

# The History of Pukekura Park



The story of the transformation of a wasteland into one of the  
most amazing urban Parks in the World

Celebrating 150 Years 1875 - 2025

# The History of Pukekura Park

Celebrating 150 Years of Pukekura Park

Written and compiled by Alan Metcalfe, 2025.

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Cover picture—Recreation Ground main lake circa 1885.

Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2007-026).

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## Foreword

There have been a number of stories of Pukekura Park over many years. None have been as thorough and comprehensive as Alan Metcalfe's *The History of Pukekura Park*. Through dedication, patience and sheer doggedness Alan has researched all available archives and presented the story in a warm, easy to read way. It is an extraordinary story of the efforts of men with vision and the courage to make it happen to achieve this special place which is known as "The Jewel of New Plymouth." Alan has brought the story to life.

Terry Boon

## Preface

I became involved in Pukekura Park about six years ago, when I volunteered to be a buggy driver, taking tours for the Friends of the Park. There was some historical information available to the drivers, but its use was optional. This piqued my interest, and I decided to do a bit of research. I read whatever books and articles I could find including, *Pukekura – A Centennial History of Pukekura Park and Brooklands* by A. B. Scanlan which is probably the most well-known.

I was then introduced to Papers Past, a rich source of information. This gave more depth to the stories that I had read in other material and in some cases didn't quite match in terms of facts. For example, many people have the opinion that James Davis who drowned in the lake in 1891 committed suicide. I have read the inquest following his death which found the cause of death to be due to accidental drowning.

The most satisfying aspect of this research is finding significant information that has never been written about before. For example, James Davidson, Chairman of the Board for 4 years in the 1880s and third Mayor of New Plymouth. He never gets a mention in the Park history, never! He committed suicide, which is probably the reason he isn't recognised.

Previously I have written three eBooks: *New Plymouth Recreation Ground* – 'The Story of the Creation and Development of the New Plymouth Recreation Ground from 1875 to 1908', *The History of Pukekura Park 1908 – 1920* 'The Smith Years' and *The History of Pukekura Park 1920 – 1949* 'The Horton Years.' These books are available online at Puke Ariki Library. They are also available on my website, <https://www.pukekura-history.co.nz>.

This book covers the entire history of the Park and was written to celebrate its 150th anniversary.

## Acknowledgements

Many thanks to architect Terry Boon for sponsoring the printing of this book. Without this backing the book may not have been published in printed format.

A special thanks to Ian Hutchinson (Pukekura Park's Botanical Records Officer) who has been a tremendous help over the past five years. He has provided a lot of input, especially with the planting history and with the background of some of the curators. Some of my research has also helped Ian to determine accession dates of some trees in the Park.

Many thanks to the Staff at Puke Ariki Taranaki Research Centre who over the past 5 years have been very helpful finding and dragging information up from the basement.

Thanks to Stuff – for allowing the reproduction of pictures and articles from the *Taranaki Herald* and *Taranaki Daily News*.

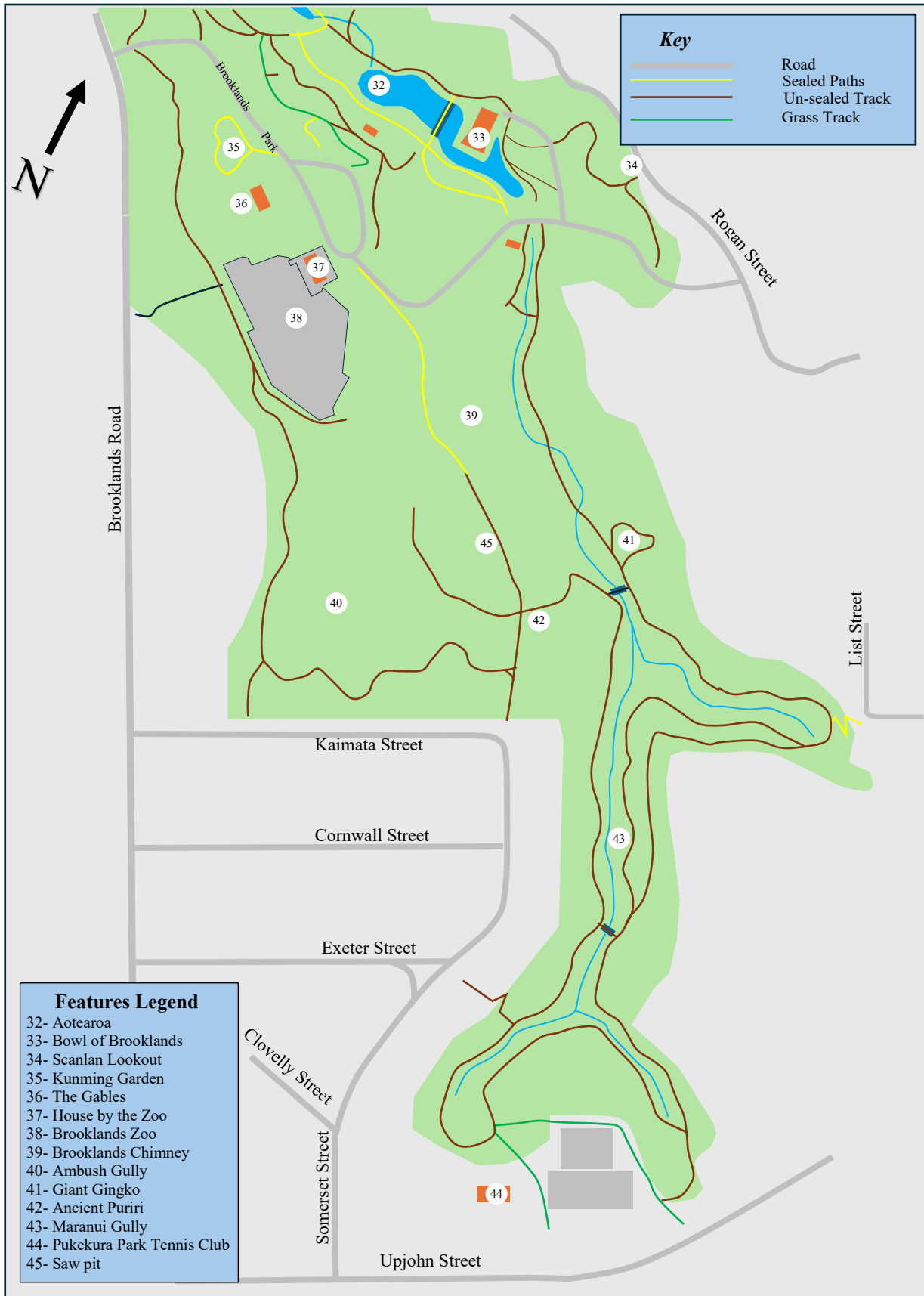
Special thanks to my wife June - for spending many hours proof reading.



## Map of Pukekura Park highlighting the Park Features.

Names written in *italics* are historic and no longer present in the Park.





**Map of Brooklands Park and Maranui Gully highlighting various features.**

## Units of Measurement

### Weight

lb oz (pounds and ounces) 16oz = 1 lb

1 lb = 0.454 kg

### Length

ft - in (feet and inches) 12in = 1ft

1 ft = 304.8mm

3 ft - 6in = 3' - 6"

yd (yard) 1 yard = 3 ft

chain

1 chain = 66 ft (length of a cricket wicket)

On section plans the length and breadth would be shown in links.

A link being 1/100 of a chain or 7.92 inches (201mm)

### Volume

Yards = cubic yards

1 cubic yard = 0.765 m<sup>3</sup>

### Area (land)

A R P (acres, roods and perches)

1 acre = 4046.86 m<sup>2</sup>

1 acre = 4 roods

1 rood = 40 perches

### Money

£ s d (pounds shillings and pence)

1 pound = 20 shillings

1 shilling = 12 pence

## List of Abbreviations

TH	Taranaki Herald
TDN	Taranaki Daily News
AWN	Auckland Weekly News
NZG	New Zealand Graphic
TPN	Taranaki Photo News

## Board/ Committee Members 1875 - 1968

Thomas King	1875 - 79	W. C. Weston	1919 - 26
Harris Ford	1875 - 1922	P. E. Stainton (S/ T)	1919 - 68
R. C. Hughes	1875 - 1935	Frank Wilson	1920 - 27
Isaac Broad	1875	Hector Dempsey	1921 - 39
John Gilmour	1875 - 78	A. T. Moore	1921 - 29
J. T. Davis	1875 - 91	James McLeod	1922 - 43
R. J. Collins	1875 - 77	Frank Amooore	1923 - 46
Thomas Colson	1876 - 80	G. M. Spence	1925 - 31
Reginald Bayley	1877 - 80	Fred Parker	1929 - 65
R. H. Thompson	1879 - 80	R. W. Tate	1929 - 33
James Davidson	1880 - 85	Victor Davies	1932 - 34
Doctor Gibbes	1881 - 88	E. J. Carr	1933 - 46
T. K. Skinner	1881 - 1901	Eliot King	1933 - 58
J. B. Roy	1881 - 94	Everard Gilmour	1933 - 53
F. P. Corkill	1885 - 1915	E. Jackson	1934 - 45
Richard Cock	1889 - 1920	N. Johnson	1934 - 35
C. W. Govett	1892 - 1914	F. S. Varnham	1934 - 44
W. L. Newman	1895 - 1917	L. Lovell	1941 - 47
S. Percy Smith	1902 - 18	H. V. McCready	1941 - 47
W. A. Collis	1904 - 20	D. F. Saxton	1947 - 68
M. Fraser	1904	E. Lippiatt	1947 - 58
C. Carter	1904	M. J. Neville	1948 - 60
E. H. Tribe	1904 - 12	K. Ward	1948 - 53
C. H. Burgess	1905, 1915 - 19	Mrs. J. Davie	1948 - 50
D. Hutchen	1905 - 06	G. Huthnance	1948 - 51
Edward Dockrill	1906 - 07	A. C. R. Anderson	1951 - 66
Fred Bellringer	1907 - 10	M. G. Maxwell	1952 - 68
G. Tisch (Mayor)	1908 - 11	K. Waite	1953 - 59
A. E. Watkins	1909 - 11	W. Wood	1954 - 56
Hartnell	1911	Wolfe	1956 - 62
W. Ambury	1911 - 15	Edward Hill	1953 - 58
H. Stocker	1912	A. Brodie	1958 - 68
G. W. Browne	1912 - 13, 1918	Arthur Sandford	1958 - 67
C. H. Drew	1912 - 16	E. P. Allen	1959 - 62
F. Jackson	1912	R. K. Birkitt	1959 - 62
J. E. Wilson	1914 - 15	Mrs. Audrey Gale	1962 - 68
W. F. Short	1915 - 50	F. P. Grundy	1962 - 65
C. E. Bellringer	1916 - 44	F. N. Aplin	1962 - 65
J. W. Hayden	1917 - 18	N. H. Guscott.	1963 - 65
A. Grey	1917 - 18	D. V. Sutherland	1965 - 68
Mrs C. H. Burgess	1918 - 21	W. J. Connor	1965 - 66
A. S. Brooker	1919 - 21	A. B. Scanlan	1965 - 68
Victor Griffiths	1919 - 23, 1927 - 33	T. C. Davies	1965 - 68
		Miss L. M. Mischewski	1966 - 68

## Bequests and Gifts

This is a list of bequests and gifts that I am aware of. There are likely to be omissions for which I apologise. Not included are the many people who regularly donated plants, especially in the first 25 years of the Park's development. Also not included are many people who gave many hours of their time to help the Park fundraising etc. One person who has to be singled out is T. K. Skinner who spent hundreds of hours as a professional surveyor laying out the Park's paths and the Sports Ground.

### BEQUESTS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1897 - Martha King. £106 17s 5d   | 1933 - Charles Score Sanders. Large cash bequest which paid for:  |
| 1905 - Isabella Small. £25  | The replacement of The Poet's Bridge in 1937, £877; Liardet St gates in 1938, approx. £1,500; relocating the Brookland grape house to the Fernery to become the first Begonia House, £150; extending the Tea House in 1946, £750; Partial cost of new administration building in 1952, £792. In 1959 there was still £776 in the Sanders Bequest. |
| 1906 - Peter Madsen. £25  | 1933 - Newton King, Brooklands estate   |
| 1906 - Robert Govett. £100  | 1933 - P. J. Flannagan. £50/ year for 21 years  |
| 1907 - Mrs. Broham. £100  | 1934 - Miss Hempton. £50  |
| 1913 - Peter Matson. £25  | 1935 - R. C. Hughes. £50  |
| 1914 - Five large cases of ducks  | 1941 - Mary Bingham. £250   |
| 1917 - Mrs Hulke. £100  | 1941 - T. C. List – Land in the Maranui Gully   |
| 1917 - C. W. Govett. £100   | 1947 - A. R. Standish. £400   |
| 1924 - Mr. A. Shuttleworth £20  | 1948 - Doctor E. F. Fookes. £50   |
| 1927 - Newton King. £3,000. This was changed in 1933 to become the gifting of Brooklands. | 1951 - Leah Graham. £2,100 and 7 gold cups.   |
| 1927 - Mr. J. Attrill. £100   | 1954 Thomas Bell Jones Sinclair. £200   |
| 1928 - Mary Ellen Freeth £50  | 1956 - Frank Amooore. £100  |
| 1931 - Walter Haddrell. £50   | 1957 - George Home. £100  |
| 1931 - Mrs Alice Paul. £50  | 1971 - Mrs Eva Alice Wood. £1,000   |
| 1933 - Charles Score Sanders. £350 for rhododendron dell                                  |   |

## GIFTS

- 1876 - Canterbury Domain 2000 shrubs
- 1876 - Mitchinson's Nursery. Trees for planting on the opening day
- 1878 - Mr. Hirst, a commodious pleasure boat
- 1879 - Bathing Shed. Built by the swimming club from public donations
- 1881 - Mitchinson's nursery. 1000 trees
- 1882 - Professor Furlong. Two alabaster nymphs, a fountain and a large glass ball reflector
- 1882 - R. C. Hughes. A pond
- 1882 - Doctor O'Carroll. A fountain
- 1883 - James Davis. The Poet's Bridge
- 1883 - H. V. Barclay. Design of The Poet's Bridge and supervision of its const'n
- 1884 - Thomas Furlong. A Dicky Barrett cannon
- 1884 - George Rhind. Ornamental Iron Gates for Liardet Street entrance
- 1885 - Chew Chong. Flagstaff from the wrecked Austalind
- 1885 - Mr. Sharland (UK). Six wrought iron garden benches
- 1885 - Mrs. Dougherty's Egmont Ladies Academy: Circular seat round flagstaff
- 1885 - James Paul. £25 towards Band Rotunda
- 1886 - Mr. White, Smart Road Brick Works. Two large earthenware vases for the main lake
- 1887 - W.L. Newman. Cannon
- 1887 - W. F. Hoskin, from Waitara. A cannon and ball. Ball from H. M. S. Pelorus
- 1891 - Reginald Bayly. Cannon
- 1891 - Clement Govett. £20 to buy trees
- 1891 - Mrs J T Davis. Two flags and poles.
- 1892 - Archibald Hood. Planted a maze
- 1893 - Messrs Cave and Luckin, Bank Farm, Tataraimaka. Whale skeleton
- 1895 - Messrs Cummins & Son, carpenters. Garden seat
- 1897 - Sportsground committee. Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain
- 1899 - W.L. Newman. Six iron garden chairs
- 1900 - Mrs. Copland. Two garden seats
- 1901 - Kauri Timber Co, Auckland. Two substantial kauri spars for flagstaff
- 1901 - Sash & Door Co. 500ft of 2-inch planking to make seats
- 1902 - E. M. Smith. Six white swans brought from England
- 1903 - Mr A. Bayly mainmast of the Gairloch
- 1905 - Tea kiosk. Designed by J. A. Maisey and constructed by a local builder at no charge
- 1906 - W.F. Short. Marble tablet to memorialise deceased benefactors
- 1907 - Various people. Many seats for the redeveloped sportsground
- 1908 - Mr. E Whittle (Proprietor, Red House Hotel). Horse drawn roller and mower
- 1910 - Hon. O. Samuel. £50
- 1912 - Hon. O. Samuel. £25
- 1913 - Hon. O. Samuel. £25
- 1916 - C. H. Burgess £25
- 1917 - C. H. Burgess. Hot water fountain
- 1917 - Taranaki Jockey Club. £25
- 1918 - C. H. Burgess. Mayoral honorarium of £150 donated to Park
- 1919 - C. H. Burgess. Mayoral honorarium of £150 donated to Park
- 1922 - Charles Score Sanders. Planted a rhododendron dell in what is now Stainton Dell
- 1930 - W. D. Graham. £300 towards lighting Sportsground
- 1931 - Mr and Mrs Burgess. Tea House. Cost approximately £1,000
- 1931 - Mr and Mrs Burgess. £150 for Tea House furnishings
- 1931 - Mr and Mrs Burgess. £60 for Tea House silverware
- 1934 - T. C. List - Land in the Maranui Gully
- 1934 - C. A. Wilkinson Land in the Maranui Gully
- 1936 - Bruce Trust. £250
- 1941 - Mrs Burgess. Replaced Tea House crockery, tablecloths and curtains
- 1948 - Junior Chamber of Commerce. £475
- 1949 - Internal Affairs Department. £500 towards cost of Ladies Pavilion
- 1950 - Junior Chamber of Commerce. £455
- 1952 - National Flower Show. £200
- 1953 - L. H. Johnston Motors Ltd. Automatic Stoking boiler to heat the Fernery
- 1955- Junior Chamber of Commerce. Ten seats placed around Fountain Lake
- 1960 - Jaycees. Constructing children's paddling pool
- 1960 - Drinking water fountain and Don Driver's Cats sculpture
- 1965 - Fred Parker orchid collection
- 1965 - Jaycees. Florafauna, Stage 1 of Brooklands Zoo
- 1967 - Mr & Mrs George Kibby. Begonia House valued at \$30,000
- 1967 - P E Stainton \$400
- 1967 - Jaycees. Deer & Peafowl enclosures
- 1970 - Jaycees. Wallaby enclosure
- 1974 - Jaycees. Free flight cage
- 1979 - Jaycees. Monkey Cage

## Introduction

The town of New Plymouth has a fascinating history. Its location is primarily attributable to the whaler Dicky Barrett. Barrett, Jackie Love and their whaling crew arrived in New Plymouth in 1828. Both Barrett and Love were married to daughters of high-ranking local Māori leaders.

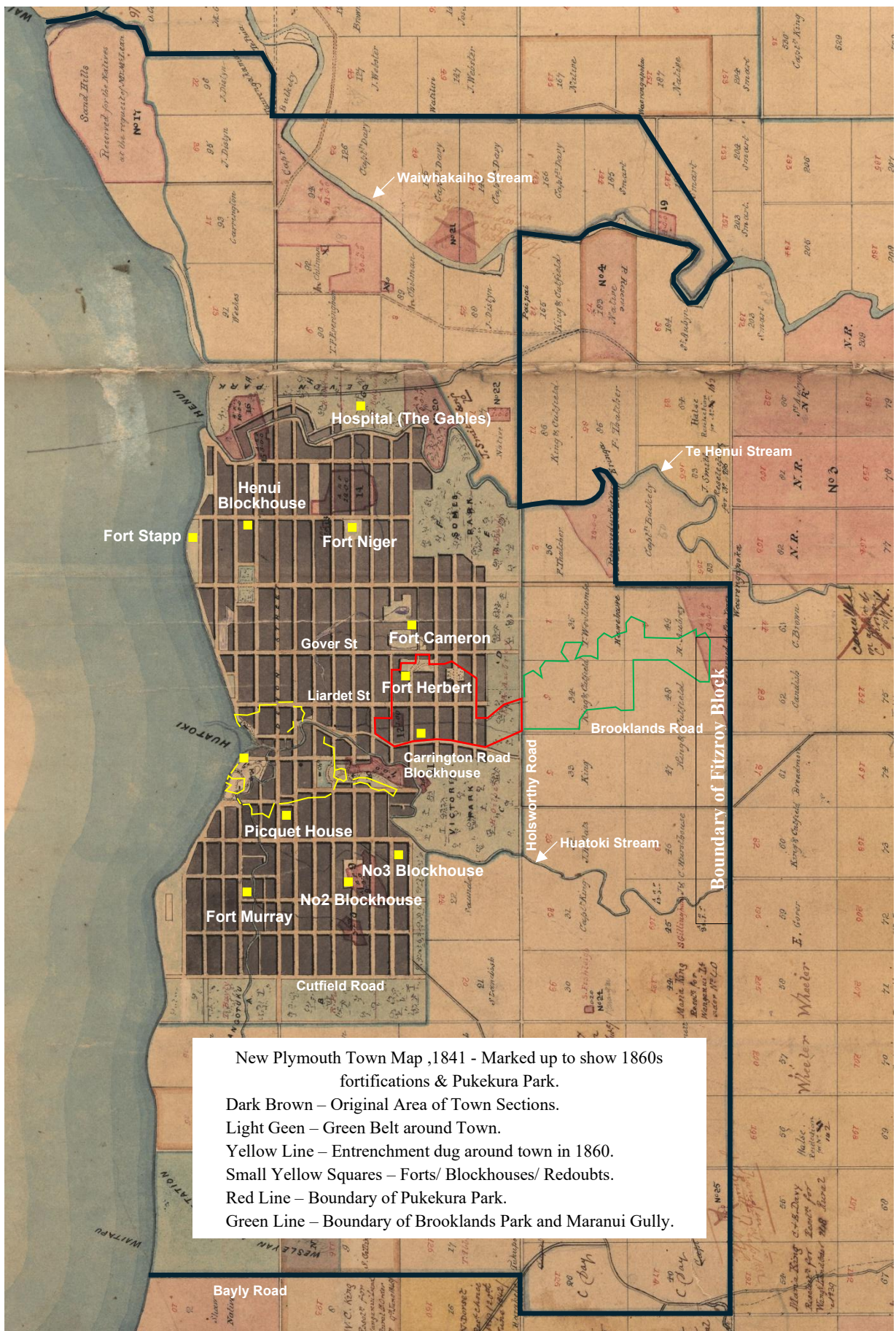
In 1831-32 Waikato Māori made several incursions into north Taranaki, the final battle was at Ōtaka Pā, near Ngāmotu beach. Barrett, Love and the crew famously helped fend off the marauding Waikato's with three cannons, Rua koura, Onepoto and Pu-poi-poi (Rua koura and Onepoto later found their way onto Cannon Hill in the Park). Following this battle the vast majority of local Māori decided they had had enough and migrated to the Wellington region. Barrett and Love continued on to the South Island where they took over a whaling station at Te Awaiti Bay.

When Colonel William Wakefield of the New Zealand Company arrived in New Zealand, he sailed to the Tory Channel to find Barrett and used him as an interpreter to help negotiate land purchases. Wakefield asked Barrett for advice on where to locate settlements. It would appear Barrett and his family wanted to return to New Plymouth, as he convinced Wakefield to purchase land there. He then convinced surveyor Frederick Carrington (who was employed by the Plymouth Company to find a suitable location to establish a town) to settle New Plymouth even though it lacked a safe harbour, which was a top priority when selecting a suitable site for settlement.

Carrington came to New Plymouth in February 1841 to start surveying. He laid out the town with about two thousand quarter acre sections stretching from Cutfield Road to the west, the Te Henui Stream to the east, and Holsworthy Road to the south. Beyond that the land was split up into 50-acre sections. Carrington's plan included several areas identified for recreation and a sizeable green belt bordering the town.

Following the arrival of the English settlers many Māori who had gone to the Wellington region decided to return to New Plymouth, probably because they felt it would be safe following the arrival of the settlers. Also, many local Māori who had been enslaved by the Waikato were released and made their way back to Taranaki. On arrival they demanded the return of their land, causing a lot of tension. In 1844 Governor Fitzroy came to New Plymouth to sort out the situation. To the horror of the settlers, he returned all of the land (approximately 60,000 acres) to the Māori, then repurchased 3800 acres for the town of New Plymouth. This became known as the Fitzroy Block. When asked what the settlers outside of the Fitzroy block were to do Fitzroy said they could resettle on the land that had been set aside as a green belt and any other land set aside for recreation. This was a huge blow for the settlement. Progress was slow and recreation pursuits were probably not a priority. Then during the 1860s the town regressed again due to the land wars in Taranaki.

In 1870 Julius Vogel launched his ambitious public works and assisted-immigration programme to catapult New Zealand forward by building infrastructure, including: roads, railways, the telegraph network and port facilities. Suddenly there was light at the end of the tunnel. New Plymouth's first railway was opened in 1875, the same year as the Harbour Board was created. People now wanted a dedicated recreation area. Until this point in time fetes and picnics were generally held on private properties such as Brooklands. And this is where the story of the Park begins.



New Plymouth Town Map ,1841 - Marked up to show 1860s fortifications & Pukekura Park.  
 Dark Brown – Original Area of Town Sections.  
 Light Green – Green Belt around Town.  
 Yellow Line – Entrenchment dug around town in 1860.  
 Small Yellow Squares – Forts/ Blockhouses/ Redoubts.  
 Red Line – Boundary of Pukekura Park.  
 Green Line – Boundary of Brooklands Park and Maranui Gully.

Map of the Town of New Plymouth  
 Ref: BAPP 23827 R23231653 Roll Y Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, Wellington.





## How it All Began

TH, JANUARY 20, 1875.

Robert Clinton Hughes a young lawyer had just been voted onto the Taranaki Provincial Council. Hughes was asked by Peter Elliot, a previous member of the council to table a question relating to the availability of land for recreational use at the council sitting of January 1875.

In reply, Thomas Kelly (Provincial Secretary) said there was such an area, referred to as the Botanic Gardens. This area had been identified by Frederic Alonzo Carrington on his original survey of the town. The site was next to the Te Henui Stream adjacent to Puketarata Pā.

Things were quiet for a few months; however, some residents were making noises. During his speech on the opening day of The Poet's Bridge James Davis, who funded the bridge was reported to have said that when he arrived in New Plymouth, he saw that the great want of the town was a public pleasure gardens, and he at once commenced to agitate the question. Also, sometime during May or June of 1875 a petition signed by 112 prominent residents, calling for a recreation area, was presented to the Provincial Council. In the petition, the signatories vowed to look after any land given. It may well have been James Davis who initiated the petition.

Kelly had been extremely busy. He was a key player in setting up the inaugural Harbour Board and securing funding for its development. There had been a lot of talk about abolishing the system of Provincial Government and the sitting in June was possibly going to be the last chance to pass legislation. Fortunately, Kelly was working on another project, which was to find a suitable location for an asylum. He had settled on the site known as Fort Herbert which lies on the hill behind the sportsground's east terrace. At that time, the Pukekura valley was almost devoid of trees, and he would have had a good view across it. He was aware that the valley had little commercial value and considered that it may lend itself to a recreation area. At that time most of what is now Pukekura Park (not Brooklands) was allocated to the Education Board. Kelly wrote to Fred Carrington, who was the Superintendent of Taranaki, laying out his vision. This was published in the *Taranaki Herald* on June 26, 1875 (see next page).

Once Kelly got the green light, he wrote *The Botanical Garden and Public Recreation Grounds Ordinance, 1875*. This vested approximately 39 acres of land for recreational purposes to be run by the Town Board. He ran this by the Town Board but unfortunately, they did not want the ratepayers to have to carry the financial burden of developing and maintaining such a recreation ground and consequently rejected the proposal. This all happened the day before the Provincial Council was due to be prorogued. Kelly, disappointed with the Town Council, was ready to drop the bill. Hughes on the other hand was keen to salvage it and suggested that the reserve could be run by a board of trustees. Kelly agreed to this providing Hughes could find seven people to act as trustees by the next morning. Hughes did this, the bill was amended, went through all its stages and was passed during the last sitting of the Provincial Council on June 30, 1875. Even though the bill passed through the Provincial Council it still had to be approved by the Governor. The bill did not get the Governor's approval, and it was not until September 1876 that the Taranaki Botanic Garden Act 1876 was approved. Even so the Recreation Ground Board<sup>[1]</sup> pressed ahead with the development of the Recreation Ground.

### PUBLIC RECREATION GROUND.

In reply to Mr. Hughes' question whether the Government had at its disposal any land in or near New Plymouth that could be used as a recreation ground.—Mr. KELLY said the only land the Government had at its disposal was that at the back of the cemetery, known as the "Botanical Gardens." Many of the reserves around the town were made over to the Education Board, and the only way to get the land from them would be to alter the trust. The difficulty was to obtain funds just at a time when every penny of money was required for opening up roads and settling immigrants.—Mr. UPJOHN thought the Government might purchase the unexpired lease of the race-course, which was to be put up by auction shortly, and make it over to the Town Board, who could deal with the matter as they thought fit.—Mr. KELLY thought the suggestion of the hon. member a good one, and the Government would make enquiry into a legal objection pointed out by his colleague, and endeavour to meet the wishes of the Council.

---

<sup>[1]</sup> The Recreation Ground Board will now be referred to as the Board

Thomas Kelly's Letter to Carrington. *TH, June 26, 1875.*

RECREATION GROUND AND WATER SUPPLY.

Sir,—In looking for a suitable piece of public land within a convenient distance from the town for the site and grounds of a Lunatic Asylum, the fact forced itself on my notice that in the immediate vicinity of the site I have selected, and which I submit for your approval—viz., Mount Herbert—that the interest of the whole community would be well consulted by making the balance of the reserve in the vicinity, by Ordinance of the Provincial Council, an endowment for public recreation grounds. The stream of water which flows through the reserve might be impounded and utilised for the ornamentation of the grounds, for watering the streets of New Plymouth, extinguishing fires, and providing for public baths.

The land to which I refer lies between Carrington Road and the Racecourse, and consist of exchanged town sections set apart for educational purposes. The area of this land, including roads which could be closed by Ordinance, is about 35 acres. It has not been a source of much revenue to the Educational Establishment, having only averaged some £15 per year, and is gradually deteriorating in value by the growth of furze, which successive tenants have failed to eradicate, or even keep down.

The reason of this is that the land is of inferior quality and very broken, rendering it unsuitable for cultivation. But it is admirably adapted by nature for forming recreation grounds, as the scenery is diversified, and winding paths could be made at small costs, and several small sheets of water made by dams of an inexpensive character. Although I propose to divert the purpose of this reserve from education to other public purposes, I do not think it would be desirable to take it without giving to the educational establishment either money compensation to compensate for the rent lost (£15), or to give, by way of exchange, other provincial lands of equal value; but I think the opportunity should not be lost for securing to the public of New Plymouth for all time these grounds which are capable of being made very beautiful for recreation purposes, and the other public services which I have named. The land is situated less than half-a-mile from the centre of the town, and if suitable paths and foot-bridges were made it would be at once used by a large section of the public on holidays, and by the various public organizations on special occasions—such as Templars' Fetes, Band of Hope, and the various denominational schools for the children's annual parties. Provisions could be easily made for making it accessible from various parts of the town, such as from the Carrington Road, from Liardet, Gover and Wakefield-streets. While these grounds might be made use of at a small cost to provide rational amusement to the public, the water, while affording a means of beautifying the grounds, could be utilised at a comparative small cost to furnish a supply for watering the streets, extinguishing fires, and providing for public baths; or even for supplying water for domestic purposes for the present population; but I propose to confine myself to the first-named purposes more within the menus of the provincial revenue. The stream which flows through the reserve takes the drainage of about three hundred acres of land roughly estimated, and therefore the annual rainfall, less that lost by evaporation and other causes, could be impounded and made available for the purposes I have named.

Assuming that 6-10 ths of our average annual rainfall could be collected and impounded, this would give a total quantity of 260,000,000 gallons for the twelve months, or a daily supply of about 360 gallons per head on the present population of the town if the whole of the water was impounded and stored up for daily use. The level of the water when damned back would be sufficiently high to flow to any part of the town not higher than 70 feet above the Huatoki River in Devon-street. And thus an abundant supply of water could be obtained at any time if pipes were laid from the reservoir, to the most densely built portion of the town. Public baths are now getting an urgent necessity, and facilities ought to be given for their promotion, and nothing would tend more to do so than a good and cheap supply of water. The financial part of the question I leave for further consideration; all that I have at present to urge is that the land be for ever secured to the public for these necessary public purposes during the present session of the Council. —

I have, &c.,

T. KELLY.

His Honor the Superintendent.

## How it all Began

A list of Board members was published in the *TH* on July 31, 1875. The names being: Thomas King, Harris Ford, Robert Clinton Hughes, Isaac Broad, John Gilmour, James Thomas Davis, and Robert Joseph Collins.

The first Board meeting was held on Friday, July 30, 1875, at which it was agreed to meet the following Tuesday as a group to survey the land they had been granted, which was now estimated to be 47 acres. It was also agreed that the first work to be undertaken would be to erect a boundary fence.

### **TH, AUGUST 4, 1875. FIRST BOARD MEETING**

#### RECREATION GROUND BOARD

THE first meeting of this Board was held on Friday evening last, in the Taranaki Institute, when all the members were present.

*Election of officers.*—Mr. T. King was elected chairman, Mr. J. Gilmour treasurer, and Mr. R. Collins secretary.

*Extent of the ground.*—Messrs. T. King and R. C. Hughes were deputed to wait upon the Government to ask them to furnish a map of the ground, which by setting forth the position of the streams and general conformation of the ground, would form a basis of operations for the trustees to work upon. The area of the ground was stated to be 47 acres, and is bounded by the Carrington Road to Mr. G. Cutfield's land, thence to the Racecourse, along to Gover-street, and across to the back of the residence of Mr. G. D. Hammerton.

*Ground to be fenced.*—It was decided at the meeting that the first work undertaken should be the fencing; and as a practical way of ascertaining the actual requirements and probable cost, the whole of the trustees arranged to meet on Tuesday afternoon, (yesterday) on the ground and make a personal inspection of the property of which they have been elected trustees.

The meeting then terminated.

The government offered to build a cottage for a keeper. The offer was gratefully accepted by the Board. The cottage built in 1876 was of modest proportions. It was located on Victoria Road on the site of the old Carrington Road redoubt. This site is immediately north of the house at 25 Victoria Road which also happens to be an old curator's house, built in 1930.

In Sept 1875 tenders were called for grubbing, burning, and clearing all furze (gorse) on a portion of the grounds. The successful tender was that of Messrs. Newell and James', at £20.

It was decided to fence the grounds and tenders were called for to construct a ditch and bank fence. Huggett and Co. won the contract with a quote of ten shillings per chain (approx. 20 m). Work on the fence did not start until early March 1876, due to a delay in surveying the boundary of the grounds. Arrangements had been made with George Cutfield to erect a dividing four-rail fence (heart of pine posts and rails) between the Recreation Ground and Brooklands.

### **TH, JULY 31, 1875. BOARD APPOINTED**



Superintendent's Office,  
New Plymouth, July 24, 1875.

IN pursuance and in exercise of the powers and authority in me vested under and by virtue of "The Botanic Garden and Public Recreation Grounds Ordinance, 1875," I do hereby appoint the following gentlemen:—

Thomas King  
Harris Ford  
Robert Clinton Hughes  
Isaac Broad  
John Gilmour  
James Thomas Davis  
Robert Joseph Collins

to be the Board of Trustees under the above mentioned Ordinance.

Dated this 24th day of July, 1875.

ARTHUR STANDISH,

Deputy Superintendent.

697 jy 31

The Board met as planned along with Arthur Standish (Deputy Superintendent) to survey the task ahead. The next morning Hughes and Davis started to peg out the first path (Hughes Walk).

There was a stream running through the Park and the aim was to run a path along the west side of the stream and have a second path at right angles up to the racecourse. Even though Hughes and Davis were eager to see progress, work on the paths did not start until 1876.

To establish a good layout for the Recreation Ground the Board ran a competition, offering a £5 prize for the best design. It was decided that the competitors should send in their plans at a scale of one chain to an inch, accompanied by an estimated cost of earthworks, planting, etc. The competitors were to utilize natural features of the ground to the best advantage. The whole cost was not to exceed £500. Sites of a cricket ground and archery lawn, ornamental pond, keeper's cottage, and main entrance were to be shown. Reginald Bayley was the successful designer.

The first planting in the Recreation Ground was a vineyard by Heinrich Breidecker. In 1875 he was granted the lease of an acre of land behind the racecourse, in what is now Stainton Dell. The vineyard was not successful and was abandoned a few years later. Breidecker moved to Hokianga where he established a successful vineyard.

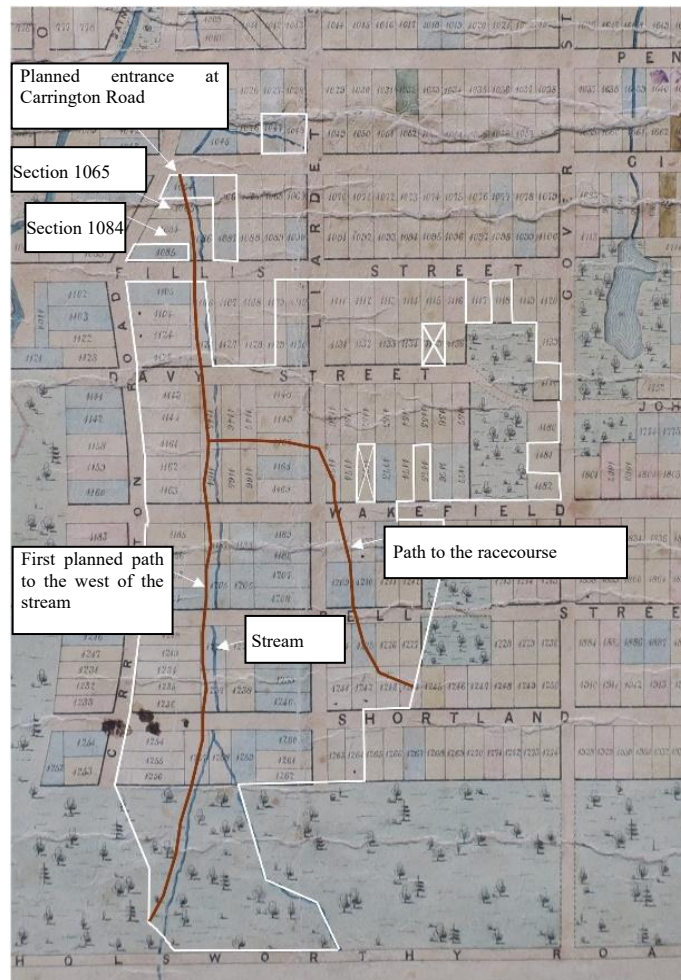
Isaac Broad was the first Board member to be replaced. He vacated his seat after missing three consecutive Board meetings. He was replaced in late 1875 by Thomas Colson.

## Road Through the Recreation Ground

The initial plan of the Board was to have the main entrance of the Recreation Ground at the north-west corner of the grounds on Carrington Road. A path was to be constructed along the west bank of the stream that ran through the grounds, from the Carrington Road entrance to the boundary with Brooklands. Another path was to also be constructed leading up to the Racecourse. To accommodate this plan town sections 1065 and 1084 had to be acquired. Unfortunately, when the Board was given the sections for the Recreation Ground, they were not included.

At a meeting of the Public Trusts Board in early March 1876 a letter was read from the Board requesting the surrender of sections 1065 and 1084, so that a front entrance to the grounds might be made. This request was declined. These sections had been set aside in 1867 for the start of a planned Carrington Road diversion to go through the land allocated to the Recreation Ground.

The Superintendent Frederic Carrington who was chairing the meeting was asked when work was going to start on the bypass. When this information was relayed to the Recreation Ground Board, they were shocked and immediately protested against this proposal. Despite several members of the Public Trust Board insisting the road go ahead, fortunately, it never eventuated. It was apparent that regardless of whether or not the road went ahead the Board were not going to get possession of sections 1065 and 1084 in the foreseeable future, so they made the decision to move the location of the main entrance to Liardet St. This was the only logical alternative.



This map shows where the Board originally planned to have the first entrance and paths in the grounds. The white outline depicts the boundary of the Recreation Ground as defined in the *Taranaki Botanical Garden Act 1876*.

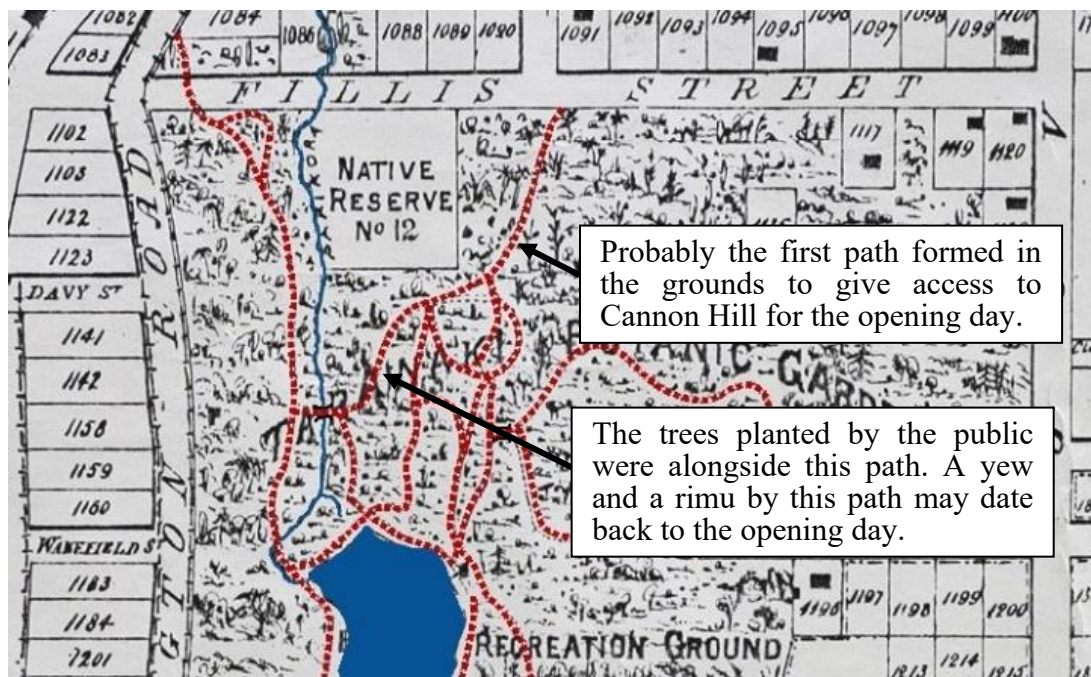
Base map: Carrington's Plan of New Plymouth, 1842.

Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2004-285).

## Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)

### Opening Day

Preparations for the opening day were carried out. Some paths were constructed, Charles Tapp had won the tender for that work with a price of 4s 6d per chain. The ceremony was scheduled for the Queen's birthday on May 24, but due to inclement weather it was postponed until the 29<sup>th</sup>. The ceremony was carried out on Cannon Hill. Speeches were given by Thomas King, the Board's Chairman and Fred Carrington the Superintendent of Taranaki. Following the speeches four trees were planted by Carrington's eldest daughter Jane, an oak to represent Britain, a pūriri representing New Zealand, a Norfolk Island Pine representing the South Pacific and a *Pinus insignis* representing America. Following the official planting other folk were invited to plant trees. A rimu was planted by Mrs M. A. Hughes, a yew by Mrs T. K. Skinner, a Norfolk Island pine by Thomas Colson, and a pūriri by Mr R. Hughes. James Mitchinson of Egmont Nursery donated many young trees for the public to plant. Land had been prepared for this to the south of the path between Cannon Hill and Fountain Lake. Some of these trees may still exist today. An account of the opening day's ceremony was published in the *TH*, May 31, 1876. The spade used by Jane Carrington is in Puke Ariki Museum (accession no A68.098).



It is likely that all the paths shown on this map did not exist in 1880 when the map was drawn. The paths routes were probably taken from a plan of the Recreation Ground drawn by Reginald Bayley.

T. K. Skinner map 1880. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2010-220).

*Taranaki Herald, May 31, 1876.*

**PLANTING THE FIRST TREE IN THE RECREATION GROUND**

A VERY interesting ceremony was gone through on Monday last, namely the planting of the first tree in the Recreation Grounds. It has been known for some time past that the gentlemen who were appointed as trustees for the grounds had been busily engaged in having portions of it fenced and paths made. They have now commenced planting it with trees, which in a few years will make the place very ornamental, and at the same time afford shelter from the sun's rays to those who visit the grounds. Monday was one of the most beautiful days we have had this season, and shortly after two o'clock a large number of persons had congregated on a hill just facing the entrance, in readiness to see the ceremony of planting the first tree gone through.

His Honor the Superintendent with Miss Carrington and Miss Jessie Carrington were early on the grounds with a number of friends. The Members of the Recreation Board—Mr. T. King, (chairman), Mr. R. J. Collins, (hon. secretary), and Messrs. T. Colson, H. Ford, J. T. Davis, J. Gilmour, and R. C. Hughes—were also present; and in various ways engaged in arranging preliminaries.

The Band (under the leadership of Mr. R. Townsend) was there and played several of their popular pieces. At About half-past two, everything being arranged,

Mr. T. KING (Chairman of the Recreation Grounds Board), addressing his Honor the Superintendent, said it was now upwards of thirty-eight years since he (Mr. Carrington), as representative of the New Zealand Company; surveyed and laid out the Town of New Plymouth; and his Honor would no doubt remember that he then set apart land that surrounded the town as broad belts and also made large reserves for recreation purposes. Some time afterwards Governor Fitzroy came down here and dispossessed them of those lands and took from them their recreation grounds. Many years had elapsed since then, but lately it has been through his Honor's means that some amends had been made, and they had had restored to them a portion of that which had been taken away, by setting apart the land for the recreation grounds. Such being the case the trustees considered that it was but fitting that his Honor should be present and take part on the occasion of the planting of the first tree in the grounds.

His Honor F. A. Carrington said, as Mr. T. King had stated, he had surveyed the town; and when doing so, had set apart land for a wide belt round it. He had, also, laid out a spot for Victoria Park and another for a Botanical Gardens; besides reserves for other purposes. Then difficulties of a native character arose, which debarred the Company from acquiring the land, and the belt round the town was taken from them by the act of Governor Fitzroy to compensate settlers who had been turned off other land; and, inasmuch as this was the case, he had carefully considered the matter, and thought it only due to the Corporation that some restitution should be made for what had been taken away. He was shortly going to the Assembly, and he would make it his special duty to see that land was awarded them; and if there was no land in the town then he would try to get other lands somewhere else in lieu thereof, as an endowment for such lands as the town had been unfairly deprived of. It was a just claim, and he believed it would be heeded. At all events, he would try what he could do. He thought they could make very pretty place there, and which, he had no doubt, would be visited by a great many, and who would have an opportunity of spending a very pleasant day in walking through the grounds.

His Honor, accompanied by his eldest daughter, were then taken to the spot prepared for the planting of the first tree, which was a British Oak. Here Mr. J. T. Davis presented Miss Carrington with a neatly polished little spade, on one side of the handle of which was the following inscription: - "To plant the first tree in the Recreation Ground, New Plymouth, May 29, 1876." On the other side was "Presented to Miss Carrington." A large hole had been dug and the tree placed in it, which was held by Mr. T. Colson, whilst Miss Carrington very gracefully lifted some of the earth with the spade and threw it over the roots. Mr. T. Colson then took her to the north side of the mound, where a Puriri, as representing New Zealand, was planted in the same manner. The same ceremony was gone through on the west side, where a Norfolk Island Pine, representing the South Pacific Islands, and on the south side a Pinus Insignis, representing America, were planted. Having performed her pleasing duties, and declared that the trees were planted, three cheers were called for Miss Carrington, which was lustily responded to. His Honor was then loudly cheered, and after three cheers for the Recreation Ground Board, the ceremony brought to a conclusion by the band playing the National Anthem.

As it was announced that after the ceremony anyone could plant trees that choose, the place assumed quite an active appearance and all along the walk might be seen persons in groups busy at work planting different kinds of trees the growth of which we have no doubt will be as carefully watched and cared for as if they were in their own gardens. When the Public Domain, as we may call it, is visited by their grand-children or great-grand-children, they will be able to point with pride to the trees which then will be of large size, and say they were planted by their ancestors. The ground we understand has been turned over in readiness to receive the contributions of visitors, and now presents quite a garden-like appearance from the number of shrubs and flowering plants brought to the grounds and set by visitors. For the remainder of the week a man will be employed in the grounds getting ready for the reception of other contributions. There is some talk amongst the Recreation Board Committee of inviting persons during the week to continue taking up suitable plants which they may either set themselves in places pointed out, or which will be taken charge of by the gardener. We hope there will be a large number of such visitors.

## Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)

As the Recreation Ground was governed by a Board of trustees there was no guaranteed source of income to pay for the development of the grounds, which was a major cause for concern. Some small areas of the ground were rented out for a modest income, otherwise there was no money coming in. It was decided to ask the public for subscriptions (either cash or shrubs). It was reported in July 1876 that £55 had been raised through subscriptions. Two businesses in Town 'Victoria House' and 'Uncle Tom's Wardrobe', which were operated by Archibald Hood and his wife Mary, donated 15% of their takings for two weeks of June 1876. The Board had also received a one-off payment of £200 from the government to pay for some clearing and fencing.

Charles Carnell (see page 159 ) was employed as custodian, he worked two days a week. Carnell lived in a property adjoining to the Recreation Ground where the Band Room stands today, at the Rogan Street Car Park. One of his duties was to impound cattle wandering into the grounds.

In the early days most of the plants were donated. The Board always struggled financially and would accept any plant donations. In 1876 the Board received two thousand plants from

### Thomas Kelly (1830 – 1921)

Thomas Kelly was possibly the most influential New Plymouth politician of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was a member of the Provincial Council from 1863 to 1869. Then he represented New Plymouth in the House of Representatives from 1869 to 1884, and later a member of the Legislative Council from 1892 to 1913. He was prominent in the setting up and financing the harbour and a driving force behind the railway coming to New Plymouth.

His foresight secured the land to form the Recreation Ground, and he authored the *Botanical Garden and Public Recreation Grounds Ordinance, 1875*.

Christchurch Domain, which had a major impact on the diversity of plants in the grounds early development. The donation included *Fraxinus*, *Ulmus*, *Castanea* and *Pinus radiata* (Monterey Pine[2].) (*Pinus radiata* was the tree that the Board planted in great numbers in the first two or three years of the Park). During 1876 a boundary fence between the Recreation Ground and Brooklands was completed.

Clearing gorse and making new paths was the focus of 1877. Both were limited due to lack of money. Fundraising events formed the core of revenue along with subscriptions and leasing of some sections. Over time the trustees donated a

lot of their own money and acted as guarantors for necessary loans.

There was tree planting throughout the year, some of the trees will have been from the Canterbury donation. A significant addition was two California Big Trees (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*), donated by, and probably planted by, James Davis. These trees are still alive today (2025). One is by the old curator's office on the east side of Sunken Dell and the other is on the east side of the same path leading to the Tea House.

Towards the end of the year the construction of a lake was on everyone's mind. Thomas Kelly provided the drawings for a dam and the Board issued tenders for its construction. The contract was won by Messrs. Neil, Claffey and Power.

A notable departure from the Board was R. J. Collins, who left New Plymouth to take up a position in the treasury department at Wellington. Collins later became Auditor-General of New Zealand. His replacement was Reginald Bayley. Bayley designed the layout of the Recreation Ground. He also oversaw the dam construction.

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[2] *Pinus radiata* also known as Monterey Pine or *Pinus insignis*, will be called *Pinus radiata* going forward.

1878 was all about the lake. The construction of the dam was a huge undertaking. The Board had hoped to get some assistance using prison labour, unfortunately, this was not forthcoming. To raise the funds to construct the dam the Board members had to extend their personal credit. On the advice of resident engineer C. W. Hursthouse an under-sluice was added to the design of the dam. This was a safety feature which allowed the lake to be fully drained if necessary. The location of the lake outlet was also changed from the west bank to the east bank. These changes added significantly to the cost. An article about the dam construction was printed in the *TH*, June 13, 1878 (see page 213 ).

There were unforeseen issues, such as springs appearing as the earth was removed and large rocks which occasionally had to be removed using explosives. Thankfully, these problems were overcome, and the dam is still doing its job today. When the dam was finished and the lake filled with water, the lake was described as having an area of nearly two acres, a length of nearly 400 yards with varying widths. The lake extended down to the northern end of Goodwin Dell.

How the lake was to be used became an interesting issue. Contentiously, Mr W. K. Hulke of the Acclimatisation Society suggested a union between his organisation and the Board on condition that bathing and boating were banned. He wanted the lake exclusively for fish, and duck breeding. The Board would have welcomed a union as the Acclimatisation Society was cash rich. Unfortunately, the terms were unacceptable.

The Board decided that individuals could put their own boats on the lake at an annual cost of £1 1s. Mr. Nicoll a local tinsmith took advantage of this. In May 1878 he christened his newly built 15ft iron outrigger “Lady of the Lake”. Apparently two gentlemen who were assisting with the ceremony were also christened in the lake when they fell overboard.

Initially boating was not allowed on Sundays. However, shortly afterwards it was changed to Sundays before 12 noon, much to the disgust of the *NP Wesleyan Chronicle* who wrote:

‘we would ask the Committee whether they think it honest on their part to first secure cooperation of all classes of the community, including prominent church members, and then to suffer this shameless desecration of the sacred day. We certainly cannot commend their forthcoming bazaar to the sympathies of our congregation if this obnoxious resolution is not rescinded.’ (*TH*, Oct 19, 1878)

It would appear that the congregation ignored the advice of the *Wesleyan Chronicle* as the bazaar was a huge success with takings surpassing £250.



T. K. Skinner wearing a Robinson Crusoe costume. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2009-221).

#### **Thomas Kingswell Skinner (1849 – 1925)**

Skinner was born in New Plymouth. He trained as a surveyor under Octavius Carrington. One of his jobs was surveying the New Plymouth to Hawera railway in 1882.

In the Recreation Ground he was responsible for most of the surveying in the first 25 years of the Park’s development. From laying-out paths to supervising the sport ground reclamation. In 1899 he supervised the formation of Manhattan Island. He was responsible for the cutting back of Cannon Hill and laying out the foundations of the Band Rotunda. He was also a board member from 1881 to 1902. He was a lover of flowers, and possessed a good knowledge of native trees. Over the years he donated thousands of plants to the Recreation Ground.



## Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)

By the end of the year bathing in the lake was allowed but only if an individual had purchased a season ticket, and not after 8am. The southern end of the lake which was long and narrow had become known as The Dardanelles.

The Board decided to employ a full-time custodian and started discussions about reclaiming the swamp near the Liardet Street entrance. This would prove to be significantly more problematic than it first appeared. The first black swan was introduced to the lake, a gift from Mr Wilson of Kakaramea.

Some of the plant donations during 1878 were from: Messrs. Mitchinson, Skinner, Butter-

worth, Hammerton, Gibson, Howell, Newman, and Uncles. The Board purchased 500 shrubs from James Mitchinson at 10s per 100 and a pound of gum seed.

1879 saw two significant changes to the Recreation Ground Board members. John Gilmour and Thomas King both resigned being replaced by R. H. Thompson and James Davidson, respectively.

### **Robert Clinton Hughes (1847 – 1935)**



A lawyer by profession and a staunch advocate for a recreation ground. Hughes was an original Board member and stayed on it until his death in 1935.

He was a strong swimmer, and it is said that on occasions when the sea was too rough for ships to land the mail he would swim out and bring it back to shore. He often featured in the accounts of swimming galas. His most successful event was the long dive.

Hughes was a leading member of the member of the Temperance Movement in the region, a member of the Temperance Alliance and the Band of Hope.

Amongst other talents he spoke several languages and played the violin.

Byelaws were introduced, one of which was to ban dogs. It was stated that any dog found in the grounds would be shot or otherwise destroyed (see page 287).

With the lake established there was a call to use it for recreational swimming. The town did not have a swimming pool and the water in the Recreation Ground looked very safe and inviting. After a public meeting chaired by C. W. Govett and R. H. Thompson, the two gentlemen were charged with approaching the Board with a scheme to build a bathing house and ask that the lake be open to the public for bathing. The Board agreed but stipulated that swimming would not be allowed until a bathing shed was erected. Plans were drawn up by architect William Northcroft and the building went out for tender. One of the reasons for advocating the lake as a swimming pool was that it was deemed dangerous to go outside the breakers on the beach on account of sharks.

Paying for the bathing shed construction had to be arranged. The committee set up to organise the construction had managed to solicit £40 by way of subscriptions, the remainder would have to be found by other means. A couple of fundraising events were organised, one being the first swimming competition (TH 10 4 1879) on Wednesday, April 9, 1879. The competitors had to be suitably attired in drawers and singlets and get changed in the new bathing shed. The occasion drew a large crowd who sat on the banks overlooking the lake. At that time, the sides of the valley were basically treeless, so there was an excellent view of proceedings. Board member, Robert Clinton Hughes was one of the competitors.

The Park is now famous for its eels and in 1879 we have our first account of eels being caught, one being about 3 feet 6 inches long and weighing in at 15lb (TH, October 1, 1879).



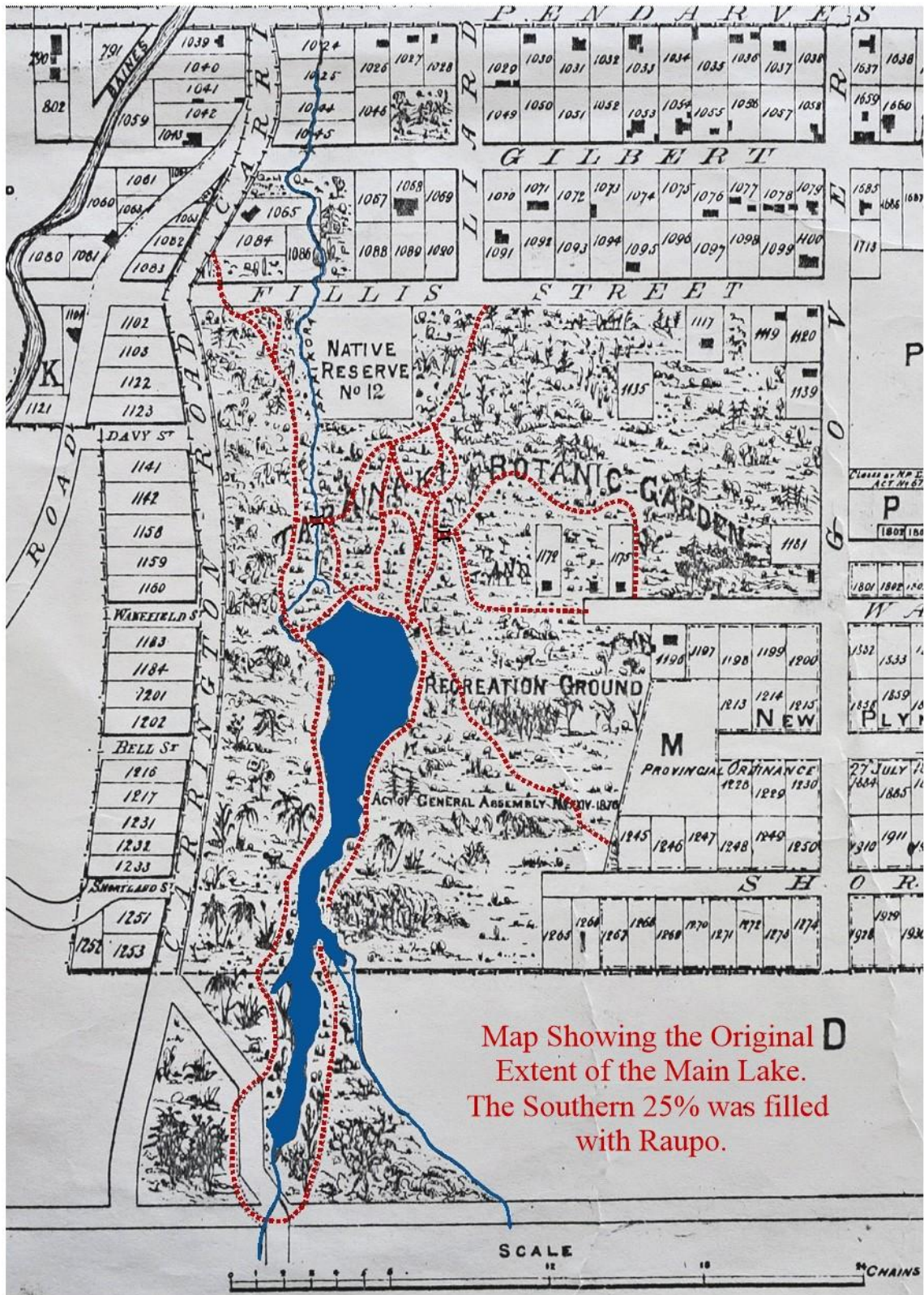
Bathing Shed. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2004-248/2).

In November 1879, the Recreation Swimming Club was formed with the intention of having annual swimming competitions and swimming lessons. Newton King was on the committee and Dr. O'Carroll was the first president. The subs were set at 2s 6d. The final act of the year was the first swimming competition arranged by the Recreation Swimming Club. The day was a huge success. The Mayor declared a public half day holiday for the occasion. Prizes included: magic lantern, gold neck ring, cricket bat, Waltham watch, greenstone pendants, bone and gold ring, travelling bag and a washing machine.

Donations during the year included shrubs from Mr. Mitchinson and Muscovy ducks from Mr. A. Colson.

1880 was a quiet year regarding progress. The Board found itself in a financial crisis and not able to do a lot of work in the grounds. The debt was troubling because the trustees were personally responsible for any debts incurred. They received a couple of cash injections, one by way of a lecture by Sir William Fox, (Prime Minister on four occasions) who gave an account of his travels in Palestine and the Holy Lands at the Odd Fellows Hall.

Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)



This map shows the possible extent of the paths in 1880. It also shows that the lake extended down to what is now Goodwin Dell. The path on the east side of the lake went down to a small bridge which crossed the lake onto a promontory, then went to the south of the grounds through what is now Goodwin Dell. A picture showing the small bridge and promontory is on page 23.

Taken from T. K. Skinner's 1880 map. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2010-220).

**Amusements.**

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*ODD FELLOWS' HALL,*  
11TH AND 16TH FEBRUARY.

**THE GARRICK CLUB**  
(under the management of Mr. G. W. HERBERT) will appear on the above dates in aid of the Funds of the Recreation Grounds.

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11.**  
Will be produced the celebrated Comedy,  
**O'Callaghan on his Last Legs.**  
To be followed by **TOODLES.**

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16,**  
**BLACK-EYED SUSAN!**  
To be followed by **THE HAPPY MAN.**

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Full particulars and cast in Day-bills. 262 f11

TH, February 2, 1880.

As the financial situation was so desperate the Board went cap in hand to the Borough Council to get a subsidy. The Borough Council considered it, then rejected the plea. Councillor Nicoll wanted to table a motion that the council take over the running of the Recreation Ground. This motion was later withdrawn because Nicoll became aware that the Recreation Ground Board of Trustees would not step down. The reality was, the Borough Council had no legal authority to take over the Recreation Ground. In fact, the opposite was true. Article 18 of the Botanical Garden Act states that, "The Governor may, on the petition of the majority of the members for the time being of the Board, or of two-thirds of the rate-payers of the Borough of New Plymouth, dissolve the said Board, and on such dissolution the said lands vested by this Act shall vest in the Borough of New Plymouth, and be managed by the said Borough as the Board is authorized to manage the said lands." In later years, the Recreation Board would use this to try and extract money from the council by threatening to hand over the grounds to the Borough Council if they did not give a grant for the running of the grounds.

The Recreation Swimming Club organised an Autumn competition on March 3, 1880. The morning was not looking promising, and the committee decided to postpone the event. As is often the case in New Plymouth the weather changed, and the committee decided to go ahead again. To inform the towns people they employed the services of the town crier. The competition had some interesting events, such as a blindfold race, "washerwoman's surprise", but the event that stands out is the diving competition won by R. C. Hughes. Hughes was a keen swimmer and member of the Board of Trustees for about 60 years. A stipulation of the swimming competitions at that time, was that all competitors had to wear singlets and drawers.

Donations in 1880, included plants from Mr G. E. Duncan, pine seeds from the Geological Department, and water lilies (*Nymphaea alba* and *Aponogeton distichyon*), from Mr Johnson of Christchurch. The board also received 200 trout ova to be released into the lake.

The focus at the beginning of 1881 was fundraising. The Board found itself in debt which it needed to reduce significantly. The main fundraiser was a Fancy Fair. They also received a £50 grant from the Borough Council (which became an annual occurrence). Another way of raising funds was the introduction of a charge for using the bathing house, issuing a season ticket for 2s 6d.

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**Amusements.**

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**THE FANCY FAIR**  
in aid of funds for the Recreation Grounds  
will be held on  
**THURSDAY, 24TH INSTANT**

Country friends who have DONATIONS  
for the above will please leave the  
same with Mrs. HUMPHRIES,  
Devon-street. 372 f19

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**BOTANICAL GARDENS**  
**FANCY FAIR!!**

BOTANIC GARDENS Fête and Fancy Fair,  
All ye who wish to come and take the air,  
'Mid sylvan haunts, around the limpid lake,  
And finish off with tea and butter bake.

Toys for your children, Caps for smoking  
brothers,  
Gifts for your sweethearts, presents for your  
mothers,  
Presided o'er by faces bright and sunny ;  
So one and all be pleased to bring some money.

Amusements for the many will be seen,  
Music and boating, dancing on the green,  
With Tub Race, Water Polo; such a lark—  
And Fireworks, Squibs, and Rockets after dark.

Then come ye early, friends, or come ye late:  
Do pay your money at the entrance gate,  
(Don't dodge the keeper), on the ground's  
behalf.

ONE SHILLING for ADULTS, and CHILDREN  
HALF.

TH, February 17, 1881.

## Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)

During the year three Board members resigned, Reginald Bayley, R. H. Thompson, and Thomas Colson. They were replaced by J. B. Roy, Dr Gibbes and T. K. Skinner. The Board then remained unchanged until 1885.

The Fancy Fair was held in the grounds starting at 2p.m. Most of the businesses in town closed for the afternoon. There were several stalls selling various goods most of which had been donated. The organiser of the stalls was Mrs. Humphries (wife of Dr. Humphries). She was the driving force for many of the Recreation Ground's fundraisers. At 4.30p.m. a game of 'water polo' was started, when six competitors appeared at the post with their noble steeds—viz., beer barrels ornamented with saddle cloths and wooden horse heads. This much anticipated event was a flop. The only sport derived from it was a number of spills. There was a large crowd in the evening and the grounds were illuminated with Chinese lanterns. The fair raised over £100.

Another fundraiser was an entertainment evening at the Masonic Hall. One of the performances was a duet featuring Miss Govett and Mr. Brewster.

Until 1881 the Sports Ground was a swamp. A decision was made to drain it and fill it with earth to create a sports field, initially for croquet. This was later changed in favour of cricket. At that time, the land around the Liardet Street Entrance was not fully developed. There was a hill outside the gate making access to the grounds difficult. A request was made to the Borough Council to be allowed to remove part of the hill to fill the swamp. Permission was granted to remove 2000 yards. T. K. Skinner was requested to prepare a plan and specifications for the work. Mr Alfred Wells was awarded the contract. Work started towards the end of the year, but it took many years to get the ground looking as it does today.

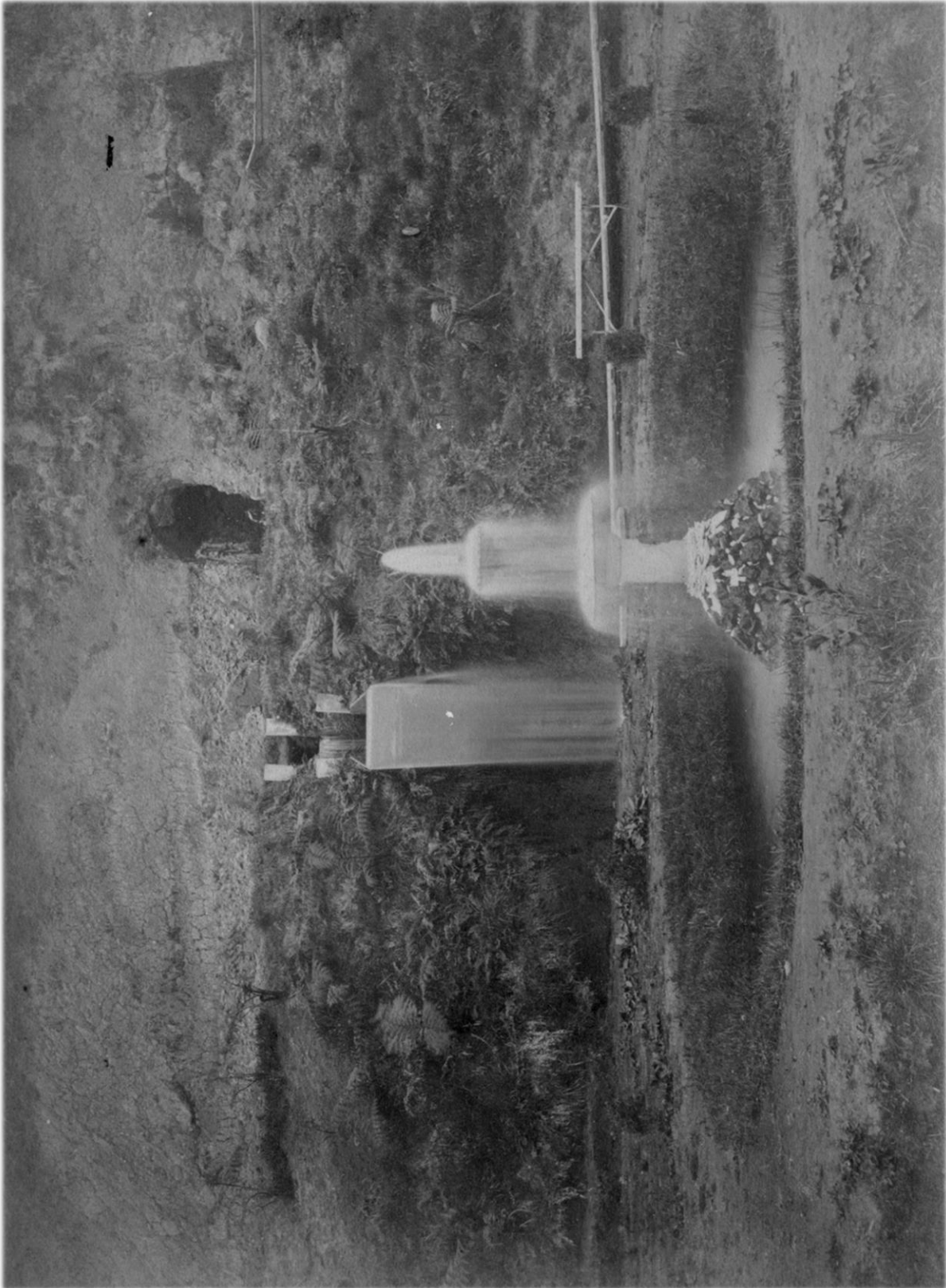
It was reported that 1100 trees had been planted during the season. James Mitchinson of Caledonian Nurseries had graciously donated one thousand established plants. Another interesting fact was that the trout released the previous year were growing rapidly.

Again, in 1882 the state of finances was front and centre of the Board's thoughts. The filling of the swamp was halted due to lack of funds and the Board again approached the Borough Council pleading for help in funding the Recreation Grounds. The Board officially threatened to hand over the ground to the council if aid was not forthcoming and eventually the council granted the Board £50.

During one Board meeting it was suggested new blood should be found and the meeting descended into chaos, but eventually things settled down and the status quo was restored.

The Acclimatisation Society was approached to help the Board. It was suggested that Darby Claffey, the custodian, be educated in the care of monkeys, goats, buffalos, elephants, serpents, and other interesting animals which the Acclimatisation Society may propose to let loose on the grounds if they came to the party. Claffey was struggling to look after plants let alone wild animals.

In March a half day holiday was observed for the annual swimming tournament. The weather was fine, and the event was well-attended. Amongst the usual swimming events there was also a very amusing 'porker at the end of a greasy pole' competition which caused much hilarity. A greasy pole was fixed horizontally so that it hung over the water, at its end was fastened a box with a live pig in it. The contestants had to slide along the greasy pole, take the pig out of the basket and throw it into the water. They then had to jump in the water, catch the pig and get it out of the lake. The first person to successfully accomplish that kept the pig. Several unsuccessful attempts were made before the prize was eventually claimed by W. Holford.



Furlong's Fountain. Above the Fountain is the old Glowworm Cave. To the left of the fountain is the Mirror Waterfall. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2004-027).

## Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)

During the year, several people made personal donations to the grounds. Robert Clinton Hughes had a small ornamental lake made, Thomas Wilson donated some king ferns and Mr. Shuttleworth donated some Prussian carp. Thomas Furlong donated a fountain at the south end of what is now called the Hatchery Lawn. Doctor Gibbes also donated a fountain which was placed in a Lily Pond which was next to Furlong's Fountain. Furlong also donated two statues (Graces) placed in the main lake and a flagpole with a circular mirror hung from it. Thomas Furlong, or Professor Furlong as he liked to be known, was an interesting character, and very active in the community. He had arrived in New Plymouth with the 57th Regiment during the 1860's. In 1866 he opened a barber shop on Devon Street West by the Mangaotuku Stream, next to William Collis, the photographer. He always had the latest in equipment, such as chairs etc. At the back of the shop was an extensive tobacconist and a shooting gallery. He also operated as a chiropodist.

One of the fund-raising events of the year was a Juvenile Fancy Dress Ball, again organised by Mrs Humphries, which realised £23 for the Board. When handing over the money Mrs Humphries requested that it be used to resume filling of the swamp and extending the lawn. This was gratefully accepted, and reclamation of the swamp was resumed and a third of an acre was added to the lawn. The contractor was Mr. G Thompson with a tender price of £19 19s.

In December 1882, architect Henry Edmonds presented the Board with drawings for a band pavilion estimated to cost between £70 and £80. The design was assessed by the Board to be both suitable and ornamental. It was decided that the pavilion should be erected at the knoll on which Mr. Furlong's mirror stood (this is where the Band Rotunda is today). James Davidson and T. K. Skinner were appointed to make arrangements for carrying out the work. They assumed that the town band would give as many concerts as necessary to raise the money to cover the cost of the construction. Unfortunately, the band did not buy into the suggestion, so the pavilion was put on hold.

