

PROSPECT

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Eden Park's early years

By Jack Baker

Some time around 1901–02, a group of keen cricketers played friendly games on a small section of land they rented to the west of today's Eden Park. In 1903, spear-headed by E. C. (Curly) Beale, they decided to found the Eden District Cricket Club. That inaugural meeting was held on 24 July 1903 in the old Victoria Hall in Eden Terrace.

The club began its first season with 123 players. Due to the success of the club, they decided to buy 15 acres (6 hectares) for £2264 to form Eden Park. This land at the edge of 'Cabbage Tree Swamp' was part of the farms of Mr Walters and Mr Leith. It was basically a swamp, and at times in the winter a lake where boats were rowed. In summer it was rough and scrub-covered with stone walls across it. The grounds were gradually developed and a pavilion built on a site opposite the grandstands that we knew in our earlier years.

Flooding of the ground was a problem with which the club battled constantly. By 1909 the burden of developing and maintaining the grounds was too much, and the members sold the park to the Auckland Cricket Association who administered it. The Eden District Cricket Club was stationed at Eden Park until the 1950s, when they built new headquarters at Keith Hay Park in Mt Roskill. Their founding members who struggled with those swampy grounds at the beginning of the century left a club and sports ground unparalleled in Auckland.

In 1924 the Auckland Cricket Association amalgamated with the Auckland Rugby Union, which continued to administer the park. In 1953 a trust board was formed to ensure the use of Eden Park for both cricket and rugby.

Auckland rep players who began as members of the Eden Cricket Club could be counted in scores; but 11 early Eden players who won New Zealand honours were H. B. Lusk, W. Brook-Smith, H. Gillespie, Les Taylor, W. N. Carson, R. W. Rowntree, C. A. Snedden, L. G. Hemus, N. McMahon, J. Mills and G. L. Weir, while Alf Postles, a senior Eden cricketer for 30 years, was captain of many Auckland teams that won the Plunket Shield.

In the late 1930s and into the 1940s—and probably even after that—there was only one food outlet for the public at Eden Park and none on

the terrace side. But there was a smallish, shuttered opening at the side of what I think is now the Merv Wallace Stand, moved to No. 2 ground. From there Geo Langton sold a smallish selection of food and drink—if you finally got shoved to the counter! But sometimes the shutters were down. Bad luck! And if you waited, more often than not you would miss a try scored or wicket taken—frustrating to only hear the cheer!

When I was twelve, I suppose, I'd sit for up to four days on the hard old concrete terrace for a Plunket Shield game and just leave my Farmers' Monarch Special bike safely propped up against the antiquated score board near the Cricket Avenue entrance. I'd have an old haversack with food, pencil (in case I got an autograph) and a small cushion—maybe. If no bike, I'd walk from The Drive, Epsom, and back.

That old scoreboard was a monstrous wood and iron-framed affair—manually operated, and if the scoring was fast, the operators (boys at times I think in the holidays) scuttled around like monkeys to keep it up to date.



Watching cricket at Eden Park, 1939
From right: Murray Tanner, Jack, Dad, sister Fay

Photo: Jack Baker

For the famous Peter Jones ‘buggered’ match,* I was way back on that grassy area to the left when you came in the Cricket Avenue entrance. I stood with one foot on an old empty quart beer bottle pushed into the mud. Your movements were controlled by the density of the crowd. When play was at the other end, the whole crowd swayed forward, you with it, and then gradually back to upright when play returned to the middle. If a few rows in the front had gone down, the rest of us would certainly have gone down in a domino effect. When Jones scored it was mayhem!

Trying to exit after the game was almost a ‘mission impossible’, as for years there was only one open gate serving the huge crowd attempting to leave. Really it was quite dangerous to be in the middle of the melee as the people all round you shoved towards the gate, and you were eventually heaved through into Cricket Avenue where ever so many were looking for their separated spouses, parents or kiddies. It was a frightening experience.

On the old terraces, especially when crowded and the call was urgent, it was quite scary pushing through the crowd to the entrance of the underground toilet, right in the middle of the terrace, and then trying to find your way back to your right seat. Scary!

I had plenty of cricket idols in those days—Jack Cowie, Bill Carson (double international), Verdun Scott, and Mathieson—but the greatest of them all was Merv Wallace. What excitement there was when Merv came to bat. One of New Zealand’s greatest for sure. Merv subsequently became father-in-law to Grant Fox, whose skills in the All Blacks graced Eden Park years later.

At club rugby matches on a Saturday you could stand on the sidelines between No. 1 and No. 2 fields (no stands then) and almost watch

* My father was a rugby fan—one of those who never went in person but listened intently on the radio. During that 1956 Springbok tour, he took a tape recording of that famous/infamous 4th test at Eden Park. Some years ago, I managed to find a player for the old style tape the size of a film reel and played the section at the end where they were interviewing the stars and Peter Jones said, “I hope I never have to play such a hard game again. I’m absolutely buggered.”

The commentator said, “No-one has ever got away with saying that over the air before.” But what interested me on my replay was the crowd’s reaction. They laughed their heads off, and I timed it all. I still have the tape so I can prove that that rugby crowd laughed for a full three minutes! —Jeanette Grant, Editor

both games at once. While at Auckland Grammar School in the 1930s and 1940s it was an exciting day watching the inter-secondary-school sports at Eden Park. Only a few schools were participating then. But the rivalry between Auckland Grammar, Takapuna Grammar, King's College, Mt Albert Grammar, Seddon Technical College, Sacred Heart and Otahuhu College was intense, good natured and noisy!

If you want to win a bet, ask when a goal on Eden Park was worth only one point. Yes, it was about 1936 when world champions India played New Zealand in a hockey test on Eden Park. India was captained by Dyan Chand who could run the length of the field while bouncing the ball on the end of his hockey stick. It was a wet, muddy field. New Zealand centre forward Roy Roughton scored two magnificent goals with powerful drives from the mud. Roy later became 'sort of famous' as he was the model for the curly-headed lad on the front of Creamota Porridge cartons. Anyway, that day New Zealand beat India, and a few years later I was lucky enough to play next to Roy for Grammar Old Boys in 1942. Also playing against India that muddy day at Eden Park were the Clark brothers—Fred and Trevor—and double international Eddie McLeod (cricket).

I well recall sitting on the sideline at No. 1 with a school party for the infamous 1937 Springbok/All Black Test. It was the most disorganized All Black team ever, with only Pat Caughey, the All Black centre, coming out with any credit. 'Brushy' Mitchell played with an injured hand; Ron King out of position. It was a disaster. Captained by Phillip Nel with Gerry Brand as fullback and Danie Craven halfback, the Boks were never threatened. I always recall the curtain-raiser that day when an Auckland team played Wellington with Merv Corner at halfback and Ron Bush at fullback. They should have been in the main event.

One for the believe it or not stories! Gordon Ingham's *Everyone's gone to the Movies*, a history of early Auckland picture theatres, etc, states that 'open air movies were shown at Eden Park' way back in the early years of cinema.

If wanting exercise, you could walk right around the boundary path both ways in front of the crowds on the terraces. It wasn't easy though for some of the attractive young ladies. Heckling existed even in those days.

Three rugby memories of No. 1 ground seem to always come back: Charlie Eastes of Australia running away from Eric Boggs in a foot race

to the line right in front of the old terrace; Ron Elvidge, head swathed in bandage, diving across to score in almost the same place; Sid Going slithering and sliding across the waterlogged Eden Park to score. Sid was really lucky he didn't drown, with two or three defenders on his back.

Before the Terraces disappeared, at their rear was a wide grassy strip (ideal for rugs, etc if not crowded), and then a high fence separated the park from the homes on Walters Road. Well this didn't daunt the residents. Most of them built high, quite well constructed 'Scotsmens' grandstands in their back yards overlooking the boundary fence, and had no trouble filling them, especially at Test time. The owners supplied parking, tea and food. A nice little earner. Even the houses over the road made a little extra by parking cars on their lawns.

During the 1970s, I think, was the era of 'Lord Ted'—shortish with military bearing, a poncy voice, and defiant smile. His court was the smallest, noisy terraced area just below the old commentators' box perched high at the Sandringham Road end. He held sway there for years, particularly in the cricket season. There with a loud, distinguished voice, he regaled the crowd with his criticisms, witticisms and humour. His coming and departing remains a bit of a mystery still.

The entertainment towards the end of Lord Ted's reign and in the same seating area got even better with the appearance of Auckland cricketer Ian Donnelly. With his dry, educated wit and stentorian voice, Ian was certainly a match for Lord Ted. Their good natured repartee, verbal onslaughts, etc, certainly kept the crowd in good spirits. Later, 'Donners' gained rep honours with his wily slow bowling.

Strangely enough, both Ted and Ian started their cricket careers with the old City Suburban Cricket Association on the Domain. I get annoyed when media refer to the 'Domain Grandstand'. Since Charlie Kerr's ashes were spread on his second home, the official name is the 'Charles Kerr Grandstand'—see the plaque by the door at the top of the steps. Phil Warren officiated representing the council at the ceremony. I was there.

Mention must be made of former Auckland Cricket captain and later commentator, Alan Richards. His commentaries from Eden Park, and from grounds all over the cricket world, were unbiased, his knowledge and measured voice so comforting. While others raved and criticized, never did Alan belittle his own country's efforts—or get involved in

controversy. The same can be said for Colin Snedden for his Eden Park rugby calls. We were certainly lucky to have these two gents before TV—when we relied on factual radio reports. Alan did the same in the soccer season. Earlier Alan represented Auckland soccer from 1942–49; his club, of course, his beloved ‘North Shore’.

My favourite rugby moments—plenty of them—but in this one I am biased. Through being on leave in London in 1945, I saw one or two of Fred Allen’s famous army team matches, but my favourite moment, and here I may have the scoring all wrong, was when just after World War II, Auckland were playing North Auckland on No. 1 ground and North Auckland were about 22:0 down at half time. The interval over, on they came, led by the one and only, the inimitable, casual, laid back, modest J. B. (Johnny) Smith, just returned with the Fred Allen army team. J. B. took control. He taunted the opposition with all his skills, body swerves, quick thrusts, intelligent kicking—he had it all. With the result I think a 22:22 draw. Smith, Peter Jones and Whineray have lived long in my memory.

Another heart warming memory also involves those two great friends and magnificent sportsmen, Whineray and Jones. (I can vouch for this story—but don’t ask me how.) North Auckland was playing Auckland on No. 1 Eden Park. Jones was rampant that day as North Auckland took the lead. A quick discussion among the Auckland senior players agreed Jones had to be quietened down a little. A scrum—and Jones was down—without ado and fuss. With St Johns aid, that large figure slowly rose, but wasn’t the same dominant character. He seemed almost proud that it had taken his best friend, Wilson Whineray, to slow him down a little. After a few years in Kaitaia and Whangarei I remain a Light Blue supporter to this day.

It is unbelievable now to recall that in the 1930s and 1940s, fifty ‘squatters’ arrived outside the Cricket Avenue entrance a couple of days (or more) before an important rugby test to ensure certain entrance and good seats. A good natured crowd—no one ever jumped the queue—it was a mass of sleeping bags, groundsheets, rugs, thermoses, etc.

My first club after leaving Auckland Grammar School at the end of 1942 was Parnell. We practised on Eden Park No. 2 and I got there by tram after work. Tough practices were controlled by that rotund taskmaster Jack Forsman. In those days, two senior matches were played on the No. 1 oval on Saturday.



Father and sister Fay going to the Springbok–Auckland match, 1937

Photo: Jack Baker

Of course there are wonderful memories of the three West Indian ‘W’s—Worrell, Weekes and Walcott—and our first ever test match win in March 1956 after 26 years of trying; of the Hadlee and Chappell brothers; of New Zealand’s lowest ever test score (26 against England

in March 1955); of a great day at the park in 1939 when Auckland took on the power of Sir Julien Cahn's XI (Sir Julien inherited a fortune and devoted his life to sport and philanthropy); the grace of Sutcliffe; meeting Bill O'Reilly at an Eden Park function—and the list goes on. But why do the names Sutcliffe, Wallace, Cowie, Scott, Smith, Whineray and Jones always dominate my thoughts? Perhaps because they epitomized sport with their uncomplicated natural skill, modesty, sportsmanship and just 'the way they played the game'.

Another vivid memory includes J. B. again, in a long-forgotten match about 1940 before he went overseas in the war. Two army teams played a mid-week game on No. 1 ground. One team was called MTP (Transport). It was a thrilling, fast encounter featuring two of New Zealand's greatest centres opposing each other. J. B. for one team and Ron McGregor for the other. Yes, Ron went on to be one of New Zealand's best rugby league centres and administrators ever.

When Dad was getting older, before a big rugby match I'd drive my car early in the morning with Dad following in his car and we'd park Dad's vehicle as close as possible to Eden Park in Valley Road or Grange Road. It was convenient for him after the match.

For the non-car spectators, the trams ran a great service. Graham Stewart writes in his book *Around Auckland by Tram in the 1950s*:

In 1925 a tramway loop was built at Eden Park which held 35 trams off Sandringham Road. On the day the loop opened the Rugby Union advertised in the *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 the lined up trams in under 15 minutes.

That great service continued until the end of the trams in 1956. It will be interesting to see how effective the 2011 substitute system proves to be for the Rugby World Cup games.

And now, Eden Park—2011 is to be your finest hour. You've been walked over, run over, made over, talked over, criticized and written over. But I've always been proud of you. Like many other parks, Carlaw, Blandford, Victoria, Cornwall, Newmarket, Hobson and Domain, you've brought me a lifetime of pleasure, contentment, excitement and mateship. Thank you. Like your mountain namesake up the road, stand proud with the sun in your face.

