

# PROSPECT

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# The Californian Bungalow

*By Bryan Boon*

Having lived in one and been surrounded by them for the whole of my life, this is a good opportunity to make a brief overview from both an architectural and sociological viewpoint, and to share a few personal memories.

## *The Golden Decade — 1920–1930*

From the early 1920s until the Depression of the 1930s caused a severe decline in housebuilding in New Zealand, the Californian bungalow was quite simply the predominant house style being built in this country. You will see hundreds in our special area of interest, Epsom, Greenlane and One Tree Hill, but fewer in Mt Eden, where a greater number of houses were built in the earlier part of the 19th century. Many have disappeared in the dead of night, transported away to begin a new life in greener pastures. Here today and gone tomorrow. The generous quarter acre sections on which they were built have proved ideal for two or three smart new townhouses.

For many, especially the newly married, the dream of owning their home had come true. Provided the breadwinner had a profession, trade, skills or work experience that was likely to ensure steady employment, a loan or mortgage often obtained through the State Advances Corporation could be paid off within 25 years. This was the first generation where the ‘average’ family could look forward to becoming homeowners instead of paying rent for the rest of their lives.

## *Bungalow*

The word bungalow is an anglicisation of the Hindu word ‘Bangla’ which refers to the single storey thatched houses of north India. The philosophy behind the style was a house reduced to its simplest form, with low broad proportions and a lack of elaborate ornamentation. An informal arrangement of rooms was encouraged. Such simple designs and a more relaxed lifestyle gave the bungalow its appeal to a generation which had known little apart from the formality and embellishment of late Victorian and Edwardian houses. It was not just a new way of building; it became a new way of life.

### *Early influences*

By 1910, American influence on New Zealand house building was increasing. They sent their products to us, and American publishers ensured that their design publications were seen both here and in Australia. Plan books full of patterns for craftsmen bungalows were widely available, and it was not long before local building speculators, draughtsmen and developers put them to use.

In 1927, fearing a downturn in demand for their services, a leading architectural magazine warned that ‘the slavish copying of plans from cheap publications is a dangerous practice’. However the catalogue of Laidlaw Leeds (later the Farmers Trading Co) assured readers that they could supply the plans, specifications and quantities for a cost which would only be a fraction of what an architect would charge for the plans alone. The impact of Californian style architecture was first seen in a large bungalow in Fendalton, Christchurch, aptly named ‘Los Angeles’ and completed in 1913 for the captain of a trader that plied between San Francisco and New Zealand.

In passing we may note the continuing influence of the west coast of America on New Zealand architectural styles. The latter part of the 1930s saw a brief flurry of stucco clad ‘art deco’ and ‘moderne’ houses with their rigid geometric shapes and streamlined Hollywood appearance. Here and there are examples of the Spanish Mission style which originated in Mexico. Auckland Grammar School (built between 1914 and 1916) is regarded as the most outstanding example of this fashion outside America.

### *The features of a Californian bungalow*

In the first half of the decade (1920–25) styles were quite elaborate, but between 1925 and 1930 a more simple appearance was preferred.

The basic plan was for a square or rectangular house, while a low pitched roof replaced the steep roofs of earlier villas. Single or multiple gables often wandered off in all directions, until the main roof was lost in a confusion of barge boards and ridges. Gradually a simpler hip roof returned giving a more steadying influence.

Corrugated iron roofing was preferred, and liberal applications of red oxide roof paint were applied. Standing on the summit of Mt Eden one viewed a sea of red roofs, relieved only occasionally by the few who chose grey or green.



*A typical Epsom Californian bungalow with its matching fence. Note the deep front porch with its tapered pillars and shingling. There is a decorative diamond paned oval window and prominent hoods over the fanlights.*

Photo supplied by Bryan Boon

External cladding was in most cases weatherboard, although sometimes a rustic look could be achieved by using the new reinforced concrete technology with a rough plastered finish known as ‘stucco’. Generally brick did not suit the style, although it was favoured a little more in the South Island. Sometimes small areas of stucco were interspersed with the brick to gain effect.

Fully shingled bungalows were rare, but gable walls were often shingled to match the shingling on bay and bow windows giving a pleasing contrast to the weatherboards below. ‘Shingles suggest rusticity’ said *Bungalow* magazine. The gables sometimes displayed a decorative ventilator, with a louvred opening shaped square, rectangular, diamond or circular. Wide overhanging eaves gave thorough protection (no leaky homes) and could display roof rafter ends without fascia boards. Prominent barge boards were a feature.

### *Porches and verandahs*

The age old shallow verandah was changed to a large, deep porch, and became an open air room. They were built under an extension of the main roof, and supported by heavy piers or pylons which could taper upwards from a wide base. In reality the porch was wasted space which with more thought could have been used for a much needed extra bedroom, sewing room or den.

The sunporch was a new innovation. Usually sited off one of the living rooms it may first have been open but was soon enclosed by casement windows and became a useful extra bedroom for a child.

### *Windows*

These were the trademark and feature of the Californian style. At least one decorative window seemed compulsory. Bay bow or boxed windows protruded from the faces of the walls, almost certainly in the front of the house. Hinged casement and fanlight windows replaced the double hung windows of the older villas. The fanlight panes were



*21 Gorrie Avenue. A simpler style of bungalow built in 1928 and occupied by the author of this article. Leadlight glass features on the fanlights, and the sunporch has been enclosed to provide an extra room. A front rockery used up many of the volcanic stones lying about.*

Photo supplied by Bryan Boon

frequently leadlights, and coloured glass was used where the extra expense was justified. Designs were based on the art nouveau style of formalized floral motifs. Occasionally casement windows had full panes of diamond grid leadlight glass, lovely to look at, but dreadful to clean and worse to replace if a pane was broken.

Protective hoods sprouted above the fanlights, and miniature bow windows of glittering bevelled glass were fitted into the wall beside a chimney or near the entry porch.

### *The interior*

The most fundamental change from villa to bungalow was the size and position of the hall and passages. Internal planning was far more informal and varied than the villa's central passage with its string of rooms on each side.

Rooms took on new shapes and found new positions about the house. The very names suggested a different lifestyle. Living room for parlour, breakfast room for dining room, kitchenette for kitchen and laundry for washhouse.

As was traditional the main bedroom and living room were placed at the front. Consequently if the rear faced the north, then the kitchen and laundry with its tiny toilet tucked into one corner, were the sunniest rooms. Not good planning. The main entrance no longer needed to be at the front, and could now be situated on one side — a popular change.

Visitors were ushered into a hall frequently panelled in dark stained cedar, giving a gloomy welcome (with due respect to those houses which retain it). This panelling occasionally continued into the living rooms. In a typical bungalow ceilings were panelled and featured heavy dark stained beams and joists, some hollow.

Two main living rooms were often provided — the more formal room, which did not always have everyday use, and a dining or breakfast room. In a well thought out plan they adjoined, back to back, separated by sliding or folding doors, and giving a large space for entertaining when necessary. In larger houses two fireplaces were included and they, as always, were the central feature of the living areas. The surrounds could be massive and sculptural, featuring clinker brick or cobblestone.

Some classic bungalows even had an 'angle' or inglenook. This is a deep alcove built around the fireplace, where seats on both sides were

built in. Small windows on either side of the fireplace created a true 'snug'.

The dining or breakfast room became what today we now call the family room. Having accommodated the necessary table, chairs and sideboard, there was still space for armchairs around the fireplace. A welcoming fire lit in the late afternoon kept the family warm during dinner and into the evening.

Between the kitchenette and breakfast room we might see a handy 'pass through' or servery built into the wall. It had panelled or lead glass doors and could be part of a bank of china. cupboards.

Wall to wall carpeting had not generally been introduced, and large bordered or scattered rugs covered the bare floor boards, a fashion which has again become very popular in recent years.

Known as 'art papers', boldly patterned wallpapers in exotic floral, foliage or chinoserie designs were the height of fashion in the living rooms. A plate shelf ran around the room at door height, where treasures were to be displayed. Below it was a scalloped fringe, and different patterned papers, were hung above and below it. In the bedrooms more restful wallpapers were chosen, and a picture rail could replace the plate shelf.

Kitchens and bathrooms were match-lined with tongue and groove boards painted with a few coats of the best lead enamel, whose lethal doses were applied to resist water. For kitchens, dove grey was the recommended fashionable colour, and this, combined with plain strong blue linoleum, gave rise to great admiration from visitors.

Another great improvement was the location of the bathroom. It was no longer a cramped spartan room under a back lean to or at the end of a long hall. Painted in dazzling white enamel, its clinical appearance promised new standards of cleanliness and hygiene.

Gas califonts in polished brass jackets appeared above the bath and kitchen sink, and the gas or electric cooker framed in a tiled recess sat glowing on its plinth.

### ***Bedrooms***

Despite reasonably generous living and service areas, all too often only two bedrooms were included in the plan. Small families were now becoming the norm. The initial wave of women's liberation occurred soon after the First World War, and family planning became acceptable



— except for those with strong moral or religious prohibitions. In the smaller bungalows lack of adequate bedroom accommodation was a real handicap. There was no provision for guests, for live-in elderly family members or more than one child.

On a personal note (having been born in the late 1920s) a good number of my closest friends, all born about the same time, were ‘only children’ with no brothers or sisters.

### *From the street*

If there was sufficient space some owners chose to break up the front lawn with trees and shrubs which partly concealed the house. Planted evenly spaced like rows of soldiers, the task of mowing around them with the old fashioned hand mower was a daunting Saturday chore. There was a general lack of formality and a genial chaos of plants and creepers growing over porches and pergolas. In the Epsom and Mt Eden areas the easy availability of volcanic stones allowed them to be used for front fences and rockeries, again a fashion which has reasserted itself (at great expense) over the past few years.

Free standing garages followed the houses often by a few years, and coincided with the purchase of the families’ first car. They were usually discreetly sited at the rear of the section.

### *What would we see today in the typical Californian bungalow?*

From the front exterior their appearance has changed little except where another storey has been added. But to suit today’s lifestyle, major modifications will probably have taken place internally. Living rooms may still be intact but freshened up, and the main bedroom is likely to have had an en suite attached. However the greatest transformation will have been in the kitchen, bathroom and service areas — now modernized and brought up to date.

A deck at the rear, no matter how small, is a necessary addition for outdoor living. It may well look out to a pleasantly landscaped patio or garden, which does not require too much maintenance.

These soundly built and reliable bungalows have served many families well over the past 80 or 90 years, and will continue to do so. They are certainly an outstanding feature of the area of interest of our historical society.



# Right to the Door

*Vignettes by Joan Butler, Eric Laurenson & Jeanette Grant*

## *The butterman*

Do you remember the butterman? I think his name was Mr Stone. I remember he had a little white van, always wore a white smock and carried his wares in a white wooden box with a strap that he could put around his neck. He sold butter, cream, eggs and cheese (remember ‘Pixie Uno’?).

He always seemed to be running and would whistle under his breath. He wore white tennis shoes and padded along from house to house. Several houses in St Andrews Road, where I grew up, had a ‘neighbourhood gap’ in the stone wall between the houses and the butterman would use these gaps as he went on his rounds. Those were the days when the milkman came every morning — very early, about 6am, so the butterman did not bring milk. He must have covered quite an area to be able to make a living. Of course, before the days of supermarkets or family cars, shopping involved quite a long walk for mothers with prams, and the long days of household drudgery, without modern appliances, meant housewives welcomed the visits of the baker, the fruiterer, the grocer, the Rawleigh’s man — and the cheerful butterman.

## *The fish lady*

When I was a little boy in Kakariki Avenue, Mt Eden, my mother was regularly visited by Mrs Morgan, the fish lady. Mrs Morgan came each week on the same day, carrying fresh whole fish in a wicker basket. She would display the contents of the basket to my mother who would select what she wanted. Mrs Morgan would then spread a newspaper on the front steps and proceed to head and fillet the fish while we (and the cat) looked on with interest. Mrs Morgan must have been down at the wharves early in the morning to get her supplies and then travelled on the tram out to the suburbs to sell her wares to her regular customers. Imagine sitting next to Mrs Morgan on the tram!

## *The Rawleigh’s man*

We lived up a long steep right of way between Mt Eden Road and

Kakariki Avenue, and not many vendors were prepared to climb up to try and make a sale. Mr Litherland, ‘the Rawleigh’s man’, was the exception. Two or three times a year he would appear with a smile and a basket on his arm containing samples of his most popular items. My mother always bought her vanilla from him and also such useful things as ‘RRR’ or Rawleigh’s Ready Relief which effectively helped children breathe when afflicted with the inevitable colds. I was pleased to find recently that a modern equivalent — Rawleigh’s Head Clear — is now available, but it is no longer brought to our doorstep.

## The Real Mackie

*By Norma Bush*

*This is an edited transcript of an interview with Mr Arnold Mackie, recorded on 16 October 2007 at his home at 2a Aratonga Avenue, Epsom.*

*The interview was conducted by Norma Bush, on behalf of the Epsom and Eden District Historical Society.*

My grandparents, who came over from Edinburgh, Scotland, arrived in Auckland but as my grandfather was a mining engineer, they decided to go down to Thames. They lived there for a number of years until he was killed in a mining accident and at that stage my grandmother came back to Auckland with four children.

My father lived in Auckland, trained as a baker and worked in a bakery before setting up his own business in Epsom in 1912. His business was located on the corner of Manukau Road and Queen Mary Avenue, and was known as Mackie’s Bakery. The bakery itself was at the back of the shop. In the early days the bakery and its equipment were quite rudimentary, most of the baking being done by hand. My father started baking on his own, but the business gradually grew, allowing more sophisticated equipment to be brought in, and he employed one and then two bakers. When my brother left school, he went straight into the bakery, as I did later, so there were three of us baking at that stage. My father was a very quiet man, who really never set out to teach us to bake. We just had to learn by observation, which we did.

Just prior to WW2 we bought bread-making equipment, which was very modern in its day, efficient and quick. That took a lot of the hard

work out of baking bread and buns, and meant a big reduction in the bakers' time and effort. At its peak we had five people in the bakery and the shop, as well as delivery staff. Flour was delivered in truckloads and hoisted up into the top floor of the bakery, where it was sorted and stacked. Abel's margarine and Anchor butter were also delivered in quantities. Health inspectors came frequently during those early years, and health inspection was taken very seriously.

As a family we lived above the shop, and it was fine. We liked living there. We were all musical, so an orchestra formed. There was an old fellow called Joe Whitehouse. He was a retired farmer but he was marvellous at making violins out of native woods and he produced some beautiful instruments. With his encouragement we formed a small orchestra of family and friends, and used to practise in the front room above the shop once a week. People used to stand on the pavement by the shop and listen to us. The six of us played around at local events quite frequently and that was great fun.