Again in 1883 the year began with an emphasis on fundraising which took the form of *Ye Olde English Fayre*. This was a fair which travelled round the country helping local groups to raise money. It was a huge event which lasted 5 evenings and bolstered the coffers of the Board considerably bringing in over £60. The Fayre was set up in the Alexandra Hall, and was laid out as an Elizabethan street, with the ladies of the town selling wares from mock-up shops. There was also a stage for variety performers, a May Pole, and a fortune teller. To promote the event a four-page newspaper was produced, *Ye Mercury* (see Appendix F), which gave a history of the Recreation Ground. It also had adverts for about seventy local businesses giving a snapshot of the town's business community at that time.



Recreation Ground, Main Lake. 1882-1885.  
One of Professor Furlong's "Graces".



The Poet's Bridge. *AWN*, June 25, 1898.

The big story of the year was 'The Poet's Bridge'. James Davis a prominent figure in town and a trustee of the Recreation Ground since its inception, had the good fortune to win a large sum of money from a horse racing sweepstake at the Auckland Autumn handicap.

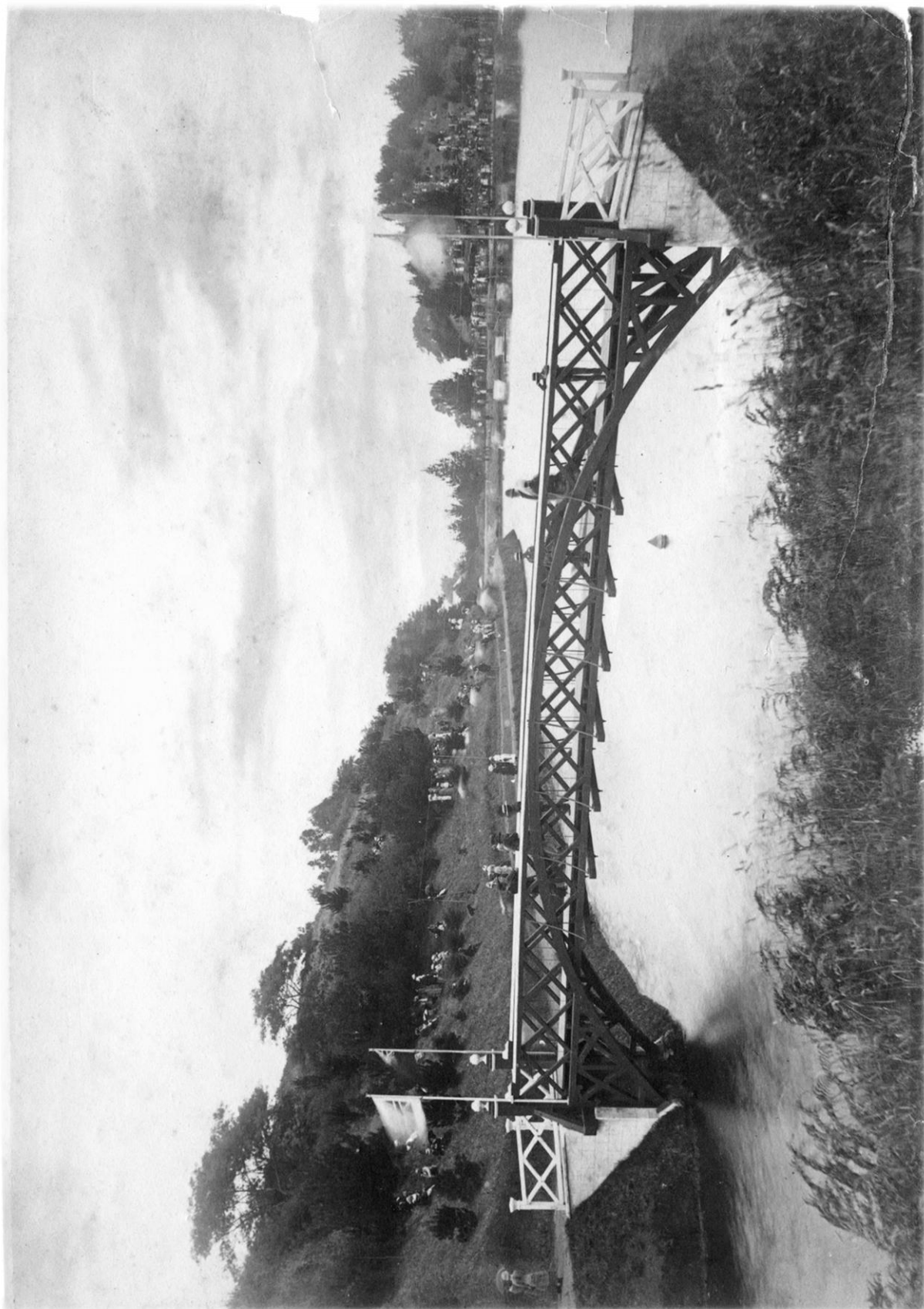
The horse was called "The Poet". Davis, an active member of the Board had often thought about having a bridge halfway down the lake, he felt the lake would not be complete until a bridge was built. The windfall meant that he could make his dream come true. People were invited to supply bridge designs on the understanding that the design was *gratis*. The design chosen was that of Henry Vere Barclay, Civil Engineer & Surveyor. The construction contract was won by Mr. Hooker. Mr. Campbell was the sub-contractor for the woodwork, Mr. Revell the iron work, and Mr. Bellringer the painting. Bridge construction started in November 1883.

The opening of "The Poet's Bridge" was carried out on the evening of March 10th 1884 with a lot of pomp and ceremony. The Mayoress Mrs. Bayly did the official honours. James Davis made a speech during which he referred to the petition presented to the Provisional Council in June of 1875 asking for land for recreation purposes. This petition may well have been initiated by Davis and names from it may have been used by Clinton Hughes to find the original members of the Board. For the story of The Poet's Bridge see page 230 .

Two black swans were donated to the Board from Mr. Vavasour of Blenheim. Unfortunately, one died on the ship bringing the birds and the second died shortly after being let loose in the lake. Dogs were becoming a nuisance worrying the waterfowl so a notice was placed in the *Taranaki Herald* stating that dogs found in the Park would be shot. The author has found no evidence that this threat was ever carried out.

The Board received two packets of seeds from the government: one of eucalyptus, or blue gum and one of golden wattle.





The Poet's Bridge. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2007-030).  
This photo was probably taken on February 11, 1885, during a swimming carnival.

**OPENING THE NEW BRIDGE IN THE RECREATION GROUNDS**  
MOONLIGHT CONCERT. *TH*, March 11, 1884.

THE ceremony of opening the new bridge in the Recreation Grounds (the gift of Mr. J. T. Davis), took place last evening, in the presence of a large assemblage. The Recreation Ground Board had made very complete arrangements so as to make the evening pass pleasantly, and they certainly attained the object. A flagstaff had been erected on the knoll opposite the bathing-house, and bunting was floating in the breeze from the masthead. The bathing-house was illuminated with Chinese lanterns, and lanterns were also suspended from the bridge. At 7 o'clock, His Worship the Mayor and Mayoress were met at the Carrington Road gate, leading to the grounds, by the Members of the Recreation Grounds Board, and were escorted to the bridge. At the lake, a guard of honor was stationed to receive the Mayoress, and, on arrival at the new bridge, the members of the Board, His Worship the Mayor, and Mrs. Bayly took up their positions at the approach, where the bridge was formally handed over. A large crowd had gathered at the spot to witness the proceedings.

Mr. J. T. DAVIS, in handing over the bridge, gave an interesting account of the history of the Recreation Grounds. He said that when he came to New Plymouth he saw that the great want of the town was a public pleasure gardens, and he at once commenced to agitate the question. A memorial was drawn up and presented to the Provincial Council, and after a considerable delay the ground was presented to the public for a Recreation Ground. At the suggestion of Mr. Kelly, who was then Provincial Secretary, a number of names were sent in to the Government for the purpose of appointing a Board to manage the affairs of the ground. The gentlemen whose names were sent in were appointed the first Board, and those gentlemen met and considered what was best to be done. They visited the spot one afternoon, and it was with the greatest difficulty that they managed to scramble over the ground, which was at that time covered with furze, and they could scarcely cross the gullies. When they had scrambled round the place they came back to town, and he for one thought they had done a good day's work. In the petition they sent to the Council they promised that if they got the ground they would carry out plans for improving it, and a few days after it was granted they went out collecting subscriptions.

They got a few pounds, and then the Provincial Government also helped them. About the first thing they had to do was to purchase the lease of the hill opposite to him there [where the majority of the audience were gathered], as that was not included in the original grant. There was also another piece of ground on the other side which the Board wanted to purchase when they could get it cheap, as it was necessary to have it to make the grounds complete. For fear that the owner would ask more money for it, they concluded the purchase. They afterwards decided upon having a grand opening day, and Miss Carrington publicly planted a tree in the grounds on the occasion of its being opened. Some months afterwards they commenced planting the ground with ornamental trees, poplars, pinus insignis, etc., which they planted round the boundary. It was a great struggle at first to get the public to come and see the grounds. He was up there every Sunday for he was a single man, but he is sorry to say he generally had the grounds to himself.

The Board determined to have a lake or pond in the grounds, and for that purpose they raised £60 Mr. R. Bayly got to work drawing out a plan making one of the gullies into a pond; he was instructed not to exceed £60 for fear the Board would go bankrupt. However, instead of the lake only costing £60 the scheme was improved as the work progressed until it at last cost £160. The Board was exceedingly well pleased with the work when it was completed, but they did not know how to get out of their financial difficulties. They had borrowed money to pay for the water scheme, but the question was how were they to pay it back? Another difficulty occurred which plunged them into deeper debt. The bank of the lake was not so secure at first as it might have been, and it commenced to leak. Well, before that leak was stopped it cost £40. However, they by degrees got over their difficulties. He (Mr. D.) was visiting the ground one day, sitting on the hill and looking down on the lake. The idea occurred to him that the ornamental water would not be complete until there was a bridge made to span it near the centre. He considered the bridge was one of the requirements of the place, and shaving got that idea firmly fixed in his mind, he decided not to leave a stone unturned until it was accomplished. He was not in a position at that time to erect the bridge, but by dint of a good deal of scheming he managed to enrich himself to the extent that would justify him in incurring the outlay. Mr. Sands drew out a plan of a bridge which was only to cost £100, but neither he nor the Board thought it would do—they could see that to make anything out of it he would have to increase the sum. He thought if he gave £150 it could be made a more suitable structure; and he also thought—and so did the Board—that if he was to call for competitive designs for a bridge it would give the young men in the place a chance of showing

their talent (laughter). This they decided to do, and number of designs were received, but he thought there was no doubt that Mr. Barclay's design was the best, and that design the Board adopted. The tenders for the construction of the bridge were far in excess of the estimate, and could not be accepted, but he ultimately came to an arrangement with Mr. Hooker to construct it. Mr. Hooker was also assisted by Mr. Campbell, carpenter, Mr. Bellringer, painter, and Mr. Revell, blacksmith, and he thought the public would freely admit they had done their work well. (Hear, hear). It had given him satisfaction, and he hoped it would give the public satisfaction. There was one thing he would like to say, and that was he became a member of the Borough Council purposely to aid in getting a grant to the Recreation Grounds; and he was not ashamed to say it. (Cheers). He thought that when they had got the Mayor there that night, and also some of the Borough Councillors, they would impress on these gentlemen that it was very desirable the Council should continue to support the grounds. The grounds belonged to the public, everyone of them had right to it, even the youngest child present had its vested right in the grounds. (Applause.) It was a good thing to come there, and even if they had not another inch of land, to be able to say, "This land is ours." (Laughter and cheers.) He would advise them in future borough elections not be led away with the cry of the racecourse reserve, but to put the question straight to the candidates, "Are you in favour of the Recreation Grounds?" and if they did not answer that question satisfactorily they should not vote for them. (cheers) In conclusion all he had to say was that it gave him great pleasure to hand over the bridge to the Chairman of the Recreation Grounds Board, and he hoped the Mayor and the Mayoress, and the whole company present, would live long enjoy it. (Loud applause.)

Captain DAVIDSON, the Chairman of the Board, said he had great pleasure in returning Mr. Davis the thanks of the Board and the people of the town for the munificent present he had made. He (Captain D.) had been told by persons visiting New Plymouth that the Recreation Grounds were the best pleasure grounds in the colony for beauty and picturesqueness.

That was a great thing to say ; but now that the bridge was completed it made the grounds more attractive than ever. There had been a great deal done by the ladies of Taranaki in aid of the funds of the Board, by holding fancy fairs, bazaars, &c., and the Volunteer Band had also given concerts, half the proceeds of which went to the improvements of the grounds ; and as chairman of the Board he begged to publicly thank those persons who had so generously assisted in improving the grounds. The Board was indebted to Mr. T. K. Skinner for his gratuitous professional services in laying out the grounds, giving levels, &c.; and likewise to Mr. H. V. Barclay, C.E., who designed and superintended the construction of the bridge. He agreed with Mr. Davis that the Borough Council should assist the Board, and he also concurred in the idea of impressing that fact on all candidates who came forward to be elected to the Borough Council. He would certainly use his influence as long as he remained in the Council to obtain a grant for the grounds. With these few remarks he would again thank Mr. Davis for his generous gift and assure him that it afforded the people great pleasure—a fact which was fully testified by the large attendance of the public that evening.

Captain DAVIDSON then requested the Mayoress to declare the bridge formally opened.

The Mayoress said: Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to declare the bridge now open to the public, and I have to express the wish that the bridge be named "The Poet's" bridge. (Applause.)

Captain DAVIDSON, on behalf of the Board, said the name would be adopted.

The procession then formed, headed by the Mayor and Mayoress, and the whole company walked over the bridge and proceeded to the bathing house, when Captain DAVIDSON proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs. Bayly for having assisted in the ceremony, which was passed by acclamation.

Three cheers were then given for the Mayoress, and an additional cheer for His Worship the Mayor.

The Volunteer Band then gave musical selections, and the public assembled round the band to listen to the music. A frame for a music stand was erected for the band near the bathing house, and a number of lamps were suspended, which illuminated this part of the ground.

The Volunteers, during the evening, gave what was originally intended to be a sham fight, but some alteration must have occurred, for we only heard volley firing (which was certainly done to perfection), but there was no skirmishing or maneuvering which goes to make up a sham fight. It would have been more effective had a detachment of the firing party been posted on the opposite side of the lake.

Fireworks and rockets were also let off, and singing parties on the lake made the hills resound with vocal music.

We must not omit to mention that in the afternoon there was a competition on the lake for model yachts, when twelve models were duly entered. The proceeds last evening amounted to £30 17s.



Barrett's cannon. *AWN*, August 21, 1913.

A cannon was presented to the Recreation Ground by Professor Furlong. This was said to be one of Dickie Barrett's used to defend Ōtaka Pā at Moturoa in 1832. Over the coming years another three cannons were gifted to the Recreation Ground, one of which was thought to be another of Dickie Barrett's, one from the wreck of the *Harriet* and the third of unknown origin. Initially these were positioned on the path at the north end of the lake but were moved onto Cannon Hill in the mid-1890s (hence the name Cannon Hill). During a visit in 1889, General Strange suggested that the Barrett cannon was fully 200 years old and a valuable curiosity.

A bathing area for children about 4 feet deep was excavated near the bathing shed. It was separated from the rest of the lake by a wire fence.

Using the lawn area in the Park for playing cricket was suggested in 1884. However, it was said to be unfit for play without spending a large amount of money and the cricketers thought this was ill-advised.

Another gift to the Recreation Ground in 1884 was a pair of ornamental iron gates for the Liardet Street entrance donated by George Rhind (see page 211).

The Board sold off two cottages that were deemed uninhabitable, these cottages were probably on sections 1172 and 1175 which the Board acquired in 1876.

There were plant donations of native shrubs from Mr. G. Oliver, pūriris from Mr. R. Wells, and holly trees from Board member, J. T. Davis.



This picture shows the wire fence used to isolate the children's bathing area.

Pukekura Park, New Plymouth. Halse, Frederick James, 1863-1936  
Collection of negatives. Ref: 1/2-010332-G. Alexander Turnbull Library,  
Wellington, New Zealand. / records/22760193.

## Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)

### Captain James Davidson (1834 – 1885)

Probably born in Kelso, Scotland. Davidson arrived in New Plymouth in the early 1870's. In 1874 he married Jane Ryan, and the couple had six children. They lived in Fleetwood Cottage on Carrington Street. He quickly became a prominent figure in New Plymouth, serving on the Harbour Board, the Hospital Board and was the third Mayor of New Plymouth, serving two terms. Davidson was on the Recreation Ground Board for 5 years, four as chairman. He was also a Captain in the local militia and was involved in the arrest of Te Whiti at Parihaka.



Tragically Davidson committed suicide, and it would seem for that sin he was written out of the Park's history.

Davidson has a fascinating history. He lived in South Africa where he was a Quarter master Sergeant of the Cape Mounted Rifles. He was a wheeler-dealer and with creditors hot on his heels he left South Africa in 1864. Soon after he landed in America where he enlisted as a second lieutenant in the 19th Maine Infantry Volunteers. In 1867 he joined the regular army as a private rising to the rank of first sergeant; after passing exams he was appointed second lieutenant. In 1869 his unit was transferred to Texas and Davidson assumed the duty of military commissioner of Red River County, where he quickly made a name for himself. Soon after the Governor nominated Davidson adjutant general of Texas with the rank of colonel. His role put him in charge of the state police. He also headed the state militia and in 1871 and gained the rank of major general. In 1872 he unsuccessfully ran for state senator. Following a dispute over finances Davidson decided to leave the United States and come to New Zealand.

By 1885 both of the Furlong 'Graces' in the lake had been destroyed, one by a boat that came loose from its mooring, the other was blown over. The Board decided to replace them with a pair of large earthenware vases. This job was given to Mr. White who had a brickyard at Waiwhakaiho.

Changing the name of the Recreation Ground had often been suggested and in March of 1885 it was announced that the name would be changed to "Egmont Park" subject to confirmation. This was at the suggestion of Captain Davidson. Unfortunately, the procedures to complete this proved too difficult and the idea was abandoned.

On April 7th, 1885, James Davidson, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees committed suicide. James Davidson joined the Recreation Ground Board at the beginning of 1880 to replace Thomas King. In 1881 he took over the chairmanship

and kept that position until his death. He worked at Bayly's the butchers as a bookkeeper. On April 7, 1885, he had an altercation with Bayly and on his way home he called into Gilmour's shop where he had a revolver which they were selling on behalf. He took the revolver, went to his home (Fleetwood cottage) on Carrington Road, sat by a tree in his garden overlooking Marsland Hill and shot himself. F. P. Corkill took his seat on the Board.

The first rugby practice was allowed in the grounds this year, but the ground was poorly drained and when it rained it became unplayable. A lot more work was still necessary to get it into a satisfactory condition for playing sport.

Chew Chong donated a flagstaff which was positioned on top of Cannon Hill. This was a topmast off the wrecked ship the *Australind* which had come to grief whilst delivering cement for the development of the port in July 1882. The mast now stands in the reserve at Moturoa next to the Yacht Club.

The question of a band stand was raised again, this time with the backing of the town band. A design submitted by James Sanderson was accepted, described as having a conical roof supported on eight pillars, which again rest on an octagonal shaped base of concrete. Iron railings run from pillar to pillar and the entrance is by four steps, which are continued all the way round the structure. Sanderson also offered to superintend the construction.

There were many donations during the year. Six ornate garden bench seats from Mr. Sharland that were shipped from the UK. A circular seat round the flagpole on Cannon Hill was made from money donated by students from Mrs. Dougherty's Egmont Ladies Academy.

Many plants were also donated, water lilies from W. L. Newman and Mitchinson, several hundred young pōhutukawa from Captain Messenger, 150 pūriri from Captain Wilson and a large quantity of young trees from Mr. Mitchinson, Six-hundred trees were planted in the region of the Racecourse Walk. Other plantings included a box hedge around the lake.

Also noted was the abundance of fish in the lake, carp, perch, and trout. It was thought that offering fishing licences would be a good way of raising money.

In April 1886 the lake was lowered to allow the sides to be cleaned and to remove a spit of land immediately south of The Poet's Bridge on the east side. This increased the area of the lake by more than an acre.

Darby Claffey, the caretaker of the Recreation Ground, was a bit of a character and would often tell yarns such as the case of a reported poacher. His story of killing a shag whilst in the process of swallowing a fish, by hitting it with a well thrown stone was not quite accurate. Apparently, the shag's eyes were bigger than its belly and it had the misfortune of choking itself.

**Thomas Furlong, aka "Professor Furlong"**

Thomas Furlong was born in Tipperary, Ireland, where, aged 18, he joined the 57th Regiment and served in the Crimea, Malta and India. In 1861 the 57th was posted to New Zealand and he was involved with the regiment at a number of actions. Reputedly a fine horseman, Furlong served as orderly to Colonel H J Warre and was discharged from the army after 12 years' service in November 1863. He then joined the Taranaki Mounted Volunteers, set up a livery and bait stables, and, as a general carrier, ran New Plymouth's first public taxi service. He was also involved with competitive shooting for several years as a member of the Taranaki Rifle Association. In 1868 Furlong established a successful hairdressing saloon and tobacconist's business in Devon Street. He often advertised the fact that he had the latest hairdressing equipment from America. His shop was also a tobacconist and at the back of the shop he had a shooting gallery.

His gifts to the Recreation Ground included:

An impressive fountain that stood in the hatchery Lawn.

Two Graces that stood on plinths in the main lake.

A round mirror on a flagpole that was installed where the Band Rotunda is located.

The first of the Dicky Barrett's Cannons.

Section 1086 was acquired giving access to the waterfall. The waterfall in question being at the location of the present-day Waterwheel.

Six fishing licenses were issued at 10s 6d each. It was reported that Mr. R Gilmour caught eight or nine carp, weighing around 12lb. Shags were competing for the prized fish, consequently some quiet culling of the birds was taking place.

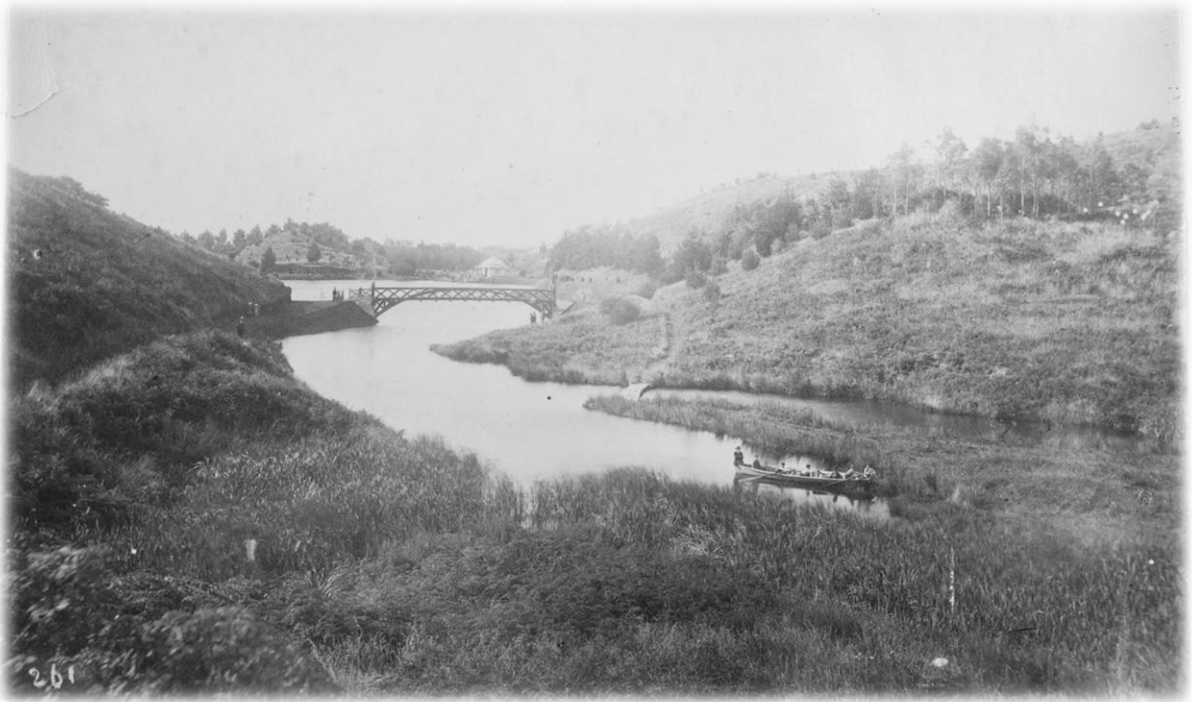
After a lot of discussion ladies bathing was allowed between 8am and 11am, except Sundays. This caused a lot of concern because it was deemed necessary to close the Park to men during these hours. Fortunately, a compromise was found, and it was decided to hoist a red flag on the Cannon Hill flagpole if ladies were bathing, warning gentlemen to stay away from the ladies bathing area.

With a donation of £25 from the Mayor, Mr. Paul, and £10 10s from a fireworks display, it was decided to proceed with the Band Rotunda. Scott Brothers of Christchurch were asked to quote on the structure. The price was beyond the board's means, so they decided to approach the construction in parts, the foundation first, then order the structure when funds allowed.

A successful fireworks display was conducted with an attendance of between 1500 and 2000 people. Fireworks for the displays generally came from England.

In August 1886 it was noted that the lake was being lowered to erect a footbridge. This was probably where the Boat Shed Bridge is today.

## Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)



Recreation Ground main lake -circa 1885. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2001-396).

The spit of land that was removed in 1886 is shown below the centre of The Poet's Bridge. Above the boat in the picture there is another spit of land with a small bridge crossing onto the east side of the lake. This spit of land was the path to the south end of the Park. The path went down through what is now Goodwin Dell (see map on page 11). Below the boat can be seen the mass of raupo that filled the south end of the lake. The boat is possibly the one donated by Mr. Hirst in 1878.



### **James Thomas Davis**

James Davis was a Trustee of the Recreation Ground from its inception until his unfortunate death in 1891. Davis owned an ironmonger's business on Devon Street. He was an active member of society. He served on the Town Board, the Borough Council, prominent member of the Ancient Order of Foresters, Fire Inspector, member of the Horticultural Society, steward of the Jockey Club and various other committees.

1887 started with work on the Band Rotunda. Cannon Hill was cut back several feet to make space for it. The earth removed was placed behind the main lake dam to give it more strength and to raise the level of the path leading down to what is now the Hatchery Lawn. The concrete base was laid but suffered a couple of acts of vandalism delaying its completion. However, it was completed in time to be used by the Taranaki Rifles Brass Band during Queen Victoria's 50th Jubilee celebrations. Because of the lack of funds, the top was not erected until 1891.

There were two more cannons donated to the Recreation Ground, one by W. L. Newman which was said to be a Barrett cannon and one by Mr Hoskin of Waitara accompanied by a 68lb cannon ball. The cannon ball was thought to have been fired from the H.M.S *Pelorus*.

The Church of Christ denomination applied for the use of the lake for an immersion service which was granted. This was probably a regular event.

A five-acre section of land originally part of Brooklands, lying between the Recreation Ground and the racecourse, acquired by the Jockey Club was offered to the Board. This land was of no use to the Jockey Club and eventually they would hand it over to the Recreation Ground Board. Over the years there were several land swaps. The two groups had a good relationship and often had people on the executive of both boards including J. T. Davis, W. L. Newman, R. Cock, and C. W. Govett.

Some birds were introduced to the grounds in 1887. The Acclimatisation Society released two brace (4) of English starlings and a Mr. Loveridge donated a mollymawk which he had caught on a hook and line at Sugarloaf Islands. Unfortunately, the bird was attacked, suffering a broken leg, and had to be destroyed.

The Board was always looking for extra sources of income so decided to issue eel fishing licenses for 2s 6d.

1888 was a quiet year for the Recreation Ground. The only real highlight being a Fancy Fair in March to raise desperately needed funds. The fair was to be held in the Recreation Ground in the area of the Band Rotunda. Lots of activities were planned, such as Aunt Sally, greasy pole, Punch and Judy, duck hunt, tub race, shooting galleries, etc. Unfortunately, the morning of the fair was wet and cold, and a decision was made to have it at the Alexandra Hall in town that evening instead. Even at such short notice the fair was a success. All the Board members actively partook in the proceedings. As was usually the case Mrs. Humphries was the driving force behind organising the event. A profit of £61 14s was realised.

During the year, the Board got prices for supply and erection of the Band Rotunda which far exceeded what they were able to afford, therefore the plan was put on hold.

It is possible/probable that trees such as, *Pinus torreyana*, *Cupressus macrocarpa* and *Cupressus macnabiana* were planted in the Park in 1888. An article in the *TH*, July 4, 1888 stated 'The Recreation Board are at present adding a considerable number of trees to the grounds. The trees are all new to this place, being the product of American seed forwarded by the government to the Board some three years ago.'

At the beginning of 1889 Dr. Gibbes resigned from the Board as he was leaving the district, he had been an active member of the community. He was replaced by Richard Cock a well-known businessman in town.

During the year, a few gifts of birds were received, the most notable of which was a pair of black swans from the premier Harry Atkinson. Also gifted were peahens, a peacock, and a mollymawk. A sort of aviary was built near the bathing shed to house some of the birds.

The major news of this year was the formation of a Sports Ground Committee set up to reclaim the swamp by the Liardet Street entrance so it could be used for sporting events.



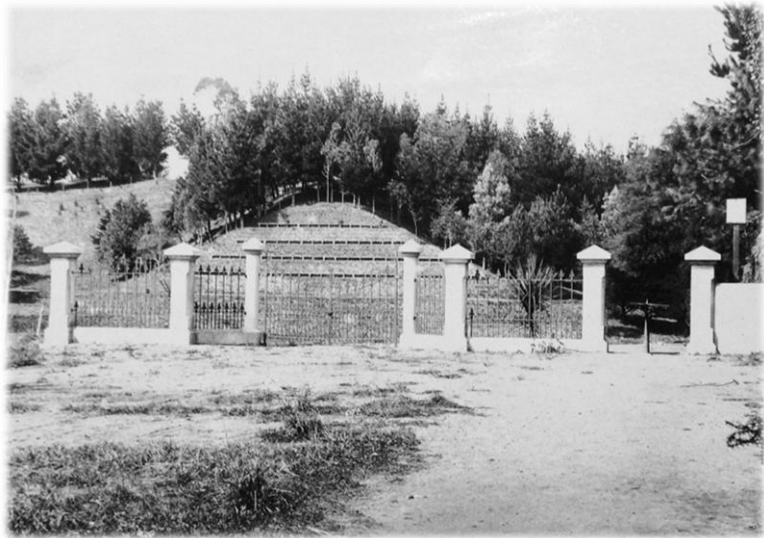
## Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)

Previous attempts to fill-in the swamp had mixed results and often fell short due to lack of funds. To develop the grounds the committee was given a seven-year lease at a rent of £1 per annum. They were allowed to use the area up to twelve times a year for fundraising, on the proviso that all funds raised would go into the development of the grounds.

The design of the Sports Ground was drawn up by surveyor T. K. Skinner who was a trustee of the Recreation Ground. Any changes to the Sports Ground area had to have the approval of the Board. Skinner also agreed to supervise the work. Clearing the swamp of trees, etc. started in December 1889. See page 222 for the story of the sportsground development.

At the start of 1890 the Sports Ground Committee was busy filling in the swamp and making an area suitable for an athletics meeting scheduled for Easter. They knew it would not be 100% suitable for all events given the time restraints but hoped they could still have a good competition. They were praying for fine weather knowing that a soggy ground would not be good. Working bees had been organised to clear the banks for spectators as at that time the terraces did not exist. The inaugural event on April 7, 1890, was run under the name of the "New Plymouth Recreation Grounds Club". Fine weather prevailed, a crowd of around 2000 attended and the event was a success.

The ornate wrought iron main gates gifted by George Rhind had become unstable, the foundations were in a bad way and Mr. Hughes senior had taken it upon himself to fix the gates and enhance their appearance. He had hoped to do this in time for the Easter sports day but raising money at the time was difficult. The gates were completed by the end of the year.



Main Entrance - Fillis Street - circa 1896.  
Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2003-859).

A sad event during 1890 was the murder of Stephen Maloney, an old soldier and veteran of the 1860s conflict. Maloney lived in the Recreation Ground, in a cottage on the hill behind the south-east corner of the Sports Ground. On the morning of his death, he had gone into town doing an errand for his neighbour Mrs. Carnell, which he often did. His route took him down Horton Walk and out the Liardet Street entrance. On this day he came across Darby Claffey the caretaker and stopped for a chat. He mentioned that he had given a young Māori lad a cup of tea and the lad had said he was helping in the Recreation Grounds. Claffey told Maloney that was not the case. Maloney did his errand, and on the way back he again went through the Recreation Ground and again Claffey saw him but this time they did not speak. Each evening Maloney would have his dinner at the Carnell's house, Mrs. Carnell would summon Maloney with a whistle. This evening there was no response, Mrs. Carnell sent her son looking for Maloney, but he could not be found. The next morning a search party found Maloney's body amongst ferns close to his house. He had been assaulted with his own tomahawk. A young Māori lad who was seen wearing some of Maloney's clothes and a new pair of boots the same as ones Maloney had recently purchased was arrested.

Darby Claffey gave evidence at the trial of the accused. After hearing what Claffey's evidence the Crown Prosecutor said "Oh! You are a most important witness; you are the last person who saw him alive." Claffey: "I was not!" Crown Prosecutor: "Who was then?" Claffey: "Why, the man who killed him!" Crown Prosecutor: "Oh; you are an Irishmen, I believe." Claffey: "I am." The dialogue then closed.



Stephen Maloney's Cottage. NZG, January 17, 1891.

As part of the Maloney investigation the main lake was drained looking for evidence. They didn't find any, however, they did pull out an 8½lb trout which was sold by the Board for 5s and served up at the White Heart Hotel.

The Board now found itself in a good financial position to complete the Band Rotunda which was ordered from Scott Bros. in Christchurch, and in December a tender was issued for its construction.

Camelias were donated by Miss Devenish, Mrs Skinner snr. and Mr T. Veale. Camelias, Welbankiana (Hatchery Lawn), Dido (East bank of hatchery Lawn) and Triumphans (Sunken Dell) may well have been come from these donations.

The Band Rotunda arrived in early February 1891. It was erected by T. Bond & Co., in time for the New Plymouth 50th jubilee celebrations which started on March 30, 1891. The jubilee was a major event which lasted a week, and several programme items were held in the Recreation Ground. There was a jubilee sports day attended by around 2500 spectators, including the premiere John Ballance. The jubilee marked fifty years since the first European settlers arrived in 1841. See page 174 for more information about the Band Rotunda construction.

Further improvements were made to the Sports Ground, including fully sowing the field, improving the terraces (which were minimal at that time) and erecting a fence to stop spectators wandering onto the field.

A path to the waterfall (now the Waterwheel) was made from the west of the grounds, this was possible since they had purchased Section 1086, and a bridge was erected over the stream above it. At that stage, the Gilbert Street entrance did not exist and the land which now forms Smith Walk was being rented out.

Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)

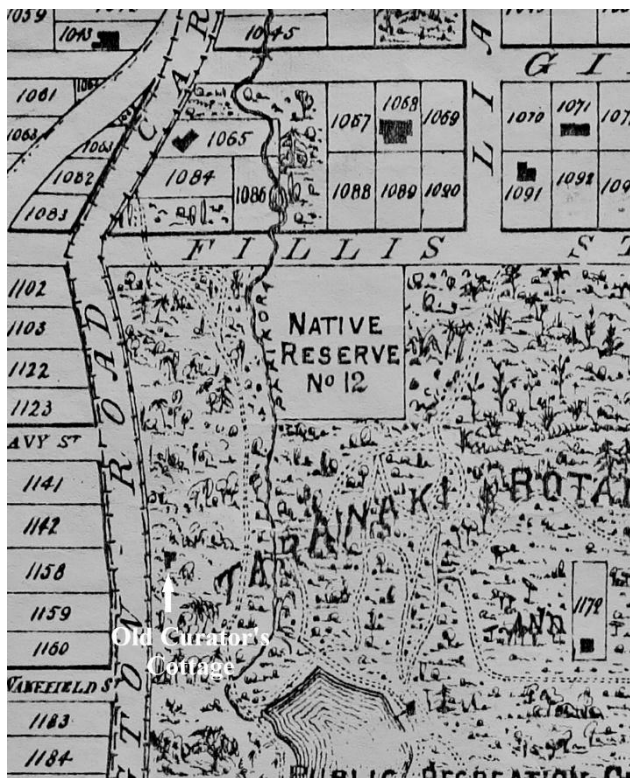


Recreation Ground - Watercolour by Sir William Fox, dated 1884.

Fox, William, 1812-1893: Mt Egmont from the Recreation Ground, N Plyth. 1884.  
(Ref: B-195-005. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand).

A piece of land formerly known as Native Reserve No 12 was acquired in 1891. The area being just over one and a quarter acres. Its footprint covers Palm Lawn, the hillside behind the Sports Ground western terrace and the northern half of Fountain Lake.

A fire at the bathing shed in March 1891 was a bizarre event. The east end fire bell was rung by a young man named James Salisbury. When people arrived at the bell Salisbury told everyone that he had lit a fire at the bathing shed in the Recreation Ground. At first nobody believed him, however a couple of young men decided to go and see if he was telling the truth. On arriving at the grounds, they found that there was a fire and proceeded to extinguish it. Luckily the fire hadn't taken hold. Salisbury was arrested, and when asked why he did it he said that he was sick of working for 5s a week and wanted to go to gaol. It later became known that Salisbury wanted to go to gaol for lighting the fire to hide other more serious offences against members of his family. He was charged with the more serious offences and sentenced to eight years in Mount Eden Gaol.



This map shows the location of Native Reserve No 12. The original Curator's house is also highlighted. Another interesting aspect of the map is the name of the stream 'PARIKORA'. In a similar map from 1913 the name changed to Pukekuara.

Taken from T. K. Skinner's 1880 map. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2010-220).

The Board lost its second chairman in six years. James Davis (The Poet's Bridge donor) drowned in the lake in September 1891. Davis had been out one evening visiting his sister whose home he left at about 10pm. On his way home he decided to go for a skinny dip in the lake, and for whatever reason he drowned. The next morning the supervisor of a prison crew saw a pile of clothes by the bathing shed and when he could not see anyone in the lake, he sent someone in a canoe to look. Davis's body was found in the lake opposite the bathing shed. The inquest resulted in the verdict of accidental drowning. There was no indication of foul play or suspicion of suicide.

A fourth cannon was donated to the grounds by Reginald Bayley. He was a Board member from 1877 to 1880. Bayley drew the original plans for the Recreation Ground.

Clement Govett donated £20 for native trees with the proviso that the Board raise an equal amount. This led to 2915 native trees from all parts of the Taranaki region being planted during September 1891. The planting was supervised by Mr. Kidd a landscape gardener from Inglewood. Kidd also planned the initial layout of Newton King's garden at Brooklands. Pukatea, kahikatea and some of the rimu that are growing in the area between the Tea House and the Fred Parker Lawn are the result of this planting. For a list of the trees planted see page 129.

Miss Devenish, and Messrs. J. Elliot, C. Kyngdon, M. Sutherland, J. Wheeler, H. Arden, and Conolly also donated native plants around the same time.

## Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)

Clement Govett was appointed to the Board at the beginning of 1892 to replace James Davis. Govett was a prominent member of the community, he had donated liberally to the Recreation Ground and was a founding member of the Swimming Club.

A system of annual subscriptions was introduced, set at 10s, this granted the subscribers free entry to all entertainment of any kind in the ground throughout the year.

An initiative to help the Board maintain the grounds and to beautify them was to invite people to take charge of small areas set aside as flower beds. The first to do so were Mrs. Hursthouse and Mrs. Weyergang but more followed including Central School. This had been tried earlier but unfortunately when the sports field was extended some of the flower beds were removed.

The head of the main lake was modified to strengthen the dam and to increase the width of the promenade in front of the Band Rotunda. This removed the point at the northern end of the lake that can be seen on Skinner's map of 1880. This can also be seen on the adjacent photo in front of the Band Rotunda. It has recently been discovered that this is the location of the under-sluice which was installed at the eastern end of the main lake dam which made it possible to drain the lake if required. How the modification affected the operation of the under-sluice is unknown.



Dicky Barrett's cannon. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: A. 4. 101).

Just above the cannon is the point at the top of the lake that was reclaimed in 1891. This is the location of the under-sluice that was fitted to the dam to allow the lake to be drained. Beyond the Band Rotunda there is a second cannon on the path.

With the constant improvements to the sports field New Plymouth Cricket club approached the Board wanting to use the field for cricket. The request was granted, and a cricket pitch laid. The first match was played in December 1892.

Archibald Hood approached the Board with the intent of planting a maze in the Recreation Ground. Hood had arrived in new Plymouth in 1861 as a Sergeant-Major in the Royal Artillery and retired following his tour of duty. He was a poet and author of short stories. The Board, always keen to improve the grounds especially if someone was willing to do the work, accepted his offer. The maze was described as being coil shaped, constructed of 3—4000 Box-thorn plants. It was planted somewhere between the southern end of the main lake and the southern boundary of the Recreation Ground. The maze became a thorn in the side of the Board because of its high maintenance and was removed after a few years.

Plant donations included: Mr. Duncan, two Norfolk Island pines. Mr. Fennell, an Azalea. Mr. J. Wheeler, ferns of *Todea superba* (Prince of Wales Feather) and constable Hickman, cabbage trees. The Norfolk Island pines are thought to be still present in the Park, one located near the old curator's office/sportsground and the other adjacent to The Poet's Bridge.

In March of 1893 the bones of a baleen whale that beached near Tataraimaka arrived at the Recreation Ground. The bones were placed on Cannon Hill as an adornment. Remnants can still be found today on the southern face of the hill. For more details and a picture of Cannon Hill with the bones see page 189.



Baleen Whale. Collection of Puke Arika (Ref: PHO2009-213).

The culling of pine trees started in the 1890's. This became a contentious issue for several decades.

Dogs in the Recreation Ground had been a problem from the start, there had been several instances where dogs had killed birds that had been donated. Threats of shooting dogs and prosecuting owners had not been a deterrent so finally it was decided to go through with the threat. The first notable case was that of Newton King, the second that of F. P. Corkill. Corkill, a member of the Board was charged with having a dog in his following in the Recreation Ground. The unusual aspect of this case was that the complainant was Richard Cock who was also a member of the Board at the time. In one of the court cases relating to dogs the judge asked a Board member:

“Why don't you shoot the dog?” Witness said that they would not like to do that. Sgt Duffin said that shooting would be a dangerous practice, as there were so many people about the grounds at times; and besides, he believed “Darby was a bad shot.” (Laughter). *TH*, January 30, 1893.

A major improvement to the grounds in 1893 was the formation of what is now known as Fountain Lake. It became possible after the acquisition of additional sections from Mrs. Fookes. Prison labour was used during the formation of the lake, which was not uncommon back then. Another major improvement was the Board's decision to build a boat shed and bridge at the southern end of the Main Lake. They approached Mr. G Brown to draw up some plans.

The sportsground hosted its first interprovincial rugby game which was played between Auckland and Taranaki. The ground was heavy and wet but there was a crowd of about two thousand spectators who enjoyed an entertaining game. Unfortunately, Taranaki lost 4-2 after leading 2-0 at half-time. At that time a try was only worth two points.

The Board's funds were boosted by £53 4s 10d from the distribution of an old relief fund for the Taranaki refugees who were sent to Nelson in the early 1860's.

Section 1084 was acquired during 1893. This was the section necessary to give good access to Carrington Road (now Victoria Road). The Rhind Gates stand on the northern boundary of this section.

There were many donations of trees and shrubs from: Major Brown, Captain Mace, Messrs, A. Standish, F. Oliver, J. Wheeler, J. Skinner and T. Hickman, H. Arden, J. C. Davies, J. Dingle, Mesdames, R. Street, Skinner senior, and Karira of Rahotu. The planting of many of the donations was supervised by local artist Hamar Arden.

## Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)

Other donations included a pair of peafowl from Mr Reynolds of Pungarehu, a kiwi from Mr Skeet, goldfish (released into Fountain Lake) and a black swan from E M Smith, M.H.R.

In 1894 Chinaware with pictures of the Recreation Ground were manufactured. This was organised by G. W. Browne who owned a China and fancy goods shop in town. Items included Tea services, plates and mugs. The items were made in England.

The construction of the Boat Shed and the Boat Shed Bridge was completed at the beginning of 1894 (see page 177). The Board's finances once again were in a bad state with outstanding debts for lands purchased. The Board acquired another section, 1135, which cost £16 16s, for which they did not have the cash. Section 1135 was important because it was isolated in the middle of the grounds. When the Board originally got the Recreation Ground it was comprised of town sections, green areas, access ways and roads. Until the Board acquired a section any accessway leading to that section had to remain open.



Boat Shed Bridge, circa 1895. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2020-0014-017).

J. B. Roy resigned from the Board and was replaced by W. L. Newman. Roy had been on the Board for thirteen years but had to resign due to pressures of work. He had been elected mayor the previous year. Newman was well known to the Recreation Ground Board having made several donations including a Dicky Barrett cannon. Newman was also a founding member of the Swimming Club and often helped with firework displays. He was the New Plymouth representative for the Union Steamship Company which also benefitted the Board.

The maze planted by Mr. Hood was growing well but it had cost him a considerable amount of money. To recoup some of this Hood decided to write a short story and sell it. The story was called *Johnny Fro*. This was the fourth story by Hood. Whether or not the book produced the income he wanted is unclear. The story is about a boy (Johnny Fro) who meets a girl, they end up getting married after some trials and tribulations. The Recreation Ground is at the heart of the story. A transcript of this book can be found starting on page 289.

Parachutist Miss Leila Adair provided a novel form of entertainment in the Park. Her act involved sitting on a trapeze suspended from a hot air balloon. When the balloon reached a height of approximately 4000ft she would jump from the trapeze with a parachute. The balloon would come down of its own accord. Reading accounts of her performances in Auckland, Thames, Hamilton, Hāwera, Wanganui and Palmerston North, all were unsuccessful, never attaining enough height to be able to jump. New Plymouth however was even more disastrous, while filling the balloon with hot air the people holding it down lost control and the balloon ended up on the burner and went up in smoke.

The Board organised a series of working bees to cull pine trees which had been planted too close together.

Some of the donations this year: R. H. Gibson, Himalaya Pines. Mrs Jameson of Koru, camellia trees. Shrubs and plants collected by Mr A. Kyngdon during a visit to California and the South Seas. J. C. Davies, *Meryta sinclairi* (puka) and Marcus J MacReynolds, pair of peafowl.

Originally the hillside south of the Boat Shed to the east of the Serpentine was not part of the Recreation Ground. In 1895 the Jockey Club allowed the Recreation Ground Board to fence off part of the land to use. Board member W. L. Newman who was also a steward of the Jockey Club initiated this move. Arbor Day plantings had recently started in New Plymouth following the formation of the Scenery Preservation Society in 1891. C. W. Govett, being a member of both the Scenery Preservation Society and the Recreation Ground Board may have suggested that this newly acquired piece of bare land was a prime location to beautify. Planting took place on August 8.

The drowning suicide of George Duncan was a most unfortunate event. Duncan, 75, a money lender in town was observed by Darby Claffey (custodian) walking by the bathing shed to The Poet's Bridge, then jumping into the lake. At the time Claffey was on top of Cannon Hill cutting grass. In his testimony Claffey said that he could not swim so spotting another gentleman in the ground he ran down the hill, got the assistance of the other man, went to the bridge stopping at the bathing shed on route to pick up a rope. On arriving at the bridge, they saw Duncan under the water and lifeless. Having taken ten minutes to get there they decided there was no point in trying to rescue him. At the inquest Claffey was criticized for that decision. The incident led to the Board sacking him in early 1896. He had been employed at the grounds for eighteen years. Claffey was more of a labourer than a gardener. The Board possibly saw this as an opportunity to bring someone else in as custodian. On one occasion he was working at the grounds when he was approached by a visitor to town. They asked him if he knew of a particular flower that might be in the grounds. Claffey indicated in the affirmative and proceeded to show them flowering gorse. Claffey died a couple of years later at the age of 49.

During the summer there were several school picnics in the grounds with students from around Taranaki participating. These were big events, on one occasion a group of 1140 students from the Stratford area came in by train.

To boost the planting of trees and shrubs Hamar Arden published a list of plants that he wanted the public to donate: *Grevillea robusta*, *Ficus macrophylla*, Lawson cypress, Norfolk Island pine, Chilean pine, *Cedrus deodara*, Austrian pine, *Cryptomeria elegans*, silver pine, tulip tree, casuarina or shiok, paulownia, camphor laurel, olive, plane, *Balbrogia lucida*, retinosporas (any variety), magnolias, rhododendrons, alder, mountain ash, tamarisk, yucca, fan palm or kentia palm, Washington palm, and any native trees not too large, especially – honeysuckle, hīnau, rimu, Fern trees, lacebark, wharangi, mountain toi, *Pittosporum trifolium*, nīkau. Arden suggested that the month of May would be the best time to send plants, as he would be in the grounds constantly during that month.



## Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)

In March 1896 (following the dismissal of Darby Claffey) Charles Edgecombe was selected from fifteen candidates for the position of custodian. He was given a salary of £1 5s a week and the use of the curator's cottage. While Claffey was occupying the cottage during his custodianship he had planted apple trees in the garden. Feeling a little upset about his dismissal Claffey decided to chop the trees down.

The Recreation Ground was again the focus of Arbor Day. Two hundred trees were planted in the area adjoining the Jockey Club, the same area that was planted the previous year.

The first interprovincial rugby match, against Nelson, was played in August 1896. The visitors arriving at 6am by the steamer, *Mahinapua*. Taranaki won 17-0. In January, the Sports Ground also hosted the first interprovincial cricket match between the two provinces, which Taranaki won by 59 runs.

In September, the curator reported that during the month some 300 native plants had been set in the nursery bed. 200 from the Meeting of the Waters and the balance from Brooklands. About 50 trees of a larger growth were planted out during the month and a 1000 native shrubs were planted in the nursery during the season. Soon after, T K Skinner donated 578 assorted native trees to put in the nursery.

Cabbage trees in the grounds were found to be suffering from an alarming blight in the form of a myriad of pale green caterpillars. The Board was advised to spray the trees with hellebore, which did not work. Subsequently they tried dried lime which was more effective.

After a period of not having swans in the lake because they were unable to control stray dogs harming them, the Board decided to try again. They were promised a pair of black swans by Mr. Wilkie which they intended putting in the main lake, and a pair of white swans by Mr. Lennard which they intended putting in Fountain Lake.

The sportsground was sown in places where the grass was patchy. After the sowing a flock of sheep was turned on the ground to tread the new spots down. One of the major events of the year was Taranaki's first Floral Fete in November, which fortunately coincided with a glorious day, and attracted a crowd of between 3 – 4000 people. It was organised for the benefit of St Mary's Parish, but the Recreation Board received a quarter of the profits which amounted to £35 15s.

The following pages have an account of the Floral Fete published in the New Zealand Graphic.



1896 Floral Fete in the Recreation Grounds. NZG, December 5, 1896.

The Prince of Wales' Birthday being a general holiday, was taken advantage of by the ladies and gentlemen connected with St. Mary's Church for holding a grand floral fete in the Recreation Grounds for raising funds for parochial purposes. Finer weather could not have been wished for, consequently the novelty of the festivities attracted persons from all parts of the district. The fete was held in the Recreation Grounds, and a more beautiful spot could not have been chosen. It is estimated that there were fully four thousand persons present on the occasion, and from first to last the affair proved a most marked success.

The proceedings opened at 2.30 o'clock in the sports ground, the terraces being crowded with spectators. There was a grand procession of carriages, ponies, carts, perambulators, etc., all lavishly decorated with flowers. Leading in the procession was a pet pony with two little 'dots' in panniers — the twin sons of Mr S. W. Shaw; then followed seven or eight other ponies ridden by boys and girls. Behind these were thirteen or fourteen carriages of different kinds all covered with flowers. Having made a circuit twice round the grounds, they withdrew, and a procession of children followed, led by one dressed as a young Maori chief, who was attended by a score of little girls in fancy costumes carrying garlands of flowers. The next to appear were a number of go-carts, the first two of which were drawn by dogs, but the remainder were drawn by children. This portion of the procession attracted a great deal of attention. One of the go-carts was drawn by four pretty little girls in white with another little dot driving them; then there was a boat on wheels drawn by a number of little boys. A pony trap drawn by a dozen little girls brought up the rear of the wheeled vehicles, and was followed by nearly two hundred children profusely decorated with flowers. One of the little carriages aroused considerable amusement, for seated in it was 'Beauty and her beast.' Mr 'Punch' was there, and had an equipage containing Judy and the baby. He was assisted by a little policeman.

The next part of the programme was a grand march by a hundred and fifty little girls under the guidance of Mrs Goldwater, and then a number of gaily dressed little girls danced round a Maypole. The children had been taught the dance by Miss Bedford, and were warmly applauded at its termination. The public were amused during the afternoon by various side shows. Punch and Judy kept the youngsters amused, whilst a gipsy tent and character reading by Mrs Westmacot and Mrs Clark attracted many adults to that portion of the grounds. There were boats on the lake, which were used by many, whilst others visited the baby show at which some fine children were exhibited.

Several prizes were awarded, the following being as complete a list of them obtainable:

Best decorated four-wheeler—Miss Holdsworth 1st prize. It was decorated entirely with roses and moss.

It was very pretty, and there must have been hundreds of roses on it. Mr W. Aubury took second prize, his carriage being decorated with ferns and bush flowers.

Best decorated two-wheeler—Miss Carrie Bayly and Miss Nellie Hursthouse 1st prize. The carriage was decorated with yellow flowers, mostly daisies. The ladies were dressed in yellow, and the effect of the whole was extremely pretty. Miss Linda Veale in her gig took 2nd prize. It was very prettily decorated with pink and white flowers. Miss Margaret Hursthouse and Miss Hales took 3rd prize. Their gig was decorated entirely with white flowers, and was drawn by a white horse. The two ladies were dressed in white with blue hoods, white college caps with blue tassels. This was acknowledged to be one of the most taking exhibits on the ground.

Best-decorated pony—Mr T. Callaghan's Percy, ridden by Master Foote, 1st prize; Miss Clarice Sole's Chippy, owner up, 2nd prize; Mr C. W. Govett's Creamy, Mr S. W. Shaw's twins in the panniers, 3rd prize.

Best decorated go-cart—Miss O'Callaghan's took 1st prize with a perambulator beautifully decorated with moss and daisies, and drawn by four little girls—Misses Alison Fraser, Gwendoline O'Callaghan, Brownie Beano, and Doris Roy, driven by Miss Gladys Roy, all dressed in pure white. Mrs F. W. Richmond's go-cart took 2nd prize, and Miss K. Hamerton's 3rd.

Miss Devenish's 'Beauty and the Beast' was particularly good. The hand cart was decorated with flowers and was drawn by two boys in Court costumes. On the cart was seated a pretty little girl dressed in white and holding the hand of a boy dressed as the beast. This took 1st prize in the miscellaneous exhibits, the 2nd prize being taken by Miss Ethel Standish with a schooner on wheels, with sails set and decorated with pink flowers. Two tiny boys sat in the boat, which was drawn by six little boys who were in sailor suits.

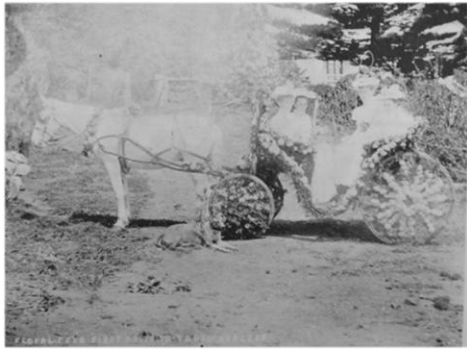
There were prizes also for other exhibits, but a complete record of them was not kept. Miss Adele Avery (daughter of Mr John Avery), took first prize for her bicycle decorated as the 'Flag of France.' Mr Harden, second prize, and Master Edward Avery, son of Mr Thomas Avery, whose bicycle was decorated as 'the Union Jack,' third prize.

There were eleven entries for the baby show, when Nellie and Minnie Tiplady (twins) took the first prize for babies under nine months, and Dorothy Rowson for those over nine and under eighteen months.

In the evening the grounds were again well attended, the chief attraction being the Druids' torchlight procession. Shortly after 8 o'clock the members of that order, clad in their gowns with hoods over their heads and white beards, stepped down from the band rotunda and marched round the lake. They were headed by the town band, who played a slow march. The procession stopped at the sports ground, where a ceremony was performed which had a very weird effect. Sky rockets were thrown up at intervals, and a party of singers in a boat on the lake sang several glees. About 9 o'clock the band struck up 'God Save the Queen,' which brought to an end one of the most successful gatherings which has ever taken place in New Plymouth.

Those who should be specially mentioned as taking an active part in getting up the fete are Mesdames Standish, Walker, McKellar, Bayly, F. L. Webster, W. J. Shaw, S. W. Shaw, Marfell, Skinner, Robinson, Dempsey, Bosworth, Dockrill, Misses Govett, Ahier, Hamerton, O'Callaghan, Jones, and Devenish. Mr W. H. Skinner assisted with the secretarial duties.

Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)



1st prize four-wheeler.



1st prize Go-Cart, Miss O'Callaghan.



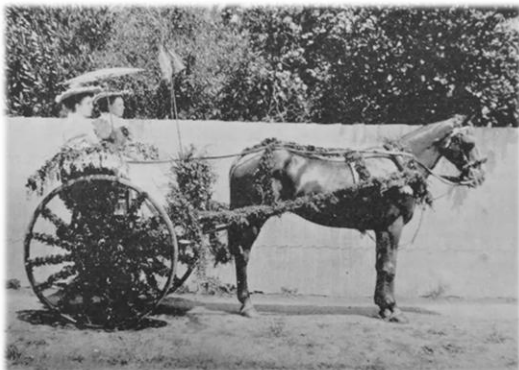
Miss Bedford's pupils, Maypole Dancing.



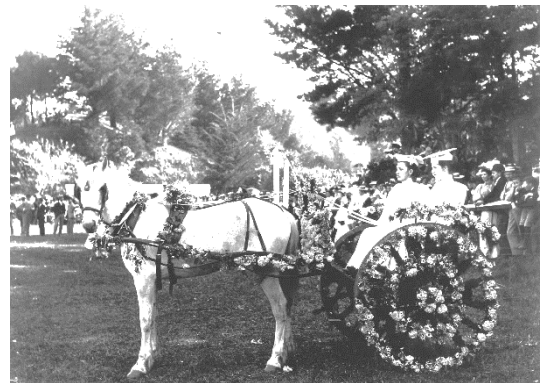
1st prize – Decorated Bicycle.



3rd prize - Decorated Bicycle.



1st prize – two-wheeler trap.



3rd prize - two-wheeler.



Beauty and the Beast.

By 1897 the Sports Ground Committee set up in late 1889 with a mandate to develop the Sports Ground to a point where it could be used for most sports including rugby and cricket thought they had achieved their goal. The committee was dissolved and the running of the Sports Ground was handed back to the Board. When they took over the area it was a partially filled swamp not fit for any sport. By 1892 they had played the first game of cricket and in 1893 they had the first provincial rugby game. The terraces were still minimal, the most developed being the southern terrace with four rows of seating.

Queen Victoria's 60<sup>th</sup> Jubilee was celebrated in 1897. There were several events in the Park but the one that stands out was the unveiling of the Jubilee Drinking Fountain. The fountain was the idea of G. W. Browne a member of the outgoing Sports Ground Committee. The committee had some cash on hand when they disbanded so started a fund to build a fountain. Browne, the owner of a fancy goods shop was responsible for the production of chinaware displaying scenes of the Recreation Ground.



Turn of the century postcard showing the Band Rotunda, Queen Victoria Jubilee Drinking Water Fountain and the whale bones on Cannon Hill.

The Board had a windfall, receiving £106 17s 5d, the proceeds of the Martha King estate after she died. Martha was a renowned botanical artist and considered to be New Zealand's first resident botanical artist. Some of her work is at the National Library as part of the Alexander Turnbull Collection.

Because the Sports Ground had been handed back to the Board, they decided to employ an assistant custodian to help maintain it. Robert Mace was appointed in March of 1897. Mace later took over from Edgecome as custodian. A changing room was built near the sports field thanks partially to a donation from Tukapa Football Club and builder H. Roberts who offered his services free of charge. The curator also helped with the construction. Until that time sports people had been using the bathing house as a changing room.

Some of the donations this year included: ferns from Miss Redman, two garden seats from Mr. Ricketts, and two Black Swans from Mr. Hooker of Nelson.

Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)

Floral Fete November 9<sup>th</sup> 1897. Photos from NZ Graphic November 27, 1897



1<sup>st</sup> prize – Decorated Wagon,  
Misses Curtis and Devenish.



2<sup>nd</sup> prize – Decorated Wagon,  
Te Henui Sunday-School.



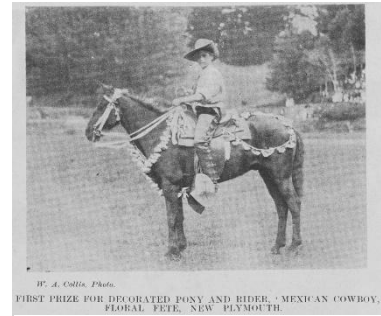
1<sup>st</sup> prize – Two wheeled carriage,  
Misses Bayly & Hursthouse.



1<sup>st</sup> prize – Decorated Child's Cart,  
Miss Joyce Hempton.



Maypole dancers under superintendence  
of Miss Hempton,



1<sup>st</sup> Prize – Decorated Pony,  
Master Percy Foote.

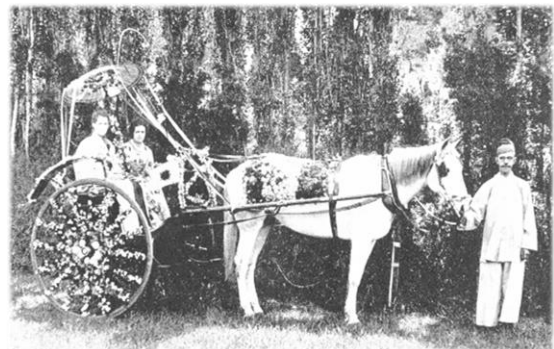
Due to there being no records from the *Taranaki Herald* for the first six months of 1898 there is less known about this period. What is clear is that the Board was still in financial difficulties. Another Floral Fete was organised to try and bolster the coffers, and it was a huge success netting the Board around £150, enough to pay off most of their debts. They still owed money on sections bought but not paid for. The people they purchased sections from must have been easy going. At the floral fete there were several different types of decorated vehicles such as: perambulators, drays, two wheeled gigs, bicycles, tricycles, and wheelbarrows. Also, go-carts, some drawn by dogs, some by children and others by goats.



First prize for Go-Cart,  
Mrs Roy's Children.



First prize Tricycle,  
Master Percy Kilner.



First prize Two Wheeled Gig,  
Misses Veale and Skinner.

Some of the prize winners from 1898  
Floral Fete. NZG, November 26, 1898.

Another fundraising event was a lecture by Saynor Griffiths entitled “Whenuaru” (trembling land) raising £25 4s. A notable feature of the lecture was that it was illustrated with limelight views. Limelight was a 19th century method of creating an intense point source of white light, leading to the saying, “in the limelight”.

The hatching of four young swans was a pleasant addition to the grounds and led to a renewed call to control stray dogs.



Manhattan Island circa 1900.  
Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2004-248).

The major development of 1899 was the completion and planting of what was known as Manhattan Island at the southern end of the main lake. The area where the island was formed was a raupo swamp. Originally there were two streams feeding into the lake, one at the east which ran through where the Serpentine is now and one at the west which came through Goodwin Dell the same as it does now. The stream back then was wider and less formal. Where the stream now runs under the path there was a bridge and to the south of the bridge a waterfall. In the 1800’s it is likely

more runoff water would have been flowing through the Park. T. K. Skinner came up with the plan for the reclamation and oversaw the project. Charles Edgecome did the planting of the island. Plants came from the Meeting of the Waters Reserve and Tarata including: kahikatea, rimu, mataī and tree ferns.

One part of the Recreation Ground doing well was the nursery, bolstered by a donation of two thousand native plants from T. K. Skinner, followed soon after by another fifteen hundred by a donor who wanted to remain anonymous. Water lilies were abundant in the lakes, so the Board advertised them for sale to raise funds.

The Taranaki Volunteers, under the command of Captain Okey held a camp in the grounds, which became a regular fixture for the volunteers.



THE VOLUNTEER ENCAMPMENT AT NEW PLYMOUTH, TARANAKI, JANUARY, 1903. W. A. COLLIS, PHOTO.

Volunteer camp next to Fountain Lake. *AWN*, January 29, 1903.

The Board received a petition requesting that the lake be available for swimming after 5pm. They agreed providing the petitioners formed a swimming club. The New Plymouth Recreation Ground Swimming Club was formed, and they were allowed to swim between 5pm & 7pm.

Even though the Board’s nurseries had enough plants for the season the custodian was asked to go to Ngāti Maru country (Tarata) for a couple of days collecting native trees and shrubs.

## Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)

There were several fundraising events during the year, but the Aquatic Floral Carnival was probably the standout. It was held on November 9, 1899, the Prince of Wales (Edward VII) birthday. A small flotilla of decorated boats was tugged up and down the lake by a pilot boat manned by Board members, Messrs. Newman and Cock. It is interesting to note that there were more than twenty ladies on the committee organising the event.



Floral Fete. *AWN*, November 24, 1899.



1<sup>st</sup> Prize Winner, Miss Hall & Miss Hempton.



2<sup>nd</sup> Prize Winner, Miss Devenish.

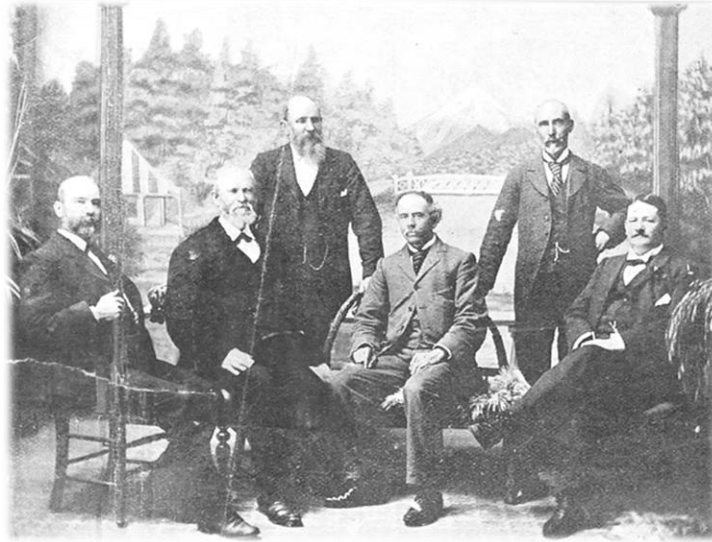


3<sup>rd</sup> Prize Winner.

In 1900 the Board once again approached the Borough Council looking for an increased subsidy. This time they recognised that the only way that this was going to happen was to offer the council some representation on the Board. The council agreed to this and to increase the subsidy once the legalities were sorted out and their members were active on the Board.

There was a push by local sporting groups to form another committee to further develop the Sports Ground and centralise sporting events. At the time there was a sports ground at Fitzroy, but it was too far from town. T. K. Skinner came up with an ambitious plan to substantially increase the size of the sports field. The plan would have meant removing the hill where the western terraces now stand and reclaiming a part of what is now Fountain Lake. At that time there were no terraces on the western bank. The plan was a bit too ambitious and expensive, and it met with significant opposition, delaying the next major development until late 1905.

The maze that Archibald Hood had so generously made was unsustainable from a maintenance point of view and was removed. During 1900 the area was planted out with 200 native trees.



1900 Board of Trustees. *AWN*, Jan 5, 1901.  
Back Row: Cock, Skinner.  
Front Row: Newman, Harris Ford, Hughes, Corkill.

Star Football Club approached the Board to erect a memorial to three of their old members who had died in South Africa while serving their country. The Board agreed to this. However, the memorial did not eventuate until 1903 and was only for Clement Wiggins.

It is notable that some of the fundraising efforts at this time were for the troops in South Africa and that the Board pulled back on its own fundraising because of this. No doubt this had some impact on the decision not to go ahead with major projects.

A noted donation was two garden seats by Mrs. Copland.

At the annual meeting of the North Egmont Forest Board, permission was granted to the Board to take from the Forest reserve two loads of plants. It is possible/probable that this is where kāmahi trees that are in the Park originated.

On February 4, 1901, the Park was the centre of a memorial service following the death of Queen Victoria.

The Jockey Club had previously allowed the Recreation Ground Board to fence off and use a piece of land they had acquired from the Brooklands Estate. In 1901 this piece of land was officially transferred to the Board. The area of land transferred was 3½ acres and lies to the east of the Serpentine between the Boathouse and the old Brooklands Boundary.

The curator Charles Edgecombe was sent to Raglan to collect plants. This was not the first time he had been sent to gather plants, but the first time to Raglan. This was made possible by W. L. Newman who had been the New Plymouth representative for the Union Steamship Company for many years. Edgecombe was given free passage for himself and the plants he collected. He brought back; mangeo, tānekaha, wharangi, native heath, umbrella fern, kōwhai and mānuka.

The Kauri Company of Auckland donated two substantial kauri spars to be made into a flagpole, these were also shipped to New Plymouth free of charge thanks to W. L. Newman and the Union Steamship Company.

In 1901 the Board introduced tree labelling in the form of 10" x 6" zinc tablets. They were painted white with black lettering. It was also noted that kōwhai trees were starting to bloom.

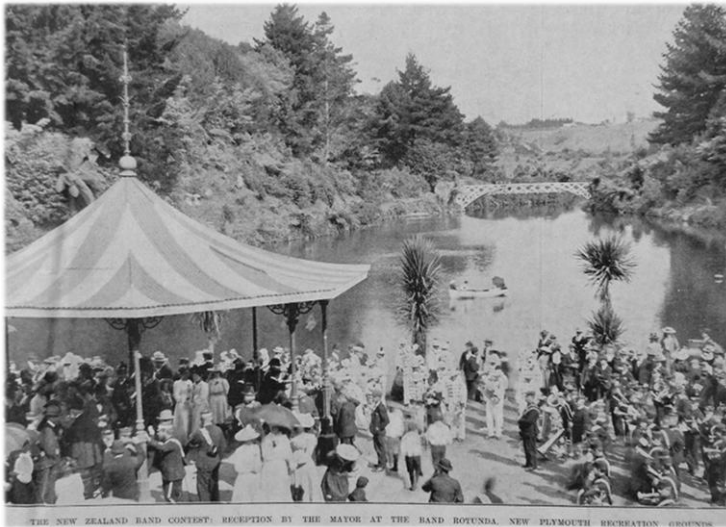


## Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)

An unusual form of entertainment during the year was that of Alexander the Australian Blondin, a tightrope walker, who performed all sorts of daring feats while balancing on a 3/4" wire rope 30ft above the ground. The rope was most likely strung over the lake from one bank to the other.

Several people donated plants including, Mr. Pickett, Mrs. Gordon, and Mr. Hawes. The director of the Sydney Botanical Gardens sent several roots of *Pontederia crassipes*, a pale-yellow type of water lily.

In 1902 Thomas Kingswell Skinner resigned from the Board after twenty years of valuable service. As a surveyor he had laid out most of the tracks in the Park. He made plans for the development of the Sports Ground and the development of Manhattan Island. Skinner was



Mayor's reception for Band Contestants.  
*AWN*, March 20, 1902.

replaced by Stephenson Percy Smith, better known as Percy Smith, who was also a surveyor. Smith had come to New Zealand with his family as a small boy, learning his trade as a cadet under Octavius Carrington, as did T. K. Skinner.

The national band contest held in March was a huge success for the town. Fifteen bands came from all over the country to compete and it was said to be the biggest ever held. It attracted huge crowds from all over the province with daily attendances of 4000 to 5000. Extra seating had been put in the Sports Ground for the event.

During the year fishponds were established in the Park in conjunction with the Acclimatisation Society. At that time W. L. Newman, a longstanding member of the Recreation Ground Board was also the chairman of the local Acclimatisation Society. The ponds were located where the Hatchery Lawn is today. The plan was that the society would supply trout fry and the Recreation Ground curator



Fish Rearing Ponds – Current Day Hatchery Lawn, Circa 1908.

Charles Edgecombe would feed the fish with food supplied, mashed liver being the main diet. Once the fish were big enough the Acclimatisation Society would transfer them to local rivers and maybe a few into the main lake in the grounds. The first batch of 5000 Rainbow Trout fry were liberated in the ponds in October, the fry being approximately an inch long. Over the years there were issues such as water quality, eels finding their way into the ponds etc., but they persisted on and off for about thirty years.

There was the influx of roughly 40 wild ducks which put pressure on the resources of the Board. They made a plea for feed and the Acclimatisation Society donated £5 for that purpose. Park staff fed the Park ducks until the 1950s.

Plant donations included: seeds from Mr. Chapman. A package of assorted seeds of African flowering shrubs from the Natal Botanic Gardens, given by Mr. M. Fraser who had recently returned from South Africa. Native shrubs and an edible cabbage tree from Captain Wilson, Smart Road. Native shrubs from Mr. Whitmore of Invercargill and Mr. J. Kelly of Awakino.

The first event of the 1903 Recreation Ground calendar was a cricket match between a North Taranaki team and an English eleven. An unusual aspect of the game was that the Taranaki team were allowed to field 18 players. Considering that the pitch back then was smaller than it is now it would have been interesting to see the field placements. After seeing the advert for the game, a person wrote in the *Taranaki Herald*. "I understand from advertisements that the game is to be played on the Recreation Ground. May I ask if the local team intend placing their "field" on

the terraces that surround the pitch?" The Taranaki team still got thrashed.



Wiggins Memorial, Circa 1908. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2007-021).

A monument to C. E. Wiggins was erected in the Park, arranged and paid for by the Bank of New South Wales in New Plymouth. Wiggins had worked there before serving in South Africa with the 3rd Contingent. The erection of the monument caused a stir in the town. Many people felt that the Recreation Ground was not an appropriate place to put the obelisk. It was erected

on a mound south of the Boat Shed Bridge, now known as Monument Hill. Wiggins died aged 27, from enteric (typhoid) fever at Germiston in South Africa on 13 July 1900. The memorial was built by memorial mason W. F. Brooking. It took the form of an obelisk made from Aberdeen granite on a pedestal of Melbourne bluestone.