My story, that of a bungalow

By Cynthia Landels

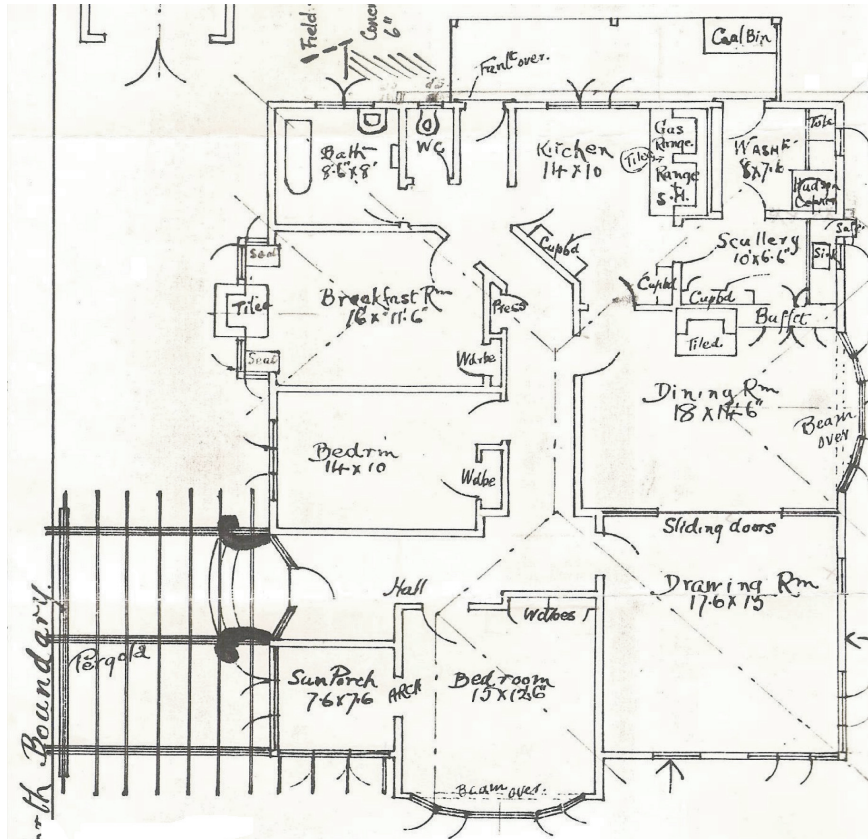
Once upon a time (all good stories start that way) I, a bungalow, was built in Epsom in late 1924. I thought I was pretty fashionable and elegant with my bow windows and their little shingle roofs over them, the stained glass fanlights and the bevelled glass on my front door. I knew I was quality, as I had kauri weatherboards and window frames, matai flooring and all my internal woodwork was rimu. I just loved my exposed rimu beams which supported the plaster panels in my ceilings.

Although I only had two bedrooms, I did have a breakfast room! As well I had a drawing room, a dining room, a kitchen and a scullery as well as a washroom (what people now call a laundry), bathroom and WC. I have often wondered about the two bedrooms, as the original owners had a son and daughter. Obviously the children shared.

I can not recall much about my early years and the changes which occurred. But when I look at the original plans I notice the front door moved, leaving a large front porch, some seats and cupboards were probably never built and the sliding doors never slid! As well the planned pergola outside the front door shrank. And did I ever have a buffet between the dining room and the kitchen? There is no evidence whatsoever of its existence.

My second owners, who also had a son and daughter, did make quite a few changes. My breakfast room became a bedroom. The kitchen became a dining room. The dining room became a second lounge. Consequently the two ranges in the kitchen were removed and cupboards built in their place. But they left my lovely white tile hearth, it is still there under the carpet, and the chimney is there inside the wall. Next, the wall between the scullery and the washroom was removed and so a new kitchen was made. Out with the Hudson copper and in with an electric stove. To make a laundry, they built a new wall half way along the back verandah. This meant that, to my relief, the coal bin was removed. One day somebody had dropped hot coals on my verandah floor and it was exceedingly painful. But thanks to the solid matai flooring, I was only left with scorchmarks. I might have burnt down!

My third owners bought me in 1976. And that was interesting, as once again there were two children, a boy and a girl. But more interesting



The original house plan from 1924

still, when the second owner discovered that the new owner's great grandfather had the same name as his great grandfather and they both came from the Scottish borders within 40 miles of each other, the sale became a foregone conclusion. And I was so happy. Another lady wanted to buy me at the same time, and the first thing she was going to do, was lower all the ceilings and cover up my lovely beams and plaster.

But it wasn't long before I began to wonder about the new owners. They ripped my roof off!! Admittedly it had a few holes, but it was so nice and old, like a comfortable old jersey. Next the fireplace in the old dining room was pulled out. I must admit quite a few of the old green tiles were broken and the grate was very rusty. But that turned out all

right as the new fireplace surround was made of beautiful marble and I like it.

Then in 1985, the pain was frightful. Weatherboards were prized off my walls and windows removed. What were they doing? Maybe it was the end of me? But I realised the pain was localised, just the sunporch was under attack. As the work went on, the sunporch grew bigger, three feet out on three sides, and the front porch shrank to a quarter of its size and the new stylish front door was installed further out. The good thing about this was that my original windows were put back, as were my nice kauri weatherboards. A fourth bedroom had been made with the old front door, bevelled glass and all, opening out onto a little deck.



The alteration to the front to make the fourth bedroom

Photo: Cynthia Landels

At the same time the remainder of the back verandah was glassed in to make a conservatory. I must admit I really appreciate not having a wet floor every time it rains.

These owners have done other things too. I have always been painted white, and my trim has changed from green to blue over the years, but they changed it to brown. The awful old flowery carpet has gone, thank goodness. It was getting quite draughty where it had worn through. And just this year they have insulated my underfloor, so warm and cosy



The glassed-in back verandab

Photo: Cynthia Landels

now. I can't wait for winter. By the way, my roof space was insulated way back in 1977.

But looking back over my life I have been very fortunate. I have not been cut in two and carted off to Hunua or Kaukapakapa like some of my friends. I still have my good looks. As well, I still have my sarking and scrim and the wall safe in the kitchen. Maybe as time goes on that will make me unique. I am grateful to all my owners over the years who have taken such good care of me. Now at the grand old age of 87, I am looking forward to celebrating my centenary.

Withiel Drive: Glimpses of the first 50 years

By Valerie Sherwood

Despite being geographically close to Newmarket and in an otherwise well populated area, Withiel Drive, in the late 1940s, was one of the last Epsom streets to be opened up.

Professor Sir Algernon Phillips Withiel Thomas, (see *Prospect*, Vol. 7) the resident and owner of the Trewithiel block of around ten acres, had left instructions in his will for the preservation of the almost two acres of native forest which he had carefully nurtured since 1890. In 1939 that led to an agreement whereby the Auckland City Council undertook to maintain the area as a wooded reserve. The remainder of the land, which at that time fronted Mountain Road and Almorah Road on its northern aspect, was surveyed and subdivided for housing. On the area between Mountain Road and Gillies Avenue a new street was formed as 'Withiel Drive'. 'Withiel' is a small parish in mid-Cornwall, the name of which means 'place of trees'.

Withiel Drive has its own history. Perhaps as early as 1200AD Maori living on Maungawhau / Mt Eden were traversing the region. The Waiohua people, then the Ngatiwhatua, established garden areas around the lower slopes of the mountain before the land was seized by the Ngapuhi. In Withiel Drive, about halfway down the hill, at the rear of a residential section is a large outcrop of rock. Evidence in the form of shell middens in its crevices, stone pounders and the wearing down of rock, as if by foot traffic, indicate that this rocky formation was a lookout point from which a Maori sentinel could observe the activities of travellers and watch for signals from others. This observation point offered a clear view of the landscape from Maungakiekie / One Tree Hill to Ohinerau / Mt Hobson and to Pukekawa, the hill on which the Auckland War Museum now stands.

In later, European times there were many visitors to the property of Professor Thomas whose friends and colleagues included citizens from a wide strata of society: academics, clergy, politicians, even press reporters. Many came seeking his opinions, viewing his kiwi and tuatara breeding programmes, or simply admiring his rock walls and gardens.

Following World War I, Captain F. W. Short was employed by

Professor Thomas as his right-hand man. His wide ranging skills and adaptability enabled him to turn his hand to any duty on the property. Captain Short's keen interest in botany was shared by his son, who was a student of Professor Thomas. On a flat area of land behind the Thomas homestead a small shooting range had been established. This was adjacent to the regenerating bush on an area of volcanic rock. The shooting stage, extant today, was built from the rock. Immediately to the northeast and below this range lay the high, exposed rock face of Pascoe's Quarry, the site of which is today occupied by the Auckland Badminton Courts which were opened by Sir Dove-Meyer Robinson in 1960.

Captain Short, a member of the Old Contemptibles Association, was a keen shooter, as was Norman Thomas, son of the professor, who was



also a returned serviceman. A series of annual competitions were held by the association on the Thomas property. Mrs Daphne Savage holds memories of attending a shoot as a young woman in the 1930s with her parents, Mr and Mrs Bob Lomas. To the young Daphne's surprise, though neither her father nor mother were successful in the competitions, she herself attained the highest score among the ladies and was delighted to proudly carry home the prize, a fine tablecloth, which was duly stored in her 'glory box'.

Between the wars Malcolm Waller, as a young lad living with his parents Arthur and Ruth (née Buckland) at 125 Gillies Avenue, was free to roam the area of land on

*Old Contemptibles target shooting
on the Thomas property c. 1939*

Photo: Daphne Savage

which the Thomas house cow had once grazed, which was adjacent to his home. The activities of the workmen at Pascal's Quarry, which was on Gillies Avenue immediately below the Thomas bush, were a great attraction to the youngster who was fascinated by the workings of the quarry; the horses and drays, the motorised equipment, the tools, the sheer rock walls and the volume of broken rock.

Of the aging Professor Thomas himself, little was seen. Local residents were accustomed to observe him passing by on the road in his black chauffeur-driven Packard. Certainly the children who played freely on his land were not disturbed by any member of the Thomas household.

Living in nearby Sharpe Road was the Bartley family. The younger son, Roger, was responsible for exercising his father's dog. Their regular walk took them up the unsealed Omana Avenue, along the edge of J. J. Craig's disused and overgrown quarry, along a dirt track behind Sir Frank Mappin's home (now Auckland's Government House), then across Mountain Road to the south side of the Thomas land. There was a large oak tree and several small pohutukawa among the rocks, some scrub and wattle trees. As Roger and his dog reached the halfway point down the hill, the dog would raise a flock of pheasants which always seemed to be in residence.

The pheasants also figure in the memory of Greer Twiss. The elevated Thomas land formed a boundary with that of the Twiss home at 8 Albury Avenue. Occasionally, when the family was at the dinner table, Greer's father would spot the birds flying in. Telling the family to hush and sit still, Mr Twiss, with rifle in hand, would quickly climb up the bank, swiftly dispatch a pheasant, and bring it back to the kitchen to be prepared for the next meal.

The undeveloped land was an adventure playground for young children. For Greer and his friends, including the Tongue children who lived at 10 Albury Avenue (their father was an undertaker), it offered a varied landscape for imaginative play. The outcrop of rock frequented by Maori in past aeons became a den for these youngsters. Decked out in a Robin Hood costume, and armed with bows and arrows, Greer was in his element in the woodland.

The late Mrs Twiss (a potter) told a story of her son Greer as a small lad during World War II. The family became aware that, unusually, the little boy was rising early on Saturday and Sunday mornings and making

his way up to the grassy land above their home. The mystery of his actions was eventually revealed. The vacant land had become a 'lovers' lane' for US servicemen and their sweethearts. Greer had discovered that there was often money to be found on the grass in the mornings, fallen from the pockets of the servicemen the previous night.

In his explorations of the local environment, the young Greer Twiss regularly visited the site of the metal foundry which was at the foot of the Thomas land, on Gillies Avenue, now the lower end of Withiel Drive. A pile of discarded sheet metal heaped behind the foundry proved to be a mine of useful metal for the imaginative lad who would choose rejected off-cuts from the pile to take home and fashion into a wide variety of creations. The development of this hobby heralded the successful career of the adult Greer Twiss, eminent sculptor.

The two acres of regenerating bush nurtured by Professor Thomas was, in fact, part of a tenacious strip of woodland which extended northwards parallel with Mountain Road, as far as the Auckland Grammar School. Murray MacCormick who lived at *Woodend* in Gilgit Road prior to his family moving to Shipherds Avenue, tells of the extent of these woods and of the large bush gardens in the area, now built on. Also living in Shipherds Avenue was J. S. (Jock) Carnachan, who was another of the many young lads for whom the Thomas land offered a natural open space, rocky outcrops and woods to explore.

It was a full ten years following the death of Professor Sir Algernon Withiel Thomas that subdivision of the land began to go ahead. In 1947 Alfred Charles Light came to Auckland to take up the position of Professor of Architectural Design at the University of Auckland. Searching for a place to build a home, he and his wife Marguerite (a Columbia University Fine Arts MA graduate) chose a section in Withiel Drive. His son, Derek Light, remembers the road first as simply a dirt track, with native bush on the north side and rock and fennel on the south. The section at #16 cost about £750. Professor Light designed his own home and also that of retired farmer, Philip Bonham at #17. Post-war council restrictions on the total area of buildings dictated to a certain extent the design and size of the houses. Charles and Marguerite Light with children Wendy and Derek moved into their home, the first completed in the new street, in 1949. The home next door, built by Mayor (later Sir) Dove-Meyer Robinson for his ex-wife Betty and children Ann and Martin, was second.

Houses in the process of erection hold a fascination for young boys. Greer Twiss was no exception. Each house, when abandoned at night and the weekends, became a veritable jungle gym, and was explored fully.