The business grew with the growth of the bread trade. Local people were good customers and bread was delivered to dairies around the district and to other areas. The delivery vans went first to dairies and grocery shops, and then delivered orders to private homes. 'Bunny' Thompson, who took over Bolton's Garage, gained his nickname because he was always eating Mackie's buns. Then there was a farrier in the Trotting Club who was very fond of eating Mackie's pies, and also gained a nickname from that. Our main staples were bread, buns, pies and blocks of Genoa fruit cake, and these became popular throughout the wider district, so that we were delivering them to dairies as far afield as Mt Eden and Onehunga. Bread delivery doubled in output during those years. We made a lot of small cakes also. We delivered to the tuck shop at Epsom Girls Grammar School. We didn't supply Epsom Normal Primary because they had no tuck shop, but some of the children used to run along Queen Mary Avenue in their lunch hour to buy a pie.

I grew up in Epsom, since we lived on the bakery premises. In those days Cornwall Park was an important part of the local life, especially for boys and young men, because of the football that was played there. Many boys played cricket at the Cornwall Cricket Club. The Campbell Park Tennis Club, near the entrance to the park, was a popular club. Both of these two clubs are still operating. Epsom was well served for sporting facilities.

I recall that Trotting Club meetings at Alexandra Park were very popular. Thousands came, and then by the last race, a fleet of trams assembled on Green Lane Road. People poured out of the gates, but thanks to the marvellous tram service, they had all gone within half an hour. At the time, people probably took the tram service for granted and did not realise what they were losing when the trams were closed down — but afterwards they did.

The Showgrounds were a big feature of Epsom in my young day. The Easter Show centred around farmers and they brought all kinds of animals to town. The carriers like Winstone's and J.J. Craig's had fleets of horses and carts, so there were beautiful animals to see. And then there were the gymkhana events. Those were real fun days.

Until 1956, the Epsom Tram Barn was located directly across the road from our shop, and so the tram drivers and conductors ('trammies'), who came across to buy their lunches were a large part of our business, and in fact they brought business to most of the Epsom shops. By that stage our business was quite prosperous, and very well known in Epsom. The nurses from Green Lane Hospital were also frequent customers. We developed a bread delivery service which eventually required three vans. During WW2, women ran the bakery and the bread delivery. Those women were very lively and popular with customers. Then we had a shop in Onehunga for a number of years which my sister ran.

My brother went overseas in the army, going first to the Pacific Islands, and then to Egypt. When I joined the army and was sent to Egypt, I applied to have him join my regiment, and then finally I was sent to Italy. So I was overseas for four and a half years.

When we came home, we both settled back into the bakery. This was fine at first, but eventually we found the night work a bit irksome. We worked long hours. The dough had to be set at night, and then from 2.00am the bakery staff worked full tilt on the bread. So we would get an early night's sleep, and then work for the rest of the night. Then we mostly had a nap in the afternoon.

My brother got fed up with the broken hours and he left first, and then I left, and went into Aulsebrooke's biscuit factory for a few years. However we still owned Mackie's, and the bakery was still my main interest. I really regretted leaving, because we had a commanding business there, right in the centre of the Epsom shopping centre, and we owned the shop as well as the bakery. We were very well known in

Epsom at the time, although when the tram barn closed, we lost all the custom of the trammies. However, Epsom was still a good area and ours was a very good business, but we didn't have enough knowledge and vision to see that it could have continued to grow. Unfortunately my father was a very reticent man, so there was not much communication between him and my brother and me, so we didn't really discuss the business and its potential to any degree. Also our war experience affected us a lot, unsettled us, and changed our views on things.

Eventually my father retired and sold the premises in 1955, but in the 1960s small district bakeries were being taken over by big bakery companies and after that smaller franchises like 'Baker's Delight' set up, baking fresh bread on the site. We would have been well placed to continue to operate on that basis. It was ironic that not very long after Mackie's closed, Eve's Pantry set up just a few shops along Manukau Road, and became a very flourishing bakery and shop. However they are in a different class from Mackie's, because they bake very top line, high quality cakes, whereas Mackie's baked working class goods.

Following the closure of the tram barn, many of the shops in Epsom changed hands. Both Ray Fallwell of the billiard saloon and McCoombe's bicycle shop closed down. The AMC butchery kept going for a few years and then closed. The Lowe family of the fruit and vegetable shop next to the AMC and the women's drapery both closed. Bartley, the chemist, moved to the opposite side of the road, but later closed. This all happened prior to the development of shopping malls, and seemed to me to largely stem from the closure of the tram barn. Much later the centre was totally disrupted by the development of the regional road. Many of the shops were demolished, and those on the southern side of Green Lane Road were cut off from those on the northern side, so they never regained the trade they used to have. The centre as a whole never recovered, and most of the local service shops were replaced by restaurants, bars or shops catering for very specific interests. So those events spelt the end of the Epsom shopping centre as a true local centre. For similar reasons, the little shopping centre and Victory Cinema down at Green Lane were obliterated by road widening for the regional road.

# The Epsom Well

*By Graham Bush*

Any writer or editor of a published local history will later almost inevitably harbour regrets that some topics within the book failed to receive the coverage they deserved. Among other things, the treatment may have been inadequate, too sketchy or unbalanced. Equally, it may have been that raw material in sufficient quality or quantity simply did not exist or that, given the available resources, was not expedient to unearth. On reflection, as editor of *The History of Epsom*, my personal regrets in this regard included a great dearth of knowledge about the pre-European Maori and Epsom, a pretty limited account of Epsom as the agricultural heartland of Auckland in the near fifty years after 1870, and the omission of a number of notable 'Epsomites' from the potted biographies which featured in the book's margins. In addition, there was one very specific topic the inclusion of which was overlooked almost inadvertently: this was the Epsom well.

In the index of *The History of Epsom* there is no reference to the well, nor do the citations relating to the suburb's early water supply provide any illumination about its existence, location and use. Indeed, the sole reference to such a basic utility appears in the appendix 'The Street Names of Epsom' where it is noted that the original name of the southern end of Gillies Avenue was 'Well Road' because of 'a public water pump adjacent.' However, as confirmed by several nineteenth century maps, such a facility definitely existed and what follows is an attempt — if belatedly and incompletely — to write 'the Epsom well' into its rightful place in the historical record.

Although rainwater fed into a fluctuating marshy swamp in the lowland immediately south of Mt St John, and there is a sketch showing a somewhat more substantial body of water occupying what is now the Windmill Road tennis courts and adjacent sports fields, the first waves of farming settlers in Epsom discovered that the area was singularly lacking in any appreciable permanent streams of water. There was no option for them but to depend on rain to water their fields and crops and to collect what they could in water butts. It could be speculated that perhaps the more affluent and enterprising undertook primitive shallow drilling in the hope of locating water, but given Epsom's overwhelmingly

volcanic geological structure, such hopes stood relatively little chance of fulfilment. (There was apparently a well located in the grounds of Marivare in Ranfurly Road used to water the horses of the military in the 1860s.)

Consequently, as Epsom's population grew, so did the need for locals to have access to an assured supply of potable water during periods of drought or prolonged inadequate rainfall. Obviously the water could not be brought to the farmers and other inhabitants (the first reference in the Epsom Road Board minutes to the goal of securing a piped — or standpiped? — supply of water was 1890), but they could go to the water. The quantities obtained might be measured only in buckets, but as an essential of life its availability was valued accordingly.

The existence of an accessible source of water coming to the surface in the area bounded by The Drive, King George Avenue, Gillies Avenue and Kimberley Road will have predated the arrival of settlers in Epsom in 1841, but no evidence of what use local Maori made of it has been found. Immediately to the north of lower Kimberley Avenue was a shallow depression (now the Epsom Community Centre carpark) previously much subject to flooding, and it is safe to assume that any overflow from 'the well' made its way to this spot.

Dating of the well back to around 1870 comes from an item in the book celebrating the centenary of the Epsom (Normal) Primary School (1983). It is an account from one of the school's pupils when it was located on the land adjacent to King George Avenue and bounded by The Drive and Gillies Avenue. She recalls her mother referring to the well as 'a boon in times of drought' back as far as 1880 or even possibly 1870. The term she used was 'government pump' so it can be assumed that the water had to be pumped to get it to the surface and that it was a public facility. Given the dates mentioned, 'the government' was almost certainly the Auckland Provincial Council. An unattributed map accompanying the article shows the school site immediately abutting King George Avenue occupying three quarters of an acre and on its northern boundary lies a 'Water Reserve' of a quarter acre. Its dimensions were approximately 113 metres by 36.5 metres. As the Epsom Road Board had successfully petitioned the Minister of Lands in 1885 to set aside 'the well site' for a school, it is possible that the well reserve originally extended over the whole acre. The fact that in 1896 the School Committee was moved to complain to the road board



about ‘the bad state’ of the well strongly suggests that it then still was supplying the school’s water needs.

Pressure to obtain access to a mains water supply mounted in the 1890s and culminated in the formation of the Manukau Water-Supply Board in 1896. Its statutory brief was to construct and operate a water supply system covering the major parts of the One Tree Hill and Epsom road boards areas. It drew water from abundant springs near the upper extremities of the Manukau Harbour, and although by 1910 vigorous suburban expansion had stretched the capacity of the source, it can be assumed that from the end of the nineteenth century Epsom was progressively reticulated, thus making recourse to the well redundant.

Jump forward almost a century to the end of 2007 when demolition of a house at 7 The Drive was followed by the appearance of a substantial pool of water. First noticed by Helen Laurenson, the founding President of the Epsom & Eden District Historical Society, the appearance of the pool generated sufficient interest to be the subject of an article in the *Central Leader*. The project manager of Signature Homes, the firm developing the site, was reportedly sceptical that the historic well had been unearthed, but it is evident that the location of the building site exactly accords with early maps indicating the existence of the ‘Water Reserve’.



*The Epsom Well, The Drive, January 2008*

Photo: N.A. Bush

# A Tribute to Professor David Cole

*By Graham Bush*

*At the Epsom & Eden Historical Society's meeting  
on 6 October 2008,  
Graham Bush paid this tribute*



David Simpson Cole died at his home on 8 September 2008 aged 84. His father, Dr J. McMurray Cole, was in partnership for a short time in the late 1930s with the notable longstanding Epsom GP Dr Richard Gillett. After graduating in medicine from the University of Otago, David Cole started specialising in surgery, and in the early 1960s, as a cardio-thoracic surgeon, became a member of the outstanding cardiac team at the Greenlane Hospital headed by Brian Barrett-Boyes.

When the University of Auckland's School of Medicine commenced teaching in 1968, David Cole (Chair in Surgery) was among the foundation appointments to the staff. When the first Dean resigned rather unexpectedly in 1974, David Cole was appointed Dean of the School and held this position until he retired in 1989. It was under his leadership that the School flourished and developed into an internationally-respected teaching and research institution.

David Cole's links with Epsom were both professional and personal. Professionally, for nearly a decade, his address was the Greenlane Hospital Cardiac Unit. He first appeared in *Wise's Auckland Directory* as an Epsom resident in 1960, his abode being stated as 20 Golf Road. He lived there for some twenty years, moving about 1980 to 195b St Andrews Road, his home until his death.

My first connection with David Cole arose from my serving as the Secretary of the Auckland Branch of the Association of University Teachers for most of the 1970s. For two of those years David Cole was the Branch Chairman and I occasionally had to visit him on the Grafton Campus to discuss AUT matters and meeting agendas. It amazed me that notwithstanding his exceptionally demanding teaching, administrative and surgical activities he was willing to devote precious time to what might be called 'trade union' matters. He always conscientiously and effectively gave whatever time was necessary.

My second connection with David Cole was in mid 2006 when the final stages of putting together *The History of Epsom* were being reached. One day he phoned to provide some very useful additional information about several sections of the Healthcare chapter which John Shaw had asked him to review. David's sharing of this insider's knowledge certainly made those sections more accurate and informative.

David Cole was an eminent medical educator and heart surgeon of whom Epsom can rightly be proud, and whose sad passing is worthy to be marked and recorded.

## Wairoa and Epsom

*By Jim Millar*

Russell Stone's evocative talk to the Epsom & Eden District Historical Society (4 Feb 2008) took me, along with the rest of his enthralled audience, down memory lane; to the extent that I felt inspired to write down some of my own childhood recollections.

But, you see, mine have a slightly different twist. I think I can identify as an Epsomite, having lived here for over 40 years, with a further ten or so in other parts of Auckland. However, my first memories until my early teens are of rural NZ — one might almost say, backblocks NZ, for I grew up on the eastern North Island (three years in Wairoa where I was born; eight years in Nuhaka, 20 miles east of Wairoa; and three years in Te Karaka, 20 miles northwest of Gisborne). I am sure there would be a number of other Epsomites who grew up in rural NZ and moved to Auckland as I did for educational or employment reasons — in my case to go to university — and have remained here ever since. (I did return to Wairoa for four years in the early sixties to fulfil my country service teaching requirements — regrettably in my opinion, no longer required. Two of my three children were born there.)

So some of my childhood memories would be similar, but a number are different to those who, like my wife, were brought up in the city. I remember well the wood and coal range and my mother cooking Sunday midday dinner on a hot summer's day, ever so often entertaining the Anglican minister who would come out from Wairoa. There was no refrigerator, so meat was kept in a portable safe which was hung in the shade of a willow tree in the hope that the breeze passing through the

sieve-like cover would prevent it from going bad. Because my father was the postmaster, we shifted around a lot. With his bookkeeping knowledge, he would do the tax returns for some of the local farmers during the depression years. Payment would be a leg of lamb, or maybe a schnapper — but on occasions, two or more such ‘payments’ would be made at the same time and we would be eating cold meat for quite a while — after Mum had done the requisite cooking over the hot summer stove.

There was no milk delivery at Te Karaka. I used to walk three quarters of a mile each morning before school to a local farmer and collect a billy full of milk — I think it cost threepence. In those days every village had its own bakery, so on the way back I would get the bread — straight out of the oven — then pick at the warm interior, trying not to eat so much that my mother would scold me. She told me off occasionally, but I guess she mostly turned a blind eye.

I did not live on a farm, but I spent a lot of weekends with various mates on their farms so I became familiar with such activities as mustering, treading down wool in the wool bales, sweeping daggy wool from under the shearers’ feet and also trapping and killing the hawks which were a menace to newborn lambs.

Mention was made by Russell Stone and others of self-help when it came to accidents and illnesses. There was no doctor at either Nuhaka or Te Karaka. The nearest ones were at Wairoa or Gisborne. For a couple of years before the war we had a car, but when petrol rationing came in my father decided it was not worth keeping, so sold it. Basically then, for most of my childhood, we relied on bus travel. Twenty miles of pot-holed metal roads separated Nuhaka from Wairoa — or 35 miles from Nuhaka to Gisborne, dusty in summer and slushy in winter and not infrequently blocked by slips or wash-outs. A daily bus with two-row cab catering for six or seven passengers provided a service between Nuhaka and Wairoa, picking up full cream cans on the way in and distributing mail, empty cream cans and other items to the intervening farms on the way back. Excess passengers, including children, sat on the cream cans or boxes under the canopy on the back of the bus. The journey took an hour or more each way.