With the establishment of the fish ponds the previous year it was rewarding for the Acclimatisation Society to release 500 rainbow trout (some as long as 8 inches) into the Waiwhakaiho River. Another 10,000 fry received from the Masterton hatcheries were put into the ponds in September. The following month another 5000 rainbow trout fry and 3000 brown trout fry were released into the ponds.

The Sports Ground pitch was still unsatisfactory for the local sports teams. Whenever it rained the ground became sodden and unplayable. The Board asked Percy Smith to produce a plan to deal with the drainage issue.

The efforts of the Recreation Grounds Board in endeavouring to preserve the rarer native flowering shrubs were highlighted by some fine specimens of New Zealand ribbonwood and koromiko in bloom. An Australian red gum tree also had a fine show of flowers.

## Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)

There were donations of plants from Mr. J Wheeler of Durham Road. A collection of South Sea Island seeds from Mr. Gordon Cliff, and a valuable donation of seeds of a varied collection of flowering shrubs and plants collected en-route from Colombo to Vancouver from T. K. Skinner. Other donations included a peacock from Albert Bayly and two Russian geese from Mr. Holden of Makino.

In 1904 the Borough Council subsidy was raised to £100 when it was agreed that three members of the council could join the Board. They were, Richard Cock (Mayor), and councillors Collis and Carter. Cock had been a past trustee of the ground for some years.

Harris Ford resigned as secretary of the Board having served twenty-three years in the position, he was replaced by E. H. Tribe. Ford remained on the Board as a trustee.

A pair of possums were released into the Recreation Ground in 1904. They were obviously unaware of the problems the little critters would pose. They were introduced to New Zealand in the 1830s because of the value of their pelt. In Taranaki the first possums were released on the Kaitake Ranges in 1895. Possums were protected in New Zealand until 1947.

The first interprovincial soccer match was played in the Recreation Ground against a team from Auckland. The local team was expected to lose badly as it was a fledgling team up against a well-established one. The Auckland team had agreed to come to town to help promote the game. The pitch in the Recreation Ground was in a sorry state. It was very heavy carrying a lot of water and stifled the passing game of the visitors. A game of hit and chase by the Taranaki team resulted in an unlikely win to the home side. A second game was organised to be played a few days later but the venue was changed due to the poor condition of the pitch.

The big sporting event of the year was the rugby match between Taranaki and Britain which drew an estimated crowd of 9000 people. The game finished in a draw.

Thousands of trout fry were lost over the summer months of 1904. A leak was discovered between a rearing pond and the Lily Pond allowing fry to escape and eels to enter. Other fish died due to the high temperature of the water because the ponds were small and shallow.

A disturbing event occurred in the grounds in September 1904. A young lady had got into trouble and her boyfriend solicited the help of an herbalist from Opunake to come to New Plymouth to terminate the pregnancy. This was attempted at night on the Band Rotunda. Unfortunately, the operation did not go well, and the young lady had to go to hospital. The gentleman from Opunake was sentenced to five years imprisonment for his actions.

Fundraising suffered this year because the Board decided not to hold a floral fete. This was to avoid interfering with the New Plymouth Exhibition and the Christmas carnival.

Plant donations included several roots of purple flowered water lily from Mrs. Wilkie and native shrubs from Messrs. T. McKenzie and J. Whitehead, of Tikorangi. Also gifted were two possums from Mr. Moynihan and a pea hen from Mr. Carrick.

After a heavy earthquake a yellow scum was observed on the lakes, some of which was collected and sent to Sir James Hector who gave the opinion that it was sulphur.

The development of the Sports Ground again became centre of the Board's discussions. Photographer W. A. Collis who was now on the Board as a representative of the Borough Council came up with a plan to increase the playing area considerably. He also suggested raising the playing field by several feet and making more terraces. Increasing the playing area meant cutting back the existing terraces which would provide part of the fill.



Old Tea House 1914. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2008-077).

The first Tea House was built in 1905, this was possible because local tradespeople gave their time gratis. The building was designed by architect J. A. Maisey who left New Plymouth for Wellington in 1905. The Tea House may well have been his New Plymouth swansong. Maisey also designed the Municipal Saltwater Baths that opened in 1903.

The Board was put into a difficult position when they were once again asked to develop the Sports Ground. The Board made it clear that their brief did not include developing the Sports Ground. The way forward was to have a separate committee come in and take over the development of the Sports Ground again. In November, a Recreation Sports Ground Committee was formed, made up of representatives from many different local sporting bodies. It was chaired by A. L. Humphries. Humphries was a rugby player who had represented his country fifteen times scoring 47 points. He played halfback weighing in at 60kg, hence the affectionate nickname "Skinny". He went on to manage the All Blacks in 1908. Humphries was an accountant by trade. The committee took control of the Sports Ground for 7 years.

The planned scheme designed by Sladden & Palmer (based on the scheme introduced by Collis the previous year) involved cutting back the southern terraces 16 ½ yards, the eastern terrace 11 yards, the hill on the west side of the ground to be cut back 16 ½ yards and a terrace built. The playing surface was to be raised 4 feet and measure 135 yards long and 110 yards wide. A cycle track was proposed around the playing field. The main entrance would move to Gilbert Street and a changing room and pavilion would be constructed in the south-east corner if funds allowed. The cost was estimated to be around £1,300. A lot of fundraising was necessary, and a ladies committee was set up to help. Fundraising got off to a good start with a £100 donation from the Licensed Victuallers Association.

Plant donations included: a collection of native shrubs, bulbs, and seeds from Mrs. Weyergang of Ngaire for planting round the new ladies' room, and shrubs from Miss Woods.

Mr A. Bayly donated the mainmast of the Gairloch for use as a flagstaff. The Gairloch was a coastal steamer which ran aground near Oakura in 1903. Remnants can still be seen today jutting out of the sand.

Charles Edgecombe resigned as curator. His assistant Robert Mace took over the role.

## Recreation Ground Development (1876-1908)

1906 was all about fundraising for the Sports Ground development. Unfortunately, it had an adverse effect on the ability of the Recreation Ground Board to raise money for the rest of the grounds. They did however receive £100 from the estate of the late Mr. Robert Govett.

The plan for the Sports Ground development was to make the pitch bigger to the south and east and raise the level of the pitch substantially. Some of the fill came from removing the existing terraces and cutting in new ones but this was not sufficient. Coincidentally the railway in town was being deviated from its route along Lemon Street to its present-day route parallel to Molesworth Street, requiring a deep cutting. The Sports Ground Committee got eight hundred yards of topsoil from that cutting carted to the ground using horse and dray.

Once the Sports Ground Committee took over the sports field it was deemed necessary to keep the public out for safety reasons. The Liardet Street Entrance was temporarily closed, and a new entrance was made on Gilbert Street. One positive result was better access to the waterfall near the new entrance.

Work on the Sports Ground started in September 1906. The first job was to relocate any plants that were going to be in the way of the changes. Also, some trees needed to be felled which were cut up for firewood. A motorised circular saw was used for this and became an attraction for onlookers. By the end of November, the old terraces had gone.

A notable event was a Sports Ground development fundraising garden party, under the patronage of His Excellency Lord Plunket. This was held in February 1906. Unfortunately, Lord Plunket couldn't make it, but everyone had a great time regardless. About 2500 people attended and it was considered a success. However, later in the year another garden party was organised as a fundraiser for the Sports Ground Committee, under the patronage of Lord Plunket, and this time he did attend. There was an estimated attendance of between three and four thousand.



Organisers of the February Garden Party. *NZG*, March 3, 1906.

There was a large gathering in the grounds for the memorial service of Sir Richard Seddon with about 3000 people attending. Seddon was Prime Minister of New Zealand from 1893 until his death in 1906.

A commemorative marble tablet listing deceased people who had made donations to the Recreation Ground was placed on the side of Cannon Hill. It was made by memorial mason W. F. Short. The names on the tablet at the time of erection were, J. T. Davis, Martha King, Isabella Small, Peter Madsen and R. H. Govett. More names were added when appropriate.

Waterfowl in the Recreation Ground were always in peril, especially from roaming dogs. However, one Russian gander found itself offside with the Board for eating duck eggs and it ended up on a Board member's dining table.

In September the custodian of the Recreation Ground reported to the Chairman the planting out of the following shrubs during the season just ended; kahikatea, 130; tōtara, 200; ramarama, 40; rimu, 30; hīnau, 8; maire, 10; kōwhai, 20; mānuka, 50; tawhiri, 20; tarata, 15; rata, 6; lacebark, 10; koromiko, 15; matipou, 10; Miscellaneous native shrubs, 16 sorts, 151; tree ferns, 40; paratawhiti fern, 10; mountain toi, 22; tree flax, 12; flax various, 50; ribbon grass, 15; Australian gums, 10; arum lily (clumps), 130; also 2200 young native trees planted in the nurseries. The hīnau tree at the Hughes Walk entry to the Children's Playground may be one of the eight listed above.

The Sports Ground Committee worked tirelessly during 1907 raising funds and developing the Sports Ground so that it could be ready for the official opening at the end of the year. The area of the field was increased by at least half a chain all round. The level of the pitch was raised by about 4 feet and new terraces were made.

Before the work began on the upgrade there were six terraces which could accommodate 500 people, after improvements this increased to 22 terraces accommodating around 2000 spectators. A promenade running around the ground at the bottom of the terraces was incorporated. The terraces were faced with turf, which was held in place using 25,000 wooden pegs, representing 2000 ft of timber.

A lot of seating was required for the new terraces and the Sports Ground Committee asked the public to donate rows of seats. The call was answered by many people including, Mrs. Woolfrey Bridge, Mrs. F. L. Webster, Mrs. Capel, Misses Humphries, Messrs. H. Okey, M.H.R., W. G. Malone, A. G. Sykes, B. Tippings, George George, and Mr. Waugh.

Fourteen tons of soil was imported from Longburn, Manawatū for the cricket pitch and practice pitch. This was considered the best soil in the country for cricket pitches. The grass seed was donated by Tothill Ltd. of Invercargill, an agent of Sutton & Sons of Reading, England.

The first cricket match on the new pitch was on Boxing day 1907. Taranaki v Wanganui.

Another major development was started in 1907. This was the establishment of the Serpentine, the body of water between the Boat Shed Bridge and the boundary with Brooklands. Originally a stream came into the Park from Brooklands which formed the eastern boundary of the Park between the Boat Shed and Brooklands. The stream bed was widened and excavated to create a water depth of 3ft. Percy Smith oversaw the development of the Serpentine and did the surveying required to lay it out. Many of the labourers were Māori, some of whom camped out with their families while employed on the development. Following the completion of the Serpentine in January 1908 the Māori crew were employed by Newton King to dig out the Brooklands lake.

The board received a bequest of £100 from the estate of Mrs Broham, sister of C. W. Govett. This along with a bequest from her brother (R. H. Govett) was used for the Serpentine construction.

The renaming of the Recreation Ground to something unique and befitting its reputation had been discussed many times since its inception. Renaming would prevent confusion between it and the Sports Ground and other recreation grounds in the area. Previous attempts to change its name had hit difficulties and been unsuccessful as an application had to be made through a Member of Parliament. Percy Smith came up with the name Pukekura Park because the valley had been known by local Māori as Pukekura for hundreds of years. In Māori Pukekura means red hill. The name possibly refers to a hill at the southern end of the valley covered in rata with their beautiful red flowers. The name change went up for discussion at a board meeting and after considerable argument the vote was 5 – 4 in favour of change. The Sports Ground was still called the Recreation Ground Sports Ground.

### **Stevenson Percy Smith 1840 - 1922**

Percy Smith arrived in New Zealand with his family in 1849 as a nine-year-old. His mother's brother was Charles Hursthouse who had persuaded the family to emigrate. He was an adventurous young man and in 1857 with five friends including Arthur Standish and Wilson Hursthouse climbed Mount Egmont, taking them five days. In 1858, again with Standish and Hursthouse a party of five friends embarked on a two-month trek of over 500 miles via Mokau to Taupo region and back via Wanganui. They used canoes and horses, but the majority was on foot.



His career as a surveyor started in 1855 as a cadet with Octavius Carrington. In 1866 while on a field trip with Carrington they were ambushed and fired upon. Fortunately, they all managed to escape unharmed.

During his illustrious career Smith had many notable achievements around the country but locally he was responsible for developing the road from Opunake to Kaupokonui. By 1889 he worked his way up to Surveyor General of New Zealand. On his retirement in 1900 he returned to New Plymouth.

He was also an amateur ethnologist and wrote several important books on Maori history including *Hawaiki*. He co-founded the Polynesian Society and when he returned to New Plymouth after his retirement the headquarters of the society moved with him.

When the Taranaki Museum was opened in 1902 Smith was a major contributor and gave the opening address. Smith also headed a Scenery Preservation Commission set up by the government in 1904. The commission identified scenic and historic sites to be made into reserves. They identified 416 sites 61 of which were gazetted by 1906 when the commission was disbanded. Some notable reserves created were: Otari-Wilton's Bush, Kennedy's Bush, Motukaraka Island, Te Kawau pa, and Ship Cove in the Marlborough Sounds. They also established reserves in Taranaki including: Turuturu Mokai Reserve, Hawera and Ratapihipihi Reserve, Cowling Road, New Plymouth.

In 1920 Percy Smith was awarded the prestigious Hector Memorial Medal.

Two of his most notable pieces of work during his time at the Recreation Ground were the development of the Serpentine which extended the main lake down to the southern boundary of the Park and building the wisteria pergola next to the Tea House.

Percy Smith also came up with the name of Pukekura Park in 1907. He felt strongly that the name should have Maori roots. He was a trustee of the Park from 1901 to 1918.

It was reported that during the planting season, Mr Mace, the custodian of the Recreation Grounds, and his assistant had set out in permanent positions a total of 540 trees and shrubs, comprised of 250 in connection with the new entrance from Gilbert Street, 50 at the John Street entrance, 130 in the newly designed belt along the Carrington Street frontage and 110 in other parts of the grounds.

Mr Edgecombe (former curator) made an expedition to Raglan-Waitetuna country bringing back 390 trees, shrubs and other plants. These were transplanted in the Grounds, mostly in the nurseries. There were about 340 trees comprising of about twelve varieties not found in Taranaki, including some fine celery-topped pines, 45 ferns of new sorts and 5 native tois.

Mr R. Davies, a horticulturalist specialising in native shrubs offered to donate a complete collection of specimen shrubs on condition that he was employed to plant them. The Board agreed and allotted a piece of land on the upper level of the Carrington Road for the purpose.

Firework displays were often used as a source of income for the Board. In 1907 the display attracted around 2000 people. They generally got the fireworks from England. On this occasion they were supplied by Brock and Co., of Crystal Palace.

1908 was an important year for the Park. The name Pukekura Park<sup>[3]</sup> had been adopted just prior to the new year with little fanfare.

The planned changes to increase the size of the playing field, raise it up several feet and construct all new terraces were completed in time for the official opening of the revamped Sports Ground on New Years Day 1908. The Sports Ground Committee was rewarded for their effort by hosting the New Zealand Athletics Championships in late February.



Opening of the new Sports Ground. *AWN*, Jan 16, 1908.

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[3] Generally, Pukekura Park will be referred to simply as the Park



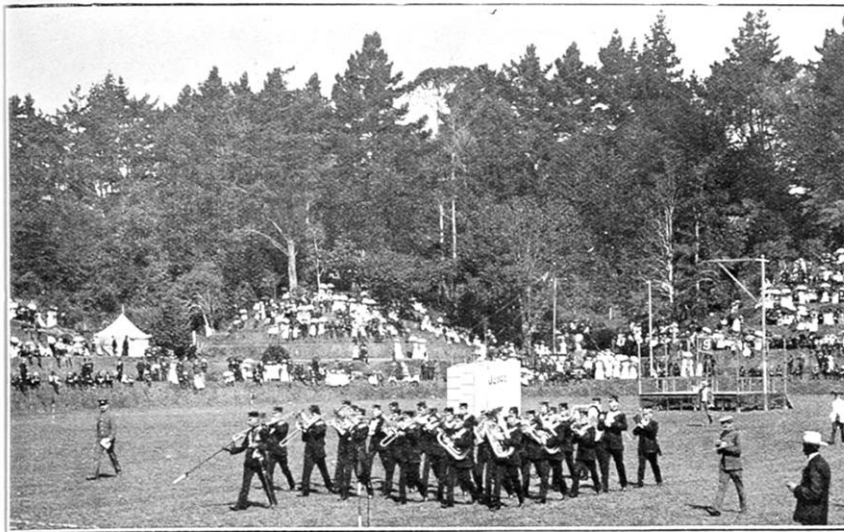
## The Smith Years (1908 – 1920)

The Smith years cover the period from March 1908 until December 1920 when William Walter Smith F. R. H. S. was the Park's curator. He replaced Mace who resigned due to deafness.

Park Board member Percy Smith was well aware of W. W. Smith's credentials and convinced him to come to New Plymouth. They had spent three years together from 1904 to 1906 as part of a five-man government run Scenery Preservation Commission. During that period Smith<sup>[4]</sup> had visited New Plymouth a couple of times and was familiar with the Park.

Smith was the first actual horticulturalist to run the Park, but he was also a nationally respected ornithologist and entomologist. He is officially accredited as being the last person to

sight a huia which he saw in the Taraua Ranges in December 1907. He is also the first person to breed kiwi in captivity which he did during his tenure at the Park. To read about the kiwi experiences see page 148. Smith also bred weka.



THE TARANAKI BATTALION BAND WINNING THE MARCHING COMPETITION AT THE RECENT NEW PLYMOUTH BAND CONTEST.

Band Contest. *AWN*, March 19, 1908.

Smith had been in charge of the Palmerston North reserves but resigned because of a disagreement with the Mayor. The townsfolk of Palmerston North, unhappy about the situation were desperately

trying to get him back. In order to persuade Smith to stay in New Plymouth the council agreed to raise the Park's annual subsidy from £100 to £200 to increase Smith's salary.

During his twelve years in the Park, he transformed the look of the place introducing many native trees to the landscape. The Park received many plant donations during Smith's tenure, which was in part due to his reputation. During 1908 Smith started developing a fernery on Manhattan Island.

During Smith's time at the Park there were only a few staff mentioned. T. S. Compton was hired as assistant curator in 1908. Other names were John Pickerell and Robert Old. Generally, people were employed on a casual basis.

Percy Smith was responsible for the construction of the wisteria pergola next to the Tea House which was originally made using mamaku. Following is a description of the intended planting on the open arbor:

Percy Smith has planned and is about to construct a pergola or open arbor along the eastern side of the little lawn by the Tea House. This will be formed of mamaku trunks with a roof of wire netting, and the structure will be covered with flowering creepers – wisteria, begonia, passion flower, solanum, and such like. *TH*, Feb 2, 1908.

<sup>[4]</sup> Going forward any reference of Smith will refer to W. W. Smith.

A new outlet of the main lake was constructed incorporating concrete sills. This was to enable the water level in the lake to be increased by one foot. The work was done by Messrs. Boon Bros. Also, the two bridges near the Gilbert Street entrance waterfall were replaced.

A start was made on the construction of a swimming pool for the Central School students. It was somewhere in the region of the Fred Parker Lawn. Unfortunately, it was never used as the spring which fed the pool dried up.

During the year a Rob Roy Canoe was gifted to the Park by Mr. J. W. Wilson.

By 1909 Smith was making his presence felt. He redeveloped the Gilbert Street entrance and the path leading from it to Fountain Lake. This path is now called Smith Walk. Other areas to get his attention were the swamp north of the Tea House which is now the attractive Sunken Dell and the area between the Tea House and the Fernery. Smith promoted the planting of native trees and during the year felled many pine trees replacing them with natives.

The question of who should run the Park came up again. Councillor F. Bellringer, one of three council representatives on the Board, was in favour of the Park management being handed over to the council. The three council representatives had equal voting rights on the board except when it came to voting on constitutional matters. Bellringer was not happy about that.

Again, the Board found itself deep in debt and struggling to find funds to pay for labour to assist the curator with his work. A scheme for using the town's unemployed was introduced, and a fund was started to pay these men.

The Acclimatisation Society introduced four more trout rearing ponds in the Park. Water was fed via a wooden flume and a drop of several feet was introduced to aerate the water and keep it agitated, resulting in stronger and more active fish. They placed 20,000 brown trout and 20,000 rainbow trout into the ponds. The Society also asked for permission to build a hatchery.

Movies were shown for the first time in the Park, organised by Mr. H. Hayward. The movies were 'A human sacrifice', depicting some of the rites of the Druids of ancient Britain and the offering of a human sacrifice, and "The White Chief", a film that illustrated the life and customs of the American Indians. The movies were accompanied by live music.

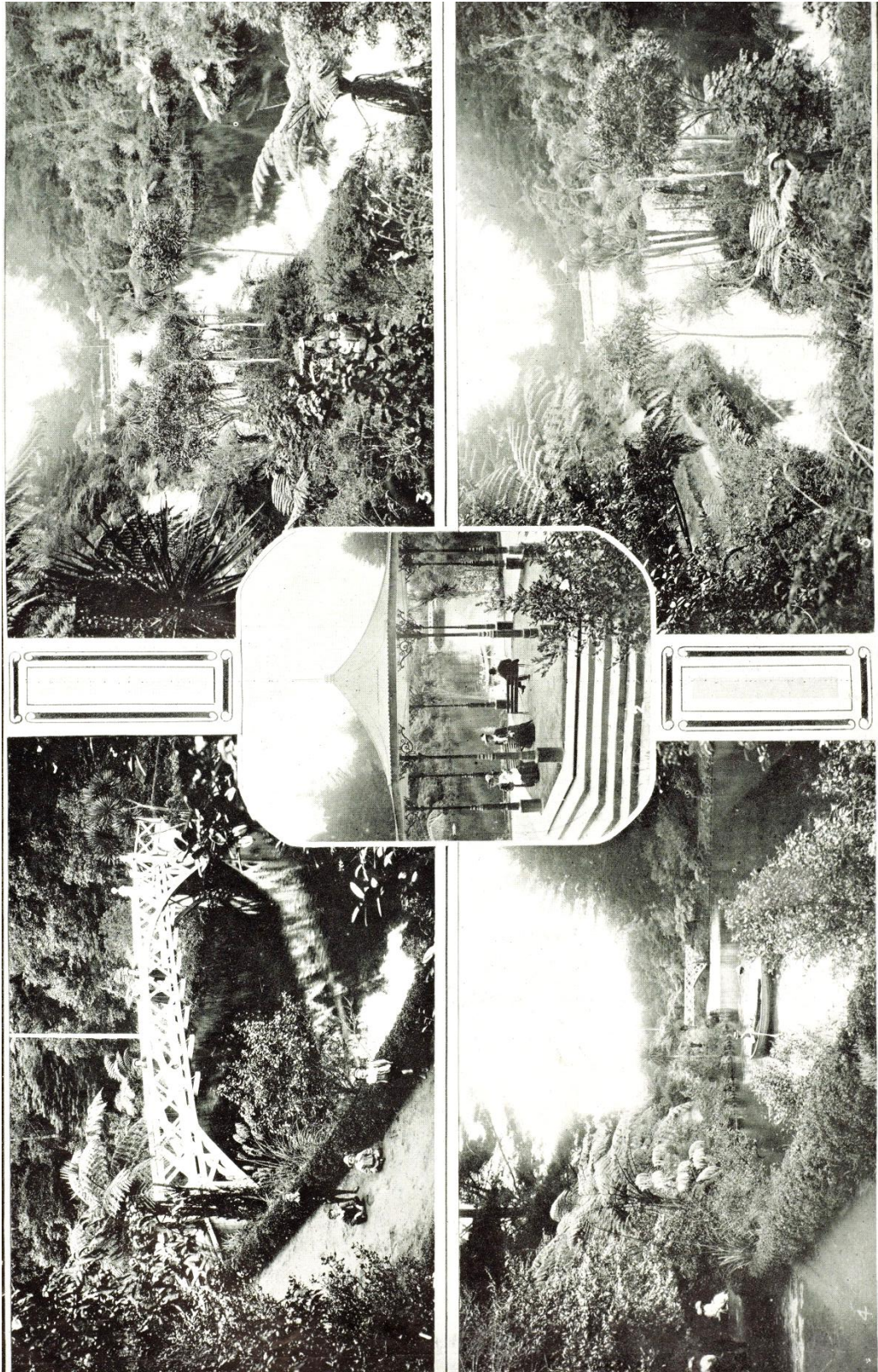
At the end of the year it was reported that the Board was in debt to the tune of £190, which the Board members were personally responsible for.

In 1910 W.W. Smith and Percy Smith went on a native plant foraging trip to government reserves. They had special ministerial authority to visit certain Crown reserves to collect specimen trees because they had been on the Scenery Preservation Commission.

There was a large gathering in May 1910 to mourn the passing of King Edward VII.

The financial position of the Board was bad, and to make matters worse the Council reduced their subsidy by £50. Fortunately, a donation of £50 by the Hon. O. Samuel eased the pain a little.

One of the entertainment highlights of the year was the screening of a movie about Shackleton's trip to the South Pole, shown on a big screen in the Park. Adding to the entertainment was the Taranaki Garrison Band playing a selection of tunes.



IN THE PICTURESQUE PUBLIC GARDENS OF NEW PLYMOUTH.

The people of New Plymouth are justly proud of their Recreation Grounds, which are ranked the best pictures in the Dominion. The grounds have been well laid out, and the natural beauty of the bush and sheets of ornamental water have been displayed to the best advantage. An excellent idea of the beauties of these grounds is afforded by our illustrations. (1) A path leading over one of the sheets of ornamental water. (2) The bandstand. (3) The benches of the bush well displayed in a public garden. (4 and 5) Pretty walks in the grounds.

Views of Pukekura Park. *New Zealand Graphic*, June 22, 1910.  
Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections NZG-19100622-0029-01.

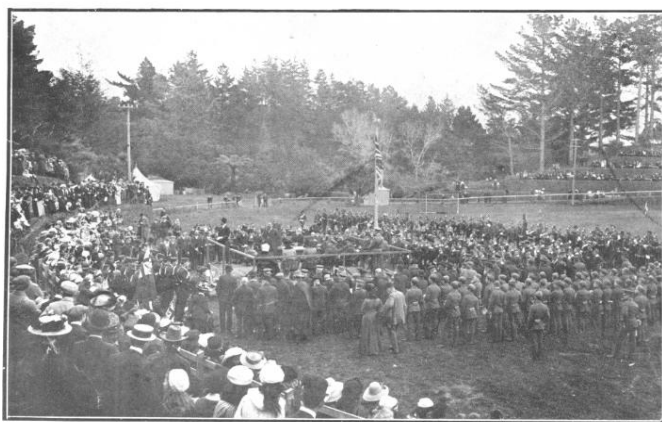
The Acclimatisation Society had a hatchery building designed by Frank Messenger with the intention of building it in the Park at the head of the Hatchery Lawn. Unfortunately, the cost was higher than anticipated and they decided not to go ahead with the project. The trout fry put in the ponds the previous year did not do well because of the hot and muggy weather. The continued dry weather caused the water to foul which was disastrous for the young fry. This made the Society doubt the quality of water coming from the Park lake.

In June, the Board was approached by a group wanting to build a tennis club on Park grounds, between the Vogeltown entrance (Shortland Street) and the curator's cottage. The Board granted their request, leasing out the piece of land on a seven-year renewable contract. The president of the newly formed Park Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club was Richard Cock, who was also the chairman of the Pukekura Park Board at the time.

In November 1910 Sebphe the aeronaut successfully ascended to 4,400 feet in a hot air balloon, then parachuted down, his balloon following him after emptying itself of air and turning turtle. Miss Leila Adair had attempted the same stunt in 1894 with disastrous consequences. On that occasion her balloon was destroyed by fire before getting off the ground.



Sebphe the Aeronaut.  
Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2009-328).



Cullis, photo. THE MAILED AND THE SPECIAL ATTENDANCE WITH PROGRAM.

King George V and Queen Mary coronation celebrations.  
NZG, June 28, 1911.

1911 was an uneventful year for the Board due to lack of funds. The financial situation had become serious, and any planned improvements were put on hold. The highlights were the opening of the Park Tennis Courts and the visit of the Governor Lord Islington, in January. In June there was a large crowd for the celebrations of the coronation of King George V and Queen Mary.

The most controversial subject during the year was the culling of pine trees, several residents complained vigorously.

In 1912 to get out of the financial difficulty the Board introduced a Park Saturday collection. This was a door-to-door campaign. To manage the collection the town was divided into 17 areas. Many of the local ladies who did the canvassing were wives and daughters of the Park's trustees. The feeling was that if the event was a failure they would have no choice other than handing over the Park to the council. Park Saturday was like a referendum as to whether the townspeople wanted the Park to be run by the trustees or the council. The day was successful, raising over £164, enough to put the Park's finances back in the black for the first time in a long time. To add to this, Hon. O. Samuel M.L.C. donated £25. He continued this donation for several years.

## The Smith Years

The curator planted a rose garden after receiving a large collection of rose bushes donated by C. E. Bellringer.

Smith continued developing a fernery on Manhattan Island using thirty-seven species of native fern. At that time, the island was accessible to the public as a picnic spot, with two small bridges linking it to the mainland. Unfortunately, a lot of the ferns planted were stolen so the Board decided to remove the bridges, this however did not stop the thieves. A lot of the plants on the island came from Ratapihipihi.

Plant theft was a major concern, as were bike riding and dogs in the Park. Ducks and swans were regularly harmed by dogs. To try and counter these issues the Board appointed Mr Tippins as an inspector to try and enforce the bylaws of the Park. Tippins was a council inspector who did this sort of work as part of his job.

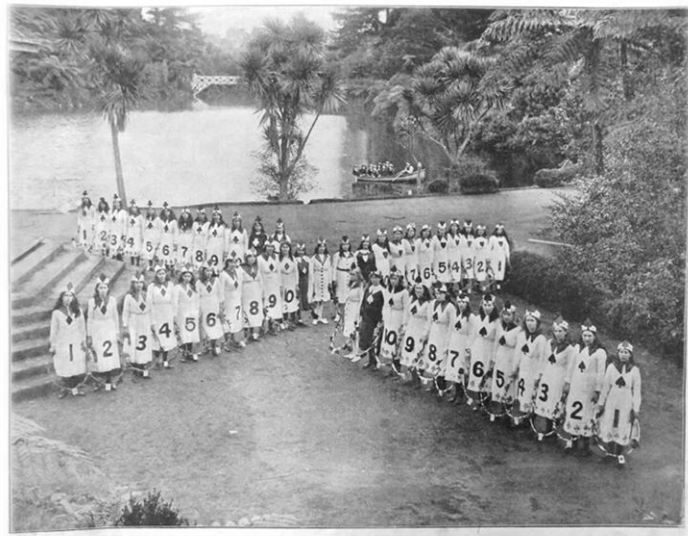
The running of the tea-rooms was taken over by Mrs. Cory. She requested that she be allowed to paint the inside of the building at her own expense. The Board was more than happy to accede. Fortunately for her, Cooper Bros came to the rescue offering to paint the building inside and out free of charge using their newly patented paint. They also painted the bathing shed.

The Acclimatisation Society stopped using the rearing ponds because of concerns over poor water quality and removed the races feeding the ponds.

Smith went on a botanical expedition to Mount Egmont to find new species of plants. He was accompanied by Donald Petrie and Murdoch Fraser. Petrie was a preeminent botanist of the time. He was a long-time friend of Smith's going back to when Smith lived in the South Island. The plants they found were introduced into the Park.

The rose bed developed the previous year (Palm Lawn) flourished but the flowers were stolen, this prompted Smith to develop a new rose garden behind the Tea House. He transplanted the existing roses and others that were donated. He also planted a bed of native veronicas in the same area.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century ducks and swans were reared in the Park. Sometimes the ducklings would be taken out of the Park and reintroduced when they were big enough to fend for themselves. The Board fed the birds and often culled eels.



Girls High School Amateur Theatricals practice.  
*AWN*, October 23, 1913.

At the end of 1912 two new paths were made, making it easier for Vogeltown residents to get to the racecourse. One path went from the Shortland Street entrance down to the south end of the lake onto Hughes walk. Two small crossings allowed residents to walk across the north end of Manhattan island. The second path went from the Boat Shed Bridge up the Eastern Hillside to the racecourse. The area on the island where the ferns were planted was fenced off.

The Park was now operating in the black instead of the red which was a massive relief for the Board. Throughout 1913 the Board received many donations of plants and birds for which the curator was thankful. The main body of work comprised improving walkways and general gardening, cutting grass, weeding, etc. Another Park Saturday was held raising over £128.



Vice Regal Party - Earl of Liverpool.  
*AWN*, October 23, 1913.

Five pine trees were cut down near the curator's cottage as they were deemed dangerous, and six above the western terrace in the Sports Ground to give more light to the cricketers.

Rider Haggard visited the Park in March 1913 as part of a trade mission. During this visit he supposedly claimed that the pūriri in Brooklands was 2000 years old.

At this time the curator and a young assistant were the only full-time employees of the Park. Casual labour was brought in when needed.

In 1914 C. W. Govett died, he had been a trustee since 1892. During his time on the Board, he made several generous donations to help the Board's finances. He was also one of the driving forces in forming the Scenery Preservation Society in 1891 and promoting the formation of Egmont National Park. C. H. Drew (jeweller) was appointed in his place.

It is noted that at this time the bathing shed was no longer being used by bathers. It was now used as a tool shed for the curator. It remained in its original location next to the lake until 1931. When the new Tea House was built, the shed was moved to a location between the Tea House and the Fernery.

The major projects for the year were the enlargement of the Lily Pond and the reclamation of the swamp (Sunken Dell) near the Tea House. The dell was drained and the main lake overflow channel that ran through it was widened to about 6 ft to improve the flow of water. Fill was added and a lawn was laid. A pathway through the dell was formed and the banks were planted with a collection of native ferns. Smith also remodelled the Gilbert Street entrance, greatly improving its appearance and making it the prettiest entrance to the Park. A short distance away he planted a collection of 34 varieties of flax in a bed near Palm Lawn.

A new path was started from near the Tea House, going up past the racecourse and behind the eastern terrace of the Sports Ground.

During the 1910s many kiwi and ducks were donated to the Park. One donation in particular stands out, a bequest of 64 hybrid ducks bred from Chilean teal and New Zealand grey duck.

In 1915 the first government meteorological station was established in town. It was located in the garden of the curator's cottage on Carrington Road (now Victoria Road). Smith took daily readings and once a month they would get posted in the newspapers (see next page). This is another example of Smith's talent.

Because of the war it was decided not to have a Park Saturday fundraising effort in 1915. This had been a major fundraiser, and indeed a lifeline for the previous three years. Instead, fetes were held to raise money for the poor in Britain, Ireland, and Belgium.

A new rose bed was established on the site of the old peacock house, at the southern end of what is now Palm Lawn. This was done to accommodate a large collection of roses sent by a gentelman from Palmerton North.

A new path was completed (Claffey Walk) which ran from the John Street (Rogan Street) entrance, around the top of the sports ground gulley (King Fern Gulley).

Several pine and macrocarpa trees were felled and sold for firewood. This was another source of income for the Board.

Around this time, the curator and Percy Smith were being called upon by several authorities in town to help with planting layouts, including: the Hospital Board, Technical College, and East End Reserve.

In 1916 F. P. Corkill resigned from the Board after serving for more than 30 years. C. E. Bellringer was appointed to take his place.

The management of the Sports Ground was returned to the Park Board. The Sports Ground Committee which had developed and controlled the Sports Ground since 1906 was finding it difficult to get the men to look after it. This was because many of the local young men were away at war. The Board came to an agreement with the Technical College in town, they would use it as a sports field and in return look after grass cutting, etc. This arrangement was not successful.

Park Saturdays were reintroduced in 1916. It raised over £166 that year. The Board also received a £100 from the estate of the late Ann Hulke.

Robert Clinton Hughes wrote 'A Brief History', which was a history of the Park until that time. It was published in three parts in the *Taranaki Herald* on August 3rd, 4th and 5th.

The John Street (now Rogan Street) entrance was improved, and native trees planted in the vicinity of the entrance.

In 1917 the old Carrington Road was renamed Victoria Road and the portion of Holdsworthy Road which formed the southern boundary of the Park was officially handed over to the Board.

E. H. Tribe resigned his position as secretary of the Board of Trustees. Tribe felt that the Board were not forward thinking, yet he objected to the Board wanting to install electric lights in the curator's cottage, thinking this was an unnecessary expense. When the chairman questioned his standing in the committee, Tribe walked out.

The Sports Ground was in such a state that it was suggested that it be dug up and planted with potatoes as there was going to be a food shortage due to the war.

The first permanent electric lights were installed around part of the main lake.

Two improvements were made during the year. The wooden landing steps in front of the Band Rotunda were replaced, and the wooden culvert which formed the mirror waterfall by the old Lily Pond (Hatchery Lawn) was replaced. Both structures were replaced with concrete counterparts designed by Frank Messenger, gratis.

#### WEATHER REPORT FOR JULY.

Mr. W. W. Smith has forwarded us the following weather report for July, recorded at Pukekura Park weather station:—"The weather throughout the month has been unseasonably mild. Heavy rain storms were recorded on the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th, and again on the 20th and 21st, resulting in heavy floods in many parts of the North Island. Locally, the uniform temperature prevailing both day and night for four days during the period of the heavy warm rains caused the rapid melting of the snow on Mount Egmont, thus adding greatly to flood waters. The rain storm on the 21st gave the heaviest rainfall recorded in one day at New Plymouth for eleven years. Rain fell on 14 days, the heaviest, 3.066in., on the 21st, the lightest, .002in., on the 25th; total, 8.083in. The sunshine recorder registered 8hr. 47min. on the 4th and 9min. on the 20th, being the highest and lowest on one day respectively.; total sunshine, 131hr. 13min. There were six sunless days. The maximum shade thermometer registered the highest temperature 63deg., on the 9th, the lowest, 53deg., on several days. The minimum thermometer gave 55deg. on four days and 30deg. on two days. The radiator (sun's heat) recorded 128deg. on the 30th and 101deg. on two days. The wind blew from the north on 3 days, north-east 9 days, south 2 days, south-east 8 days, south-west 8 days and west 1 day. Cloudiness exhibited great range of form and density. The masses of cumulo-nimbus preceding the heavy rain storms were of immense volume. Stratus occurred around Mount Egmont on three days. Cumulus were numerous throughout the month; alto-cumulus occurred on four days and cirrus (highest of all clouds) on two days. Frost was recorded on the grass on four mornings, ranging from 1deg. on the 3rd to 2deg. on the 30th and 31st."

A hot water fountain was donated by C. H. Burgess and was located by the Band Rotunda. This supplied hot water for people making cups of tea. Unfortunately, it was short lived as it was vandalised soon after being installed.

The Park's finances were OK. The Board raised £200 from subscriptions and the Park Saturday collection, plus £100 from the estate of Clement Govett and £25 from the Jockey Club.

Another addition to the Park was the initial palm tree plantings on what is now Palm Lawn. They were supplied by Clement Wragge of Auckland. In 1916 Wragge had visited New Plymouth as part of a speaking tour and commented on the fact that Pukekura Park would benefit from a planting of palm trees. The Board must have heeded his advice and ordered some from him. Wragge owned Waiata Subtropical Gardens which was a well-known visitor attraction. It is believed there are four trees from that planting still growing in the Park: 2x *Livistona australis* (cabbage-tree palm), 1 x *Howea forsteriana* (kentia palm) and 1 x *Phoenix rupicola* (cliff date palm). A pergola was constructed by the Sports Ground. It was eight feet high, rising to thirteen feet in the centre.

Two Board members resigned in 1918. Percy Smith who had been a member for sixteen years and W. L. Newman after serving for twenty-four years. Both men made significant contributions during their tenures. One of the replacements was the Mayoress, Mrs Burgess. She had been very involved in fundraising for the Park for many years and was familiar with the issues the Board faced. Having a lady on any Board must have been unusual back then.

The Board got a boost to its funds when the Mayor, C. H. Burgess, asked the council to give the Park his honorarium of £150. The council agreed to this provided that the Board spent the money as directed by the Mayor.

In March 1918 there was a fundraising gymkhana which had some interesting events. It included a motor car obstacle course and a motorcycle obstacle course, as well as the usual aquatic events. The fete raised £120.

There was a push to develop a fernery. The site chosen was near to where the Fernery is today. At the time they knew of about sixty-four varieties of ferns indigenous to Taranaki, and about half of them were in the Park. This was part of a bigger scheme to develop the valley leading from the Tea House to the racecourse. The plan was to have an entrance – an archway of native creepers – from the path leading up to the racecourse, leading to a fernery which was to be the finest in the Dominion. Higher up it was intended to complete the lake which had been started some years before. Walks were to be formed along the surrounding banks. It was anticipated that the changes would make this one of the most picturesque and interesting sections of the Park. During the year the Smith completed the preparation for the fernery and planted a number of ferns, some of which he collected himself from Whangamōmona. The building however did not go ahead.

There were two rose beds in the Park, one behind the tea house and the other in the Palm Lawn area. Due to the constant theft of roses, it was decided to move the plants from behind the tea house to the Palm Lawn bed. It was thought that people would be more exposed there and therefore less likely to take the plants.

On November 11, 1918, the Armistice agreement was signed ending WW1. This was celebrated in New Plymouth a few days later with a procession through town ending in the Park. The celebration coincided with the Spanish Flu making its presence felt in town. The parade went ahead even though other events that week were postponed due to the influenza epidemic.



## The Smith Years

W. C. Weston joined the Board in 1919 replacing Percy Smith. The secretary Albert Grey resigned. His position was filled by P. E. Stainton. The job of secretary was advertised as a paid position; however, Stainton took on the job as an honorary role. He remained on the Board for 44 years. Stainton Dell is named after him.

Interestingly, the Park was offered 6d for sacks of pine cones. The Board members felt that 2s 6d was more realistic because the seeds from the cones were at a high price as they were being used to take the place of almonds in the manufacture of toffee.



Victory parade 1919. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: A.4.50).

wisteria, next to the current Tea House. A short walk was formed from near the Band Rotunda down to the water Lily Pond (Hatchery Lawn). The curator thought this would be convenient for ladies and nurses with young children.

A major event in town was Peace Day celebrations in July of 1919.

The theft of plants was an ongoing problem; roses were leaving the Park as quickly as they were being planted. The curator also pointed out at one of the committee meetings that, “The last of the todeas or royal ferns, was stolen from near the lower waterfall recently.”

In April the *Taranaki Daily News*, reported that:

“There is at present to be seen at Pukekura Park the rare sight of banana trees in bloom. These are not the ordinary fruiting variety, but belong to the Abyssinian kind, which grow in great profusion in the vicinity of the Nile. Those in the Park have been grown from seed, which was planted about seven years ago. The blooms which three of the trees have thrown are really magnificent specimens. The trees are now twelve feet in height and are situated just north of the lower lake. Some Fijian bananas were planted, but the severity of the past winter killed them.”  
*TH*, April 3, 1919.

At the beginning of 1920 Richard Cock resigned from the Board having served many years.

The Council’s proposal to run a new tram route to Vogeltown via the Park caused a lot of consternation. The proposed route was for the tram to come up Liardet Street from town, turn right at the Park gates on to Fillis Street, enter the Park, run across to where the Children’s Playground is today, take a left turn before reaching Hughes Walk heading south, cross Hughes Walk near where the Waterfall is today, and there have a tram stop, continue on the west side of Hughes Walk gradually rising up the side of the hill coming out on to Brooklands Road just after the Vogeltown entrance, opposite Shortland Street.

A major fundraising effort was launched headed by Mrs Burgess. It was called the £1,000 Pukekura Park Fund. The feeling amongst the newer members of the Board was that the old guard had not been aggressive enough in asking the public for money. The first event was an Apple and Chrysanthemum Day which raised £207. The fundraiser concluded with a five-day carnival. The £1,000 Fund realised over £1,500.

The Park had its first royal visit, Edward, Prince of Wales. The initial itinerary had the Prince arriving at the railway station at 8.55am and departing at 11am, giving him two hours in New Plymouth. After a reception at the Park, he was to be driven through the Park to the Boys' High School. The Racecourse Walk was widened in preparation. Unfortunately, a few days before the visit, the town was informed that the duration had been shortened to one hour, arriving at 10am and leaving at 11am. This meant it was no longer practical to go to the Boys' High School. The visit was still a huge success. The motorcade entered the Park through the Gilbert Street entrance. See page 241 for more details of royal visits.

Pine cone sales were a bonus money earner for the Park. They had 194 sacks for sale in January 1920.

Over thirty pine trees were cut down during the year and sold as firewood. Significantly, half a dozen were removed near the western terrace of the Sports Ground. The cricketing fraternity had wanted these cut down for many years. They threw large shadows across the pitch in the afternoon and detrimentally affected the light, sometimes causing play to be called off early.

A new Sports Ground Committee was formed to try and resurrect the Sports Ground to its former glory and to make further improvements. A. L. Humphries was again at the helm. The committee was granted three years rent free to give it time to pay off old debts.

The Trout rearing ponds on the Hatchery Lawn that had been abandoned and filled in in 1912 were reinstated, with the intention to also construct a hatchery building. 3000 fry were put in the ponds in October of 1920. A week later someone opened the trap door releasing the fish. This made the Acclimatisation Society think twice about using the rearing ponds. It turned out that it was an accident.

Mrs Burgess realised that the board needed a major fundraising effort every year to adequately fund the Park. She wasn't prepared to organise another major fundraising effort and promoted handing over the running of the Park to the Borough Council.

W. W. Smith resigned at the end of 1920 which was a huge loss to the Park. It appears that the secretary of the Board, P. E. Stainton, was not happy with the amount of time Smith was spending outside the Park, helping other people and organisations. The way this dissatisfaction was relayed was not ideal. The outcome was that Smith resigned, threatening to take Stainton to court for slander.

Another loss for the Board was W. A. Collis who passed away. Collis first sat on the Board as one of the Borough Council's representatives in 1904. He was a professional photographer and a lot of the old photos of the Park were taken by him.



The Poet's Bridge. Collection of Puke Arika (Ref: PHO2007-026).  
Taken soon after the bridge was constructed in 1884. The lack of vegetation is striking.

## 1921 - 1924

The Board made a notable decision not to appoint a new curator after the resignation of Smith. This was done to save money; however, they did appoint William Boccock (retired farmer) as a working foreman, this position was basically curator without the appropriate salary.

The chairman, C. E. Bellringer, went on a trip to the UK and on his return mentioned how he had visited many reserves and how he had been struck by the provisions made for the amusement of children. This led to a couple of swings being installed in the area of the current playground. Unfortunately, nothing else was done for children until 1953.

At the February 1921 Board meeting it was again suggested that the control of the Park should be vested in the borough Council. Mrs Burgess moved the following:

“That in order that Pukekura Park and all lands owned by this this board shall be vested in the borough of New Plymouth, a petition signed by the majority of the members of the board be presented to his Excellency the governor-General, praying that he will be pleased to dissolve the board under the powers conferred upon him by section 18 of the Botanical Gardens Act, 1876, and that, in order to give effect to this resolution, the board’s solicitor be instructed to prepare the necessary petition for signature.” *TH*, February 2, 1921.

There were a number of reasons that Mrs Burgess was pushing for this change. The lack of a fixed source of income big enough to run the Park was the main factor. The board always struggled financially. It was receiving an annual subsidy of £250 from the council, but its running costs on wages alone was about £800. The shortfall had to be fundraised. Needing to constantly organise fundraising events was not easy. The newer members of the Board felt that as the Park was a public place it should be run by people who were elected to office, not by a self-elected board who were members for life. They thought that was outdated.

Hughes, who had been a member since the Board’s inception thought councillors would be the wrong people to look after the Park because they wouldn’t be personally invested in the Park as much as the trustees. Hughes also had a dig at the new blood (Burgess, Stainton, and Weston) blaming them for the resignation of W. W. Smith.

The motion Mrs Burgess tabled was rejected, but it was agreed that the Board would approach the council to see if they were amenable to the proposal. The council indicated that they were, however, they also made it clear that they were not prepared to increase the amount of ratepayer funding for the Park. This meant that the new Board would essentially be in the same position financially as the existing Board, and there was no advantage in handing the Park over to the council. Mrs Burgess resigned soon after that meeting.



A LINE-OUT IN THE MATCH. SPRINGBOKS VERSUS TARANAKI. AT NEW PLYMOUTH.

L. EARD, photo

Taranaki v Springbok, *AWN*, July 28, 1921.

1921 - 1924

On a sporting note, the Taranaki Rugby team held the touring Springbok side to a famous draw. The credit for the result went to the coaches, A. L. Humphries and C. Brown. Humphries had been a half-back for New Zealand around the turn of the century and was a stalwart of the Recreation Sportsground Committee dating back to 1906. He oversaw the first major transformation of the sportsground.

To help the Park, free advice regarding planting was given by Victor Davies, of Duncan & Davies. This was the start of his long relationship with the Park.

The Board was approached by the Acclimatisation Society seeking permission to build a trout hatchery, which was granted. It took the form of a whare which was placed at the southern end of the Hatchery Lawn. The first consignment of trout ova was received at the end of June. The brown trout ova came from the Hakataramea hatcheries in Otago. The rainbow ova came from the government hatcheries in Rotorua. After hatching the young fry were released into local rivers in August. A good description of the hatching process can be found in a *Daily News* article, August 20, 1921 (see page 205).

During a July meeting held in the Park it was agreed to establish a fernery and a rhododendron dell. The fernery was planned by John Gibson, a prominent horticulturist, of Frankley Road.

The new Sports Ground Committee got stuck into updating the Sports Ground. They started by re-laying drains and raising the level of the pitch to facilitate better drainage. They imported over 1500 cubic yards of soil, some of which came from the hill in Fillis Street to the west of the main entrance.

In 1921, Gilbert Street between Victoria Road and the Park's Gilbert Street entrance was impassable because of a deep gully. The gully was where the Park's stream goes across Gilbert Street. It was suggested that this be filled in and the road completed to ease traffic problems on Liardet Street. There was pushback from the council because of the cost. To reduce costs, it was suggested using kerosine cans as fill. They were being used in large quantities and thousands of cans were being dumped each year. Fortunately, it was not allowed. The gully was filled in with earth in 1922.

Three Board members died during 1922. Harris Ford who had been a member of the Board since its inception in 1875, Percy Smith who had served from 1902 until 1918 and F. P. Corkill who was a trustee from 1885 until 1916. Hector Dempsey (Central School headmaster from 1885 – 1916) and James McLeod were brought onto the committee as government appointed trustees. Dempsey remained on the board until 1939 and McLeod until 1943.

Following a suggestion by the Sports Ground Committee of sharing a custodian the board hired Charles Revell. He worked two days a week on the Sports Ground and the balance in the Park. They hired Revell because they wanted a younger person in the position of curator, so they laid-off Bocoock who was in his late 60s. Unfortunately, Mr. Revell died of pneumonia, aged 44, in December 1922.

The trout hatchery was in full swing handling several hundred thousand ova per year, and a new rose bed was introduced under the supervision of Hector Dempsey.

The first rhododendron dell was planted in the Park, the work of Charles Score Sanders. Sanders supplied the plants and supervised their planting in what is now the eastern arm of Stainton Dell. Over two years he planted approximately seventy different varieties of rhododendron in this area. Some may still exist today. A fernery was also established in Stainton Dell by the Racecourse Walk.



View of the original rhododendron dell. Private collection, Warwick Horton.

The 1920s was a time of depression and high unemployment and the Board got involved in a subsidised scheme to give work to some of these unfortunate men. They pledged to give pound for pound raised by the public to a maximum of £100. They targeted the neediest, particularly returned servicemen and married men with children. The main work carried out with the extra labour was the cleaning out of the main lake and preparing an area for the Fernery.

The Sports Ground Committee were preparing for phase two of the redevelopment of the Sports Ground. With the pitch completed the next phase was to increase the number of terraces. This would be achieved by reworking what was already there. The plan was also to eventually construct a changing room incorporating toilet facilities.

The main lake in Pukekura Park in 1922 must have been a lot cleaner than today. It is hard to imagine Seventh day Adventists today performing submersion baptism, as they did back then.

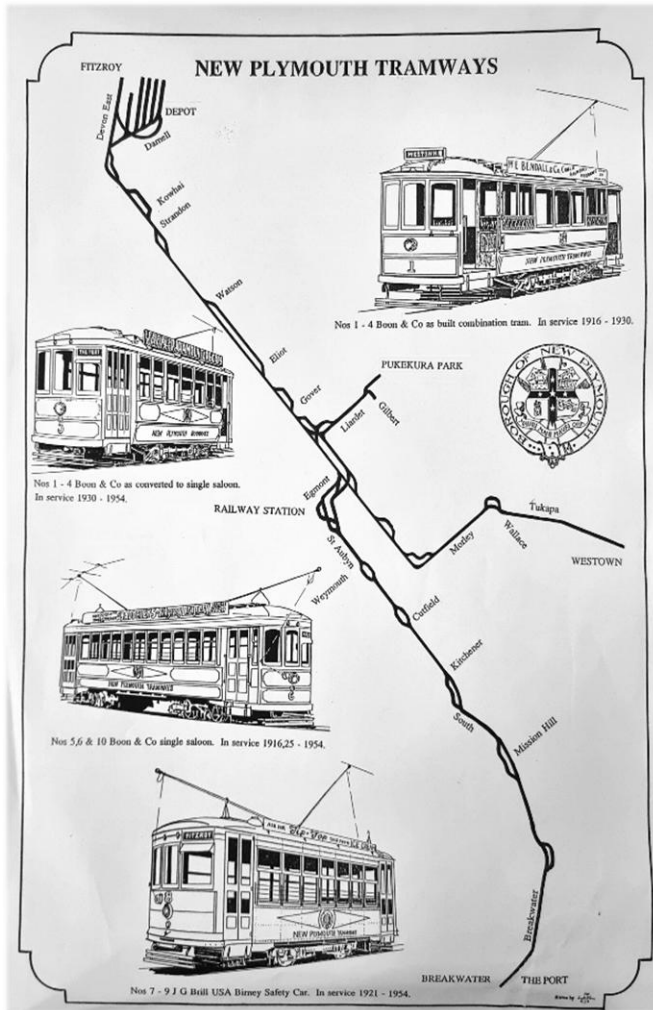
Donations of ducks, swans, plants etc. were generally accepted with open arms, but they had to say no to two lion cubs.

At the beginning of 1923 George Tunnecliffe was promoted to custodian following the death of Charles Revell. Presumably his duties were the same as Revell's, looking after the Park and the Sports Ground.

Section 1117 on Fillis Street was purchased giving access to Kindergarten Gully.

As part of its policy of improvements the Sports Ground Committee had a changing room designed. The architect was T. H. Bates, a well-known New Plymouth architect of the time. Bates was a keen cricketer and was on the Sports Ground Committee. He was also the Park's honorary architect. The building he designed was a cute single-story structure which still survives today (2025). If you peer through the doors of the Bellringer Pavilion the original building is hidden inside. It was built by Jones and Sandford. The drawings were donated by Bates who also supervised the construction. The building had a changing room for each team with showers and a separate room for officials. At the back was a separate entrance to a public toilet. It was completed in the first quarter of 1924. The building was subsequently modified twice, once in 1956 when a second story was added, then again in 1988 when the floor area was increased towards the playing field behind a new facade. This is what you can see today. The future of the building is uncertain as there are structural issues, and it is susceptible to flooding.

Shags have always been a feature in the Park, but their diet of fish from the Park lakes was not welcome in those days and was often remedied by culling the birds.



Sketch showing tramline to Pukekura Park.  
Ref: *New Plymouth Tramways 1916-1954*, Rudd, Don.

A major fundraiser during 1924 was a successful Queen Carnival which netted the board over £1,400. Unfortunately, the carnival was marred by the death of the nominated queen, Miss Maisie Whittle. There was a Queen Carnival parade in the Park which she missed due to illness and she died a few days later having contracted influenza.

The town's tram network was extended to the Park's gates. This was opened in July of 1924. The line ran up Liardet Street from Devon Street where it branched off the main line. It terminated at the main gates on Fillis Street and branched off to the Gilbert Street entrance. This was made possible because a lot of the materials were left over from the construction of the Westtown extension. It was also stated that the branch onto Gilbert Street could be extended to Vogeltown via Carrington Road. This extension did not ever materialise, probably due to technical difficulties with the proposed route. The tram service to the Park ceased in 1937 and the lines were removed in 1938. The lines were used for repairs to the lines on South Road.

It was reported that a large poplar tree had fallen over and badly damaged the boat shed. Early in the Park's history poplar trees were planted to identify the Park's boundaries. On the hill just east of the boat shed is the southern boundary of section 1262, which in 1876 was a Park boundary.

The first plan for a major fernery was put to the Board by Mr. Besely in 1924. It had three chambers, one 30ft by 50ft and the other two, 60ft by 30ft. The walls were terraced, all covered with a glass roof. The plan was drawn up by Mrs H. Lovell, of Hāwera. The proposal was given the go-ahead and work started on clearing the hillside to the south of the John Street walk.

George Tunnecliffe resigned his position as curator due to ill health, having served approximately one year. Advertisements were placed for a replacement and the Board was fortunate to receive an application from Thomas Horton.

## The Horton Years (1924 – 1949)

Thomas Horton F.R.H.S. started his tenure as superintendent/curator in July 1924. He had a wealth of experience as a nurseryman and was a world leader in the cultivation of apple trees. For a brief bio of Horton go to page 163.

As part of the preparation for the Fernery the board decided to clear a number of large pine trees on the north side of the John Street walk (Horton Walk) which it thought may cause issues in future years. This clearing of pines led to Horton's first major planting of native trees. The trees in question are the rimu, tōtara and kauri which flank what is now, Horton Walk, leading from the Rogan Street entrance, down to the Tea House. He planted about 300 trees in this area, which were purchased from Duncan and Davies. His diary entry, September 25, reads, "kauri, rimu & other trees arrived.

Planted John St walk. Mr. Morshead presented a tānekaha (*Phyllocladus alpinus*)". We know from Thomas Horton's diary that tree felling started on September 3, and the job was finished by November 4. Also noted in his diary were the trees that were felled. His entry on October 28, read, "Total number of trees felled to date, 35 Pine (large), 3 Pine (smaller), 18 Oak and Sycamore.' The



Cricket match. *Taranaki Herald*, Xmas Supp, December 18, 1926.

board authorised the felling of large Pine trees that were dangerous. The logs suitable for milling were purchased by the Sash and Door Factory and Timber Company. What was left was cut up and sold as firewood.

The first Taranaki Kennel Club dog show was held in the Park and proved very successful. The champion ribbon for the best dog on the parade was won by Mr. J. Somerton's smooth-haired fox terrier (Maidestone Donholm).

An interesting article was published in the Daily News March 25, indicating that some of the timber for the original St Mary's Church came from Pukekura Park. "Great care was taken in the selection and seasoning of the timber, a great deal of which was obtained from the gullies where Pukekura Park now is. The timber was hand sawn and then dragged down to the Huatoki River, where it was chained down under the surface of the water for seasoning."

In March 1925 it was noted that boat takings were down due to the polio epidemic, an epidemic which killed 175 people in New Zealand. This epidemic triggered a lockdown and many schools closed and students had to study at home. In those days work was sent to them by post, not online as was the case with the recent pandemic.

An open-air boxing tournament organised by the Taranaki Boxing Association was held in Pukekura Park in February of 1925, the first of its type in Taranaki. The main event was a heavyweight title fight between George Modrich, of Auckland and Eddie Parker, of Hastings, Parker won after Modrich's corner threw in the towel at the end of the seventh round. There were several other fights on the undercard and a number of local boxers demonstrated their skill. The crowd of 1500 were well entertained under the lights of the sportsground.



A committee was set up to look at the possibility of erecting a new house in the Park for the superintendent. The feeling was that if he lived in the Park, it would deter vandalism. Plans were drawn up and estimates were done by T. H. Bates, so the board could look at ways and means of financing it. Unfortunately, they could not come up with the means of financing the property and the house did not get built until 1930. There was an old curator's cottage on Victoria Road paid for by the government when the land was first given to the board in the 1870s, presumably its condition was not suitable for habitation. Following Smith's departure the cottage was used by the scouts until it was pulled down in 1930.

At the July 1925 board meeting Thomas Horton told the committee that he had planted 800 native trees of different varieties which he had grown in his own garden, saving the board a lot of money. Having only been in New Plymouth one year this action shows how dedicated he was to his job. He also initiated the labelling of trees for educational purposes and was a believer that if you could get people interested in the Park, they would be more likely to look after it. To this end he reached out to schools offering to take groups round the Park and teach them about the plants.

Thomas Kingswell Skinner died in August 1925. Skinner was a board member from 1881 to 1901. From the Parks inception in 1875 Skinner had selflessly given his time and skill as a surveyor laying out many of the paths in the Park as well as working on the sportsground development and Manhattan Island.

A Pair of kiwis were donated and released on Manhattan Island. How they fared is a mystery as the birds were left to their own devices.

A monster fireworks display was held in the sportsground on November 5, which attracted a large crowd. A competition was run for the best guy. At the end of the display a huge bonfire was lit at the southern end of the ground and all the guys were burnt. The success of the bonfire was guaranteed as it was fuelled by a case of kerosene donated by A. S. Patterson and Co. and old motor oil donated by Criterion Motors Ltd. The night netted a profit of about £100.

The maintenance of the Sports Ground was handed back to the Board. An agreement was made whereby the Sports Ground Committee would pay the board £175 per annum to look after the grounds. This payment was for maintenance only and did not include development of new terraces etc. Some new terraces were constructed at the Sports Ground during the year; however, the location and extent of work is not clear.

There was a renewed push to build a fernery and the fernery sub-committee submitted a new plan which provided for three large "dug-outs" each 60ft by 30ft. The estimated cost of the work was £450 plus cost of glass for the roof, estimated to be between £100 to £150. It was proposed that the board provide £300 towards the cost, with the sub-committee undertaking to raise the balance. This was given the go-ahead in December.

On September 19, The *Taranaki Herald* printed an article, *Ramble Through the Park*, which describes what a person sees while walking through the Park with a child. The narration of the walk, along with a botanical survey as part of the same article gives a very good description of the Park as it was in 1925. With a bit of thought the same walk can be taken today and maybe some of the trees mentioned can be spotted. The walk description is printed on the next page.

## Ramble through the Park. *TH*, September 19, 1925

Come on, Emily, we'll enter by this gate near the racecourse.

The top of the terrace shows a valley of varying shades of green. The afternoon sun glistens on the mamaku fronds, and the shades merge into one tone in the distance below. This wealth of greenery envelopes one as the path leads gently downwards. On the right a valley rich in native foliage and a secluded lakelet among the greenery; on the left a hilly brow of bush with an enticing little path, which we will follow.

Tarata trees, chefflera, and mahoe crowd in on all sides, towered over by tall pinus insignis, Scotch fir and tuberculata. Along this carpet which the firs have shed, past the corner, the sheen of open water shows between the pines and tall mamaku. (No, Emily, we'll keep to the higher path.)

This leads up to more scattered vegetation, allowing space for pleasant swards of grass among the trees of rimu, kawakawa, koromiko, macrocarpa, matipo—what a sudden glimpse of yonder hill, crowned by a house!—and strawberry (banthenia), a white-flowered native of the Himalayas.

Listen (hush, child) to that tui in the kowhai tree. How he revels in the sunlight and pours out his song—

Far-away cheering breaks in. If the applause is for the tui's song, he well merits it.

The notes of a bell-bird chime in. The whole bush is full of song. The staccato notes of the startled blackbird are offset by the soughing of the pines and the rustle of the breeze in the bush.

Past two towering rewa rewa, poisonous rangiora, and tarata and boardleaf, the path leads downward into a cool fernery of ponga and asplenium, capensis (capense), through which it zig-zags, in charming fashion. (Don't trip over that fallen mamaku, child). It fell across path in a storm a decade ago, but undaunted has sent up from its trunk a spur of fronds.

The path becomes level; crosses a bridge near which a miniature waterfall is bursting to imitate Niagara, and leads out into a glade fringed with rata, English alder, kowhai and pittosporum crassifolium under whose imposing name is hidden a cunningness in propagation by its seeds adhering to the feathers of unsuspecting birds, who scatter them in flight.

The path broadens with the stream, and opens up vistas at every turn. The tone of green is broken by a subdued red and white. Ah, a neat little bridge!

But let us leave this 30ft. kauri near the path and climb the hill to the left, where the paths are few. Native trees and shrubs crowd in on every side, and the path appears to be seldom used. (Come back Emily). The view broadens as the hill is climbed. (You mustn't run ahead like that and surprise young couples child. It isn't fair) and a wealth of foliage is revealed from the top.

Along both sides of the valley the mass of green is relieved by taller rewa rewa, mamaku fronds and towering pines. In the centre a stretch of calm water offsets the green and finally loses itself round a curve. We will follow it—

Again that cheering breaks out. If it is for the view, it were well made.

Tread lightly past this offshoot of the historic cedars of Lebanon (cedrus Libane), the Indian cedars (cedrus Indica) and take the winding path which leads down from the spreading black gum of Australia to a cool walk besides a stream which feeds the lake. Another waterfall is chattering beside the footbridge, and the brook entices down to islands fringed with cladium and formed by the agency of man. Mamaku on the nearest of these has played a cunning part, for it has hidden the view till it bursts suddenly on the sight.

Hillsides covered in verdure, an open stretch of water, and a picturesque bridge whose subdued colours blend yet contrast with the prevailing green. Mamaku and pines alike grow upside down, mirrored in the lake, and ducks and a white swan swim over them. (There is some bread in the basket, Emily).

The walk round the western side of the lake leads to the "Poet's Bridge," where another prospect opens with pleasing suddenness. Having been tied in bounds by the bridge, the lake spreads itself to lap the pathways under the slopes; to lap the embankment where a band rotunda, monument and building have been erected; to lap with little effect the rowing boat which is riding on its surface; and to shake in threatening fashion the hills and trees mirrored in its depths.

Sustained cheering, very near this time, is heard. If it is in compliment to the aspect, it were indeed well planned.

The path entices toward a fringe of mamaku, refreshingly cool in the shade of the pines. Past it, to the left, is a grove inviting one to new vistas, which are cunningly concealed round a bend. Through the fringe is a placid lake whose water-lilies strive towards the air, and to the right a rotunda and a monument commemorative of the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign. On the hill above, the cannons of "Dicky" Barrett, though lacking their jovial master, are still on the lookout for Maori attacks. Loud cheering breaks the silence. If the outburst is Taranaki's acknowledgement of Richard Barrett's work in the early days, it is singularly appropriate.

No, child, we'll go round to the left of the hill beside this lake of lilies and—

A calm stretch of water, fringed with mamaku, where all Nature shows the effect of man's taming hand. A delightful, enchanting spot!

Follow to the left in the shade of the pines and the mamaku, catch the sun's sParkle on the water and on the fronds on its farther side, drink in the sublimity of the scene, and one has seen cultured Nature at her best.

At the farther end of the lake, between the sunlight and the shade, a brook babbles from the stretch of water and is soon lost in the under-growth and around playful little corners which entice one to follow the rill. But we are going round to the right, through this wide gate.

Great goodness! Terraces and terraces of bright colours, offset by darker hues! Men and women crowding the hills on three sides, excited at a Rugby struggle on the level sward. All is movement on the ground, and above, the dresses of the ladies contrasted with the attire of the men, form at once a spectacle no to be forgotten.

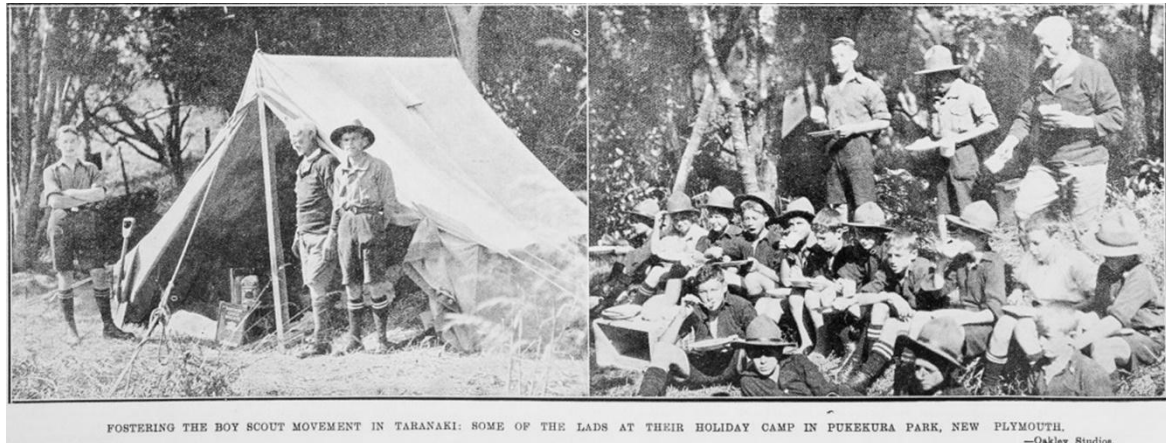
Deafening cheers break out. If they are for the glory of the sight, they are indeed well suited.

Come on, Emily, it's nearly time for tea.

## The Horton Years

An aquatic carnival was held in May 1926 as a fundraiser for the new fernery. This was an evening event, and the lake was illuminated with hundreds of coloured lights. Male and female swimmers took part. There were also lifesaving displays, canoe races and a fishing demonstration. The evening was a success but only raised £15 for the Board.

The Anzac Day Ceremony in 1926 was well attended. 1500 ex-soldiers, territorials and school children made up a procession which marched from town to the Park. There was a crowd of seven to eight thousand at the Sports Ground to take part in the ceremony.



Boy Scouts camp in Pukekura Park. *AWN*, January 14, 1926.

In June, the Fernery construction started, this had been many years in the planning. It was a huge undertaking, consisting of three 60ft x 40ft grottos linked by tunnels, covered with a glass roof. The front chamber lay east-west, the other two chambers behind, side by side laying north-south. The back chambers raised 10ft above the front one. These were cut into the side of a hill. To start, approximately 12ft of earth was removed from above where the fernery chambers were to be, forming a plateau roughly 180ft x 90ft. The topsoil from this excavation was put to one side and later used to cover what is now the Fred Parker Lawn. The Fernery was designed by Mrs. Lovell of Hāwera who had a fernery of a similar nature in her own garden. For more information about the Fernery construction see page 195.

By October the superintendent reported that the excavation for the Fernery house construction had been completed as far as it was advisable before the carpentry work and glazing was done. The concrete foundations were also finished. Unfortunately, there was a delay in the delivery of the glass for the roof.

While construction was ongoing many people were out collecting ferns. The Fernery Committee had visited the Taranaki Forests property. Messrs Maxwell and Davies collected ferns on a trip to King Country, Rotorua, Bay of Plenty and Auckland. Plus, lots of friends of the Park from around the country sent ferns.

New drains were laid from Stainton Dell. The pipes were run down the gully past the Fernery down past the tea house, picking up the tea house drains, exiting into the outlet of the main lake in Sunken Dell. The old drain outlet went into the main lake.

The other big project happening at the same time as the Fernery excavation, was dredging the main lake. The Sports Ground's new Fordson tractor was adapted to drive the winch. The tractor was acquired for cutting the grass in the Sports Ground, until then a horse had been used to pull the mower. The tractor was four times quicker than the horse.

A major door to door fundraising effort (similar to the 1910s Park Saturdays) generated almost £500.

In 1927 Pukekura Park hosted its second royal visit of the 1920s. This time it was the Duke and Duchess of York, who on the abdication of Edward VIII came to the throne as George VI and Queen Elizabeth the parents of Queen Elizabeth II.



Main Lake cleaning 1926. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: A.4.18).

The glass for the Fernery arrived at the end of February 1927 and tenders were sought for the roof construction. The contract was won by Frank Hartnell with a quote of £90. Once the roof was complete Mr. Hartnell and his team returned to finish the inside excavation. By mid-July construction of the Fernery

was completed and planting commenced. In total 2340 ferns were planted, consisting of 145 species. The walls of the rooms were terraced to make it easier to display the plants. Large rocks and a water feature were added to exhibit the ferns as naturally as possible. A controversial aspect of the Fernery was the addition of punga posts to prop up the roof. These had not been part of the original design and impacted on the paths inside the Fernery. A door to the Fernery was kindly donated and installed by Fred Parker who was a builder by trade. Fred Parker's assistance during the building of the Fernery began his long relationship with the Park. A large display of begonias was added, mainly in room 3. The begonias were intended as a filler until more ferns were available, however they remained as a permanent feature.

By this time the landscaping outside was complete. There was a lawn, flower beds, and a rose pergola. The new lakelet up in the valley was finished hosting water lilies and three islands, each island was planted with a tree at its centre with a rimu, a kauri and a Halls tōtara.

The board was finding it increasingly difficult to finance the running of the Park and vesting of the Park in the Borough Council was again on the table. Following a conference between the Board and the council it was agreed that the council would take over the control of the Park and strike a rate for its upkeep. An important agreement was reached that any bequest made to the Park would be used for permanent improvements only. A petition that Pukekura Park, New Plymouth, be vested in the borough and come under the control of the council was drafted. This had to be approved by the government.

Following the death of Mr. Newton King a £3,000 bequest was left to Pukekura Park, it was suggested that this money be invested for several years, and the interest used to build a teahouse.

In 1928 Thomas Horton went on a six-month bowling trip to England. During his absence nurseryman Francis Morshead stepped in as his substitute. When it had been agreed that the Park would be handed over to the council, the Park Board and the Sports Ground Committee decided to try and raise £3,000 so that when handed over the Board would be debt free and have some cash to carry out permanent improvements. The first event was a floral fete which was held in the Park following the official opening of the Fernery. The Fernery was officially opened at 1.30 p.m. on January 28, 1928. Later in the evening there was a Pierrot entertainment under the direction of Mr. Wauchop. The next fundraiser was a sport meet at the Park on February 18.

## The Horton Years

A special feature of the meet was the appearance of Stanley Lay. He registered a very long javelin throw which surpassed the Australian and New Zealand record of 209 ft 4in by three inches. The distance was not measured by a surveyor as a record could not be granted because the meeting was not a registered one. (The drive from the main entrance at Fillis Street to the Bellringer Pavilion is named the Stan Lay Drive in honour of this amazing athlete). The main fundraiser was held over 3 days in March starting with a pageant of nations, where groups of local ladies, boys and girls were dressed to represent different nations including Japan, China, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain, Holland, Scotland England and Ireland. The final day included a motorcycle football game and a display of motorcycle jumping.

During February, the cannons that had stood proud on Cannon Hill for more than thirty years were removed and delivered to the Carnegie Library. These are now at Puke Ariki Museum.