By 1952 six homes were occupied on the south side of the street and two on the north, wooded side. The property at #1, a home old enough to boast pressed steel ceilings, had originally been accessed from Gillies Avenue. Subdivided into two flats, it provided accommodation for a foreman and a labourer employed by the 'Innes Tartan' soft drink factory (the Northern Bottling Company) at 3-5 Gillies Avenue.

Once the road was sealed cars tended to travel too fast for the bends. Derek Light relates that this caused several accidents, including those of cars crashing into the Lights' rock wall. As a result speed humps were installed and, later, vehicle access was restricted to the Mountain Road entry.

Being in close proximity to Auckland's Government House on Mountain Road—the entry to Withiel Drive is directly opposite that property's main gateway—gives an advantage to residents when it comes to royalty watching. Residents and other citizens have gathered from time to time to wave to royal personages as they were driven down the Drive. Progressing on this route at various times have been Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and also Princes Charles, Edward and William. Each morning during the Queen Mother's visit in the 1970s, the royal piper would pace up and down with measured steps in the vicinity of #12, at 7am, playing Her



*The Queen Mother's piper warming up
in front of 12 Withiel Drive*

Photo: V. Sherwood

Majesty's favourite Scottish lilt at just the right distance from her bedroom at Government House to produce the musical effect she desired. Resident Ron Pike was one who expressed his gratitude that this daily musical performance would be of short duration only.

When the Prince of Wales and Princess Diana brought the infant Prince William to Auckland, enthusiastic monarchists clustered around the gates of Government House, creating the usual traffic problems for local residents. An elderly gardener, Ron MacBeath, who walked up and down Withiel Drive to his employment at Government House, confided that he had presented *the* Buzzy Bee to the royals for the infant Prince William. A well known pharmacist, Joe McManemin, is said to have presented another, and it was claimed that even a third Buzzy Bee had been presented by a titled lady. Just whose particular gift appeared in the famous photograph taken of the young Royal family at that time is unknown.

Derek Light relates that in 1990, the year of the Commonwealth Games, Prince Edward was a guest at Government House in Mountain Road. Badminton Hall, in the old quarry site, was the venue for the badminton competitions. After making his official visit to Badminton Hall by limousine, Prince Edward made three more independent visits to the hall, walking via Withiel Drive. Sitting in the hall chatting with the Prince, Derek, as sports director for badminton, found he was knowledgeable about the sport, and enjoyed the visits. The Prince made a point of expressing the enjoyment he experienced in his walks up and down such a pleasant street.

From its inception Withiel Drive was a street where the neighbours knew each other, but respected each other's privacy. The women folk, often at home during the day, were better acquainted with each other than were the men. Apart from Professor Light, several owners of the newly built homes gave their occupations as managers; one was a radio director, one a widow, and one retired. Most lived normal day-to-day lives, celebrating births, graduations, weddings and deaths—the various joys and tragedies of life. The street, however, was not free from untoward incidents. Mystery, crime and rumour appeared on the scene.

Michael Church tells a story of his neighbour, a pleasant man who was said to have had a sewing workroom in the lower area of his house. One day this man disappeared. His car and abandoned belongings were found

at a beach. Despite wide publicity and police investigation, neighbours from that time declare he was never seen from that day to this.

One hot summer in the late 1960s the area surrounding the Auckland Badminton Hall on Gillies Avenue became the focus of a police investigation. Jim Lambert was one of the members present when guests from the Otahuhu club remarked upon an unusual smell which seemed to come from outside the hall. A week later the body of a young woman, who had been missing for a month, was found. The case was initially thought to have been one of murder, but proved to be one of an illegal abortion which had gone wrong, carried out by the tenant of a house in Withiel Drive. The guilty man had panicked and dumped the unfortunate lady in long grass.

Wild rumour and innuendo flew around the district at the time of the Mr Asia drug sensation in 1979. It was claimed that the owner of the very large house shrouded away behind trees at the southern corner of Withiel Drive and Gillies Avenue had given sanctuary to the lawyer girlfriend of the head of the drug ring, Terry (Terrance John) Clark, Mr Asia, at the time of the latter's arrest and subsequent trial.

A lasting feature of the Thomas era is the extensive rock work including the paths, walls, stairway and lookout which survived the subdivision of land around the original 1890 family villa. During his long tenure at 17 Withiel Drive, Denis Nathan ensured that the treasured garden and rock landscaping which he had inherited were carefully nurtured. These include a charming tunnel entry into the garden, constructed under a raised pathway which gives access to stone steps and gate posts at a higher level. Mr Nathan generously opened his garden for fundraising purposes from time to time.

Today the regenerated native forest now known as Withiel Park is passed by motorists daily, its significance often unrecognised. Few people are familiar with the stone seat, complete with a bird bath, hidden in the shade of the bush, halfway down the street, which bears a plaque in memory of Sir Algernon Thomas. Visitors who have discovered the existence of the park can explore the rock-bordered pathway and observe the individual trees growing though the rocky terrain. In 2011, residents of Withiel Drive and the surrounding area delight in the bush outlook, the native birds and their song.

Acknowledgment

The writer is indebted to all those ex-residents of Withiel Drive and visitors to the area over the years who have shared their memories of the past.



The enchanting rock wall and tunnel built in the Thomas era

Photo: V. Sherwood

Thomas Aubrey Chappé Hall, 1873–1958

By Jeanette Grant

This Epsom resident was one of the few Europeans of the period to become expert in Maori carving techniques.

He was born in Ruddington, Nottinghamshire, in 1873, the elder son of Dr John Hall and his wife Margaret Louise (née Chappé de Leonval). He was educated at Leamington College and Tonbridge School, and then went on to Brasenose College, Oxford, but never completed a degree.

In 1896 he sailed from London to Wellington and settled in the area of the Whanganui River. Over the next four years he was taught carving by Hori Pukehika, the celebrated Te Ati Haunui-a-Paparangi carver.

During the Boer War he served with the 6th New Zealand Mounted Rifles. Afterwards he married Ethel Marguerite Adams in 1904 and they had a daughter, Winifred Ethel Chappé Hall, in 1905. The family settled in Tauranga, but in 1911 his mother was dying and he returned briefly to England. By 1913 they were living in Auckland, but with the outbreak of war he spent three years with the New Zealand Army Service Corps at Featherston Camp. From 1918–20 they lived on Kawau Island and spent some years at Waiwera in the mid 1920s.

In 1928 his life took on a new element. Gilbert Archey, curator of the new Auckland War Memorial Museum, asked him to work on the renovation of the Wharenui Hotunui. For the next 23 years he was actively involved in restoration work throughout the country, particularly at the Auckland and Otago museums. Among these projects were the installation of the wakataua Te Toki a Tapiri in the new museum and the erection of Mataatua in the Otago Museum.

The *Auckland Star* of 30 October 1947, reporting on the Tainui Garden of Memories in Howick which Miss Emilia Maud Nixon had created in 1936, says:

One of the many attractions is the small carved whare into which Miss Nixon has packed all the Museum relics, such as mats, cloaks, weapons, eating utensils and ancient memorabilia she could gather in 12 years.... Here too is some intricate tukutuku work, a form of reed tapestry, executed by Mr T. A. C. Chappe Hall of Epsom. It

wa. [sic] Mr Chappe Hall, the leading pakeha craftsman of Maori art in the Dominion, who did the elaborate exterior carving.

Unfortunately this wharenuī was destroyed by fire in an arson attack in 2004.

Not all his work involved restoration. Among his larger new works were an altar for St Paul's Cathedral in Dunedin, the lectern at the Auckland Teachers' Training College (now the University of Auckland's Department of Education) and several pataka. Small items ranged from replicas of Maori bailers and feather boxes etc to cigarette boxes which were very popular with American GIs in World War II.

There was never any suggestion that his works were considered forgeries. Many were signed or otherwise labelled as being his work. Many of the pieces were copies of Maori patterns but that was inevitable when he was involved in restoration work. If anyone doubts he was capable of original work, they only need to look at the three 'Phar Lap panels' in the skirting board beneath the window of Mataatua in the Otago Museum. They are described as 'Before the race', 'The Finish' and 'After the race'.

The Tē Papa website has an illustration of a chair he carved and has the following to say about it—and him:

This exceptionally high-backed chair from the Edwardian period (1900–1910) was carved by Thomas Aubrey Chappe Hall (aka Tamati Hape Hore) in 1904. Hall is pictured in a *New Zealand Herald* photograph (3 November 1952: 8) in this or a similar high back chair in his Epsom home. The *Herald* article mentions 'carved dinning [sic] room chairs' along with a grandfather clock. The carving features a stylised double spiral motif flanked by two manaia (avian figures) at the top of the backrest, and a large central tiki (primal human) figure with a takarangi (dizzy) spiral between its legs. The main parts of the chair are further enhanced with taratara-a-kai (parallel strips of raised zigzag notching) in curvilinear and straight-line aspect covering all the chair's visible surfaces. There is also some scrollwork that appears to be of European origin. The chair's overall decorative form has many precedents in customary Maori art, especially with the Tē Arawa and Ngati Tarawhai carving schools that flourished in Rotorua in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Hall had a close association with

the Rotorua school of carvers and bequeathed his carving tools to Pineamine Taiapa, a well-known Ngati Porou carver and tutor at the school. . . . Although he realised the value in perpetuating traditional art for his many commissions, he also excelled in applying his skill to non-traditional forms, such as non-Maori architectural features and other genres including furniture like this example.

In his later years he suffered from what he described as ‘gouty arthritis’ and by 1951 his loss of dexterity had forced him to stop carving. His wife Ethel died in 1952 aged 72 years. He died in 1958 aged 84 years, and was commemorated by a newspaper article in the *NZ Herald* of 22 May 1958 headed ‘Loss of Pakeha Expert in Maori Art’.

Sources

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Josephine’s phrases

Sayings collected by Josephine Power

Don’t bust your boiler Don’t hurry unnecessarily

Don’t get your knickers in a twist Don’t get too upset about it

Don’t make a song and dance about it Don’t make a fuss

Elbow grease An expression to say ‘Use a bit of an effort’ i.e. in polishing something such as a floor or a car, or general cleaning

Fatty Arbuckle Fatty Arbuckle was an obese screen actor from silent film days; his name was often applied to overweight people

High jinks Referring to a person saying to a child ‘No high jinks please’, i.e. no loud noises or boisterous behaviour

Hot tongue and cold shoulder What a husband thought his wife would be cooking for his next meal following an argument

Just a hair past a freckle When someone without a watch was asked what the time was

May holidays or August holidays School terms were set around having school holidays in May and August with a larger break from Christmas until early February

A gentleman's residence

By Bryan Boon

Standing beside the southern pathway of the cemetery surrounding St Andrew's Church in Epsom, there is an obelisk headstone now slightly tilted and made of fine grey granite Three sides are blank, but the fourth bears these brief words:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

JAMES WILLIAMSON

WHO DIED 22nd MARCH 1888

AGED 75 YEARS

It is the resting place of one of Auckland's earliest colonists, who rose from modest beginnings to become one of its most prominent and wealthy men, but whose life ended in ruination and tragedy as a result of the long depression of the 1880s.

The funeral took place at 3pm on the day after his death, but the news had spread quickly around the town. The church was surrounded by an impressive array of carriages, buggies and brakes bearing many of Auckland's leading citizens from every walk of life who had journeyed out to the farmlands of Epsom to pay their respects.

James Williamson was born in 1814 in Belfast, Northern Ireland, the son of Anne Gardiner and Thomas Williamson, a linen merchant and ship owner. Adventurous by nature, he went to sea at an early age and saw much of the world, travelling extensively in the Americas and the East. He is reported to have been shipwrecked several times, once on the Goodwin Sands and in Cook(s) Straits.

In 1840 at the age of 26 he came from Sydney to Kororareka (Russell) as chief mate aboard a vessel, and there decided to obtain a discharge and try his luck in the new colony, setting up a humble store selling supplies to the Maori and settlers and rum to the sailors. As many as 40 ships could have been anchored there at any one time.

He realized that if fame and fortune were to be made, Auckland, the newly established capital, was the place to be, so a year later he moved there and entered partnership with Thomas Crummer whom he had met in the north. They were present at the first government

land sale, when they bought a quarter acre allotment in Shortland Street (Crescent) for £266, where they carried on an extensive trade as merchants, naming the enterprise Williamson and Crummers Store. They also built and ran the Victoria Hotel on the waterfront.

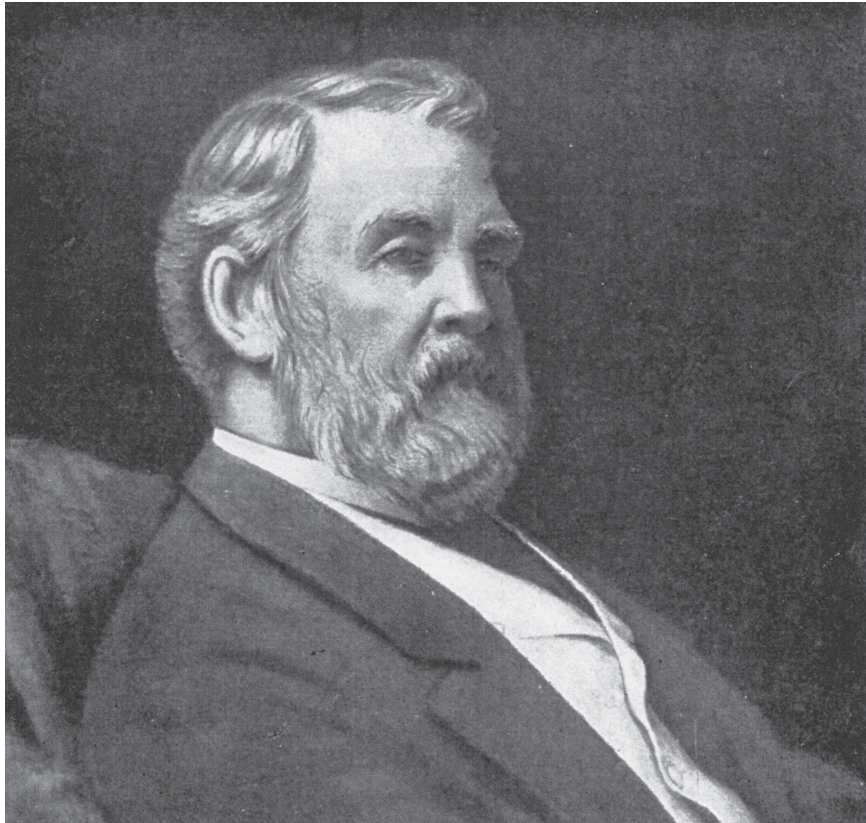
In the early 1850s the lure of gold attracted Crummer to San Francisco on behalf of the firm, but his trading adventures turned out badly, and they lost heavily. Crummer returned to Auckland and they remained partners until his death in 1861.