As a child, I cannot remember ever seeing a doctor, although I suppose mother did on the occasions of her pregnancies before my brother and sister, some years younger than myself, were born. No

doubt I would have been at school when she went into either Wairoa or Gisborne.

We did have a district nurse in both places and I do recall her visiting when I had the measles and whooping cough in Nuhaka. I suspect she was highly competent and dealt with many complaints that should more properly have been referred to a doctor. However, during the Depression years that was not really an option in rural areas such as Nuhaka and Te Karaka. These district nurses were highly respected — as were all people holding ‘official’ positions, e.g. schoolteachers, headmasters, ministers, postmasters and especially policemen.

I suppose one could ring up for help from Wairoa or Gisborne if things got out of hand — although even that was difficult, for the local exchange was closed from 9pm to 7am and all day Sunday. However, I suspect that calling for help would have been seen as an admission of failure and was not to be contemplated. The local ‘bobby’ was expected to maintain law and order and he did so. I remember one incident where a bushman from the backblocks, no doubt on a rare weekend off and presumably after imbibing a fair amount of alcohol, became a bit obstreperous and challenged the local cop who had suggested he had had enough to drink. The news got around rapidly and we youngsters joined the patrons in the yard at the back of the pub to witness the officer of the law, a big man, take off his coat and helmet and ‘go to it’ in traditional bare knuckle fashion with the forestry worker, another big, strong muscular specimen. It was a scrap lasting ten minutes or so and the policeman eventually triumphed. I don’t know what would have happened if the result had gone the other way.

I am not certain, but I suspect that afterwards the policeman would have taken him home, put him in the lock-up to sleep off the effects of the alcohol and the fight, given him breakfast in the morning and sent him on his way with no hard feelings on either part — and there would have been no reports to headquarters, nor would such reports have been expected.

As a child I can never remember being bored. My father was an avid reader, and since there was no local library at Nuhaka — although there was one at Te Karaka — his one indulgence was to buy a book or two every time he went to Wairoa. By the time I was 12 or 13 years old our bookshelves contained most of Dickens, Thackeray, Scott, Eliot and Dumas — cheap Everymans or Collins editions. Add to that the local

school's collection of Henty, Fennimore Cooper and J.M. Barrie, and I was never at a loss for reading material. I am sure I never suffered by comparison with city children even though they would have had access to a greater range of material at their more sophisticated libraries.

Of course, when it came to entertainment — drama, movies, musicals, orchestras — compared with the cities, we had nothing at all. I can recall one of our young lady teachers at Nuhaka being very popular because, among her various attributes, she could play the latest 'pop' tunes on the piano. We did have 'pictures' at the local Nuhaka LDS hall on Saturday evenings — Te Karaka had Staurday matinées as well. It was obligatory to attend each week so that you kept up with the latest episode of serials such as *The Lone Ranger*, *The Mark of Zorro*, and one I think was called *The Green Arrow*.

Before the Second World War, most Maori lived in rural areas. Both Te Karaka and more especially Nuhaka had large Maori populations. Consequently many of my friends and playmates, particularly at Te Karaka, were Maori. I sat next to a Maori boy in the classroom. My first girlfriend, at the tender age of 13, was a Maori girl who lived over the back fence from the post office residence. In the hot summers, we spent many happy hours playing tennis on the grass courts of the local club, a hundred metres or so from where we lived; followed by a trip home to get changed into our togs before we raced off to swim in a 'hole' on the neighbouring Waipaoa River.

Competitive sport virtually disappeared during the war years. Apart from 'knockabout' games, there were very limited opportunities to play, or indeed to see, competitive rugby or cricket. After a couple of months in the third form at Te Karaka District High School with its total roll of 80 or so pupils, we shifted to Wellington and I was enrolled at Wellington College, a much larger and more prestigious establishment. However, from my own observation, the quality of teaching and the interest shown in the pupils was of a much higher quality in the small rural high school.

I have sometimes wondered whether I would have benefited more, or been happier, being brought up in the city. My conclusion is that it does not really matter. Of greater importance is a supportive and caring family and a positive attitude. My wife, brought up as she was in Epsom, was equally fortunate with myself in those respects.

# Teacher Training in the 1920s

By *Olive Clarke (née Stubbs) 1907–86*

*This is an extract from the ‘memoirs’  
which Olive was bullied into writing for her family*

It was the first day of February, and school was in for me too. I had just turned sixteen, passed my Matriculation and been accepted as a brand new member of the teaching profession. I was what was known as a pupil-teacher. My salary was to be £80 a year, but at the moment, the money concerned me less than the impression I was going to make on the real teachers and, what was more frightening, on the children I would have to teach.

As I approached the playground of my appointed school, the shouting and laughter grew in volume and my courage shrank correspondingly. I reluctantly opened the gate and immediately became the focus of dozens of pairs of curious eyes. I heard a whisper, ‘It’s only another of the new teachers’ and thankfully realised I was not alone in my misery. Actually there were four of us, three girls and a boy. We met outside the headmaster’s study and shyly introduced ourselves while we waited for him to arrive. I liked what I saw of them and was glad for I knew I was to work in close contact with these three for the next two years.

Alice the oldest of our group, was fair, plump and placid. She looked as if motherhood should be her vocation instead of teaching, and so it turned out as she did not finish her training. Ena, dark energetic and competent, was fun all the way. Colin, serious and conscientious, plodded to the top and became an inspector.

How I struck the others I do not know, but I knew myself only too well. I was neither striking-looking nor plain; just a tall, dark-eyed, black-haired girl inclined to thinness with a habit of taking life very seriously. This trait of looking round corners has been too deeply rooted to eradicate and is with me still. Sometimes I try to think it has been a virtue and that I have been a better teacher because of it. Maybe I’ve been deluding myself.

At last Mr Stevenson the headmaster arrived. He was a tall, fair man with a slight stoop. He greeted us and took us into his study where he gave us our first insight into what was expected of us. He was a wise



man, shrewd in his knowledge and handling of people, sparing of words (an unusual trait to find in a school teacher) and he had a happy knack of putting one at one's ease.

My training at his school was sound and happy, and now, years after, I often wonder why such training was discontinued. As pupil-teachers we were appointed to a school for a period of two years. One year was spent in the Infant Department and the other in the Standards. We were attached to one particular teacher where we assisted in all class work and were invaluable in many ways both in the classroom and the playground.

In the classroom we gave individual attention to slow pupils; we took groups outside for greater practice work; we made, mended and sorted apparatus and in general did most of the necessary chores so that the experienced teachers could get on with their specialised job of teaching without hindrance. At the same time, we absorbed the techniques of teaching. We learned our strengths and our weaknesses but most important of all, we learned whether or not we were fitted for our job.

Did we like teaching or did we not? Did we wish to continue or did we not? On the answers to these questions depended our future and that of our future pupils. Unless one likes teaching one must not teach. An uninterested teacher creates an uninterested class and lasting damage is done to the unfortunate children in it. If one were not suited it was not too late to resign before too much public money had been spent. I say spent — I do not mean wasted, for we gave good value in our work where we had some responsibility but not sufficient to cause any harm to young minds.

In the playground we were invaluable. We assisted with the necessary supervision and were the mainstay of all sports. We had youth on our side and the older teachers were greatly relieved to leave the bulk of the coaching and refereeing in our hands.

The first class with which I was associated was a Primer One class of 40 five-year-olds. They were taught by the infant mistress, a very efficient and energetic woman (of course). Plenty of equipment was necessary — matching games of all kinds for aiding reading, phonics and number. None of this was supplied. It all had to be made and most of the making fell to my lot as did the replacing of lost pieces and the repairing of torn ones. It was an endless task but a valuable one judging from the quick progress the children made. There was no such thing

as ‘social promotion’ and children had to earn their right to move into a higher class.

We pupil-teachers had to learn too, for we had to pass our own examinations before we could qualify as certificated teachers. Our first exam was known as Teachers’ D and it embraced many subjects. We had to pass in reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, nature study, hygiene, school method, music (practical and theory) needlework, English and drawing. This last consisted of three papers — freehand drawing, blackboard drawing and instrumental drawing. We had also to produce a St Johns certificate to prove that we were capable of rendering practical first aid. I may have actually missed mentioning a subject or two but have been unable to verify this. Anyhow, this examination was the open sesame for entering training college. Some of the subjects were new to us (school method for instance) and we were coached by the headmaster or the first assistant. This coaching was given before school commenced.

Our training also included the taking of ‘special lessons’. These were prepared lessons that we had to take on any subject in any class. They were set by the headmaster, who observed them and wrote his criticism of our efforts. They were a dreadful ordeal but we learned a lot from them as the criticisms were mainly constructive.

During my year in the Infant Department, we had our yearly check from the medical people. The school doctor and his nurse arrived and each child was given a general overhaul. The parents were advised beforehand and were invited to be present if they so desired. Most came of course, and assisted by undressing and dressing their children. If parents were unable to come, it was my job to do this. I can remember undressing a very chubby little Chinese boy. I removed his jersey to find another on underneath. Underneath that was another one. All in all I removed five jerseys which explained his chubbiness, and I had a bit of a problem remembering where each jersey came in its correct order.

We also had periodic visits from the school nurse to check the children’s hair, as the long hair of the girls sometimes created trouble if it was not kept clean. Goitre too was rather prevalent at that time, and as a preventative, we were issued with iodine pills which we gave the children once a week. Some had difficulty in swallowing these, but by a little perseverance, we usually managed to overcome this.

At the end of my first year, education policy changed and pupil-

teachers were allowed to enter training college after completing twelve months in the schools. There was one proviso though, and this affected me. Entrants had to be 17 years of age by 1 January and I was 27 days too young. This meant of course, that I had to stay put for another year. This time I was attached to a Standard Four class. I thoroughly enjoyed this period and found that work in the standards was what I wanted.

As I said before, social promotions were not permitted and as the leaving age was 14, many slow learners managed to reach Standard Four and could proceed no further. They often created behaviour problems as they resented being with much younger children, and teachers found their job made very difficult. Our headmaster found a very realistic way to combat this. He created a class composed of these slower learners and put them in the charge of a dedicated teacher who worked out a syllabus suited to their needs. The work was simplified and extended in many ways. Reading was graded according to individual ability. English consisted mainly of letter writing to enable a child to communicate, and arithmetic was aimed at helping children to handle money and use measurements.

The remainder of the time was devoted to subjects necessary for normal living. Girls were taught laundry work, needlework and cooking, while the boys dealt with woodwork and metalwork. This worked splendidly from all points of view. The children were happy doing work that was in their capabilities and which was aimed at creating good citizenship. Parents were, of course, consulted before children joined the class and their permission was necessary for the experiment. Some of them didn't wish to cooperate as they feared their children might be classed as different, but on the whole refusals were few and the results most encouraging.

My two years pupil-teaching passed very quickly and training college was the next stop. It was then situated in Wellesley Street opposite Albert Park — a lovely spot, where at lunch many of us shared our sandwiches with the pigeons. These birds had no manners, and if we were not quick enough to share they were quite capable of landing on our knees and helping themselves. We spent two years in college, and at the time of my admission there were about 300 of us. About half of these were second year students. About 60 per cent were girls. Second year students were rather aloof and did not fraternise with us to any extent.

On entry, we were divided alphabetically into groups of about 30 students and a line was drawn between the mixing of the sexes. All sections were either male or female and we had our own separate common rooms where we relaxed for 15 minutes over our morning cup of tea and a biscuit. This cost us £1.10 a year. Cheap by today's standards, but dear enough for us on our small wage of £80 which was spread over the year in monthly payments. Most of us paid into the Superannuation Fund at a rate of 5 per cent, and this was deducted from our cheques. Contributions to this fund were not compulsory during our training period but if we joined we could retire two years earlier, as our four years were counted as two towards retirement (40 years service for men and 30 years for women until equal pay was introduced in 1962).

Most of us paid board if we were living at home, and a small boarding allowance was granted to help those who had to live elsewhere, generally in the college hostel. I paid £4 a month myself and when fares were paid this left very little for clothes, so a sale, particularly *Milnes' Half Price Day*, was a day of hope — hope that we would be able to find a bargain that fitted.

For six weeks we remained in college attending lectures on education, psychology, methods of teaching, music, handwork, etc. While we were thus engaged, the second year students were out in the schools doing practical work. Our lectures were not all given at Wellesley Street. Some were given in a large galvanised iron building known as The Annexe. This annexe was situated at the back of the Auckland Hospital in the Domain. It had been built by the US army to accommodate their wounded men while they were in NZ, and was intended as a temporary building only. When the war was over, it was used by the Education Board, again as a temporary measure, until a new training college was completed in the Epsom area. It was quite a trek to get there from Wellesley Street and we had to rush madly to get to our lectures in time as we had no transport other than shank's pony [i.e. on foot].

The centre of the annexe was divided into two badminton courts, and round the sides were the classrooms, the staffroom and the common room for the students. The place was unlined, cold in winter and hot in summer. I used to vow and declare that all the cicadas in Auckland swarmed in the trees outside, and their trills said '*Heat it. Heat It.*'

At lunchtime when we played badminton, our shuttles would sometimes be stuck up in the rafters and it was impossible to dislodge

them. I loved this game and became quite expert at it, so much so that I actually won the First Year Championship. This meant that I had to challenge the champion of the second year. I studied her play and watched her technique very carefully so that I wouldn't disgrace myself too badly. To my great disappointment she was beaten by one of her mates in the finals, and I had to play a complete stranger. To make matters worse, I broke a string in my racquet while I was serving and had to borrow one. Fortune favoured me somehow, for I managed to win my matches and for years my photograph hung on the college walls with those of other sports champions. It was a great thrill for me, as sport had never been a strong point of mine.

Now to get back to work. As I said before, for six weeks we remained in college attending lectures. For the next six weeks we were posted to the various city schools to observe and apply our observations. Four students were attached to a class where we spent three days a week, the other two being spent back in college. For the first two weeks, we observed the teacher's methods of teaching and control, and wrote up detailed accounts of the lessons taken. We also copied (this was 40 years before photocopiers were dreamt of so the copying was done by hand) the class scheme, the timetable and pages of the workbook. This workbook was a detailed plan of the lessons to be taken each week.

The next four weeks were spent in actual teaching. We each took lessons apportioned by the class teacher. These were written up fully as we had to show what we intended to teach and how we intended to do it. This was criticised by the teacher in charge, and of course, the watching students also commented. Fortunately their comments were not recorded.

Sometimes the headmaster would wander in and watch too. I had a very embarrassing experience with one. I was taking singing with a Standard Six group when he arrived, sat in a back seat and joined in. His singing was atrocious, so much so that in desperation I stopped the lesson, summoned up a little courage and said, 'I'm sorry sir, but you are singing flat.' To my amazement he laughed and said, 'I wondered if you would have the courage to tell me so. Good girl.'