The Governor-General Sir Charles Ferguson and Lady Ferguson visited in June of 1928. They were greeted by a large gathering of children from schools together with Girl Guides, Brownies, Boy Scouts, Cubs, and Māori War Veterans.

The demise of ducklings by predators had always been a problem in the Park. In 1928 two gentlemen, Mr. Hayton and Mr. Little took it upon themselves to remove some of the ducklings from the Park and raise them at their homes then release them back into the Park when they were big enough to look after themselves.

The Borough Council took over the administration of the Park at the beginning of April 1929. A committee called "The Pukekura Park Committee" was appointed to run the Park. The members were Messrs, F. Amooore, R. C. Hughes, W. C. Weston, C. E. Bellringer, J. McLeod, P. E. Stainton, G. M. Spence, H. Dempsey and the Mayor, Victor Griffiths. For a report of the handing over ceremony see page 260. In his diary on October 17, Horton wrote, "This has been a 'Red letter day' in this Park's history". A great function was held, at which the Deeds of the Park were handed over to the Mayor by Mr. Amooore. Appropriate speeches were made. Robert Clinton Hughes gave a resume of the Park's early history. After the Mayor had planted a Memorial Kauri tree, afternoon tea was served and a donation of £100 was received.

Several trees that had been planted on the opening day of the Recreation Ground on May 29, 1876 were marked with plaques to highlight their significance. These were: 1. *Pinus Insignus* planted by Miss Jane Carrington. 2. Rimu and pūriri, Mr. and Mrs. Hughes Senior; 3. Specimen *Pinus insignus* above the Lily Pond (Hatchery Lawn); 4. Norfolk Island Pine, Mrs. Thomas

Colson; 5. English Yew, Mrs. T. K. Skinner. Some of these trees may exist today, but unfortunately it is not known for certain.



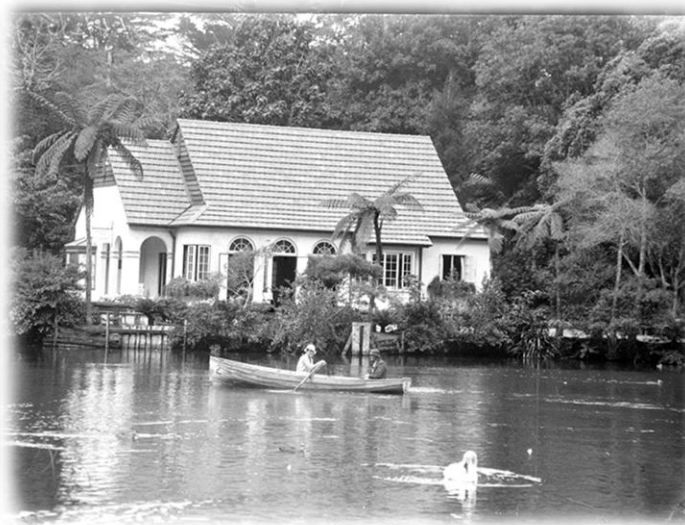
New propagating house in front of the Fernery.  
*TH*, October 10, 1929.

A new propagating house was built near the entrance of the Fernery, paid for by donations. Before it was built one of the rooms in the Fernery had been used for this purpose.

After years of deliberation a superintendent's house was built in 1930. The location chosen was on Victoria Road (now 25 Victoria Road) between the old curator's cottage and the Park Tennis Club. The main reason for building the cottage was to hopefully deter vandals, and with this in mind several pine trees were cut down giving a view into the Park from the house. This was controversial; many people were not happy at being able to see the house from down in the Park so a group of native trees were planted on the slope below the house that would eventually hide it. The drawings for the house came from the Borough Engineer, and the house was built by Mr. L. F. Hand at a cost of £1,080. The old curator's cottage was pulled down.

A donation of £300 came from Walter Graham to help install floodlighting at the sportsground. The Grahams were the proprietors of the Criterion Hotel from 1920 until 1937. Mrs Graham often donated plants to the Park and when the couple died in the early 1950s, they left a large bequest to the Park. The floodlighting was installed and used officially for the first time at an athletics meeting on Boxing Day 1930.

The Tea House we see today was erected in 1931 and was the gift to the city of Mr and Mrs Burgess on the occasion of their golden wedding anniversary. It cost approximately £1,000, but their generosity did not stop there, they also donated £150 for furnishings and later another £60 for silverware. It was designed by Surrey Alleman, of Inglewood and built by Frank Hartnell. The original tea house built in 1905, was moved towards the Fernery and re-purposed as a ladies conveniences and curator's office. Frank Hartnell supervised the move carried out by returned soldiers. Before building the new Tea House, the old bathing shed that had stood next to the lake since 1879 was also moved to the path leading from the Tea House to the Fernery.



Tea House 1934. Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, Ref: 1370-0641-07.

It was noted at the August 1931 committee meeting that a new entrance had been created at the end of Fillis Street. Another new feature added to the Park was two ticket boxes for the Sports Ground which were built and paid for by the Sports Ground Committee. These still grace the Park today, but sadly are not used.

The first mention of a reserve at the Fillis Street gully was reported at the August committee meeting. "The chief work undertaken was that in the gully. All the blackberry, gorse, fern, sycamore, and other useless growth had been grubbed and thoroughly cleaned up. This portion of the Park was in good order. It would be desirable to plant the larger part of this area in native trees, but first the pines on the hill would have to be cut down."

The committee decided to cut down a row of fourteen pine trees on the ridge above the eastern terrace of the sportsground, which caused an uproar in the town. A delegation which included W. H. Skinner tried to dissuade them from that course of action. The deputation was convinced that the committee's intent was to eventually remove all the pine trees from the Park. To try and allay any such fears the board issued a couple of resolutions.

## The Horton Years

“The Intention of the board at their discretion and after full consideration of each case, is to remove any dangerous, dead, dying, or redundant trees, whether native or exotic.”

“That, while not excluding exotic flora, the board intend to make Pukekura Park a standard collection of native flora.”

One committee member who vehemently opposed the cutting down of any pine tree was lawyer Robert Clinton Hughes and in reference to this, the satirical article below was published portraying the trees as defendants in a courtroom. The author of the article is unknown, but it may have been Hughes himself.

### Court News

As everybody knows, a session of the Court was held in New Plymouth recently, or was it a drum-head court-martial? Mr. Justice (?) Park Board presided. The number of prisoners arraigned was extraordinarily large, and their variety was infinite, but most of them were from the well-known Insignis family. They were unrepresented by council, and being unable to speak the language of the Court officials they were compelled to state their case by means of signs and whispers.

“Have you no counsel?” asked the Judge sharply.

“Yes sir,” chorused the accused. “Mr. Hughes!”

But alas, where was Mr. Hughes? Perhaps he had grown weary of the long struggle on behalf of his clients, all of whom he had known from childhood. Perhaps he had not been told that the session was on.

“Very well,” continued His Honour, “we must make a start. Bring forth the first prisoner.”

And everyone in the court stood silent as the prisoner entered the dock, for she was the loveliest girl they had set eyes on for a very long time. Slim and erect, she gazed proudly at the bench, her arms outstretched in supplication, and her wonderful features quivering with emotion.

“What is your name?” asked the Judge.

“Poplar sir.”

“Where do you live?”

“Right at the very edge of your Domain sir, alongside Victoria Road.”

“Yor nationality?”

“English sir.”

“Prisoner at the bar,” exclaimed His Honour sternly, “you are found guilty of the heinous crime of not being a New Zealander.” Assuming the black cap the judge was about to pass sentence when the prisoner cried out piteously, “But can’t I have a fair trial, sir, and put my case before the jury?”

“What jury?”

“Why, the people of New Plymouth, sir.”

“Certainly not! They are too old-fashioned altogether, and can’t keep pace with the times. Off with her head!”

And with Mr. Groundsman as the Lord High Executioner off went her head forthwith. Suffice it to say that she had a fitting funeral, for after her limbs had been dismembered and her body sawn into pieces she was duly carried to her grave with fitting solemnity and dignity by an army corps of unemployed. But all this is by the way.

“Next please!” called out the judge impatiently.

A whole row of the Insignis family stepped into the dock.

“Where do you live?” asks His Honour, having ascertained their names.

“Along the ridge above the Eastern Terrace sir.”

“You are old,” said the judge, “and what is more you are not New Zealanders. Off with their heads! Next please.”

And so it went on. And soon the whole countryside resounded with the chop, chop, chop of the executioner’s axe, as it plied its grim trade, and the whole countryside re-echoed with the monotony of that passionless sentence “Off with their heads!”

Far away, however, a new note struck the ear. From a murmuring it grew to a rumble, and His Honour stirred uneasily in his chair. For it sounded uncomfortably like the voice of an enraged people.

The sparrows around the Tea House are interesting. It is likely that they are descendents of sparrows dating back more than 100 years. Following is an article published in the *Wairarapa Daily Times*, April 30, 1931. Nothing has changed!

“Unlike some of their less fortunate brethren, the sparrows that frequent the tea kiosk at Pukekura Park lead a life of luxury and scorn the pursuit of worms and other dainties. Long experience has taught them that the people having morning and afternoon tea will not hurt them, and they have become exceedingly tame. Often they perch on a table, while people are still sitting there, and most visitors enjoy the experience as much as the birds. In between times they sit waiting on the trees in contented fluffy balls.”

In 1932, G. M. Spence resigned from the committee. He was leaving town, his place was taken by Victor Davies, owner of Duncan and Davies nursery.

The Girl Guides asked permission to plant twenty-one trees in the Park to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the Girl Guide movement. The request was granted and on May 27 they planted twenty-two, mainly native trees near where the old curators house had stood. Why they planted twenty-two is not clear.

#### **Newton King (1855 – 1927)**

Born at Mangorei, New Plymouth, on July 21, 1855, Newton King was the second son of Mr. Thomas King, one of the first settlers to arrive here from England. After leaving school at about 15 years old he worked in the office of Messrs. Webster Bros for about nine years gaining his early commercial training. He joined



Mr. R. G. Bauchope who was a land and commission agent and accountant, at the end of 1879, commencing a new partnership, Bauchope and King on January 1, 1880. The firm's first sale was held on February 21, 1880, when Newton King commenced his career as an auctioneer. In 1881 the partnership dissolved, Mr. King continuing the auctioneering business himself. He bought the good-will of cattle saleyards at Glenavon, Waitara, Inglewood, Stratford, Oakura and Stony River. Other yards were added later.

He also had land and commission agencies, shipping and insurance agencies, produce and seed merchants, agricultural implements, wholesale merchandise, and car sales. He established branches in Stratford, Inglewood, and in other centres, eventually converting the whole into a company, of which he was chairman and managing director up to the time of his death. He was one of the founders of the Crown Dairy Company. He also had an interest in a butter tinning factory exporting to Eastern countries. For over 30 years he was chairman of the New Plymouth Sash and Door Company and a director of the Taranaki Building Society for many years.

Newton King also held several public positions. He was one of the founders of the Taranaki Chamber of Commerce and was its first president in 1889. In that year he was elected to the New Plymouth Harbour Board, of which he was chairman from 1917 to 1922. He was president of the Taranaki agricultural Society in 1903. He was a trustee of the New Plymouth Savings Bank for some years. Mr. King was president of the Taranaki Jockey Club and also of two or three other provincial racing clubs. In his youth he played football and represented Taranaki against Auckland in the first encounter between the two provinces.

His great hobby, however, was his garden His home at Brooklands was surrounded by beautiful gardens and native bush, of which he was intensely proud.

There were some interesting plantings during the year. On the brow of the hill above the rhododendrons and azaleas (Stainton Dell), 100 tōtaras, 86 coprosma and 15 assorted native trees were planted. Forty extra pōhutukawas were planted on the hill at the eastern side of the Sports Ground. White pines and forty King ferns were planted in the low, damp part of the gully (King Fern Gully) running south-east from the Sports Ground, and quite a number of other assorted native trees planted on the higher slopes in the same area.

Colonel Tate resigned from the Park Committee in 1933, and he was replaced by E. J. Carr. The Mayor Mr. E. R. C. Gilmour also joined the Park Committee.

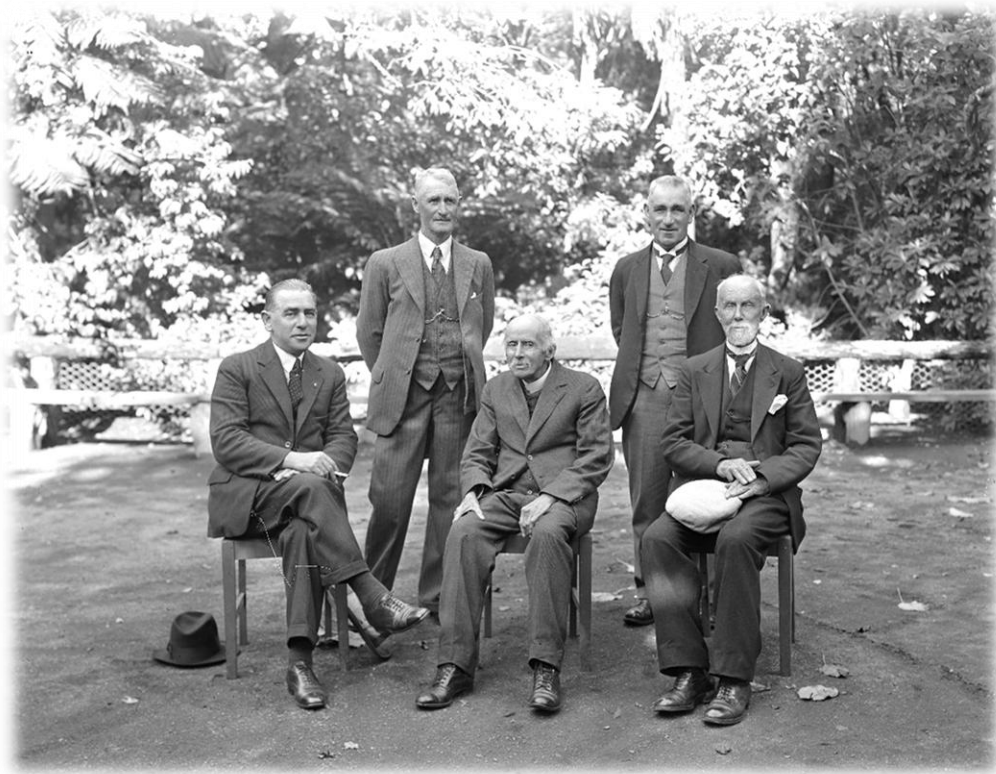
A major undertaking at the beginning of the year was the desilting of the lower lake. Horton estimated that 2350 tons of silt was removed. This was all done by hand with shovels and wheelbarrows. Disposing of such a quantity of silt was challenging, some was used on

flower beds and quite a large amount was used to reclaim a section of the Lily Pond north of the old hatchery building. 1100 tons of silt was carted away to the Fitzroy golf course and Rugby Park. Removing two to three feet of silt unearthed some surprises: a six-inch glazed pipe running



## The Horton Years

across the floor of the lake from the direction of the Sports Ground, and seventeen logs of various sizes, mainly pine, Horton was at a loss to explain how they got there. In the middle of the lower lake was a small island which Horton decided to make bigger. His idea was to erect a wall of pungas around the small island six feet from its bank using approximately 300 pungas, then filling the void with silt that was being dug up. This was a convenient way of disposing of more silt. The island that Horton created was ultimately removed in 1955 when the Queen Elizabeth II Fountain was erected. The desilting of the lake took over two months to complete. The work of clearing the lake was done using relief workers who did such a good job that they were kept on and put to work cleaning the lake at Brooklands which had come under control of the Committee.



An historic gathering of Park curators and administrators. March 10, 1934.  
Left to right. Back Row: Tom Boulton, Brooklands head gardener; Thomas Horton, Park superintendent 1924 – 1949. Front Row: James McLeod, board member 1922 – 1943; Robert Clinton Hughes, board member 1875 – 1935 and William Walter Smith, curator 1908 – 1920. Private collection, Warwick Horton.

Under the terms of the will of the late Mr. Newton King, who died in 1927, varying amounts totalling £7,000 were bequeathed to New Plymouth reserves as follows: Pukekura Park, £3,000, East End Reserve, £2,000; Kawarua Park, £2,000. With the consent of beneficiaries interested under the terms of the will, the trustees offered the valuable “Brooklands” property (53 acres 1 rood and 19 perches) in complete fulfilment of the terms of the will in respect of these three reserves. This was a very generous action and having made satisfactory arrangements with the Kawarua and East End committees, the New Plymouth Borough Council accepted Brooklands to be placed under the control of the Pukekura Park Board. The gift included the buildings and chattels on the property. The transfer was done through an Act of Parliament. Thomas Horton was asked to produce a report (see page 268) to highlight what work needed to be done to incorporate Brooklands with Pukekura Park. Work in Brooklands started before the transfer was



Truby King delivering address when he handed over Brooklands to the borough on behalf of the King family. *TH*, March 16, 1934.

completed. One of the first jobs was to clean out the Brooklands lake. It was plagued with bulrushes which were very strong and rampant growers. To remove them they had to resort to using gelignite. Brooklands was opened to the public on December 21, 1933. When the transfer was completed Newton King's son Eliot was given a place on the Park committee and Newton King's long-time gardener Tom Boulton was asked to continue in his job.

The Park also received a large bequest from the estate of Charles Score Sanders, £350 of which he wanted set aside to make a rhododendron dell. After providing for legacies and bequests of a private nature and payment of the usual duties and charges, the Trustee was directed to keep the residue of the estate in trust for the New Plymouth Borough Council to be used for permanent improvements to Pukekura Park which would be of benefit to the public.

The official handing over of Brooklands to the borough on March 10, 1934, was an historic day. For an account of the event see page 271. To compliment the gift of Brooklands, about 9 acres of the Highlands estate (Maranui Gully) belonging to the T. C. List and C. W. Wilkinson were also gifted to the Borough.

Trying to incorporate Brooklands into the Park was a big task. The estate was rundown. It had been seven years since the passing of Newton King. There were several buildings including the family home that the Park Committee had to decide the fate of. Fences needed repairing, the driveway need upgrading, paths needed to be made to connect Brooklands to Pukekura Park and it needed connecting to the town's sewerage system. The buildings included: The family homestead, The Gables, the bungalow, the vinery, conservatory, and begonia house, propagating house, potting shed, motor garage and the old stables and barn. The old stables and barn were the first to go. After long discussions the homestead, which in its day was a magnificent house was deemed unusable in the Park setting and went up for auction for removal. It only raised £180. The minutes from the meeting that discussed the fate of the house are on page 276.

In recognition of the long service of R. C. Hughes the committee invited him to plant a kauri in the Park. The site chosen was in the lawn on a newly reclaimed piece of land in front of the old hatchery building. The Park committee members attended the ceremony as well as Mr Hughes' wife. Unfortunately, the location, which had been part of the Lily Pond before being reclaimed with silt from the lower lake did not suit the kauri and it was removed in the 1950s as it was dying.



R. C. Hughes planting a kauri tree. Thomas Horton on his knees, the committee members and Mrs Huges looking on. Private collection, Warwick Horton.

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After the committee received the Sanders bequest of £350 for a rhododendron dell, they chose a location in Brooklands near the old homestead. It was pointed out that the bequest stated that the dell was to be in Pukekura Park. Because of that restriction the dell was planted west of the Serpentine where part of the Rhododendron Dell is today. This was planted in 1936. Because of this issue the “New Plymouth Borough Land Exchange and Empowering Act, 1934.” was created. This basically made Brooklands and Maranui Gully part of Pukekura Park. It also tidied up some small land title issues. In 1918 the Board allowed the Jockey Club to build curator’s house on its land (the house at the TSB Stadium Car Park). This piece of land was transferred to the Jockey Club as part of this legislation. The Act passed in November 1934.

Park administrators once again took over control of the sportsground setting up a four-man sub-committee.

The spade that was used by Miss Jane Carrington on the opening day of the Park in 1876 was returned to the Park by Mr. Harry Wood of Eltham and hung in the kiosk along with photographs of Jane Carrington and the original Board members taken on the opening day. Where these photos are today is a mystery.

The planting of the Fillis Street Botanical Reserve started on September 5 1934. Horton recorded in his diary, “In Fillis St. gully all day. Took load of trees there & rec’d coll of rare native trees from D & D.” The reserve was completed in 1939. It covered approximately four acres, approximately 1200 trees of over 200 varieties were planted. His aim was to have at least two of every native tree, but the collection did not include alpine, rockery or bay plants.

925 trees were planted at Brooklands in the first year that the Park Committee controlled the area. Trees planted included, macrocarpas in Ambush Gully, Lawsoniana and pōhutukawa shelter belts on the western boundary of Brooklands.

1935 started with the royal visit of Prince Henry the Duke of Gloucester who was the third son of King George V.

Robert Clinton Hughes passed away on January 18, 1935, at the age of 87. Hughes had the distinction of being the oldest practicing solicitor in the country. He was very much a community man and had been on the Park Board since its inception in 1875. In honour of Mr Hughes, the path from the Victoria Road entrance at the corner of Gilbert Street to the bandstand was named Hughes Walk. These days the path bearing his name runs all the way to the Brooklands Road entrance.

Further improvements to the Sports Ground terraces were started in 1935. First was the southern terrace where the top two terraces were remodelled and made into three.

The concept of Kauri Grove, the plantation between Brooklands Road and The Gables was introduced by Horton in 1935. He wanted to have a plantation of all the native timber trees in New Zealand, especially Kauri. The area chosen was described as rough wasteland, partly swamp and partly a hill slope covered with fern, gorse, blackberry and broom. The land required a lot of preparation, clearing the unwanted growth and draining the swamp, boundary fences between the Park and private residences were also erected.

Plant diseases were becoming an issue in the Park and at one of the committee meetings Thomas Horton Stated:

“Insect pests and fungus diseases of various types are prevalent on many of the native and exotic trees in this Park, both in the old Pukekura Park area and in Brooklands. For many years there have been signs of the pests, but they are now spreading to an alarming extent, and if they continue unchecked for a few more years, the lives of many trees will be in jeopardy and the disfigurement of the foliage serious.” *TH*, July 10, 1935.

The native trees most seriously affected were kapuka, rewarewa, kawa-kawa, mapau, karaka, porokaiwhiri, several varieties of olearia, mairehou, pūriri but included many others. Most of the varieties of large growing timber trees were not seriously affected, but Mr. Horton could not say if any species or variety were absolutely immune. The trees attacked most seriously were the large glossy foliated varieties. Exotic trees badly affected were the strawberry tree, English holly, and a few others. This issue was a country wide problem.

The Wiggins memorial built in 1903 to commemorate Clement Wiggins who died while on service in South Africa in 1900 was removed from the Park. Over the years it had been the object of vandalism on several occasions. A cypress tree was planted in its place (since removed).

Another notable visit in 1935 was the new Governor-General Lord Galway and Lady Galway. They were welcomed by a crowd of over 6000 people at the Park.

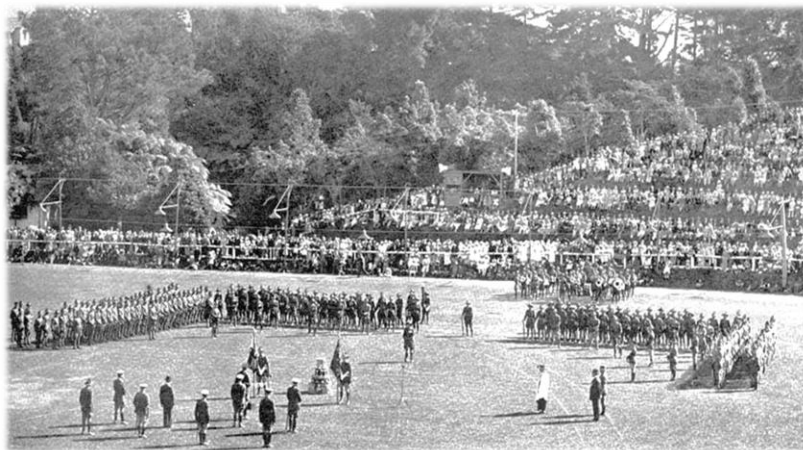
1936 had an inauspicious start with the death of King George V. There was a large memorial service held in the sportsground. A few weeks later the sportsground hosted a more celebratory occasion when the Taranaki cricket team managed to hang on for an unlikely draw against the M.C.C.



From Left to Right: Percy Stainton, Mr. S. G. Smith, MP., Lord Galway, Lady Galway, Mrs. S. G. Smith, Mrs. P. E. Stainton, Thomas Horton and Mr. E. Jackson. Private collection, Warwick Horton.

The council wanted to lease the Park sections facing onto Gover Street to allow houses to be built on them. This required an Act of parliament. A Local Bill was drafted called The New Plymouth Borough Land Exchange and Empowering Act, 1936. This Bill also included the transfer other pieces of land between the council and the Harbour Board. Fortunately, the government did not allow the clause relating to the Park and it was removed from the Bill.

A significant ceremonial occasion at the sportsground was the 1st Battalion, the Taranaki Regiment, receiving new regimental colours from the Governor-General, Viscount Galway with much pomp and ceremony. The traditional trooping of the Colours was performed in the presence of about 10,000 people, and provided a memorable scene under the blazing sun.



Taranaki Regiment receiving new colours.  
*AWN*, March 25, 1936.

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Thomas Horton raised the issue of the safety of The Poet's Bridge and on inspection by the Borough Engineer (Mr. Clarke) it was deemed unsafe and closed to the public. The bridge was replaced in 1937. Plans were drawn up by Mr. Clarke. He originally suggested making a steel bridge but was asked by the Park Committee to make it of timber and to look similar to the original. The money for the construction came from the Charles Score Sanders bequest fund. When the bridge was completed the question of colour had to be finalised. The committee decided to throw the question open to the public. Someone suggested painting it the same colour as the famous Red bridge at Nikko Japan. For the full story of the bridge see page 230.

Work upgrading the terraces continued in 1936 with the southern terrace being reformed increasing the number of terraces from seven to eleven. The eastern terraces were also changed dramatically. The playing area was also increased by 500 square yards.

When Brooklands was handed over there were three large glass houses, A vinery, a conservatory/ begonia house and a propagating house. The Conservatory needed repair, so the decision was made to convert the Vinery (which was in good order) into a conservatory and transfer the plants.

The planting of Kauri Grove which Horton had initiated the previous year started in 1936. The council granted the committee £500 over a four-year period, and the committee also received a grant from the Bruce Trust, of Hunterville for £250, again to be paid over a four-year period. Stage one started in August 1936, when a total of 2245 trees were planted, comprising: 350 kauri; 50 titoki; 50 taraire; 100 rimu; 25 hīnau; 25 porokaiwhiri; 25 rewarewa; 25 pukatea; 50 mangleo; 200 pōhutukawa; 200 ngaio; 100 red beech; 50 silver beech; 25 maire; 10 toru; 50 tānekaha; 200 white pine; 100 matai; 150 tōtara; 50 tawāpou; 200 kōwhai; 10 pūriri; 25 tōwai; 100 lawsoniana; 75 *Thuja plicata*. The trees planted were valued at £106 15s, of which £43 5s worth came from the Park's nursery.

Extensive tree-planting was also carried out during the 1937 season, which included 360 native timber trees in the extension of the forest area at Brooklands, also 160 Lawsoniana and 250 macrocarpas to protect the native bush in the Maranui gully. At the back of the old orchard site at Brooklands 550 *Pinus radiata* were planted behind the old pine plantation, and 40 white pines were put in the swampy ground near the rhododendrons. Around the lake and in other parts of Pukekura Park 165 tree ferns were planted, and 650 native trees in the new botanic reserve at Fillis Street making a total of 2175 trees planted. Twenty-eight trees were to be planted in the forest area to mark Arbor Day.

A memorial tablet with the names of deceased donors erected in 1906 on the south side of Cannon hill was removed. The tablet made of marble was carved to represent an open book with the names engraved on the pages. Over the years it had been the target of vandalism. The tablet carver was stonemason W. F. Short, long-time Park board/committee member. He had done remedial work on the tablet on many occasions.



This postcard from the 1910s shows the memorial tablet behind the band Rotunda on the face of cannon Hill.



Bathing Shed, circa 1900. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2020-014-022).

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The pine trees behind the eastern terrace of the sportsground were finally felled allowing a further 650 trees to be planted in the new Fillis Street gully native botanical reserve.

Construction of the new main gates was started in 1937, designed by Messrs Griffiths and Syme. The entrance with two 30ft tall towers with a base 7ft 6in square incorporating ticket boxes was an imposing structure. It was originally intended to be built with Mount Somers stone, but this was difficult to acquire and expensive, so the architects came up with an alternative which was to build the towers out of concrete and plaster the outside and point it to resemble stone. This was accepted and the contract to build the gates went to Boon Bros, of New Plymouth. Committee member W. F. Short, stonemason by trade, was not happy with the decision to imitate stone. For more details see page 211.



Sanders Gates almost complete. *AWN*, July 27, 1938.

Planting of the forest extension area at Brooklands continued in July and August of 1938. Between this and the 1937 plantings Horton added in total another 1570 trees, comprising: 150 kauri, 100 rimu, 25 hīnau, 100 rewarewa, 25 pukatea, 200 pōhutukawa, 100 maire, 50 tānekaha, 100 white pine, 150 tōtara, 500 kōwhai, 20 pūriri and 50 lawsoniana.

This brought the total number of trees planted to 3815, comprising: 500 kauri; 50 tītoki; 50 taraire; 200 rimu; 50 hīnau; 25 porokaiwhiri (pigeonwood); 125 rewarewa; 50 pukatea; 50 mangeao; 400 pōhutukawa; 200 ngaio; 100 red beech; 50 silver beech; 125 maire; 10 toru; 100 tānekaha; 300 white pine; 100 mataī; 300 tōtara; 50 tawāpou; 700 kōwhai; 30 pūriri; 25 towhai; 150 lawsoniana and 75 *Thuja plicata* (western redcedar).

Thomas Horton was aware that the popularity of the Fernery had a lot to do with the flowers on display, not just the ferns. Unfortunately, the conditions inside the Fernery were not suited to the growth of begonias which were the big attraction and so he promoted the idea of relocating the grape house from Brooklands. This was done at a cost of about £150 which came from the Sanders bequest and was carried out by Messrs. Cook and Son. Over the course of one weekend members of his staff worked tirelessly to dig the tunnel connecting the new begonia house to the north-west fernery house (House No 3).

In his diary Thomas Horton recorded measuring the kauri tree near the Boat Shed Bridge. "Height 50 ft. Circumference 4ft from the ground 41 ½ in. Diameter 14 inches. Tree planted 1913. Average yearly growth 2ft. 400 feet of good timber in tree."

Following the removal of the old Liardet St entrance iron gates the committee received a letter from Mr. Len Hughes asking if the old gates could be erected at the Victoria Road entrance. This was agreed to. The gates dated back to 1885. They were a gift from Mr. George Rhind an engineer who worked on the harbour development. By 1890 it became necessary to re-hang the gates and Mr. Robert Hughes senior took it upon himself to organise this and from that point they were affectionately called the Hughes gates.

Thomas Horton and George Huthnance suffered severe irritation when removing *Rhus verniciflua* from flower beds in front of the Fernery, the irritation so bad that Huthnance was off work for several weeks.



The two glass houses moved from Brooklands in the late 1930s. The begonia house in the foreground, the propagating house behind. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2011-029).

Tom Boulton who had worked at Brooklands for Newton King as his head gardener for decades and kept on when Brooklands became part of the Park was let go. It was felt that he could no longer handle the heavy work required to maintain Brooklands.

In 1939 the old Brooklands propagating house was moved from Brooklands to the Fernery site and used as a propagating house for the new begonia house.

New Plymouth was approaching its centennial celebration in 1941 and to commemorate this it was decided to develop a reserve encompassing 80 acres on what is now Centennial Drive in the vicinity of Paritutu Rock. Thomas Horton was asked to design and oversee the development and was released from Park duties for 2 days a week for several months.

Committee member the Hon. James McLeod was appointed President of the Chairman of Reserves and Parks Superintendents Association.

The Park Tennis and Croquet Club was advised that within five or six years they would have to relocate so a shelter belt could be planted. It was felt that the rapid decline of the pine trees on the western hillside below the tennis courts would soon create a problem leaving that side of the Park exposed. The tennis club was offered a site next to the Gables to relocate to.

The road into Brooklands was widened and finally sealed.

Thomas Horton in his diary on September 4, noted, "WAR DECLARED last night."

Ivan Waddle who was running the Fernery in 1939 was called up for active duty at the outbreak of war. He had joined the Park in 1934 as Horton's apprentice. Committee chairman, Lieutenant Colonel F. S. Varnham who had served in WWI was also called up and sent to Egypt.





The Lawson sisters.  
Private collection, Warwick Horton.

In 1939 Miss Evelyn Lawson was employed on a casual basis to help in the Fernery. This became a permanent position when Ivan Waddle went off to war. She was the first female staff member at the Park. She was joined by her sister a few years later.

Thomas Horton was appointed Superintendent of Reserves for the Borough in 1940. For some years he had been doing work outside the Park for the Borough Council, such as the supervising of the Centennial Park reserve. Horton was still doing a lot of manual labour in the Park, so the borough council gave the Park committee an extra £150 to compensate for his time out of the Park. Horton however didn't receive an increase in salary for his new position.

During the 1930s and early 1940s the employment division of the National Service Department ran a scheme to subsidise unemployed men, a lot of whom were employed in Parks and reserves throughout New Zealand. An example of this occurred in 1941 when the Park was approved four men on a full subsidy for nine weeks under what was known as Scheme No 13. This was then extended by another thirteen weeks. This wasn't the first time that the Park had benefitted from the scheme.

In a review of the plantings of the Brooklands forest reserve and the Fillis Street native botanical reserve, Horton said that at Brooklands 3815 trees had been planted in an area of approximately 10 acres. Trees planted included all the principal native trees. At Fillis Street in an area of approximately 4 acres 1200 trees had been planted with over 200 varieties. Sadly, the Fillis Street reserve was neglected during the 1940s due to the lack of manpower and never recovered.

The old main gates at Fillis Street (Rhind gates, dating back to the 1880s) that were removed when the Sanders Memorial gates were built, were finally re-erected at the lower Victoria Road entrance. Also, a memorial plaque was erected at Brooklands to recognise the gift of the estate.

Staff levels were down to a minimum which was barely enough to keep up with general maintenance. The only new work was a pōnga gateway at the Kaimata Street entrance.

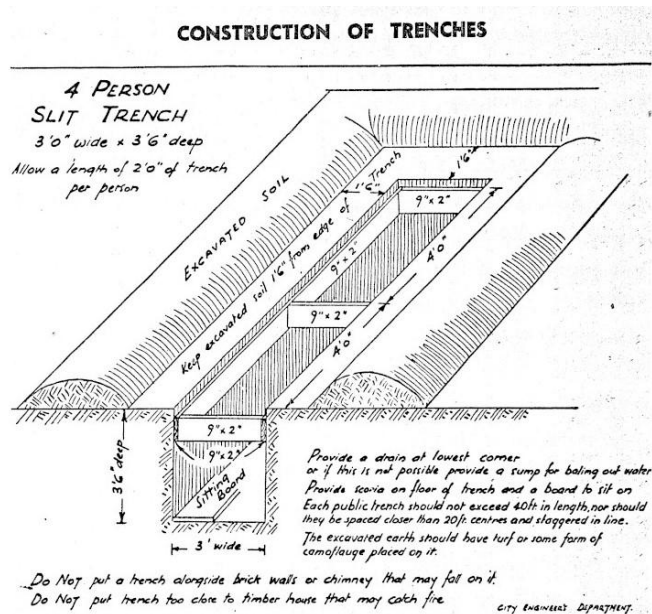
With a show of optimism, a V for victory sign was planted on the Fred Parker Lawn using red iresine, with a background of bronze and yellow African marigolds.

In 1941 the southern boundary of Brooklands was protected by a shelter belt of lawsoniana trees, unfortunately some of the trees had to be removed when a dip in the land was filled to facilitate the forming of Kaimata Street. About 2000 yards of soil was brought in.

To celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in 1931, Mrs Burgess and her late husband had gifted the kiosk and all its contents to Pukekura Park. On what would have been their 60th wedding anniversary Mrs Burgess carried out her and her late husband's intention to renovate and replenish the contents of the kiosk. One year after the opening of the kiosk while visiting England with her husband Mrs Burgess had bought new crockery. Since then, it had been stored in packing cases and moved from place to place.

The Park staff joined a Borough Council Industrial Union. They came to an agreement which saw their working week reduced to 40 hours over 5.5 days.

During the war it was decided that slit trenches should be dug to protect people in the event of an air raid. These were simply holes in the ground approximately 3 ft wide, 3 to 5 ft. deep, and in Pukekura Park, 12 ft long. They were made to cater for people working in town and were dug next to the paths at the northern end of the Park, beside the paths from the Fillis Street entrance, the Gilbert Street entrance, and the Victoria Road entrance at the end of Gilbert Street. They were designed to protect against shrapnel, not a direct hit. During the war blackouts were in force at night, hence walking through the Park at night could prove dangerous and people falling into trenches was not unheard of. The trenches were also



traps for nocturnal animals like hedgehogs. Work on these started at the end of 1941. In Pukekura Park 300, 12ft long trenches were dug. Approximately 1500 yards of earth was excavated. The earth that was dug out was piled next to the trench as a bund. The trenches were never used in New Zealand and generally they were filled in a year or two later. During the war an Emergency Precautions Scheme was set up. This was a group who considered things like the best places to have air raid shelters etc. The emergency headquarters was the Park Tea House.

Visitor numbers were down at the beginning of the year and one of the contributing factors was the introduction of fuel rationing, which meant people were travelling less.

Two more staff were called up to serve in the war. George Huthnance and Edwin Grant were a big loss to Horton at a time when staffing was already depleted. Huthnance held a diploma in horticulture and ran the Fernery. To help in the Fernery Noline Lawson was hired joining her sister who had been working there for about 3 years.

Vandalism was a serious issue during the war and in 1943 it was probably at its worst. One act that stood out was the destruction of the Gilbert Street entrance gates by a car driving into them. One of the more unusual forms of vandalism was the theft of two pitchers from a Nepenthes plant in the begonia house. This plant had been a centre of interest, and school children enjoyed lessons about it during visits to the Park. The pitcher plant, as it is commonly called, has two pitchers, or long bell-like tubes, with a liquid inside which attracts unwary insects. The insects steal into the pitcher to feast on the liquid and are trapped, the plant then absorbs them for food. The theft of the pitchers meant that the exhibit lost its interest until the following season.

A sad event in the Park was the drowning of Barry Frank Brown, aged four years eight months. He was found in the Brooklands lake. The exact circumstances of how he ended up in the lake were never determined.

When T. C. List donated a part of the Maranui Gully to the Borough Council along with C. W. Wilkinson in 1934, it was stated that a second piece of land associated with the homestead would also be donated when Mrs. List no longer wanted it. During wartime it was difficult to

## The Horton Years

get the labour to look after the garden and the decision was made to hand over the land. To gain access from List Street the council purchased another smaller section from the List estate.

Iolanthe Small started working in the Park at the beginning of 1944. She was employed initially for 6 months to assist Horton with work on the flower beds on a starting salary of £1. per week. She worked in the Park for 48 years, retiring in 1992. She spent many years in charge of the Fernery.

The Park committee lost two stalwarts with the deaths of James McLeod and C. E. Bellringer. Charles Bellringer had been a board/ committee member since 1916 and James McLeod since 1922. Both men were prominent members of New Plymouth society.

Three plots of land in the Maranui Gully were officially added to the Park. Plots C, D and E, see map on page 258 .

F.S. Varnham was welcomed back having spent 4 years serving in Egypt but unfortunately a few months later resigned because he was transferred to Gisborne.

Boating on the main lake was popular in days gone by. Over a four-day period during Christmas 1944, 1251 people went on the boats.

Until 1945 the sections on the corner of Liardet and Gilbert Streets (currently model railway; "Pukekura Junction") were being used as a dump. Originally a stream ran east to west through the sections, this was filled-in over the years. During the war people abused the privilege by dumping types of rubbish that wasn't allowed so it was decided to close it to the public.

E. Jackson passed away; he had been a committee member since 1934. He was the third committee member who had died in an eighteen-month period.

Post WWII the Sports Ground became popular. At the December 1945 committee meeting Thomas Horton noted that unusually large numbers of people were using the sportsgrounds in Pukekura Park for training purposes. Athletic sports were held on two evenings every week, and athletes and marching teams used the grounds regularly for practice.

New wage agreements were reached. The male employees were part of a union and a nurseryman's award of £5 6s 8d /week plus cost-of-living bonuses was paid. The female staff received considerably less depending on the length of employment. Ranging from £1 3s 6d as a new starter to a maximum of £3 6s 0d with more than four-years' service.

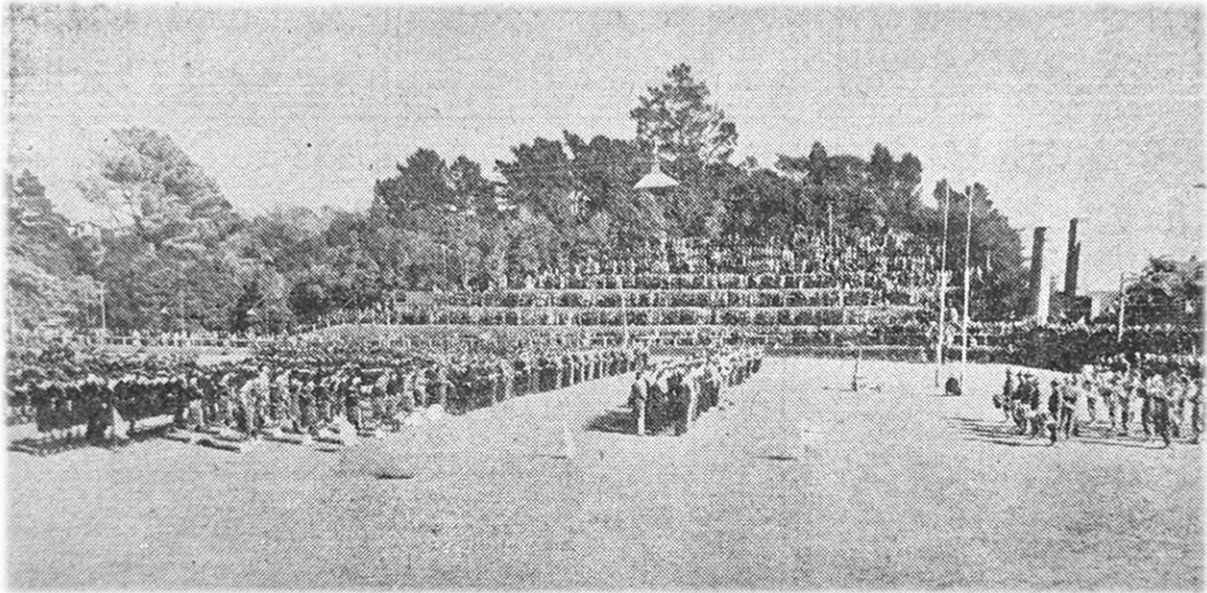
The chairman Frank Amooore died in September 1946, the fourth committee member to die in 30 months. He had served on the board/committee for 23 years. The four men had a combined total of almost 85 years' service to the Park.

Ivan Waddle returned to the Park staff on returning from duty overseas. When he left in 1939, he was told his job would be kept open for him. During his service he had spent some time as a prisoner of war.

In the early days of the Fernery there was an entry fee, and a record was kept of how many visitors went through. Numbers generally increased each year except for a few years during the war. During the 1945-46 season 13,606 people visited the Fernery. During the same year 8286 people used the boats.

One evening at 9.30 p.m during April 1946 a large and apparently healthy macrocarpa tree fell with a terrific crash in dead calm weather. For many years this tree had stood on the bank overlooking the entrance to the glowworm cave, but its roots had been undermined by erosion. Thomas Horton said that he had been expecting it to fall for 10 years. He also said it had always been the policy of the Pukekura Park committee to remove dangerous trees, but the removal of any trees had invariably provoked a storm of protests from a certain section of the public. The

tree, which was about 80ft high, smashed through a group of other trees and fell across the lawn in front of the old hatchery, completely uprooting a 120 ft tall poplar tree and smashing many others, including a beautiful rimu and half a rubber tree (Morton Bay fig). As a further safeguard against any future damage at this spot, three large poplars and two big macrocarpas were removed from the top of the bank. Native trees were planted in the gap made by the felling of trees, which included pōhutukawa, kōwhai, miro and tree ferns.



Anzac parade. *TH*, April 30, 1946.

Alterations were made to the Tea Kiosk costing £750, these were completed by Messrs. W. J. Cleland & Son Ltd. The kitchen was extended by 10ft, and a new water heating system was installed. A small shop was transferred from the eastern side of the buildings to the back. The alterations were designed to give more space to the kitchen, where small goods were prepared. The money came from the Sanders bequest.

Due to the financial constraints and lack of manpower the Park had deteriorated badly during the war. Horton was acutely aware of the need to bring the Park back to its former glory before it was too late. Some of the structures were getting so bad that if left much longer without maintenance they would need replacing. To highlight the issues, he assessed all the work required and the cost necessary to get the Park into good order. He estimated the Park needed almost £3,000 spending on it. A transcript of his report is on page 277.

In 1947 Committee member E. J. Carr died, he had served the committee since 1933. With yet another loss the committee was forced to invite new members. Ken Lippiatt, Brian Scanlan and Don Saxton joined the committee along with Mr. M. J. Neville as a council representative.

The New Plymouth Junior Chamber of Commerce had publicly criticised the state of the Park and at their request a conference to discuss the state of Pukekura Park was arranged between themselves, members of the Park committee, the New Plymouth branch of the Institute of Horticulture, New Plymouth Rotary Club, and the Taranaki Chamber of Commerce. Many suggestions were made including the reorganisation of the method of control of Parks and Reserves of New Plymouth by setting up a separate department under a superintendent to administer all Parks and Reserves. At the end of the conference, Mr. Stainton (Park committee secretary), said, "I was hopeful that I would hear a solution as to how to do all this, I hoped to hear Mr. Wilson say the Junior chamber would take charge and run carnivals to finance

## The Horton Years

Pukekura Park. Up to now I am disappointed.” In response Mr. G. M. Porter, the chamber’s president said, “it was not the intention of the junior chamber to raise money.” However, in 1949 they embarked on a fundraising drive to help the Park and raised a sum of £475.

The Rhododendron Dell that was planted in 1937 was overcrowded. The plants had been planted 6ft apart with the intention of moving every other plant four years later. This did not happen because of the shortage of staff during the war. Due to the delay the plants were much bigger and more difficult to move, some weighing as much as half a ton. These were all moved manually. Approximately eighty-five were moved, most to an adjacent area in Brooklands which still is part of the Rhododendron Dell today.

The Park received a £400 bequest from the estate of Mr. A. R. Standish with no restrictions on how it could be spent. Bequests often came with caveats.

Towards the end of 1947 New Zealand was in the grip of a polio epidemic. Schools were closed and children had to isolate. This had a big impact on visitor numbers during the Christmas holiday period.

The ceremonial spade that was used by Miss Jane Carrington on the opening day of the Park in May 1876 was gifted to the New Plymouth Museum. It had been hung on the wall of the Tea House for several years.

The financial situation at the Park was becoming critical. The council’s grant of £2,000 was woefully inadequate. In the 1947-48 financial year the Park committee had overspent by about £1,300 on normal Park maintenance. Horton stated that to do the necessary work on the buildings etc. there needed to be another £2,500 spent. Mr. E. Hutt director of Parks and reserves in Wellington was asked to give a report on the future development of the Park and associated costs. In his opinion the Park needed an annual grant of £5,000.

In 1948 it was stated that the Fernery had one of the best displays of begonias in the country. There were 1500 pots on display. These were displayed in the begonia house and the conservatory (Fernery).

The need for a ladies dressing shed at the sportsground was highlighted by a deputation from a number of local sports groups. It was pointed out that the women competitors had to change in their cars or the bushes because of the lack of facilities. It was also pointed out that there was every possibility that the following year the New Zealand women’s and junior track and field athletic championships would be held at New Plymouth if good facilities were available. The committee was in full agreement with the deputation and promised they would make it a priority. The ladies changing room got the go-ahead to be built at the southwest corner of the sports field. For more details see page 210.

With the finance situation being dire lots of thought was focused on how people could help the Park. One suggestion was forming a group called “Society of Friends of Pukekura Park,” which unfortunately didn’t happen until 1995.

George Huthnance was appointed to the committee as the representative of the Institute of Horticulture, he had worked at the Park prior to the war and was running the Fernery before being called up to serve his country in 1942.

The first Carols by Candlelight was organised in 1948 which was a collaborative effort between the Park Committee, the Y.W.C.A. and the Rotary Club. The event was a huge success, notwithstanding the inclement weather on the night.

New Plymouth received city status on January 27, 1949.

The new ladies dressing shed was completed early in 1949 in time for the New Zealand Women's and junior men's track and field championships featuring athletes including: Yvette Williams, Shot Put Champion and Miss Shirley Strickland, Australian Olympic Games representative.

In mid-March the Park hosted the New Zealand Highland Pipe Band championships. Twenty-four bands entered containing five-hundred pipers and drummers. On the last day there was a crowd of approximately 16,000 people. It was so hot that Saint John's Ambulance had to treat 40 people suffering from the effects of the heat.

Thomas Horton retired at the age of 81 on March 31, 1949, after spending 25 years as superintendent. He left an indelible impression changing the look of the Park forever. While in charge he introduced thousands of native trees while gradually dispensing with the *Pinus radiata* which had outgrown their usefulness. He oversaw the building of the Fernery and the transformation of a nearby ugly swamp into a dell admired by all. He planted the Sanders rhododendron dell with plants personally selected, many of which were imported from England. The Kauri Grove plantation between The Gables and Brooklands Road was his idea along with the Fillis Street Native Reserve. However, what he will always be remembered for is his first planting, the kauri, rimu and tōtara along Horton Walk leading from the Rogan Street entrance down to the Tea House.



Announcement of Thomas Horton's retirement.  
*TH*, November 11, 1948.

## The Goodwin Years (1950 – 1966)

During the 1940s the Park declined. Several of its core staff members were called up for duty, and there was a severe lack of investment. Much of the good work done by Horton and the team during the 1930s was undone, the Park became neglected and weed infested.

The arrival of Jack Goodwin in June 1949 and a new committee which had evolved in recent years ushered in a new chapter in the Park's development.

Over the summer of 1949 – 1950 Baden Winchcombe and some of his friends (including John Bolt) got permission from the Park committee to play recorded music from the Tea House on Sunday evenings. The concerts started at 8.15 and ran until 10pm with 24 sides of records being played. The first half of the concerts were described as "light classical", and the second half consisted of "major works" of a more "serious nature". The equipment which Winchcombe and his friends supplied amplified the sound so it could be heard clearly around the lake. The concerts instigated a discussion about erecting a soundshell in the Park which eventually led to the creation of the Bowl of Brooklands.

Possums had become a major problem, so Park staff were given permission to cull them using a shotgun. Until 1946 opossums were a protected species in New Zealand. They were introduced into New Zealand in 1837 to establish a fur trade.

The Park Tennis and Croquet Club were given a date of March 31st, 1952, to vacate the site occupied by the club on Victoria Road. This had been under discussion since 1939.

Brian Scanlan produced his first book about the history of the Park, titled "Pukekura Park and Brooklands", the profits from the sales went to the Park.

W. F. Short, a monumental mason who had served on the board for 35 years, died in a car crash when his car hit a power pole. He was 81 years old.

Soon after arriving Jack Goodwin highlighted the necessity of establishing a nursery to save money. One was established in 1951 between the Gables and the house by the zoo and was used for growing young trees. This area had been previously offered as the new site for the Tennis and Croquet Club.

The committee was notified of a large bequest following the death of Leah Graham. It was estimated to be worth around £16,000, but eventually realised over £21,000. Park Chairman Don Saxton and Park curator Jack Goodwin produced a report with thirty-three suggestions of how the money could be spent. Some of the projects were considered to be necessary while others were seen as not urgent but of value in increasing the beauty, amenities, and in certain cases the revenue of the Park.

### NEW CURATOR FOR PUKEKURA PARK

Subject to formal confirmation by the New Plymouth City Council, Mr. J. W. Goodwin, superintendent of grounds at Massey College, Palmerston North, has been appointed curator of Pukekura Park. Mr. Goodwin, who is 37, holds a diploma of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture and in 1939 won the Campbell memorial prize for the outstanding student in the intermediate examination of the Institute.

Mr. Goodwin's academic training includes a course with the New Zealand Correspondence School of Horticulture, lectures by the Canterbury branch of the Institute, private lectures on soils, manures, botany and plant ecology and a course at the Canterbury School of Art.

He was nurseryman gardener and senior gardener with the Christchurch reserves department, head gardener at Lyndon station, Waiarau, and a nursery salesman before going to Massey College in 1944.

He will take up his new duties about the middle of June.

Announcement of the appointment of Jack Goodwin. *TH*, May 23, 1949.

The planting and replanting proposals were extensive and involved planned development over a period of years. The 70-year-old pines were considered to be coming to the end of their lives and would need replacing block by block with predominately native trees. Saxton pointed out that the replacing of the pines would have a profound effect on the character of the Park but it would be a mistake to replant with the same type of tree because of their short lifespan.

Some of the proposed projects were:

Administrative block, women's rest room near the Fernery, replacement of bridge by boathouse, new boathouse, men's and women's conveniences near north-east corner of the sportsground, partial reconstruction of the Fernery and begonia houses, aviary, aquarium, soundshell, extensions to men's pavilion, playground and conveniences, floodlighting sportsground, vehicular road around south side of Brooklands lake, production and sale of guide book, waterfall and fountain. The full report is on page 280.

The committee requested that the road leading into Brooklands be changed from Brooklands Road to Brooklands Park Drive to avoid confusion. This name change was confirmed by the council in 1952.

Plans by Graham Harvey were submitted for a new administration building. The need for a new building had been identified by Thomas Horton in 1946. The building contractor was Messrs. Ashman Ltd. Before the new administration building could be constructed an old tractor shed had to be moved. This was done during the year and moved to an area on Smith Walk next to the Fountain Lake, where it remains today.

Construction of the new administration building started in February of 1952 and was completed in May 1952. It comprised an L-shaped workshop accessed by a large double doors, a staff lunchroom, a small dressing room with a shower, a storeroom, and an office for the curator. This was a huge improvement on the dark damp repurposed wooden buildings that they had been using.

A new path through Maranui Gully as far as List Street was completed by students from N.P.B.H.S. It was coordinated by D. F. Saxon and named Saxton Walk in his honour. Now Saxton walk extends from the Tea House to the Bowl of Brooklands. It is unclear when and why the Saxton Walk change occurred.

In 1952 the council set up a Parks and Reserves Committee. D. F. Saxton was appointed to the committee and Jack Goodwin was appointed Superintendent of Parks and Reserves. Goodwin's time was split 75/25 between being curator of the Park and his new role as Superintendent of Parks and Reserves.

A new 30 cwt Bedford truck was purchased for the Park costing £836.

The development of a Children's Play Area was proposed. Jack Goodwin was tasked with finding a suitable area and developing it. He chose the current site which at the time had several large macrocarpa trees growing on it, these were subsequently removed. Until this time the only children's playground equipment was two swings purchased in 1922.



Some of the original playground equipment.  
*TDN*, July 25, 1983.



## The Goodwin Years

The first payment of £10,000 was received from the Graham bequest in 1953.

The new Boat Shed Bridge became the priority. In May 1953 it collapsed under the weight of a dozen rugby players from the Hinuera Rugby Football club near Matamata. Fortunately, no one was seriously injured. The only real loss was 10 shillings which had come out of someone's pocket. The bridge was replaced in the latter part of 1953, using funds from the Graham Bequest. It was designed by the city engineer Mr. R. F. Mainland and constructed by Thomson and Williams. The total cost of replacement was approximately £1,800.

The Park Tennis and Croquet Club finally vacated their site on Victoria Road and moved to Kura Street at the southern end of the Maranui Gulley, where it remains today. The club rooms that were built in 1933 were relocated and are still used.

During 1953 the first Children's Playground was established. The equipment included: two sets of four swings, one set of four see-saws, one nine-foot merry-go-round, one fourteen-foot slide and two climbing frames.

Coloured lights were installed for the Christmas holiday period around the Main Lake and through the Fernery, and the Fernery was open during the evenings. This was inspired by the Queen's visit scheduled for January 1954. Even though the committee knew the Queen was not going to see the lights they knew many more people would be in town over the Christmas and New Year period. Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip visited New Plymouth on January 9, 1954 and were welcomed by a crowd of around 18,000 people in Pukekura Park.

Alois Schonbachler retired after working in the Park for 25 years. He was well known for feeding the ducks every morning at 8am.

The Graham bequest which the Park was notified of in 1951 included seven gold cups which were trophies from horse racing victories. Over the years the Grahams owned several very good horses. Two of these cups were sold to the New Plymouth Amateur Road Cycling Club for £50. All the cups were eventually sold raising approximately £200.

The decision was made to go ahead with the installation of an illuminated fountain. Messrs. Turnbull and Jones Ltd., of Wellington were asked to submit pricing and plans. Initially it was going to be a memorial to fallen soldiers but was changed to a commemoration of the Queen's visit. The Park committee received heavy criticism for the decision to erect the fountain due to belief that the fountain would spoil the natural beauty of the Park. Phase one of the project started in August 1954, which was the partial removal of the island in the middle of the lake and the filling in of the old Lily Pond to form what is now the hatchery Lawn. To fill the Lily Pond several truckloads of clay were brought in from Fitzroy. The fountain was officially opened on Saturday May 9, 1955, to the delight of several thousand people who spent the evening admiring it. People were also entertained at the Main Lake which was encircled with coloured lights as far as The Poet's Bridge. The main attraction was Mr. Sonny Pratt's Hapu-O-Rongo Māori concert party slowly moving over the water in a chain of nine dinghies, bow to stern singing Māori songs. For more information about the fountain installation see page 201.

Tom Wagstaff joined the staff and moved into the house next to the zoo.

A deputation from various local cultural societies approached the committee with a view to constructing a sound shell west of cannon Hill. The plan also included a proposal to demolish the Band Rotunda. The plan was rejected because the committee felt that they had enough projects in the pipeline.

A female staff quarters was built near the entrance of the Fernery. The building which was designed by Edward Borrell and built by Ross Allen also housed a female toilet and a ticket box for the Fernery. The estimated cost was £1,192 10s. When this was completed the old Tea House which had been used as a female toilet was dismantled.



Female Staff building/ Fernery ticket box.  
Collection of New Plymouth District Council Parks Dept.



Who is to help the Wardens?

TH, August 12, 1954.

These two cartoons from 1954 highlight some of the issues of the time. Bike riding in the Park was getting out of hand and a decision was made to appoint volunteer wardens to patrol the Park. Opposition to the fountain was also prevalent.



GAMBOLS IN THE LOWER LAKE.

TH, December 23, 1954.

## The Goodwin Years

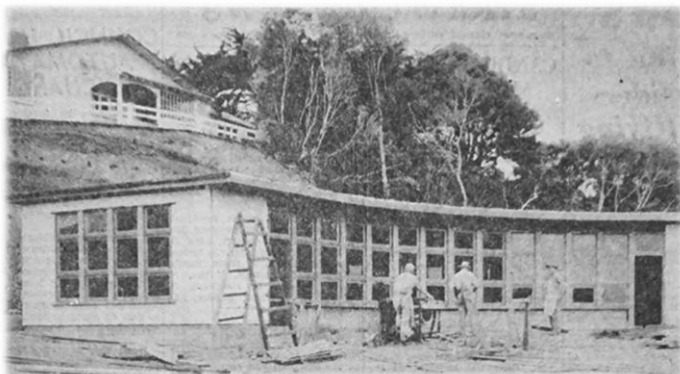
In 1954 the committee was approached by the N.P. Society of Model and Experimental Engineers, who wanted to build a model railway on the corner of Gilbert and Liardet Street. The committee decided to relinquish control of the two sections and let the City Council take over responsibility for them. The City Council granted permission for the railway to be built. It was opened in October 1955.

The single story (T H Bates designed) sports pavilion built in 1924 was extended in 1956 by adding a second story. The extension was designed by Edward Borrell and constructed by A L Roberts. The extension proved to be tricky when it was discovered that there were basically no foundations for the original building. The total cost of the extension including furnishings etc. was £5,840. During this year the playing of the fountain was severely restricted because of power restrictions. Consequently, on the occasions it was allowed to operate it drew large crowds.

The ceremonial kauri planted in 1934 by Robert Clinton Hughes at the southern end of the Hatchery Lawn died and was removed.

In 1957 a three-day water carnival organised by the Public Relations Office was a huge success. The third day drew a crowd of around 10,000. The main attraction during the evening was wrestling on a floating stage on the main lake. Another big event was dancing on the Hatchery Lawn.

Jack Goodwin went to England to attend an international conference of Park Superintendents. He was away several months, and the trip was used as a fact-finding mission for future Park developments. During his absence Tom Wagstaff was acting curator and on Goodwin's return Wagstaff was promoted to assistant curator. Some of the ideas that Goodwin brought back from his trip to England included a tea garden near the kiosk, an aquarium, an aviary at Brooklands, and a grazing area for deer, kangaroo or highland cattle. Goodwin felt that the Park lakes could host more aquatic sports and activities such as model yachting, canoeing and pedal boats. Other suggestions included a paddling pool, more equipment in the children's playground and an ornamental illuminated waterfall.



Kindergarten under construction. *TH*, April 10, 1957.



Who threw whom is not certain, but it was B. Southern the camera caught hitting the water first. B. Mauriri also took a tumble from the raft into the lake at Pukekura Park on Saturday night — to the amusement of a crowd of several hundred. The wrestling bout was a feature of the programme arranged by the New Plymouth Co-ordinating Council in its three-day carnival.

*TDN*, January 14, 1957.

The Free Kindergarten Association was granted the right to lease town section 1118 on Fillis Street to build a kindergarten, which was the first of its kind in the country. It was named "The Pukekura Kindergarten" and remains so sixty-five years later. The building was designed by Edward Borrell and constructed by Jones and Sandford.

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In June the committee received the first communication from the Public Relations Office requesting the use of the grass area between Pukekura Park and Brooklands (Bowl of Brooklands) for a comprehensive festival to be staged in February/March 1958. At that time the area was grazed by cattle and not used by the public. Permission to use the area was granted free of charge for an initial five year period on the understanding that the Park Committee would have no financial commitments to the project. The committee did however agree to rebuild the bridge across the Brooklands Lake. The bridge had been vandalized during the war. This was built by Fred Parker with help from the Park staff.

After several years of indecision, the committee finally decided to rebuild the Boat Shed. Graham Harvey was asked to submit drawings for a shed positioned at the north-west corner of the main lake opposite the Tea House capable of housing 12 boats. After considering the cost of the proposal and the aesthetics of having a shed opposite the Tea House, it was agreed that the new building should be constructed on the old site. Drawings for a 40ft x 27ft shed were submitted by Arthur Sandford. Sandford designed the structure with Fred Parker. Mr. R. M. Clough won the tender to build the Boat Shed at a price of £1,780.

New floodlighting was installed in the Sports Ground in 1957. This consisted of a series of twenty-one lamps placed around the playing field.

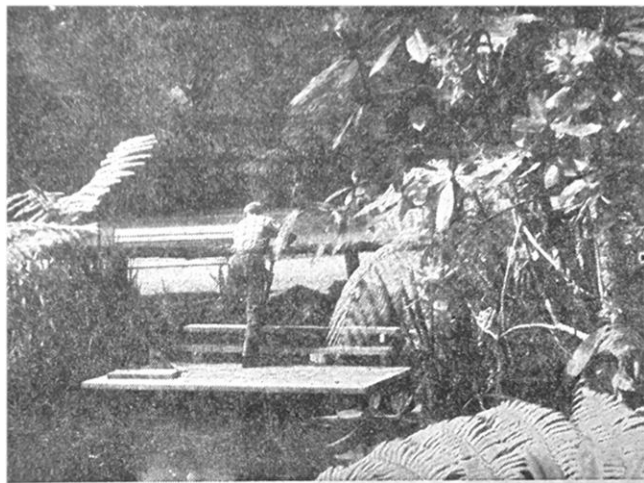
In 1958, Thomas Horton, curator from 1924 until 1949 died at the age of 90. Eliot King, son of Newton King died the same year at the age of sixty-six. King had been a member of the Park Committee since the handing over of Brooklands to the city at the end of 1933. As a boy Eliot King grew up living at Brooklands and as a committee member was always consulted on any changes that affected Brooklands.

The Queen Mother visited New Plymouth in February 1958 and was welcomed by an estimated crowd of 16,000 at the Sports Ground.

Gardener, Frank Parker, resigned. He had worked at Brooklands for 20 years.

Two boat landings were erected in Fountain Lake primarily for model boat enthusiasts. They were also useful for the Park staff when doing maintenance on the lake.

The first "Festival of the Pines" at the newly developed Bowl of Brooklands was a huge success. The event was basically a trial. The soundshell and sound systems were temporary installations. Following its success, the Public Relations Office presented the Park Committee with a list of proposed developments they wanted to carry out over a period of five years. The list included: a new permanent soundshell, better seating, re-levelling the amphitheatre, reforming the access road, an access road from the racecourse, widening the bridge across the lake, dressing room facilities, sound columns in the lake, and permanent toilet facilities. The new permanent soundshell designed by Edward Borrell was constructed before the New Year. See page 180 for details of the Bowl development.



A MEMBER of the Pukekura Park staff, Mr. E. Powell, installs steps leading down to one of two wooden landings, which have been erected at the northern and southern ends of the fountain lake for a double purpose.

*TH*, November 13, 1959.

## The Goodwin Years

There were hundreds of frogs living in the bowl lake, and during the summer mating season it was feared the croaking would interfere with the performances on the Bowl stage. One idea put forward by Handbury was to blast the frogs with gelignite.

Towards the end of the year a dressing room was built at the Bowl of Brooklands, which was designed by Edward Borrell. Also, a toilet block was constructed at the south-eastern end of the Brooklands Lake which is still used.

For several years the Sports Ground had been having issues with the turf. There was a lot of paspalum and kikuyu mixed in with it. The level of the ground was not suitable for athletics and there was inefficient drainage. Trying to come up with a solution that was acceptable to all the sporting bodies proved difficult, but a solution was agreed to in 1959 and work started towards the end of that year. The spraying of the kikuyu and paspalum was successful. Soil was brought in from Longburn for the cricket wicket, and new drains were laid, unearthing old drains and sumps that they were unaware of. The surface was re-levelled, and new grass sown. It was hoped that when the upgrades were finished the track would meet NZ athletic championship standards.

The committee asked Jack Goodwin to produce a comprehensive report on the future horticultural development of the Park. The report was published in the local newspapers on August 12, 1960 (see page 282).

A paddling pool that Goodwin had suggested in 1958 was added to the Children's Playground. It was built by the New Plymouth Jaycees. Next to the pool a drinking fountain was installed, and Don Driver's "Cats" sculpture was mounted on the top of the fountain. For more details about the playground development see page 192.

In 1961 Jack Goodwin was made an Associate of Honour of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture.

The administration building was modified internally to accommodate the curator's secretary, an office for the foreman of the Parks and Reserves Dept. and an office for the deputy curator. The work was carried out by Mr. S. B. Priest. To replace the workshop and store that were lost when the building was remodelled a 36 feet x 12 feet shed was constructed behind the Administration building.



Allan Jellyman working at Brooklands.

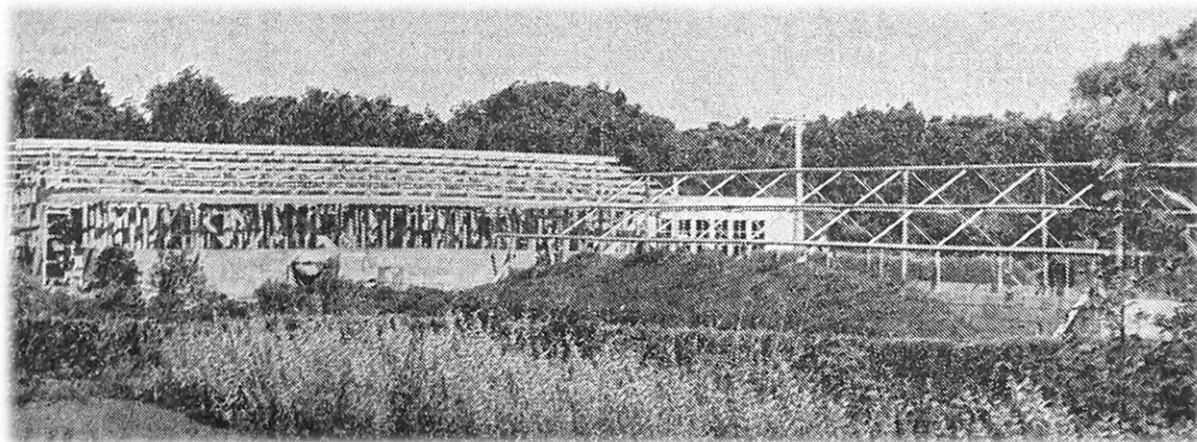
*TDN*, July 7, 1962.

Assistant curator Tom Wagstaff, resigned at the end of 1961 and was replaced by Alan Jellyman who started in April 1962.

Pinetum Dell at Brooklands Bowl was planted by J.W. Goodwin to future proof the name of the yearly summer music/theatre festival in the Bowl of Brooklands, "Festival of the Pines".

During 1962 two staff members received awards. Miss Iolanthe Small who was in charge of the Fernery, received the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture Fellowship Certificate, and deputy curator Alan Jellyman was selected for the David Tannock Special Award.

In January 1962 construction began on a large nursery project which included a glasshouse 60ft long, 16ft wide and 10ft high. There was also a large packing shed and storeroom. The nursery supplied plants for many reserves and Arbor Day ceremonies etc.



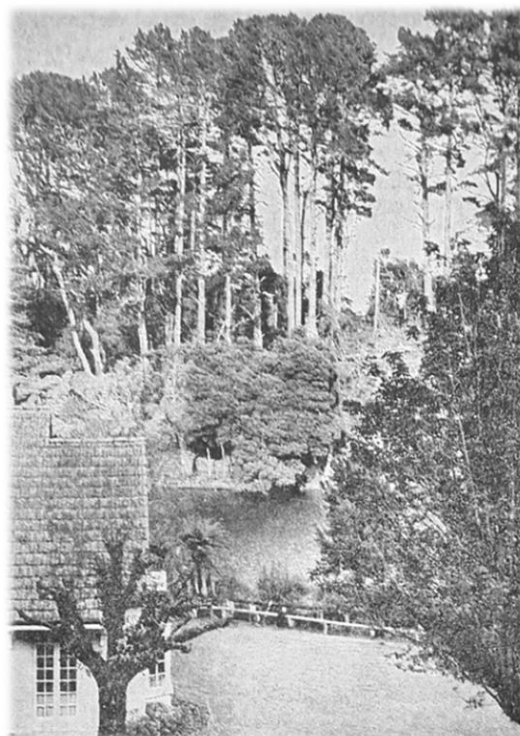
Brooklands Glasshouse under construction. *TH*, February 20, 1962.

In 1963 a bold decision was made to remove seventy-six trees, mainly *Pinus radiata* and a few macrocarpa. These were identified for removal due to the danger they were posing to the public. Thirty-three were on the west side of the main lake, twenty-four were on the east side of the lake south of the Tea House, and nineteen were on the Racecourse Walk south-east of the Fernery. What would replace them was contentious. Half the committee wanted the areas to be planted with natives, while the other half wanted to introduce more exotic deciduous trees to add colour.

In July Pukekura Park hosted the first hockey test match between Australia and New Zealand. Australia won 3-2. The old press box was given a spruce up for the occasion.

Percy Stainton resigned as secretary after holding the office for forty-four years. His successor was Mr. N. H. Guscott.

In 1964 the committee was advised that the Council had approved in principle an offer of the N.P. Jaycees' to establish a 'Florafauna' zoo at Brooklands. Work on this development started in October 1964 and it opened in February 1965. It was comprised of a block of 10 cages totalling 100ft in length each one measuring 10ft wide by 10ft high and 15ft deep which housed a variety of birds and two monkeys. For details of the zoo's development see page 185.



Some of the pine trees identified for removal.  
*TH*, July 17, 1963.



HORTICULTURIST MISS IOLANTHE SMALL checks calceolarias in the Pukekura Park fernery for a pest called leaf miner.

Iolanthe Small busy working in the Fernery.  
*TH*, August 8, 1964.

Fred Parker donated his amazing collection of cymbidium orchids in 1965. A shade house was built at the Fernery especially to house the collection and Fernery house two was modified for displaying the collection. Upon completion of the modifications house two was dedicated to the memory of his recently deceased wife Agnes Mary Parker. When Fred made his donation, it was on the understanding that a qualified person would be employed to look after the collection.



Fred Parker.  
*TH*, March 24, 1965.

The Park was extraordinarily lucky because orchid expert George Fuller was returning to NZ. Fuller learned his trade at Duncan and Davies Ltd, New Plymouth. He then worked for an Auckland grower prior to going to England where he studied orchids with Sanders & Co., one of the largest growing firms in England. He then spent two and a half years studying at Kew Botanical Gardens and was awarded the Kew Diploma and a diploma in horticulture. After six years in England George spent six years in Sweden in the development of hydroponics. He then went to Malta helping to establish a greenhouse chrysanthemum nursery. On his return to NZ he was hoping to get a job in the orchid field. George had worked with Fred Parker before leaving NZ and jumped at the opportunity he was given. He joined the Park staff in 1965 and took on the role as curator a year later.

George had worked with Fred Parker before leaving NZ and jumped at the opportunity he was given. He joined the Park staff in 1965 and took on the role as curator a year later.



Shade house under construction for the Agnes Mary Parker memorial orchid collection. *TDN*, May 15, 1965.

Significant improvements were made to Brooklands leading up to the festival of the Pines in 1965. The woodland stage was rebuilt and linked up with five other permanent staged areas. Bayden Winchcombe designed improvements to the sound system creating a state-of-the-art electronic sound system, with thirty speakers installed in three positions and six sound channels to produce amazing stereophonic sound. Seating with backs was provided for about 4000 people.

## The Fuller Years (1966 – 1990)

After sixteen years in charge Jack Goodwin passed on the mantle of curator to George Fuller in 1966. Goodwin was appointed full-time Director of Parks and Reserves for New Plymouth.