Crummer married a high ranking Maori who had an interest in a large tract of land on the outskirts of the town, and which through her connections they were able to buy for a song. They named it Surrey Hills in memory of Crummer's home county in England. The estate was formed into a borough and named Newton, comprising the Wards of Sussex, Surrey and Richmond, but in 1899 the name was changed to Grey Lynn after Sir George Grey. We still have reminders of its origins in Surrey Crescent, Richmond Road and Sussex Street, while the partners' names are remembered in Williamson Avenue and Crummer Road.

Crummer died probably at about the age of 50 in 1861, but had bequeathed half of the estate to Williamson who nine years later was able to buy out the other half from Crummer's sons; he thus became the sole owner of a very large parcel of land. When Auckland grew rapidly in the 1870s, Surrey Hills skyrocketed in value as a prime area for subdivision. To his chagrin Williamson in old age found himself denounced as a land monopolist.

On 29 April 1857 Williamson married Julia Maria Seidler of London, described as a well-connected and polished young woman of 26, but 13 years his junior. She was considered one of the beauties of Auckland. They had six children, three sons and three daughters, all of whom survived to adulthood, so Williamson would have been in early or mid fifties when his younger children were born.

When the New Zealand wars broke out in the 1860s, Williamson was already a man of substance and was further enriched by commissariat contracts. He also speculated profitably in city and suburban land and shrewdly invested in the Thames goldfields. He seemed the very epitome of the self-made merchant-prince. Such were the 'unlimited means at his command' surmised the *Observer*, 'he could if he chose almost recall the fable of Aladdin'.



James Williamson

Photo: Auckland Public Libraries

Although Williamson was briefly (1862–7) a member of the House of Representatives where he spoke little, and then of the Legislative Council (1870–88), which allowed him to prefix his name with the title Honourable, his main public service was in finance. He was one of the Auckland businessmen who founded the New Zealand Insurance Co, (1859), the Bank of New Zealand (1861), and the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency (1865), and served on their Auckland Boards almost continuously until his death in 1888. His fellow directors are reported to have had admiration for his experience and judgement, and alarm at his occasional petulance and uncertain temper. He was also the foundation president of the prestigious Northern Club in Princes

Street (1869) where he would have socialized with many of Auckland's leading citizens. His obituary notes that he took a lively interest in all matters concerning the advancement of Auckland, and spent large sums purchasing and improving properties in the Waikato.

On 17 July 1877 at the age of 63 he bought from his close friend Thomas Russell for £10,000 a 313 acre estate in Hillsborough named Pah Farm, and set about achieving what must have been a lifelong ambition which was to build and occupy the most palatial residence in Auckland. It took two years to complete, but he and his family were only able to enjoy it for about eight years. Within five years of its completion Williamson was on the verge of bankruptcy.

After the Waikato war Williamson had invested heavily in confiscated Waikato land, but much of it was swamp and required considerable expenditure before its potential value could be realized. Dwarfing all his other land speculations was the Auckland Agricultural Co, which he and his friend Thomas Russell, with two others, had formed in 1881. Its purpose was to develop estates in the middle Waikato which totalled nearly 80,000 acres. By November 1887, six years later, the company was insolvent, unable in the midst of a deep rural depression to meet interest payments due to its mortgagor the Bank of New Zealand.

In an attempt to retrieve his financial position he subdivided and sold off the remainder of his Surrey Hills estate in Grey Lynn, but the income from it was not sufficient to get him out of trouble. His undoing was not Auckland's commercial recession of the 1880s but the collapse of the market for provincial farmland.

Death had been expected for some time as he had been suffering from valvular disease of the heart. It was during his attendance at Wellington at the last session of Parliament that symptoms of the complaint had manifested themselves, which subsequently accelerated his death, and he was compelled to return to Auckland.

The Pah

In 1841 William Hart was in business in Queen Street, as a land dealer and auctioneer. He petitioned Governor Hobson on more than one occasion for authority to buy land from Maori owners, who were apparently willing to sell the whole of the Tamaki isthmus.

Three years later he was able to purchase a piece of land called the Kohiraunui Block of about 400 acres from the chiefs Kati and Tamate

in consideration for £60 cash, two coats, two waistcoats and two pairs of trousers. The exact boundaries are not clear, but it is situated in Hillsborough, and much of it still remains undeveloped, and is now named Monte Cecilia Park. He was convinced that the natural features of the land would enable both agricultural and pastoral farming to be profitably carried on.

In 1846 he engaged builders to erect a homestead on the elevated location of the present mansion known as Monte Cecilia. During the course of excavating and levelling the site, workmen unearthed the remains of upright totara stakes, Maori artefacts and several greenstone ornaments. He was informed that an extensive pa had stood on the site and was occupied by a hapu of about 400 of the Wai-o-Hua tribe of which Tamaki-a-Kiwi was the last great leader. This chief had his principal pa on Maungakiekie/One Tree Hill and was the paramount chieftain of the Tamaki isthmus until he was slain with practically all his people at a great battle fought about 1750 at Titirangi.

Hart named his farm 'The Pah' using the form of spelling which was common until the 1860s, that is by adding the letter 'h'. The name was retained by subsequent owners until 1913, when it was changed to 'Monte Cecilia' after its purchase by the Catholic Diocese of Auckland.

Contemporary reports of 1853 described the home as being surrounded by arbour'd walks, parterres, latticed summer houses, walls of dressed stone and ornamental ponds stocked with swimming birds, as well as Roman and Greek statuary, some of rare and costly marble. This, when Auckland was only in its infancy!

Hart was in a constant state of pecuniary embarrassment, much of which was his desire to 'keep up with the Joneses.' He would have been wiser to have spent his money on improving his pastures and raising the standard of his wool-bearing sheep and beef cattle. He was able to stave off his creditors until 1870, when he sold the home and farm of 313 acres, described as one of the finest properties in this part of the colony, to the Hon Thomas Russell, a former member of the Crown. Four years later Russell added a further 55 acres of adjoining land, some of which had been owned by James Carlton Hill whose name was conferred on the suburb of Hillsborough. He is also remembered by Carlton Street, also in that suburb.

Russell held the property for seven and a half years, and then sold it for the sum of £10,000 to the Hon James Williamson on 17 September

1877. Both would have been well known to one another as Members of Parliament and directors of many Auckland companies. Williamson told Russell that it was his intention to build a 'gentlemen's residence' on the site of the existing home. The story received wide credence that it was his wish to erect a mansion that would match in every way the large residence built in Dunedin for the Hon William Larnach, and now known as Larnach's Castle. The truth is that he sought for a model the stately homes of that part of Ulster of which he was a native, and remembered from earlier years. He instructed Edward Mahoney, a prominent Auckland architect, to prepare the plans. Mahoney in turn obtained several plans from architects in England suitable for a New Zealand setting, which he submitted to Williamson, who made his choice.

It is clear, though not recorded, that Williamson's instructions to all concerned were these: 'I want nothing but the best' and they were obeyed. No expense was spared, and every modern convenience was to be incorporated to make easier work for the household staff.

The old homestead built by William Hart and later enlarged by Thomas Russell was demolished and the site levelled for the new building which was now being called by the locals Williamson's Mansion, Williamson's Castle, or Williamson's Hall.

There was a select group of notables present to witness the laying of the foundation stone. Proceedings were fully described in the *NZ Herald* on 26 November 1877. Williamson was not able to be present (perhaps he was in Wellington at Parliament) but he indicated that he wished his second son, Master James Williamson, to perform the ceremonies. A fine block of scoria stone was provided with a cavity excavated for the reception of the usual documents and coins of the realm in a sealed bottle. Then the necessary tools, trowel and hammer were laid on it, after which it was lowered into position, suspended by a derrick. As was usual on those occasions an excellent lunch was provided, catered for by the Thistle Hotel, and followed by numerous toasts to all concerned.

The contract price was £8250, but when all was completed to Williamson's satisfaction including the £10,000 for the purchase of the property, he would have got little change out of £20,000. A rough conversion into today's money would be somewhere between 30 to 50 million dollars.

Work proceeded over 16 months, and at the end of March 1879 the *Herald* was able to devote a full column to a description of the site and the building. They noted:

It is built of plastered brick on stone foundations in the Italianate style with round headed windows. The entrance facing Hillsborough Rd is rather plain, and is under a porte-cochere supported by eight Ionic columns.

There are 33 rooms, all well over 12 feet high, and a dozen fireplaces with Minton tile hearths. All of the mantle-pieces [some of which still remain] are of marble, two of which are splendid specimens of white marble. The ground floor contains a drawing room, morning room, ballroom, dining room and study. Of special interest are the curved glass windows and sashes in the drawing room [which luckily have survived]. There is a grand staircase with a cedar handrail and rimu balusters leading to the upper floor, which has seven bedrooms, the two principal ones opening through casement doors to a balcony. A staircase leads to a tower or kind of lantern or cupola which enables splendid 360 degree views of Auckland to be had. The drawing and morning rooms are of grained maple, and the dining room and hall have all the woodwork except the doors grained in imitation oak. Fine parquetry flooring is a feature of much of the ground floor. [It still remains.]

Gillows of London the Royal Appointment cabinet makers were commissioned to supply the furniture and furnishings. [The only item which survives is a hall stand to the left of the entrance, which was 'built in' to its permanent position.] A full sized billiards table was supplied by the famous Alcock and Sons, London, and pronounced to be the finest ever landed in New Zealand up to that time.

Attached to the main building are the kitchen and servants' department, butler's pantry and scullery, and above these are the servants' bedrooms for whom it is worthy to note that a comfortable bathroom has been fitted up.

While the interior decorative work was being carried out, Mr

Williamson let a contract for the erection of stables, coach houses, kennels and quarters for his groom and stable hands. He engaged a landscape gardener to lay out tree-lined carriage driveways, tennis and croquet lawns, orchards and orangeries and plantations of indigenous and exotic trees, many of which still survive. Seven or eight gardeners were engaged to care for the grounds. The main driveway was paved in asphalt the first to be seen in Auckland.

Opening day at the Pah

Strangely the newspapers of the day do not contain a single reference to the opening day function. However in 1957, 78 years later, an old Onehunga resident recalled the event as a 9- or 10-year-old schoolboy.

My pal and I were on our way back to school after lunch break and we stopped in Queen Street (Onehunga) to watch the Mayor, Town Clerk and several Councillors getting into two carriages. A small group of onlookers were standing around making remarks about 'the toffs' in their shiny bell toppers, Prince Albert coats, tight trousers, gold watch chains and silver walking sticks. Such a grand spectacle the locals had not previously seen in Onehunga. We heard that the heads were going to the opening of the Pah so we decided to 'mitch' from school and go too.

When we got outside the main gates with stone pillars in Pah Rd we saw two men in uniform who were stopping all the carriages and examining the invitation cards. We went further up the road and climbed through a hole in the hedge, and we saw a great crowd of people—flags were flying everywhere and ladies with parasols walking up and down in groups. No one asked us who we were but there were a lot of well dressed 'toffs' kids and we felt out of place in our school clothes. There were lots of speeches which didn't interest us much,

We looked through a window to see tables piled high with a great banquet, and while no one was looking we darted in and grabbed a couple of legs of turkey, a handful of sandwiches and a lump of cake, then bolted outside to the shrubbery where we scoffed the tucker without being disturbed. We thought ourselves clever because we had dodged the Onehunga Councillors but some knew my father and told on us, so we got four cuts of the cane the next day for 'mitching.'

The Williamson family were only able to enjoy their grand lifestyle for a few years. The circumstances leading to his downfall and death have already been recorded. His fall was the most spectacular instance of the way in which (in the phrase of the day) the spin of the wheel of commercial fortune brought down some of Auckland's most successful businessmen.

A visitor in 1882 described the Pah as being like one of the stately homes of England. Nevertheless its isolation from the heart of Auckland where most of their friends would have lived, must surely have taken some of the glamour off a visit which would have required them to travel six or seven miles by horse and carriage over unsealed roads, a journey which could have taken an hour and a half. Having attended a ball and danced the night away, a long journey home in the early hours of a cold, dark winter's morning must have been something of an anticlimax. Nonetheless they knew nothing different.

The family did not long reside at the Pah after his death. A little more than a year later his three sons, the trustees of his estate, found themselves unable to maintain it on the same scale of magnificence as formerly, or for that matter, on a lesser scale. They mortgaged the property to the Bank of New Zealand for a considerable amount but were unable to pay in full the amount of the loan money on the due date, June 1891. As a consequence the whole estate was transferred to the Bank as sole owners

During the next ten years the Bank leased the property to three tenants but none were able to maintain its upkeep. The first, a Mr Chivers who was believed to be a member of the English family who owned the well known jam manufacturing company of the same name, maintained a style befitting the mansion, but returned to England with his family after a two year lease.