When our section came to an end, a general report was sent into college so that our lecturers would know how we shaped in a classroom and how we measured up with our fellows. It also gave us a good indication of our strengths and weaknesses so that we were able to

concentrate on the latter in an effort to improve while we had the help of experts. These reports, coupled with our work in the classroom, determined our next qualification and we were awarded a 'C' certificate at the end of our second year.

Changes though had taken place, for during my second year, the training college at Epsom had been completed and we were the first occupants. Moving to the new building was fun too, for we were used to carry over some of the precious bits and pieces. I took over a stuffed kiwi which gained me curious looks from other people on the tram.

We enjoyed the roominess of our new quarters but missed our easy access to Queen Street. Our programme remained unchanged and soon we were subjected to that all-important mystery — grading. Grading was a number allotted to us by the powers-that-be, and was intended to give an indication of your teaching ability. Beginners, as we were, commenced from 200 to 220 and a few of us were lucky enough to be in the 190 group, for contrary to expectations, the lower the number, the higher the grading.

Each year, when an inspector came to examine our work, he would allot us a certain mark which was subtracted from our present figure, and the new total was published in the grading list. What a lot of heart-burning that list caused. When it came out, we looked up all and sundry to find out how we fared in comparison with the other members of the profession. As different inspectors had different standards and also had different subjects that appealed to them, the results were far from uniform and many teachers were most unhappy with the poor rewards they received for their work.

Once our grading was established, we were sent out to schools where we were to teach for twelve months. The headmaster kept a watchful eye on the quality of our class work and class discipline and duly reported our progress to the Education Board. We also had two visits from inspectors to give destructive or constructive comments as they saw fit. Inspectors in those days gave no warning of their coming, and you never knew when to expect them. This, to my mind, was a fair method of judging a teacher's ability. It gave us no chance to window dress and we were caught doing our usual lessons without special preparation. The inspectors took over and our children were subjected to oral and written examinations set, given and marked by them.

All exercise books were scrutinised and commented upon. By the

time the inspectors left they had a detailed knowledge of the teacher's methods and the results they achieved. Even our schemes, our workbooks and our timetables came under their scrutiny.

The first school to which I was sent was Newton West where we had a cross section of children. Some came from good homes and some — well, the least said the better. My commencing day was horrific. The headmaster showed me into my room, told me I was to teach Standard One, and left me to it. The room was fitted with old, heavy, two-seater desks all pushed together to make work easy for the cleaner during the holiday period. These I had to pull and push into rows ready for the children. By the time I had finished, all I was ready for was a bath. What a beginning!

I eventually found the cloakroom, washed off the worst of the grime, and when the bell rang, I hurried out to the assembly. When my class (70 of them) was in my fairly organised room, I found that they were all equipped with slates and slate pencils. The pencils squeaked, few of the children had dusters, and a bit of spit and a quick rub with a sleeve seemed to be the accepted way of cleaning those awful slates. This coupled with the noisy handling of the loathsome things made me wonder how I could possibly cope. I finally solved the problem by spending a month's pay on exercise books and pencils which I supplied free. Life after was much peaceful.

Prior to actually handling my first class, I had given my teaching approach a lot of searching thought. It is a very frightening experience to stand in front of a class of inquisitive children and it is very necessary to create a good impression if you are to gain their confidence and cooperation. I decided that discipline had to be determined first and that my class must know that I meant what I said. To do this, I should not talk too much and I should not raise my voice unnecessarily. I should avoid direct confrontation if possible and try to gain cooperation right from the start. Only then could teaching become a pleasure for teacher and pupil.

Children must learn because they want to, and it was my job to make them want. As every teacher knows, each child is an individual who needs individual handling. Some children present problems which take a lot of solving and present challenges which often come between a teacher and her sleep. These children of mine certainly did. They mainly came from poor homes but were the most cooperative and



appreciative children I have ever taught. Sometimes their methods of showing this caused much embarrassment. Once a child presented me with a lovely vase which I knew could never have come from his own home. By dint of judicious questioning, I eventually found that it had been taken from a grave in Grafton Gully.

Another time, I was presented with a lovely box of chocolates which had been stolen from a nearby dairy. These had to be returned of course, but the situation had to be handled delicately. Fortunately the shopkeeper saw my dilemma and was very helpful (and the occupant of Grafton Gully caused no complications). These incidents were never repeated, and if anything brought about a deeper understanding between us. The children realised that material payment was not welcomed and that dishonesty of any kind was most abhorrent to me, and they really tried to live up to my expectations of them.

Later in the year we were transferred to an old detached room some distance from the main building, and here we had lots of fun in spite of many inconveniences. There were cracks in the floor where pencils could drop out of sight forever and sometimes a rat would pop up its head and create a minor panic. Fortunately I am not afraid of those nasty creatures and soon the children ignored their appearances. This room was conducive to a quiet atmosphere and we were all able to feel like a family group uninterrupted by the movement of other classes.

At the end of the year, we had to apply for another position. These positions were advertised in the *Education Gazette* and the successful candidate was chosen according to his or her grading. The most sought after jobs were those in the city, and the competition was keen. We newcomers of course were at the bottom of the list and had to apply for the country positions. These were always a gamble as it entailed living away from home, and board and lodging was a mixed blessing. Sometimes one was lucky enough to be taken into a comfortable friendly home, but that was not always the case. I remember one of the boys boarding with a family who didn't possess a bathroom and when he got tired of sponge-downs, he actually had a bath in a cattle trough in a back paddock. I ended up teaching in Dargaville — but that is another story . . . .

# London to Auckland in 1955

*By Veronica Friedlander*

I married a New Zealander, and ten days later we came out to Auckland on the *Melbourne Star*, a Blue Star Line cargo ship. My husband, Peter, was ship's doctor and I was one of the twelve passengers. There was a lot of sea and few ports, in contrast to the route of the passenger ships on which we went between Auckland and England eight years later. (Oddly enough when we left on our first trip back to England on the P & O *Oronsay* we looked across to the other wharf and there was the *Melbourne Star* on which we'd come out to NZ.)

We disembarked in Brisbane, came down to Sydney and thence on the trans-Tasman ship the *Wanganella* to Wellington, very beautiful with the lights on at dawn. But the barren hills were a shock later! Then after a day with a cousin, we travelled by sleeper to Auckland to be met by Peter's father. I remember looking across from the top of Ayr Street to Remuera in the bright winter sunshine. But it was cold in July! There was a delay in Peter getting locum work so we stayed with his parents. We went for a walk one day up Mt Hobson, with daffodils on the lower slopes.

As we were married in England, Peter's parents had a big reception for us at the 'Mandalay', where some of the Remuera shops are now. It was a big castellated building, presumably once a grand house.

Shops were all closed at weekends. I was used to Saturday shopping but no late nights. Dairies were new to me — and useful, especially at long weekends. There were four-day close downs at Christmas and Easter, nice for shopkeepers but difficult for the rest of us. But of course a lot of people were away at the beach at Christmas.

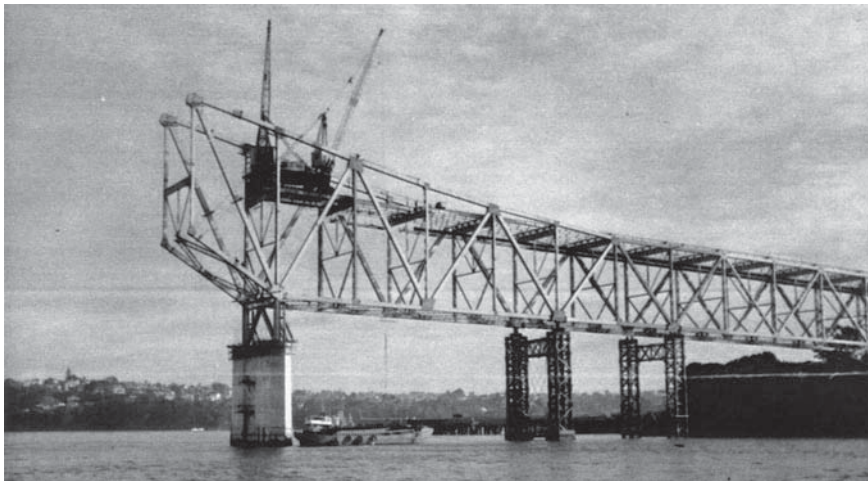
After Peter had done locum work for some while, in one case in Kawakawa, living in an old weatherboard house (there are few wooden houses in England), we bought a small weatherboard house in Richardson Road, opposite the top of White Swan Road, and Peter started up his own practice there. Later he moved his surgery twice and eventually we bought our present house off St Andrews Road, where we have been for 40 years, and we go to St Andrew's church.

Before supermarkets ruined their trade, there were many small 4-Square and IGA grocers. There was a 4-Square grocer at the top

of White Swan Road, and after we moved to Epsom, I went to the nearby grocer at Buckland Road (before it was inappropriately renamed Buckley Road, disregarding the Bucklands who had owned and lived on land nearby). I went to the shops most days, partly to stave off loneliness. It was very lonely at home all day with small children, though luckily I made a friend up the road. Eventually I found out about Playcentre and Kindergarten, which were lifesavers. (Subsequently I became a Kindergarten teacher myself.)

I used to go to the Mt Roskill shops at times. These have now changed almost beyond recognition. There was a branch of Milne & Choyce (a department store in Queen Street, closed long ago, though I am glad to say Smith & Caughey still have their main shop in Queen Street). There was also Woolworth's which sold a lot of cheap goods (but not food) off open counters. It was very different from the big Woolworth's supermarkets of nowadays.

When I first came to NZ the hardest thing was to have Christmas in the summer, then nothing to break up the winter. I also found the heavy rain beating on the tin roofs disconcerting as I was used to lighter rain, a lot less total rainfall and tiled roofs. The garden of our first house used to get flooded, as it was clay; but in Epsom, with its volcanic soil, it never did. I felt as if I'd reached home when we moved to Epsom.



*Building the harbour bridge, July 1958*

Photo supplied by Veronica Friedlander

# God Defend New Zealand

*Words by Thomas Bracken (1843–98) Music by John F. Woods (1849–1932)*

*By C. E. Keith Fuller*

When the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840, New Zealand adopted Britain's *God save the King* as its national anthem.

In 1869, Thomas Bracken (born in Ireland in 1843) arrived in Dunedin from Geelong. He had written much verse in Australia and continued to write while being involved in journalism in Dunedin. In the late 1870s he wrote the words of *God Defend New Zealand* and they were first published in 1876 in the *Saturday Advertiser and New Zealand Literary Miscellany*, with the announcement of a competition inviting local musicians to set the words to music. The prize was ten guineas and the judges were to be 'competent' Melbourne musicians.

Twelve completed entries were considered by those judges in Australia, who each independently, selected the same entry as winner — 27 year old John Joseph Woods, a Tasmanian, who at the time of the competition was teaching at a Roman Catholic school in the gold mining town of Lawrence in South Otago.

The musical version had its first public performance on Christmas Day 1876 in Dunedin's Queen's Theatre, played by the Royal Artillery Band and sung by the full complement of the Lydia Howard Burlesque and Opera Burle Troupe. The patriotic hymn found immediate support and favour with the Dunedin public.

The first Maori translation was carried out in 1878 at the request of Governor Sir George Grey by Thomas H. Smith, a judge in the Native Land Court. The most recent Maori version is a translation by former Maori Language Commissioner, Professor Timoti S. Karetu.

The popularity of *God Defend New Zealand* continued to grow throughout the nineteenth century, and in 1897 Prime Minister Richard Seddon presented a copy of the words and music to Queen Victoria. It became one of the country's most popular hymns of the period, and through the efforts of many people Cabinet considered the request to make it our 'National Song' in time for the Centennial Year.

In 1940 Prime Minister Peter Fraser proclaimed it to be our national song, and the rights to the song were bought by the government. However it was not our national anthem, although Prime Minister

Norman Kirk tried unsuccessfully to promote it to this status in 1973. A petition with 7,750 signatures was presented to Parliament in 1976, and on Monday 21 November 1977 the *New Zealand Gazette* announced that: ‘The National Anthem of New Zealand shall be the traditional anthem “*God Save the Queen*” and the poem “*God Defend New Zealand*”, both to be of equal status as National Anthems appropriate to the occasion.’ The queen agreed.

### *Postscript*

The first verse makes reference to ‘Pacific’s triple star’. What does this mean? Bracken did not leave any detailed notes explaining his choice of words. Popular belief is that it refers to New Zealand’s three main islands and this view does have historical backing.

In the English version, the second verse begins ‘**Men** of every creed and race . . .’. Whilst the reference to only men may have posed no problems when the words were written in the late nineteenth century, equality between women and men in today’s society makes it inappropriate to sing the original words now. If they are sung, some explanation is considered necessary.

The English words in the fifth line of the fifth verse: ‘guide her in the nation’s **van**’, require some explanation for today’s audiences. The word ‘van’ has nothing to do with a four wheeled motorised vehicle. Van as Thomas Bracken used it is an abbreviation of the word ‘vanguard’. The author was expressing the hope that New Zealand would be in the vanguard, or leading group, of nations promoting love and truth to man. The word ‘man’ here obviously means ‘humanity’ and is not gender specific.

There is a Maori version of all five verses of *God Defend New Zealand*.

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God Defend New Zealand — History & Timeline. National Library of New Zealand (undated).

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# Eden Edifices

*By Jeanette Grant*

## **1. Eden Park**

Eden Park is probably the best known place in Mt Eden — even though purists may consider it is really in Sandringham. Originally a wild and waterlogged area known as Cabbage Tree Swamp, it began its sporting life in 1903 when the Eden Cricket Club bought 15 acres. Six years later the ground was sold to the Auckland Cricket Association, and it has been the home of Auckland Cricket since 1910. In 1913 the construction of the No. 1 Stand began and by 1914 the ground was drained and turned into two ovals. The Auckland Rugby Union leased the park in 1914, and the first international game between Auckland and Australia was held. The ARU officially made Eden Park its home in 1925. To accommodate both sports, the cricket pitch is removable. In 1926 a trust was set up that provided for a group of trustees to manage Eden Park primarily for the benefit of Auckland Cricket and Auckland Rugby. The trust still manages the park today.

In 1925 a tramway loop line which held 35 trams was built at Eden Park. On the day the loop opened, the Rugby Union advertised in the *New Zealand Herald* that trams would run at one-minute intervals from the city into the park grounds. When the game finished, rugby fans were carried away from the park by trams in less than 15 minutes.

In 1959 a new South Stand was opened, followed in 1963 by a new North Stand. This was demolished in 1997 and replaced by the ASB Stand, which was opened in 1999. In 2002 a Hall of Legends was opened for tours.

Eden Park is far more than just a sports field and has been the venue for such diverse events as:

- 1950: British Empire (now Commonwealth) Games
- 1966: Visit by the Queen Mother
- 1970: The public welcome to the Royal Family
- 1974: Russian Olympic gymnastic display
- 1983: Visit by the Prince and Princess of Wales
- 2002: Visit by the Dalai Lama

Eden Park is the largest of any New Zealand sports arena. There are





*ASB Stand, Eden Park, 2008*

Photo: Jeanette Grant

no standing areas, and temporary seating in front of the ASB Stand and the West Stand (usually only used for international rugby matches) is required for the capacity of 45,472 to be reached. Due to sight screens and the larger area required for cricket matches, the cricket capacity is only 42,000, a number seldom reached these days.