There was an agreement to extend the recently completed aviary at Brooklands following an offer of peafowl, seven varieties of pheasants, pigeons and other birds from Mr Larsen, Ureti. By the end of the year the Jaycees had built a peafowl cage. The Auckland Zoo curator was brought to New Plymouth for advice on how to expand the Brooklands Zoo. He advised building a free flight aviary about 80ft long, 25ft high and 25ft wide.

The main lake and Fountain Lake were desilted by sluicing using fire hoses, which proved to be very successful.



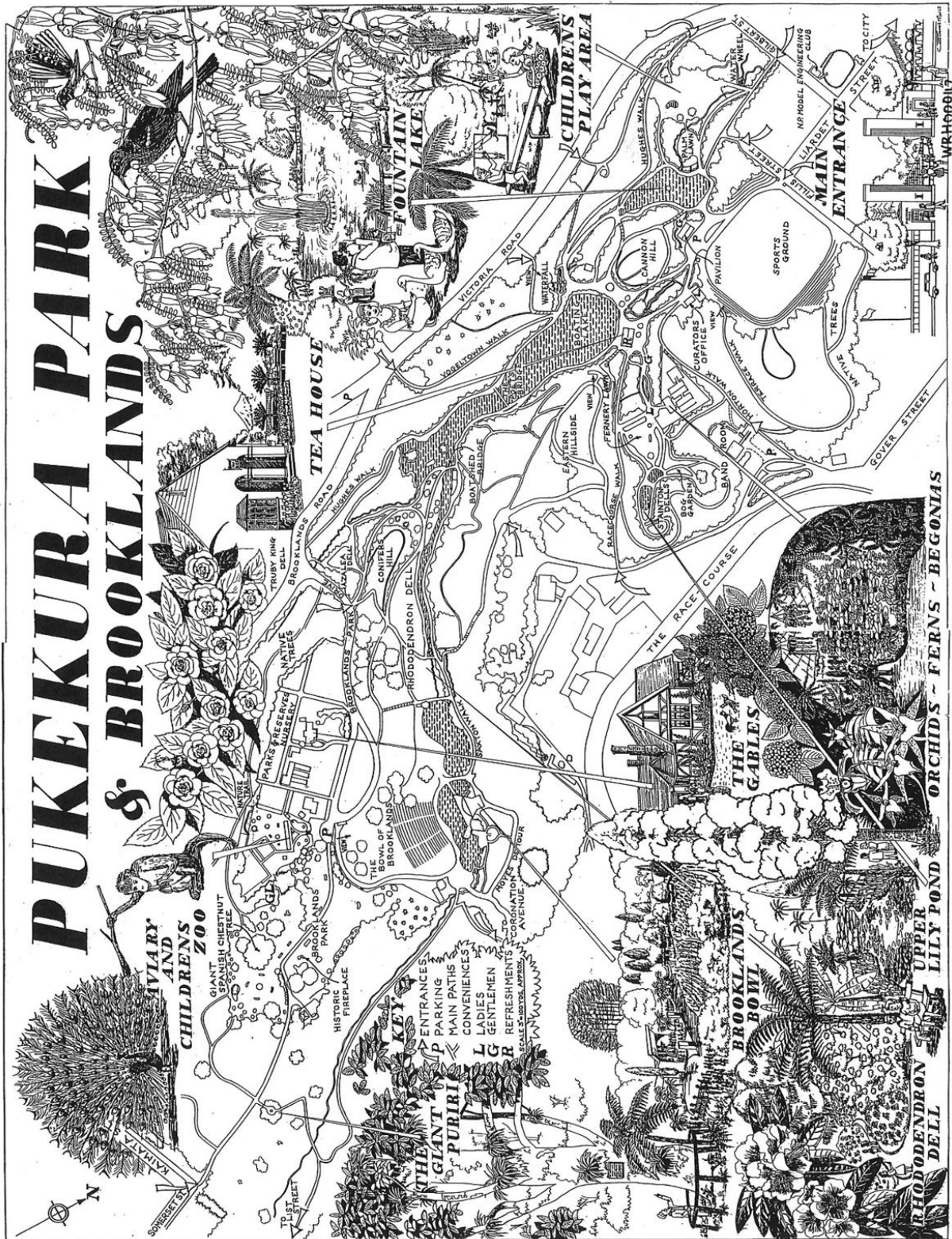
Sluicing Lake - 1966, V Swan, C Busby & C Keast. Puke Ariki ARC2003 359-3  
Cleaning the main lake. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2003-359-3).

In 1967 an Australian cricket team toured New Zealand. The first match against New Zealand was played at Pukekura Park because of doubts about the condition of the pitch at the Basin Reserve, Wellington. After the match the manager of the Australian team Mr. F. J. Bryant praised the pitch saying, “ My command of the English language is not good enough to describe how excellent this ground is”. The match proved financially successful netting the Park £700.

Possum numbers were getting out of hand. Poisoning was considered but thought to be too dangerous in a public area, so possum traps were introduced.

George and Mabel Kibby donated £10,000 for the purpose of building a begonia house. Begonia growing was George Kibby’s main hobby. The house was designed by Auckland architects L. J. Fisher & Co. Ltd. The house was officially opened in 1970.





1965 Map of Pukekura Park, by Ian McDowell. Collection of New Plymouth District Council Parks Dept.

The Jaycees continued their development of the zoo in 1966/67 constructing peafowl and deer enclosures.



Blackie – six-month old fallow deer in his new home.  
*TH*, July 1, 1967.



THE NATIVITY scene at Pukekura Park.  
Nativity scene. *TH*, December 20, 1967.

1967 could possibly be described as the year the festival of the lights began. Since 1952 Photographer Joseph Swainson had staged an impressive display of Christmas lights and an illuminated nativity scene in his garden, attracting thousands of visitors each year. By 1967 at the age of 77, he felt it had become too difficult for him to manage and he donated the nativity scene to the Park. It was assembled at the southern end of the Hatchery Lawn and recorded Christmas music was played. Lions club members organised cars to take elderly and immobile people to see the displays.

The Band Room was built in 1967. It is located on town section 1196 which was gifted to the town in 1965 from the estate of Harry Frethey. The building was designed by John Huggins of Edgar Collins Architects.

Alan Jellyman, George Fuller and Ian McDowell were all asked to submit reports on their vision for the future of the Park. They all produced extensive reports, and a summary was published in the Taranaki Herald on May 3, 1968 (see page 284). Because of a lack of funds most of the suggestions were not acted upon, and several are still under consideration over 50 years later. One of the suggestions was to open up the outlet of Fountain Lake and lay boulders. This was done only a couple of years ago and has improved that area of the Park considerably.

Charging for the fountain to play was introduced in 1968. The fountain was fitted with a slot machine which took a 20c coin to operate the fountain for 15 minutes. The free full combined sequence of 45 minutes was continued, however, it wasn't run every night. Frequency of the full sequence run depended on the season of the year.

The old bathing shed built in 1879 which had been moved in 1931 and re-purposed as a tool shed was demolished.

The Pukekura Park Committee was disbanded in 1968. The responsibility for running the Park went to the Parks and Reserves Committee under the directorship of Jack Goodwin. Even though this was a council committee there were four citizens' representatives on the committee.

Plans for the waterfall at the north-west corner of the main lake were approved. These were drawn-up by Ian McDowell. Partial funding was received in the form of a donation from the New Zealand Insurance Co. who donated £1,700 towards the estimated cost of £3,000. Construction commenced in August 1969. The waterfall was officially opened in October 1970. It incorporated approximately 100 tons of boulders and was almost entirely constructed by Park staff. (It is a credit to the gentlemen who built it that it is still standing over 50 years later and remains a huge crowd favourite.) For more info about the waterfall see page 233.

### **EYE-CATCHER FOR PARK LAKE**



Sketch of the proposed waterfall. *TH*, July 31, 1969.

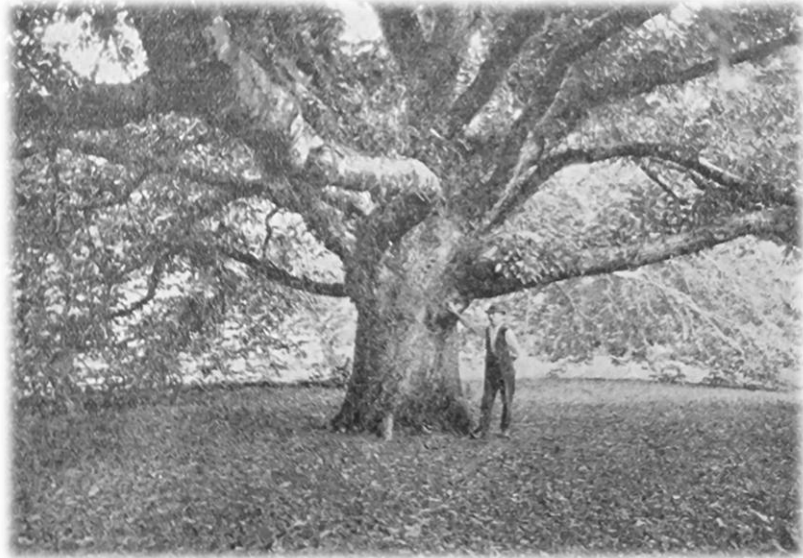
The viewing platform overlooking the Fountain Lake was constructed during 1969 by members of the Park staff. The platform gives a wonderful view across Fountain Lake. For the less able it can be accessed from the Victoria Road Car Park.

In 1970 the Jaycees continued their amazing work on the zoo and constructed a wallaby pen and a peacock cage which were officially handed over to the council in September that year. They also built a dovecot in memory of Ronald Brooker, the man who came up with the idea of the zoo in 1964 when he was the president of the New Plymouth chapter of the Jaycees. The new Kibby house at the Fernery was also opened in 1970.

Victor Davies discovered a rua (Māori food pit) in the Park near the site of the old Wiggins Memorial site in 1971. He thought it was over a hundred years old. It is the author's opinion that Davies was correct about a small group of Māori living in the area but questions the date. Until 1908 the area of water south of the Boat Shed known as the Serpentine was just a stream. Percy Smith came up with the plan to extend the lake from the Boat Shed down to the border with Brooklands. To do this the Park Trustees employed a group of Māori to manually excavate the extension. This took several weeks during which time the Māori camped in the Park. It is logical to suggest that the Rua dated back to this time.

The Bowl of Brooklands underwent a major upgrade in 1972. Both the lighting and sound systems were updated. The new lighting dimmer board could handle up to 60 channels and 300 kilowatts of power, compared with the old unit which handled 18 channels and 32 kilowatts.

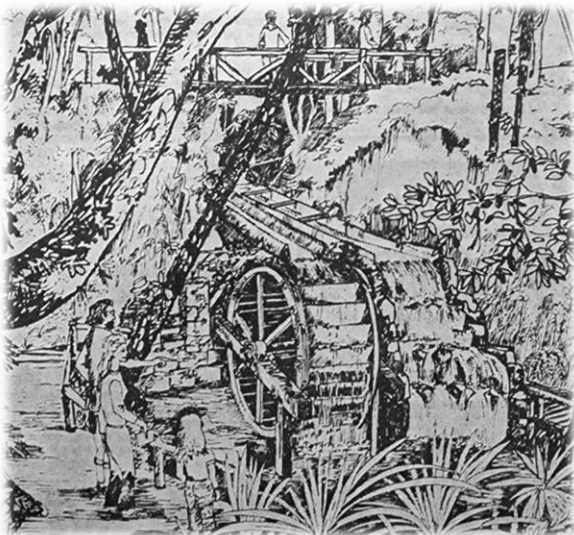
The huge Spanish chestnut at Brooklands reportedly planted in 1847 started showing signs of dying. It was heavily infested with borer. Dead limbs were periodically removed, but despite all efforts to save the tree it kept on declining until eventually it gave up and toppled over in 1994.



Brooklands Spanish chestnut. *TH*, March 10, 1934.

The Jaycees started construction on the free flight cage in Brooklands Zoo in 1973. The cage was 90ft long by 40ft wide and 14ft high. The majority of the work was carried out by volunteers during evenings and weekends. It opened in October 1974 and was the first of its kind in NZ.

Another major project initiated during the same year was the Waterwheel near the Gilbert Street entrance. Initial plans were to install a waterwheel at the outlet of the main lake in the Sunken Dell next to the Tea House. Unfortunately, the wheel that they acquired from the Omata Dairy Factory was too large and a new location had to be found. The artist's impression published in the Daily News was probably drawn by Ian McDowell.



Artist's impression of proposed water wheel.

*TDN*, March 21, 1973.

Work started on the construction of the Waterwheel with the intention it would be completed in time for the centennial celebrations of the Park's opening. The wheel was rescued from the Omata dairy factory and was restored by Jones and Sandford & Fitzroy Engineering.

The Waterwheel installation was completed by December 1975. A feature at the time was the ability to walk down a track from Smith Walk, go behind the Waterwheel and up the track at the other side to the Children's playground. Most of the work necessary for the completion of this project was done by Park staff. For more details about the Waterwheel see page 236.

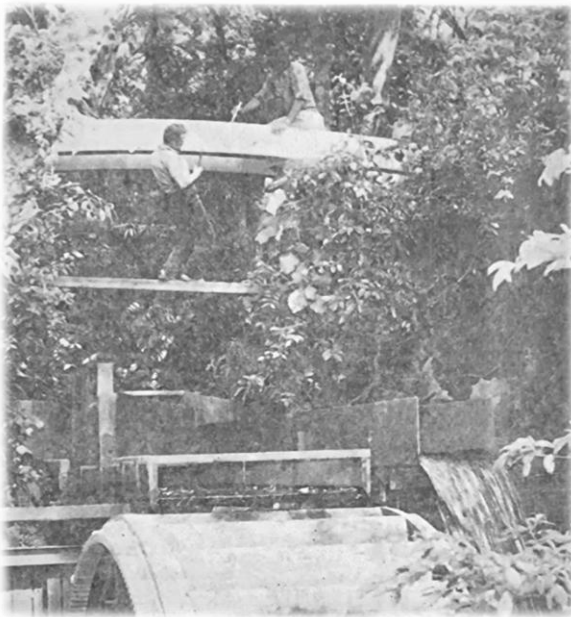
## The Fuller Years

The Park's centennial celebration took place on May 1, 1976. The event included the official handing over of the Waterwheel and a tree planting ceremony performed around the Park by various prominent local people. The following trees were planted:

A kauri was planted on the western side of the summit of Cannon Hill by Don Saxton and A Brodie. Mr Saxton was a long-time chairman of the Pukekura Park Committee. A ginkgo tree, *Ginkgo biloba*, was planted near the foot of Cannon Hill, by Fred Parker, a local horticulturist and long-standing member of the Pukekura Park Committee. A Norfolk Island Pine was planted at the northern end of the summit of Cannon Hill by Denis Sutherland, the Mayor of New Plymouth. A Southern Magnolia, *Magnolia grandiflora* 'Goliath' was planted near the outlet of the Fountain Lake, by Councillor, Audrey Gail, Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Committee and a Linden, *Tiliax euchlora*, was planted at the southern end of Hatchery Lawn by Mrs Eliot King, the daughter in law of the late Newton King.



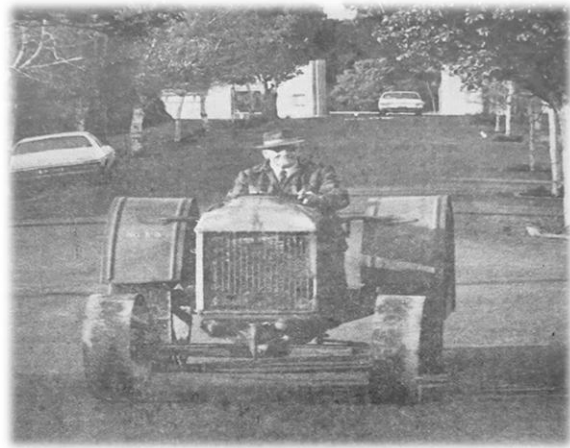
D F C Saxton planting a kauri on Cannon Hill.  
Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2003-859/4).



Installing new bridge above the Waterwheel.  
*TH*, December 19, 1977.

The bridge above the Waterwheel was replaced in 1977 and paid for by a bequest from the late Mrs Eva Alice Wood. In the same year The Poet's Bridge was strengthened, repainted and re-decked, costing around \$2,000.

The Fordson tractor that had been in the Park since 1925 was finally retired. It was donated to the Taranaki Aviation Transport and Technology Museum who promised to restore the machine to as near as new condition as possible. The tractor is still in the museum now located on Kent Road.



Fordson tractor retired from Park service.

*TH*, June 14, 1978.



The finishing touches to a retaining wall on the edge of the main lake at New Plymouth's Pukekura Park were made by city council workman Mr Les Silby today. The lake has been lowered to enable silt to be taken from its bed and the lake edges and island surrounds have been retained with timber and backfilled in places.

In 1979 the main lake was badly silted up again, and some of the banks were in need of repair. This time a digger was brought in working from the banks of the lake. The sides were fitted with a retaining wall. The following year the Brookland lake was desilted, and the silt was used to create the Brooklands traffic island.

Left: Last touches being made to the retaining wall by Mr Les Silby.

*TH*, June 6, 1979.

The Jaycees continued their good work at the zoo and they built a monkey house for a group of seven capuchin monkeys. Four female and three male which arrived in January 1980.

Right: It was possibly a case of see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil as these New Plymouth boys from left Peter Watt (9), Kim Van Leeuwen (7) and Pieter Van Leeuwen (8) – crouched by the Brooklands monkey cage yesterday.

*TDN*, September 1, 1979.



### Monkey cage almost ready

The long saga of the monkey cage being built at Brooklands Zoo, New Plymouth, by the New Plymouth Jaycee Chapter is just about over.

Chapter members are to make their final "big burst" this weekend to try to put the finishing touches to the cage, which has been a major project for the chapter for some years now.

The project's convener, Mr B. Sefton, said yesterday the cage was all but completed and only needed some final fittings.

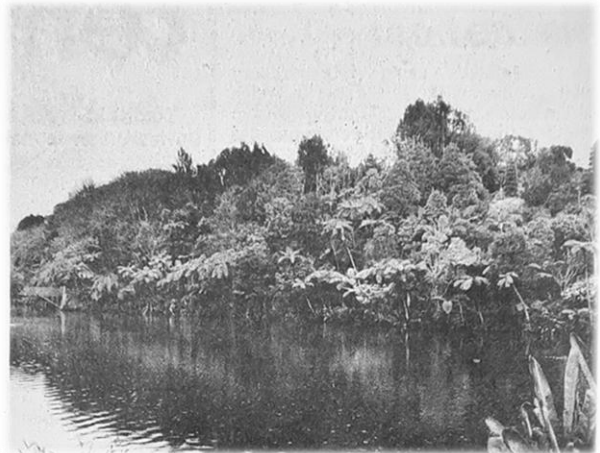
Before the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries inspected the cage and issued a permit for it, it had to be completed, said Mr Sefton.

Seven monkeys are waiting in Britain for shipment to New Plymouth and Mr Sefton said the freighting of them could also not begin until the Ministry's permit had been issued.

Although the monkeys would have to undergo about a month in quarantine in Auckland, it was hoped they would be here and on view to the public possibly by Christmas.

## The Fuller Years

In 1982 twenty-seven pine trees and three macrocarpa were removed from the western hillside. Below are the before and after photos.



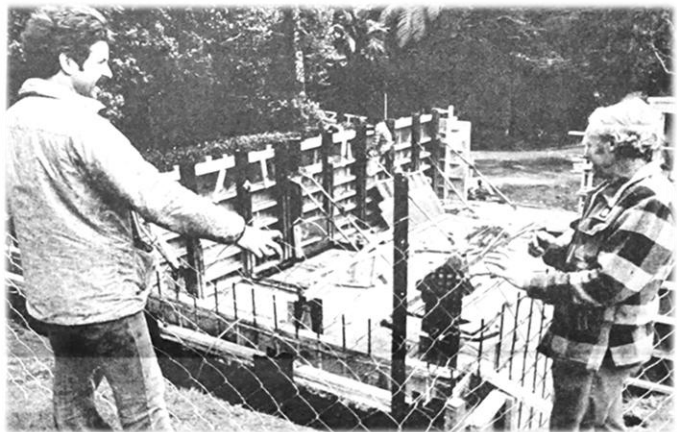
*TH*, October 10, 1982.

The felling of the pine trees led to a major Arbor Day project in 1983 along upper Scanlan Walk. The scheme was a continuation of planting that had been done in 1964. The Shortland street entrance was also revamped with the creation of a scented garden. Other projects in 1983 included cutting the path by the Tea House to Racecourse Walk and building the new tractor shed at the sportsground. Also, the Gables was given 'Historic Place category 1' status by Heritage New Zealand.



Bert Clark (left) and Ian Berry putting finishing touches to new path.

*TH*, November 22, 1983.



New tractor shed being built by Roebuck construction.

Site foreman John Hope (left) and Park curator George Fuller.

*TH*, November 22, 1983.

Following the heritage status being given to The Gables in 1983, the building was restored by the City Council and the Historic Places Trust. On completion in November 1985, it was leased to the Taranaki Society of Arts as a gallery.

In 1985 the cascade at the south-west corner of Hatchery Lawn was renovated. The intention was to restore the falls so that the water coming down had the appearance of a sheet of glass, as it had been in earlier days. People would literally stand behind the cascade of water and have their photos taken. Unfortunately, the restoration did not achieve its goals.



Left: Mirror Waterfall - Hatchery Lawn. Undated Photographic postcard of Syd and Norm Lovell. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PH2011-2164).

Right: Pukekura Park gardener Les Silby washing down the stonework of the renovated cascade.

*TDN*, August 8, 1985.



The top propagation house at the Fernery was damaged by cyclone Bola in 1986 and had to be rebuilt. Also, a toddler's play area was added to the children's playground. It was financed by the TSB and constructed by six Taranaki Lions Clubs. The project was completed in 1987.

In 1987 the Band Rotunda celebrated its 100th anniversary. It was first used in 1887 during Queen Victoria's 50th Jubilee celebrations. At that time only the concrete base was completed. Due to a lack of funds the canopy wasn't constructed until 1891. For more information see page 174.



Workmen pause during construction of Pukekura Park's new observation platform and duck-feeding deck. The deck represents the last stage of development around the New Plymouth park's kiosk. Photo: Glen Farnison

New deck under construction.  
*TH*, July 15, 1987.

Other 1987 developments were the Rogan Street Car Park, and a new viewing deck by the Tea House.

The sportsground pavilion was extended and renamed the Brian Bellringer Pavilion in 1988. The estimate for the extension was \$160,000, however, the final cost was \$215,000.

In 1989 the Waterwheel was overhauled by Fitzroy Engineering. The work included strengthening the wheel and making it concentric so that it turned more easily.



## A New Era in Park Management (1990 – 2007)

George Fuller retired in 1990. He had been in the Park twenty-five years, twenty-four as curator. Anthony Joines took over the role but at the same time the management structure of the Park's dept changed. Between 1990 and 2007 there were three people (Anthony Joines, Ian McDowell and Bryan Gould) who had the role of curator but not necessarily that title, however, for clarity's sake the title of curator will be used in this book. In the same period there were also three different operational structures within the Parks Dept. For much of this period the curator wasn't based in the Park.



The Fountain Lake was drained to allow repairs to be made to one of the jetties. The repairs were carried out by a member of the Taranaki Model Marine Club. The Jetty was originally built in 1959 for the purpose of launching model boats.

Left: Renovation of Fountain Lake jetty. Stan Robinson (Taranaki Model Marine Club member) watched by NPDC parks and recreation department worker Bert Clark.

*TDN*, November 24, 1990.

In 1991 Eighteen 100-year-old pine trees on the hillside between the children's playground and the Fountain Lake were cut down. The gap left by the trees inspired the creation of the Japanese Hillside.

The banks of the sportsground eastern terraces were faced with horizontal timber planks to repair damage caused by erosion and by people climbing up and down the face of the terraces.

Iolanthe Small retired from running the Fernery in 1992 and Ken Davey took over as person in charge. Iolanthe had worked in the Park 48 years.



Old pine trees to be removed.

*TDN*, September 19, 1991.

In 1993 the first Pukekura and Brooklands Parks Management Plan was drafted. It was compiled by a working party made up of: Councillor Lyn Bublitz, Mrs. Sally Masson, Mr. Geoff Cooke, Mr. Crelin Keig, Mr. Richard Bain; Mr. Alan Jellyman, Community Services Manager; Mr. Mike Nicholls, Horticultural Services Manager and Mr. Anthony Joines Pukekura Park Officer. The plan then went out for submissions. After considering all the submissions a final plan was released which laid out a set of policies to follow relating to future development of the Park.

The plan was divided into twenty five headings, each having several policies:

1. Landscape Character.
2. Bush Margins and Framework.
3. Environmental Controls.
4. Wildlife.
5. Boundary Management.
6. Landscape Development.
7. Public Use.
8. Commercial Use.
9. User Conflicts.
10. Promotion and Information.
11. Parking and Access.
12. Pathways and Circulation Patterns.
13. Public Involvement.
14. Plant Collections.
15. Sportsground.
16. Playgrounds.
17. Zoo.
18. Water Features.
19. Bowl of Brooklands.
20. Endowments and Gifts.
21. Heritage.
22. Buildings and Structures.
23. Illuminations Display.
24. Fernery and Display Houses.
25. Development.

The plan included a legal description of the land titles making up the Park. It also had a history summary, a map of redevelopment sites, plant collections and conceptual sketches.

Policy 10.1. A visitor and education centre should be established within the Brooklands area to serve the whole Park. This is one of the policies the public are still waiting for thirty years later.

## A New Era in Park Management

The standout planting in 1993 was the first stage of the Japanese Hillside above Hughes Walk.

The annual eel fishing evening was now sponsored by Walsh Appliances and branded as the “Walsh Appliances Grand Eel Hunt” and in 1993 it attracted more than a 1,000 participants. 1993 was also the first year that the annual summer decorative lighting was branded as the “Festival of Lights.” The concepts and origins for the summer lighting in the Park dated back to the illuminations installed at Christmas 1953 prior to the Queen’s visit.



Waterwheel being lowered into position.  
*TDN*, December 10, 1993.

The staffroom in front of the Fernery entrance was demolished and the potting area of the bottom propagating house was converted to a temporary staff room.

The Waterwheel was removed and repaired by Fitzroy Engineering. It had been damaged during the anniversary floods of 1990.

In 1994 Ian McDowell took over as curator from Anthony Joines. McDowell had worked for the Parks department for many years, he designed and helped build the waterfall which opened in 1970. He also played a key role in the acquisition and transfer of the Waterwheel from the Omata Dairy Factory, and its installation in the Park. This was also the year the famous Brooklands Spanish chestnut finally give up the ghost. It had shown signs of dying since 1972.

Right: DEAD END: Gardener John Harvey takes an axe to the Spanish chestnut tree – now a sad sight.

*TDN*, February 5, 1994.



The Friends of Pukekura Park was formed by Heather Allen and Patricia Stewart in 1995. George Fuller who was concerned about the health of the lakes in the Park suggested setting up the group as a watchdog on the Park's development. Heather Allen said "Saving the lakes is our number one priority...there should be a resident curator at the Park. This (Park) is too important to be managed from a distance." Regarding the curator being based in the Park, they got their way in 2007.

A major development was the formation of the Victoria Road Car Park. The car park was constructed on land which had previously been part of the old curator's house garden. It contained a few old sheds and some old fruit trees which had to be removed.



Victoria Road Car Park area before construction.  
Collection of NPDC. Parks Dept.



Victoria Road Car Park area during construction.  
Collection of NPDC. Parks Dept.

Paying to activate the fountain and waterfall was stopped in 1995 when push buttons were introduced. They were making up to \$2,500 a year, but vandalism and burglaries were a constant headache. In the 3 months leading up to the conversion there had been five burglaries of the pump sheds which cost the council about \$200 each time.



Walsh Betta Electrical Great Eel Hunt. On this occasion 700 people registered for the event. This was part of the New Plymouth District Council summer scene programme. About 2000 people attended.

The caption on the photo read, "It's Alive!". *TDN*, January 11, 1995.

## A New Era in Park Management

Starting in 1996 silt was removed from the Main Lake using a suction *dredge*. The associated dewatering plant was located to the north of the Brooklands Traffic Island near the path leading down into Rhododendron Dell. The equipment belonged to Drilling Fluid Equipment Ltd. and was adapted from equipment used in the oil industry. It was completed in 1998.



Silt Sucker. *TDN*, September 24, 1996.

The cricket wicket block was completely dug up and replaced using Patumahoe clay. The old block was laid in the early 1970's.

The Bowl of Brooklands stage was redeveloped, the wooden extension to the original concrete stage (which was at a lower level) was removed and a new concrete extension constructed to make a large single level all concrete stage. A new roof was also erected to cover the extended stage, designed by Terry Boon. The original estimate of \$100,000 blew out to \$235,900 following detail design work. Fortunately, the TSB Community Trust gave \$100,000 grant in return for the venue naming rights for ten years. It became known as "TSB Bowl of Brooklands". It was completed in February 1997.

A new outlet culvert for the Pukekura stream was created to reduce the risk of flooding.



Mother and son with George Fuller being given life membership to The Friends of the Park.  
*TDN*, April 15, 1997.

Probably the most unusual event in 1996 was the birth of Andrew Langslow who arrived into this world in an agapanthus bush between The Poet's Bridge and the Tea House. Andrew weighed in at 2.7kg.

The Poet's Bridge featured on an 80c stamp issued by New Zealand Post in 1996.



In 1997 a plan to upgrade the Fernery was approved. This included raising the glass roof areas by 5-6 metres and developing an extended covered walkway to provide a circular walk within the Fernery. A gathering area would include seating and an information site. The new area would also be wheelchair accessible enabling people to look down over the rest of the Fernery. Unfortunately, there was a \$150,000 error in the estimate and the project was delayed for a year. However, the first stage of the redevelopment of the Fernery did go ahead in 1998, it included a new roof structure for houses two and three and the creation of house 2A and annex. When it was completed the roof was raised by 2.5m over house two and three. A new high-level walkway was part of the design, using the newly created annex at the north end of the Fernery. This allowed wheelchair access for viewing the lower houses. The project was carried out by Inglewood construction firm Fabish & Jackson. For details of the Fernery story see page 195.

Also in 1997 the zoo deer pen was redeveloped to become a Farmyard feature, including a barn. This was the first stage of a planned \$400,000 upgrade to the zoo spread over four years.

A six-seater golf cart for taking less abled people on tours of the Park free of charge was donated by Saywell Motors in 1998. Bookings were taken by the kiosk staff and members of the Friends of Pukekura Park drove the buggy. Buggy tours still run today using an eight-seater buggy supplied by the council. These days the service caters for everyone and there is a reasonable charge.



In the photo clockwise from top left, Molly and Tom Nagle from the Park kiosk, Joy Hall from the friends of Pukekura Park, Murray Saywell of Saywell Motors, Denis Hall from Friends of Pukekura Park and Anthony Joines of the NPDC.

*TDN*, December 17, 1998.

New direction signs with a dark blue background and yellow lettering were erected throughout the Park. Some of these still exist, however, they may be replaced in the near future. Also, in 1998 phase two of the \$400,000 zoo upgrade was carried out which involved a revamp of the aviary.

In 1999 the walk from the waterfall up to the Shortland Street entrance was named Scanlan Walk after Brian Scanlan. Scanlan wrote two books on the history of the Park. The first in 1950 titled *Pukekura Park and Brooklands*, the second was in 1978 titled *Pukekura – A Centennial History of Pukekura Park and Brooklands*. Scanlan served on the Parks and Reserves Committee from 1967 to 1971.

The Rhododendron Dell was extended onto the bank below the Brooklands Traffic Island.

The curatorship changed again. Ian McDowell retired and Brian Gould was hired. Gould's job title was Pukekura Park manager. He came down from Auckland where he had the position of chief arborist with the Auckland City Council.

A new 8-seater mobility cart was donated to the Park by Saywell Motors. The new cart was battery-powered and a lot quieter than the first.

## A New Era in Park Management

The Kibby house was rebuilt in 2000. This represented stage two of the Fernery redevelopment. The new house was designed by TSE Taranaki and the building contractor was Arthur Brown Construction, Hāwera. A new shelter for the people running the boats on the lake was also built in 2000.

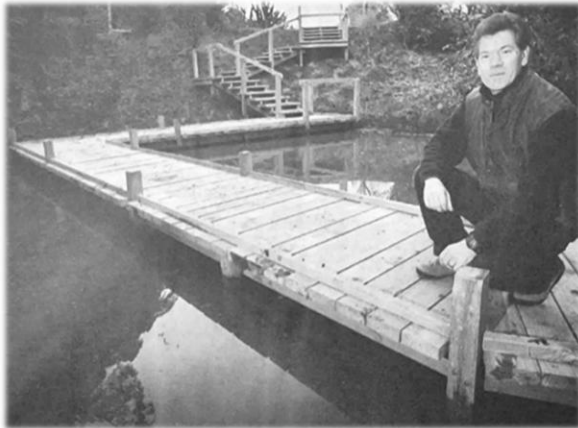
Phase three of the zoo revamp was completed which involved construction of a new capuchin monkey enclosure. This was followed soon after by phase four, new otter and tamarin monkey enclosures. The original bird cage constructed by the Jaycees in 1965 was removed and the children's playground was upgraded at the same time.

The 125th anniversary of the opening of the Park was commemorated in 2001, with the planting of a mountain coconut palm at the Palm Lawn by Mayor Claire Stewart.

A swampy area at the base of the bowl lily pond dam was developed into a wetland with a walkway running through it. This was the brainchild of the Park manager (curator) Bryan Gould. The project was partly funded by a grant from Fletcher Challenge Energy.

Brooklands Bowl was remodelled and recontoured to provide a better view over the stage for the audience towards the back of the bowl.

In 2001 New Plymouth and Mishima, Japan celebrated the tenth anniversary of their Sister-city relationship. A torii gate was installed on the Japanese Hillside and the unveiling ceremony was attended by a delegation from Mishima headed by city council chairman Hajime Shimura. Officials from Mishima had helped design the torii gate. The lower section of the Japanese Hillside below Hughes Walk was also developed and planted.



Bryan Gould on his newly finished wetland walkway.  
*TDN*, November 14, 2001.



Opening of the revamped Kibby House.  
From left: Ian McDowell, Alan Jellyman, Jack Goodwin, Bryan Gould and George Fuller.  
*TH*, September 2, 2000.

Plans and discussions were initiated to purchase a block of land from the Education Department (formerly part of Highlands Intermediate) to become part of the Park.

In 2002 three paths were named. A track in the Maranui Gully was named after Park curator George Fuller. A track near the Waterwheel was named after Park curator Ian McDowell, and a path in Brooklands was named after Alan Jellyman who was Director of Parks and Recreation, and later New Plymouth District Council community services manager.

The Park's orchid collection was relocated from the nursery at Brooklands to the Fernery. The warm growing/tropical collection was housed in the top propagating house. The intermediate temperature collection went to the house 4 extension/growing area, and the remainder distributed around other growing houses at the Fernery and new palm house. Also, overcrowding of kauri in Kauri Grove led the council to cull approximately 40 kauri.

The first New Plymouth WOMAD festival was held at Brooklands Park in March 2003. The festival used 5 generators, 400m of fencing, 30 portable toilets, 5km of cabling and required 80 production staff.



WOMAD. TDN, March 17, 2003.

A 2003 report written by Bryan Gould (Park curator), Anthony Joines (former curator) and Gary Brown (Tse Group) proposed major changes to the Park. Some of the suggestions included, a treetop walkway connecting Brooklands and the zoo to the TSB Stadium Car Park, an information centre at the TSB Stadium and a cable car from the TSB stadium to the Tea House. Major changes to the Fernery were also proposed. This was a very controversial plan. The cost of the proposals was over \$17 million and ultimately proved too expensive and faded into oblivion. It is the authors opinion that the main entrance of the Park should be at the TSB Stadium Car Park and some form of mechanical access should be provided to give easy access for the elderly and disabled. It is interesting to note that many of the suggestions put forward in 2003 had already been advocated in reports written in 1968 by Alan Jellyman, George Fuller and Ian McDowell.

**PUSH FOR PUKEKURA'S FUTURE**



**GLASS AND STEEL:** Huge canopy over fernery



**OLDEN TIMES:** Victorian makeover for cricket pavilion.



**ON THE BOARDWALK:** New-look tearooms.



**GOING UP:** A cable car is proposed (left) along with an aerial walkway (right).

**MAIN POINTS**

- **EXTEND** the tea house and build new function room on the lake frontage. Estimated cost: \$757,000.
- **BUILD** a 5-6m wide boardwalk across part of the Main Lake to the tea house. Estimated cost: \$214,000.
- **NEW** glass canopy over a fernery glasshouse to accommodate full-sized native tree ferns and nikau palms. New cafe and toilets. Estimated cost: \$3.5 million.
- **NEW** park information centre, near the old caretaker cottage by TSB Stadium. Mason Drive extended, with more parking included. Estimated cost: \$715,000.
- **CABLE CAR** to link the new park centre on Mason Drive to the park. Estimated cost: \$3.33 million.
- **AERIAL** walkway between the Main Lake and the Bowl of Brooklands. Estimated cost: \$2.43 million.
- **LOOK-OUT** tower in conjunction with the aerial walkway. Estimated cost: \$3.45 million.
- **EXTENSIVE** landscaping around the Gables. Estimated cost: \$220,000.
- **CAFE-SHOP** at Brooklands Zoo with enough space for souvenirs. Estimated cost: \$138,000.
- **ENLARGE** zoo's free-flight aviary and establish a butterfly house. Estimated cost: \$715,000.
- **TRANSFORM** the Bellringer Pavilion into a Victorian pavilion with a clocktower on the roof. Estimated cost: \$280,000.

SOURCE: NPDC

TDN, September 10, 2003.



## A New Era in Park Management

The paddling pool and Don Driver's "Cats" sculpture in the children's playground were removed. Towards the end of the year the small stage on the hatchery lawn was constructed, just in time for the Festival of the lights. Also, the sportsground was transformed into a military encampment for the filming of the movie "The Last Samurai."

The Scanlan Lookout which sits amongst the Sky-line Pines behind the Bowl of Brooklands and adjoining the racecourse was officially opened in April 2004. It took a year to complete. Plans for a memorial lookout were originally drawn up in 1996 by George Fuller for a lookout overlooking the main lake.

When a Kunming delegation visited New Plymouth in 2003 for the first part of the sister city signing, Mayor Zhang announced the gift of a pagoda-styled pavilion. Construction of the Kunming Garden started in November

2004 with an initial team of eight Chinese craftsmen arriving from Kunming. For details of the Kunming Garden development see page 209.



SPECIAL PLACE: From left, New Plymouth Mayor Peter Tennent, Friends of the Park president Heather Allen, Alex Strade, Taranaki Alpine Club's Darcy Williams, Rash Avery, New Plymouth Rotary Club president David Brownson and Rotarian George Mason cut the ribbon at Brian Scanlan's memorial at Pukekura Park. Photo: MARK TAYLOR

*TDN*, April 30, 2004.

One of two Torrey pines at the Children's Playground was removed (the remaining tree is the sole survivor of plantings of Torrey pines in 1888).

The Council purchased the 2.5ha of land owned by the Ministry of Education bordering Highlands Intermediate and the Park's Maranui Gully. This was first discussed in 2001.

A decision was made to replace the worn-out old Waterwheel with a new one. The project started in December 2004 with the removal of the old wheel.



SAFETY FIRST: NPDC arborist Steve Mitchell prepares to remove part of an old pine tree from Pukekura Park. Photo: MARK TAYLOR

**Lightning-hit tree felled**

Left - Arborist Steve Mitchell prepares to remove part of an old Torrey pine that had been struck by lightning nine years earlier.

*TDN*, April 30, 2004.

The other major event of 2004 was the release of a new Park Management Plan. This was very different from the 1993 document. It was in two parts. Part A focussed on the statutory aspects of running a Park and part B focussed on the policies moving forward. Even though the Park had been administered under the principals of the reserves Act 1977 some of the land was not officially classified as reserve land. The extract from the 2004 Executive summary explains this.

The Park is administered by the New Plymouth District Council. Although the Park has been managed for many years as a public recreation reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 (hereinafter referred to as the “Reserves Act”) many areas have not been formally classified under the Act. The various areas of land comprising the Park are currently contained in 21 certificates of title. The Council is in the process of ensuring that the Park is confirmed to be “reserve” land and appropriately classified, as either recreation reserve or local purpose (community purposes and recreation). This process has been undertaken concurrently with the process of preparing this management plan. The Reserves Act requires each reserve to have a management plan, prepared by the “administering body” (in this case the Council).

The Reserves Act sets out the statutory criteria for the management plan and requires that “the management plan shall provide for and ensure the use, enjoyment, maintenance, protection, and preservation, as the case may require, and, to the extent that the administering body’s resources permit, the development, as appropriate of the reserve for the purposes for which it is classified, and shall incorporate and ensure compliance with...” each of those principles as set out in the Act for a reserve of that classification.

The plan also highlighted other relevant legislation and controls to be considered, such as:

Resource Management Act 1991.

Local Government Act 2002 and 1974.

Conservation Act 1987.

Treaty of Waitangi as it applies to Reserve Management.

Taranaki Botanic Garden Act 1876.

It was noted that this was still a relevant document that needed repealing. However, in 2024 it still in place.

Historic Places Act 1993.

The New Plymouth District Plan.

The New Plymouth District Bylaws.

Taranaki Regional Council.

Relevant Council Policies, Strategies and Plans including:

Long Term Council Community Plan, The 2001 Water management Technical Study, Parks Asset Management Plan and 1999 Leisure Plan.

## A New Era in Park Management

Part A also included an excellent summary of all the land acquisitions that made up the Park in 2004, including land description, statutory references and location. Highlighted was the need to amalgamate the different land parcels into one title. Some areas were classified as 'local purpose reserve', such as the land at the kindergarten and scout den.

The land in Gilbert street home of the Model Engineers Club was removed from the Park.

Another interesting entry in Part A is the explanation of the changes of the Park management from 1993 to 2003. Below is an extract from the Park Management Plan.

Since 1993 the Park has been subject to fundamental changes in its infrastructure and management. In many ways it was a trying time for the Park - a time that it has survived well, considering the challenges.

The most significant change was in terms of management. In 1994 the position of Park curator was dis-established and a combination of the Council's Park management took over the day-to-day planning and running of the Park. The Park's garden staff were re-organised into a contract unit of Council, accountable for all operational activities. The Park operated in this fashion for a number of years. Even though intentions were good and all practical efforts were made, the Park suffered from unclear management in both its physical and strategic well-being as a result of this reorganisation.

In 1999 the new position of Pukekura Park Manager was established, which covered many of the tasks of the original Curator position. As a result of further Council restructuring in 2002, the management of Pukekura Park and Brooklands is now the responsibility of the Premier Parks team within Parkscape Services, Customer Services Group.

Work is now well under way to improve the daily routine management needs of the Park, to improve the quality and accessibility of services to the Park and to address its long-term development needs.

Part B focussed on policies which were divided into the following categories.

Access and Circulation; Recreation and Use; Landscape Management and Protection; Information and Education; Community Relations; Facilities, Buildings and structures; Leases, Licences and other Agreements; Development; Administration and Management.

Each category was divided into subcategories which in turn had many policies.

The 2004 Park Management Plan is available for download on the NPDC website.

Kunming Garden was officially opened on February 27th, 2005.

A New Waterwheel was installed in time for Christmas 2005. It was designed by New Plymouth engineer Michael Lawley and built by carpenter Dave Carnahan in a shed on Lawley's property in Kent Road.

A block of two unisex toilets were installed at the children's playground and one unisex toilet at the Rogan Street Car Park and the Parks Department Nursery was disestablished, and the buildings demolished.

Ken Davey retired, and Donna Chrstiensen took over as person in charge of the Fernery. An irrigation system was installed at the top of the fern banks in houses 1, 2 and 3.

After ideas put forward in 2003 were incorporated into the 2004 Park Management Plan a study was commissioned by the council to obtain feedback from the public. Wellington research group Pistoll and Associates conducted the study and found that the majority of people supported developing and promoting Pukekura Park as an international attraction. Ideas that found favour included a revamp of the Tea House, extending and upgrading car parking, building a visitors' centre, creating a café at Brooklands Zoo, constructing a look-out tower and developing a new main entrance at the racecourse. The only major proposal not to get a favourable outcome was that of a cable car from the TSB stadium to the Tea House. The only project to be actioned was the Tea House renovation which commenced in July 2006, costing around \$520,000. The aim was to maintain the character of the original building while meeting the then current building standards. A new floor was laid with underfloor ventilation and the interior redesigned to make it easier to operate. For more details about the history of the Tea House see page 226.



Old Torrey pine that had been struck by lightning two years earlier being removed.  
*TDN, June 22, 2006*

Another consideration in 2006 was the setting up of a Centre for Sustainable Living in the house next to Brooklands Zoo. This house has recently been converted into an enviro-hub.

Following a District Council reshuffle former Parkscape manager Chris Connolly was appointed curator of the Park in December 2006. This role had been disestablished in 1994.

## Curators Return (2007 – present)

In 2007 Pukekura Park and Brooklands was assessed as a Garden of National Significance by the New Zealand Gardens Trust. In its assessment, NZGT made particular note of the Park's superb natural landscape and how it contrasts well with the lake, pockets of horticultural delight as well as "quirky additions" such as the Chinese garden, serene atmosphere and uniformly high maintenance level. They also noted good use of the landscape's natural form, with a logical flow through the Park.

The Lions faces and bowls of the Victoria drinking fountain were vandalised. The repairs were carried out by conservation stonemason Jerry Smith using marble from the north Italian city of Carrara.

The Michael Smither sculpture "Aotearoa" was installed in the Bowl Lily Lake. Smither donated the sculpture but the Council had to cover the cost of materials to build it and the cost of installation which was estimated to be \$97,000. The sculpture is made of bronze and painted with a special marine resin to avoid issues such as algae growth. For more details see page 171.

The Centennial of the naming of the Park "Pukekura Park", was commemorated with plantings taking place on Eastern Hillside.



Twins Ethan (left) and Mac Rowe assist Chris Connolly plant a conifer (*Araucaria bidwillii*) on Eastern Hillside as part of the naming of the Park's centennial celebrations. *TDN*, November 21, 2007.

The Park gained fame on New Zealand's version of "Monopoly" claiming the prestigious Mayfair square, and the Park's cricket ground was named one of the six great cricket grounds in the world in the 2007 version of *Wisden Cricketers' Almanac*.

The Tea House which was saved from the brink of destruction in 2006 and restored to its former glory by architect Jenny Goddard received a stamp of approval from the New Zealand Institute of Architects' western region judges who gave it an award in the Heritage and Conservation category.

The Friends of the Park won a \$101,000 government grant along with a dollar-for-dollar support from Puke Ariki to record the Park's history. The joint venture – Terrain (Taranaki Educational Resource: Research, Analysis and Information Network) recorded historical data on a website. The New Plymouth District Council also published a book *Pukekura Park and Brooklands – A Guide to Walks*, written by Ron Lambert.

The 80th anniversary of the Fernery was celebrated on the Fred Parker Lawn with a barbecue and a birthday cake. People were dressed in 1920's attire.

New tracks were made in the part of the Maranui Gully that had been purchased from the Ministry of Education in 2004.

The Park got its first all-electric buggy from China. The buggy was designed to carry less able-bodied persons around the Park.



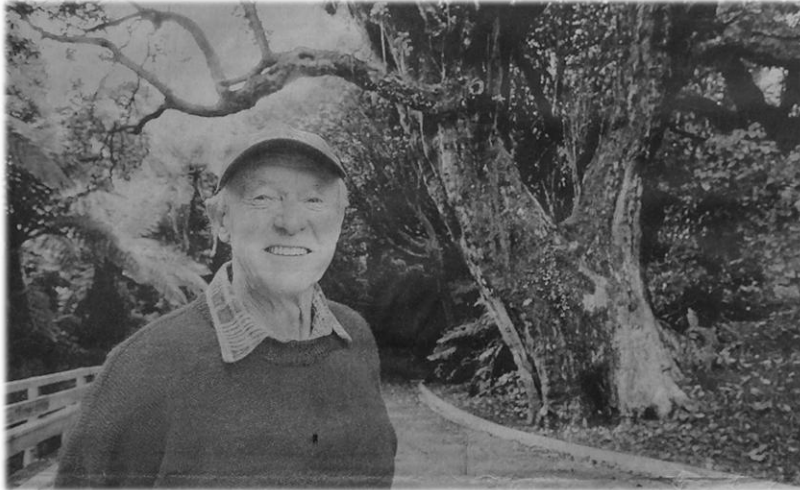
Celebrating the Fernery's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Dressed in 1920s attire (from left) Heather Dodunski, Chris Connolly, Donna Christiansen, Judi Harre and Bev Moratti. *TDN*, January 29, 2008.

A diseased section of the northern-most of the two Norfolk Pines at Brooklands was removed. About 9m was taken off the top of the tree. These trees are believed to have been planted in 1851.

2009 was a year of controversies, however it started on a calmer note with the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the gifting of Brooklands to New Plymouth City. The King family planted a Mexican Weeping Pine, *Pinus patula* in the Pinetum at Brooklands.

Right: Stephen and Vivian King, grandsons of Newton King, put the first shovel of dirt around the tree planted in celebration of 75 years since the King family home was gifted to the city of New Plymouth. Granddaughters Lynette Jolicoeur, Adrienne Tatham and Jennifer Voss look on. *TDN*, March 10, 2009.





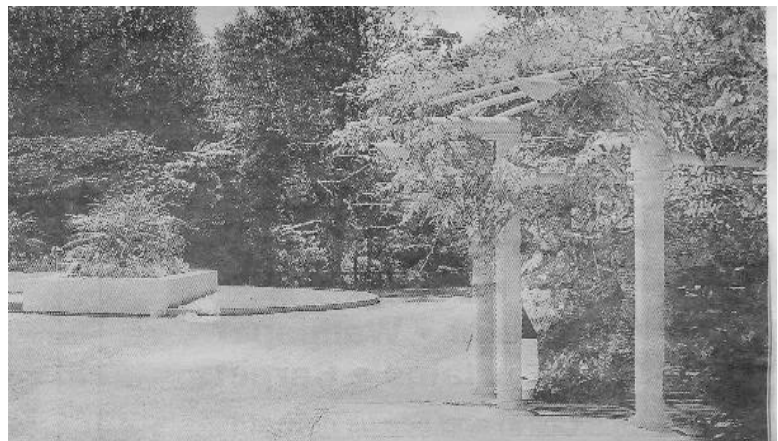
George Fuller standing by the pūriri tree that he battled to save.  
*TDN*, December 26, 2009.

The main controversy was an access road from the racecourse down to the Bowl of Brooklands. The road was deemed unsuitable for emergency vehicles and large B-train trucks that were being used to carry equipment for big acts playing at the Bowl. At the centre of the controversy was an old pūriri tree. Initially two options were proposed. One option was to have a new road above the pūriri which would possibly have a devastating effect on the tree, and also required removing another

25 established trees. The second option was to widen and strengthen the existing road. After studying the options, the council were advised that option one was the only feasible option. Excurator George Fuller headed a protest to save the trees and went into the Park at the site of the pūriri every day for a week, to explain to the public the council's proposal. The issue was finally solved when engineers: John Mathews, John Kuindersman and Colin Bell, came up with a solution to stabilise and widen the existing road.

The second controversy in 2009 was the installation of a temporary platform over the lake at the Bowl of Brooklands during concerts. The platform which seated 1044 people was used in February 2010 for the Cliff Richard concert. Cliff Richard thought it was great.

Other projects during the year included rebuilding the Wisteria Arbor near the Tea House by Tenix Robert Stone to commemorate their 60th anniversary and both The Poet's Bridge and the Boat Shed Bridge undergoing major refurbishment work. Also, the Waterwheel was spinning a bit wonky making repairs necessary. The wheel was removed, and fitted with a new drive shaft and bearings.



A montage of the likely finished appearance of the specially designed and purpose-built steel pergola to support the iconic wisteria behind the Tea House.

*Midweek*, August 26, 2009.

The approach to the waterfall was modified (boulders that were in front of the pool, at the bottom of the falls, were removed and replaced by forming steps to improve public access). Kunming Garden was closed while repairs were made to the main supporting columns of the Pagoda. Timber used in its construction was not treated and not suitable for NZ conditions.

In January 2011 a 120-year-old English Beech that stood on Brooklands lawn was badly damaged in a storm and was removed. The tree was listed as category one notable tree under the district plan and was on the Notable Trees of New Zealand register.



George Fuller – Hoping the beech timber will be put to good use.  
*TDN*, February 2, 2011.

Four of the Park's fleet of clinker boats were rotten beyond repair. The boats were very expensive to maintain so four plastic lookalike boats were trialled. These were supplied by Auckland Company, Mac Boats.

The cricket practice nets in Fillis Street got the go-ahead after fierce debate. They were first proposed in 2008. The project got approval after the TSB Community Trust came up with half of the cost. They were constructed in 2012.



Stage three of the Fernery upgrade in progress. Fernery technical officer Donna Christiansen in the foreground.  
*TDN*, October 10, 2012.

The unisex toilet block at the west end of the Brooklands Bowl Lake was constructed replacing an old block that had been destroyed by fire.

The third and final stage of the Fernery redevelopment commenced, putting a new roof on House 1 and building a new office block for the curator and Park staff. This was completed in 2013.



## Curators Return

Another three unusable clinker boats were replaced with plastic lookalikes. The three boats were put on Trade Me with a reserve of \$1 but remarkably raised \$2,765.

The Park was awarded a Certificate of Excellence by TripAdvisor.

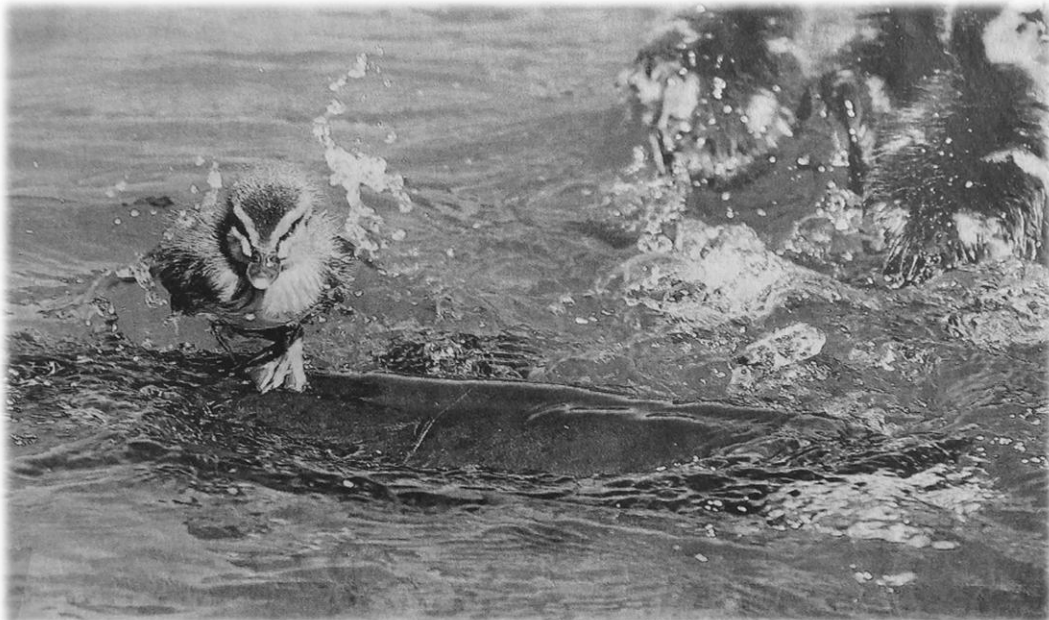
The Children's Playground was redeveloped in 2013, which included removing the much-loved wooden fort. The cost of the upgrade was \$560,000. Included in the redevelopment was the installation of a replica of Don Driver "Cats" sculpture.

The Band Rotunda was given a complete makeover which included repairing the damaged finial on the roof, cleaning and repainting the roof and supports, re-plastering the steps and renewing the electrical wiring and fittings. The restoration cost around \$60,000.

The Kaimata Street Entrance at Brooklands was redeveloped with the creation of six angled car park spaces on Kaimata Street. This was the first of the many entrances to be smartened up. Interlocking gravel-filled geotextile bags were placed around the crumbling edges of the Main Lake and Fountain Lake. They are held to the edge of the lakes with 1m long pegs. The Main Lake was also dredged of thousands of litres of silt. While dredging the lake contractors found several items including an industrial coffee machine, a saw, cell phones, tyres, and a trolley.

In 2014 the Park was accredited with a green flag award by the International Parks Forum and it has been awarded every year since. The award rates the management, condition and appearance of Parks, through site visits and examining of management documents.

Improvements were made to the outlets of the Main Lake and Fountain Lake. The changes made it easier and safer for staff to operate the lakes' level control outlets. A new underground pipe was also installed near the waterfall running to the Fountain Lake to improve the water flow through the Fountain Lake and improve water quality.



Extraordinary photo. A young duck surfing on the back of Boris the eel.  
*TDN*, October 10, 2012.

The Fillis Street frontage west of the main gate was redeveloped and new retaining walls were installed on Racecourse Walk in 2015. The walk was also resealed.

In 2015-16 twenty-three rubbish bins, ten entrance signs and a number of wayfinding signs made from Cor-Ten steel were installed in the Park. This steel oxidises and creates a protective layer of rust giving the items an estimated life of forty years. When installed the wayfinding signs were controversial. The letters on the signs were cut outs and when the signs had bush behind them the lack of contrast made the signs difficult to read. To fix this issue plywood painted with orange iridescent paint was fixed to the back of the words. It is the authors opinion that the larger problem is that the signs don't actually point in the right directions. The old wooden signs installed in 1998 are better in that respect.

At the beginning of 2016 Brooklands zoo got a new office building, built by ten students of the Taranaki Futures programme.

In 2017 the Gables was reroofed using 20,000 cedar shingles imported from Canada. Corrugated iron was considered, fortunately that idea was rejected. The Shortland Street entrance was developed and landscaped and the lighting on waterfall was upgraded with new LED lights.

Projects for 2018 included: A new viewing deck, external landscaping and a new tiled floor at the Tea House. Also, a new arbor frame was installed for the climbing rose (American Pillar) on the Brooklands lawn.

At the beginning of 2019 Chris Connolly resigned as curator and Kristian Davies filled the vacancy. Chris had been curator since 2007.

The Sportsground's eastern and southern terraces were fitted with new timber retaining walls, costing around \$550,000.

Charlie the sulphur-crested cockatoo died in 2020. He had been an icon in New Plymouth since 1983 when he took up residence as a pet at the Pukekura Park tea house. Charlie was moved from the tea house to Brooklands Zoo in April 2002 because he was foul mouthed.

Desilting the Park's waterways started in 2020 for the first time since 1996, using a Swedish-made dredge to suck up tonnes of rotting vegetation. The budget was \$2.45 million, to be spread over two years, using a one-person Truxor amphibious dredge that used biodegradable oil to remove sludge and separate out the water. The sludge was dried and disposed of, and the water was returned to the lakes. The desilting stopped in November 2020 for the summer at which time 6500 cubic metres had been removed. That was roughly 60% of the total estimate. Because of funding issues, the dredging was not completed.



In June 2022 a discussion document - Our Pukekura Park, Guiding the next chapter – was issued for public feedback. Projects suggested were terraced seating at the Bowl of Brooklands, a detachable platform to sit over the Bowl's lake, a new community pavilion at the Park's sports field, revamping the historical Tea House, creating an off-road commuter cycle track and an environmental hub next to the zoo.

## Curators Return

Kristian Davies resigned as curator of the Park in August 2022 and Sheryl Clyma was appointed to the role. Kristian now works as head gardener at Pukeiti.

Remedial work was necessary on the Fountain Lake dam and the outlet stream was redeveloped. The adjacent garden environs were replanted with new palms and bromeliads.

In 2024 a new Pukekura Park Reserve Management Plan was issued. The purpose of the plan is to provide strategic direction for the management of parks and reserves, and identify policies and plans for the use, enjoyment, maintenance, protection, preservation and development of parks assets. Reserve management plans are prepared with community involvement and as such are a statement of the community's expectations for the way council manages their parks and reserves.

A copy of the plan can be found on the NPDC website.

Near the end of the plan it lists some programmes to be implemented in the near future, and some programmes that are ongoing. It also lists some proposed projects to be implemented over the life of the plan and gives them a priority rating of 1 – 9 depending on their importance, necessity or complexity, 1 being the highest priority.

Programme	Description
Water Body Improvements	Ongoing interventions and maintenance to ensure the best health of the Park's lakes and streams
Pest Control	Ongoing control of pest plants, animals and diseases
Succession Planning	Ongoing replacement of mature vegetation reaching the end of its natural life and other non-thriving vegetation with species suitable for the current and future Park environment
Design Guide	A guide to ensure consistent and appropriate infrastructure and landscape development
Viewshaft Protection	Ensure selected viewshafts within Park are kept open
Lighting Upgrades	Ongoing upgrades to lighting within the Park and along pathways to improve safety and efficiency

## Project Banding

**Small-scale projects** (<\$100,000 or able to be staged over time as discrete components of this scale) that can be implemented from existing Reserve Management Plan implementation budgets allocated yearly for Pukekura Park.

**Medium projects** (\$100,000 - 1 million) that would be required to be funded through the LTP as separate projects.

**Large projects** (>\$1 million) that would be required to be funded through the LTP as separate projects.

**Partner projects** (large or small) that would only proceed with external partner funding and/or are eligible for offset funding (e.g. Waka Kotahi).

<b>Project</b>	<b>Band</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Brooklands Zoo Phases 2 - 7	Large	Renovation of animal habitats and public education spaces including playspace n.b. Phase 1 included in 2021- 2031 LTP	1
Main Dam Upgrade	Large	Upgrades to the main lake dam and spillways to meet modern safety standards and anticipated climate change effects n.b. Safety considerations with new (2022) dam guidelines	1
Bellringer Pavilion & Fillis St Upgrades	Large	Renew Bellringer Pavilion and update Fillis St entrance area including new dugout and scoreboard n.b. Bellringer replacement driven primarily by safety considerations	1
Path Network & Wayfinding Review	Small	Upgrade selected path surfaces and renew Park signage suite	2
Dedicated Cycle Route	Partner	Dedicated path for commuter cycling	2
Brooklands Enviro-Hub	Small	Development of the former Brooklands house as a community environmental and Park learning and advocacy facility for Council and community groups	3
Staff Operational Area	Large	Develop an easily accessible staff operational area for deliveries, storage of equipment and resources and works associated with the Park	4
Brooklands Entry Improvements	Medium	Update Brooklands Road entrance and Parking	5
Tea House Plaza Upgrade	Large	Upgrade the Tea House, dock and immediate surrounds to improve the overall visitor experience	6
Brooklands Terracing	Large	Increase Bowl of Brooklands capacity nearer to 20,000 and improve performer/audience connectivity	6
Lake Edge Protection	Medium	Work around lake edges to retain embankments and protect pathways	6
Fillis St Boundary Treatment	Medium	Replace existing solid boundary wall along Fillis Street with a more visually permeable option	6
Canopy Walk	Partner	Develop a canopy walk that connect the zoo to the surrounding native forest and provides educational canopy experience	7
Cannon Hill Upgrade	Medium	Upgrade Cannon Hill as a more inviting visitor location	8
Brooklands Lake Stage	Large	Increase Bowl of Brooklands capacity and create quicker and more cost effective temporary stage infrastructure over lake	8
Victoria Road Entrance	Medium	Removal of Victoria Road house and upgrades to public entry and car parking in this location	9

## Planting History

This chapter gives a brief insight into the plants of Pukekura Park. It includes plants that were added and plants that already existed in Brooklands and Maranui Gully when they were gifted to the town, both had remnants of an ancient broadleaf forest.

### Lowland Forest in the Park

Remnants of an ancient broadleaf forest exist in the Park which includes trees that may be several hundred years old. The natural forest remnant in Maranui Gully and enclosing Brooklands main lawn to the south and west is an example of lowland broadleaf forest, which at one time would have occupied most of the north Taranaki ring plain. New Zealand lowland forests have a subtropical appearance due to the presence of epiphytes, climbing lianes, tree and ground ferns, but are in fact temperate forests.

The tree species common to this forest remnant are pukatea, *Laurelia novae-zelandiae*; karaka, *Corynocarpus laevigatus*; kohekohe, *Dysoxylum spectabile*; pūriri, *Vitex lucens*; rewarewa, *Knightia excelsa*; tītoki, *Alectryon excelsus*; Tawa, *Beilschmiedia tawa*; porokaiwhiri, pigeonwood, *Hedycarya arborea*; mahoe, whitey wood, *Melicytus ramiflorus*; mamaku, *Cyathea medullaris*; pōnga, silver fern, *Cyathea dealbata*, and nīkau palm, *Rhopalostylis sapida*.

Understory and forest floor plants growing in association with these are pikopiko, hen and chicken fern, *Asplenium bulbiferum*; nini/rereti, lance fern, *Blechnum chambersii*; para, king fern, *Ptisana salicina*; hairy fern, *Lastreopsis hispida*; pākauroharoha, gully fern, *Pneumatopteris pennigera*; kamu/matau-a-māui, hook sedge, *Uncinia uncinata*; kawakawa, *Macropiper excelsum*; kanono/raurēkau, *Coprosma australis*; hangehange/whangewhange, New Zealand privet, *Geniostema ligustrifolium*, and patē/patetē, seven finger, *Schefflera digitata*.

Some of the epiphytes or perching plants include:

Ferns: huruhuruwhenua, shining spleenwort, *Asplenium oblongifolium*; petako, sickle spleenwort, *Asplenium polyodon*; mokimoki, fragrant fern, *Microsorium scandens*; kōwaowao, hounds tongue fern, *Microsorium pustulatum*; leather fern, *Pyrrosia elaeagnifolia*.

Lianes or climbers: karewao/pirita, supplejack, *Ripogonum scandens*; kiekie/tāwhara, *Freycinetia banksii*; kaihua, New Zealand jasmine, *Parsonsia heterophylla*, and akatawhiwhi, scarlet rātā, *Metrosideros fulgens*.

Perching Plants: kahakaha, perching lily, *Collospermum hastatum*, and puka, broadleaf, *Griselinia lucida*.

### Significant trees in Brookland planted before the Park took control

Spanish chestnut, *Castanea sativa*, planted at Brooklands in 1847 by Miss Brough, Lady Help of Captain Henry King RN. (This tree was regarded as the best and possibly largest of this species in the Southern Hemisphere, and was nationally notable while alive, died in 1976).

Two Norfolk Island pines, *Araucaria heterophylla*, planted at Brooklands by Captain Henry King in 1851. (These trees likely came from the 'Egmont Nursery' operated by James Laird).

The following were planted at Brooklands in 1890: walnut, *Juglans regia*; Monterey pine, *Pinus radiata*; maritime pine, *Pinus pinaster* on the Kaimata boundary of Brooklands; Monterey cypress, *Cupressus macrocarpa* (edge of the lawn by the zoo).

In 1893 the following were planted at the southern end of the Brooklands main lawn; *Magnolia x soulangeana*; rimu, *Dacrydium cupressinum*; tōtara, *Podocarpus tōtara* and tānekaha, *Phyllocladus trichomanoides*.

London plane, *Platanus x acerifolia* (Bowl of Brooklands & Rhododendron Dell); American elm, *Ulmus americana* (Brooklands & Rhododendron Dell); Rhododendrons, *Camellia japonica* varieties: 'Great Eastern' and the Chinese Tea camellia, *Camellia sinensis* and holly trees, *Ilex aquifolium* were planted circa 1898.

Giant Ginkgo - *Ginkgo biloba*, planted circa 1902 by Clement Govett in the gully below the "Maranui" homestead, after which the gully is named. The part of the Maranui gully where the ginkgo is planted is now known as List's Garden, after the third owner of the property "Maranui" Mr. T. C. List. 1901 or 1902 are the most likely dates for the planting of the Ginkgo in that Clement Govett bought the property from the original owner, James Cartwright George, in 1901 (therefore the suggested planting date of the 1880's on the current tree signage and in records, is unlikely or incorrect). Clement Govett first opened the garden to the public in December 1902.

A variety of palms were planted in 1903 including: European fan palm, *Chamaerops humilis*; Chinese windmill palm, *Trachycarpus fortunei*; Senegal date palm, *Phoenix reclinata*, also *Wisteria floribunda* 'Multijuga'.

### **Planting in Pukekura Park since 1876 and Brooklands post 1933**

When the Recreation Ground was established in 1875 the Pukekura valley was basically covered in gorse, ferns and tutu. Any trees of significance had been cut down by the early settlers and used for building or firewood. It was reported in an article (*TDN*, MARCH 3, 1924) that some of the timber for the original St Mary's church built in the 1840s came from the Pukekura valley.

The first planting in the Park was a vineyard in what is now known as Stainton Dell. German, Heinrich Breidecker leased one acre of land from the Board for this purpose.

The Board started planting in 1876. Initially they needed a layout to see where paths would be, and then they needed some areas cleared of gorse etc.

The first recorded tree planting was on the opening day of the Recreation Ground, May 29, 1876. This was performed by Miss Jane Carrington, who with the help of Board members planted; an oak, *Quercus robur*, representing the UK; pūriri, *Vitex lucens* (NZ); Norfolk Island pine, *Araucaria heterophylla* (South Pacific); Monterey pine, *Pinus radiata* (N America). All the plants for the official plantings were supplied by local nurseryman James Mitchinson. Members of the public were also invited to plant trees which included: rimu, pūriri and yew. The pūriri planted by Jane Carrington may be the pūriri behind the Bellringer Pavilion. A rimu and yew next to the path on the east side of Fountain Lake may also have been planted on the opening day.

Because the Park (Recreation Ground) was run by a Board of Trustees they had to raise money to develop the grounds which was always a struggle. They relied heavily on donations of money or plants. Presumably whatever was donated was planted and would have dictated the landscape to a large extent. In the first fifty years the vast majority of the plantings were donated. Some people such as James Mitchinson, Miss Devenish, John Wheeler, T. K. Skinner and others were regular donors.

## Planting History

In September 1876, the Board received a donation of 2000 trees and shrubs from Christchurch Botanical Garden, including - *Fraxinus*, *Ulmus*, *Castanea* and *Pinus radiata*. *Pinus radiata* were the tree that the Recreation Grounds Board planted in great numbers in the first two or three formative years of the Park. They were a great tree to provide quick shelter for the Park. It is thought that a large proportion of the trees from Christchurch were *Pinus radiata*.

In 1877 description of the Recreation Ground progress was reported as:

“We notice with pleasure that considerable improvements have been effected in the Recreation Ground. A great many trees have lately been planted there. Parallel with the northern and eastern boundary of the ground *Pinus insignis* have been planted. Some additional paths have also been formed. The furze (gorse) and fern have in some places been cleared away, and where this has been done the young trees look healthy and vigorous. Seed beds have been sown of pines in variety, as well as our own native trees.” *TH*, September 22, 1877.

In September 1877 Board member James Davis donated some Californian pines, *Wellingtonia gigantea*. Two of these trees still exist on the path from the sportsground to the Tea House.

In June 1878 the following request was placed in the Taranaki Herald:

“The planting season having arrived, the Botanical Gardens Board again solicit donations in the shape of trees, plants and shrubs from the public. Those having any to spare can communicate with Mr. Colson, Currie Street; or Mr J. T. Davis, Devon Street; when a man will be sent to collect the same.” *TH*, June 7, 1878.

At the July Board meeting it was noted that:

“It was resolved that the offer made by Mr Mitchinson of 500 shrubs at 10s per hundred be accepted, and that a pound of gum seed be procured.” Donations of Shrubs: “It was resolved that the thanks of the Board be accorded to Messrs Mitchinson, Skinner, Butterworth, L.A. Hamerton and S. Howell, for donations of shrubs; Cutting furze – It was resolved that all fern and furze be cut on the west slope, cleared off and burnt, and that 300 holes, more or less, be dug three feet wide by 18 inches deep.” *TH*, July 20, 1878.

Some of the 500 trees offered/mentioned are probably the English oaks on the western side of the main lake.

Until the 1890s the Board did not employ anyone with planting knowledge. They relied on various other people including: Board member Thomas Colson, nurserymen James Mitchinson, landscape gardener James Kidd and artist Hamar Arden to supervise planting.

In June 1881 Mitchinson made another generous offer:

“We hear that Mr. Mitchinson, of the Caledonian Nursery, has liberally offered about a thousand well grown trees and plants of various kinds to the Recreation Board, the only condition being that the Board employs an experienced man to transplant them. For want of funds it is feared this offer will be declined. Until lately the Board owed the custodian of the grounds over thirty weeks' wages, part only of which has been paid.” *TH*, June 28, 1881.

It would seem that the Board found the money to buy Mitchinson's plants:

“The Botanical Gardens Board are carrying out extensive improvements in the recreation grounds. Several hundreds of trees have been planted, and the swamp at the northeast end of the grounds has been drained preparatory to its being laid down in grass for a croquet lawn. In the course of two or three years, when the trees will have grown up, the grounds will present a charming appearance and will vie in point of excellence with any other found in the Colony.” *TH*, July 25, 1881.

During the 1881 season the Board planted 1100 trees.

There was an early exchange of plants with the Botanical Gardens in Melbourne as noted in the Herald:

“Mr. Harris Ford, the secretary of the Botanical Gardens Board, has received a valuable selection of flower and shrub seeds from the Curator of the Botanical Gardens, Melbourne. The parcel was sent in exchange for a quantity of seeds forwarded by the Board to Melbourne, and the Curator expresses the hope that the Botanical Gardens Board of New Plymouth will continue the interchange of donations.” *TH*, November 6, 1881.

Some notable donations in 1882 included: a parcel containing 17 different kinds of seeds of shrubs and trees, from Dr Hector, Wellington museum. Dr Hector had previously visited New Plymouth. Mr T. Wilson donated a number of New Zealand fern trees.

In April 1883 the Board received two packets of seeds from the government – one packet containing seeds of the eucalyptus, or blue gum, and the other of the golden wattle. The latter was being introduced by the government for the purpose of producing bark for tanning purposes. By this time the Board had a nursery somewhere in the grounds. At a Board meeting it was stated that:

“It was resolved that the trees in the nursery fit for planting out be done as soon as possible.” *TH*, July 19, 1883.

The two pūriri trees, *Vitex lucens*, by the Band Rotunda, were planted in 1883. Originally there were three, but one was removed to open up the space around the Band Rotunda.