The next was a Mr E. D. O'Rorke who leased it shortly after his marriage to a member of the Rhodes family, socially prominent in Canterbury. He was the only child of Sir George Maurice O'Rorke, who was the Speaker of the House of Representatives for 20 years. Being a keen horseman, the stables and carriage houses were re-opened and teams of beautifully groomed polo ponies, jumpers, ladies hacks, and carriage pairs were pastured on the farm. Old residents say he lived in great style putting on lavish entertainments, grand balls, 'gay parties' and 'field days' involving his own horses and those of his guests. Two



Monte Cecilia: the eastern frontage overlooking Monte Cecilia Park

years later he complained that the upkeep of the Pah was too much of an onerous hurdle and moved out.

The last tenant is said to have been a Mr W. Reid who was understood to have had a collection of antiques of great value, and visitors spoke admiringly of rooms resplendent with Jacobean, Chippendale, Sheraton and early Georgian furniture. Walls were hung with oils and



Photo: John Denny, May 2011

watercolours which the cognoscenti recognized as being the work of notable artists.

Alas, 1901 saw the end of private ownership of the Pah, which lasted only 21 years. It was the end of a way of life which is now gone. Of the three great houses of Auckland: the Pah, Alberton and Highwic, unquestionably the Pah was the grandest but the most difficult to maintain.

The Pah becomes St John's Collegiate School

St John's Theological College was established by Bishop Selwyn in 1844, soon after his arrival from England, and has remained on its original site in West Tamaki or Meadowbank ever since. In 1881 the newly appointed warden, in response to requests from local settlers, opened a primary day school for boys using one of the college buildings for the purpose. It was appropriately named St John's School. Three years later the theological students moved out, taking up residence in Parnell, which enabled all of the college buildings to be used for school purposes. It was now able to accept boarders as well as day boys, and a secondary department was added which brought the roll up to 54.

In 1890, the remarkable Rev (later Canon) Percy Smallfield was appointed headmaster at the age of 32, and he held this position for the next 22 years which was the remainder of the life of the school. In 1901 and after 20 years at Tamaki, by which time the roll had grown to about 100, the authorities of the Anglican church indicated that the college would now be needed exclusively for theological students and that the boys' school presently in occupation must find a new location.

At that time the Assets Realization Board of the Bank of New Zealand had several splendid properties on its hands for disposal which were within fairly easy reach of Auckland city. After viewing some of these, Smallfield acquired The Pah at Hillsborough from the Board, together with its surrounding pasture and plantation which would now be the future home of the School. After Williamson's death the bank had sold a large portion of the land surrounding The Pah, and it was now reduced to about 50 acres.

The day after prize-giving at Tamaki in 1901, drays and wagons arrived taking timber, furniture and school equipment across country, and the task of converting the residence into a school was completed in time for the new term. The large brick building outside, formerly stables, etc, was to be used as a gymnasium, workshop and armoury. Another outdoors building named 'The Whare' became a library and masters' room, and the dormitories and classroom accommodation were provided by buildings brought from Tamaki and reassembled. A public hall at Epsom was moved to be used by the juniors.

The house provided the headmaster's study and accommodation for his family, a masters' sitting room and a dining room for the boarders, together with the kitchen and domestic offices.

On opening day early in February 1902 there were 51 boys who had continued from Tamaki, and another 49 who were new arrivals. Many came on horseback, using the paddocks at the rear for grazing purposes, while others travelled by bicycle or walked from the public transport system whose nearest point was probably Greenwoods Corner.

The school was planned largely on the lines of the great public schools of England, but from its earliest days Smallfield sought to integrate it into the life of the district. All of the boys were encouraged to be part of rugby, cricket, tennis or hockey teams, and the cadet corps paraded in khaki uniforms on ceremonial occasions. It was also Smallfield's declared aim to build up an orchestra so that every boy could take his place as a performer, irrespective of how he played or how humble his instrument. Boarders were required to attend morning service at St Peters in Onehunga, walking a distance of over four miles to and fro. Senior boys had to return later in the day for evening service.

The Bank of New Zealand Assets Realization Board was anxious to dispose of the mansion and surrounding estate, and advertised it several times between 1905–07. They were successful in 1908 when a lady from New Plymouth bought it for an undisclosed purchase price.

The lease of the property was due to expire at the end of 1912, and at the beginning of that year Smallfield believed that it would be renewed. Five months later, sadly as a result of his action in cutting down five old pinus radiata trees, the owner Mrs Bayly took umbrage and indicated that 'there would be no further renewal'.

The problem now to be faced was whether the school could continue. However an offer by Mr C. T. Major, the headmaster of King's College Remuera, that the schools could be amalgamated was accepted, and St John's Collegiate School as it was now known closed down at the end of 1912.

Post-1913

It is not within the scope of this article to record an in depth account of the use of the Pah during the next 90 years, but a brief summary will suffice.

Mrs Bayly transferred the property to an Auckland land agent in August 1913, again at an undisclosed price, and on the same day he sold it to the Religious Order of the Sisters of Mercy, and to Bishop

Clearly the Roman Catholic Bishop of Auckland as joint owners. It now became known as Monte Cecilia House, named after Mother Cecilia Maher, the founder of their Orders.

1913–25 143 girls from St Mary's Orphanage in Ponsonby, which had been burnt down, were taken to Monte Cecilia, and it was used for that purpose until 1925 when a new orphanage was built at Howick.

1926–52 The Sisters of Mercy established and used it as a junior boys' boarding school (primary).

1952–64 It became a girls' primary boarding school.

1965–67 It was used as a Formation House for the Sisters of Mercy

1969–75 Reverted to become a girls' primary boarding school again.

1975–82 The house was used by the Chanel Institute as a religious training centre.

1982–2000 Under the care of the St Vincent de Paul Society, the house was used as emergency accommodation for the homeless,

The year 2000 onwards

After a century of institutional use the home had become completely run down, and major expenditure was required to restore it. The Catholic Church wished to rationalize its holdings of land in Hillsborough, and the house and land facing the east were no longer required.

In 2001, after five years of complex negotiations, the Auckland City Council purchased the house and a small area of surrounding land for \$9.5 million, and a year later it was able to purchase the remainder of the estate with the intention of transforming it into a park for public use. An open day was held in 2003 and visitors were asked for suggestions as to how the home might be used for the benefit of all Auckland citizens.

By 2006 the council had made a decision. In 2007 they released a multi million dollar plan to completely restore the building to its original glory, and for it to be used as a centre for leisure and cultural activities, particularly in relation to art in its broadest sense.

Early in 2009 the City Council announced a new arrangement with the Taranaki Savings Bank, which would enable the home to be used to display part of the collection of contemporary paintings, ceramics, sculptures and statuary owned by the James Wallace Arts Trust. Totalling over 5000 items, the collection has been built up over the past

45 years, and had long outgrown its previous Queen Street premises. Works will be displayed on a rotating basis, and provision has been made to include a café, audio visual room, a recital and lecture room, corporate entertainment space, as well as an apartment for artists in residence. It is now open to the public free of charge.

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Bert Bannister and the 'Maori Motorbike'

By Jeanette Grant

Epsom has been home to many people over the years, and the variety of their interests and innovations has been immense. One of these, known mainly to motorsport aficionados, was Bert Bannister who lived at 15 Gilgit Avenue in later life.

He was born Albert Richard Bannister in Gisborne on 9 February 1886. His father was a blacksmith, and his own first job was as a bricklayer. He married Eileen Ainsworth Gardiner on 20 December 1911 at St Marks Church, Wellington, and they had two children, Peter and Anne. Eileen died in 1938 aged 52 years.

Bert's interest in engineering led him to a friendship and business partnership with another Gisborne man—Thomas George Johns—and together they designed the 'Maori Motorcycle' in 1910 using their own variable speed drive. They had no money to develop their ideas so they aimed to sell the manufacturing rights to an overseas firm that

could build them in quantity for the New Zealand market. Just raising the money to patent their ideas was a struggle, but they managed to convince a number of Gisborne businessmen to invest, and the Patent Office records show their application for a provisional specification on 31 July 1911, NZ Patent 29970 'Improvements in Variable Driving Gear for Motor Cycles and the like'. The complete specification was submitted on 30 May 1912. Other patents on the gearbox followed in the United States, Britain, Austria, Denmark, Japan and Germany between 1912 and 1922.

In 1914 the family went to England where Bert continued to work on the automatic gearbox and many other inventions. However in 1916 he enlisted as a gunner in the NZ Expeditionary Force and served in Europe for two years. After contracting 'trench fever' he was sent back to England to recover, and as he was an accomplished trombone and double bass player, he spent the rest of the war entertaining troops.

He carried on developing his inventions and took out a new patent on 10 January 1919 and set up the Zelandia Motor Co Ltd even before he was demobilized in May 1919. In that year the 'Maori Motorcycle' was road tested by the magazine *Motor Cycle Trader* and the report stated: 'The machine and variable gear are the design of Mr A. R. Bannister, a New Zealander, who has had a large experience there, from the inception of motorcycling, and many of the special features of the Maori are the result of his experience of the difficulties encountered in some of the roughest parts of New Zealand.'

On 11 August 1920, Eileen Bannister and their two children returned to New Zealand on the *Mamari* but Bert stayed in England and continued work on a third motorcycle variable gearing design, completely unrelated to his earlier efforts. This one included a clutch and reverse gear and changed ratios automatically without the foot pedals previously used to raise and lower the gears. It was patented on 27 Oct 1921 but does not seem to have ever been fitted to a motorcycle. On 25 October 1923 his last motoring related patent was applied for—destined to be put in a car called the 'Century' as it was intended to sell it for £100. It had an efficient 4-cylinder, two stroke 7hp motor which would have been in competition with the Morris and Austin four stroke 7hp engines. A prototype was registered in 1925 as XX3772. It had a 2210mm wheelbase, and photos show no radiator so it was probably air cooled. In 1926, Century Cars Ltd was registered and Zelandia Motor

Co sold them the design and manufacturing rights. Unfortunately the Depression arrived and they ran out of money before getting any manufacturer to commit to production. In 1934 the company was dissolved.

This may have been his last unsuccessful foray into the motor field, but Bert's inventive genius produced a variety of new creations in other areas. There was an automatic gramophone deck in 1928, capable of changing up to ten records, which could be attached to an existing machine. Others included an air plotter for the military, a coin vending machine (1933), juice extractors, a rotary hand-held kitchen whisk (1938) and the 'Quixie toaster' which preceded the modern toasted sandwich maker.

The best known was probably his 'cream machine' which made cream by emulsifying butter and milk. As late as 1956 he was still designing refinements for it. Its uses were not confined to the kitchen, and the basic emulsifying device was adapted for use in bakeries, pharmacies and even the paint industry. He patented this and in 1932 Bert became a founder and director of British Emulsifiers Ltd to manufacture and distribute this and other inventions worldwide. The firm's output included castings of parts for electric motors, thermostats, washing machines, cars, clocks, tools and household fittings of all kinds. They claimed to have 3000 customers—including the War Office and the Admiralty.

In 1938 he was asked to join the Anglo-International Trade Association as an adviser. However this never eventuated as news arrived of his wife Eileen's death. She had been living in Carterton, New Zealand, with Peter, now 25 and Anne, now 18. Bert had a new partner in England, Mad-elaine Ward, and they were married on 3 October 1938. Bert was aware that war was threatening so before the end of the year they returned to New Zealand on the *Akaroa*. He was reunited with his children and they all settled in Gilgit Road, where son Dick was born in 1941.

In 1943 Bert and his elder son Peter set up the Dominion Die Casting Co at the foot of College Hill, and manufactured castings for milking machines, pots and pans, toys, household appliances and the building trade. However, while he was in New Zealand the firm of British Emulsifiers was being run by non-technical directors and started to lose money. Bert subsequently sold his shares and lost touch with it.

In 1955 the Dominion Die Casting Co went into voluntary liquidation after a new vertical washing machine—the ‘Vortex’—went onto the market without sufficient development. The following year Bert, by then 70 years old, decided to retire. He died in Auckland on 17 February 1961 aged 75 years.

Appendix

From ‘Papers Past’: *Poverty Bay Herald*, 17 October 1913.

In a private letter from London to Mr G. E. Bannister, sent by his brother, who is at Home with the Johns, Bannister patent, Mr. Bert Bannister explains the pause of the delays in dealing with the first patent, as everywhere they tried they found themselves opposed to vested interest in existing gears. They could sell now, but the price offered was not equal to its value. The attorneys had got some strong financiers interested, and they would probably back up the Gisborne company with cash to handle the gear and share the profits. On going into a large garage with their model for some small repairs, they found that the proprietor of the garage was the inventor of the Zenith Gradua gear, which is decidedly the best on the market now, and was fitted to the Triumph motor cycles which carried off the motor cycle test at the international meeting in France this season. The Gradua inventor had a good look at the J.B. gear, and said it was easily the best he had seen, and the garage mechanics fully agreed. The patentee of the Gradua said there would be very few Graduas sold when the J.B. was on the market. He explained the struggle he had to get his gear taken up, but it had finally got there, and the company that bought it were now extending their factories. He said he had no influence much behind him, but with the backing Messrs Johns and Bannister had there should be no difficulty in getting it off quickly. So far as No. 2 patent was concerned, Mr Bannister said they had been instructed by the attorneys not to touch it yet, but from private opinions they had received from leading experts at Home he was satisfied that it was going to be a big thing. He asked his brother to remember him to all his old friends in Gisborne.

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Now you see it, now you don't!

Saving some of the history of 6 Stokes Road, Mt Eden

By Christine Black

The intersection of Stokes Road and Mt Eden Road has been settled a long time. Auckland Museum collection photographs from the 1880s show a group of houses and shops, and this settlement continued to grow in subsequent photographs. According to Fay Angelo's *The Changing Face of Mt Eden*, p.20: 'By the late 1880s residents were wanting to make Mt Eden into a "respectable" residential area.'