Most recently, in 2007, Eden Park was named the finals venue for the Rugby World Cup 2011 and the co-host for Cricket World Cup 2015. The park will need to be redeveloped to a 60,000 seat capacity as a condition of New Zealand's bid to host the Rugby World Cup. Political interference and opposition from local residents delayed the start of these changes, but Auckland City finally granted consent for the Eden Park Trust Board to proceed, and the government committed \$190m to the redevelopment. Tender documents were sent out in November 2007.



Three independent planning commissioners considered the board's resource consent application, along with more than 500 submissions and evidence from subject matter experts, before deciding to grant the consent. There are more than 90 conditions attached to the consent, including:

- construction management, including restrictions on hours, access, noise and lighting
- requirement for landscaping, including streetscape planting in adjoining roads
- provision of increased access to open space within the site
- restrictions on the number and type of night time sporting events
- shading mitigation measures, including specific mitigation packages for affected properties
- noise restrictions for events and during construction
- requirements for traffic management, including pedestrian access to Kingsland rail station.

A further complication is the fact that Auckland Cricket will have to leave the park while reconstruction takes place. They hope that the outer oval may later be redeveloped for international test matches which do not attract large enough crowds to warrant using the main stadium. If the older grandstands at the southern end which house the Auckland Cricket Society and indoor training facilities were retained, and the rocky bank at the northern end transformed into a grass embankment, the capacity could be increased to between 7–10,000.

## ***2. From Grafton Library to Galbraith's Alehouse***

In 1913 this building was opened as the Grafton Library, a branch of the Auckland Public Library. In later years, patronage dropped as the local area became more commercial and less residential, and in 1991 it closed. For the next few years it had several short term uses, e.g. line dancing, until in 1995 Keith Galbraith opened 'Galbraith's Alehouse'. In 2003, the *NZ Listener* (June 14–20 2003, Vol. 189, No. 3292) gave it a rave review which included such comments as:

- It's a beer lover's place, but not just for beer anoraks, as many brew-pubs are, and not Ye Olde English Pub pastiche, either.
- For a start, the food is excellent — not extravagant, often hearty,

always satisfying, sometimes interesting. And the wine list is exceptional . . .

This has proved a popular and successful mixture, and in July 2007 it won the Pub of the Year award.

Attached to Galbraith's Alehouse is New Zealand's first modern time brewery, producing cask conditioned ales. Their English-style 'Real Ales' are produced using malted barley from the United Kingdom, local and imported hops, pure water and their own special strain of top-fermenting ale yeast. Galbraith's real ales contain no added sugars and are not filtered or pasteurised. This lack of processing ensures the beers are naturally flavoursome. All the ales go through an initial fermentation in open fermenters with a secondary fermentation in the casks from which they are served. Real ale is traditionally served at cellar temperature of 10–12°C (50–54°F) through beer engines (hand pumps), and is not artificially carbonated or served under gas pressure. For these reasons people not used to drinking real ale may find Galbraith's ales 'flat and warm' by New Zealand standards.

They are the only brewers of this traditional style of beer in New Zealand, and a core group of regulars come there for the English-style ales and the lack of background noise. There is no jukebox, pokies, pool table, television or loud music; but there is good food and a wide selection of beers and ales. Such is its popularity that an 'Ode to Galbraith's Alehouse' by Anon in praise of the institution has been posted on the internet.

### **3. *Nesfield House***

Nesfield House in Valley Road is currently the headquarters of Diabetes NZ, but it was built as offices for the Mt Eden Borough Council. In April 1911, the MEBC purchased Lots 1 & 2 of the Thomas Cranwell estate from his widow Jessie Cranwell and Thomas Bell, and employed architects Wade & Wade to design a two-storey structure. The foundation stone was laid on 14 September 1911 by the Mayor Oliver Nicholson (1906–18), and the council met there for the first time in March 1912.

The front entry, originally facing the Mt Eden School (northern face), was described as being of 'rusticated cement work' at the ground floor level. Other details included neoclassical details to the top storey,

with block modillions supporting the cornices, and decorative pilasters on either side of the double windows over the main entry. The top storey was to house the council chambers and committee rooms, with much of the internal timber used being heart of kauri.

On 4 December 1924 a new station for the Mt Eden Fire Brigade was officially opened alongside, of reinforced concrete throughout with brick curtain walls. It was designed by Arthur Sinclair O'Connor and built by Mr C. A. Lee. With the creation of the Auckland Metropolitan Fire Brigade in 1933, the borough council subdivided their corner property in April 1933 and transferred ownership of the fire station building to the brigade in 1934.

In 1940, the rear of the municipal building was expanded by a third of its original size. The original entry was closed off and transformed into another ground floor window (keeping the original rusticated detail), while a portico entry was constructed around the corner on the eastern face, bringing the point of entry immediately off the footpath.

In 1970 the borough council bought back the fire station building and had a connecting two-storey link designed between the two buildings to utilise both as offices. The original fire station doors were donated to MOTAT in 1971. A 1980s study by Gurley & Nicholls, civil and structural



*Nesfield House, 2008*

Photo: Jeanette Grant

engineers, found that the original 1912 municipal building could be classed as an earthquake risk, and suggested a number of measures to be carried out to reduce the risk. None of these appear to have been carried out prior to the borough's amalgamation with Auckland City in 1989.

The site was transferred to Diabetes Auckland in March 1992 and has been renamed Nesfield House in honour of its first patron, John Nesfield. It is also the base for the Fred Hollows Foundation (NZ). A major refurbishment of the whole ground floor of Nesfield House has just been completed, providing a 95-seat training room, improved retail space, an information area for people with diabetes and greatly improved office space. An enormous amount of hard work and effort has been put in by many people in fund raising, planning and design, construction and fitting. The building was re-opened by local resident and Prime Minister, Helen Clark, on 17th February 2006.

In September 2007 the council approved a plan change giving the building Heritage Building Category B classification.

## My Auckland in 1955

*By John Grant*

I came out to Auckland with relatives in September 1955 on the *Oronsay* after spending two years in Toronto working for Cementation Construction building the tunnels under Niagara Falls for a power scheme. Before coming to live in Mt Eden in 1967, we spent our first year in a rented house right at the top of the Waikumete Hill. In those days the hill was so steep and the buses so underpowered that passengers had to get out and walk up the hill and re-embark at the top. While living there my uncle and I were working during the week at Atiamuri and building a house in Northcote in the weekends.

This was a real culture shock. My uncle was a civil engineer who had originally done an apprenticeship as a joiner. He was confident of his ability to build a house but because we were working so far away was forced to take what he felt were shortcuts. In other words he gave detailed plans to Fletchers to get all the timbers pre-cut to the exact lengths. He expected it to save a lot of time but it was a disaster. The

timbers arrived cut approximately to length — i.e. to within about three inches. This meant that all the too long ones had to be recut, while just as many were useless as they were too short. He got no redress from Fletchers. That was just the way they did business. Their equipment was so worn that the saws could not cut accurately.

We found other things very different to life in the UK or Canada. The harbour bridge was still being built, so travel to the city was by vehicular ferry or all the way round through Riverhead. Most of the North Shore still felt rural. We were lucky in being on the right side of Onewa Road so we had sewerage. On the far side, the night carts were still coming around once a week.

The power supply was under stress. Brownouts occurred daily in our street when everyone came home from work and started trying to cook dinner simultaneously. Testing with voltmeters showed the houses at the far end of the street were only getting 180 volts instead of 240! Installing an additional transformer solved the problem — eventually.

Locals took things for granted which we found — unusual. Everything closed down for the weekend. Only dairies and petrol stations were allowed to open. Butchers shops were closed by 4pm. Banks were only open between 10am and 3pm. Even the Post Office had restricted hours. Most other shops opened only from 9am–5pm and were shut all weekend. Most had a ‘late night’ on Friday — till 9pm. Later K Road and a few other centres began opening on a Thursday night instead. Revolutionary! Of course what we found most ridiculous was the six o’clock swill when all the pubs closed at once and the trams were full of drunks. They stopped running the year after we arrived and their place was taken by buses, but six o’clock closing outlasted them while the fixed transport pattern of having to go in to the city centre first to get to another suburb continued.

Looking back, the prices seem ridiculous. My weekly wage before overtime was very good by contemporary standards, but was under £50 a week — including overtime. I paid £500 in 1956 for a secondhand MGTC which sold about five years ago for \$45,000. Butter was 2/- a pound, bananas 1/- a pound, milk 4d a pint, bread 4d a half loaf; a leg of mutton big enough to do a family of four for three meals cost about 12/6. In the early 1960s you could buy a good house in Mt Eden for £4000 and get a 25-year mortgage from the ASB at three per cent! Talk about the good old days!

# Dr Torrance's Street

By Basil Hutchinson

Just when Epsom's Torrance Street came into existence is not clear, but it is pictured on the advertisement<sup>1</sup> dated 1911, when Torrance's estate was put up for auction. Liverpool Street, on the other side of the estate, is shown in a map dated 1890<sup>2</sup> in *Spire on the Hill*, the history of St Andrew's Church. The Torrance home at No. 8 Liverpool Street, is the oldest surviving dwelling in that street and has had only three owners during its life of some 130 years. Dr James Torrance purchased land from William Greenwood, and a portion of this was later sold to Alfred Buckland. The Torrance home, 'Cadzow Villa' — named, it seems, after the family residence in Scotland — was sold to Rev Canon Percy Smallfield about 1913, the time when St John's Collegiate School amalgamated with King's College (Smallfield had been headmaster of St John's School which had moved from Tamaki to Pah Mansion on Pah Road in 1902)<sup>3</sup>. The Smallfield family retained ownership of the

home until the early 1950s when it was purchased by the Crosbie family, the present owners.

Who was Dr Torrance? James Halden Torrance was born in Hamilton, Lanarkshire, Scotland, in 1843. He was well qualified, graduating from Glasgow University in 1864 with the degrees Doctor of Medicine and Master of Surgery. He was registered in Britain on 20 June 1864 with the address Cadzow Villa, Hamilton, Scotland<sup>4</sup>. He worked in Wolston, Warwickshire, England, before coming to New Zealand, registering here on 4 July 1879, at



*Notice of the 1911 sale of Torrance's Estate (courtesy Mrs Crosbie, 1996).*

Photo: Basil Hutchinson





*Part of the Torrance home at 8 Liverpool Street, Epsom. It is believed Dr Torrance planted the Norfolk pine behind the house.* Photo: Basil Hutchinson

Onehunga. Whether he practised there or in Epsom is not known, but he died relatively young on 3 September 1884, aged 41, having succumbed to a neuromuscular disease. His death notice was in the *New Zealand Herald* of 5 September 1884:

TORRANCE. At Cadzow Villa, Epsom, on September 3, James Halden Torrance, M.D., C.M., late of Wolston, Warwickshire. The funeral will leave his late residence as above at 3pm tomorrow (Saturday), the 6th instant, for the Epsom Church burial ground.

Dr Torrance's grave in St Andrew's Anglican Church cemetery bears the inscription: 'James Halden Torrance, died at Epsom, 3rd September 1884, aged 41 years.' On the same tombstone is: 'Jane Cairns, died 21st April 1898, aged 78 years. "The spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Because I live, ye shall live also."'

Was this an aunt, or his mother-in-law? To the right of Dr Torrance's



tombstone is that of his wife: ‘Hannah Grace Torrance, died 9th January 1942, aged 94 years.’ So she was 36 when her husband died, and a widow for 58 years.

To the left of Dr Torrance’s headstone is: ‘Jane Hamilton Cleary, died 10th October 1937, aged 55 years.’ Was this the Torrances’ daughter, born two years before her father’s death and who predeceased her mother by more than four years?

Although Dr Torrance survived only five years in New Zealand, it is interesting that an Epsom street bears his name!

### **Sources:**

1. See photo page 42.
2. Sweetman, Rory, *Spire on the Hill: A history of St Andrew’s Church in the Epsom district, 1846–1996*, Auckland, St Andrew’s Parish, 1996, p. 54.
3. Hamilton, Bruce, *O Floreat Semper: The History of King’s College, 1896–1995*, Auckland, Board of Governors, 1995, p. 15–19.
4. Wright-St Clair, R.E., *Medical Practitioners in New Zealand, 1840–1930*, Hamilton, the author, 2003, p. 374.



*Dr Torrance’s gravestone in St Andrew’s Church cemetery. Jane Cleary’s headstone is at the left and Hannah Torrance’s to the right.*

Photo: Basil Hutchinson

# Preservation and Progress — the perils of planning

*By Eric Laurensen*

*A talk given at the AGM of the  
Epsom & Eden District Historical Society, August 2008*

On 22 March 1877, William Morris and other notable members of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood held the inaugural meeting of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in London. The founding members were deeply concerned that well meaning architects were destroying the historic fabric of too many buildings in their zealous ‘restorations’. Most of you will know that William Morris was an English artist, writer, and socialist. He was one of the principal founders of the British Arts and Crafts movement and a pioneer of the socialist movement in Britain. Morris was determined to resist the way in which the industrial revolution was changing and eliminating generations of British craft traditions.

He was also heavily influenced by Augustus Pugin, a Roman Catholic architect who was influential in the Gothic revival that was taking place throughout England. Pugin was convinced that the Gothic style was the ultimate expression of civilisation, so much so that he believed that a primitive society which was subject to civilising influences as he saw them would ultimately, of its own accord, commence building in the Gothic style. In contrast, buildings built in the classical style were seen as pagan and unchristian. It’s interesting to note that the exact opposite view existed in some Protestant quarters, in that Gothic was seen as Papist. Examples of this difference in Auckland are the Baptist Tabernacle in Queen Street and St Matthews in Hobson Street.

In 1896, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings hosted a conference in conjunction with London County Council on the preservation of ancient buildings in London and it was resolved that a register of ancient buildings would minimise the threat to such edifices. Also in 1896 the National Trust was founded.

The society in 1913 was so successful in lobbying the Church of England to take seriously the wealth of medieval and later architecture it had in its care, that Diocesan Advisory Committees were established.

After the Great War, the society found itself busy defending ancient churches against ill-conceived war memorials and what seemed 'a tidal wave' of stained glass windows. In World War 2 the society again found itself busy criticising the hasty demolition of damaged buildings and, interestingly, asked the RAF to be sensitive to continental monuments during allied air raids. In 1944, the Town and Country Planning Act introduced the listing of historic buildings on a national basis. You may have watched various programmes on TV where enthusiastic amateurs discover old barns and similar farm buildings and then set about converting them into domestic dwellings. The society regards this as a fad and has strongly resisted the insertion of doors, floors and windows into what they call 'these historic gems'.