Among the donations in 1884 were native shrubs from Mr G Oliver; pūriris, Mr. R. Wells and hollies from Mr. J. T. Davis. Hollies were one of the trees used as boundary markers. There are a few holly trees in the Park today which may have been from this donation.

In May 1885 the Board received of a selection of valuable Western Australian plants from Mr W. Luke, comprising varieties of gums, acacias, jarrahas and wattle. A packet of thirty varieties of tree seeds was also received from the government. A few weeks later it was stated that :

“With the large donation of plants, the Recreation Grounds has been enabled to lay out a new plantation. About six hundred young trees have been set on the hill above the strawberry bed.” *TH*, May 23, 1885.

The strawberry bed was in the region of the Racecourse Walk.

In September the Board received 150 pūriri from Captain Wilson and water lilies from W. L. Newman. The maritime pine, *Pinus pinaster* probably were planted around this time. From newspaper reports we also know that strawberry trees were in the Park in the mid-1880s.

In mid-1888 the Board planted a considerable number of American native trees. These had been grown from seed forwarded by the government to the Board three years earlier. This is the possible/probable source of trees such as, *Pinus torreyana*, *Cupressus macrocarpa* and *Cupressus macnabiana*. Water lilies donated by Mr Mitchinson, were planted in the Lily Pond (this lily pond was located on the site that is now Hatchery Lawn).

In 1890 the Board received camellias from Miss Devenish, Mrs Skinner Snr and Mr T Veale. This could account for some of the older camellias in the Park such as *Camellia japonica* varieties: ‘Dido’, ‘Triumphans’, and ‘Welbankiana’.

In 1891 James Kidd designed and oversaw planting of native trees in the gully leading up to the Racecourse (area now known as Stainton Dell). Kidd was a landscape gardener from Inglewood. The following Herald article is a list of 2915 trees and shrubs planted in the Stainton Dell area in September 1891, which is an amazing collection of natives:



## Planting History

“The following is a list of the varieties of native trees obtained from all parts of the Provincial District which have been planted in the Recreation Ground during September last: 115 titi or cabbage tree, 69 mountain toi, 76 manuka rauriki, 189 horoeka or lancewood, 270 tarata, 110 ramarama, 40 wharangi (puka), 142 rewarewa (honeysuckle), 175 titoki or tapitapi, 109 kawakawa, 1 ngaio, 55 kohekohe or cedards, 223 totara, 58 nikau (palm), 60 rimu, 39 kahikatea (white pine), 53 miro, 30 tainui, 12 paratawhiti (the edible fern), 20 kowhai (yellow), 12 Prince of Wales feather ferns, 1 parapara or birdlime tree, 5 mountain pines also packet of seed, 5 puka (parasite), 100 koromiko, 52 tawa, 2 rata, 14 akeake, 40 matai, 45 pukatea, 26 maire, 212 puriri, 1 stingnettle of New Zealand, 12 spear grass (wild Irishmen?), 248 shrubs from the ranges, of different varieties, 170 matipo (red birch), 125 karaka. Total 2915 native shrubs, &c. The Board have still £20 left, and in the autumn they intend to plant more shrubs in the plantation, which occupies the old strawberry bed site.” *TH*, Oct 13, 1891.

Based on the list of plants it could safely be suggested that a very small part of the plantation remains and occupies the area between the Tea House and the Fred Parker Lawn, as there are plants in this area that appear in the list that are possible/probable survivors namely, kahikatea (white pine), pukatea, and possibly a pūriri and one of the rimus. Also based on the list of plants, the plantation may have included parts of the bank on the north side of what is now Primula Dell where there are some mature kohekohe’s and pūriri’s. This planting is also the earliest recorded introduction of Para Tawhiti/King fern, into the Park.

In 1892 due to a lack of manpower the public were asked to take charge of flower beds in the grounds. Mrs Hursthouse became the first person to volunteer along with some friends, followed soon after by pupils of Central School. In June 1892 Mr G Duncan gifted a couple of Norfolk Island pines, *Araucaria heterophylla*. The Norfolk Island pine near The Poet’s Bridge may be one of those gifted. A major planting in October 1892 was a maze consisting of 3-4000 box thorn plants, *Lycium ferrocissimum*. The maze was designed/planted by Archibald Hood. It was based on the maze at Hampton Court and was somewhere south of the Boat Shed Bridge. Improvements were made to the Carrington Road entrance and lots of native shrubs were planted.

The following is extracted from a letter to the editor. The trees mentioned are possibly sycamores and oaks near Mason Drive. This is probably the first indication that not everyone was in favour of the Park being dominated by pine trees:

“The plan of getting rid of ugly and useless pinus insignis trees has been steadily kept in view, and of replacing all gaps as far as possible with native trees and ferns, while a grand avenue of deciduous trees has been planted by the side of the racecourse.” *TH*, January 21, 1893.

In May 1893 Captain Mace from Oakura offered a selection of native plants for the Recreation Grounds. He had so many seedlings of all kinds come up that he invited the Recreation Grounds Board to send out some of its members to select any they thought useful. T. K. Skinner, the Chairman of the Board and another member went there and selected many plants including hardy flowering shrubs and creepers from all parts of the world. During the season 500 hundred native plants and shrubs were planted out in the grounds supervised by Hamar Arden. In 1893 a slip from the willow tree on which the Rev, Mr Volkner was hanged by the Māoris at Opotiki was planted in the grounds. What happened to that tree is a mystery.

By May 1894 nearly 3000 native trees and shrubs had been planted out under the superintendence of Mr Arden, and a large number placed in the nursery. In June of that year the Board received a donation of Himalaya pines from Mr R. H. Gibson, also shrubs and plants collected by Mr A. Kyngdon during a visit to California and the South Seas. T. K. Skinner wrote to the Borough Council asking permission to plant a new hedge along the Fillis Street frontage running eastward from Liardet Street. Permission was sought because part of the hedge was going to be outside the Park boundary on council land. In photos taken a few years later a row of young poplar trees is clearly evident.

In April 1895, Frank Hamar Arden made a public request for donations of plants for the Recreation Ground. He suggested May would be a good time to donate as he would be in the grounds constantly during that month. He asked for the following:

Grevillea robusta, Ficus macrophylla, Lawson cypress, Norfolk Island pine, Chilian pine, Cedrus deodara, Austrian pine, Cryptomeria elegans, Silver tree, Tulip tree, Casuarina or shiok, Paulownia, Camphor laurel, Olive, Plane, Balbrogia lucida, Retinosporas (any variety), Magnolias, Rhododendrons, Alder, Mountain ash, Tamarisk, Yucca, Fan palm or Kentia palm; Washington palm; and any native trees not too large, especially – Honeysuckle, Hinau, Rimu, Fern trees, Lacebark, Wharangi, Mountain toi, Pittosporum trifolium, Nikau. *TH*, April 23, 1895.

This year has been attributed as the accession date of the Park's Moreton Bay fig based on this request.

In late June 1895 the Taranaki Jockey Club gifted a piece of land at the back of the grandstand to the Recreation Grounds Board to be an addition to the Park. The land that was gifted is situated on the eastern side of the main lake serpentine and runs southward from the Boat Shed back to the stream from the Bowl Lake and up to the top of the ridge where it borders the pony paddock at the back of the Stadium. The land, according to a report in the Taranaki Herald had a remnant of bush growing on it and you can still see evidence of that remnant with examples of mature pukatea, tawa, tītoki, and rewarewa, plus many supplejack vines, however, the majority of the site was bare. It became the site for the first Arbor Day planting in the Park that took place under the direction of the Scenery Preservation Society.

There was a second Arbor Day planting in the Park in August 1896. It was a continuation of the project started in 1895. Two hundred trees were planted on the day. When you walk the track that runs across the middle of this slope you will see some large pūriri trees on the edges of the track, it is probable given their size that they were part of one or other of the two Arbor Day plantings on this site. There are also a few larger karaka trees that may have been planted at this event. In July 1896 the Board sent the custodian (Charles Edgecombe) to collect plants, as recorded by the Herald:

“The custodian reported on the work during the month, which consisted principally of planting out. The Board decided to give effect to the suggestion of the custodian to work a couple of days at Ratanui for the collection of native trees and shrubs. An express will be employed to bring the collection to the Grounds. Mr N. King was thanked for his donation of native shrubs from Brooklands.” *TH*, July 6, 1896.

In September the following was reported:

“The Custodians report was read and discussed. The report stated that during the month some 300 native plants had been set in the nursery bed – 200 from the Meeting of the Waters and the balance from Brooklands. The overseer was glad to say that all these are looking well, owing to the puddling treatment, not one of them having turned a hair. About 50 trees of a larger growth were planted out during the month.” *TH*, September 7, 1896.

In October, T. K. Skinner made a donation of 578 native trees for planting in the nursery.

The Board received over 2,000 native trees and shrubs in 1898 which were planted out in nurseries around the grounds.

The Board created Manhattan Island in 1899, at the southern end of the main lake. It was a part of the lake that was shallow and filled with raupo. The island was planted with native plants using stock from the nurseries in the grounds. Later in the year the curator was sent to Ngāti Maru country (Tarata area) to collect native trees and shrubs some of which were planted on the island.

## Planting History

Edgecombe was sent to Raglan in July 1901 to collect plants. He returned with mangeao, tānekaha, and wharangi. He also collected some specimens of native heath and umbrella fern together with a quantity of kōwhai and mānuka seed. Following one of the Board members' visits to Sydney, the Board received several roots of *Pontederia crassipes* from the director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens. In September 1901 it was noted that some of the kōwhai were blooming. Twenty kōwhai had been planted in the grounds in 1891.

The Board was gifted a valuable package of assorted seeds of African flowering shrubs from the Natal Botanic Gardens in 1902, courtesy Murdoch Fraser of Burgess Fraser Co, who had been in South Africa on a working holiday. Some of the trees flowering in the grounds in 1902 included; New Zealand ribbonwood, koromiko and Australian red gum trees.

More seeds from overseas arrived in 1903. T. K. Skinner gifted seeds of a varied collection of flowering shrubs and plants collected en route from Colombo to Vancouver.

In July 1905 the secretary was instructed to arrange an exchange of shrubs with the Ashburton Domain Board. At that time, Board member Percy Smith was heading the Scenery Preservation Commission. Fellow commissioner W. W. Smith who became Pukekura Park's curator in 1908 spent ten years setting up Ashburton Domain around the turn of the century which probably accounts for this exchange.

Some of the trees planted in 1906 by curator Robert Mace, which may well have been a first stage planting of Tōtara Hillside, were noted in the Herald:

“The Custodian of the Recreation Grounds has reported to the Chairman the planting out of the following shrubs during the season just ended; Kahikatea 130, Totara 200, Ramarama 40, Rimu 30, Hinau 8, Maire 10, Kowhai 20, Manuka 50, Tawhiri 20, Tarata 15, Rata 6, Lacebark 10, Koromiko 15, Matipou 10, Miscellaneous native shrubs, 16 sorts, 151, Tree Ferns 40, Paratawhiti Fern 10, Mountain Toi 22, Tree flax 12, Flax various 50, Ribbon Grass 15, Australian Gums 10, Arum Lily (clumps) 130; also 2200 young native trees planted in the nurseries.” *TH*, September 28, 1906.

The Board was busy in 1907 as can be seen from the following report:

“During the planting season just ended, Mr Mace the custodian of the Recreation Grounds and his assistant have set out in permanent positions a total of 540 trees and shrubs. These comprise 250 in connection with the new entrance from Gilbert Street, 50 at the John Street entrance, 130 in the newly designed belt along the Carrington Street frontage and 110 in other parts of the Grounds. As the result of Mr Edgecombe's recent expedition to Raglan-Wiatetuna country 390 trees, shrubs and other plants have been transferred to the Grounds, mostly in the nurseries. These comprise about twelve sorts of trees not met with in Taranaki, including some fine celery-topped pines. These trees number altogether about 340. There are 45 ferns of new sorts and 5 native tois or grasses.” *TH*, September 19, 1907.

Many of the plants for the Carrington Street frontage were donated by Mr. R. Davies, brother of Victor Davies from Duncan and Davies.

W. W. Smith came to the Park at the beginning of 1908. He was well known around the country as a botanist, ornithologist and entomologist. The Park seems to have benefitted from his fame as they were inundated with plant donations.

Donations included: 75 *Prunus pseudo-cerasus*, Japanese flowering cherries of 12 different varieties, *Rhododendron ponticum* 'Alba', *Genista andreana* (red and yellow flowered broom), *Adiantum formosum*, *Asphinium culliformu*, *Lomaria lucida*, *Clematis afoleata*, *Exichondra sp*, *Helianthus florepleno*, *Oxalis alba*, *Frinkia subcordata*, *Heuchera alba*, *Cineraria maritima*, *Cineraria hybrids*, *Bignonia glandra*, *Dracophyllum longifolium*, *Sericio laxifolino* (*Senecio laxifolia*), *Convallaria maplis* (majalis), *Akebia japonica*, bags of mixed bulbs including (narcissus, *Lilium grandiflorum*, gladioli), *Alstroemeria*, *Kerria japonica*, flax plants,

herbaceous plants and shrubs, Australian plant seeds, a collection of native plants from Stony River, rare olearias, pomegranate plants, cactus dahlias, lilies and amaryllis.

Also a collection of native plants procured by Mr R. Davies from the Coromandel ranges near Paeroa, on behalf of Mr S. Percy-Smith was presented to the Park. A new nursery was established for receipt of the plants – The collection included about 20 species new to the Park.

The first major planting of Smith's was reported in July 1908:

“that all the 380 plants in the old nursery have been planted out. The young totaras were planted on totara hill, while the remainder were planted on the banks of the new extension of the upper lake and on the island therein. The work of cleaning the large island at the head of the upper lake (Manhattan Island), and converting it into a large fernery composed of only native ferns is progressing as rapidly as the weather will permit.”  
*TH*, July 4, 1908.

Later in the year Smith accompanied by several gentlemen, visited the terminus of the Mount Egmont railway line, and obtained a large collection of native trees and shrubs which were planted out in the Park. It is clear that W.W. Smith made a huge impact on his arrival to New Plymouth. Smith also started developing a large flax bed in the vicinity of Palm Lawn.

The first kauri was planted in the Park in 1909. It was originally planted near the site of the current Teahouse and relocated to its present site at the base of Monument Hillside in 1911. Smith now focussed his attention on the new Gilbert Street entrance including the banks of the stream. It is interesting to note that when the public became aware of this work, they donated many plants specifically for that area. Taking a walk down Smith Walk today, many of the trees there would have been planted around 1909. The other area Smith started developing that year was the swampy land between the tea house and the Fernery.

In 1910 the spread of noxious weeds was highlighted as a problem, especially for farmers. As a response W. W. Smith offered to mount and name specimens of any plants farmers give him. His idea was to assist in checking the spread of noxious weeds. Smith continued developing the area near the Gilbert Street entrance including the flax bed, which ended up with more than 40 varieties. He also planted groups of camellias and azaleas. It is thought that camellia japonica ‘Pukekura’ that is growing near the Bellringer Pavilion was planted at this time.

W. W. Smith and Board member Percy Smith had spent three years as colleagues on the government's Scenery Preservation Commission from 1904 – 1906 and this gave them certain privileges. They went on a plant collecting trip together in 1910 reported by the Herald:

“Permission had been obtained to visit Government reserves, from which to procure shrubs. Mr S. Percy Smith's offer to assist in this work was gratefully accepted by the board. Mr. Smith mentioned that he had special Ministerial authority to visit certain Crown reserves for the purpose of securing specimen trees. *TH*, May 3, 1910.

Many more donations of plants were received. Three Raby brothers who were farming at Rerekepa collected native plants and on more than one occasion brought them to the Park by coach or horseback free of charge. Being encouraged by the Raby brothers Smith made the following plea:

“I would here remark that, like the Brothers Raby, all young men working in the native bush have exceptional opportunities for obtaining young native plants and seeds. As we require some thousands of young trees and shrubs for planting in the Park at the present time, I may be permitted to request those who have such opportunities to send us such for the improvement and beautification of the Park.” *TDN*, July 5, 1910.

Percy Smith asked R. W. Davies to collect native plants while he was on a trip to Raglan and Hokianga in July 1910. Davies brought back 15 different varieties of plants (216 plants in all), some of which were new to the Park.

## Planting History

In July 1911 C. E. Bellringer donated a collection of roses which prompted Smith to create a rose garden. It was planted in what is now known as Palm Lawn. Later in the year he reported that he had planted out 400 native trees some of which had been donated by Mr. Raby, of Rerekapa. (Rerekapa, is located in the Moki track area).

The theft of plants was an issue. Many roses were stolen, and it was noted in 1912 that two young rare Mexican Agaves were taken. However, plant donations continued to flood in, including dozens of roses and three seven-foot standard weeping ash trees donated by John Wheeler. An interesting donation came in November 1912 reported in the TDN:

“The Pukekura Park Board has secured a number of fine specimens of the Para Tawhiti, commonly known as the horseshoe fern. Mr. S Percy-Smith says that this species of fern was probably introduced into New Zealand by the natives when they migrated here. They were, he thinks originally called “Para,” at Tawhiti, but were designated Para Tawhiti in New Zealand, meaning “the Para of Tawhiti.” This particular fern is fast becoming extinct, and the board thought it would be wise to secure some specimens before it completely died out. At its meeting last night a vote of thanks was accorded Messrs. Sole Bros., who secured the ferns from the natives.”  
*TDN*, November 5, 1912.

This gift of king ferns may be the nucleus of the current King Fern Gully/Dell.

Some of the donations in 1913 included; Mr. H. Nicholson, of Maryborough, Queensland plant seed; Mr. O. Hoby, of a variety of seeds of African plants and flowering shrubs procured from the curator of the public gardens, Bulawayo, South Rhodesia; Native plants from Tolaga Bay plus many more plants from New Zealand.

In an update at the 1914 AGM Smith said:

“The beds on the lawn and the rose bed had made vigorous growth during the year. The flax bed contained 34 varieties of native flax, all flourishing well. All the Senecios and Olearias received from Kaitaia in the far north, and those from an altitude of 3000 to 5000 feet on the mountains of the West Coast of the South Island, and from the Chatham Islands had flourished vigorously side by side.” *TH*, May 19, 1914.

Smith started developing Sunken Dell in 1914. The stream running through it was widened and two dozen tree ferns, using four species were planted on the banks of the dell. A lawn was also sown in the dell. Some of the donations in 1914 included; Mr K. Webster, Oregon pine (Douglas Fir) and white pine seed, obtained from a lumberman in the United States of America; Mr. A. Coxhead, of Tongapōrutu, parcel of native plants and native tree seeds; Miss Devenish, collection of azaleas including azalea mollis; Mr. Morshead, fine collection of bulbs; Mr. Arthur Cox, of Tongapōrutu, packets of seeds; Mr. Cock, three dozen tree ferns, comprising three species. Nine were 3ft in height, and the others smaller, but all are very healthy plants; Mr Hanrecht, of Taumarunui, package of royal fern and other plants; Mr. Wm. Arthur, parcel of trees and shrubs from the mountain; Mr W. T. Adams, of Greendale, Canterbury, sent ten packets of American tree seeds.

In 1915, the black beech, *Nothofagus solandri*, at the entrance to Fountain Lake was planted. It was donated to the Park by Mr Morshead, a New Plymouth nurseryman.

The collection of roses was bolstered further in 1915 with a donation of 10 plants from Duncan & Davies. They also donated another 180 trees and shrubs at the same time, which probably included the Judas tree, *Cercis siliquastrum*, which is a standout feature specimen and the parapara or bird catcher tree, *Pisonia brunoniana*, that also used to grow at Palm Lawn. Other plants donated included, kourcroya (*Furcraea foetida*), new varieties of native flax, six new species of water lilies and seeds from the Agricultural Department, Hawaii.

A note from 1915 mentioned the removal of several pine trees, cut up for firewood.

In 1916 there was a native tree planting near the John Street entrance (Horton Walk). Donations that year included; Garden seeds from the curator of the Public Gardens at Colombo (Ceylon); trees and seeds from Paraguay; plant seeds by exchange from the Botanic Gardens of Calcutta; box of New Zealand orchids collected in the Ruahine bush and, Australian plant seeds brought back from New South Wales by Mr. C. List.

The first palms in Palm Lawn were planted in 1917. They were supplied by Clement Wragge of Auckland. In 1916 Wragge had visited New Plymouth as part of a speaking tour and had commented on the fact that Pukekura Park would benefit from a planting of palm trees. The Board must have heeded his advice and ordered some from him. Wragge owned Waiata Subtropical Gardens which was a well-known visitor attraction. It is believed there are four trees from that planting that still survive in the Park. Two cabbage-tree palms, *Livistona australis*; one kentia palm, *Howea forsteriana* and one cliff date palm, *Phoenix rupicola*. A rose pergola was constructed near the sportsground. Nurseryman, Mr Morshead donated 16 climbing roses for it.

Donations received during 1917 included, some well grown plants, natives of the Chatham Islands, native plant seeds from Ohakune, packets of seed from Christchurch and a parcel of seeds from the Mōkau district.

Work carried out in 1918 included clearing the front of Cannon Hill and planting it with tree ferns and rarer native plants and planting out the west side of Cannon Hill. The Board decided to make a fernery which Smith prepared. He then visited Whangamōmona and found rare specimens of native ferns to plant. At the time it was thought that there were about sixty-four native ferns in Taranaki and about a half of these could be found in the Park.

In April 1919 it was reported that:

“There is at present to be seen at Pukekura Park the rare sight of banana trees in bloom. These are not the ordinary fruiting variety, but belong to the Abyssinian kind, which grow in great profusion in the vicinity of the Nile. Those in the Park have been grown from seed, which was planted about seven years ago. The blooms which three of the trees have thrown are really magnificent specimens. The trees are now twelve feet in height and are situated just north of the lower lake. Some Fijian bananas were planted, but the severity of the past winter killed them.” *TH*, April 3, 1919.

Donations received in 1919 included: seeds of rare Japanese trees; seeds of Australian gum trees; native plant seeds, which were sown in the bush on the east side of the upper lake; seeds of quintonia; ferns from the Bay of Islands and six new varieties of hydrangeas.

In 1920 a box hedge around the main lake was removed. The banks of the lakes were replanted with tree ferns and flowering cherries. Donations included: flowering shrubs; azaleas; collection of trees and a hundred young fan palms; dozen hydrangeas; bulbs and dahlia tubers.

Between 1920 and 1924 the Park was without a proper curator and very little planting was done. However, Charles Score Sanders planted a rhododendron dell in 1922, in what is now Primula Dell. He planted 70 varieties of rhododendrons which he supplied at no cost to the Park. A bed of Japanese irises donated by Newton King were planted near the new rhododendron dell.

Thomas Horton arrived in the second half of 1924. One of the first things he did was plant out a thousand young trees in a nursery, nearly all of these were natives. His other task was to clear the area around the site of the new fernery, removing all large trees that may cause problems. 38 pines, 18 oak and sycamore were removed. About 300 trees and plants were replanted in some of the cleared area. This planting included the avenue of kauri, rimu and tōtara that are either side of Horton Walk. Some of these trees and plants were donated by Francis Morshead, Duncan & Davies and Mr. Bridgeman.

A weeping elm was donated by John Wheeler, of Vogeltown. It was planted on Huges Walk at the junction where the waterfall is today. The tree was subsequently relocated to the Band Room Lawn in 1969 when the waterfall was built.

## Planting History

In 1925 Horton planted the Gilbert Street frontage. This part of Gilbert Street had just been reclaimed. Until 1922 there was a 10m deep gully across Gilbert Street that the Pukekura stream ran through. kōwhai, tōtara, rimu, karaka, cabbage tree, miro, rewarewa and holly were included in this planting many of which still exist today. Pōhutukawas were planted on the John Street (Horton Walk) extension and a *Camellia japonica* was planted next to *Sequoiadendron giganteum* near old curator's office. Other plantings during the year included, *Asplenium tenibrosum sanderii*, *Pteris comans*(very rare), *Colensoa sinclairii* and *Melicope ternata* var. *mantellii* (Chatham Islands).

Some pōhutukawa's were planted on the eastern side of the Sports Ground in 1926 as well as coastal redwood, *Sequoia sempervirens* on Cannon Hill, donated by F. Cowling. The Norfolk Island hibiscus, *Lagunaria pattersonii* and tulip tree, *Liriodendron tulipifera* near the pavilion were probably planted in 1926. The major development this year was the beginning of construction of the Fernery. Collecting ferns was ramped up as it was the intention to have as many different types as possible. Fortunately, many people got involved and sent plants from all over the country.

The main focus of 1927 was the planting of ferns in the Fernery, which started in June. By August 1071 ferns had been put in. As the Fernery was constructed the Fred Parker Lawn and Stainton Dell areas were developed and landscaped. A Japanese maple donated by Mr Aldridge was planted at Fred Parker Lawn. The Stainton Dell lower pond islands were planted with rimu, kauri and Hall's tōtara. *Dicksonia fibrosa* tree ferns from Tarata were planted around the Stainton Dell pond and a canna lily bed was planted on the Fred Parker Lawn.

The Fernery was opened in January 1928 at which time it had over two thousand ferns of one hundred and fifty varieties. There were also a lot of begonias in the Fernery occupying spaces reserved for more ferns. Other plants in the Fernery included bouvardias, cinerarias, calceolarias, trailing lobelia, gloxinia and primulas. More ferns came in during the year and in September it was noted that:

“The fern collection now comprised 112 recognised species and varieties, besides many local variations of the types which had been collected and sent in by interested collectors.” TDN, September 20, 1928.

Following is a list of ferns established in the Fernery by September 1928

Ref: The Magazine of the Friends of Pukekura Park, June 2009, page 3.

*Hymenophyllum sanguinolentum*, *villosum*, *australe*, *pulcherrimum*, *dilatatum*, *demissum*, *flabellatum*; *Trichomanes reniforme*, *venosum*, *strictum*, *elongatum*; *Loxosoma cunninghamii*; *Dicksonia squarrosa*, *fibrosa*, *lanata*; *Cyathea dealbata*, *medullaris*, *cunninghamii*; *Hemitelia smithii*; *Polystichum sylvaticum*, *richardi*, *cystostegia*, *hispidum*, *adiantiforme*; *Dryopteris decomposita*, *glabella*, *velutina*, *punctata*, *pennigera*, *parasitica*, *gongylodes*; *Nephrolepis cordifolia*, *exaltata*; *Leptolepia novae-zealandiae*; *Davallia tasmani*; *Lindsaya linearis*, *viridis*, *cuneata*, *cuneata* var. *lessonii*; *Athyrium umbrosum*; *Diplazium japonicum*; *Asplenium flabellifolium*, *trichomanes*, *adiantoides*, *obtusatum*, *lucidum*, *lucidum* var. *obliquum*, *scleroprium*, *anomodum*, *hookerianum*, *hookerianum* var. *colensoi*, *bulbiferum*, *bulbiferum* var. *laxum*, *bulbiferum* var. *tripinnatum*, *richardi*, *flaccidum*; *Blechnum patersoni*, *discolor*, *vulcanicum*, *norfolkianum*, *lanceolatum*, *banksii*, *penna-marina*, *capense*, *filiforme*, *nigrum*, *fluviatile*, *fraseri*; *Doodia media*, *caudata*; *Pellaea falcata*, *rotundifolia*; *Nothochlaena distans*; *Cheilanthes tenuifolia*, *sieberi*; *Hypolepis tenuifolia*, *millefolium*, *distans*; *Adiantum aethiopicum*, *diaphanum*, *diaphanum* var. *polymorphum*, *hispidulum*, *formosum*, *affine*, *fulvum*; *Pteris tremula*, *comans*, *macilenta*, *macilenta* var. *pendula*, *macilenta* var. *saxatilis*; *Histiopteris incisa*; *Pteridium aquilinum*; *Paesia scaberula*; *Polypodium billardieri*, *grammitidis*, *dictyopteris*, *pustulatum*, *novae-zealandiae*; *Cyclophorus serpens*; *Gleichenia circinata*, *dicarpa*, *cunninghamii*, *flabellata*; *Schizaea fistulosa*, *dichotoma*; *Lygodium articulatum*; *Todea barbara*; *Leptopteris hymenophylloides*, *superba*; *Marattia fraxinea*; *Botrychium australe*, *australe* var. *millefolium*.

Donations in 1928 included: 10 varieties of metrosideros and a large banana tree.

In 1929 a rockery was made outside the Fernery entrance, including the *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Nana Aurea'. Many of the plants for the rockery came from Mr & Mrs Wheeler. Some rhododendrons were added to the dell, sourced by Thomas Horton on his 1928 visit to the UK as part of the NZ bowls team. The plants came from the old nursery firm Waterer & Son's. The kauri tree in the Fred Parker Lawn was planted on October 17, 1929, by the Mayor, H. V. S. Griffith's, to commemorate handover of the administrative control and title deeds of the Park from the "Pukekura Park Board" to the New Plymouth Borough Council. Forty-seven pōhutukawas were planted in the region of the Rogan Steet Car Park and more were planted near the sportsground. Horton also planted another 800 pōhutukawas in a nursery.

When the Victoria Road curator's house was built in 1930, six old pine trees were removed from the hillside below. The gap was filled with the following list of trees published in the Taranaki Herald on October 2, 1931:

One *Ackama rosaefolia* (Makamaka), one *Alectryon excelsum* (Titoki), one *Aristotelia racemosa* (Makomako), three *Brachyglottis rangiora* (Rangiora), one *Clianthus puniceus alba*, three *Coprosma baueri* (Taupata), six *Coprosma robusta* (Karamu), two *Cordyline australis* (Cabbage tree), two *Correa alba*, one *Corokia lineata*, one *Corokia buddleoides*, four *Corynocarpus laevigata* (Karakas), one *Dacrydium colensoi* (Silver pine), two *Dacrydium cupressinum* (Rimu), one *Dacrydium intermedium* (Mountain Pine), one *Dracophyllum strictum* (Nei-nei), one *Fuchsia excorticata purpurea*, one *Helichrysum glomeratum*, three *Hoheria populnea* (Houhere), three *Leptospermum nichollisii*, one *Libocedrus bidwillii* (Pahautea), six *Macropiper excelsum* (Kawakawa), one *Melicytus lanceolatus* (Mahoewhau), one *Melicytus simplex*, one *Melicytus micranthus*, two *Myrtus bullata* (Ramarama), two *Myrtus obcordata* (Rohutu), two *Myrtus obcordata* 'Purpurea', six *Nothopanax arborea* (Five-finger), three *Olearia greyii*, two *Olearia nitida*, one *Olearia haastii*, one *Olearia ilicifolia*, two *Olearia oleifolia*, one *Panax daviesii*, one *Phebalium nudum* (Mairehau), one *Phyllocladus alpinus* (Toatoa), one *Phyllocladus glaucus*, two *Phyllocladus trichomanoides* (Tanekaha), one *Pisonia brunoniana*, one *Pimelia decubata* (Taranga), one *Pittosporum crassifolium* (Karo), six *Pittosporum eugenoides* (Tarata), one *Pittosporum dallii*, one *Pittosporum nigrescens*, one *Podocarpus totara*, one *Pomaderris apetala* (Tainui), one *Pomaderris rugosa*, three *Pseudopanax crassifolium* (Lancewood), one *Pseudopanax discolor*, one *Pseudopanax ferox*, one *Pseudopanax lessonii* (Houpara), one *Quintinia serrata* (Tawheowheo), one *Rhopalostylis sapida* (Nikau), two *Senecio greyii*, two *Senecio rotundifolia*, one *Senecio bidwillii*, one *Senecio remotifolius*, one *Sideroxylon costata*, one *Senecio buchananii*, one *Meryta sinclairii* (Puka), ten *Sophora tetraptera* (Kowhai), twenty-two *Cyathea medullaris* (Mamaku), six *Dicksonia fibrosa* (Weki-ponga). Total, 146. The following exotic trees and plants are planted amongst the above: Three *Fagus purpurea* (Copper Beech), one *Waratah*, one *Koelreuteria paniculata*, one *Banksia menziesii*, two *Thuja gigantea*, one *Chamaerops excelsa*, one *Musa ensete*, one *Retinospora obtusa*, one *Retinospora crrippsii aurea*. These make the total 158 trees on this open face, besides a few ornamental and flowering shrubs.

Other planting in 1930 included: pōhutukawa's and assorted natives along the Brooklands Road boundary of the Park following the removal of pines. Planting of the tōtara hedge, sequoia near the old Croquet green. Also, *Thuja gigantea*, kauri and pōhutukawa along Rogan Street behind Stainton Dell.

In 1931 Horton turned his attention to King Fern Gully and the hill at the top of the gully (Claffey Walk). The gully which was basically a raupo swamp was cleared. The hill above was planted with many trees including pōhutukawas and karakas. The site of the old cottage, which was also the site of Carrington Road Redoubt was planted with seventy assorted trees and one hundred tōtara (for a hedge). The hedge is on Victoria Road north of 25 Victoria Road. Eighty hydrangeas comprising about 40 varieties were planted around Stainton Dell. Hydrangeas are still a feature there today. Horton reported that five-hundred native trees had been planted out in August.



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A list of exotic trees growing in the Park was published in October 1931:

“318 pinus insignis, 35 cupressus macrocarpa, 60 English oaks, 60 sycamore, 18 European silver birch, 12 poplars, 60 Japanese cherries, 150 benthamia fragrifera, 5 wellingtonia gigantea, 5 criptomera japonica, 30 sequoia sempervirens, 6 cupressus lawsoniana, 10 English ash, cypress of sorts including guberniana, knightiana, menabiana, and horizontatis, thuja gigantea, alder, plane, copper beech, Oregon pine, evergreen oak, salisburia adiantifolia, scarlet oak, maple, paulonia imperialis, acacias of sorts, English yew, lauris nobites, English laurel, Canadian catalpa, and several others. A total of 997 exotic trees.” *TH*, October 1, 1931.

Notable planting in 1932 included; the planting of twenty two mainly native trees on the site of the original curator’s cottage (near No. 25 Victoria Road) as a way to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the formation of the Girl Guide movement; Planting of a shelter belt of *Quercus ilex* alongside the croquet green and tennis courts on Victoria Road; Planting of trees on the old maze site; Planting the area directly behind the teahouse with native trees; The planting of forty King ferns in King Fern Gully; Planting of tall growing conifers on hill tops with varieties such as, *Araucaria heterophylla*, *Calocedrus decurrens*, *Cupressus macrocarpa* ‘Aurea’ and *Pinus nigra* subsp. laricio (Monument Hill, Eastern Hillside, Claffey Walk, Victoria Road); Planting on the brow of the hill above the rhododendrons and azaleas (Stainton Dell), 100 tōtaras, 86 coprosma and 15 assorted native trees. During the year approximately nine hundred trees were planted.

A newspaper article described the Rhododendron Dell as follows:

The rhododendron dell in Pukekura Park, situated towards the racecourse from the fernery, is very beautiful at present, and is well worth a visit. Most of the rhododendron bushes are in flower. In about three weeks, it is stated, the dell will be at its best, with almost every bush in full flower. With 135 bushes, comprising 110 varieties, nearly all of slightly different shades and all in half an acre of ground, it can well be imagined that the dell will indeed be a glorious sight. Some of the bushes are in full flower. In particular, there are two large white bushes of the Alba Grandiflora variety. It is seven years since work in the Rhododendron Dell was commenced. Half the dell was then planted but it was not until three years ago that the work was completed. In 1928, Mr. Horton made a trip to England and during his visit procured many rare varieties of rhododendron. Countess of Haddington (shell pink), Pink Perle (deep pink), White Perle (white), George Hardy (a glorified White Perle, a new and rare variety) are some of those purchased by Mr. Horton and just now coming to bloom. The dell is Mr. Horton’s own special charge and is seldom touched by other members of the staff. *TDN*, October 6, 1932.

The main plantings in 1933 included; a pōhutukawa hedge along the eastern boundary of Fillis Street; Planting of kauri trees in the Fillis Street Gully Botanical Reserve (Kindergarten Gully) and pōhutukawas on the ridge top to the east of the Sports Ground; the Fountain Lake island was planted with tree ferns and azaleas donated by Duncan & Davies. Seventy pungas were planted in the gaps around Fountain Lake and the Lily Pond after they had been desilted.

A highlight of 1934 was the planting of a kauri, *Agathis australis*, at the south end of what is now Hatchery Lawn on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April by Mr R. C. Hughes, to commemorate his 60 years of service to the Park on the Park committee. Unfortunately, the tree died in the mid-1950s due to the wet nature of the site. The planting of the present-day Rhododendron Dell was started in 1934 and completed over the next two years.

Brooklands became part of the Park in 1934 and Horton didn’t waste any time in planting a shelter belt on the western boundary of Brooklands. He planted 925 trees which included 250 cupressus lawsoniana, 340 assorted native, 35 thuja gigantea, 200 macrocarpa and 100 pōhutukawa.

In 1935, 500 macrocarpa were planted in Brooklands as shelter trees and 200 lawsoniana were planted as shelter trees in Maranui Gully.

## Fillis Street Botanical Reserve

In 1931 Thomas Horton identified the Fillis Street gully as an area to develop a complete collection of native trees. Clearing started in 1931 and was ready for planting by November 1932. The go-ahead to start planting was given in April 1934 and planting started September with some plants being put in temporary beds. In September 1935 Horton noted:

“ self, Arthur planting trees in Fillis St gully & nursery, Kauris etc”. Horton’s Diary 2-4 Sept 1935.

A few days later he reported that the collection of rare Native trees presented had been planted in their permanent position in the Fillis Street gully, after having been in the nursery for a year. In February 1936, it was noted that:

“In the Fillis Street Botanic Reserve 96 trees, mostly rare varieties of natives, and forming the nucleus of a botanic collection, have already been planted. These trees have mainly been donated to the committee exclusively for this purpose. The plan calls for the planting of a further 850 native trees in this section.” TH, February 26, 1936.

The trees planted were on the east side of the gully. Planting was paused because it was considered not advisable to further plant the Fillis Street gully while a row of pines (*Pinus radiata*) was still existent along the top of its western side. There were 14 pines along the west edge of the gully which were eventually removed around September 1936. Planting resumed in April 1937. In August 1937 Horton reported that during the recent planting season, 650 native trees were planted in the new botanic reserve at Fillis Street.

In 1940 Horton gave a summary of the Fillis Street reserve planting:

“The planting of this reserve was started in 1935 and completed last year. The area comprises approximately four acres and is set apart as a botanical reserve for native trees and plants. Here we have planted not less than two each of all native trees, but the collection does not include alpine, rockery and bog plants. There are about 1200 trees and over 200 varieties. These trees are doing well. Cultivation has now ceased. When these trees have sufficiently developed, it is proposed to make suitable paths through them to give easy access to every part, and also attach name plates to all the trees. It will be essential to provide a suitable entrance to the reserve from Fillis Street. These matters need not be done immediately but must not be overlooked; probably the work should be done in about three years’ time.” TH, May 15, 1940.

Unfortunately, the work necessary to maintain and fully develop the Fillis Street reserve was not done. Several of the Park’s staff went off to serve their country during the war. This caused the Park to decline during the 1940s. This area in particular suffered badly from a lack of attention and never recovered. Today only a small number of the trees remain from this plantation.

## Kauri Grove

At the Park committee meeting in May 1935 the question of the ultimate use of Brooklands land at the rear of the cottages was discussed. It was decided to obtain a report from Horton on the advisability of planting the whole area in native major trees. Horton presented a report at the Park’s committee meeting on 13/8/1935, stating:

“There is a very large area (from 30 to 40 acres) of native bush in Pukekura Park, comprising mostly all those dwarf and medium growing varieties such as are common in the native bush of this coast, and growing amongst them are only a few of the principal timber trees. We have practically every variety of timber tree, but only in small numbers, and there are more kohekohe than any other variety. The idea of planting an area in all our best timber trees is an excellent one in my opinion, and I strongly urge that it be done, especially in view of the fact that every variety does well in the Park and no experimental planting will be necessary. There is no doubt that a plantation such as this would be of intense interest to generations to come. I do not know of any area embracing these varieties ever having been planted in any part of the Dominion before. You will notice that in my list of trees given below I have suggested more than double the number of kauris than any other variety. My reason for this is that, although this tree does not grow naturally south of the Auckland province, those that have been

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planted here have done remarkably well. Considering all the facts, I have no hesitation in recommending that kauris be made the special feature of the new plantation if the scheme is adopted. After a careful survey of all the Park lands, I find that an area fronting Brooklands Road would be the most suitable site. This area is eminently suitable for such a project and could be prepared for planting in 1936.” *TH*, August 14, 1935.

Horton’s proposal was for - 250 each of white pine, tōtara, rimu, mataī, pūriri; 125 each of birch, hīnau, maire, kohekohe, yellow pine, miro; 625 of kauri. A total of 2750 to be planted out in 22 rows each of 125 trees. Also 200 lawsoniana for shelter.

The Board members visited the proposed site in September 1935. The scheme was given their full approval, but they wanted a larger area planted than Horton was proposing.

Fencing and other preparatory work started in April 1936. Fencing was necessary as the proposed plantation bordered private property. Preparation for planting the new forest reserve was the principal work being done when the Board met in June. Horton reported that a good deal of draining had been required to get water off low-lying portions, and there was still much grubbing, digging, and fencing to be done. At the July committee meeting Horton advised that most of the first section of the scheme would be ready for planting the following week. Part of the boundary fence between Brooklands and adjoining private properties had been erected through the centre of a very wet, swampy area which it had been necessary to drain.

The first trees were planted in the new forest plantation on August 5, 1936, which was Arbor Day. Further plantings took place there throughout August. Horton reported to the Park Board at its September meeting that planting of the new native forest area had been completed. We learn from his work diary, under 9/9/1936, that the following 2245 trees had been planted:

“350 Kauri; 50 Titoki; 50 Taraire; 100 Rimu; 25 Hinau; 25 Porokaiwhiri; 25 Rewarewa; 25 Pukatea; 50 Mangaeho; 200 Pohutukawa; 200 Ngaio; 100 Red Beech; 50 Silver Beech; 25 Maire; 10 Toru; 50 Tanekaha; 200 White Pine; 100 Matai; 150 Totara; 50 Tawapou; 200 Kowhai; 10 Puriri; 25 Towai; 100 Lawsoniana; 75 Thuja plicata”. Horton’s Diary, September 9, 1936.

The Borough Council was so pleased with the project that it voted £500 towards the expense, to be spread over four years. A gift of £250 towards the carrying out of the work was made by the Bruce Trust. Trees to the value of £106/15/- were planted, of which the Park nursery supplied plants to the value of £43/5/-. The total cost of labour, trees and fencing was approximately £300. All the swamp area which was drained early in the winter months was dug and planted in white pines. On the high range above the plantation a row of pōhutukawa trees was planted to make the eastern shelter belt. Lawsoniana trees were also planted on the southern side for shelter.

Horton advised the Park Committee in April 1937 that the native forest plantation was in good order. About 50 trees needed to be replaced. In mid-June 1937, a fence at the corner of Brooklands Road was removed in readiness to extend the planting of the plantation, digging for trees on the extension area was finished by the end of June 1937, and planting took place there during August 1937. Horton advised the Park Committee at its August meeting that 360 native timber trees had been planted in the extension area.

Planting of the forest extension area was continued in July and August 1938. Horton noted in his work diary (9/9/1936), that the following 1570 trees were planted in the extension area in 1937/38 – “150 kauri; 100 rimu; 25 hīnau; 100 rewarewa; 25 pukatea; 200 pōhutukawa; 100 maire; 50 tānekaha; 100 white pine; 150 tōtara; 500 kōwhai; 20 pūriri; 50 lawsoniana”. Horton added these trees retrospectively to his 1936 diary entry to give an overall count of the forest planting from 1936 to 1938.

In 1940 Horton wrote a brief summary of the planting at the Brooklands plantation:

“The area is approximately 10 acres. The total number of trees planted is 3815. The varieties include all the principal native timber trees. The Matai are not doing as well as most of the kinds. The totara, rimu, hinau, rewarewa and kauri are making particularly good growth, and also the white pines planted in the swamp areas. In the first area planted the height of the trees ranges from three to nine feet, the average being about four feet six inches. It is definitely established that the Kauri can be grown successfully here, for out of 500 in this reserve we have had scarcely a failure, and though only planted three years, many are six feet high and are very strong and healthy.” *TH*, May 15, 1940.

Following is a list of the trees planted in the Brooklands plantation from 1935 - 1938:

500 kauri; 50 tītoki; 50 taraire; 200 rimu; 50 hīnau; 25 porokaiwhiri; 125 rewarewa; 50 Pukatea; 50 mangaeho; 400 pōhutukawa; 200 ngaio; 100 red beech; 50 silver beech; 125 maire; 10 toru; 100 tānekaha; 300 white pine; 100 matai; 300 tōtara; 50 tawāpou; 700 kōwhai; 30 pūriri; 25 towhai; 150 lawsoniana; 75 thuja plicata. Total 3815.

### **Rhododendron Dell**

In 1933 Charles Score sanders bequeathed £350 to Pukekura Park for the specific purpose of creating a rhododendron dell. The dell was planted out in 1936 to the west of the Serpentine. Since 1936 many of the plants have been moved and the collection added to, and today the Rhododendron Dell extends south to the Bowl of Brooklands.

589 plants were ordered. 216 were imported from W. C. Slocock Ltd., in England. The remainder came from NZ growers, Duncan & Davies, A. H. Goudie and Edgar Stead.

The imported plants included hybrids such as 'Armistice Day ', 'Loderi Pink Diamond', 'Patience' and 'White Diamond', 'Countess of Derby', 'Cornubia', Louis Pasteur and 'Betty Wormald'. Slococks' also provided some free of charge plants which included: 'Beauty of Littleworth', Goldsworth Crimson', Pink and Yellow', 'Mount Everest', Vicountess of Elveden', 'Faggetters Favourite' and 'Alice Martineau.

The plants provided by local nurseryman A. H. Goudie included: 'Blue Peter', 'Earl of Athlone', 'Mars', 'Pink Delight', 'Unique' and 'Glory of Bagshot', while the Duncan & Davies collection included: 'Ivery's Scarlet', 'Loder's White', 'Mrs Charles Pearson', Unknown Warrior', *R. arboreum rubrum* and *R. griffithianum*, while the Edgar Stead collection included *R. delavayii*, *R. decorum* x *arboreum* hybrids and *R. falconeri*.

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Excluding Fillis Street Reserve and Kauri Grove, Horton planted 160 lawsoniana and 250 macrocarpas in 1937 to protect the native bush in the gully running towards Avenue Road corner and Upjohn Street. At the back of the old orchard site at Brooklands 550 *Pinus radiata* were planted behind the old pine plantation, 40 white pines had been put in the swamp ground near the rhododendrons. Around the lake and in other parts of Pukekura Park 165 tree ferns were planted.

In 1939 Horton donated a copper beech (twelve year old) which he planted at the bottom of the Bowl of Brooklands hill. The tree was dug up and moved in 1957 when the Bowl was constructed and replanted at the bottom of the road going down to the Bowl. Unfortunately, the tree split a few years ago and had to be removed. The Park imported 26 new varieties of hydrangeas from England which were planted out in the rhododendron dell.

The Park Committee decided that the location of the tennis courts was required to plant a shelter belt and suggested that the club be relocated to Brookland behind the Gables. To give the proposed site protection Horton planted 250 natives in a double row of five chains (100m) in length.

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The next major planting was 1942 when a number of tōtara and Lawson cypress were planted in an area of one and a half acres of land next to Kaimata Street. This land had previously been let for grazing. Horton noted in his diary:

July 22, "Planted trees at Brooklands."; July 23, "Men finishing off the trees at Brooklands."; July 26, "List of trees planted 22nd & 23rd at Brooklands Kaimata St." The trees listed are: 106 lawsoniana, 5 years old, 5s each, £26; 20 lawsoniana, 3 years old, 10s, 40 Podocarpus totara, 5 years old, 4s each, £8; 40 kowhai, 4 years old, 2s 6d each, £8; 24 Rewarewa, @ 2s 9d each, £3 6s.

He also noted that four men did the job in 2.5 days. Some of these trees can be seen next to the Ambush Gully nature walk.

In June 1943 Horton reported that 250 trees were planted including mangeao, tōtara, white pine, native cedars, tōwai, rewarewa and kōwhai.

In 1946 a large macrocarpa on the bank below the curator's house fell landing across Hatchery Lawn, bringing down a 120ft poplar and damaging a rimu and the Moreton Bay fig. For safety reasons another three large poplars and two macrocarpas were removed. The area was replanted with pōhutukawas, rimus, kōwhais, miros and tree ferns.

When the Sanders Rhododendron Dell was planted, 257 plants were put in spaced 6ft apart. The intention was to move some of them a few years later. Unfortunately, due to the outbreak of war the Park was short staffed, and the move was delayed. It was done in 1947 by which time some of the trees weighed half a ton. About 80 trees were moved, all manually. In the same year the Park was told that it would have to cut down about 30 large pine trees along Victoria and Brooklands Roads because of the installation new telephone toll lines between New Plymouth and Wellington. The removal happened in 1949.

In preparation for the construction of the lady's pavilion in 1949 nine pine trees were removed from the hill behind the pavilion and towards the top of the southern terrace. It was replanted with tall growing trees given to the Park by the New Plymouth Horticultural Society.

An Arbor Day occurred soon after Jack Goodwin took over the role of Park curator in 1949. It was arranged by Victor Davies and the North Taranaki Branch of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture. The site chosen was the top of the ridge between Horton's 1924 plantings on Horton Walk and southern terraces of the Sportsground. Trees planted included natives such as kauri, *Agathis australis*; pūriri, *Vitex lucens*; rimu, *Dacrydium cupressinum* and exotics such as; Norfolk Island pine, *Araucaria heterophylla*; Caucasian fir, *Abies nordmanniana*; deodar cedar, *Cedrus deodara*; Japanese cedar, *Cryptomeria japonica* and Holm Oak, *Quercus ilex*.

### **Bicycle Tree**

By the path on the Children's Playground side of the bridge by the Waterwheel there is a well-formed kauri with an unusual story. In 1943 the Parks Department gave the tree to Mr Norton who lived on Brougham Street. He planted the tree in his garden and some years later realised that it was going to end up being too big, so he offered it back to the Park in 1949 just after Jack Goodwin took over as curator. Without a truck to transport the tree Jack had to improvise. He and his assistant Alois Schonbachler strapped the tree between two bicycles and pushed it back to the Park and successfully planted it in its current location where it thrives today.

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Some of the planting in the 1950s included; tupelo, *Nyssa sylvatica*, planted in Primula and Sunken Dell in 1951, for its coloured autumn foliage display; redwoods and *Cryptomeria* were

planted near the List Street entrance in 1952/3; In 1955, the Azalea Dell ( Goodwin Dell ) was planted out; planting of the first dawn redwoods, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* in Sunken Dell and on the main lake island; taraire, *Beilschmedia tarairi*, northern rata, *Metrosideros robusta*, miro, *Prumnopitys ferruginea*, narrow-leaved maire, *Nestegis montana*, toru, *Toronia toru* and kawaka, *Libocedrus plumosa* were planted by Claffey Walk at the back of King Fern Gully; also in 1955 pōhutukawas were planted at Kaimata Street frontage.

### Victoria Road Arboretum

This is the area of the Park fronting onto Victoria Road, from the car park to the Shortland Street entrance. It was identified as an area necessary as a shelter belt so that the aging pines on the western slopes below could be removed. The main planting occurred between 1953 and 1955, after the tennis courts had been removed. Trees that remain today from that planting include: peppermint tree, *Agonis flexuosa*; deodar cedar, *Cedrus deodara*; white bottle brush, *Callistemon salignus*; cabbage tree, *Cordyline australis*; Monterey cypress, *Cupressus macrocarpa* 'Aurea'; smooth Arizona cypress, *Cupressus arizonica* var. *glabra*; blueberry ash, *Elaeocarpus reticulatus*; Suriname cherry, *Eugenia uniflora* (syn *Eugenia myrtifolia*); spindle tree, *Euonymus lucidus* (syn *Euonymus pendulus*); Hill's silky oak, *Grevillea hilliana*; macadamia nut, *Macadamia tetraphylla*; Kermadec pōhutukawa, *Metrosideros kermadecensis*; coastal kōwhai, *Sophora chathamica*; west coast kōwhai, *Sophora fulvida* (syn *Sophora microphylla* var *fulvida*); Queensland fire wheel tree, *Stenocarpus sinuatus*; western redcedar, *Thuja plicata*.

Other trees were added later, some of which remain, they include: 1962, Red flowering gum, *Corymbia ficifolia* (syn *Eucalyptus ficifolia*); Norfolk Island hibiscus, *Lagunaria pattersonii*; 1983, tītoki, *Alectryon excelsa*; rimu, *Dacydium cupressinum*; wharangi, *Melicope ternate*; 2004, Norfolk Island pine, *Araucaria heterophylla*.

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In 1956, the Victoria Road Camellia collection was integrated into the native planting from 1930 on the hillside below the curator's house. This collection had additional plantings in 1968 and again in 1990. Also, in July 1956 Central School students helped with an Arbor Day planting in Kintergarten Gully at which trees planted included kaikōmako, *Penantia corymbosa*, ewekuri, *Streblus banksia*, white maire, *Nestegis lanceolata* and silver beech, *Nothofagus menziesii*.

In 1958 Central School students aided with another Arbour day planting, this time on the azalea bank near the first lily pond in Stainton Dell. A number of the azalea varieties planted that day still flourish in Stainton Dell.

The Stainton Dell Magnolia Collection was planted in 1959; the source of the collection was Duncan & Davies. Other plantings in 1959 included planting of the bank between the Band Room Lawn and Fernery (Frethey's Bank); further development of Goodwin Dell; planting of conifers on Cannon Hill.

In 1959-1960 a collection of conifers were planted on Monument Hillside and planting of deciduous azaleas and *Cornus kousa* on Rhododendron Dell hillside.

The first conifers were planted in late August 1961 near the bridge over the lake. They included a hinoki cypress, *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Tetragona Aurea', and some Northern cedar, *Thuja occidentalis* 'Pyramidalis'. The latter were removed around 2000 or 2001 but the *chamaecyparis* is still going strong.

During the following month, September 1961, the Pinetum was planted up with a collection of pine species, many of which came from the Christchurch Botanical Gardens. The Christchurch collection included one of each of the following: Japanese red pine, *Pinus*

## Planting History

*densiflora*, *Pinus densiflora* 'Globosa', mountain pine, *Pinus mugo*, *Pinus mugo* subsp *mughus*, black pine, *Pinus nigra*, ponderosa pine, *Pinus ponderosa* (mistakenly thought to be *Pinus armandii*), red pine, *Pinus resinosa*, chir pine, *Pinus roxburghii* (syn *Pinus palustris*), Japanese black pine, *Pinus thunbergii* and mountain pine, *Pinus uncinata* (syn *Pinus mugo rostrata*). A Mr Collins from Dannevirke was another source of plants, supplying three *Pinus densiflora* and three *Pinus thunbergii*; Duncan & Davies provided a patula pine, *Pinus patula*; and lastly from an unknown source came a Canary Islands pine, *Pinus canariensis*. The Pinetum collection from 1961 that you see today is as listed above and, quite amazingly, has lost only two species from the original plantings, a limber pine, *Pinus flexilis* and a Macedonian pine, *Pinus peuce* which were both part of the Christchurch Botanical Gardens' collection of plants. Also in 1961 - Planting of evergreen azaleas on Monument Hillside.

In 1962, Smith Walk Azalea Bed was planted.

Camellias were planted at Shortland Street entrance and on Swan's Walk in 1963, as well as the initial plantings of the Racecourse Walk Camellia collection.

The western hillside/Scanlan Walk was planted In September 1964 with; kauri, *Agathis australis*; rimu, *Dacrydium cupressinum*; miro, *Prumnopitys ferruginea*; European beech, *Fagus sylvatica*; Japanese maple, *Acer palmatum*, for their autumn colour and magnolia's. This planting followed the removal of thirty three 1870s *Pinus radiata* the previous year.

In 1965 the foundation of the Park orchid collection was formed with the donation of *Cymbidium* orchid plants from local horticulturist and nurseryman Mr Fred Parker. The donated collection was named in memory/honour of his wife, Agnes Mary Parker. On the 7th of August 1965, an Arbor Day planting took place at Brooklands, which included the addition of specimen trees around the margins of the Brooklands main lawn and the planting of the camellia hedge that used to be between the Park and the Bowl of Brooklands. It also saw the initial plantings of trees and gardens in the zoo grounds.

The dawn redwood's, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, and swamp cypress, *Taxodium distichum* in the Bowl of Brooklands were planted in 1966. The planting concept was the idea/suggestion of Trevor Davies, one of Sir Victor Davies son's. The trees came from Duncan & Davies Nursery.

When the Band Room was built in 1967 two mature trees had to be relocated. One is the Belmore sentry palm, *Howea belmoreana* this is at the northern end of the Palm Lawn adjacent to the stream. The other is the weeping elm growing in the middle of the footpath to the north-western end of the Fountain Lake. Other planting in 1967 included; - water lily collection in the Bowl of Brooklands Lake, rhododendrons along Kaimata Street frontage and hebe, olearia and brachyglottis collection along Victoria Road frontage.

The Kaimata Street Camellia Collection was part of a 1968 Arbor Day planting. This was done after the removal of Lawson cypress which formed part of the 1942 shelter belt. The Gables garden development plantings also took place in 1968 as well as the Band Room gardens and Band Room Lawn camellia hedge.

On August the 9th 1969 what was the largest of the Brooklands Arbor Days by area and plant numbers took place. The plantings encompassed the planting of trees in the zoo deer pen (now farmyard) and a camellia collection across the southern boundary of the zoo, following the removal of pines, and the planting of Ambush Gully following the removal of Lawson cypress trees. The Lawson cypress trees that were removed had probably been part of the shelter belts planted by Thomas Horton in 1942.

Sometime in the early 1970s, two plants of *Taxodium distichum* var *imbricarium* 'Nutans' were inter-planted amongst the existing swamp cypress trees near the Bowl of Brooklands. These trees were the result of grafting by George Fuller, of scion wood from Felix Jury onto swamp cypress, *Taxodium distichum* rootstock. This form of swamp cypress tree has less droopy branches and foliage and is generally more upright.

In 1971, the Arbor Day project was the planting of the Nature Trail Native Grove, which is located behind the zoo free flight enclosure. This planting included a number of rare or less common plants that are only found in northland or on the offshore islands, such as: Three Kings Islands cabbage tree, *Cordyline oblecta* (syn. *Cordyline kaspar*); Three Kings vine or akapukaea, *Tecomanthe speciosa* and Three Kings kaikōmako, *Pennantia baylisiana*. Also, makamaka, *Ackama rosifolia*, and *Weinmannia silvicola* which both occur naturally together in northland.

A Park centennial planting took place on May 1, 1976. A kauri was planted on the western side of the summit of Cannon Hill by Don Saxton and Alex Brodie, Saxton was a long-time chairman of the Pukekura Park Committee. A ginkgo tree, *Ginkgo biloba*, was planted near the foot of Cannon Hill, by Fred Parker. A Norfolk Island Pine was planted at the northern end of the summit of Cannon Hill by Denis Sutherland, the Mayor of New Plymouth. A Southern magnolia, *Magnolia grandiflora* 'Goliath' was planted near the outlet of the Fountain Lake, by Councillor, Audrey Gail, Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Committee, and a linden, *Tilia x euchlora*, was planted at the southern end of Hatchery Lawn by Mrs Eliot King, the daughter in law of the late Newton King.

A group of trees were planted on 10 September 1978, adjacent to the fence line near the ticket box at the top of the Bowl drive. They are bunya bunya, *Araucaria bidwillii*, klink pine, *Araucaria hunstenii*, and Taiwan fir, *Cunninghamia konishi*. These were raised from seed from Peter B Dow & Company, Gisborne and all share one thing in common - very prickly foliage. Two more klink pine were added in June 2008 to this group of trees.

The original planting of the Traffic Islands at Brooklands was done in 1980 along with the planting of a holly collection on the eastern boundary of the zoo. (The holly collection was subsequently removed for the zoo farmyard redevelopment).

On June 11, 1983, The last and most recent Arbor Day in Pukekura took place, with plantings taking place along Scanlan Walk (Western Hillside), after the removal of last original *Pinus radiata* from the upper section of this area. It continued on from where the 1964 plantings on this site concluded. An emphasis was placed on plantings of deciduous trees for their autumn colour, such as Japanese maples, *Acer palmatum*, European beech, *Fagus sylvatica*, and Persian ironwood, *Parrotia persica*. The Arbor Day plantings included a revamp of the Shortland Street Entrance with the installation of the stone walls that you see there today and the creation of a scented garden in and around the existing camellias.

In 1991 another deciduous conifer was added into the Bowl collection, namely a Chinese swamp cypress, *Glyptostrobus pencilis*. This is located near the bridge over the lake on the racecourse side and is peeking its head above the neighbouring *Elegia capensis*. *Glyptostrobus* is a monotypic genus native to subtropical south-eastern China and potentially grows up to 30m tall and, like a related genus *Taxodium*, forms pneumatophores especially if growing in water. In the wild, *Glyptostrobus* is nearly extinct so it is a good thing that we have this growing as it helps with conservation of the species. This species can also be seen in the Kunming Garden.

In 1992-1993 the Vireya Bank on racecourse Walk was developed and planted. This planting was combination planting of vireya rhododendrons and cycads.



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The Japanese Hillside was developed and planted in 1993, on the slope to the west of Hughes Walk after the removal of original 1876 *Pinus radiata* trees from this area. The hillside was developed and planted in response to requests for a Japanese garden. Seed for the maples and Hinoki cypress were wild sourced in Japan. A collection of Camellia species was added to the Race Course Walk Camellia collection. Also, in 1993 the Brooklands Alder collection and Chinese collection were developed and planted near the Pukekura Tennis Club courts at the Welbourn end of the Park.

As foreseen by Mr Goodwin the skyline pines, *Pinus radiata*, were removed in 1994, and replacements were planted during the winter of 1995 using a cutting grown forestry clone of *Pinus radiata* "GF28" sourced from Shem Kerr, Inglewood. The area where the replacement pines were planted was renamed in 2004 as Scanlan Lookout, in honour of A. B. (Brian) Scanlan. Because of his interest in the Park and its history, Scanlan authored *Pukekura: A Centennial History of Pukekura Park and Brooklands*. (These pines were removed in 2024).

In 1996 the Victoria Road Car Park was developed and planted on what was once part of the grounds of the curator's house.

In 1997 there was a major landscape redevelopment of the Herbaceous Border at the Fred Parker Lawn, including realignment of the paths and configuration of the border.

The Sanders Rhododendron Dell was extended and planted on the hillside to the west of the Bowl lily lake in 1999, and the pathways on the hillside renamed "Jellyman Walk". In June that year a Caribbean pine, *Pinus caribaea*, was added to the pinetum collection. On November 16, 1999, *Pinus roxburghii* Sarg. (syn. *P. longifolia*) Long-leaved Indian pine was planted by the Venerable Pong Re Sung Rap Tulku Rinpoche the first Tibetan High Lama born in New Zealand. The tree was supplied by Alan Jellyman and planted on Eastern Hillside. It was grown from seed, supplied by Tony Schilling, sourced in Bhutan. Unfortunately, the tree is no longer there.

The Pinetum was revamped in 2000, repositioning the perimeter fences to increase the capacity of the Bowl. Plantings associated with the revamp included plants such as: Montezuma bald cypress, *Taxodium mucronatum*; western red cedar, *Thuja plicata*; hiba, *Thujopsis dolobrata* and incense juniper, *Juniperus thurifera*, which were all sourced from the local conifer nursery Cedar Lodge Nurseries. In the same year the Welbourn Chinese collection was expanded with the upgrade of the Coronation Avenue Entrance and the Welbourn Beech Wood was planted. The beech trees coming from the open ground block in the lead up to the closure of the Parks Department nursery.

In June 2001, a monkey puzzle forest was planted on the northern slope below Scanlan Lookout. The forest was the idea of Park manager Bryan Gould and monkey puzzle, *Araucaria araucana*, was chosen because he wanted to build on the representation of genus *Araucaria*, already present in the Bowl, and by association outside the Bowl the Norfolk Island pines, *Araucaria heterophylla*, at Brooklands. In the same year the palm collection was built on with the addition of a number of new genera and species, which include bangalow palm, *Archontopenix cunninghamiana*; Mount Lewis palm, *Archontophoenix purpurea*; jelly palm, *Butia odorata*; Himalayan fishtail palm, *Caryota maxima* 'Himalaya'; Chinese fishtail palm, *Caryota ochlandra*; Ecuadorian wax palm, *Ceroxylon ventricosum*; mountain coconut, *Parajubaea cocoides* and Bolivian mountain coconut, *Parajubaea torallyi*. One of the *Parajubaea cocoides* was planted by New Plymouth Mayor Claire Stewart on 29 May 2001, to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Park. Mayor Stewart used the same spade to plant the palm that was used by Miss Jane Carrington to plant the Park's first trees on 29 May 1876.

The Scanlan Lookout was developed and planted in 2003. The development of this lookout required the removal of some of the Bowl skyline pines planted in 1995. Also, in 2003 the Kaimata Street Frontage border was redeveloped/revamped with the installation of new edging and the planting of dawn redwoods, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* amongst the existing rhododendrons.

In 2004-2005, Kunming Garden was developed and planted. This garden was the gift of New Plymouth's sister City Kunming, in the Yunnan Province of China. All the plants were sourced in NZ. The planting included: *Acer garrettii*, *Acer laurinum*, *Acer pentaphyllum*, *Acer salweenense*, *Bambusa multiplex* 'Wang Tsai', *Camellia* 'Fairy Blush', *Camellia* 'Fairy Wand', *Camellia reticulata* 'Dr Clifford Parks', *Camellia transnokoensis*, *Cedrella sinensis*, *Clethera fargesii*, *Davidia involucrate*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Fargesia nitida*, *Ginkgo biloba*, *Glyptostrobus pensilis*, *Gordonia yunnanensis* 'Moonlight Magic', *Hydrangea heteromalla*, *Juniperus chinensis*, 'Kaizuka', *Keteleeria evelyniana*, *Kohlrreuteria paniculata*, *Lagerstromia chekiangensis*, *Magnolia delavayi*, *Magnolia denudate*, *Michelia yunnanensis*, *Nyssa sinensis*, *Picea meyer*, *Pistacia chinensis*, *Podocarpus macrophyllus*, *Prunus mume* 'Peggy Clarke', *Radermachera sinica*, *Raphis excelsa*, *Sasafras tzuma*, *Weigelia florida* 'Variegata', *Wisteria sinensis*.

Trees were planted on Eastern Hillside in 2007 to commemorate the centenary of the naming of Pukeura Park. The trees included, bunya-bunya, *Araucaria bidwillii* (alive); Corsican pine, *Pinus nigra* subsp *laricio* (alive) and Manchurian fir, *Abies holophylla* (Deceased). The Monument Hillside conifer collection was revamped in the same year.

The most recent conifer plantings in the Bowl are all situated in or near the Pinetum and occurred during the latter half of the 2000s. The first is a grouping of a dwarf form of the Weymouth pine, *Pinus strobus* 'Witch's Broom', planted in January 2007, which is situated on the top of the bank directly behind the toilets. The needles on this species have a lovely blue-grey tinge.

The Brooklands herbaceous border (eastern border), and the western border (subsequently renamed the 4 seasons border) were both revamped in 2008.

In 2009 a Mexican weeping pine, *Pinus patula* was added to the Brooklands pinetum plantation to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the gifting/handover of Brooklands to the citizens of New Plymouth. It was planted by members of the King family. The Brooklands traffic islands, zoo and "Gables" gardens were revamped.

The latest addition to the pinetum was in June 2010. A chir pine, *Pinus roxburghii*, which had been planted at Lake Mangamahoe but was not thriving there was relocated to the Park to add to the pinetum collection. It is located on the slope above the drive with the 1961 pines as a backdrop.

In 2012 there was a revamp of the native plant border on Victoria Road, with renewal plantings of brachyglottis, hebe and olearia collection. A second stage of the revamp took place in 2018.

Landscaping and planting of the Kindergarten Gully frontage occurred in 2013, after the installation of new cricket practice nets.

Native plantings in the Children's Playground environs happened in 2014, this was a joint venture between the Park and STOS (Shell Todd Oil Services) for whom this was a team building day project. In August the Park received a plant of Bodhi/sacred Fig, *Ficus religiosa*, from the local Sri Lankan Buddhist community. Provenance of the tree; It was propagated from a parent tree in Sri Lanka and was sent/given to the Buddhist temple, Sri Lanka Ramaya in Auckland. The temple distributed plants to various communities, including the local Sri Lankan

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Buddhist community who planted their plant at a retreat property in Urenui. However, the property on which the retreat was set up was placed on the market and so a new home had to be found for the Bodhi tree and it was subsequently gifted to the Park. It was grown for a period of time at the Fernery before eventually being planted out on Eastern Hillside on 6 May 2016. This sacred tree is a focus point for the community who gifted it.

In 2015 the Fills Street Frontage was landscaped & redeveloped, including new retaining walls and plantings of palms and hibiscus.

The Shortland Street entrance was redeveloped and landscaped again in 2017 and the following year the adjacent Victoria Road frontage was redeveloped and landscaped.

There were several trees removed in 2018, including, the last two old pines in Goodwin Dell, two old pines on Eastern Hillside and an *Abies religiosa*, which had been planted in 1965 was blown over in a storm. The storm coincidentally occurred on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the storm that caused the inter-island ferry Wahine to sink at the entrance to Wellington Harbour and was of similar intensity. A significant event that year was finding myrtle rust for the first time.

In 2019 fifteen large cycads were gifted to the Park by Mark and Lucy Braun of Te Kuiti. These were planted out in various locations; main car park gardens, Tea House wisteria bank, Palm Lawn and Vireya/Cycad Bank on Racecourse Walk. The native shrub plantings on Horton Walk were revamped. Two significant trees were lost, a large American elm was removed from the gables garden and a storm toppled a scarlet gum on the Sports Ground's southern terrace.

The Brooklands traffic island garden was revamped in 2020 with additional plantings of palms, aloes, yuccas, pony tail palms and grasstree, xanthorrhoea. Also, the last of the old horse chestnuts at Brooklands came crashing down.

In 2021 the Taranaki Regional Plants garden near The Poet's Bridge was developed and the last of the original pine trees on Cannon Hill were removed. A Western Himalayan spruce, *Picea smithiana* was planted on Eastern Hillside as a replacement for the *Pinus roxburghii* planted by Rinpoche in November 1999.

Due to issues with the dam, the Fountain Lake outlet stream was redeveloped in 2022. The adjacent garden environs were planted with new palms and bromeliads. In more recent times the Palm Lawn has been an area where vireya rhododendrons have been integrated into the landscape. The vireya rhododendrons planted include varieties such as 'Golden Charm', 'Pop Corn', 'Tropic Glow' and 'Will Silent', while the varieties 'Red Mountain', 'Scented Sun' and 'Tickety Boo' were added in 2024.

## Birds of Pukekura Park

Bird life at the outset of the Recreation Ground would have been minimal as the land was denuded of trees. Once the lake was formed in 1878 the Board started receiving gifts of ducks, geese and swans. Records show that paradise ducks, swans, geese and pea fowl were introduced in the 1870s-1880s. The pea fowl were kept in a wire enclosure somewhere near where the Tea House is today. In the early 1900s a more substantial cage was built near today's Palm Lawn.

It should be noted that in 1876 (the year the Park was officially opened) the Taranaki Acclimatization society was importing birds such as partridges, thrushes, blackbirds, goldfinches, starlings, yellow hammers, and mynahs.

The first mention of shags in the Park was 1886 when one was found half dead choking on a carp it had caught in the lake. A few years later a shag was shot in the Park because it was eating too many fish. It was opened up and found to have eleven newly caught perch in its gullet varying in length from 1" to 2.5". The most bizarre shag event was in 1894. A man was found drowned in the lake and he had been there a few days. When the body was found there was an eye missing. The curator Darby Claffey had noticed that a shag was diving in the water in the area of the body and the conclusion at the inquest was that the shag had removed it.

In 1887 twenty starlings were released into the Recreation Ground. They were imported because they are insectivorous and were expected to help agriculturists.

Undoubtedly the most interesting story relating to birds in the Park is that of W. W. Smith and his kiwi breeding. Smith who was curator from 1908 until 1920 was a recognised ornithologist as well as entomologist and botanist. He is acknowledged as the last person to sight a huia. Foremost he was a conservationist. As the first person to breed kiwi his name is immortalised in history. Smith bred kiwi successfully from 1909 until about 1915. Unfortunately, feeding them was too expensive and he reluctantly stopped. He was also breeding weka which he continued to do until he left the Park in 1920. Another legacy of Smith's was the introduction of a more diverse collection of trees. When he arrived, the Park was substantially a pine forest. He introduced trees to be a food source to encourage bird life in the Park.

Following is an extract from Taranaki Herald December 17, 1932, Christmas Supplement. This gives a brief introduction into Smith's work with kiwi.

### **Rearing young kiwis. - Success in New Plymouth**

"It was in New Plymouth that W. W. Smith made his exhaustive study of the kiwi, continuing a work that he had previously started. In July 1908, the late Mr. Newton King gave him a large female kiwi which had been captured by some Māoris. Mr. Smith set to and built a house, but when he introduced a mate the lady proved to have ideas of her own on the matter. So fiercely did she attack her unwilling suitor that she nearly killed him. A second male was subjected to the same drastic treatment before the termagant finally admitted him to her good graces. Experiments in the years following proved it to be the rule with Madame Kiwi that when a strange male was introduced to her he had to take his "degrees" in the order explained before being accepted by her. When reconciled and mated, however, no birds pass a more peaceful life than do kiwis.

### **Painstaking Study**

After the pair had been mated for three months the female laid two eggs, with an interval of 10 days. Then the male took possession of the nest and commenced to incubate the eggs. As Darwin used to stand in the woods and let the baby squirrels gallop up and down his back, so in the evenings Mr. Smith would sit or be motionless in the gloom of the place where the kiwis were, observing their habits and enjoying their sniffing at him and prodding him with their beaks.

For four whole weeks the luckless male sat on the eggs before the chicks appeared, the mother taking no interest in the task at all. When his long wait was over he had been reduced to a bag of bones, and it was just as well for him that the female then took the babies in hand, for it took the father all his time to feed himself back to prosperity.