Mt Eden Primary School had been founded in 1877, and Auckland Girls Grammar School was the closest girls' secondary school. It therefore is not surprising that when the Misses Bews were asked to establish a girls' year 1-13 school, Mt Eden would have been a sensible part of the city to choose. Their school began in 1895 at 'Mayfield', 109 Owens Road, but within a year the roll had grown so much that bigger premises were required. An elegant, two storey house was available a short distance away and so the recorded history of 6 Stokes Road begins as School House, the main building of Mt Eden Collegiate.

The pupil roll continued to increase, and the school gently spread to encompass the whole of the northern side of Stokes Road, some buildings in Oaklands Road and for a while at 1 Stokes Road on the opposite side.

Mt Eden Collegiate continued until it was purchased as a going concern by the founders of St Cuthbert's College. With the onset of World War I, 1915 was a difficult time to build a new school so the plan for a bigger and more suitable site was delayed until the 1920s. The college moved to Market Road, Epsom, in 1925 and School House returned to life as a private residence.

In January 2011, demolition began on this building. As archivist at St Cuthbert's College I became increasingly alarmed that significant parts of Mt Eden and school history might be lost. The New Zealand Historic Places Trust was contacted. The trust stopped demolition work in January and further assessment was done.

The following account is the initial summary by Dr Hans-Dieter Bader, Archaeological Solutions Ltd, who supervised the ongoing work.

From private residence to St Cuthbert's College

By Dr Hans-Dieter Bader

In Stokes Road, Mt Eden, an old house was recently demolished and a small archaeological excavation undertaken on the site. Research revealed that the demolished house was the remains of a large, elaborate two storey building of the 1870s, which was reduced to one storey after a fire in 1930.

The original building on this site was an earlier cottage with a dirt floor and a small separate kitchen house, of which we found the hearth foundations (see picture below). Interestingly the dirt floor inside the cottage was tarsealed, obviously to make it easier to keep clean. This building was replaced with another one, which formed the nucleus of the building still standing here until recently.



The archaeological investigation revealed that the building in Stokes Road started life as another small two-room cottage using large kauri timber. At some stage a large extension with a verandah was added, though soon this didn't seem enough and a further extension added a grand entrance and possibly the second floor. At this stage the house was the largest and most beautiful building in the fledging suburb of Mt Eden.

In 1896 this two storey building was taken over by Mt Eden College,

which provided private education to girls (and boys for kindergarten age only). By 1912 this was the largest private girls school in the country. The building was turned by 90 degrees and a school hall added to it. A large fireplace and separate entrances for the front rooms were changes made to use the building as a school.



The original building as it was by 1915, looking from Stokes Road

Photo: St Cuthbert's Archives

In 1915 the principal, Mary Bews, sold the school to the Auckland Presbyterian College for Ladies Ltd, which subsequently became St Cuthbert's College. In 1925 St Cuthbert's College moved to their current location in Market Road, Epsom.

During the expansion phase of the school in the first decade of the 20th century many more buildings and building sites along Stokes Road and adjacent roads were bought and used for school purposes. It seems that at least three more buildings of the school complex have survived until today in the area.

Much research remains to look at both the material remains of Mt Eden College and historic sources of the birthplace of St Cuthbert's College.



The house as it has looked from Stokes Road since the 1930s
Photo: St Cuthbert's Archives



Demolition underway—the roof off early, January 2011



The original staircase and other construction details, mid January 2011



The site cleared ready for the dig, March 2011

Demolition photos: Christine Black

Remember, remember the 5th of November 1945

By Helen Laurenson

With awe we recently watched the magnificent displays of fireworks that marked the end of the old year and the beginning of 2011. The spectacular, soaring fountains and cascades of colour and dazzling light, the explosions of sound, and the sheer lavishness of the show still brought a sense of wonder to those of us who were children during the austere years of World War II. Then celebrations of Guy Fawkes Day in New Zealand, if they happened at all, were very low key and quiet. In 1941 war emergency regulations had imposed a ban on the bonfires and fireworks that traditionally marked the occasion. Many of us had never seen a firework or heard a cracker before that ban was lifted in time for Guy Fawkes Day in 1945.

Although it was legally possible to set off fireworks and crackers on 5 November 1945, in fact they were very scarce commodities in Auckland. There had been few importations of stock during the war years. Most local supplies were held by Chinese importers, but as reported by one member of such a city firm, those had been largely used in celebrating both the end of World War II and of Japan's occupation of that country. He also attributed the shortage to import restrictions and lack of shipping, saying that few fireworks or the larger types of crackers would be available for Guy Fawkes night, with only very limited quantities of the smaller varieties.

Nevertheless the *New Zealand Herald* of 5 November 1945 confidently stated that 'now with the war ended and the ban removed the children, with the assistance of their parents, may revive the old custom of celebrating the occasion.' I had been kindly invited by school friend Graham Davy, and his young sisters Annette and Cynthia, to their home at 35 Woodside Avenue, Mt Eden, that evening for just such an occasion. It was very exciting, for I did not remember ever seeing fireworks before.

The evening was mild, calm and cloudy, perfect for such a celebration, but it was hard to wait until darkness fell and the real action could begin. Bob Gummer, the Davys' neighbour at 39 Woodside Road, owned a hardware shop at 151 Queen Street, just a few doors south of Milne &



Auckland Normal School 1945

Graham Davy is standing at left of row three, Wilson Whineray at the end (left) of the row behind him, Graham Bush at the end of the back row (left). Helen Crabtree (Laurensen) is standing 4th from the right in row three.

Choyce's stylish department store, separated by the Wilson & Horton office of the *New Zealand Herald*. He had stored a precious supply of pre-war fireworks which of course could not be used during the war. What a memorable display we were about to witness! Finally it was dark enough for the show to begin, with the men, including Graham's father John, bravely ensconced in the 'danger zone' at the far end of the back lawn, while women and children watched at a safe distance from the back verandah, out of range of wildcard fireworks and stray sky rockets.

A few spectacular fireworks were selected from the basket in which the precious hoard was stored and were set off to gasps of amazement and 'oohs' and 'aahs' of delight. What even more wonderful examples would be revealed to the assembled company as the basket steadily yielded up its treasures!

Alas, it was not to be! Probably in the interests of safety, Bob Gummer was lighting the touch papers of the fireworks from a candle. By mistake poor Bob dropped the lit candle into the basket, whereupon the whole large basket of goodies exploded in a cacophony of ‘son et lumière’. The men fled from the far end of the lawn towards the safety of the house, pursued by rogue skyrockets—the assembled company watched open-mouthed as the conflagration of basket and contents roared, banged, burst flashes of colour, shot rockets skyward and sideways. Buckets of water were hurriedly brought and poured on the basket and on those fireworks that had been determined to make their escape.

Fortunately no one was hurt. There was only one local casualty of 1945 Guy Fawkes night. Young William O’Brien, aged 14, of St Mary’s Bay Road, Ponsonby, was in a group of boys using chemicals to fill cartridge cases of various sizes to make their own fireworks in a vacant section in Clarence Street, when one case exploded. William’s lacerated leg was treated in the casualty department of the Auckland Hospital.

The following day the *New Zealand Herald* reported that on Guy Fawkes Day,

... some Chinese children were seen letting off fireworks in Grey’s Avenue, but generally there was a complete absence of them. Large bonfires were seen in Orakei and Kingsland, and one in Birkenhead, but in the majority of districts there was a complete lack of activity by the children.

There was indeed ‘a complete lack of activity’ by the children at 35 Woodside Road, Mt Eden, for they were in a state of shock at what they had witnessed. Disappointing though it might have been at the time, it was a far more spectacular occasion for us eight-year-olds than any 2010 New Year’s Eve extravaganza, and certainly unforgettable. Even after all these years Graham and I still share the story with amusement.

Sources

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Graham Davy to Helen Laurenson, 18 November 2010.

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Wise’s Auckland Provincial Directory.

Reminiscences: the Epsom neighbourhood

In April 2003, and responding to requests for information about the area, Dr Jock Carnachan and the late Dr Roger Bartley contributed these reminiscences about Epsom streets to the history book project. Readers will be interested in these notes transcribed by Valerie Sherwood Ayers from the writers' original material with their families' support.—Ed.

My memories of the Sharpe Road area

By Dr Roger Bartley

I was born at #6 Sharpe Road, Epsom, in 1929, and it was my home until I married in 1954. My father was an electrical engineer. In 1902 he went to England to study for this. (Both he and his father were born in Auckland.) He met an English girl, who came out to New Zealand in 1914 to marry him. When I was born my father was manager and chief engineer of the Auckland Electric Power Board. He remained in this position until he retired in 1952.

In Sharpe Road there were eleven houses, occupied by three widows, four women without husbands, and four couples. Only four people had cars and we were the only family with a refrigerator.

Once a week, 'Walter's Ice' would deliver an ice block to those with ice boxes. Bread was delivered by horse and cart, and brought to the back door in a covered basket. Milk, delivered daily from a horse drawn wagon, was dished out at the kitchen door, directly into the jug, from a measured half round pail. Cream was served out in smaller amounts. The horses knew the route so well that they would come to a stop at each home where deliveries were made. The butcher's boy arrived with the meat carried in a basket which was attached to the front of his bike. He wore a blue and white striped apron. Groceries were ordered at the shop, then delivered.

Until after my father died my mother didn't have a cheque account. Every month, prior to the 20th, she went personally to the ASB in Newmarket, where she withdrew cash. She would then proceed in turn to George Court's, John Court's, Milne's, and Smith & Caughey's to pay her accounts.

Life in Sharpe Road

- #1 Mrs Pratt had a son and a daughter with mongolism. Her husband, who was manager of the Northern Roller Mills, was never discussed.
- #2 Colonel and Mrs Dawson, who had no family.
- #3 Mrs Dunning, who died in her 100th year when her husband had been a long time dead.
- #4 Mr and Mrs van Stavern had two daughters and a son about my own age.
- #5 Mrs Conlan, a widow with two older children.
- #6 The Bartleys.
- #7 Mrs O'Neil, whose husband was never discussed.
- #8 Mr and Mrs Restall, who had older children.
- #9 Mrs McDonald, a widow, and her sister Miss Mincham.
- #10 Mrs Garland, with three older children, whose husband was not discussed, though he was known to be a publican, and as such, 'a sinner'.
- #11 My grandparents.

Albury Avenue

In Albury Avenue, at the end of Sharpe Road, lived the Twiss family: father, mother, and Greer; the Tongues, who were funeral directors; and on the corner of Albury and Gillies, the Stallworthys. Mr Stallworthy had been a government Minister of Health. His two sons were medical practitioners, one was a psychiatrist at Auckland Hospital, and the other the Queen's obstetrician in London.

Omana Avenue

At this time there were two houses in this area, Florence Court, with its entry from Mountain Road, and Omana, owned by J. J. Craig. A Mrs McGuire occupied the large home, Florence Court, which was sold in 1939. The purchase price was £5000.

The road now known as Omana Avenue was unsealed at that time, and consisted merely of two tracks. At its end, in what is now Savannah Street, was a scoria quarry and a stables owned by J. J. Craig. The quarry had ceased to function before my memories of the area. It was over-grown and was a great place for boys to play in. A dirt track passed through the back of (Sir Frank) Mappin's home (now Government

House) on Mountain Road, to Glenfell Road. This was a good area for me to walk my father's dog, as was Withiel Drive which at that time was bare of houses. There were quite a few pheasants there, on the right side going downhill.

I attended Model Country School (now Kohia Terrace) and then went to the Normal School [now ANI], just up the hill from my previous classrooms. When World War II broke out the Teachers' Training College was taken over by the Ministry of Defence and the Normal School became the Teachers' College. We pupils were split up, some going to Epsom School, some to Mt Eden School, and others, including me, to Newmarket School. We remained officially part of the Normal School, but were accommodated in the 'Tiny Tots' area, four classes in all. In 1943 I went to board at King's College, and thence to Medical School in Dunedin. One year following my return to Auckland I was married.

Jottings: Shipherds Avenue history

By Dr Jock Carnachan

The street was formed in the early 1920s on land owned by the Shipherd family, which was a small farmlet extending from Model Country School's current situation back to Owens Road.

One of the earliest residents was a Mr Starkey from the UK, an accountant by profession, who could not find work in Auckland in that field, so turned his hand to house building. (Apparently he had some experience in building in the UK as a young man.) He built his own home, which is currently the Wilson home in Shipherds Close, then built at least two other homes in the street, #18, #16, and probably #10 (c. 1926–30). All were built with Canadian cedar. Miss Shipherd, a surviving daughter of the original family after whom the street was named, took up residence in #6.

Robert Carnachan and his family (wife, five sons and two daughters) arrived from Te Kuiti and moved into the street in 1926, the first occupants of #18. Other families moving into the street were the Robinsons at #21 and the Crofts at #25. Later George Croft was the first resident of Shipherds Avenue to purchase a motor car. As the roadway was not sealed, but the footpath was, he drove on the footpath, much to the horror of all the neighbours. Mr Croft was a well known

builder of organs, which he installed in churches and theatres of the day.

An Australian, Mr Wilson, a motor mechanic by trade, was a resident of #24, and the Firths at #17 in these early years.

In 1954 Robert Carnachan moved out of #18 Shipherds Avenue to live and retire in Mission Bay. His son Colin purchased the family home at this time, moving with his wife Shirley and two sons, Jock and Robert, from Opoutere on the Coromandel Peninsula. Colin, previously a school teacher, took up a position with Pye Radio in Auckland.

In this era there were a number of families with school-aged children in the street, including: the Carnachans, #18; MacCormicks, #19; Bruces and Bournes, #14; Barrowcloughs, #23 (previously Dallows); Waltons, #7; Gallaghers, #1; Babbingtons, #5.

There were games of cricket, tennis, touch rugby, running races, and soccer in the comparative safety of the no-exit street, which also allowed for endless cycling races up and down.