The Modern Movement in architecture which began in Europe in the early years of the twentieth century ran headlong into this sort of attitude with its celebration of the industrial revolution and its belief that buildings should reflect their function, and their building materials should be expressed honestly. The modern movement itself came under attack in the 1980s with architects like Philip Johnson questioning the very basis of modernism and adopting new styles labelled 'post modernism'. None of this process happened by accident. It all reflected the prevailing sentiment of the time, from the romanticism of the nineteenth century, through the excitement of scientific and technical development in the twentieth century to the cynicism and disillusionment of our own age. Through all of this ran a stream of conservatism that simply resisted change of any sort and said that old would always be best.

Perhaps one of the most notable examples of this resistance to change is that of the Prince of Wales. Charles has fought a running battle with architects over the years. In 1984, he delivered a blistering attack on the profession of architecture in a speech given to the Royal Institute of British Architects, describing the proposed extension to the National Gallery in London as a monstrous carbuncle'. Despite criticism from the professional architectural press, he has continued to put forward his views in numerous speeches and articles on traditional urbanism, the need for human scale, concern to restore historic buildings as an integrated element in new developments and green design. To put his ideas on architecture and urban planning into practice, the Prince of Wales is developing the village of Poundbury, in Dorset. Prior to

commencing work on Poundbury, Prince Charles published a book and produced a documentary entitled *A Vision for Britain*, both being critiques of modern architecture. In 1992, he also established The Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture, and began the publication of a magazine dealing with architecture. You can imagine what he thinks of some of the new buildings going up at this time.

Being a relatively recent society, in terms of Pakeha culture at least, New Zealand was a latecomer to the whole business of protection of old buildings, and in Auckland it was some well publicised events like the destruction of Partington's Mill in upper Symonds Street that helped in the establishment of The New Zealand Historic Places Trust by an Act of Parliament in 1954. Over the past 50 years, the NZHPT has become New Zealand's leading national heritage agency, and is seen as the guardian of Aotearoa New Zealand's historic buildings and sites. It is governed and managed as a crown entity under the *Crown Entities Act* 2004, and its powers and functions are prescribed by the *Historic Places Act* 1993.

This is all background to the question of the preservation of old buildings, but we have plenty to think about in our own time. The current furore over plan change 163 of the Residential 2 zoning in the Auckland City Council's District Plan is sufficient to show that the subject is alive and well. As you know, the Residential 2 zoning made allowance for suburbs where there was a preponderance of pre-1940s buildings to be protected as to demolition or replacement. The current intention is to remove certain houses within the zone, which are deemed unworthy of protection from that blanket listing. This change of policy was engendered by the threat of legal action.

Of course we all want to see old buildings protected don't we? But if we do, we have to consider what it is that we are actually asking for. Some questions that we have to answer are:

- What are the individual's rights to do what they will with their own property?
- What about progress? We have to remember that even the buildings we want to protect were once an intrusion on what had previously been on their sites.
- At what age do we think a building becomes worthy of preservation? Did buildings suddenly become less worthy of preservation after

1940 for instance? There was an argument recently here in Epsom over the demolition of a 1960s house designed by the legendary Group Architects.

If we think that age is not the main criterion but that it is the quality of the building that merits preservation then we have to think how to define that quality. More importantly we have to decide who we will trust to make the decision on its quality. Will we trust a council-appointed individual or committee for instance? Having worked that one out, we then have to decide longer term questions about the building we want to preserve. How long, for instance, are we going to preserve the building; 10 years? 50 years? 1,000 years? Once preserved, it becomes increasingly difficult, with the passage of time, to reverse that preservation and there is a vast difference between the preservation of an ancient stone building and one built of timber. The long-term preservation of some of our typical New Zealand timber buildings means that it is not many decades before they resemble the Irishman's trousers, patched so often that they are a completely new pair.

This evening I want to take you briefly to the other side of the fence — to the side of someone involved in the process of removing an old church building from within the community. This won't necessarily gain your sympathy but I hope it will show you something of the complexity of these questions of preservation. I want to talk about the Mt Eden Village Methodist Church, on the corner of Mt Eden Road and Ngauruhoe Street. Many of you will be familiar with this wooden Gothic church which commenced building in 1899. One hundred years after this building was constructed, in 1999, the Auckland Central Parish, of which Mt Eden Methodist Church is one constituent, developed a strategy for the future of the site in the Mt Eden Village. Like many established congregations, the Mt Eden Methodists had seen a shrinkage in support over the years until there were questions as to the continued viability of the congregation. Contributions from members were not sufficient to meet the expenses of a minister together with the maintenance of their buildings.

The sale of two redundant houses in the parish meant that there was a capital sum available for the support of operations in Mt Eden, and this meant that the congregation had a breathing space to consider their future. The fact that the way in which church properties are used has

changed drastically over the years since 1899 meant that changes were needed for the church and hall buildings to bring them into line with church usage in the 1990s. A scheme was developed whereby the existing church would be removed from the site and it would be replaced with a new building fronting Mt Eden Road, with three shops on the ground floor and a multi-purpose church space above. This would enable the congregation to have a modern church plant together with an assured income to support their various activities. As an architect for the parish, I was asked to prepare sketch plans for the project. Bearing in mind the distinctive character of the Mt Eden shopping centre, I designed a building in line with the briefing and to some degree reflecting the character of the buildings up at the Stokes and Essex roads intersection. When one looked at the character of many of the Mt Eden shops, one found in fact that they are little more than shacks whose shaky nature is concealed by their verandahs and signage.

And so it was that in May 2000 I lodged an application for planning consent with the Auckland City Council and waited for due process to continue. I was aware that we would be going through a resource consent process but was confident that it would be non-controversial and could well be handled by council on a non-notified basis. My confidence was based on a long association with both the church and the community. My office is in Mt Eden Road and I had been baptised in the church as an infant. I thought I knew the community well. No one seemed to take any interest in the building, certainly few if any locals attended the church and so it seemed to me that people would be quite content to leave the church to do what it deemed necessary with its own property. How wrong I was!

A long silence then ensued, with the planners at Auckland City occasionally asking for further information but apparently in no hurry to deal with my application. After repeated attempts to get some sort of action, in October — five months after my application — I wrote to a councillor whom I knew, asking if he could find out what was happening. I enclosed a copy of an unanswered letter I had written to the manager of planning complaining about the delay. The process was suddenly invigorated and shortly afterwards I was advised by Auckland City that the application would now have to be publicly notified with a hearing at a date still to be set.

On 23 January 2001, the secretary of the Mt Eden Business

Association organised a meeting at the church between representatives of the Citizen's Advice Bureau, Business Association, Artists in Eden and Community Board in conjunction with ourselves and representatives of the parish and congregation. This meeting was to determine if these community groups could find space in the projected new building. There was considerable interest and the church expressed a wish to be cooperative but it was also clear that little funding was available to any of these groups and that they would be relying on the generosity of the church. The meeting ended with no firm conclusions.

A public meeting, organised by Ngauruhoe Street resident Bradley Stanford, and attended mainly by Ngauruhoe Street residents, representatives of the parish, congregation and council, was held outside the church on 31 January 2001. This was the first of a number of protest actions organised by Bradley. Most of the crowd were hostile but there were some supporters of the church's right to do what it thought best.

I wrote again to the manager of planning on 2 February 2001 following this meeting, complaining about the lack of progress of our application. In the same letter, I protested the actions of the planner dealing with our case . . .

As applicants, our situation was not helped by an article in the *Central Leader* of the same day in which the planner dealing with the application was quoted as saying that a deficiency of 103 spaces is the biggest parking shortfall she has dealt with in about five years as a planner. No mention was made of the counter-argument of existing use. I was greatly disturbed that the planner dealing with our application chose to make a statement that did not give both sides of the question when we are so dependent on this planner for an objective report.

Further requests for information were promptly dealt with by us as they arrived and a hearing date was finally set for 29 May 2001 — a year after the initial application! In the interim, the application to turn the old post office, immediately across the road, into a tavern was lodged in September 2000, treated as a non-notified application despite a considerable parking shortfall, and the tavern was in business in time for the Christmas trade. On 1 March 2001, a public meeting was held inside the church and was attended by church members and local



residents, again mainly from Ngauruhoe Street. A representative of the mayor and other community representatives were also present. The meeting was well chaired by the new parish superintendent, although Bradley Stanford was quoted in the *Central Leader* as saying that the meeting had not gone well from his point of view.

Despite excellent preparation and presentation by the parish and its consultants at the hearing in front of a number of councillors on 29 May, the application was declined and the parish eventually undertook an appeal at the Environment Court. Throughout the whole process, I felt that I was dealing with unseen forces of resistance. Political influences were obviously brought to bear on the process and the *Central Leader* adopted a hostile stance throughout. It became one of the most frustrating projects I have ever been involved with.

Sufficient to say that on the 10 April 2003, three years after making that original application, Judge Newhook of the Environment Court granted the church a resource consent for their project and we were able to start on the preparation of working documents for the new building.



*Mt Eden Methodist Church, May 1998*

Photo: Eric Laursen

Work was well advanced on the building consent application when, in 2004, the then mayor John Banks suddenly made an offer to buy the property from the church, offering both council's and his own money. The church was not interested in selling but eventually an offer was made by council to enter into what they call a facilities partnership with the church. This involves council moneys being put into the project with the understanding that the property will be available for regular community use. The main condition of this agreement was that the existing old wooden Gothic church would remain and be restored to its 1900 appearance. The church agreed to this with the proviso that some alterations and additions would need to be made to the remainder of the buildings to meet the needs of a modern congregation. This is all currently going through due process with the formation of the necessary groups to administer the partnership and the search for the considerable funding necessary. The original resource consent is still operative and the church's fall-back position is to return to the original project if the facilities partnership falls through.

Over the years, the whole process throughout has seen an extraordinary hostility to the church by some local residents. 'How dare the parish take away our church!' This from people who never darkened the door of the church building. The process showed me the extraordinary influence of local politics and politicians. There seemed to be extreme lobbying of people in authority — right up to the mayor it seems. The way in which the local newspaper was enlisted in opposition to the church's plans was enlightening, with a whole series of hostile articles over the years. A building which was erected to further the church's mission in 1900 has now become an implicit possession of the whole community. The church's mission has been modified by its sense of obligation to the community. Relations with the local community, however, are much improved. There has been a lot of contact between people in the church and the community and attitudes have mellowed. Both sides now have a better understanding of their respective feelings.

There is no easy answer to the question of the preservation of old buildings and anyone who thinks there is can only be fooling themselves. The answer is found in the discussion and the debates and it is important, I think, that our society be a part of that discussion; not as antiquarians simply wanting to preserve all that is old, but entering into the debate with intelligence and understanding.

# Normal School changes during World War Two

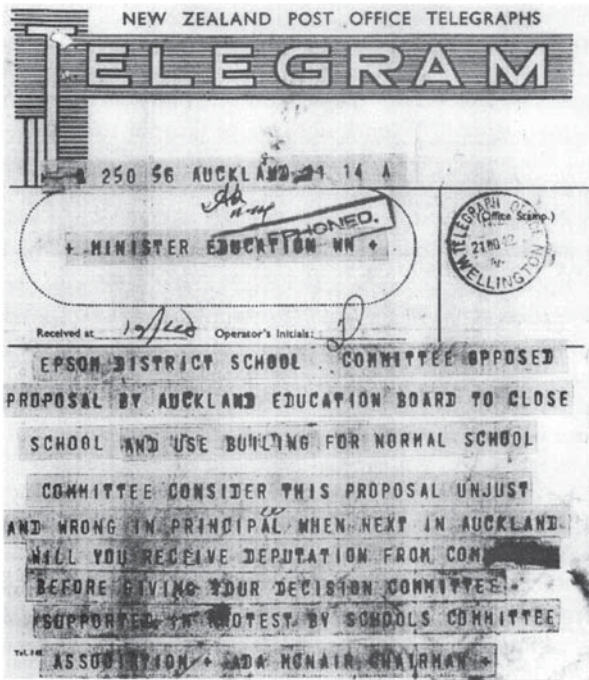
By Don McArthur

My early school years involved walking past ‘the dell’ at the end of St Andrews Road on the way to the Model Country School which had within each room pupils from Primer One to Standard One (years 1 to 3). This was the period 1937–9. The dell has long since been filled in to form part of a playing field, and the stone windmill in which I played with friends was demolished in the early 1950s. The mill stood at the brow of the hill — currently 27 St Andrews Road.

In my Standard Two year I moved up to the main Normal School brick building (since replaced by the Auckland Normal Intermediate buildings). I recall hearing of teachers ‘going into camp’. For a youngster who had only heard of camps in terms of school camps, the concept of military camps was entirely new. I recall at weekends watching the Home Guard having bayonet practice in the school grounds using straw palliasses supported on wooden frames. We practised for bomb attacks, each pupil carrying a small bag with a cork to place between the teeth. Evacuation to our homes was organized in groups like the ‘walking buses’ of today.

In the early 1940s I was a nine-year-old riding my bike along Gillies Avenue to Normal School classes situated at Newmarket School. With the military occupying the Teachers Training College and teacher training being moved to Normal School, the Normal School classes were distributed to classrooms at Newmarket, Mt Eden, Maungawhau and Epsom schools. The headmaster of Normal School at the time was a Mr Fawcett, who had the unenviable task of travelling between the various schools. Sometimes he rode a motorcycle but I also recall him at one stage arriving in a little Austin 7. I cannot recall what happened to the Model Country classes (at Kohia Terrace) during this period.

My two years at Newmarket include memories of model aircraft from ‘Modelair’ and ducklings from a local shop being raised by some pupils. One of my friends named her ducklings ‘Churchill’ and ‘Chamberlain’ — well known names of that time. In 1944 I moved for my Form One year to a classroom at Epsom District School. During that year we had



*Not everyone was keen to see the establishment of Normal Intermediate.*

Image: ANI 50th Jubilee, 1995

at Normal Intermediate School (previously Normal Primary). The Epsom District School became the Epsom Normal Primary School, and teachers who had been away at the war were returning to their profession.

### Sources

1. Grant, Jeanette, 'The Bunker', *Prospect*, Vol. 2, 2003, p. 23.
2. Laursen, Helen, 'The Crystal Palace', *Prospect*, Vol 4, 2005, p. 45.
3. The memorandum and telegram on page 6 of *ANI 50th Jubilee* book, 1995. The note in the jubilee book relates these documents to the establishment of Normal Intermediate.

weekly manual training classes at Newton. This involved us processing to Manukau Road to catch the tram to the city. The boys had woodwork classes while the girls had cooking classes. It was about this period that the Campbell Hall and associated classrooms were built adjacent to the brick building of Normal School in the Teachers College/Normal School grounds. The Model Country buildings later underwent a metamorphosis to the Kohia Teachers' Centre, then more recently to Kohia Terrace School. For my Form Two year in 1944 I was a foundation pupil

# Ian Beresford Madden

— scholar, bibliophile,  
genealogist and eccentric

*By John Stacpoole*

Ian Beresford Madden, known to many historically-minded people and a familiar figure to users of the Auckland City Library's heritage collection where, in latter years, he was almost daily seated at a microfiche reader, died on 13 August 2008. He was 77 years old.