“Of all the beautiful things in Nature nothing appeals to me like a young kiwi,” Mr. Smith confesses. They are little fluffy birds, pure white, and with preposterously long pink beaks. Mr. Smith found that the two babies being reared in captivity could run about and feed as soon as they were hatched.

When they were half grown one fell a victim to an English murderer, the cordially hated weasel. This particular one expiated his crime a day or two later, and the other young kiwi in five months grew to maturity. Mr. Smith had thus achieved the feat of raising the first kiwi in captivity.

### **Kiwis Fierce Fighters**

For its size the kiwi is tremendously strong bird, and with a blow from its powerful leg could rip open the flesh of a big dog. On several occasions Mr. Smith placed a full-grown Game cock in the yard in the evening. The female kiwi lost no time in assailing him and, before the melee was stopped, had kicked half the feathers off his back and breast, wounding him severely. When they were fighting, the ferocity and rage of the kiwis seemed unsurpassible. They rushed furiously at one another, striking rapidly with the right foot, and the impact generally caused both to roll over. Of the 15 kiwis which Mr. Smith had in captivity at different times, all remained irreconcilable to their confinement and unrelenting in their efforts to escape. No birds ever worked more persistently or determinedly to gain their freedom.

And now, to-day, it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that W. W. Smith knows the whereabouts of every family of kiwis within a large area in North Taranaki. In his keeping their secret is perfectly safe. Wild horses would not drag from him the information as to their haunts unless he were absolutely certain of the inquirer.

In 1926 the Park was given an albatross. The bird had been kept in captivity at Cape Egmont lighthouse. When concerns were raised about how the bird would be fed. The general opinion was, it would find enough food in the Park. The Park was also gifted two kiwi that were let free onto Manhattan Island. It is not known what happened to these birds.

In 1956 Jack Goodwin wrote an interesting article published in *Forest and Bird* Issue 119, Feb 1, 1956. He noted that birds in fair numbers included: - bellbirds, tuis, kereru and kingfisher. He also noted that the shining cuckoo was a regular visitor. Goodwin arrived at the Park at the end of 1949 at which time kereru were not common. This was attributed to them being preyed upon by bush hawks (New Zealand falcon). Over the next 6 years they killed a few falcons each year which increased the number of kereru seen in the Park. He also attributed the low numbers of kereru partly due to the birds being shot.

For an insight into birds in the Park this century lawyer and ornithologist David Medway wrote a short article about twenty years ago. Unfortunately, David passed away in 2013 which was a huge loss to the community.

Pukekura Park and Brooklands are almost certainly unique among the urban Parks of New Zealand in the number and variety of native and introduced birds to be found here. Their large area, wide range of suitable habitats, and great variety of native and introduced vegetation provide an ideal habitat for many bird species.

Notable among the many species of bird inhabiting the Parks, either permanently or seasonally, are the native tūī, pigeon (kererū), kākā, and little shag (kawaupaka).

Some tūī are resident year-round and breed here regularly. Numbers increase significantly around April as other birds arrive in the Parks from elsewhere in search of nectar sources to feed on during the cooler months of the year. Tūī are common in Pukekura and Brooklands from then until about October when most leave the area at the end of kōwhai flowering. While here, tūī find ample nectar in a wide variety of plants, especially the many introduced plants, that flower here during the cooler months. Recent studies have shown that introduced plants in the Parks are particularly important as food sources for nectar-eating tūī. A surprising 90% of observations of tūī feeding on floral nectar over two recent winters were of them doing so at introduced plants. The most important of these are Formosan cherries (*Prunus*) and many of the *Camellia* cultivars, and they may be the principal reason why so many tūī dwell here during winter and spring. The maintenance of local tūī populations may well depend upon the presence of these food-source plants.

There are probably about twenty native pigeons (kererū) living in the Parks and several pairs breed here each year. Recent studies show that they reproduce more successfully here than most places elsewhere. This is probably because numbers of predators like possums, rats and stoats appear to be low. The wide variety of vegetation also provides year-round food for native pigeons so they don't need to travel long distances to find other suitable supplies. Notable among the foods that kererū use extensively are the leaf buds and leaves, and flower buds and flowers of many of the introduced *Magnolias* here. Pigeons probably use *Magnolias* as food sources more in New Plymouth's Parks and private gardens than they do anywhere else in New Zealand.

In most recent years, up to three kākā have visited the Parks. They are usually present, off and on, from about April until October but sometimes visit other New Plymouth Parks and gardens in their search for food. It is not known where these now-endangered birds come from, but it is probably from the largest North Island population in the native forests near Pureora on the Volcanic Plateau. The kākā are more often heard than seen. They have been seen eating a variety of flowers and fruits in the Parks, but they spend a lot of time searching tree trunks and branches for insects and other invertebrates. Sometimes the kākā are closely accompanied by one or more tūī looking for insects disturbed by the kākā.

Little shags have nested in Pukekura Park since about 1990. The little shag nesting colony is unique in that it is the only one known in northern Taranaki. The shags nest in some of the tall tōtara trees beside Fountain Lake. They begin nesting in late August, and in some years they do not finish until April. Adult birds from the colony travel mostly to the nearby coast, and to a lesser extent inland, in search of food, usually fish, for themselves and their young. Adult shags can sometimes be seen successfully catching perch in the main lake. After they leave their nest trees, immature birds can often be seen on Fountain Lake practicing swimming and diving.

David Medway. (Ref: Pukekura Park and Brooklands -A Guide to Walks, Ron Lambert)

## Birds of Pukekura Park

To get an idea of the varieties of birds that live in and visit the Park today. The 'eBird' website lists bird sightings. Below is a list of birds that have been spotted in the Park in the past few years.

Australasian Swamphen Porphyrio melanotus

Australian Magpie Gymnorhina tibicen

Black-billed Gull Chroicocephalus bulleri

Black Swan Cygnus atratus

Canada Goose Branta canadensis

Common Chaffinch Fringilla coelebs

Common Myna Acridotheres tristis

Duncock Prunella modularis

Eastern Rosella Platycercus eximius

Eurasian Coot Fulica atra

Eurasian Blackbird Turdus merula

Eurasian Skylark Alauda arvensis

European Goldfinch Carduelis carduelis

European Greenfinch Chloris chloris

European Starling Sturnus vulgaris

Gray Gerygone Gerygone igata

Great Cormorant Phalacrocorax carbo

House Sparrow Passer domesticus

Kelp Gull Larus dominicanus

Little Black Cormorant Phalacrocorax sulcirostris

Little Pied Cormorant Microcarbo melanoleucos

Mallard Anas platyrhynchos

Masked Lapwing Vanellus miles

Morepork Ninox novaeseelandiae

New Zealand Bellbird Anthornis melanura

New Zealand Pigeon Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae

Pacific Black Duck Anas superciliosa

Paradise Shelduck Tadorna variegata

Rock Pigeon Columba livia

Sacred Kingfisher Todiramphus sanctus

Silver Gull Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo Chrysococcyx lucidus

Silvereye Zosterops lateralis

Song Thrush Turdus philomelos

Tui Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae

Welcome Swallow Hirundo neoxena

Yellowhammer Emberiza citrinella



Fountain Lake circa 1910. Right of picture is a peacock house on what is now Palm Lawn.  
Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2012-001).

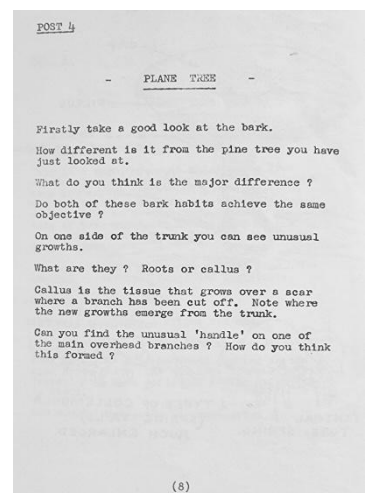
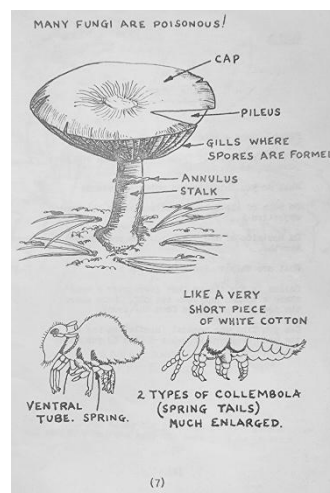
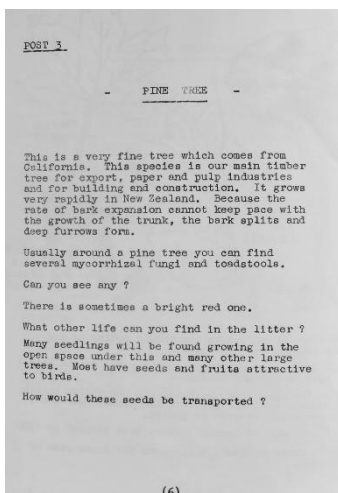
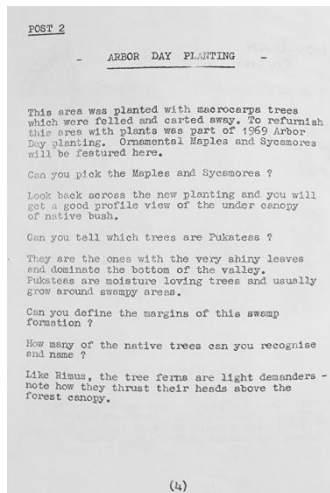
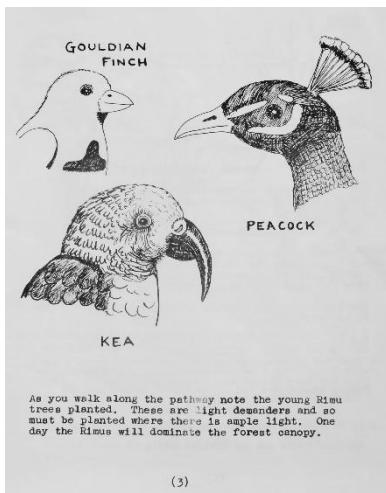
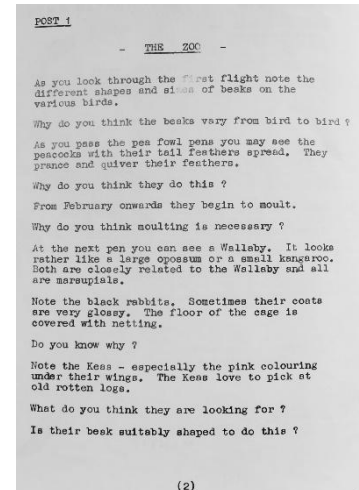
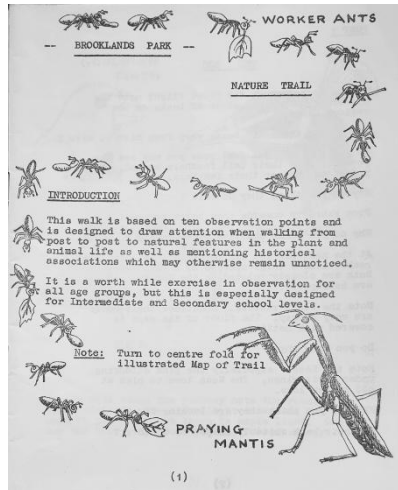
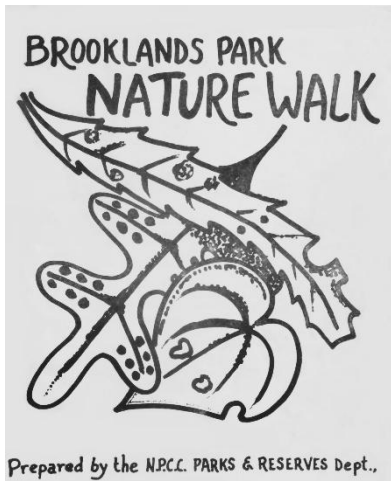


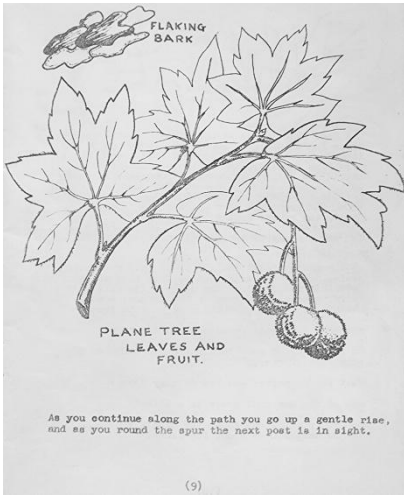
## Brooklands Park Nature Walk

A nature walk was first advocated in October 1966, by Alan Jellyman, deputy director of parks and reserves. He suggested this after returning from a six-month study trip to Britain (*TH*, Oct 6, 1966). The nature walk and booklet were created in the mid-1970s.

Following is a copy of the first booklet which was illustrated by Ian McDowell.

Collection of Puke Ariki, (Ref: ARC2003-859 Box 3).





POST 5

- KOHE KOHE TREE -

The Kohe Kohe is one of our common coastal forest trees and this one is considered to be one of the largest recorded in New Zealand. Its wood makes very fine furniture and is, as a consequence, called New Zealand Mahogany. Kohe Kohe belongs to the same family as the Mahogany, and is notable for its white flowers that grow out of the trunk and branches. You can see the flowers during the winter months.

Can you see any of the flowers or nuts that follow?

In the valley below you can see a colony of the native King Fern which is sometimes also called the Horseshoe fern. There are quite a few different ferns in this area, some on the ground, some climbing up trees and others growing in trees.

How many different ferns can you see?

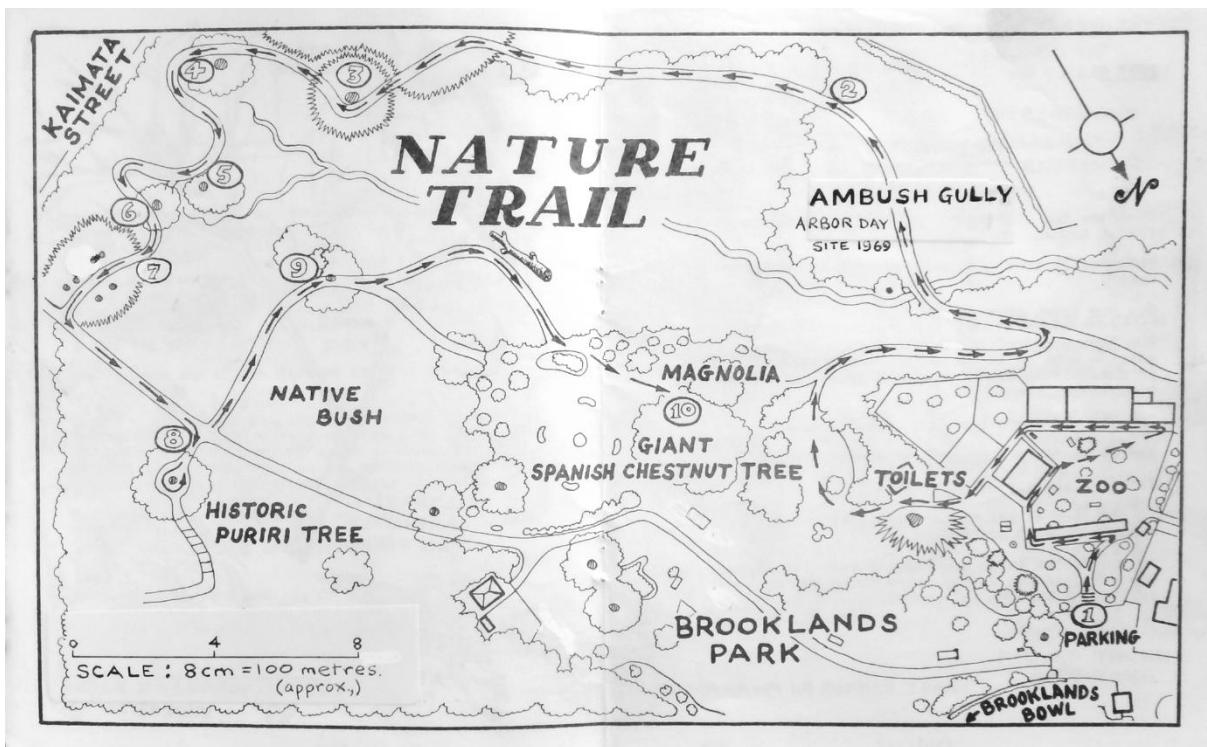
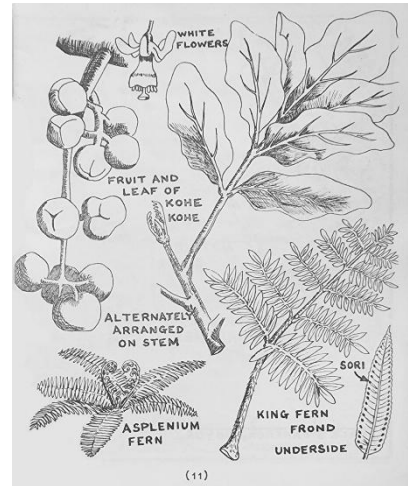
In the trees on your left there are a number of epiphytes growing.

What are epiphytes and how do they live?

One of the dominant trees is a Titoki.

Can you pick it out among the others? It has deep flutes along its trunk.

(10)



POST 6

- THE PURIRI TREE -

Remember the silver beech with all the holes in the trunk.

This Puriri tree with whitish bark has similar holes.

Can you think what causes them?

You have heard of the Puriri moth. If you examine some of the holes you could well find an exoskeleton from one of the grubs, which has been recently shed.

Can you see where the grub camouflages the hole?

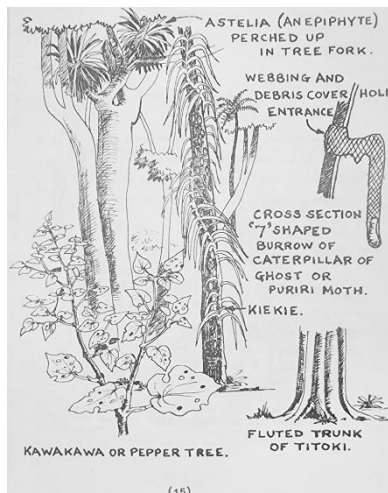
Nearby there is another fine Titoki tree.

What are its main distinctions?

If you look at its trunk and its canopy, you will be able to guess them.

In the Titoki there are several perching ferns. One of these has a very shiny frond and is called the Shining Splenwort.

(14)



POST 7

- PINE TREE AVENUE -

In this group of pine trees some of the largest pines in the Park are growing. These trees are the same type of pine as the tree at Post 3.

Can you guess the height of these trees?

There are more Kohe Kohe trees in this area, many of which flower and fruit.

Can you identify them?

There is a dead pine laying beside the path - several forms of decomposition are visible.

SLATER OR WOODLOUSE

(16)

# Brooklands Nature Walk

LEAF OR PINE NEEDLE.

PINE CONE.

PINE SEED.

CICADA NYMPH EXOSKELETON.

You now turn left and proceed along the wide walk until you come to the Historic Puriri on the right of the walk.

(17)

POST 8

- HISTORIC PURIRI TREE -

This is an ancient tree which is estimated to be 2000 years old. It was a sacred tree of the Maoris who used to nest at the tree and build fires around its base. Some of these fire scars can still be seen but gradually these scars are healing. In the upper branches above the notice, you can see insect activity.

What do you think the insects are ?

What would you expect the timber characteristics to be for such a long lived tree ?

How do you think the age has been estimated ?

On the ground near the main bush walk there are many small tufts of twiggy growths.

What are they and where have they come from ?

What is the name of the tree these growths have come from ?

(18)

STAMENS. STYLE.

PURIRI FLOWER.

1 YEARS GROWTH SUMMER WINTER

CAMBIUM LAYER UNDER BARK

CROSS SECTION OF TREE TRUNK

WORKER BEE WING

ANTENNA THORAX

HEAD ABDOMEN

POLLEN COMBS

POLLEN BASKET

Go straight across the main walk and follow the bush path opposite.

(19)

POST 9

- KARAKA TREE -

This Karaka is the largest in Brooklands and one of the largest recorded in New Zealand. In mid-summer you may see the orange fruits of the Karaka tree on the ground. This fruit was an important food source for the Maoris who took seeds to new settlements. Settles were fought over ownership of Karaka groves.

There is a dominance of one type of fern on the forest floor.

Have you any ideas why this fern grows here better than others ?

If you look back to the south of the Karaka, or on your left as you approach the tree, note the increase in scrub growth where there is a light gap in the upper canopy. This may give you a clue to the question about the ferns.

(20)

THICK AND SHINY

KARAKA LEAVES AND FRUIT

GREEN AND ORANGE

TAWA LEAVES AND BERRY

A little further along the path there are several Tawa trees. When Karaka berries fall the Tawa berries can also be seen on the forest floor. These are blackish and are a food source of our native pigeons. Note the smooth trunk and the spreading canopy of the Tawas.

Beyond the Tawas there is a dead Rimu lying in the bush. There is no doubt that this tree once towered above the main bush canopy. In perhaps 100 years the young Rimus planted along the pathway to Post 2 could also dominate the canopy of the forest.

(21)

POST 10

- BROOKLANDS PARK -

Brooklands Park was allocated to Captain Henry King as the result of a preferential land ballot in 1841. The area is approximately 50 acres and the developed areas were set out in the traditional English style with sweeping lawns and specimen deciduous trees. Several of these are sources of food - e.g. chestnut and walnut. Beneath them spring flowering bulbs have been naturalised. These include jonquills, daffodils and bluebells.

How does the growth pattern of such bulbs relate to that of deciduous trees ?

This location has been dominated by a Chestnut tree said to have been planted in 1846. By 1972, when the main trunk portion began to decay through fungus infection of the roots, it had reached gigantic proportions. The branches, which had dipped to the ground and rooted, remain alive. This is called 'layering' and is not common in chestnuts. It remains to be seen whether they will survive.

The large specimen of Liquidambar provides a good example of tree surgery for treatment of serious wind damage to which this species seems particularly prone. It is also extensively ravaged each spring by possums browsing on young foliage - only the tips escape.

Here we have large trees sustaining damage from fungus, wind and noxious animals.

(22)

SPANISH CHESTNUT BRANCHES SHOWING LAYERING.

MAGNOLIA LEAVES, FRUIT AND TRACERY OF BRANCHES.

The Magnolia acuminata is one of the largest in the country and smothered in spring with large pink flowers. Note the dense and distinctive branchwork which is very decorative even in winter.

Another fine tree is the copper beech, notable in spring and early summer for its purple foliage which then fades. By contrast the Japanese maple has pale green spring foliage and rich autumn tinges.

(23)

CONCLUSION

This is the end of the trail. On your way you have seen a good cross section of the type of native bush that dominated New Plymouth prior to its settlement. You will have noted how some exotic trees have been able to compete with our native trees. The important role that light plays in the life of plants should be clear to you. The varying tolerance of plants to moisture has been demonstrated by examples of swamp dwellers contrasted against the perching plants. And finally we hope that you will now know a little about the trees which grow in Brooklands, the birds at the Zoo and the fascination of plants living in their communities.

Parks are the 'breathing spaces' of the City and are provided to enable us to live in pleasant surroundings. Parks belong to you and every other citizen. They are provided for you to use and to enjoy and for your children to enjoy.

Brooklands is a priceless gem, preserve it and care for it.

Do not damage any trees or plants and place your litter in bins provided or take it home with you.

In this way you can ensure that Brooklands will be preserved for future generations as a "priceless gem".

(24)

The brochure was updated in 1987 and a page relating to the Brooklands saw pit was added.

This was probably one of many pits created in the 1840s when the early European settlers were cutting down timber trees for building.

This pit lies to the right of the track leading from the Brooklands lawn to the Kaimata street entrance. Walk approximately 100 metres down the track from the walnut tree and the pit is a few metres from the track.



Collection of Puke Ariki,  
(Ref: ARC2003-859 Box 2).



Remnants of Brooklands Saw Pit.

Since the first nature walk brochure was issued others have been created by various organisations including schools.

In 2016 The Friends of the Park updated the Brooklands Park Nature Walk and released a new booklet *Brooklands Nature Walk*. They also released two more brochures, *Maranui Gully* and *Around the Lakes*.

## Tragedies in the Park

Unfortunately, there have been a lot of tragedies in the Park. Below is a list of the dates of the events and the types of incident. There may be others that the author is not aware of.

April 11, 1890. Stephen Maloney was murdered. He was attacked with his own axe in the vicinity of Horton Walk. Maloney was a retired soldier. He had come to New Zealand with the 57<sup>th</sup> regiment.

circa May 1, 1894, Charles Francis of Okiawa, drowned in the main lake. He was found floating in the lake. It is thought he had been in the water several days. Francis had sent a letter to Wanaganui Herald telling of his intent to commit suicide. He was thought to be about 35 years old.

December 16, 1895, George Duncan. Seventy-five-year-old money lender George Duncan jumped off The Poet's Bridge to end his life. The act was witnessed by the Park's curator Darby Claffey. Claffey was sacked soon after this incident.

February 10, 1897. Twenty-year-old domestic servant Annie Way drowned in the main lake at the Park. Annie thought she was pregnant. Knowing that the man who she thought was the father of the child had no interest in marriage decided to end her life. An autopsy confirmed that she was not pregnant. Annie's body was found by the Park's curator, Charles Edgecombe.

December 5, 1900, John Chorley, eighty-one-year-old resident of the old man's refuge (The Gables) drowned in the Fountain Lake. The verdict at the inquest was that Chorley had drowned himself while temporarily insane.

July 19, 1917, Frederick James Bateman, forty-year-old railway guard from Waipuku. Bateman was found floating in the main lake by curator W. W. Smith. The verdict of the inquest was that Bateman committed suicide by drowning himself.

November 27, 1917, Alice Maud Hartnell. Alice Hartnell was found in the main lake. She was suffering from poor health which was made worse by her constant worrying on account of her husband Captain Frank Hartnell who was serving with the forces in France. The verdict of the inquest was that she committed suicide while in a state of unsound mind.

April 23, 1918, Emma Eliza Osborne. Emma Osborne was in a nursing home suffering from a nervous breakdown. One day she disappeared from the nursing home and was found the following morning in the Fountain Lake.

August 1926, Norman Wilfred Gilbert. Forty-five-year-old dentist Norman Gilbert left a letter stating, "You will find my body in the Rec., at the back of the football ground." He had been suffering from poor health and depression. His body was found by a NPBHS student in the Park a week later, with several self-inflicted wounds.

April 23, 1937, Frederic Wilson Whitaker. Fifty-six-year-old Frederic Whitaker won the contract to rebuild The Poet's Bridge in 1937. Unfortunately, he had a heart attack while working on the bridge and died.

July 7, 1941, Clara Emily Mary Bingham. Seventy-six-year-old Clara Bingham was found in the Fountain Lake. Concern was raised when her neighbour noticed her front door was left open, and her milk was still on the doorstep. Presumed suicide.

August 18, 1943, Barry Frank Brown. Four-year-old Barry Brown drowned in the lake at Brooklands. Nobody witnessed what happened and it was presumed to be an accident.

June 12, 1945, Agnes Minnie McKenzie. Forty-two-year-old Agnes Mckenzie from Kaponga was staying with friends at Brooklands. When they got up on the June 12<sup>th</sup> Agnes was gone. A search found her body in the main lake in the Park.

June 13, 1950, Douglas Mathieson Clarke. Seventy-five-year-old Doulas Clarke suffered a heart attack while walking through Brooklands Park.

May 17, 1957, Rose Wilkie McEwen. Fifty-nine-year-old Rose McEwen was found drowned in the main lake. There were no suspicious circumstances.

January 27, 1985, Auckland boy. A sixteen-year-old boy from Auckland who was part of a group of about 50 boating on the lake decided to jump in and go for a swim. Unfortunately, he got into difficulties and drowned.

November 21, 1986, Wendy Snowden. Wendy was brutally attacked and left unconscious while jogging through Brooklands. She never regained consciousness and died from her injuries sixteen days later.

January 6, 1993, Joseph Scotty Greenwood. Sixteen-year-old Joseph Greenwood tragically drowned in the main lake. He and a friend were riding through the Park at around midnight. Joseph must have crashed his bike and been thrown into the lake unbeknown to his friend.

June 23, 2001, Douglas Ferabend, aged 91, was found in the main lake.

## Curators/ Custodians

### Charles Carnell

1876 - 1878

Charles Carnell was a native of Ottery St Mary, Devonshire, England and the first custodian of the Recreation Grounds. He came to New Plymouth due to his service with the 65th Regiment, which was involved with the Taranaki Wars, and must have decided to stay on after retiring or being discharged from the service.

At the meeting of the Recreation Grounds Board on Friday 17 November 1876, it was resolved: "That Mr. Charles Carnell (being a resident adjacent to the grounds), be placed in charge thereof, in consideration of his being employed to work thereon for two days a week, and have full power to impound all cattle found trespassing thereon, and exercise the usual duties of a custodian." (Taranaki Herald, 22 November 1876)

In his "Pukekura Park, its Origin and Development. A brief History" (Taranaki Herald 4 August 1916), Robert Clinton Hughes had this to say of Carnell: "He had a happy and placid Sancho Panza appearance, but his age and stoutness were rather against him." (Sancho Panza is Don Quixote's short, potbellied squire in the novel Don Quixote.)

### Mr Breidecker

1878 - 1880

At the September 1878 Board meeting the following was decided: "That a permanent gardener and custodian be engaged at 20s per week, a three-roomed cottage being found him, and half an acre of ground rent free." Mr. Breidecker was appointed and became the second custodian of the Recreation Grounds. Breidecker was already set up in the grounds, having leased part of it since late 1875 to plant and cultivate a vineyard and strawberry garden. The vineyard was situated in the part of the Park now known as Stainton Dell and flowed up onto the Eastern Hillside behind the racecourse. Also, from the beginning of 1878 the board had employed either Mr Breidecker or his son to weed flower beds in the garden, so his appointment perhaps ended up being an obvious choice. Breidecker remained two or three years and then went to the Hokianga District, where he successfully cultivated grapes and made wine.

Breidecker was succeeded sometime in the first half of 1880 by Darby Claffey. Breidecker, however, remained working his vineyard for another year until he surrendered his lease on it at the end of May 1881, before moving to Hokianga.

### Darby Claffey

1880 - 1896

In his "Pukekura Park, its Origin and Development. A brief History" (Taranaki Herald 4 August 1916), Robert Clinton Hughes had this to say of Darby Claffey: "... Mr. Darby Claffey, a young man fresh from County Cork. Darby, as he was generally called, knew little of botany or horticulture, but he was hardy and strong and not afraid of work. He was skilled in making sod banks, and most of his work of this kind stands well to this day. He was a good sample of an Irish peasant. His native wit and droll sayings amused visitors, and also brightened many an

hour which the writer has spent working alongside of him. To him fell most of the heavy and rough work involved in turning a wilderness into a garden. He served the board for many years, but when the development of the grounds seemed to demand a better knowledge of trees and of horticulture and landscape gardening, Darby (to the regret of the writer) was superseded.”

During Darby Claffey’s employment a lot of his time would have been spent developing pathways around the grounds. In 1886 he increased the area of the Main Lake south of The Poet’s Bridge by more than one acre. Other projects he was probably involved with were: cutting the paths on Cannon Hill, installation of the cannons on its summit and the creation of Fountain Lake.

Claffey was well known for the donkey and cart that he owned. Like its owner, the donkey was apparently well-liked by visitors to the Park – especially children. The donkey and cart would have obviously played a useful part in many of the projects such as the creation of the Sports Ground, Fountain Lake and the new pathways around the two lakes. However as popular as the donkey was, there were times when it could also be a bit stubborn – as this item from the *Taranaki Herald* on 22 December 1894 shows: “There was plenty of fun provided in the Recreation Grounds on Friday afternoon by the antics of “Darby’s Ass,” who refused to be ridden. The Recreation Grounds pet dislodged several, including his owner, but at length three lads succeeded in keeping their seats and riding the animal around.”

Plant expertise was not necessarily Claffey’s strength, as indicated by this excerpt from Robert Clinton Hughes “Pukekura Park, its Origin and Development. A brief History” (*Taranaki Herald* August 4, 1916): “On one occasion a visitor, having heard there was a fine display of Native convolvulus in the grounds, asked Darby where it was to be seen. Darby, who made no pretence of botanical learning and yet had no desire to proclaim his deficiency, led the visitor to a lovely clump of furze (gorse) in full bloom.”

Claffey was let go at the beginning of 1896, following the drowning of George Duncan. He witnessed Duncan’s suicide. Claffey was on Cannon Hill cutting the grass when he saw Duncan jump off The Poet’s Bridge. Following the inquest, it was felt by some that he had shown a lack of action and had not done enough to try and save Mr Duncan. The *Taranaki Herald* on 17 December 1895 gave a report of the inquest and the jury’s verdict: “From the evidence the jury are of the opinion the deceased, George Edward Duncan, came to his death through drowning in the lake in the Recreation Grounds on December the 16th while temporarily insane. The jury regret that the custodian so far lost his presence of mind as not to utilise the appliances provided for these cases, and would urge upon the Recreation Grounds Board the necessity of instructing him to use the appliances immediately in future.” In January 1896 the board gave Claffey three months’ notice of his dismissal. Claffey died two years later at the age of 49.

## **Charles Edgecombe**

1896 - 1905

Charles Edgecombe was born in New Plymouth in 1843 and was the son of William and Mary Edgecombe, who had arrived in New Plymouth aboard the *William Bryan* in 1841.

In his “Pukekura Park, its Origin and Development. A brief History” (*Taranaki Herald* 4 August 1916), Robert Clinton Hughes had this to say of Charles Edgecombe: “... Mr. Charles Edgecombe, a gardener had a good knowledge of native trees. He served the board for some years.”

Following Claffey’s dismissal the board advertised the vacant position of Custodian. The *Taranaki Herald* on 7 March 1896 reported: “There were fifteen applications for the position of



## Curators/ Custodians

custodian of the Recreation Grounds. The names of Messrs C. Edgecombe and H. Tiplady were selected from the list, and the former was finally given the appointment. The salary is £1 5s a week with cottage, ground and firewood.” Edgecombe commenced duties on April 4, 1896.

During Charles Edgecombe’s time as custodian some of the main works that he was involved with were the development/establishment and maintenance of plant nurseries in the Park, the creation and development of Manhattan Island in 1899, the formation of the Vogelstown Walk (Scanlan Walk) in 1901 and the establishment of fish ponds (Hatchery Lawn) by the Acclimatisation Society for raising trout in 1902 (the Acclimatisation Society paid Edgecombe and assistant custodian Robert Mace to feed the fry).

Edgecombe went on a number of plant collecting trips on behalf of the Recreation Grounds Board. He spent a couple of days at Ratanui for the collection of native trees and shrubs. He collected 300 native plants which he set in a nursery bed – 200 from the Meeting of the Waters and the balance from Brooklands. He visited Tarata, where he collected ferns and shrubs. He also went to Raglan a couple of times collecting: mangleo, tānekaha, wharangi, native heath, umbrella fern, together with a quantity of kōwhai and mānuka seed.

### **Robert Mace**

1905 - 1908

Robert Hyde Mace was born in Funchal, Madeira, Portugal on 10 November 1851, the son of Francis Thomas Mace and Isabella Broughton. The Mace family arrived in New Plymouth on 2 December 1852, on the sailing ship St Michael, and settled at Omata.

In his “Pukekura Park, its Origin and Development. A brief History” (Taranaki Herald 4 August 1916), Robert Clinton Hughes had this to say of Robert Mace: “.... Robert Mace, a gardener who also had a good knowledge of native trees. He resigned due to deafness.”

Robert Mace first became an employee of the Recreation Grounds Board as assistant custodian in March 1897. He was employed because the committee that had overseen the development of the original sportsground had been dissolved in February 1897 and the ground had come back under the control of the Recreation Grounds Board, which obviously would have meant an increased workload for the custodian.

Robert Mace subsequently became custodian in 1905, after the resignation of Edgecombe.

Mace was involved with significant planting programmes in both 1906 and 1907, which added to the range of plants in the Park. Details of these plantings can be found in the Planting History section of the book. Robert Mace resigned towards the end of 1907.

### **W. W. Smith**

1908 - 1920

William Walter Smith was appointed curator in 1908 and held the position until 1920. His influence on the Park was noticeable and still is to this day. He was instrumental in replacing a lot of the original pine trees in favour of natives. As well as being a renowned plantsman he was also well respected in the fields of ornithology, entomology and meteorology. He is famous for being the first person to breed kiwi in captivity, which he did in the early 1910s in the Park. Later in the decade he also successfully bred weka. At the time, his kiwi breeding was not well recognised. Where he bred the kiwi is debateable. It is the writer’s belief that Smith made a purpose-built building near the curator’s house on Victoria Road. (What is certain, he did not breed kiwi on the island that used to be in Fountain Lake).

He grew up in Hawick Roxburghshire (Scotland). From an early age he had an absorbing interest in the plant and animal worlds. On leaving high school he became apprenticed to the Forestry Department, after which he worked in big private gardens in England for three years. He then spent about eight months in France, where he learned the language and later, attracted largely by the novelty of its plant life, came to a decision to take his passage to New Zealand.

His first position in New Zealand was on the estate (Mount Peel Station) of the late Hon. J. B. Acland, on the Rangitata River, in Canterbury. While he was there, he devoted much time to the study of moa remains, many of which were to be found in the Albury district. He also studied the life history and habits of the kea. His next move was to Windsor Park, Oamaru, after which he became curator of the botanical gardens at Ashburton, a position he held for 10 years. During this time anxiety at the wholesale destruction of native bush led him to advocate vigorously for the preservation of the country's scenic wealth. As a result of this work he was approached by Prime Minister Richard Seddon, at whose request he became secretary of the newly set up Scenery Preservation Commission, which travelled for three years in both islands. Its business was to select areas for preservation including all classes of scenery, also ancient Māori pas. As the result of the commission's recommendations to the government many scenic and historic places in Taranaki were proclaimed as reserves.

He is recognised as being the last person to sight a huia when he came across it in the bush at the back of the Tararua Range in 1907.

Smith left the Park under a cloud of controversy. When Smith started in 1908 his salary was subsidised by the council. For this it was expected that he would spend time outside the Park advising other entities such as the Hospital Board. At the end of the 1910s the Park Board had a number of changes. Some of the new members weren't happy with the amount of time Smith was away from the Park. The secretary Percy Stainton had a run-in with Smith, prompting Smith to resign. It got to a point where Smith was threatening to sue Stainton.

Smith was responsible for introducing many new native plants into the grounds. He developed Smith Walk, Palm Lawn, Sunken Dell, A fernery on Manhattan Island, planting around the Serpentine and Tōtara Hillside, plus many more areas.

## **Charles Revell**

1922

In June 1922 at the suggestion of the Sports Ground Committee Charles Revell was appointed custodian at a salary of £4 5s per week. The agreement was that Revell worked two days a week on the Sports Ground and for this the Sports Ground Committee paid the board £75 per annum in quarterly payments. Unfortunately, Mr. Revell died of pneumonia in December 1922 at the age of 43.

## **George Tunnecliffe**

1923 - 1924

Following the death of Charles Revell George Tunnecliffe took over the role of curator. He was already employed by the board. He kept the position until May of 1924 at which time he retired due to ill health.

## **Thomas Horton**

1924 - 1949

Thomas Horton was born on the 18th of October 1867, in Tysoe, Warwickshire, England. He came to New Zealand with his family in 1874 aboard the sailing ship, Crusader. During the voyage he celebrated his seventh Birthday. The family settled in Rangiora.

He married his first wife, Sarah in November 1888 and they had nine children, six boys and three girls. Unfortunately, Sarah died in 1917. He married his second wife May, in New Plymouth in 1931. They had one son. Horton by then was in his mid-sixties.

He made his entrance into the nursery business at the age of 11 when he started a 7-year apprenticeship with W.E. Ivory (Currently Riverside Horticulture) nurseryman Rangiora. During his apprenticeship he attended night school conducted by Mr. Elderton an eminent English scholar, receiving his principal botanical and general education. As a young man he played the cornet in the salvation Army brass band and was band master for a while.

When he was 21, for health reasons he accepted the position of foreman at John Goddard's nursery Havelock North and at the age of 27 accepted a job as manager of Fernleigh Nurseries at Mangatainoka, near Pahiatua where his job was to establish an orchard on newly felled bush. He needed to clear stumps, level the land and plant. Though hard work it was satisfying. But after three years he was given notice to cease operations, with the company still owing him several hundred pounds. Horton with a family of three children was struggling to make ends meet so did odd jobs, gardening and pruning etc.

Then he had some good luck, a friend offered to sell him 2 acres of newly felled bush, on easy terms, in the 40-mile bush at Pahiatua close to where a railway station was going to be built. Also close by was a railway yard full of thousands of Tōtara sleepers which had to be adzed and bored. Horton put in a price for doing this and spent many months working 8 hours a day doing this and then four hours each evening stumping his land. When his land was ready, he planted vegetables which he sold to the many railway workers. After two years he had paid for his land and bought a further five acres.

A chance encounter with Prime Minister, Richard Seddon while Horton was on his land stumping proved very fortuitous. Seddon, seeing how industrious he was offered to help him in any way he could. Before embarking on a trip to Australia, Seddon gave Horton a letter of introduction which opened up many doors. Seddon insisted he see the premiers of the states he visited which proved very fruitful for Horton.

In 1898 he set up "Premier Nurseries" Pahiatua. The nursery grew large quantities of hedge and shelter trees, advertising as many as 75,000 plants. However, he needed to expand to keep up with demand. By 1902 he was advertising 600,000 plants. Horton was a prolific advertiser, and in the six years from opening Premier Nurseries, he posted more than 3000 substantial newspaper advertisements.

By 1905 he had 24 acres, and employed 28 men. In the same year he purchased 20 acres of the famous Frimley Estate near Hastings where he established Horton's Frimley Nurseries whilst also maintaining his business at Pahiatua. By 1907 he had 85 acres, not only was his business and staff growing rapidly but also his global reputation. By 1910 he employed a permanent staff of 97 men, he had seven travellers and had established agencies in various parts of New Zealand and abroad.

At Frimley his principal study was the growing and cultivation of pedigree fruit trees and he sent millions of these to fruit growing districts in not only New Zealand but also Australia, the Argentine and South Africa. Horton did a lot of pioneering work and catalogued no fewer than

700 varieties of apples alone. Every year from 1899 to 1917 he visited Australia, exploring all the commercial orchards and fruit tree nurseries searching for new outstanding varieties.

In 1910 he accepted an invitation from the government of Paraguay to give advice on fruit culture and also travelled extensively in Argentina. He saw the trade possibilities that existed in South America and established a Buenos Aires agency through which he distributed hundreds of thousands of fruit trees. He revisited South America in 1914, and at Buenos Aires staged a comprehensive show of his various kinds of fruit. As a result, he got many substantial orders for trees. Unfortunately, before the orders could be filled war broke out, and New Zealand ships that had previously called regularly into Buenos Aires and Montevideo were being diverted to other routes. To keep faith with his numerous South American clients he chartered a ship. The ship left Napier in 1915 flying Horton's own house flag bearing the slogan "Horton's Trees Grow". However, the cost made it impossible to continue trading with South America and eventually trade was abandoned.

Horton also developed a 90 acres orchard at Nelson, concentrating on varieties of apples suitable for the export trade. In 1902 he was a foundation member of the Horticultural Trade Association of New Zealand.

In 1903 during the early days of the export apple industry Thomas Horton was appointed to the pomologist board to give advice on the best varieties of apple to plant in various parts of the country. The board decided to confine the number of varieties to twelve. Three years later he went to England and earned a Diploma at the Royal Horticultural Society. While there he won the championship of Great Britain, judged by the Government Pomologist to be the best collection comprising 200 dishes of fresh fruit.

Besides his trips to England, South America and Australia he also made three world tours collecting new and rare plants he thought might be useful in New Zealand.

Although Horton had been extremely successful, because of circumstances beyond his control he found himself in financial difficulties and in August 1922 he begrudgingly handed over his affairs to the Official Assignee declaring himself bankrupt.

After a short spell of travelling, he found himself in New Plymouth starting at Pukekura Park in August 1924. His intention was to stay at the Park only one year but ended up remaining twenty-five years during which time he made his mark.

One of his first notable actions was the planting of kauri, tōtara and rimu up the pathway now named "Horton walk". Between 1926 and 1928 he faced the challenge of creating the Fernery. Due to the massive amounts of earth dug out of the banks of the hillside to form the Fernery he had the foresight to simultaneously create Stainton Dell and Fred Parker lawn.

Horton was a keen bowler and soon after the Fernery opened, he left on a lengthy bowling tour and holiday which took him around Australia, Sri Lanka, Europe, the UK, North America and Canada. He made effective use of this trip visiting many Botanical gardens and nurseries and arranging to have many new plant species sent to the Park.

Between 1935 and 1939 he was responsible for the planting of the "Fillis Street Native Botanical Reserve" which was some four acres planted with approximately 1200 trees of over 200 varieties. Controversially many *Pinus radiata* were felled during the development stage of this area between 1931 and 1935. During the period 1936 to 1938, not long after the addition of Brooklands to the Park, he promoted and successfully completed the planting of the Kauri Grove. This work transformed 10 acres of land in Brooklands that had been left to gorse etc. He planted some 3815 trees of 25 different varieties including 500 kauri. He was also responsible in 1942 for the planting of the Kaimata Street shelter belt.

## Curators/ Custodians

In 1938 Horton was made an Honorary Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Horticulture.

During WWII work in the Park slowed down significantly with men having gone off to war, and Horton by this time was in his seventies. Thomas Horton finally retired in 1949 at the age of 81 and died in New Plymouth on May 1, 1958.

### **Alois Sconbachler**

1949

Alois Sconbachler was born in Switzerland. He came to New Zealand in 1912 and worked on the land before starting work in the Park in December 1928 as a gardener. He worked in the Park for 25 years until June 1954. He was acting curator during the period between Thomas Horton retiring and Jack Goodwin starting. For the last sixteen years of his time at the Park he was the caretaker of the Sportsground and well respected for the way the pitch was presented.

Every morning for twenty years he fed the Park ducks breadcrumbs at 8.00 am and admitted that "After twenty years I still can't tell one from another".

### **Jack Goodwin**

1949 - 1966

He was born in Waimate, south Canterbury, 1912. His interest in gardening started at a very young age. He was growing hyacinths when he was 4 years old and sweet peas as a 5-year-old. At school his studies included, dairy science, agricultural science and general principals of botany.

During the depression of the 1930s he travelled around taking any job on offer and even tried his hand at gold prospecting in Otago. He worked in tobacco, hops and orchards in the Nelson district and seasonally he would go down south and do wool classing, a skill he had studied for as a teenager. In the mid 1930s he spent 3 years as a head gardener at a sheep station in the Nelson district, during which time he took a correspondence course in horticulture through Otago University. He then went to Christchurch getting a position as a nursery salesman during which time he also studied dendrology. He was at the nursery about 3 years. In 1940 he was appointed Senior Gardener and Nursery Foreman for the Christchurch City Council, where he became involved with street beautification, then spent two years in the army as a quartermaster. From 1944-1949 he was responsible for laying out the grounds, practical training of horticultural students and further rehabilitation of service personnel at the emerging Massey College (now Univ.) Palmerston Nth.

In 1949 he successfully applied for the role as Curator of Pukekura Park. His brief was to bring back the visitors to the Park. He had his work cut out as the Park had been neglected in the 1940s because of the war. Many areas like the Fillis Street reserve had become severely overgrown with weeds such as convolvulus and also a lot of sycamore and strawberry tree seedlings.

There were many changes made in the Park during his tenure, including: a new curator's office, children's playground, Queen Elizabeth II fountain, Bowl of Brooklands and a large plant nursery at Brooklands.

He transformed both sides of the main lake in the 1960s when over thirty huge pines were removed from the western hillside and over twenty from the eastern hillside. These were replaced by mainly native trees.

## **George Fuller**

1966 - 1990

George MacMurray Fuller was born at Henderson on 9th January 1929. His parents had a family orchard. One of their neighbours was an orchid breeder who encouraged him to go to New Plymouth to learn more about plant nurseries.

He left school at the age of fifteen to work in Palmer's first nursery in Glen Eden, and then spent time at Duncan and Davies Nursery in New Plymouth. While he was in New Plymouth, he met Fred Parker who had a garden full of plants and was an orchid enthusiast. He worked weekends in Fred's garden.

In 1947 he went to England. He began work at Sanders Nursery in St Albans north of London and spent four years there. He then spent two years as a student at Kew Gardens. His next appointment was in Sweden working for an orchid grower to grow plants hydroponically under glass. After six years in Sweden, he met an English man who was starting up a big propagation nursery in Malta and invited George to pioneer the development of that nursery. Four years later the nursery was producing one million chrysanthemum cuttings a week.

After sixteen years in Europe, he decided to return home. Here he obtained a job assembling Volkswagens in Otahuhu and declined another job offer as a gardener in the Auckland City Council Parks division.

Thinking he would obtain a job in Palmerston North he travelled there and on coming back through New Plymouth he called on Fred Parker who was planning to donate his extensive orchid collection to Pukekura Park but required assurances that they had a competent person to look after it.

So, it came about that George moved into Pukekura Park in early 1965 to induct Fred's orchids into the Fernery. He was made Curator of the Park the following year and lived on site in the Curator's house on Victoria Road with his family.

George was curator of the Park for twenty-five years from 1966 to 1990 and left his mark. He was not only a plantsman, but an ecologist and engineer – he understood the factors affecting the Park. His environmental awareness came to the fore as he became ever more involved with the land. Much of his concern within the Park lay with the passage of water through the area and the deterioration in the condition of the pathways.

With Ian McDowell, George planned and built the waterfall, a project of which he was immensely proud.

The next major project was the Waterwheel. This was erected in 1976. The wheel itself had been sourced from the Omata dairy factory where his son, Chris had a holiday job at the time. Once again George teamed up with Ian McDowell to complete another successful project.

He loved all trees which became even more evident when he worked with Cory Smith to compile a book about the trees they regarded as significant, both within the Park and beyond it.

He was awarded the MBE in 1990 for his services to the community. In 2009 he wore this medal proudly during his successful campaign to save the trees on the Bowl Road when the New Plymouth District Council decided to form a new road connecting the Racecourse with the Brooklands Bowl. In 2010 The Taranaki Daily News voted him Person of the Year.

## **Anthony Joines**

1990 - 1994

Anthony Joines grew up in Wellington. He completed a degree in horticulture at Massey University in 1986, then worked at Duncan and Davies for four years. His specialty interest was New Zealand ferns.

Joines had the luxury of working under George Fuller for just over a year, before taking over the role as curator in November 1990. His title was Pukekura Park Officer. The change of title was due to structural changes within the NPDC.

When he started his primary goal was to introduce forward work and labour planning. The planning programme was divided into weekly, monthly, six-monthly and yearly plans of maintenance. Including: pruning, spraying, planting projects and routine maintenance.

Labour planning involved regular staff meetings with the aim of making workers more invested in the Park's development. Staff were split into small units which were rotated between different areas of the Park. When Joines took over the focus changed from mostly recreation to mostly horticulture, introducing more colour and interest to the garden.

Probably the biggest impact made by Joines in his short stint at the Park was the development of stage 1 of the Japanese Hillside made possible when a grove of century old pines were removed.

Government legislation was introduced requiring all Parks to have their own management plans. The first for *Pukekura Park Management Plan* was drafted in 1993 and Anthony Joines was a major contributor to the plan.

Anthony left in April 1994 due to another restructuring of the NPDC's Parks division. He became senior assets officer of the asset unit that owned and managed the Council's parks. His successor Ian McDowell worked for the Park's business unit (Parkscape Services) which was contracted to the asset unit to do the work in the Park.

## **Ian McDowell**

Curator 1994 - 1999

Ian was raised in Essex on the edge of Epping Forest. He developed a passion for trees and shrubs. He did a gardening apprenticeship at Bournemouth, before working at the John Innes Horticultural Institute. After that he got a student's place at the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew. He was offered two jobs in New Zealand, one in New Plymouth and the other in Timaru. Some of his colleagues at Kew were Kiwis and they recommended New Plymouth, and he took their advice. He came to New Zealand with his new bride Ann on a £10 assisted passage.

His first job was with the Parks and Reserves Department in 1963 as a technical assistant. He had several different jobs in the department rising to being Deputy Director of Parks. But for the last five years of his career, he stepped back into a hands-on horticultural role as curator of Pukekura Park.

As well as being a knowledgeable plantsman he was also a talented artist. He designed the illuminated waterfall at the north-west corner of the main lake. He also drew the first tourist map of the Park (see page 97) . Another passion of Ian's was as a botanical artist.

## **Bryan Gould**

1999 - 2006

Bryan Gould was born in Plymouth England. He started his career as a tree surgeon in London working for a local authority before moving to a private company, Southern Tree Surgeons. He then spent six years managing the prestigious Winkworth Arboretum in Guilford, near London. He moved to Melbourne in 1988 to become Parks manager for Melbourne City before shifting to Auckland in 1994 where he held the position of chief arborist with Auckland City Council. His professional qualifications included a professional diploma in arboriculture and a graduate diploma in horticulture.

He started at Pukekura Park in November 1999. Plans were already in place for major changes to the zoo and the Fernery, so he arrived at a busy time.

Following more reorganisation in 2002, Gould was made manager of Premier Parks, a position he held until 2006.

## **Chris Connolly**

2007 - 2019

In 2006 there was another reorganisation in the council's Parks department. The Park finally got a dedicated curator. Chris Connolly was Parkscape manager until the position was disestablished in 2006. Chris had been working for the council for 12 years in charge of maintaining the districts reserves, sportsgrounds and cemeteries.

During his time as curator, he oversaw the upgrading of the Queen Elizabeth II fountain, a new lookout platform overlooking the main lake, a new playground, a pest management programme and upgrading of the Fernery and display houses.

Under his leadership the Park also won the international Green Flag award for six years running, a measure of the world's top parks and green spaces.

Before coming to New Plymouth Chris worked as a teacher in Auckland, parks worker at Gore Borough Council and parks supervisor at Manukau City Council.

## **Kristian Davies**

2018 – 2022

In 1996 Kristian Studied Horticulture Science at Unitec in Auckland.

From 1997 he then spent six years at Auckland Botanical Gardens. The first three years as a trainee developing his horticulture knowledge working all around the gardens. The next three years he spent as the camellia and magnolia collection curator.

In 2004 Kristian went to London and in 2005 he started Koru Gardens Ltd. This involved landscape design, installation and maintenance.

He returned to New Zealand in 2018 to take up the position of curator at Pukekura Park. The major projects during his tenure were the Fountain Lake dam spillway upgrade and the desilting project using the Swedish Truxor amphibious dredge. The other notable event during his time at the Park was the outbreak of COVID.

Kristian left the Park in 2022 to take a position as Head Gardener at Pukeiti.



**Sheryl Clyma**

2022 - present

Sheryl was born in New Plymouth and attended Spotswood College. While in the 6<sup>th</sup> form in 1981 she worked one day a week at the Fernery in Pukekura Park for work experience.

In 1982 she started a four-year Apprenticeship for NPDC Parks Department, this involved working in Pukekura Park and around the district's gardens. She then became a tradesperson working in the around town teams before leaving in 1988 to start a family.

Between 1988 and 1998 she continued to work in Horticulture, working part time at Bell Block Garden Centre and maintaining private gardens.

In 1998 she started work for the Department of Corrections as a Horticultural Instructor/Prison Officer based at New Plymouth Prison. Here she trained prisoners in horticulture unit standards, maintained the prison grounds, and ran a large riparian nursery, supplying plants to the Taranaki Regional Council Riparian scheme.

In 2012, Sheryl went back to NPDC as the Assistant Curator at Pukekura Park. She continued in that role until September 2022 when she successfully applied for the position of Curator following the departure of Kristian Davies.

## Park Features

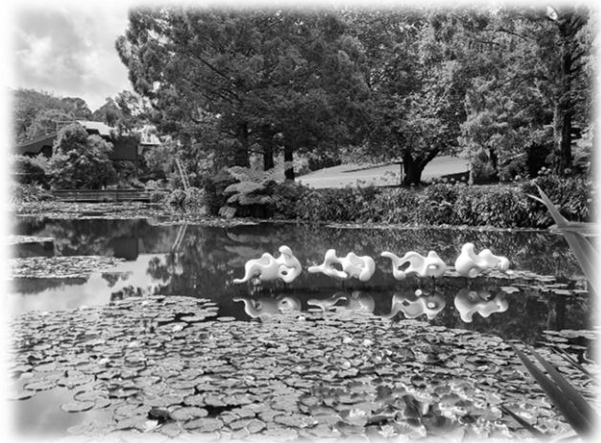
In the following pages there are expanded details of some of the features in the Park.

Included are:

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## Aotearoa

The proposal to put the Michael Smither's sculpture, Aotearoa, in the Brooklands lily pond, was first put to New Plymouth District Council CEO Roger Kerr-Newell in December 2006, by architect Terry Boon, long-time friend of Michael Smither. Kerr-Newell liked the idea and put it to the council's policy committee on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2007. Michael Smither wrote the following artist statement, which was presented to the committee.



### Artists Statement.

"In the 1980s, when I lived up on Carrington Rd, I became a keen observer of clouds.

I made a series of drawings and paintings exploring, the rhythms and structures of clouds.

As a result of these works, I made another series of small three-dimensional wax sculptures, and in the 1990s, I developed these into larger plaster of Paris works that I cast into bronze, as I could afford it. The last of these, and the largest I began in my parents garage in Doralto Road, and after my mother's death transported to my studio in Otama, where it was completed, in the summer of 2005, 2006. I had been working on this sculpture over a period of 15 years.

Its plaster version, it was heavy and required two or three strong helpers to rotate it into a new working position. As a consequence, it remained in one or other, of these positions, for long periods of time, and each position developed a very individual aspect. This enabled me to consider casting it four times, and by rotating each unit along its long axis, create a line of clouds. This rotation beautifully describes the evolution of the clouds structure.

It now became the long white cloud, and it was obvious it needed to hover over and be reflected in water. I could envisage no better position for Aotearoa, than in one of the Pukekura Park Lakes.

I've had a connection with Pukekura Park since my grandfather pushed me around the lakes in my pram. As a schoolboy on the lakes in rowboats. As a family man, caretaker, and resident artist at The Gables, which enabled daily contact with the Park.

Aotearoa with its symbolism and deeper meanings, will be a valuable development of the Parks already significant local, national and international reputation.

I am not asking for a fee for this work, and the work itself I would like you to consider as my gift to the city of New Plymouth. I would however, expect the expenses of casting, painting, transportation and siting of the work be met by the New Plymouth District Council. As the work is not a commissioned work. I retain the copyright of the sculpture itself, but would be happy for council to use its image in promotional or advertising for New Plymouth City and Parks."

The policy committee accepted the proposal and sent it to the full council meeting for final approval on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2007.

At this meeting George Fuller gave a lengthy submission, highlighting his concerns about the location in the lily pond. He asserted that to people entering Brooklands from Pukekura Park through the rhododendron dell, the sculpture hovering over the waterlily lake would be an, in your face experience, which would be setting a precedent without parallel in the Park's history. He pointed out that features like the Fountain, the Waterwheel and the waterfall were unobtrusive, and if idle could easily be missed by visitors walking within metres of them. He was trying to make the point that they had to be discovered. This is also true for the Fernery.

Other concerns included, algae and mould, ducks fouling the sculpture, graffiti by people swimming out to it. People using it as target practice, hurling bottles at it etc. As curator, George had lived in the Park for 25 years, and he was well aware of the mischief people could get up to in the evenings. The



Artist's impression of what the sculpture would look like in the lake.

This was part of the presentation on April 3, 2007

The main reason Smither picked the lake was for the reflection, and George suggested that keeping the lake clear of lilies to maintain the reflection, would be difficult. As an alternate location he suggested the sculpture would be better placed somewhere on the towns foreshore where Michael Smither had already contributed significantly to its improvement. Marise Keat and Joy Hall also made deputations expressing concerns about the location in the lilypond. Smither maintained that this was the only location that he would accept.

Smither, who attended the meeting rebutted all of George Fuller's concerns and stated that: "As far as drunks swimming out to it, and posing on it for photographs, I think is a bloody good idea. He's a bit worried about them throwing beer bottles at it and making it bong, that would be good for Womad. They could all be out there throwing bottles at it. It would take that sort of punishment."

Because of the opposition, the decision to proceed was deferred until the next council meeting, which was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2007. The estimated cost was \$97,000, to be paid for by The Art in Public Places Fund, which was set up for purchasing works such as the sculpture.

The breakdown of the estimate was: \$57,000 for the production of 4 cast bronze clouds, \$10,000, for painting, \$20,000 for fixings and foundations, \$10,000 contingency.

At the next council meeting on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, George Fuller made another deputation. This time he concentrated on the fact that, the lilies would always be an issue, interfering with the reflection in the lake.

Michael, at the February meeting, had explained how he was inspired by a horse sculpture in Japan. He said he was able to get close to it, and from every angle, it was a masterpiece. George Fuller pointed out, that in the lake, you would neither be able to get close to the sculpture, nor walk round it, therefore, not benefit from the inspiration behind the piece.

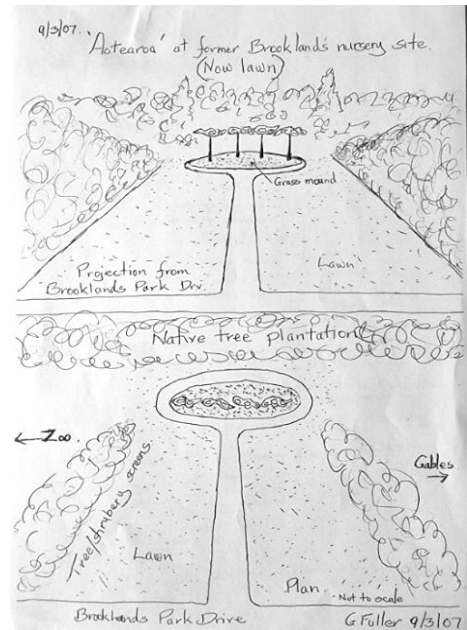
## Park Features

Fuller offered an alternative location in the Park, between the zoo and the Gables, where he suggested elevating the sculpture.

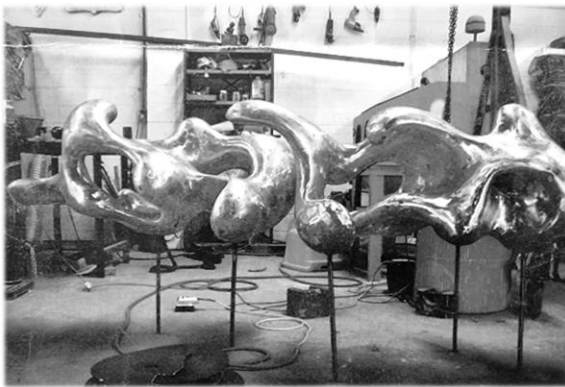
Despite the opposition the council made the decision to proceed. Architect Terry Boon offered to oversee the project at no cost.

The 4 bronze clouds, were cast at the Monument foundry, in Auckland, and delivered to New Plymouth on June 7, 2007.

The clouds were painted by Greg Brown, Master painter, using a 4 coat 2-pack Resene system. The colour was alabaster. The system comprised a Resene vinyl etch adhesion primer, Resene armourcote 510 high solids epoxy, and a topcoat of, Resene Uracryl 403 gloss finish, which is good in a marine environment and also anti-graffiti.



George Fuller's proposed location near The Gables.



Castings in Auckland foundry.

discovered that the foundation would have to go down 6 meters to solid ground, instead of the estimated 3 meters. To keep within budget the design changed to a platform attached to wooden piles. The platform was designed by Terry Boon.

The final cost of the installation was \$94,217, consisting of, \$55,553 for the production of 4 cast bronze clouds, \$970 for painting the clouds, \$27,867 for fixings and foundations, and \$9,827 for contingencies such as, internal staff costs, turf reinstatement, contract preparation costs and a plaque.

Whitaker Civil Engineering Ltd carried out the foundation investigation, supplied the tanalised piles constructed and fitted the support assembly and erected the sculptures. Installation took place during September 2007.

The clouds sit on a platform, supported by 4 - 8 meter by 275mm Diameter, tanalised timber piles. The original design was to have each cloud, perched on its own concrete foundation, but following an engineering survey of the lakebed, it was



Installing Aotearoa, September 24, 2007.

## Band Rotunda

The story of the Band Rotunda, often referred to as a band stand or pavilion started in 1882 when the Recreation Ground Board was approached by architect, Henry Edmonds who submitted his plans for a rotunda. Edmonds probably had some tie to the town band. The design was considered both suitable and ornamental and was approved by the Board. The estimated cost was between £70 and £80. It was decided that the pavilion should be erected at the knoll on which Mr. Furlong's mirror stood, on the south face of Cannon Hill. The Board anticipated that the cost would be raised from the proceeds of concerts given by the town's band. Unfortunately, when the band was approached, they declined to make that commitment. Due to lack of finance the rotunda was put on hold until 1885.



Band Rotunda, Circa 1905.

At their meeting in November 1885, the Board decided to erect a band stand and ask the local architects to gratuitously supply a plan capable of extension when funds permitted (Henry Edmonds had left New Plymouth). In other words, they wanted to build it in stages. A deputation from the New Plymouth Town Band met with J. T. Davis (Board Chairman) to fix a location. Again, the area where Furlong's mirror stood seemed to be the most acceptable location. At that time Cannon Hill extended further south, so as to accommodate their preferred location part of the hill had to be cut back and one of the largest pine trees in the grounds felled. The tree was probably planted on the opening day of the Recreation Grounds.

At the December 1885 meeting, the Board received a design from architect James Sanderson who in the early 1880s had been in partnership with Henry Edmonds. It was thought that the structure would be quite an ornament to the grounds. The rotunda was described as having a conical roof, supported on eight pillars, which rested on an octagonal shaped base of concrete. iron railings running from pillar to pillar. Entrance was by four steps which were continued all-round the structure. At the meeting Sanderson said he was willing to supply full detailed drawings and also offered to supervise the construction. In March 1886 Messrs. Scott Bros, of

## Park Features

Christchurch, were asked to provide an estimate to supply the rotunda. The estimate was not well received by the cash strapped Board, and it was decided to ask Scott Bros. if they could supply the structure in parts.

Fundraising started in September 1886 with a fancy-dress ball organised by the Foresters' followed soon after by a fireworks display. The Board received £25 from Jas Paul (Mayor) who was one of the patrons of the ball and £10 10s from the fireworks display. The work started by cutting back Cannon Hill and levelling a site for the Rotunda foundation. This was done by Mr. J. Roberts at 5½d a yard. The excavated earth was deposited below the dam in order to raise the pathway by the Lily Pond. It was noted in April 1887 Board meeting that Mr. Roberts had moved 151 yards of material.

The earthworks were finished by the beginning of March and Mr. H. Hooker, the contractor selected to build the base, began immediately. Unfortunately, two acts of vandalism caused delays in its completion, however it was finished in time to be used by a band during Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebrations in June 1887.

Another fancy fair was organised raising £61 14s. The Board went back to James Sanderson to see how they could progress. It is reported in the August 1888 Board meeting that the plans of the proposed band stand and the price from Oakey & Asher for erection, totalling £190 were approved. However, because the plans could not be executed in stages it was put on hold until sufficient funds were available.

Over the next two years many fundraising events were held until finally at the end of 1890 the Board was in a position to proceed. Tenders went out for the construction of the rotunda from drawings produced by Mr. A Mofflin who appears to have taken over the project from James Sanderson. Mofflin also supervised the construction which was awarded to T. Bond & Co., at a cost of £94 10s.

The cast iron components for the rotunda were manufactured by Scott Bros. foundry, Christchurch and arrived on the Takapuna in February 1891. The design of the rotunda had iron railings between the pillars which unfortunately did not get supplied. The Board were eager to get the structure erected before the start of the Taranaki Jubilee celebrations just a month later. They contacted Scott Bros. and accepted the structure without the railings after renegotiating the price. On March 31, 1891, over 5,000 people attended a sports event in the grounds. This was followed by a pyrotechnic display in the evening during which bands played under the newly erected Band Rotunda.

In 2013 the Band Rotunda underwent a major restoration. The roof was repainted in its original colours of red and white stripes.

## Bathing Shed

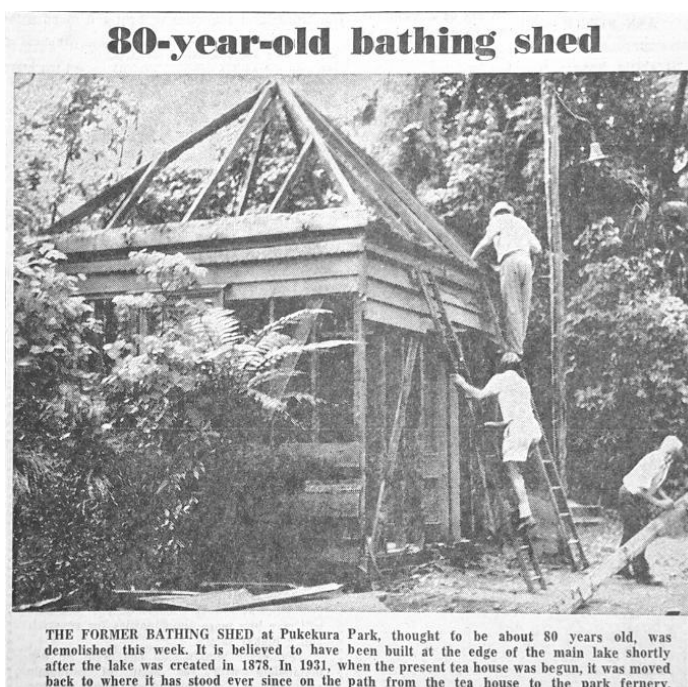
Once the lake was established there was a call to use it for recreational swimming. The town did not have a swimming pool and the water in the Recreation Ground pool looked safe and inviting. Following a public meeting chaired by C. W. Govett, he and Mr. R. H. Thompson were charged with approaching the Board with a scheme to build a bathing shed and get permission to swim in the lake. The Board agreed but stipulated that swimming would not be allowed until a bathing shed was erected. Plans were drawn up by William Northcroft and then went out for tender.



Bathing Shed Circa 1900.

Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2020-0014-022)

How to pay for the bathing shed was a concern. A committee was set up to organise its construction and managed to solicit £40 by way of subscriptions, the remainder was found by other means. A couple of fundraising events were organised, one being the first swimming competition held on Wednesday, April 9, 1879. The competitors had to be suitably attired in drawers and singlets and get changed in the new facilities. The occasion drew a large crowd who sat on the banks overlooking the lake. At that time, the sides of the valley were basically treeless, so there was an excellent view of proceedings. Board member, Robert Clinton Hughes was one of the competitors.



Bathing Shed being Demolished. *TH*, March 18, 1969.

Note: The bathing shed was 90 years old when it was demolished.

A fire at the bathing shed in March 1891 was a bizarre event. The east end fire bell was rung, when people arrived at the bell the person sounding the alarm was the same person who had deliberately lit the fire. It later became known that the young man responsible wanted to go to gaol for lighting the fire to hide other more serious offences. He was charged with the more serious offences and sentenced to eight years in Mount Eden Gaol.

By the 1910s the lake was no longer the main swimming pool in town and the shed was repurposed as the curator's tool shed. It remained next to the lake until the new Tea House was built 1931 at which time it was taken down and erected by the path leading from the Tea House to the Fernery. It remained there until it was demolished in 1969.



## Park Features

### Boat Shed & Boat Shed Bridge

Boats had been used on the lake since the day it was opened. However, the means to protect them did not come until some years later. The first mention of a boat shed was in December 1884. The Taranaki Herald reported that an application was made to the Recreation Ground Board by the High School for permission to excavate a piece of land at the head of the lake for a boat shed. The board acceded to the request but stated that the site and style of the edifice had to be approved by Mr. Skinner. There is no record of any action being taken with respect to the request, but later at the September 1893 Board meeting it was decided to ask Mr G. Brown to prepare a plan and estimate for a small bridge and boat shed at the upper end of the lake. In May of 1894 The Taranaki Herald reported that since the beginning of the year a new bridge and boat shed had been built at a cost of over £100. The bridge replaced a that was probably built in 1886.



Recreation Ground New Plymouth, 1905, Dunedin, by Muir & Moodie. Te Papa (0.036588).



*Auckland Weekly News*, December 22, 1904.

On May the 25th 1953 the almost 50-year-old bridge suffered a catastrophic failure. During a tour of the Park, twelve members of a visiting rugby team, from Hinuera near Matamata, overloaded the bridge causing it to collapse. They found themselves in the water, fortunately no one was injured. It was acknowledged that the bridge was an old structure and had been deteriorating and likely needed replacing. This event just hurried things along. An initial estimate of £3,000 to replace the bridge evoked a lot of criticism and many people argued that the bridge should not be replaced. One person felt so strongly about it that they wrote the following ode.

In 1924 the Boat Shed was severely damaged by a fallen poplar tree. On the Eastern Hillside above the Boat Shed there is an old Park boundary which was probably identified by poplar trees which were commonly planted for that purpose.

#### Old Bridge Collapses In Pukekura Park

The old bridge at the southern end of Pukekura Park, New Plymouth, collapsed yesterday and spilled 12 members of a visiting Waikato football team into knee-deep water. No one was hurt.

The footballers, members of a party of 30 from the Hinuera Club, Matamata, were standing on the bridge about 10.30 a.m. when there was a sudden crack and the whole structure broke and dropped into the lake.

Some of the footballers scrambled to the ends of the bridge and escaped the worst of the unexpected wetting.

A quantity of money was lost in the fall; some was recovered as the men paddled about in the water but about 10/- was left in the mud.

The replacement of the bridge, which was known to be deteriorating, was authorised some time ago and plans and specifications are now being drawn for a bridge similar in design to the bridge over the main lake.

Before the bridge can be replaced, however, the lake level will have to be lowered so that the site can be inspected for the foundations.

The curator of the park, Mr. J. W. Goodwin, inspected the wreckage of the bridge yesterday and said that a strain must have developed over the week-end which could not take the weight of a group of young men. The bridge was more than 30 years old but had been strengthened and partly rebuilt at various times.

TH, May 26, 1953.

**PUKEKURA PARK BRIDGE**

(With apologies to Longfellow.)

(To the Editor.)

I stood on the bridge at daylight,  
As the workmen came and went,  
And a groan rose out of the Gardens  
As each thousand pounds was spent.

I saw the rich reflection,  
In the waters under me,  
Of this costly, extravagant spending  
Of the Graham legacy.