A favourite adventure was to sneak up the drive (currently Shipherds Close) of Mrs Scanlan, who owned an enormous home on an acre of land which rose back from Shipherds Avenue. To keep the grass under control Mrs Scanlan ran sheep. Running around this vast 'lawn' and chasing the sheep was a great entertainment.

In those days Mr Douglas Hay, who was a sharebroker of repute in Auckland city, lived at #3. He was famous for the fact that, whilst managing the New Zealand cricket team on its 1927 tour of England, he played in a test match because the team was plagued by injuries, and there wasn't time to get a replacement player to the UK from New Zealand. He apparently acquitted himself with a creditable score.

In the 1950s and '60s a favourite pastime for the children in Shipherds Avenue was to go into Rocklands Hall property (the Teachers' Training College Hostel at the time) on the Gillies Avenue side of the street and play in the large grounds amongst all the trees in the old orchard, which afforded marvellous hiding places. Also, there was the attraction of the 'air raid shelter' on the Shipherds Avenue boundary of Rocklands Hall, which was a dug-out with a concrete shell. This was accessed down a flight of dark stairs, smelt dank, and inside which voices echoed—the stuff of real adventure.

In 1972 Jock Carnachan purchased #18 from his father Colin, who had moved to Australia, thus retaining the house for a third generation of the family, who still occupy the same.

St Andrews Reserve

(almost the birthplace of Mt Roskill)

By C. E. Keith Fuller

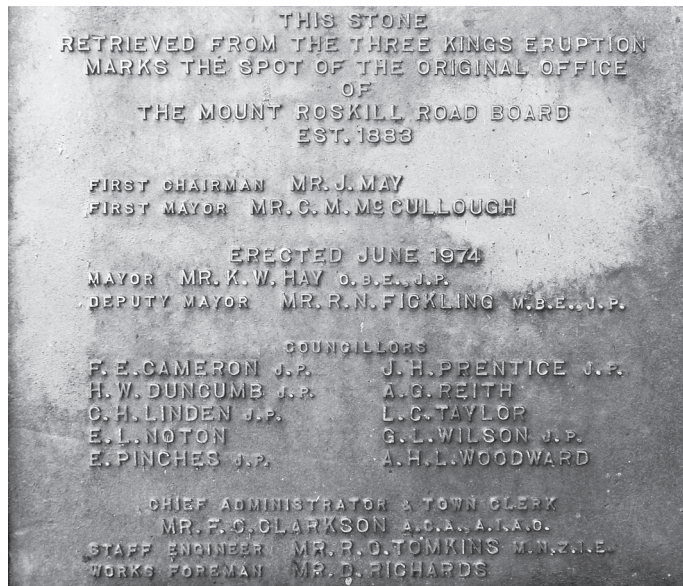


Photo: P. Dale, November 2010

This small, triangular-shaped piece of land, about 1700 square metres, is found between the southern ends of St Andrews and Rowan roads where they each join Mt Albert Road. This reserve is classified by the Auckland City Council as an ‘opened spaced activity zone’. In reality it is a tree-planted ‘off-street parking lot’. There are also two park benches for people to rest upon. However, most important is the presence of a large grey rock to which is attached a commemorative plaque (see next page).

Site history

This property was a nondescript piece of land from Allotment 85—a designated ‘recreation reserve’. It was situated on the eastern edge of the southern tuff ring formed by the volcanic explosion of Three Kings



*Plaque at
St Andrews
Reserve*

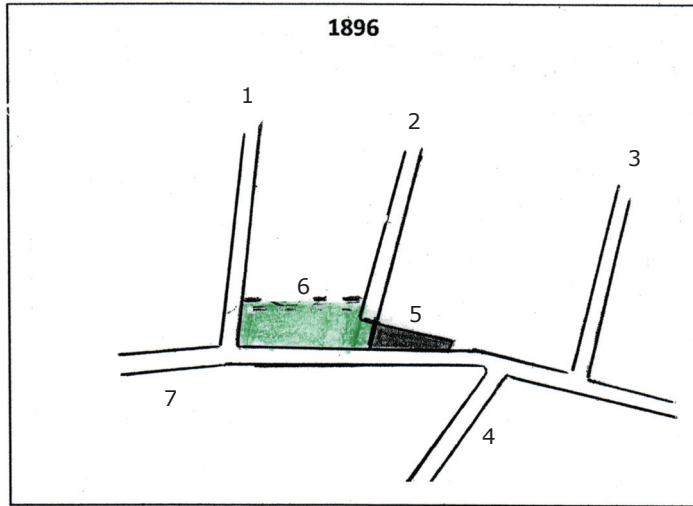
Photo:
John Denny,
May 2011

some 20,000 years ago. A tuff ring is a prominent rim of consolidated volcanic ash surrounding a volcanic crater. Volcanic rock can also be present. The mechanics of such a soil would make it unsuitable for farming. Being Crown Land, Allotment 85 became the responsibility of the Waste Lands Board (1855).

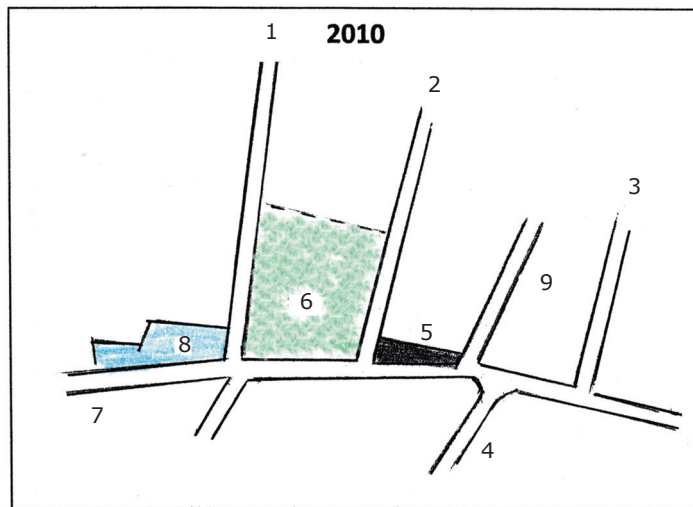
As an 'aside', but of relevance, by 1877 the Waste Lands Board had granted 1.2ha of this southern tuff ring, being part of Allotment 85, for the building of a school, Mt Roskill District School (1878). A school house (1879) resulted, and this became the headmaster's house for Three Kings School (1943). At this time St Andrews Road was called School Road and stopped short of joining Mt Albert Road. When joined (1930s?) the boundaries of both the school and of the Mt Roskill Road Board became as seen today, clearly definable.

The year in which the Waste Lands Board granted 'site ownership' to the road board is proving elusive! They built their administration building on the user-friendly eastern end of the property in 1890 (or was it possibly 1877?). At the western end, scoria was being mined. On removal, the road board made use of this now level space to establish on it their works depot.

From Mt Albert Road, the outline of the south facing quarry wall is



- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Three Kings Road | 2. School Road |
| 3. Buckland Road | 4. Hillsborough Road |
| 5. Mt Roskill District Road Board (1867) | 6. Mt Roskill District School (1878) |
| 7. Mt Albert Road | |



- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Mt Eden Road (1988) | 2. St Andrews Road (1917) |
| 3. Buckley Road (1975) | 4. Hillsborough Road |
| 5. St Andrews Reserve (1973/74?) | 6. Three Kings School (1943) |
| 7. Mt Albert Road | 8. Metrowater (ex Borough Chambers) |
| 9. Rowan Road | |

easily seen, even though oversprayed (1970s?) with a cement coating to protect house(s) on the upper boundary from crumbling or erosion of a weather-exposed quarry face.

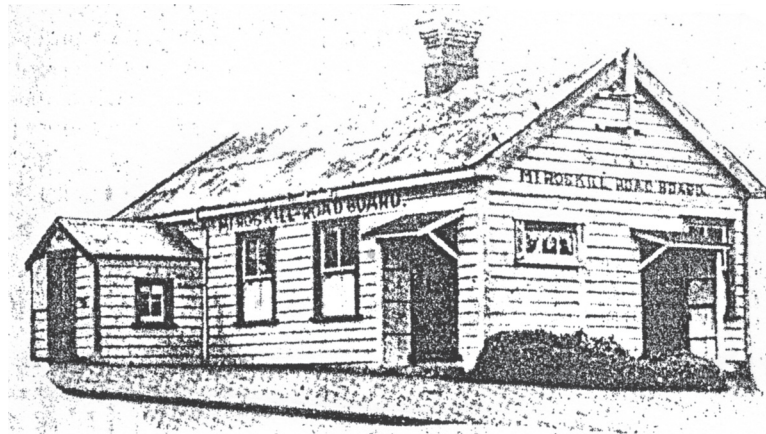
On the St Andrews Road boundary, a section of the original quarry retaining wall about 160m long is visible. Embedded into the original remnants of the stone pillars are ten protruding D-shaped steel sockets. Clearly something fitted into them. Below this wall, on the reserve side, were once three hoppers for the storage of construction aggregates.

A 'new' stone wall, in the interests of public safety, has been built on top of the original wall. The old and the new stone walls are clearly visible from the carpark.

Roskill's historical timeline

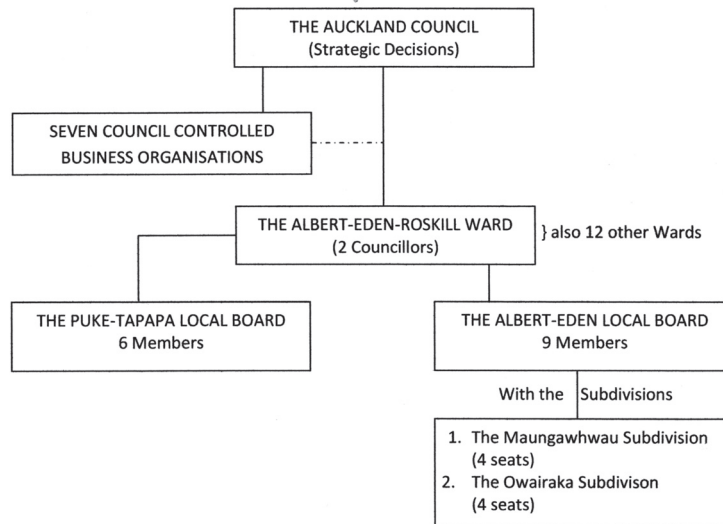
1867: The Auckland Provincial Gazette announced that Mt Roskill was to become a district under the provisions of the Highway Act 1862. On 7 August 1867 the ill-defined boundaries of Mt Roskill, a conceptual area of land within the County of Eden (1842), were defined.

1868: On 7 August, in a barn on Albert Dornwell's property, the following were elected as trustees of the Mt Roskill District Highways Board: Mr Joseph May (Chairman), Alfred Buckland, Albert Dornwell, Joseph Hayr and John O'Neil. Local body governance of 'Roskill' was born.



Mt Roskill Road Board, as built 1890 (note chimney)

- 1883:** In this year the Highways Board was superseded by the Mt Roskill Road Board (domain status was also granted).
- 1890:** The road board built their administration building on the St Andrews Reserve site.
- 1947:** By 1947 the Mt Roskill district had changed in character—from farming to suburbia, and qualified for the status of becoming a borough. As a consequence the Mt Roskill Borough Council—‘New Zealand’s largest borough’—came into being. Because of need, the outdated road board building continued to serve the borough as the administrative centre for a further 10 years (67 years in total).
- 1957:** On 7 June the new municipal chambers, built on the corner of Mt Eden Road (then Three Kings Road) and Mt Albert Road, were opened. The redundant ‘Road Board Building’ was renamed the Three Kings Social Centre, and served as a meeting place for residents with common interests. In 1967 it was reported as being in a dilapidated state of repair. The writer believes on evidence seen that it was knocked down sometime in 1977. It would have been 87 years old.
- 1989:** The Mt Roskill Borough Council was merged into the Auckland City Council. A Mt Roskill Community Board was constituted to care for the local needs of Roskill’s citizens. This board became redundant in October 2010 with the formation of Auckland as a ‘super city’. Its functions became the responsibility of a board to be called the Puke-tapapa Board (see diagram below). Interestingly, this board is to be domiciled in the Metrowater Building (ex Mt Roskill Borough Council Chambers on the Three Kings Reserve). Metrowater, under the name Watercare Services Limited (a ‘Council Controlled Organisation’), shifts to Newmarket.
- November 2010:** Mt Roskill became a part of the newly created Albert-Eden-Roskill Ward of the Auckland Council. Within this ward are two local area subdivisions: Maungawhau and Owairaka. These two subdivisions will work in collaboration with the newly created Puke-tapapa Local Board. The ‘new’ Auckland extends from Wellsford in the north to Pukekohe in the south. It consists of 13 wards and 21 local boards, spread across the region. There is one mayor and 20 ward councillors, elected from the 13 wards. (See diagram next page.)



The seven CCOs—by council appointment only:

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Transport | 2. Watercare | 3. Regional Facilities |
| 4. Tourism | 5. Waterfront Development | |
| 6. Council Property | 7. Council Investments | |

In essence the evolution of Mt Roskill from a country district to that of being New Zealand’s largest borough was conceived and nourished from its founding site, the St Andrews Reserve. Currently this achievement is marked by an ill-cared-for boulder with its attached bronze plaque the only reminder of Mt Roskill’s non-party, local body history. I quote:

‘There’s no room for politics in local body affairs.’

The late Keith W. Hay OBE, CBE, Mayor Mt Roskill Borough 1953–74.

Mount Roskill in summary

1869–1989: An independent self governing district.

1989–2010: Amalgamated into the Auckland City Council—autonomy lost!

APPENDICES

District Land Office, Auckland 1854²–1892

1854 The General Assembly of New Zealand passed an ACT that ‘shall be entitled and may be cited as THE WASTE LANDS ACT 1854’.