Ian was a biggish man, friendly yet reserved, very upright in bearing and conservative in dress but he was not what is generally thought of as handsome. He customarily wore a felt hat and a belted overcoat over a navy blue suit, sometimes galoshes, and carried a briefcase and an umbrella. Some may have judged him a hypochondriac but in truth his health was not good, whether from the peculiarity of his lifestyle or not, it is difficult to say. He preferred talking to listening and could continue for an hour without stopping.

He grew up in Remuera, an only child closely attached to his parents. His mother was a Masefield of the family branch associated with the Bay of Islands and the Kaipara. His father, remembered as a harsh man, came from a relatively distinguished Anglo-Irish family settled in Monaghan and Fermanagh in the early seventeenth century but possibly of earlier Irish extraction. An ancestor, Dr Samuel Madden (1686–1785) 'miscellaneous writer and philanthropist', rates three columns in the great *Dictionary of National Biography*. He was a nephew of William Molyneux, Ulster King of Arms, a possibly significant connection in light of Ian Madden's mature pursuits. Molyneux's assemblage of Irish family histories is one of the treasures of Trinity Collage Library in Dublin.

The Madden family was brought to New Zealand in the late 1880s by Walter Wilmot Madden, a discharged naval officer who came on a holiday and stayed. He settled at Otahuhu in a house called 'Falcons' and married a Miss Bischoff, daughter of a minor painter of portrait miniatures living at Waiuku. His elder son, Arthur Wilmot Madden, later lived at Lincoln Park, Waiuku, while still drawing rents from



*Ian Madden*

Photo supplied by  
Barbara Lloyd (undated)

properties in Ireland. Those properties, Rosslea Manor and Aghafin House, were apparently sold in the 1950s. Arthur had no children and his estate apparently went to his widow.

His younger brother, Charles Beresford Madden, Ian's father, applied the name Rosslea to his house in Mt Hobson Road and then to the house at 15 Belvedere Street which is more usually associated with the family.

Charles Madden was a Union Steamship Company officer who later described himself as a shipping broker. He is remembered for the large dickey-seated Austin car which he drove and in which he took his wife and son on numerous camping trips round the North Island. He died in 1974.

On leaving Auckland Grammar School, Ian went to Teachers' Training College while also studying at university. He graduated MA in 1956 and was briefly a junior master at Otahuhu High School but his longest spell of employment, 1958-66, was in the role of a legal officer with the State Advances Corporation during which time he began to study for a law degree. In April 1967 he joined the office of Earl, Kent, Massey, Palmer & Hamer but stayed only a year. Refused study leave, he decided to complete his law degree in Dunedin, which he did in 1971.

He seems to have been happy in Dunedin and supported himself by working, not in legal practice but in various casual jobs in the wool department of NIMA, in the factory of Cadbury, Fry & Hudson, and with Wrightson NMA. He graduated LLB in 1971 and was duly admitted to the Bar, evidenced by studio photographs in wig and gown, but he did not seek or could not obtain legal employment. Returning to Auckland in 1974 or 1975, he was employed briefly by Wiri Woolbrokers.



*Called to the Bar, 1971*

Photo supplied by John Stacpoole

He came back to the house in Belvedere Street and lived there with his mother until her death in 1985. This place became his sanctum to which, after his mother's death, very,





*The house formerly occupied by the Colbeck and Edward Clifton Firth families in Belvedere Street.*

Photo supplied by John Stacpoole

very few people were ever admitted. Even concerned relatives were firmly kept at bay, dropping farm produce over a locked gate when they came to town. House and garden took on an appearance of neglect which is not to say that he did not have plans. He disliked the modest street gate at one side of the property — it was too close to neighbours — and he set about preparing the ground for a direct entrance opposite the central portico. But a telegraph pole stood in the way and the project was abandoned; heaps of weed-covered earth remained.

Mrs Madden had been entitled to a two-thirds share and Ian to one third of the income derived from her parents' house, Dilston, which had been divided into flats. Ian took over the management of the property, assuming the role of landlord until it was sold. That house was a typical Californian bungalow. Rosslea, on the other hand, had been built about 1928 of stuccoed brick on concrete foundations with brick internal partitions at ground floor level. It mixes styles in outrageous fashion. The ground floor window patterns and the internal detailing of fireplaces, stairway and panelling were influenced by Arts and Crafts fashion of a slightly earlier period but the upper storey might, with some flight of the imagination, be described as Palladian, borne



out by the columned portico and its token but inaccessible balcony. Balconies there are, however, flanking the upper storey. To add to the confusion the downstairs drawing room and dining room and the main bedroom upstairs have remarkable ceilings and cornices of apparently solid plaster with bold patterns of flowers and foliage spreading across their surfaces. It is not difficult to see why this would have appealed to a family whose albums were scattered with photographs of Georgian houses once owned in Ireland.

On his own in the house Ian, not given to housekeeping, concentrated on his genealogical research. He obviously had no intention of practising law though he had acquired an extensive law library probably purchased in one lot. As a young man of 24, a budding genealogist, he had constructed from many sheets a huge chart, ten feet by ten feet, setting out his own pedigree and, as soon as he had money of his own, he had begun assembling a library which must have stayed in Auckland while he was in Dunedin. Imagine then the delighted reunion when he returned to Auckland. Whatever he could spare was spent on books he could ill afford, and occasionally overseas dealers — Hodges Figgis in Dublin, Kenny in Galway, Emerald Isle in Belfast, Stanley Crowe and Francis Edwards in London — had to wait for payment. But their catalogues continued to arrive and Ian continued to indulge, often in books of high value and the utmost rarity.

He planned to write a history of the Madden family but could never make a start. His history professor at Auckland University had remarked that he treated as an end in itself the accumulation of detailed knowledge and that remained true and a problem. Nevertheless he did, back in 1966, put together a history of the Riverhead community and he wrote, for delivering as a lecture, an admirable account of his mother's family at Batley. But the Maddens defeated him. There was just too much detail to be gathered. There was a constant flow of correspondence with distant relatives and family connections in Ireland, in England, Scotland and Wales, in Canada and South Africa, in Australia and the USA, in France and even Hong Kong. It was endless.

The Riverhead book was written while he was acting as president of the Auckland Historical Society and there were other occupations also. As a Northern Irishman by descent he took an interest in Dilworth School. His interest in heraldry led to an early and lasting association with the Heraldry Society of New Zealand of which he was a Fellow,



*The 'sunroom' (an addition to the house) which became Ian's workroom and, for some time, his library until the collection of papers and files pushed the books upstairs.*

Photo supplied by John Stacpoole

Stratford on behalf of the Guardian Trust. There were immense accumulations of hand-written notes, drawers and drawers of card indexes, a dozen filing cabinets devoted to individual families often stacked with cuttings from periodicals, rolls and rolls of death notices from the *New Zealand Herald*, rolls of pedigree charts often executed by Ian himself. These were all in a very large room added to the house as a sunroom but now with windows covered to exclude strong light. This

and he was a founding member of the Monarchist League. He held local office in the politics of the National Party, while the Navy League attracted him because of his grandfather's service and the later role of a distant cousin, Admiral Sir Charles Madden, KCB, as Chief of Naval Staff at Auckland in 1953-5. Ian was a generous founding member of the Auckland Library Heritage Trust to which he eventually made a significant bequest of pre-1800 books and some manuscripts.

He died in the hospice of the Elizabeth Knox Home in Ranfurly Road, a combination of names which would have pleased him. His Knox ancestry, linking him to the Earls of Ranfurly and the Waterford Beresfords, had always been a matter for satisfaction.

The task of clearing the house after his death was simply huge. It was done with understanding by Peter

room also housed a desk and the legal library, and had housed most of the general library until the mounds of paper compelled the removal of most of the books to an upstairs room and others to the drawing room. The upstairs room was filled with shelving spaced little more than two feet apart, wood round the walls and steel between, ranging from six to seven feet high. Upstairs or down, nothing was thrown away.

There were various sub-collections: hundreds of naval books were bequeathed to the Naval museum at Devonport; many others were acquired by the Genealogical Society and the Auckland City Library — the latter in addition to their bequest — but the range was mind-boggling. There were separate Irish and Scottish groups, military and regimental histories, school histories from Eton to Wanganui, English county histories and parish records, books about heraldry and rows of peerages and Almanachs de Gotha and heraldic visitations. Family histories abounded. Some books went to a specified archival trust in England, some to English and Irish cousins; one — a joint biography of the first Duke and Duchess of Marlborough inscribed by the present duke to Edward Carson — was directed to the Northern Ireland parliamentary library. It had first to be found. When all of the instructions had been carried out there were still many mundane volumes, art books and New Zealand books to be dispersed.

Farewell Ian Madden. You were one of a kind. So much more might be said about you and your collections — the copy portrait of Colonel Greer which you commissioned from Tristram Massy-Beresford, your near life-size equestrian portrait of King George II, the silver wrapped up and buried under piles of newspapers in a cupboard, the little safe and its golden contents, even the best-ever scrimshaw pastry crimp which has so delighted a Northern collector.

### *A further note on 15 Belvedere street*

The site of the house is one quarter of the land formerly occupied by a tall gabled house belonging to the Colbeck family (well-known to Mrs Madden's Masefields at Batley) and possibly built earlier by James Williamson who owned all the surrounding land before building the Pah Farm mansion at Hillsborough in 1877–8. There are references to his house prominent on the north western slopes of Mt St John. Margot Street was once known as Williamson Street.

The Colbecks made the house over to Edward Clifton Firth.



*Rosslea, 15 Belvedere Street, as it appears today.*

Photo: John Denny, May 2009

Photographs of the gardens in Firth occupation — a full acre — show sloping lawns, garden seats, and a garden house in the form of a small Maori whare. The land ran right down to Margot Street. It was Firth's unhappy lot to see his house on fire when returning with his wife one Sunday morning from church in 1926 or 27. The house was destroyed and the land was subdivided.

The site of No 15 was bought by a builder named Sydney Grey Wheeler. He sold it in 1928 to Charlotte Augusta Shortt but we cannot

be sure whether there was already a house on it. Doubtless he built the house but whether for himself, or as a speculation, or specifically for Mrs Shortt we do not at present know. Mrs Shortt died in 1953 and the house remained in the hands of executors, her husband Frederick Mortimer Shortt and lawyer H.M. Rogerson until transferred to Aubie Augusta Katie Shortt in August 1960.

Miss Shortt completed a sale to Charles Madden in June 1962. The sale price was £8,250. Eva Orkney Smith was associated with Miss Shortt in the sale.

### *Postscript by Helen Laurenson*

It was ironic that after Ian Madden's death, the longstanding mystery of 15 Belvedere Street and its solitary and reclusive owner was finally revealed to anyone interested to view the property. There were indeed many curious visitors during the 'open homes' held after the house had been cleared, and right up to the time of its public auction on 28 March 2009. A record number of between 3000 and 4000 people took advantage of the opportunity to enter and explore the setting of his formerly closely guarded and private world.

The auction, in the usually quiet cul-de-sac of Belvedere Street in Epsom, attracted enormous interest. Approximately 600–800 people crowded into the front garden, stood on the footpath outside the hedge, or watched from the roadway with muted excitement as the auctioneer conducted the sale from the first floor, north-facing balcony. There was spirited bidding from about 20 buyers until the hammer finally fell and the property passed into the hands of Irene Crean, an Auckland-based interior designer who intends to renovate the Epsom residence. On 865sq m of land and with a CV of \$990,000, the house fetched \$1,370,000.

Ian Madden's extraordinary life, rich in its many interests and accumulations, has sadly come to its end; his solidly-built old house, rather than facing possible demolition for redevelopment of the site, begins a new life, full of promise and potential.



# Hilda Wiseman, artist — and her world of Epsom bookplates

*By Ian Thwaites*

*A talk prepared for Epsom Historical Society, 6 April 2009*

## ***Part One: Setting the scene***

Hilda Alexandra Wiseman, the eldest of seven children of Alexander and Harriot Amanda (Coombes) Wiseman, was born on 7 April 1894 at Mooroopna, Victoria.<sup>1</sup> At this time Alexander was pursuing a career as a musician but later the family returned to Auckland and he reverted to his other profession, that of architect. In 1909 Alexander designed the family home, Shelford, at 11 Ranfurly Road, Epsom (later changed to 89) and here Hilda was to live for the rest of her life.<sup>2</sup> Her initial education was received at Mt Eden College (later St Cuthbert's College), a private school for girls run by the Misses Alice and May Bews. She received art tuition from Miss Vera Jacobsen, was a student for some years at Elam School of Art and also learnt the techniques of illumination and lettering from John Willsteed Ash at Auckland Technical College.<sup>3</sup>

Alexander Wiseman died in 1915, and Hilda went to work for the prominent advertising firm of Chandler & Company, Pitt Street. The 15 years spent at Chandler's were to prove invaluable, for here there were colleagues such as David Payne and she was also introduced to others in the commercial art world including Arnold Goodwin and graphic arts enthusiasts such as T.V. Gulliver. Hilda was always close to her mother Harriot, and so it must have seemed a logical move in 1931 when she set up practice at home. For close to 20 years Hilda was able to care for her mother and at the same time carry on her various artistic activities at her 'Selwyn Studio'. Many Aucklanders have examples of her paintings, drawings and cards but it is her bookplates which have become her best known and most lasting creations. It is also interesting to note that Hilda designed 25 bookplates while working at Chandler's, including three plates for herself, and those for her mother and sisters Huia and Vella. All this activity pre-dated the formation of either of the two New Zealand bookplate societies in 1930.

Much has been written about the Selwyn Studio and for those



*Hilda Wiseman in her Selwyn Studio, 89 Ranfurly Road West.*

Photo: *Auckland Star*, 1973

interested in further reading I mention three sources. First there are John P. Webster's two articles about Selwyn Studio, 'Hilda Wiseman at Selwyn Studio', *Art New Zealand* Vol. 30, Autumn 1984, and 'Hilda Wiseman's Selwyn Studio', *Auckland-Waikato Historical Journal* Vol. 43,



September 1983. Much misinformation has surrounded the history of the building but the basic facts are simple. Hilda acquired a workmen's cottage from Orakei which she furnished with windows obtained from the old St Stephen's School in Parnell, when it was demolished in 1931. After Hilda's death, the cottage was bequeathed to Auckland Historical Society but eventually it was demolished, given its bad condition. As described in *Auckland-Waikato Historical Journal* Vol. 43, the diamond-shaped hoop-iron window frames from the 1850s were given to St Chad's Church, Huapai, where similar frames had come from the old Church of England Grammar School building in 1924. Journalist Dorothy Wiseman (McLean), Hilda's sister-in-law, contributed the article 'New life for old school's windows' to the 'Weekender Women' section of the *Auckland Star*, 9 June 1973.<sup>4</sup>

Hilda Wiseman is by no means an unknown name in Auckland's art history. During her active artistic years she was a consistent member of Auckland Society of Arts, exhibiting as early as 1912. Examples of her flower paintings and other work come up at art auctions now and then, and less than five years ago former Rutland Group member Ruth Coyle could still recall Hilda as one of the older members of the Auckland art world of the 1940s and 1950s. Ultimately however it is for Hilda's contribution to the cause of bookplates, their creation and collection, and also for the continued furtherance of the Auckland Ex Libris Society that she will best be remembered. Here we look at her achievement and how she continued throughout a 40-year period to remain an inspiration for those involved with bookplates, which were a principal, although not exclusive, interest. Later we examine her bookplate links and friendships with residents of Epsom and adjacent suburbs.