‘Under the *Auckland Land Regulations* of 1855 the Provincial Superintendent appointed the *Waste Lands Board* which consisted of the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Chief Commissioner of the Waste Lands Board) plus at least two other members.’

Under the *Land Regulations* and subsequent legislation, the board was responsible for, ‘all business connected with the sale, letting and disposal of Crown Lands including emigration schemes, sale of land at auction, leases and licenses of various kinds, reserves, and settlement of naval and military personnel’.

1892 Duties transferred to a successor agency—The Auckland District Survey Office.

Source of information: Sarah Mathieson, Archivist, Archives of New Zealand, 15/10/10.

- During the Depression years of the 1930s, up to 120 workers employed on the No 5 scheme quarried, shaped volcanic stone and built the walls and terraces of the attractive grounds of today’s Three Kings School (*Central Leader*, 17 December 1973).
- At one stage, possibly in the very late 1970s, an ornamental fountain with a model footbridge adorned the small carpark. Birds made it impossible to keep the water clean. It was dismantled.
- A Mrs E. M. Lovell ran the Three Kings (Mt Roskill) Post Office from her stationery/lending library shop opposite the road board offices from 1941–55.
- A newly built public convenience sited on the eastern end of the reserve by the council became a gathering place for sexually deviant men. Without ado council had it demolished, forthwith. (Dates of construction not found, possibly the late 1970s.)

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Three little streets

By Jack Baker

The wealthy large homes and estates of early Epsom have been well documented. But in 1935 when I was ten years old, as New Zealand slowly recovered from the Depression, I believe that the names and occupations of residents of three of Epsom's little streets, with their fifth (or more) of an acre sections, better reflect the life and times of Epsom in the mid-1930s.

These three little nooks and hideaways were only a decent 'mother's shout' from our home in The Drive. They played a big part in my growing up years. When not up One Tree Hill or down at Windmill Road reserve, we would often be in one of these little safe, quiet streets on trolleys, skates or bikes.

Two of these streets run opposite each other off Onslow Avenue, midway between The Drive and Manukau Road—a very short stone's throw from the early Onslow Road (now Avenue) family home of Dr Graham Bush, our *History of Epsom* editor. They are Goldsmith Road and Linwood (now Lurline) Avenue. Our third little street is Bramwell Place off Atherton Road—all approximately 150 yards long.

Such was the friendly life then, we kids got to know just about all the families listed. William Worrall and family lived in a large home in the middle of Onslow Avenue. Mrs E. Baker (née Worrall) wrote to me that in 1917 her dad was instrumental in having Goldsmith Road formed to link with Rangiatea Road. His wife's maiden name was Goldsmith and he named it so he would always have something to remember her by. Sadly Mrs Worrall died in the 1918 'flu epidemic.

Linwood Road's name was probably changed because there was also a Linwood Avenue in Mt Albert. *Lurline* was a coastal barque plying Auckland from 1879–89 and also a passenger liner servicing Auckland in the mid-1900s. Sister Matson Line ships were *Monterey* and *Mariposa*, all painted shiny white. They created much interest on the Auckland waterfront.

In 1936 at #1 Goldsmith Road lived Robert Newbold, the manager of State Fire Insurance and his family. At #3 was William Ward, a leather bag manufacturer and at #5 was (and still is) the elegant large brown home of Arthur Newdick and family. Arthur was a butter merchant

who later trained trotting horses and sadly was killed by a trotter named Dick Redmond.

So long ago that it's outside the Statute of Limitations, and sadly, we must now confess the following. Mrs Newdick owned about half a dozen white pomeranians, I think they were. They fussed around the large property at #5 and on occasions, one would go missing—tucked away in a certain boy cyclist's jacket. After half an hour or so, this caring cyclist would return the 'lost doggie' to a joyous Mrs Newdick and the reward was always the same—2/6. This half crown was a goodly sum in those days. No names, no pack drill.

On the other side of the road at #2 resided Ed Bowman, a porter, and at #4 the Thwaites family. Mr Thwaites was a solicitor and his children—Shirley, Les and Brian—all went to Epsom School. Another solicitor, Mr C. P. Nutsford, was at #6 with his family—Bruce, who also became a lawyer, Kendall and Graham. Mr Nutsford senior was one of the founders of the old Epsom RSA.

Across the road on the corner of Onslow and Lurline (then Linwood) avenues, lived Bill Burns and family. Bill was a commercial traveller who later owned a hardware store in Newmarket. All the family, Alan, Dick and Ailsa, were good tennis players, with Mrs Burns their greatest supporter. Alan went on to become a New Zealand champion in doubles with Jeff Robson, but war service with his Scottish regiment took away the best years of his career. Later Alan coached tennis and was probably the country's first commentator for tennis on radio and TV. Incidentally, next door to the Burns in Onslow Avenue lived the Galloway family. Mr Galloway founded Fayre Form [a lingerie & corsetry firm] in a shed which is still there in his former back yard.

On the other corner of Onslow and Linwood lived the Jackson family. Mr Jackson had a factory that made toothbrushes. Three sons served overseas and all returned safely. At #1 Linwood was the Murphy family. Mr Murphy was a carrier who contracted for Dominion Breweries, Otahuhu, back-loading beer to the rail, and coal back to the brewery for the boilers. Although Irish, both Mr and Mrs Murphy served in the British Army—Mrs Murphy worked for 12 years as an army nurse. Mr Murphy served in France and Greece, earning both the Greek Military Cross and the British Military Cross. Their son Bill served in the Air Force in World War II, and daughter May supplied much of the material for this story.

At #3 was a very reserved family—the Grices. Son Jackie died of pneumonia at 16. Then at #4 Linwood, the Driver family. Ted Driver was a long-serving master at Auckland Grammar School; his ‘Driver’s Trig’ was the Bible for thousands of pupils in following years. He was a prisoner of war in World War I. His children were Ray who served in the Navy in World War II, Gwen (Mrs Alex Evans) and Noelene. After the Driver family left in the early 1940s, Mr Laeber the baker and his wife and sister moved into the house. Mr Laeber’s bakery of course, at the top of Arcadia Road, was an institution. Epsom’s most appetizing smells emanated from there for years.

At #5 lived the Scott family. Mr Scott was a retired sea captain who later drowned in a dinghy with his black spaniel ‘Typo’. Later James Rutherford, historian and university academic, lived at #5 with wife Rose and four children. He had a sheepdog named ‘Chum’ which used to carry a basket to the shops. The Lee family resided at #6. ‘Togo’, a trotting horse trainer, served in World War I. He also had a paddock in Onslow Avenue (probably leased) where I often saw his champion trotter ‘Auto Machine’ grazing. Mr and Mrs Lee had four children, Eileen, Loma, Beryl and Gordon. Beryl, we believe, already a trainer, was New Zealand’s first female licensed trotting driver. Eileen, a Guide Ranger, married a Scout Rover, the son of Mrs Audrey Drummond—the author of *Te Ana Rangī*, the story of the old Dignan family home located on a rocky promontory on the south side of Melville Park.

The well loved Halley family lived at #7. He was a tram motorman originally driving horse-drawn trams. Mrs Halley foster-mothered six children at a time. Everyone in the district called her ‘Auntie’.

Finally at #8, before entering a gate to Holy Cross Convent School (Sister Berchmans), was the Davis family, and in 1930 Mrs Frood moved in with children Arthur and Marie. Arthur served in the Air Force and later we believe became a pharmacist. It was a large house and a Miss Moynahan moved in too. They were nurses at the Mater with Miss Moynahan an Industrial Nurse at the Colonial Ammunition Company and at Reid Rubber.

Delightful little cul-de-sac Bramwell Place had only four addresses in 1935. At #3 Mrs E. Pilcher and at #5 her son Leo Pilcher, who became famous as the handsome hero in Rudall Hayward’s *Rewi’s Last Stand*, probably New Zealand’s first made and acted feature film. At #7 Bramwell Place lived Edwin Eady and family. The entire left side of Bramwell

was owned by the Harrison family—their old home still stands there. The Harrisons are a story in themselves. John, the pioneer, arrived in New Zealand in 1878 and various other family members arrived later. John started a surveying business in Queens Arcade. John and Rose had a daughter Gertrude and four sons, Maurice, Frank, Percy and John. The last two were both exceptional sportsmen—champions at tennis and bowls—with John acting as a Wiseman coach for years. In 1921 the family took up residence at #18 Bambury Avenue (later #20) and the old home is still there at the blind end of the street. Development took place including the property at Bramwell Road where John lived in later life.

So three little streets remain, big in memories of my Epsom Patch of 75 years ago. I still visit them regularly. They don't seem to have changed much!

Sources

May Meads (née Murphy).

Hooves over Kakariki

By Eric Laurensen

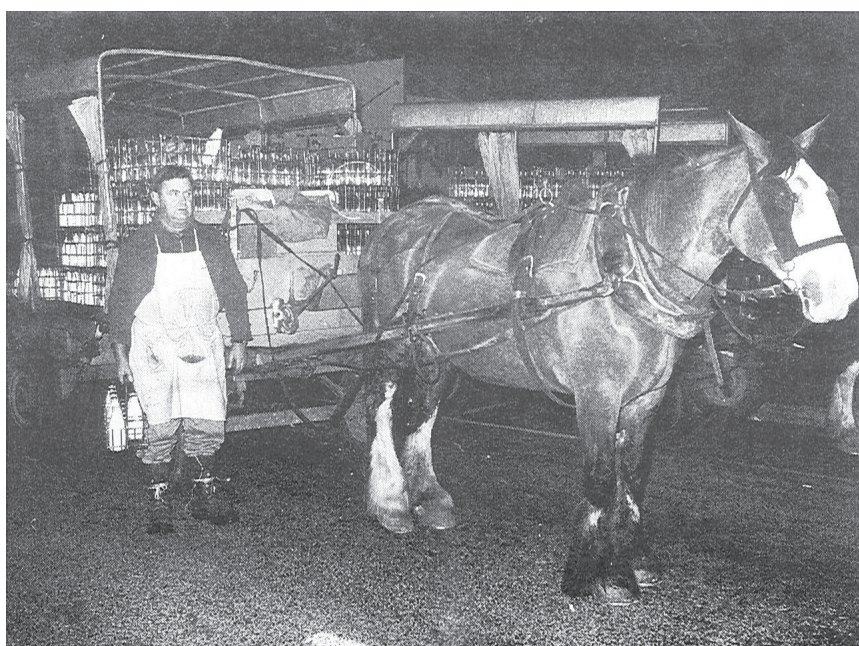
It could hardly be claimed that World War II produced many benefits for the world, but for our little world in Kakariki Avenue, Mt Eden, we children had the rare privilege of experiencing what it was like to live in a horse-drawn society. In the normal course of events, the horses that had laboured for centuries to provide transport of goods and people would have been swept away by the change to petrol-driven vehicles that had seemed almost inevitable during the 1930s.

Instead, the wartime shortages of fuel had seen motorists having to ration their use of their vehicles. Some cars sprouted strange coal-burning gas generators, but the majority of people simply used their vehicles less and hoarded their petrol rations for important use.

Delivery vehicles were no exception, and our bread and milk continued to arrive by horse-drawn vehicles throughout the major part of the war period. In the case of the Buchanan's bread delivery it was by a two-wheeled vehicle like a gig, with one horse. The bread was stored

under the driver with a little door accessed from the back of the gig. The door had an elliptical panel with ventilating louvres. In the tradition of the time the paintwork was elaborated with decorative livery.

Ambury's milk, on the other hand, a much heavier load, was distributed by a four-wheeled horse dray. Officially, roundsmen did not start until 3am and deliveries had to be completed by 7.30 each morning. According to the 1943 Milk Commission Report, Ambury's were then operating 23 horse-drawn vehicles, which were cheaper to operate than their 12 motor vans. Horses could of course be left unattended while the milkman ran backwards and forwards with his deliveries. Our milkman neighbour in Mt Roskill in the 1960s tried the same technique, and was prosecuted for allowing his truck to idle along unattended in the middle of the road while he did his deliveries single-handed.



Typical horse and dray Auckland milk delivery

Photo: Alec Brown's book *Town Milk*

There was great excitement on one occasion in Kakariki when something spooked the horse near the top of the street and it bolted

down the road towing the dray at high speed behind. The velocity was such that at the first bend in the road, the dray overturned, upsetting its load in one enormous mess and leaving the poor animal spreadeagled in its traces.

The conventional wisdom of the day had it that the best fertilizer for roses was horse manure, and there was considerable competition for the steaming piles of this commodity that were left in the middle of the road after the horses. Rumour had it that the retired Presbyterian clergyman Rev Ings, who lived across the road, and my friend's father Mr Scholes would hover casually behind their respective letter boxes at the ready with shovel and bucket to be first on the spot after the horses had been past.

We tend to forget, in our romanticizing of the horse-drawn era, that these heaps of dung were very much a feature of pre-automobile times, in the city as well as the suburbs. My father-in-law told me how small boys were stationed in Queen Street to scoop up the offending piles and place them in containers at the side of the road. Because the manure was liberally laced with oats, these boys were nick-named 'sparrow starvers'.

Further down the road from our place was an extensive old orchard. It was a place of ancient lichen-covered fruit trees and long grass, where Mr Deady kept a horse. We boys loved to play in that long grass and on one occasion were playing 'Gats', a game based on the Chicago gangsters and their fondness for Gatling machine guns. Our imitation of the noise of gunfire and the constant rustling and movement in the grass finally proved too much for the horse, which stampeded and started galloping frantically around the fruit trees. We were terrified and shinnied up the nearest apple tree to escape the thundering hooves. It was some time before we felt safe enough to come down and make our escape to the security of the street.

Some time in the early 1950s the orchard was subdivided, Ambury's and Buchanan's horse-drawn vehicles no longer plied their trade, and the sound of hooves finally disappeared from Kakariki Avenue.

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