Much has already been written about Hilda's bookplate involvement, and the reader is referred to my book *In Another Dimension* for a catalogue of her bookplate designs together with biographical notes on the plate owners. My essay on her bookplate art also appears in the same volume. Others too have written about Hilda, including Sian Davis, whose thesis on Hilda Wiseman's Bookplates is available, and Georgia Prince, who contributed the essay in *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Vol. 4, Hilda being the only biographee in the *Dictionary* to be awarded an entry principally for her bookplate contribution. (See bibliography at end of this article for references.)

If proof were needed that Hilda was the pioneer figure in Auckland bookplates, one has again to consider that 25 of her designs had appeared before the formation of the Auckland Branch, New Zealand Ex Libris Society, in November 1930. Because of her enthusiasm, Auckland Branch was every bit as lively as its southern counterpart, a point acknowledged by Pat Lawlor, who brought about the formation of the Society in Wellington. Here is what he said about Hilda:

Although the honour is with Wellington for forming the first ex libris society in New Zealand, it will be obvious to any bookplate enthusiast that, mainly due to the enthusiasm of Miss Hilda Wiseman, Auckland has in the past been the centre of bookplate culture in the Dominion. It was through Miss Wiseman's work that the first New Zealand Bookplate Exhibition was held in New Zealand last year.

(*New Zealand Ex Libris Society. Brochure No.1, 1930, p.25.*)

Considering that it pre-dated the onset of the two New Zealand societies, *The Catalogue of a Loan Collection of Book-Plates shown in the Art Gallery Auckland, April 7th to April 26th 1930* is impressive. On show were the works of 29 New Zealand, 22 Australian, 10 British, 13 Russian and 10 Spanish artists. Seven other countries were represented. All these plates came from the collection of Hilda Wiseman.

From the inaugural meeting of Auckland Branch on 27 November 1930, Hilda Wiseman was its mainspring. With very few interruptions for illness, she was honorary secretary from 1930 to 1967 and also acted as treasurer until 1953.<sup>5</sup> Throughout the 1930s and 1940s Hilda's own bookplate collections formed the base for major exhibitions in Auckland. Typical examples were the August 1934 exhibition of over 200 plates from many countries held at Milne & Choyce Ltd, and an even larger exhibition of 300 plates at Auckland Art Gallery in October 1935. In both cases the plates came largely from Hilda's own collection, demonstrating that she was already an established collector.

In the apparent absence of correspondence kept within the family we can fortunately turn to a group of 18 letters written by Hilda from 1932-8 to her Wellington counterpart, NZELS secretary, Mrs Violet

Wakelin, later Mrs Markham Jones. Here Hilda was delighted to be able to 'tell it as it was' and share with her colleague the joys and also the trials and tribulations of trying to keep a bookplate society afloat. Hilda indicated that the letters were to be regarded as conveying her informal opinions as opposed to more formal messages she was required to send regarding subscriptions. In fact, the letters are a mixture of both sorts. On the one hand they provide a delightfully informal account of Hilda's own feelings about her bookplate world and they also tell us what was required to keep the fledgling society going. This was not always an easy task, and as the letters show, one which was, in Auckland, often carried on largely by herself. These letters are reproduced with commentaries by myself as the chapter 'Hilda Wiseman, Bookplate Pioneer' in *75 Years of Bookplates: Auckland Ex Libris Society 1930-2005* by Ian Thwaites and Rie Fletcher.

These letters from Hilda to Violet convey her real sense of enthusiasm, enjoyment and devotion to the cause of bookplates. They also reveal the excitement which Hilda felt when designing a plate for an enthusiast like Sandy Geddes or setting up the series of exhibitions for which she was primarily responsible during the 1930s. In today's terms she obviously experienced a real 'high' at such times. At the same time, along with the pleasure, the letters also reveal a sense of frustration, especially in the 1934 letters, of having to make do with very little money and some rather reluctant members. It is known that sometimes Hilda felt displeasure at the tardiness of members in communicating and especially for not paying their subscriptions. She invariably showed restraint in her reactions however.

The 1934-8 letters are a valuable window into Hilda's world of bookplates. We now know that most of her collecting and exchanging was done in the late 1920s and that by the early thirties there was no longer so much time for this pleasant pursuit. Fortunately she appears to have written hundreds of letters during these early years and built up a fine collection of plates, the basis of almost all the Auckland ex libris exhibitions of the 1930s and 1940s.

We also learn from the letters to Violet about Hilda's relative isolation, and how she relished meeting colleagues from overseas and also from other parts of New Zealand, although the letters seem to suggest that Auckland or Wellington members rarely managed to get together. Sian Davis has commented on characteristic devices used and

possible stylistic influences on Hilda's bookplate art. Hilda continued to find inspiration for her designs right up to the early 1970s and so perhaps this lack of contact was not a great hindrance. Possibly in her case, more exposure to outside influences may not not have resulted in great differences in style.

In 1954 Auckland Branch became Auckland Ex Libris Society, and during the next 30 years flourished, providing much enjoyment for its members. There was a wide range of topics covered at meetings, and many additional activities took place such as jubilee dinners and visits to out-of-town members. Bookplates, on the other hand, became increasingly less significant with the passing of the years although this was certainly not due to lack of effort on the part of some members, notably Hilda, Colonel A.R. Hughes, Phillip Prescott and Robert Langholm, who all contributed consistently towards the 'ex libris cause'. Auckland was not alone with these problems, however. The NZELS in Wellington, despite a similar change to a widened focus as a 'book-lovers society', eventually ceased operation in 1960, although it did not formally wind up until some years later. An Auckland highlight was the successful acquisition by Auckland War Memorial Museum Library in 1955 of the Percy Neville Barnett Collection, a transaction in which the Society, and especially Hilda and Colonel Arthur Hughes, played a major part. During this period AELS was (and still is) a happy group of friends, especially fortunate in having many dedicated members who all came together to make it an important part of their lives. Presidents such as Allan and Ella Swinton, Claude and Eileen Tucker, Bertha and Les Taylor, Estelle Verran, Mr and Mrs Ross Waters, Jean and Graham Dawson, all made notable efforts. Other faithful supporters included Una Smith, Teddy Henderson, Gladys Salter, and Ron and Joyce Tizard.

In 1953 Hilda relinquished the position of treasurer in favour of Jock Allen and in 1967, after 37 years as hon secretary, she handed over the reins to Philip Prescott. During the 1970s she continued to attend meetings but increasing age and ill-health meant that she was unable to devote time to bookplates. Bob Langholm remembers however that characteristically, Hilda always brought along a selection of plates to every meeting for members to study and discuss. Her close association with John Barr made it likely that her bookplate collection would be donated to the Auckland Public Library, and so it proved to be. On 8

June 1980 she was able to be present at the handing over of the Hilda Wiseman Bookplate Collection which took place at the residence of Messrs Phil Prescott and Robert Langholm, 41 Taumata Road, Sandringham, and this was followed on 16 July 1980 by the opening of an exhibition in the Rare Book Room of the Library displaying a selection from the vast array of Hilda's plates. (See *75 Years of Bookplates* for further details.) When Hilda died on 28 April 1982, her passing was felt with real sadness by her colleagues and friends in the society which she had done so much to foster.

A note about the balance in Hilda's life. The 'little lady in Brown' as she is often remembered, fitted bookplates into her world and not the other way round. Hilda looked at her hobby with a balanced viewpoint. Bookplates were an absorbing and enjoyable interest to be indulged in when time permitted. They fitted neatly into her scheme of things and took their place alongside her other activities. The letters to Violet Wakelin make it plain that, perhaps surprisingly, Hilda owned few books. Her joy in being able to borrow one of Neville Barnett's limited edition volumes from NZELS Wellington was obvious, although one imagines that the Auckland Public Library must have provided additional reading on the subject. Auckland Branch was always a small society with never more than about 25 members, the meetings often attracted only 6–12 members and of course they did not just talk about bookplates, although doubtless Hilda would have welcomed this. The positions of secretary and treasurer were certainly time-consuming, but *ex libris* meetings occurred usually only four or five times per year and her work load seems to have been manageable. Apparently she hardly ever got to meet her Wellington *ex libris* colleagues, although she corresponded with them frequently. One notable exception occurred in 1946 when Mervyn Taylor came to Auckland for a weekend meeting about linocut printing methods with his *ex libris* colleagues Louise Tilsley and Hilda.

What was Hilda really like? A quiet, rather Victorian personality, who liked to hold morning tea parties at which one arrived on time and did not stay too long, and who often dressed conservatively in brown. Bob Langholm recalls that she often wore mittens. She liked flower painting, especially magnolias. Her art world and her artist friends were important to her, and she retained her ASA Working Membership for many years. At various times she held group shows with friends such

as Connie Lloyd, Dorothy Vallance-Young and potter Olive Jones. Bob Langholm also remembers that Hilda got on well with all ex libris members. She was always encouraging to young ex libris members both during the early years of Auckland Branch and later on. We know that she had very definite opinions, for example when members did not pay their subscriptions, although these opinions were usually expressed only in private letters. A very efficient secretary and treasurer, Hilda was not given to wordy minute taking, rather the opposite, although her handwriting (always using a fountain pen) was very legible. Especially during the 1920s and into the mid 1930s she was still a very keen collector and exchanger of bookplates.

Because she was such a significant figure in the bookplate movement it is tempting to visualise her world as something specific and structured. The reality was however that Hilda, like many other artists, was far too busy coping and getting by to entertain notions of a structured world of bookplates. On the other hand the Auckland ex libris scene, particularly in the 1930s and 1940s, was something of a social and cultural focus and so my construction of an imaginary world of Epsom Bookplates is not, I hope, unhelpful. In addition, one should not forget that, especially during the 1930s, bookplates were an accepted, if minor part of the local art scene. Their profile was such that during the 'Golden Age of Bookplates', approximately 1920–50, they were often the subject of media exposure, whether in the form of exhibitions or newspaper and periodical articles. And the members of Auckland Branch comprised a diverse group of mainly professional men and several talented women artists who were not without influence.

As has often been noted, Hilda Wiseman seemed to be 'born for bookplates'. She possessed a real flair, especially for the linocut, and was able to produce many plates of considerable delicacy and charm, almost always appropriate to their owner's interest. Bookplate design was also something which could be easily carried out at home in her Selwyn Studio using relatively simple materials, and just as importantly it could be accommodated with work demands and family responsibilities. During the last ten years of her life Hilda was affected by several health problems although she still attended meetings whenever possible, and her appearances were a great pleasure for her many friends and admirers. Let us reflect on the many years which she devoted to bookplates, their creation and enjoyment. Her designs and her encouragement

were an inspiration and a lasting legacy for our society. The letters reinforce the conclusion that her involvement with bookplates was one of the happiest parts of her life. Hilda Wiseman produced over 130 bookplates, many more than any other of her contemporary artists. As I will show in part two of this article, with her linocuts and line drawn plates Hilda reached out to a wide range of book lovers, with designs for family, friends, neighbours, ex libris members, and those with links to St Cuthbert's College in particular.

It is certain that Hilda would have welcomed the renaissance of interest in bookplates which has steadily taken place since 1990. Now with each year's programme for Auckland Ex Libris Society, there is at least one meeting totally devoted to bookplates, something which Hilda would surely have welcomed. In recent years Hilda Wiseman bookplates have fetched handsome prices at local book auctions. Much research still awaits those who wish to find out more about the bookplate activities of this quiet and yet influential figure. I hope these notes have been stimulating and that more information about Hilda Wiseman may come to light.

In Part Two of this essay I shall examine more closely Hilda's bookplate world and those who inhabited her 'World of Epsom Bookplates'. It is important to remember that Auckland in the 1930s-50s was a small city compared with today. Certainly, it stretched to all the compass points, but often one tended to find one's friends not too far away in any one direction. By and large the ex libris world (and this was true for many groups of similar size) was contained within Auckland City and inner suburbs. With some exceptions most Auckland Branch members lived within an area stretching not much farther than Panmure in the east to Mt Albert in the West and Hillsborough in the south. Even in the case of another principal interest for Hilda, the Auckland Society of Arts, it was a similar state of affairs. This was not yet an era of suburban clubs and societies.

### **Notes:**

1. The other children were: Vella Elizabeth Amanda (1895-1970); Neville James Alexander (1898-1961); Enid Olive Alexa (1900-61); Huiia Alexandra (Mrs Maginness, 1904-93); Rona Altan (Mrs Alexander, 1905-87); and Douglas Alexander (1908-81).
2. Alexander Wiseman's designs included 'Marinoto', Symonds Street; Auckland Hospital Board building, cnr Wellesley Street East and Kitchener Street; the Ferry



Building; the home of Hilda's uncle and aunt, Mr and Mrs F.W. Wilson, which is now the Auckland Grammar School hostel on the corner of Mountain and Clive Roads; and of course the family home 'Shelford' in Ranfurly Road. Hilda lists several of her father's designs in her April 1978 article (see bibliography).

3. John Willsted Ash (1865–1944). Arrived from Leicester in 1913. Art master at Seddon Memorial Technical College. Known as a landscape painter. Lived at New Windsor Road, Avondale. Vera G. Jacobsen was art teacher at Auckland Girls' Grammar School from 1914–19. She followed Kennett Watkins when he retired after 26 years. There is an interesting comment about her time at the school in *Auckland Girls' Grammar School: the First Hundred Years*, by Heather Northey with J.A. and M. Asher, 1988, p. 88. In 1919, when Vera returned from Australia where she had taken up an art commission, she was greeted with a letter from the principal, Miss Butler, informing her that her replacement, Miss Baker, had better discipline and got more work out of the rank and file. She was asked firmly not to return and had to accept a month's pay in lieu of notice.
4. John Webster notes in his 1983 article that the house and section were bequeathed to Christian Care Centre Trust Board, Auckland. The cottage itself was subsequently offered to this latter body but apparently was in such poor condition that it was removed and later demolished.
5. Long-serving Auckland Public Library staff member Miss Dulcie Haszard (43 years) was AELS assistant secretary, 1960–5. She took over for a short time in 1962 when Hilda was absent for health reasons.

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