And far in the hazy distance,  
Of that crazy day in the Park,  
The pine trees bowed in sorrow  
And the tree-fern's frown was dark.

And like lake waters splashing  
Among the palatial piers,  
A flood of thoughts came o'er me  
That filled my eyes with tears.

How often, oh how often,  
In the days that had gone by,  
Had we prayed the Park Committee  
Some saner schemes to try.

And whenever I cross that water  
On its bridge like the "Golden Gate,"  
I will sigh for the spent three thousand  
And gasp at the City's rate!

I will think of the many hundreds  
Of rate encumbered men,  
Who have paid their bills to the Council  
And crossed the bridge since then.

And for ever and for ever,  
As long as the waters splash,  
I will think of that Park Committee  
And the way they squandered their cash.

I will hope that no picture disturbing  
Will rise from this Bridge of Sighs,  
To hang itself in the heavens  
And startle some watching eyes!

I am, etc.,

PONS ASINORUM.

New Plymouth June 30.

## Park Features

The bridge was replaced in the latter part of 1953, using funds from the Graham Bequest which had been left to the Park for expenditure of this nature. The replacement bridge was designed by the city engineer Mr. R. F. Mainland and constructed by Thomson and Williams, who tendered a price of £1,102 5s 10d for constructing the new bridge. A further estimate of £600 for materials brought the total price of the new bridge up to an approximately £1,800.



THE LEVEL of the main lake in Pukekura Park, New Plymouth, has been lowered about 4 feet 6 inches to allow work to begin on the site of the new boathouse. Members of the park staff are here seen removing soil from the area of the old boatshed. Some 220 cubic yards will have to be excavated before erection of the new building can begin. The upper, or boatshed, bridge is in the background.

Work starts on the new Boat Shed. *TH*, November 13, 1957.

After several more years of indecision the Park Committee finally decided to replace the Boat Shed in 1957. Plans for the new Boat Shed were drawn up by Arthur Sandford with help from Fred Parker. With a tender price of £1,780, Mr. R. M. Clough was awarded the contract to build the Boat Shed.

Boating was for many years a good source of income for an often cash strapped Park administration. As an example, from Christmas 1947 to January 30, 1948, 4409 people went on the boats raising £224. Boats can still be hired to this day.

## Bowl of Brooklands

The desire to have a soundshell in the Park was recorded as early as 1950 when Baden Winchcombe, John Bolt and some of their friend's got permission from the Park committee to play recorded music from the Tea House on Sunday evenings during the summer. The concerts played from 8.15 until 10pm with 24 sides of records being played. The first half of the concerts were described as "light classical", and the second half consisted of "major works" of a more "serious nature". The equipment which Winchcombe and his friends supplied amplified the sound so it could be heard clearly around the lake. Having a soundshell would have made this experience better.

The Park Committee had highlighted a soundshell as a possible project in a list of over twenty possible projects in 1950. However, it was at the bottom of the list of priorities and probably would never have eventuated if left to them.

By 1954 the call for a soundshell was getting stronger and a committee was formed whose members came from the Community Arts Service, New Plymouth Ballet Club, Caledonian Society, New Plymouth Orchestra, Choral Society, Operatic Society, and the Philharmonic Society. A sub-committee recommended that the soundshell should be situated on the path on the south-west side of Cannon Hill facing towards the Tea House. The size of the stage was to be 38ft at the front, narrowing to 21ft at the back, with a depth of 20ft. This was apparently the size of the soundshell at Napier. (TH, July 24, 1954). Representatives



Work starts on the Bowl. TH, August 17, 1957.

from nine organisations attended the Park Committee's August meeting with the proposal. The Park Committee decided they would defer any decision until 1955 as they were busy with other projects, mainly the Queen Elizabeth II illuminated fountain. Following the deferral, the proposal seemingly disappeared.

In January of 1957 the newly formed Public Relations Office organised a very successful 3-day Water Carnival in the Park organised by Eric Handbury the Public Relations Officer. This was so successful that it encouraged Eric to try and organise another event that was bigger and better, and to do this he realised he needed a bigger venue. He was shown the area at Brooklands and immediately saw its potential comparing it to the Hollywood Bowl at Los Angeles.

## Park Features

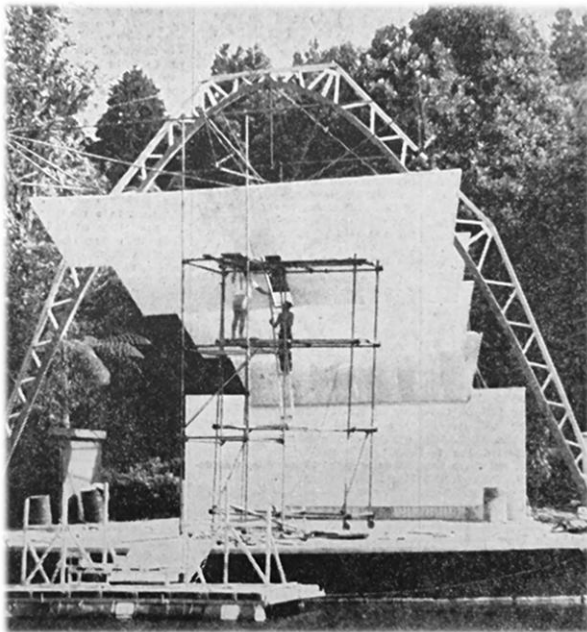
Handbury called the event the “Festival of the Pines” because of the imposing stand of pine trees on the boundary between the racecourse and the Bowl.

With a budget of only £485 and no financial assistance available from the Park Committee or the City Council the development of the Bowl of Brooklands became a huge community effort with Eric Handbury as the driving force behind it.

When the Park Committee agreed to the Bowl of Brooklands being constructed, they also agreed to give the New Plymouth Public Relations Office Board of Control exclusive rent-free rights for five years to stage shows. At the same time the Park Committee made it clear that they would not put any money into the venture.

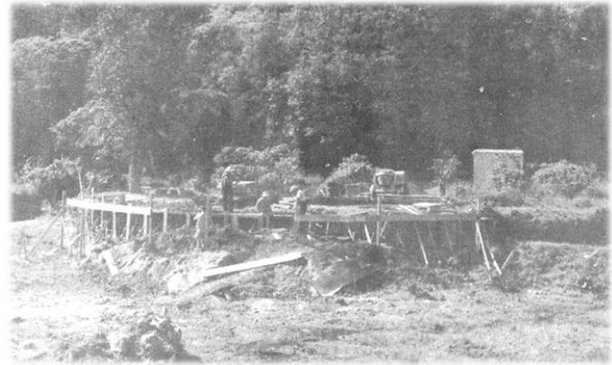
The original idea was to use two islands that were in the middle of the Brooklands Lake as stages, but Handbury realised that that wasn't going to work and decided to build a concrete stage.

The stage construction was supervised by master builder Malcolm Lay and was designed to have 2400 square feet of acting space. The soundshell, designed by Robin Sinclair, consisted of a parabolic wooden arc supporting a cantilevered tubular frame which in turn had four separate acoustic baffles suspended from it.



Installing the Sound Baffles.

*TH*, February 13, 1958.

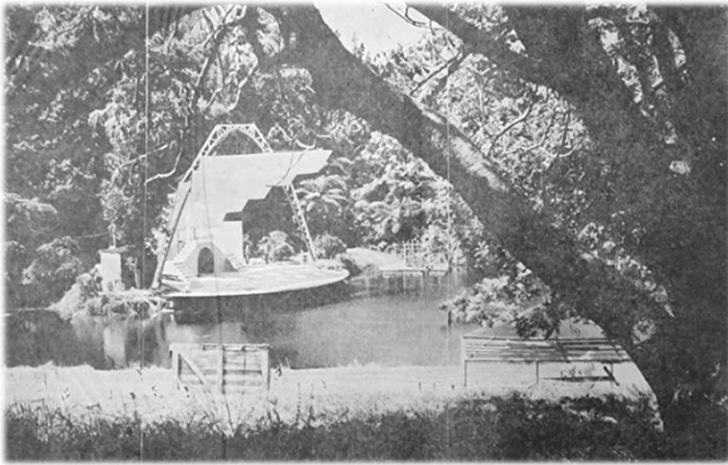


Construction of the Stage. *Photo News*, Dec 1957.

Work started in August 1957. With the Brooklands lake drained, the first job was to remove one of the bigger islands and a few smaller islets. These were dug out by hand. The soil was wheelbarrowed away across the lakebed on planks of wood. Where the concrete stage is, was originally swampy ground that had to be consolidated.

The bridge that crosses the Brooklands lake had been vandalised during the war years. To develop the Bowl, it was necessary to replace the bridge in order to carry materials to the Bowl site. Even though the Board had said they would not financially assist the Bowl development they did agree to replace the bridge. This was done by Fred Parker.

The first job in constructing the stage was building a concrete supporting wall. The stage itself overhung the wall giving the appearance that it was floating over the water. All the concrete was mixed on site and wheelbarrowed to where required.



Completed soundshell ready to go.  
*TDN*, February 22, 1958.

A sound shed was constructed north-west of the bowl, near one of the plane trees, giving the sound technician Frank Stead line of sight to the stage. Baden Winchcombe advised on the sound equipment needed for the Bowl and instructed Frank on its operation.

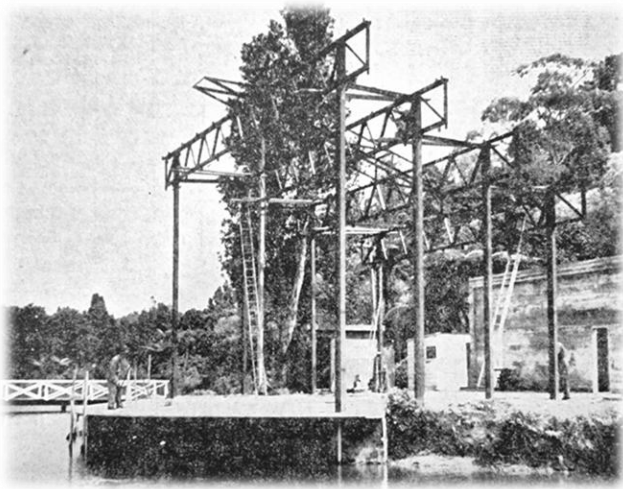
The lighting system was designed by Caleb Wyatt, the electrical control equipment was housed in an old army hut supplied by the New Plymouth Savings Bank.

Bulldozers were brought in to even up the rough ground so seating could be installed. The seating took the form of 12ft long planks nailed on top of wooden stakes driven into the ground using sledgehammers. The timber was donated by Malcolm McAlpine.

Although the Festival of the Pines proved successful there were a few issues. The conveniences were makeshift and lacked privacy, and the changing facilities for the performers were very poor, and apparently lit by candles. Another issue was the croaking frogs which at times tended to drown out the performers.

The first Festival of the Pines was a seven-night affair. The first two nights were performances of "Androcles and the Lion," a play by George Bernard Shaw. Night three was a variety show featuring Irish tenor, Patrick O' Hagan, N.P. Girls' Choir and the N.P. Orchestra. Night four featured the Wellington Ballet, N.P. Orchestra, N.P.G.H.S Choir and the crowning of Miss Brooklands. Night five (Sunday) Thanksgiving Service. The last two nights were concerts by the National Orchestra conducted by John Hopkins.

In May of 1958 the Public Relations Office approached the Park Committee with an ambitious eighteen-point plan to improve the Bowl facilities which was accepted.



New soundshell under Construction.  
*TH*, October 30, 1958.

Before the 1959 Festival of the Pines the wooden parabolic arc and suspended baffles were replaced with a permanent soundshell supported by columns rising from the stage. The new soundshell was designed by Ted Borrell and constructed by Riddick Bros. & Still Ltd. Two wooden 9ft x 9ft x 25ft high towers were erected in the lake incorporating sound and lighting systems. These were 90ft apart to avoid affecting spectator's view of the stage. The speaker system was designed by Baden Winchcombe.

## Park Features

An access road was created from the racecourse making better access for spectators from the eastern part of town. The audience seating was ripped up, the area regraded and new seating installed to accommodate 7000 spectators. The new seats were supported by concrete blocks.

To pay for the improvements the Brooklands development fund was created. This was a publicly funded scheme that would give members preferential treatment with Parking and ticket allocations. Another notable feature of the Bowl was a water curtain which sprang up from water nozzles positioned along the front edge of the stage.

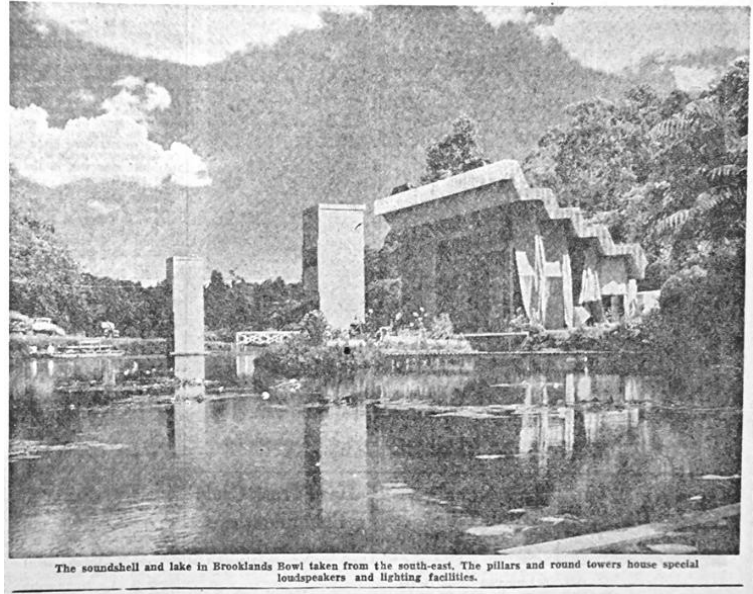
In 1959 permanent changing rooms were built and a second stage known as the “Woodland stage” was erected to the right of the main stage.

By 1960 the running of the Bowl had become too difficult for the Public Relations Office and so the Bowl of Brooklands Trust was set up. In 1961 the toilet block at the south-eastern end of the Bowl Lake was constructed which replaced a less permanent structure nearby.

In subsequent years more changes were made the most significant being in 1996 when the size of the concrete stage was increased considerably, and an arched roof extension was installed, designed by Terry Boon. This was also when the Baden Winchcombe sound towers in the lake were removed. These changes were completed in time for the ENZSO concert in February 1997. Another major development at this time was gaining the TSB Community Trust as a major sponsor and giving them naming rights for the Bowl for ten years.



Bowl of Brooklands 2024.



New soundshell ready for action.  
*TDN*, February 17,1959.

In 1995 the stand of pine trees that were the basis for the festival name were deemed dangerous and were removed, around 100 trees. They were subsequently replaced with new pines, to recreate the skyline stand. The new stand of pine trees which can be seen on the adjacent photo above the roof of the Bowl, have now been removed.

## Brooklands Chimney

What is now known as Brooklands Park was originally part of a two-hundred-acre property owned by Captain Henry King, R.N. and his Brother-in-Law George Cutfield. They were both leaders with the Plymouth Company that established New Plymouth in 1841. Captain King was the chief commissioner for the Plymouth Company and arrived in New Plymouth aboard the *Amelia Thompson* in September 1841. The chimney is the remnants of the house that he built in 1842. The house was burnt to the ground in 1861 during the Taranaki Wars.



When Newton King moved to Brooklands in 1888 the chimney may have been in the house that the King family occupied until their new house was built circa 1897.



Captain Henry King's property at Brooklands, sketched by Mrs Wickstead for Charles Hursthouse's 1849 book *An Account of The Settlement of New Plymouth*.



## Brooklands Zoo

The concept of building a zoo was first formulated by the Jaycees back in 1959. Realising the enormity of the project it was designed to be done in stages. They relied on public subscriptions, volunteers, and the good will of local businesses to supply goods and services at cost or at no cost, which was often the case.

Having the zoo at Brooklands and featuring monkeys as its main attraction was conceived in early 1964 by Ronald Brooker, Chairman of the New Plymouth chapter of the Jaycees. He felt that being centrally located the zoo would provide a means of recreation and education. Apparently at the time the closest monkeys were in either Wellington or Auckland.

After consulting with various people around the country who had knowledge of controlling large aviaries a plan was formulated and put before the City Council in July 1964 which was tentatively approved.

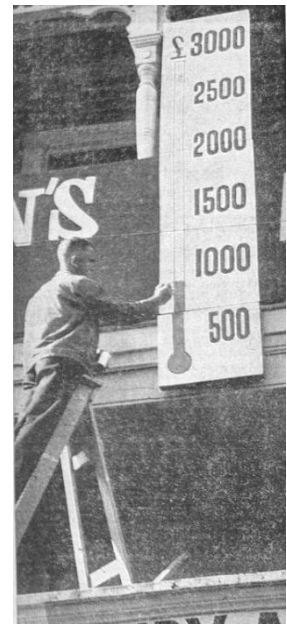


Brooklands Zoo Stage 1 – 1965.  
Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref:ARC2001-152).

bringing in outside skilled tradesmen when required. The initial schedule was to finish by December but due to delays caused by bad weather it wasn't completed until the end of February 1965. The Chapter had 70 members at the time, 65 of whom were actively engaged in the construction of the project, working a total of 1411 manhours. Expert outside help and advice often came without charge.

The internal fittings and stocking of birds was done with the help of the Caged Bird Society.

The zoo was officially handed over to the City on February 27, 1965, the name plaque was unveiled by Mrs Brooker, widow of Chapter President Ron Brooker who died suddenly in January 1965. The zoo was stocked with 130 birds of 14 different species which had been donated, and two male monkeys, Joe, a five-year-old rhesus monkey, and Willie, a three-year-old bonnet monkey. Both monkeys were on a long-term loan from Wellington Zoo.



The first stage of the Jaycees plan was the construction of a block of 10 cages totalling 100ft in length each one measuring 10ft wide, 10ft high and 15ft deep. To pay for it the Jaycees started fundraising with a target of £2,500. £1,700 to complete stage one and the remainder to set up a fund for future developments. An initial £200 was put in from chapter funds. In total £2,175 was raised. So that the public could keep track of how much money was being raised a giant barometer was installed on the corner of Currie and Devon Street. The amount raised was painted on the barometer weekly.

The City Council gave final approval in August and construction began on October 3, 1964. The majority of the labour was carried out by members of the Jaycees,



Joe

Willie



Blackie, six-month-old fallow deer in a new enclosure. *TH*, July 1, 1967.

Brooklands Park and the Zoo were the joint location for the Arbor Day plantings in 1965. It was at this time that the first specimen trees were planted in the lawn areas of the zoo (some of the trees planted were quite rare, the zoo site was selected for these because of the presence of the security fence).

In 1967 a deer and Peafowl enclosure was constructed by the Jaycees costing £100. They followed that by constructing a wallaby enclosure and a kea pen in 1970. This depleted the Jaycees coffers which was the reason that the free flight cage wasn't built until 1974.

1970 was also the year the zoo became a registered zoological garden. Some of the residents at that time included: Wally the wallaby, Willy the bonnet monkey, Bambi the fallow deer, Pete the peacock and Daffy the Paradise Duck.

RIGHT: The president of the NP Jaycees, Mr John Brocket dedicated a memorial dovecote to former Jaycee president, Mr R Brooker and a memorial plaque was unveiled by Mrs M, Brooker. At the ceremony Mr Brocker officially handed over the wallaby pen and also informed the attendees that they were planning to build a free flight cage.



*TDN*, September 7 1970.

The next development was a free-flight cage, which was the first of its kind in the country. This was officially opened on 5th October 1974 by Mr V R Brownson of the Jaycees. The free-flight cage was a two-year project utilising many volunteer manhours and costing over \$10,000. By 1974 the zoo was housing weka, kea and peafowl.



Opening of the Free Flight Bird Cage  
L to R - Mrs Audrey Gale, NP City Cllr; Denis Sutherland, Mayor; Vincent Brownson, Jaycee (Immediate PP) and Barry Sefton, project convenor.

Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref:ARC2001-152).

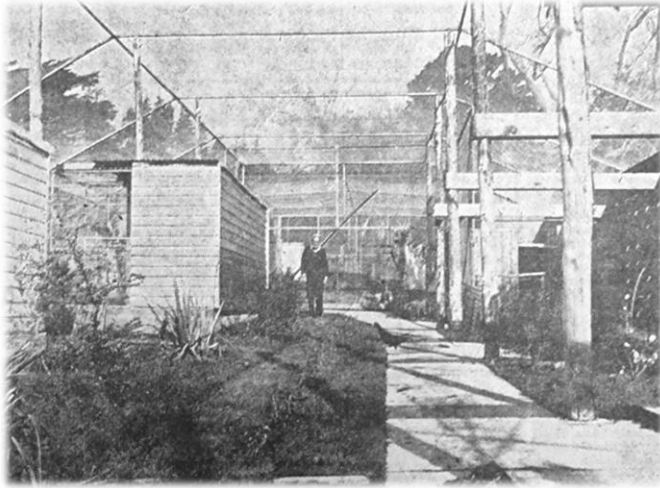
A pheasant enclosure was added at the front of the deer enclosure in 1977. This was designed in house by Ian McDowell. It is not clear who built it, but it was probably the Jaycees.

In 1979 the Jaycees built a monkey enclosure. It was occupied at the beginning of 1980 by a colony of seven Capuchin Monkeys. Three males and four females. The monkeys were imported from Britain but were originally from Paraguay. The first baby monkey was born in June 1980.

Because of people going into the zoo at night leading to the death of some of the animals the Park installed a high mesh security gates in 1983.

The Peafowl enclosure was modified in 1984. It was split into two parts, pools were added. Small clawed otters were introduced into one section, the other housed Carolina wood ducks.

## Park Features



Free Flight Cage. *TDN*, October 10, 1974.

plantings. Construction work for the first two phases was done by builder Mike Christianson. Around this time macaws and a kea were introduced to the zoo. In 2000 phase three included the construction of a new capuchin monkey enclosure, followed closely by phase four, new enclosures for the tamarin monkeys and otters. Clelands Construction Ltd carried out the construction work for phases three and four. The original birdcage enclosure from 1965 was finally demolished, and its footprint became part of the children's playground. The playground was also redeveloped introducing new equipment and shade cloths.

Three cotton-top tamarins arrived in 2000, dad, Ivan, mum, Nancy and baby Niva.

Due to changes in the Health and Safety Act volunteers could no longer help in the zoo. Eleven-year-old Stephanie Oliver and twelve-year-old Holly-Mae Giddy were both gutted when they were given this news. They had both been volunteering on a Saturday for three years.

In 2004 Brooklands Zoo became a full institutional member of ZAA (Zoo's and Aquaria Association). The following year two male alpacas, Sambuca and Cinnamon were introduced into the zoo.

Other species introduced to the zoo were African Clawed frogs and Mungo the red panda, in 2006. Mungo was brought in from Hamilton zoo to be part of an international breeding programme for endangered species.

In 2007 three female Ring-Tailed Lemurs (Ashleigh, Sarah and Minera) got a home in the zoo. They were part of a National breeding programme. The enclosure for the Lemurs was enlarged from the original layout by removing partitions.

Five meerkats were introduced in 2010, two nine-year-old females, Fupi and Mtoto, and three six-year-old males, Imani, Zuri and Zambesi. A Butterfly garden was also established with the help of the Friends of Pukekura Park. The Friends were involved again in 2012 when they assisted with the installation of the Weta Hotels. In the same year five bachelor male Bolivian squirrel monkeys were added to the collection (Occupying the former lemur enclosure).

In 1986 Golden-rumped (Red-rumped) Agouti were added to the collection, and a family of four gibbon monkeys came from Perth.

The zoo underwent a phased redevelopment starting in 1997. The redevelopment was designed by Alan Reed of Boon Goldsmith Bhaskar Team Architecture Ltd. Phase one involved the construction a barn and farmyard to replace the deer enclosure. Phase two in 1998 involved the renovation of the free-flight cage, including the addition of a waterfall, stream, raised walkway and refreshed



Mungo the red panda.



Bug Hotel. *TDN*, Dec 8, 2015

In 2013 Simon the red devil cichlid, who was in an aquarium in the barn, was rehomed. New to the barn were two twenty-three-year-old blue tongue skinks, Bert and Ernie. Also introduced into the barn were Oriental fire bellied newts. In the same year Mulloka a male broilga was added to the collection. He passed away in Feb 2020 and was not replaced.

Two adult female leopard geckos (Soha and Shirina) were added to the collection in 2015. They came from the Otorohanga Kiwi House and a bug hotel was added to the zoo's Backyard Wildlife Display in the same year.

In 2016 the zoo became one of only a few in New Zealand to complete the Zoo and Aquarium Association's (ZAA) Animal Welfare Accreditation Programme. A number of animals were added to the collection that year including three female meerkats, Nala, Lindiwe and Zola.

Nephrite a cotton-top tamarin had to be euthanised in 2017. She was born in the zoo in 2002. This left only two tamarins, Nephrite's daughter five-year-old Inca and Inca's father fifteen-year-old Lorenzo.

In 2018, Takumi, a three-year-old male otter was brought in from Mogo Zoo, in New South Wales, Australia. He was introduced to partner Jemima, who had lost her previous partner Jala in 2017. Also in 2018, a permanent picnic shelter was erected in the zoo by the Pakeke Lions Club as part a project to celebrate 100 years of Lions Clubs around the world.

Animals introduced in 2019 included: Marcella, a female scheltopusik (European legless lizard), two red-rumped agouti and two leopard tortoises, Kobe and Kamba. A year later two capybara were added to the collection, brothers, Luis and Fernando from Auckland Zoo.

In 2021 little owls and red crowned kakariki were introduced to the zoo, for which DOC permits were required.

The zoo saw the return of otters in 2022 with the introduction of five one and two-year-old small-clawed otter sisters, Katara, Rani, Suki, Luna and Akira. Also, a new owl enclosure was opened. The enclosure houses morepork/ruru and little owl.

More changes are coming to Brooklands Zoo with NPDC confirming \$9m in funding in its 2024-34 10-Year Plan to improve visitors' experience and ensure the zoo continues to comply with national standards. The council is also working on a wider vision for the zoo, to ensure it continues to be a destination of choice for kids and adults alike.



Brooklands Zoo Otters (2024).  
Collection of Brooklands Zoo.

## Cannon Hill

Cannon Hill has at times been a focal point in the Park, and at other times an overgrown jungle. It was certainly the centre of attention on May 29, 1876, during the opening ceremony of the Recreation Ground. The townspeople gathered there to begin a new chapter in the town's history. To mark the occasion four ceremonial trees were planted on the slopes of Cannon Hill by Miss Jane Carrington, daughter of Fred Carrington, the father of New Plymouth. The trees were an oak representing the Great Britain, a pūriri representing New Zealand, a Norfolk Island pine representing the Pacific and a *Pinus radiata* representing the Americas. At that time there would have been a 360-degree panoramic view from the top of the hill.



Cannon Hill circa 1900. Collection of New Plymouth District Council Parks dept.  
On top of the hill can be seen at least two cannons and the seat that went round the flagpole. On the face of the hill are the whale bones.

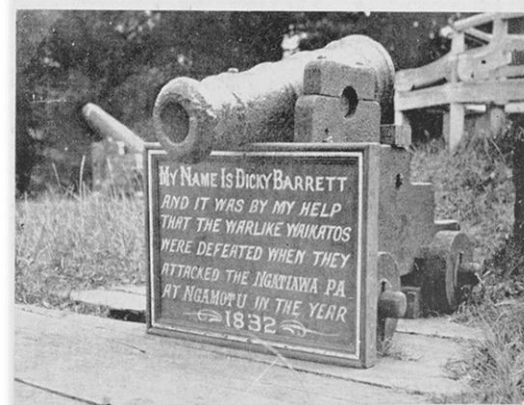
The first man-made adornment on the hill was a large circular mirror presented to the grounds by Professor Furlong (TH, Aug 30, 1882), unfortunately there are no known photos of this. The next item to grace the hill was a flagstaff donated by Chew Chong in 1885. This was part of a mast recovered from the barque Australind which beached at Moturoa on July 26, 1882, while delivering bags of cement for the new harbour. In 1886 when ladies were granted permission the use the lake for bathing from 8am to 11am the flagstaff was used to hoist a red flag, warning the local gentlemen to stay away.

To attract more people to the hill a seat was erected around the flagstaff. Mrs Dougherty's Egmont Academy scholars raised the money to build the seat, and it was erected by Mr. H Taylor.

The hill was cut back in 1887 to create space for the installation of the Band Rotunda foundation but was left in a rough state. In 1892 the southern end was neatly faced (this work was probably done by Darby Claffey), and new paths were cut to give better access. Cannon Hill was named at this time after the Recreation Ground's cannons were placed on top of it.

There were four cannons donated to the Recreation Ground, two of which were said to have been used in the defence of Ōtaka Pā in 1832 (Dicky Barrett cannons), and one was said to have come off the shipwreck of the barque Harriet, which ran aground off the Taranaki coast in 1834.

Professor Furlong donated the first Barrett cannon as noted in the Boards minutes of September 1884 (TH, September 20, 1884). The stand for it was made by W. H. Skinner. A second cannon with carriage was donated by Board member W. L. Newman as noted in the Boards minutes of April 1887 (TH, April 25, 1887), followed soon after by a third accompanied by a 68lb cannon ball donated by W. F. Hoskins, of Waitara as noted in the Board's minutes of August 1887 (TH, August 30, 1887). The fourth cannon was gifted by ex-Board member Reginald Bailey as noted in the Boards minutes of August 1891 (TH, August 10, 1891). The cannons were removed from the hill in 1928 and donated to the Carnegie Library in New Plymouth. They had been vandalized and were deemed unsafe.



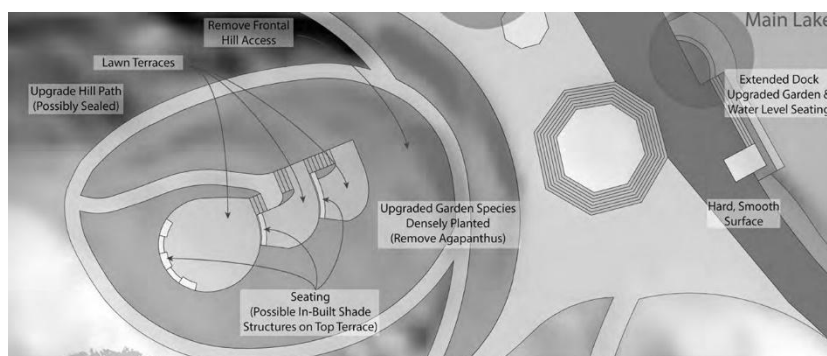
A TREASURED RELIC NAMED AFTER A FAMOUS OLD WHALER.

NZG, January 23, 1904.

The bones from a whale that had beached itself near Tataraimaka were an unusual feature dressing the hill in the mid-1890s. The whale was found by employees of the National Bank Farm, Tataraimaka. The bones were bleached at the farm before being given to the Board. They arrived in New Plymouth in March 1893. The original plan for the bones was to reassemble them as a skeleton (based on a sketch produced by Dr. Hector, Director of the Colonial Museum) and display them to the east of the Band Rotunda. The attempt at re assembly was unsuccessful and someone must have come up with the idea of placing the bones on Cannon Hill, which was probably done in 1894.

In 1976 during the 100th Anniversary celebrations of the Park Cannon Hill once again became the centre of attention. A number of trees were planted on and around the hill, four of which still remain: a Norfolk Island pine on the top north edge of Cannon Hill, planted by Mayor Denis Sutherland; a kauri on top of Cannon Hill on the west side, planted by, D. F. C. Saxton and Alex Brodie; a *Tilia x euchlora* at the south east corner of Hatchery Lawn, planted by Councillor E. P. Allen and Mrs. Dorothy Eliot King and a Ginko biloba 'Fastigiata', planted by Fred Parker by the path on the eastern side of Fountain Lake.

In the 2024 Park Management Plan there is a proposal to redevelop Cannon Hill. Let's hope that it comes to fruition.



Proposed layout of Cannon Hill, NPDC Park Management Plan 2024.

## Park Features



Ginkgo biloba  
planted by Fred Parker.



Kauri  
planted by Don Saxton & Alex Brodie.



Norfolk Island Pine  
planted by D. V. Sutherland.



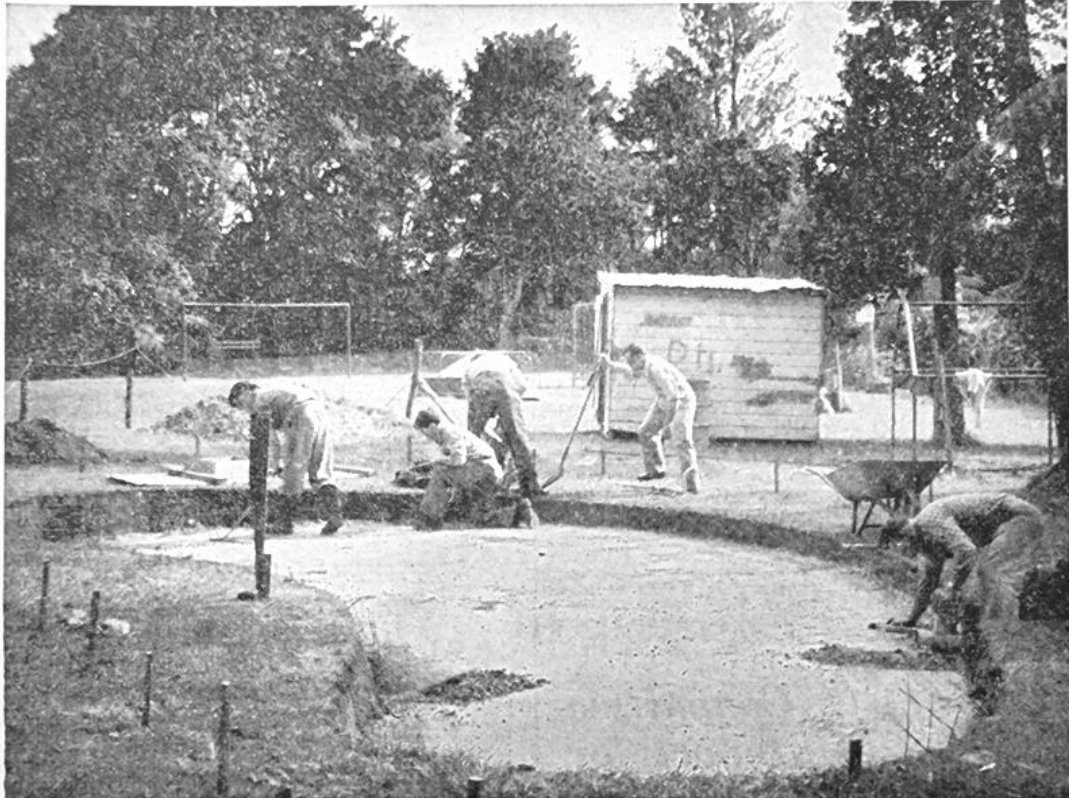
Linden tree  
planted by Mrs Eliot King & E. P. Allen.

Four remaining trees from the 1976 Centennial planting (2025)

## Children's Playground

The site was originally covered with a stand of *Cypress macrocarpa* trees which were probably planted at the same time as the Torrey pine in 1888. These were grown from the seeds of American trees given to the Park in 1886 by the government.

In 1953 a group of macrocarpa trees were felled to make way for the development of the playground which included swings, seesaws, climbing frames, a merry-go-round, and a slide. There were already two swings in this area which were put up in 1922 and were the only children's play equipment in the Park until 1953.



NEW PLYMOUTH JAYCEES at work today on the paddling pool in the children's playing area at Pukekura Park which they are providing at their own cost and labour. Free form murals and a concrete sculpture the same shape as the pool will be special features. Messrs. E. Collins, J. B. Ford and Don Driver are preparing the murals and the sculpture, which will be six feet eight inches high and contain a drinking fountain. Water will come from the city supply and will be about nine inches deep. The pool, 34 feet long and with an average width of 16 feet, is more than 400 square feet in area and will be ready by the summer holidays. The apron surround will have an average width of 3½ feet.

*TH*, September 24, 1960.

A paddling pool was constructed as a community project by the New Plymouth Jaycees, in 1960, and was known as the Barclay Pool. Along with the paddling pool, was the installation of a drinking fountain on top of which the Don Driver 'Cats' sculpture sat. The sculpture was taken out of the playground when the paddling pool was removed in 2003. The original sculpture was refurbished and is now part of the Govett-Brewster collection. A replica was created in 2012 and was installed during the 2013 revamp of the playground.

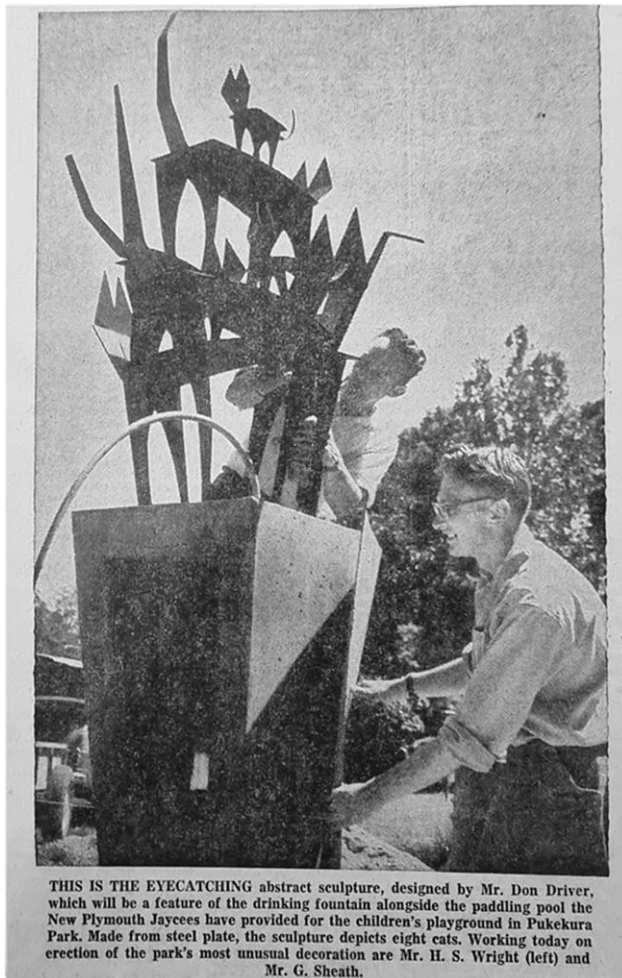


## Park Features



CHILDREN HAPPILY SPLASH AROUND in Pukekura Park's new paddling pool in the playing area after the pool's official opening by the chairman of the Pukekura Park Committee, Mr. D. F. C. Saxton, on Saturday.

*TH*, November 12, 1960.



THIS IS THE EYECATCHING abstract sculpture, designed by Mr. Don Driver, which will be a feature of the drinking fountain alongside the paddling pool the New Plymouth Jaycees have provided for the children's playground in Pukekura Park. Made from steel plate, the sculpture depicts eight cats. Working today on erection of the park's most unusual decoration are Mr. H. S. Wright (left) and Mr. G. Sheath.

*TH*, November 12, 1960.

The playground also underwent a redevelopment in 1986 at which time two wooden forts/tree houses were built. The larger of the two was constructed next to Hughes Walk and the second smaller one was next to the bridge that accesses Palm Lawn. At this time the old swings and seesaws were refurbished, and the merry-go-round was removed due to safety concerns. It was also at this time the TSB Bank were granted naming rights for TSB Children's Playground.

The present design and layout of the playground took place in 2013 with the official reopening taking place in October 2013. The revamp required the removal of the forts as these no longer complied with the latest NZ/Australasian codes for playgrounds. The designer of the playground got ideas for the revamp by consulting with students from, Central School, St Pius School, and Highlands Intermediate.

## Curator's House

The first curator's house was built in 1876 and paid for by the government. The cottage was of modest proportions. It was located on Victoria Road on the site of the old Fort Carrington (Carrington Road Redoubt/Blockhouse). The location is immediately north of 25, Victoria Road which is also an old curator's house built in 1930. The house was used by Darby Claffey, Charles Edgecombe and W. W. Smith. Smith vacated the house in 1920 when he resigned, at which time the house still did not have electricity. The Board were too mean with money. After Smith vacated the house, it was used as a scout den. The building was demolished in 1930 when a new curator's house was built on an adjacent section. A visitor of Smith's described the house as "a poor, mean little cottage".



T K Skinner's 1880 map showing old curator's cottage.  
Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2010-220).

After years of deliberation a replacement house was built in 1930. The location chosen was on Victoria Road (now 25 Victoria Road) between the old curator's cottage and the Park Tennis Club. The main reason for building the cottage was to hopefully deter vandals, and with this in mind several pine trees were cut down giving a view into the Park from the house. This was controversial, many people were not happy at being able to see the house from down in the Park so a group of native trees were planted on the slope below the house that would eventually hide it. The drawings for the house came from the Borough Engineer, and the house was built by Mr. L. F. Hand at a cost of £1,080.



25, Victoria Road.

## Fernery

Prior to the creation of the Fernery as we know it today, there had been other outdoor ferneries established in the Park. The first of these was planted by Smith in 1908, on Manhattan Island at the southern end of the Main Lake.

A proposal for a new fernery was put forward at the beginning of 1918. This was partly because plant theft from Manhattan Island had been an issue. Board member C. E. Bellringer set about strongly urging the Board to adopt a policy for establishing a fernery that would be second to none in the country. He also suggested that the curator's time, given his botanical talents and knowledge was being wasted on mundane duties and that his skills should be put to better use. Bellringer suggested the area in the gully below the people's stand at the racecourse (Stainton Dell) as he felt this was the most picturesque and ideal spot. Smith reported in October 1918 that preparations for the new fernery were complete, and planting would take place as soon as the ferns were received.

In 1919, C. E. Bellringer, now chairman of the Park Board continued pushing for the establishment of a fernery, this time promoting the building of a bush hut to house the ferns. The raw materials were available to make a hut, but the manpower was lacking. It was noted at the A.G.M. that a local gentleman had a large collection of ferns that he was ready to donate.

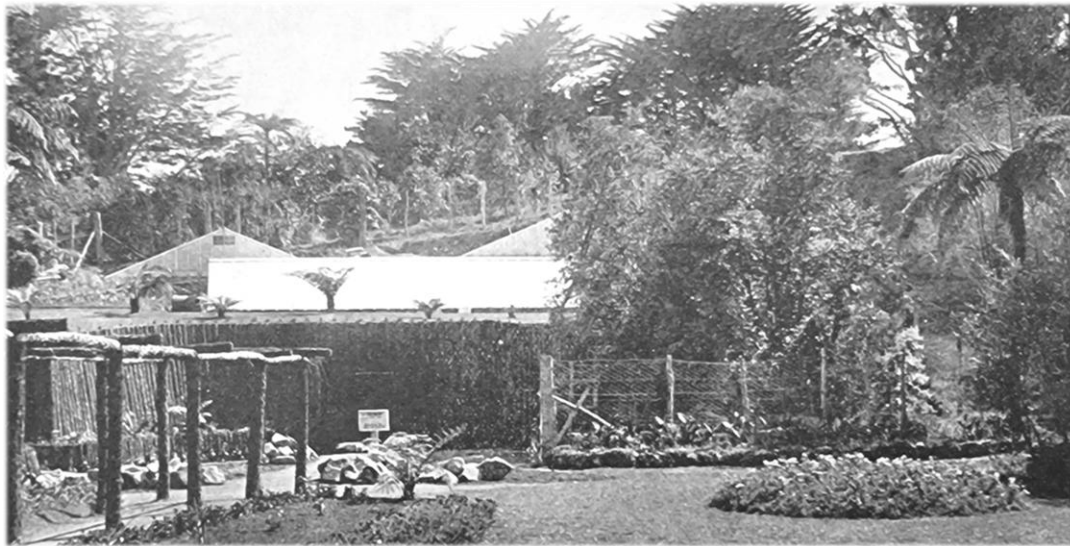
Smith resigned in 1920, which probably stalled the fernery project until June 1922, when it was reported that preliminary work for shaping and grading land for a fernery had begun. The location was on the banks of Stainton Dell below the Racecourse Walk, where an area was fenced off and planted. The work was carried out by John Gibson, a prominent horticulturist, of Frankley Road.

In November 1923 a fernery committee consisting of C. E. Bellringer, James McLeod and W. H. Besley were appointed to make arrangements for the establishment of a first-class fernery. At the Board meeting of May 1924, the Pukekura Park Board instructed the fernery committee to submit plans for a fernery costing approximately £500, to be considered by the Board at its next meeting. The project became financially possible after a very successful Queen Carnival netted the Board over £1,400. At the following meeting in June William Besley outlined a plan to excavate three chambers, one in front and two behind. The walls separating these chambers would be 8 feet thick, in order to support the roofs, which would be glass. The dimensions of the chambers, taken from the roof level, would be 30 feet by 50 feet for the front one and 60 feet by 30 feet for the two rear ones. Terracing of many of the walls was proposed, meaning the area at the bottom of the chambers would be considerably less than that at the top, and the terraces would be planted with the many varieties of available ferns. By adopting this scheme, it was hoped to cover the whole face of the walls with a screen of growth, and walks would be constructed in a way that would enable the public to gain the best views of the place. At the same meeting of the Board the chairman Mr. Dempsey thanked Mr. Besley for his trouble and stated that a great deal of work had been done by Mrs. Lovell, of Hāwera, to whom the board were deeply indebted. Work on clearing the site of trees etc. started immediately.

At a meeting of the Board in April 1925 plans to build the Fernery were officially put on hold due to financial constraints.

After many years in the planning work finally started on the Fernery construction in June 1926. This was a huge undertaking, involving the creation of three 60ft x 40ft grottos linked by tunnels, and covered with glass roofs. The front chamber lay east-west, with the other two chambers behind, side by side laying north-south, and raised 10ft higher in the hillside than the front one. Stage one of the project involved removing approximately 12ft of earth from the side of the hill forming a plateau above where the Fernery chambers were to be excavated. The plateau was roughly 180ft x 90ft. The topsoil from this excavation was put to one side and later

used on what is now the Fred Parker Lawn. The Fernery was designed by Mrs. Lovell of Hāwera, who had a similar fernery in her own garden. Approximately 4000 cubic yards of subsoil was excavated during the construction, all dug manually with spades. The cost of disposal of this material off-site would have been prohibitive, fortunately, there was a swamp nearby which could be filled in. The level of the swamp was raised by as much as 12ft, to form a lawn (subsequently named Fred Parker Lawn). Subsoil was used for the bulk of the land reclamation,



Fernery Entrance. *TH*, Xmas Supplement December 15, 1928.

which was then top dressed with the black topsoil that had been put aside. They also decided to form a second lakelet using some of the excavated subsoil to create a dam. The excavated material was transferred approximately 100ft to the dam site using a truck on rails supplied by Boon Bros. The person in charge of constructing the Fernery was Mr. W. Holmes, of Putaruru. Six labourers were employed, four dedicated to excavation of the soil, one the levelling of the swamp and one in charge of the truck. Thomas Horton was the overall supervisor of the project, which took about 5 months to complete, sometimes under very trying conditions.

By October the superintendent reported that the excavation of the fernery chambers had been completed as far as it was advisable before the carpentry work and glazing were done. He also noted that the concrete foundations were completed. Unfortunately, a delay in the delivery of the glass for the roofs meant that the roofs were not completed until mid-1927. While construction was ongoing many people went out collecting ferns, the Fernery Committee visited Taranaki Forest properties especially in the Koru district (Oakura). Messrs Maxwell and Davies collected ferns on a trip to King Country, Rotorua, Bay of Plenty and Auckland. Many friends of the Park from around the country also sent ferns.

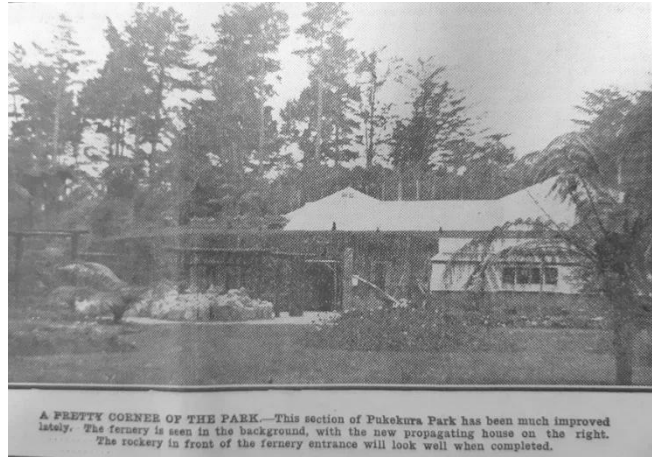
The Fernery was officially opened at 1.30 p.m. on January 28, 1928, with the Mayor Victor Griffiths doing the honours. The opening was arranged to coincide with the last day of a Shopping Week organised to promote the businesses of New Plymouth. Later that afternoon a floral fete was held in the Park and in the evening a Pierrot entertainment under the direction of Mr. Wauchop. Both events were fundraisers.

The scheme cost approximately £1,150. The excavation cost about £917, and £50 to £60 was spent in beautifying the surroundings and the swamp. The nucleus of the fund was a sum of £500 which was earmarked by the board from the proceeds of the Queen Carnival in 1924. Every penny of the sum spent was provided by public subscription.

## Park Features

In 1929 a new propagating house was built near the entrance of the Fernery, paid for by donations. Also, a rockery was developed and planted at the approach to the Fernery.

In 1938 a begonia house was constructed using materials salvaged from one of the old glass houses that were part of the Brooklands estate. By the end of the year the begonia house was constructed, and a new tunnel dug out connecting it to house 3 in the Fernery. The following year another glasshouse was moved from Brooklands to the Fernery site and used as a propagating house. Along with the glass houses some of the first orchid's came into the Park collection. These were slipper orchids, *Paphiopedilum insigne*. Other plants such as tuberous begonias and other flowering and foliage greenhouse plants that had been part of the greenhouse plant collections of Newton King also made their way to the Fernery.



New Propagating House. *TH*, October 18, 1929.

At the beginning of 1939, Miss Evelyn Lawson was employed as the first female staff member at the Park. She started on a casual basis to help in the Fernery. When Ivan Waddle (Fernery manager) went off to war Miss Lawson's position became permanent. She was joined by her sister Noline in 1942.



Fernery Views. *TH*, Christmas Supplement, 1935.

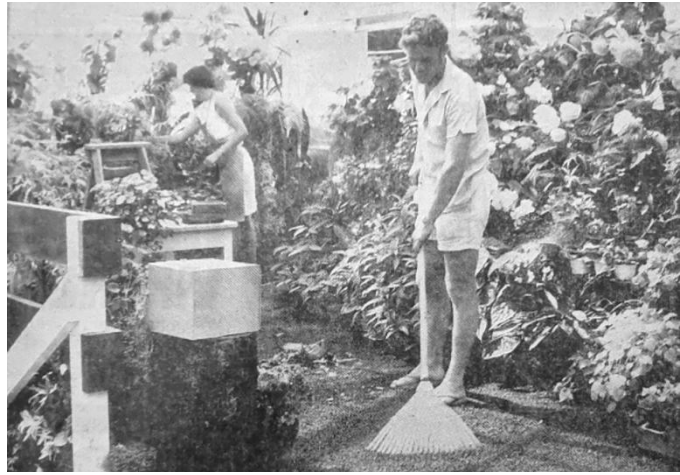
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In 1956 a glass walled shade house with a lath roof was built for growing on ferns and the following year another shade house was built for growing palms which also had a lath roof and side walls, but the west side was open.

The mid-1960s was a busy time for redevelopment of the Fernery. The Nova roof shade house which is adjacent to fern house number one, was built in 1965 by Fred Parker using plans drawn up by Mr Sandford. This shade house replaced a set of cold frames. It was built to house a collection of cymbidium orchids gifted by Fred Parker in memory of his wife Agnes Mary Parker. House No 2 was modified with the addition of a pyramidal stand, on which the orchids were displayed when in flower. In 1967 the old begonia house erected in 1938 was pulled down

and replaced by a new structure paid for by a donation from George and Mable Kibby. The project also included a new boiler and boiler house. The house was considerably larger and warmer than the house it replaced. Over subsequent years Fred Parker gifted the remainder of his very extensive orchid collection to the Park.



Ailsa McCrone and Garry Carradus making the final preparations for the official opening of the new Kibby House. *TH*, January 28, 1970.

In 1967 it became necessary to construct a purpose-built glasshouse at the Parks Department Nursery at Brooklands. This was to house the rapidly growing collection of orchids, when they weren't on display. The collection grew from the many donations from growers around the country, at its height the orchid collection was one of the largest municipal collections in the country. This house was eventually demolished in 2005 and the collection was moved entirely to the Fernery. Considerable rationalisation of numbers was required to fit them in.



Anthony Joines in the reroofed fernery. *TDN*, November 25, 1998.

In 1998 there was a major rebuild of the roof structures over houses 2 and 3 and the cold frame area between them. They were amalgamated into one structure (2, 2A, 3), and an extension of the complete structure to the north created the annex. This new structure replaced the original houses built in the 1920s and the new roof line was considerably higher allowing taller plants to be more easily accommodated.

In 2001 the Kibby house was rebuilt and extended to the west. The steel framing in the old structure had started to fail. The top propagation house was rebuilt at the same time and incorporated as a side wing of the new Kibby House (House 4) with the floor area doubled. Previously the top propagation house had been a standalone structure.

In 2013 the final stage of the Fernery redevelopment was completed. This included a new roof structure over House 1 and new Propagation house with a new Park office/ staff facilities underneath. There was also a new potting shed and chemical store. New boilers were installed and the glasshouse venting system was automated.

The latest addition is a small glasshouse donated by The Friends of Pukekura Park in 2023.

## Forts and Rifle Range

During the Taranaki Wars of the 1860s New Plymouth was transformed into a fortress. An entrenchment was dug around the town. It went from the beach, up Liardet Street, across to Marsland Hill, down Robe Street, down Queen Street to the stockade at Mount Elliot. Around the entrenchment protecting the town were nine blockhouses /redoubts/forts, two of which were in the confines of what is now Pukekura Park.

Fort Herbert was a single-storey blockhouse within a stockade, which housed friendly Māori. There were three thatched buildings inside the stockade. It was on the flat area behind the sportsground's eastern terraces. In July 1860 a fire destroyed the buildings. A replacement wooden building for the guard was brought in from Captain Atkinson's farm at Hurworth.



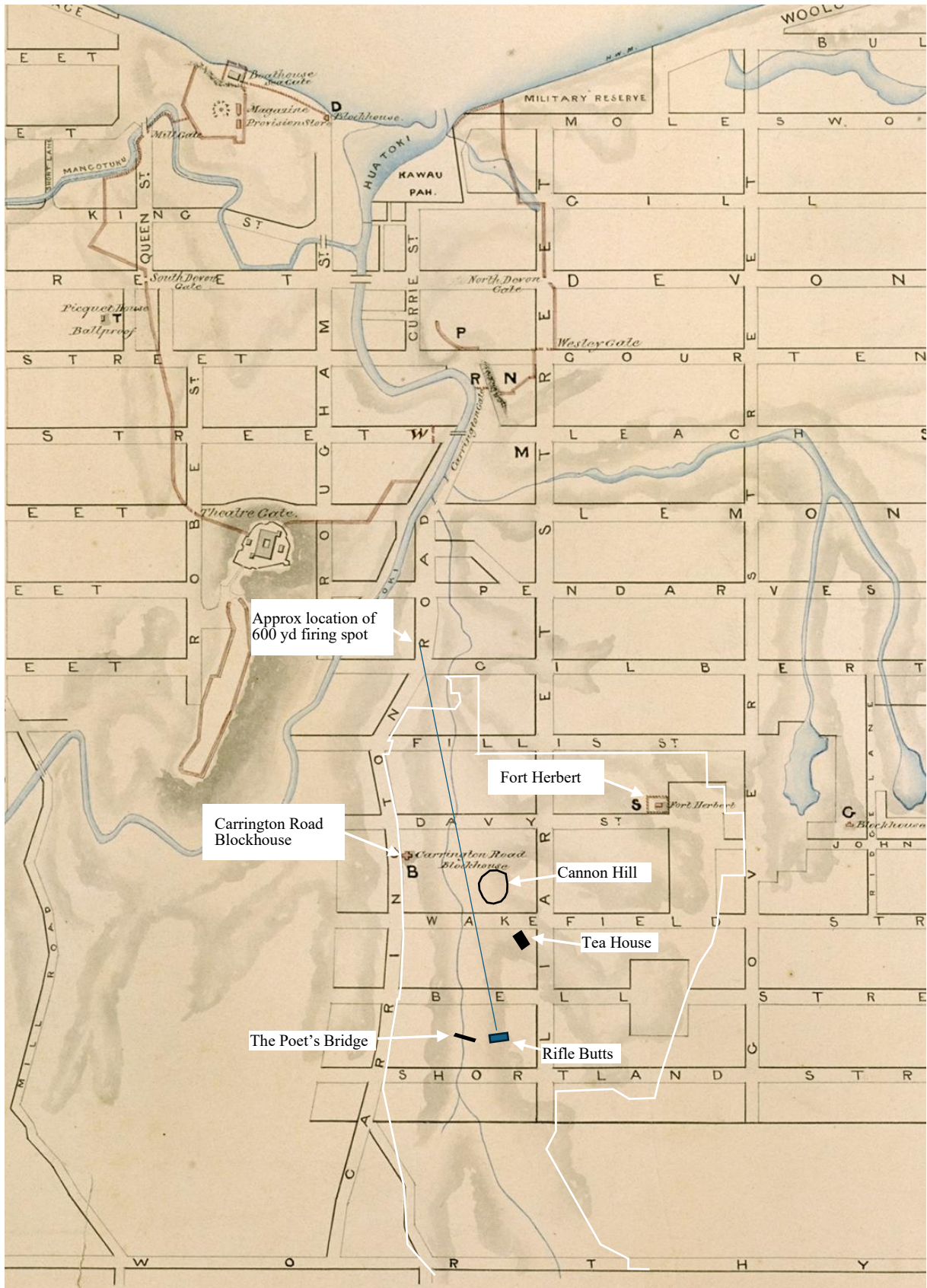
Carrington Road Blockhouse in the middle distance. By Colonel Edward Arthur Williams, 1864  
(Hocken Library Collection, Dunedin. Accession 75/131).

Carrington Road blockhouse was a cross-shape structure surrounded by an earth parapet and housed approximately 50 men. This was on the flat north of 25, Victoria Road.

### Rifle Range

During the 1860 a rifle range was used for target practice and competitions. The distance from the firing position to the targets varied, the longest being 600 yards. The location of this firing position was somewhere near the junction of Gilbert Street and Victoria Road. The targets were set on the hillside to the east of The Poet's bridge. They were set into the hillside to avoid stray bullets going into Brooklands. Unfortunately, this may not have always worked. The use of the range was stopped when complaints were received from George Cutfield who lived on the Brooklands estate.

At the end of 1868 a new rifle range was created on the beach between the Te Henui and Waiwhakaiho streams.



Section of map drawn by Thomas Mould in Sept 1860 showing entrenchment and blockhouses. The rifle butts and 600-yard firing location have been added as well as a rough outline of Pukekura Park. Cannon Hill, The Poet's bridge and Tea House are added to give context to the map. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections Map 3673.



## Fountain Lake

When the Recreation Ground was formed it included an area of privately owned land of approximately 1.5 acres: Māori Reserve No 12. It covered what is now Palm Lawn and the northern half of Fountain Lake. This package of land was purchased in 1891 from Mr. Fookes for £125. This opened up the area around the original waterfall and presented the possibility of creating a second lake.

Little is known about the lake's construction other than it started early in 1893. During construction in July 1893 the lake filled prematurely flooding part of the Recreation Ground. The Taranaki Herald of December 4, 1893, reported that work was complete, and the lake had been filled. There is no reference to outside contractors working on the lake leading the writer to believe that it was excavated inhouse by Darby Claffey aided by his donkey and cart. There may also have been some prison labour involved.

The kidney shape of the lake was determined by the stream to the west and a footpath already in situ to the east. This footpath which ran from Liardet Street to Cannon Hill was probably the earliest formed in the Park and would have been used on the opening day of the Recreation Ground.

In 1933 a decision was made to desilt the lake for the first time since its creation 40 years earlier. The process brought to light some interesting finds and caused the problem of disposing of a lot of silt. Work commenced on April 24 and was completed by mid-July.

Approximately 2350 tons of mud and slush was removed. 1100 tons were carted to the Fitzroy golf links and Rugby Park, the public took about 250 tons and approximately 1000 tons were used in the Park for such purposes as top-dressing flower beds and filling a depression at the top end of the Lily Pond.

Work was scarce at the time because the country was in the middle of a depression. Fourteen men from all walks of life were employed. Eleven of whom worked two days per week and three worked three days per week over a period of 50 working days. Some returned soldiers and permanent staff also helped.

The work was dirty and difficult involving the shovelling of the silt into wheelbarrows then pushing the barrows over greasy planks laid on the lakebed. According to Thomas Horton who was curator at the time none of the men complained.

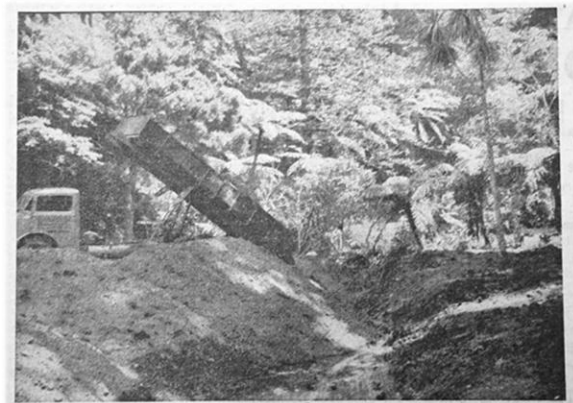
In a 1951 report Don Saxton (Pukekura Park Committee Chairman) and Jack Goodwin (Park curator), identified a number of projects aimed at attracting more people to the Park. One of which was the building of a fountain. The projects were possible because a bequest of approximately £21,500 from the estate of Walter and Leah Graham, former licensees of the Criterion Hotel.



Fountain Lake circa 1897.  
Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2020-0014-008).

During the Park's committee meeting of June 1954, it was suggested by Stanley Anchor that the fountain could be a memorial to returned soldiers and the lake be called Memorial Lake. The following month the idea of having it as a memorial for the Queen's visit was suggested. The Council had a plan to plant trees along Coronation Avenue as a memorial for the visit, but that was abandoned. Commemorating the Queen's visit was thought to be the best way to get the

public behind the proposed fountain. The plan met with a lot of public opposition and the local newspapers received many letters expressing disapproval. However, once the fountain was completed, opposition disappeared, drawing large crowds to see it play and with everyone thinking it was fantastic. At the time it was built it was considered to be state of the art.



THIS TRUCK LOAD OF EARTH, one of many, helped to fill the former lily pond in Pukekura Park this morning. All that now remains of the pond is a muddy stream, about five feet wide, on the Sportsground side, as shown above. A ditch is being dug to detour the water that formerly filled the lily pond into the lower lake, where it is proposed to build an illuminated fountain. At present the lower lake is overgrown with weeds.

Truck delivering fill to the Lily Pond,  
*TH*, January 27, 1955.

The location chosen for the fountain was where an island stood in the middle of the lake. In anticipation of large crowds gathering to see the fountain a decision was made to fill the Lily Pond and create the Hatchery Lawn. Some of the fill came from the island.

The fountain was designed by the electrical engineering firm of Turnbull & Jones Ltd, Wellington, who had a lot of experience in this field. They also supplied the technical equipment including control panels, spray jets, underwater lights etc. To keep the cost down local tradesmen volunteered to do much of the construction work free of charge. Plumber, Stanley Anchor organised a group of fellow plumbers to install the pipework, and local builders arranged the construction of the fountain bowl and pump-house. Mr G. T. Payne supplied the labour, but the cost was borne by New Plymouth builders jointly.



This tangle of pipes and jets fitted into place without trouble on Saturday as plumbers proceeded with their voluntary work inside the basin of the illuminated fountain in Pukekura Park, New Plymouth.

Plumbing the Fountain. *TH*, March 28, 1955.

Local consulting civil engineer Alex Brodie acted as supervisor, also gratis. The concrete basin sits on three wooden piles which were driven in by Roebuck Construction Company. Funding for the project came from the Graham Bequest and public donations.

Construction began the first week in February 1955, with the building of the pump-house. The fountain was complete and ready for its official opening on April 9, 1955. The honour of starting the fountain display was given to Miss Judith Saxton, the Park Committee Chairman's daughter. There was a crowd of 6 – 8000 people in attendance.

## Park Features

Following the opening the fountain played daily from 2.30 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. Times varied depending on the time of year and later in 1955 were reduced to playing only three evening a week due to power shortages.

During construction there were a few mishaps, with vehicles getting stuck in the mud on a couple of occasions, and the Rhind wrought iron gates at the lower Victoria Road entrance being badly damaged when they were hit by a truck.

### Some interesting details about the fountain

Total water pumped	366 gallons/ minute
Total number of Jets	228
Main Jet operating at 30 feet	21 G. P. M.
Inner Ring – 23 Jets operating at 25 feet	125 G. P. M.
Sprays 4 Jets	25 G. P. M.
Outer Ring – 132 Jets operating at 10 feet	130 G. P. M.
Edge Ring – 66 Jets operating at 6 feet	65 G. P. M.
Pump – 3 inch single stage	1440 R. P. M.
Pump Motor – 15 H. P.	1440 R. P. M.
Number of light changes.	22
Time for full sequence of light changes.	6.6 minutes.
Number of water changes.	14
Time for full sequence of water changes.	5.2 minutes
Combined sequence–Time including each effect and each colour	45 minutes
15 Under water lights each 1,000 watts –3 each Red, Amber, Green, Blue and White.	

## Hatchery Lawn

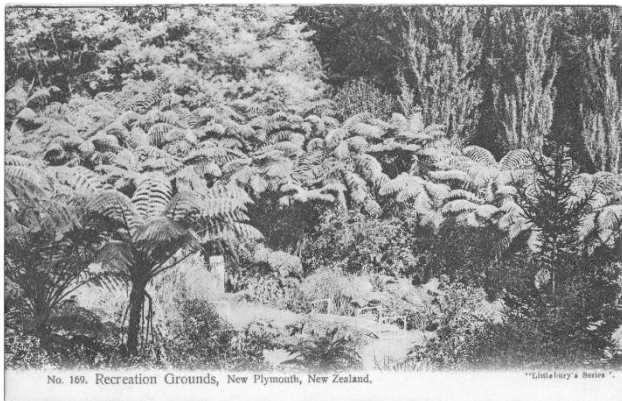
When the land was given to the Recreation Ground Board in 1875 the stream which flowed through the valley went through the middle of what is now the Hatchery Lawn. When the dam was put in to form the main lake a spillway was constructed at the northwest corner of the lake and flowed through to the Hatchery Lawn area, down a small waterfall and back into the original stream bed.

By 1882 a lily pond had been formed, and an ornamental fountain was constructed between the pond and the back of the main lake's dam, courtesy of Professor Furlong. The fate of Furlongs Fountain is unknown.



1882, Furlong's Fountain. On the hillside above the fountain is a glowworm cave.

Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2004-027).



Fish Rearing Ponds, circa 1906.

In 1902 the Board agreed to allow the Acclimatisation Society to build trout rearing ponds, and the area that is Hatchery Lawn was chosen as the most suitable site. There were several ponds forming an arc around Furlong's Fountain. Fry were put in the ponds and fed on mashed liver until they were big enough to fend for themselves. Then they were released into local rivers throughout Taranaki. During the first world war the ponds were abandoned, and they were filled in for safety reasons.

In 1921 the Recreation Ground Board were again approached by the Acclimatisation Society with a plan to develop a hatchery. Permission was granted and a hatchery was built, taking the form of a Māori whare. The site was chosen due to the difference in elevation between the water level in the main lake and the hatchery lawn. As the water fell it was aerated which was vital for the hatching process.

Rainbow trout ova were brought in from Rotorua, while brown trout ova were brought in from Hakataramea in the South Island. Initially this venture was successful, however problems with water quality became an issue. From records it would appear that the hatchery ceased to be used circa 1928. The building remained on site for a number of years and a concrete water tank from the hatchery can still be seen at the southern end of the Hatchery Lawn, hidden in the undergrowth.

## Park Features

The following article published in the Taranaki Daily News, August 20, 1921, gives an insight into the operational workings of the hatcheries in the 1920s.

### Trout Hatcheries

#### PUKEKURA PARK - TARANAKI ACCLIMATISATION SOCIETY'S WORK.

These hatcheries are now in full swing, and have been largely patronised by the public of late, who have been full of appreciation of the work of the society, and in particular of that of Mr. W. J. Bell, who is superintending operations. Indeed, one visitor from the South Island remarked that it was well worth travelling to New Plymouth to see the hatchery alone. There are now some 275,000 Ova and young trout on view, but would-be visitors are urged not to delay if they wish to see them, as they are progressing rapidly that the commencement of liberations takes place at once. Briefly, the series of operations now going forward is as follows:- The ova arrive packed in butter-cloth, resting upon moss; the case in which they travel is also arranged to carry a quantity of ice. This keeps the vitality of the eggs down, so that, being semi-dormant, they are less likely to sustain injury on their journey. Even then the boxes of ova have to be handled with extreme care. For instance, a heavy blow to the case is sufficient to kill a large number of eggs. Arrived at the hatchery, the ova are carefully unpacked, or floated off the butter-cloth into a bowl of ice-cold water, and then spread on the hatching trays. The troughs which contain these also contain at first large pieces of ice. This gradually melts, and the water rises to its normal temperature without injuring the ova, which otherwise would be killed by the shock. The trays are placed in tiers in the troughs, and by an ingenious arrangement the water is made to rise through them all from bottom to top in succession. On examining the eggs, it will be noticed that there are two black dots, some way apart, in each of them. These are the eyes of the future fish, and when they are present it is certain that the egg is fertile. When nearing hatching, it is possible to see the eyes moving about in the egg, through the semi-transparent shell, giving it a somewhat uncanny appearance. In a few days, depending upon how far advanced the ova were when received, and upon the temperature of the water, the young trout commence to burst their shells and to make their appearance. They do not look very much like fish, for each troutlet has attached to its abdomen a sac or, rather, one might say, each sac has a troutlet attached to it. This is the remainder of the yolk of the egg, and the fish gradually absorb it, growing fast all the time. When it is just absorbed is the time plant the fish in the rivers.

There are many queer freaks of nature among the baby fish. Some have two heads, some two tails and some are Siamese twins. These, of course, live only a very short time. In liberating the fish the greatest care has to be exercised in bringing the temperature of the water in the fish cans to that of the river. This is accomplished by pouring water out of the can and replacing it with water from the river, and often takes some time, and many changes. It is only necessary to state that a difference of over two degrees will kill every fish, to show the importance of the above, indeed, many fish must have been killed by liberators at times simply owing to their ignorance of this point. The system of liberation is based on the fact that three or four tiny fish are unnoticed by big trout, eels, etc., as being in no sense a meal. To liberate young fish of any sort in a body is a great mistake. They invariably form a shoal, and naturally attract attention which their enemies are not long in giving to them.

The present-day liberator passes along the river with a receptacle of fish. Here and there, whenever he finds a quiet little shallow, he dips out a very few never more than six. It takes a long time, but the results that follow prove it to be the right one. Indeed, the excellent waters of South Taranaki were made by this process. The little fish now fend for themselves. Never having been artificially fed their natural instinct teaches them what to look for and what to eat. They are spread all over the river, so there is food for all. They thrive and grow in their new environment at an enormous rate in this Dominion, and nowhere in it is there better trout water than in Taranaki.

The secretary of the Acclimatisation Society (Mr. Val. Duff, New Plymouth) would be glad to hear from gentlemen willing to assist in liberating fish, especially in the following districts:- Opunake, Inglewood, Okato, Warea, Lepperton, Oaonui.



Lily Pond with hatchery building at the rear.

Part of the southern end of the Lily Pond was reclaimed early in 1933 using silt from the lower lake, and Robert Clinton Hughes planted a ceremonial kauri tree there the following year. Unfortunately, the site was too wet, and the tree did not like it and died in the early 1950s, and was removed by Jack Goodwin.

In 1954 the Lily Pond was completely filled in. An island in the middle of Fountain Lake was removed when the Queen Elizabeth II fountain was constructed and some of the spoil was used to fill the Lily Pond. Most of the fill came from Fitzroy Golf Club. There is a belief that the Lily Pond was filled in so as to dispose of the island, that is not the case. The reason was to create extra space for people to congregate to view the fountain.



Robert Clinton Hughes planting a kauri in 1934.  
Photo, private collection, Warwick Horton.

## House by the Zoo

This attractive bungalow was constructed for Newton King in 1925. It was designed by noted New Plymouth architect Thomas Herbert Bates. Bates advertised for tenders for its construction in early August 1925, but construction appears to have been delayed for some months, with a permit for its construction not being granted by the Borough Council until 13 November 1925. F. D. Payne was the builder, and the estimated construction cost was £1,275.

Newton King had the bungalow built for his son Waldyne who at the time was employed by his father as a chauffeur.

When Brooklands was handed over to the Park Committee in late 1933 the house was unoccupied. The electric range, copper and tubs had been removed so had to be replaced before the house could be inhabited.



Once refitted various staff members lived in the house including; Alex Dent, Arthur Cleaver, Albert James and Mr Rae. Tom and Shona Wagstaff lived there from 1955 until Christmas 1961. Alan and Gael Jellyman lived there for 10 years from 1962. Alan was at first assistant curator to John Goodwin, then became deputy director and later director of Parks. Glyn Church and his wife Gail lived there from 1978 – 81. Ken Davey and his wife Adrienne occupied the house after the Church's. The house was convenient for Ken because he was manager of the Parks Department Nursery which was next to the house.

In 2022 the house was converted into an envirohub. The Brooklands Enviro-Hub aims to be a centre for groups and individuals to meet, work and learn about our local environment and ways to improve where we live while minimising our impact on the world.

Bringing together people with a passion for sustainability and the environment, it is a place of collaboration, advocacy and learning, welcoming anyone with an interest in the environment and a sustainable future. The hub has been created to promote positive ideas and actions that can be incorporated into everyday lives.

## Japanese Hillside

The Japanese Hillside was developed in response to requests for a Japanese garden. The opportunity arose in 1992, when it was decided to remove the original aged pine trees from the hillside to the west of Hughes Walk. A proposal was put forward to establish the hillside with Japanese trees, as the framework for a feature which fitted into the wider park landscape, but whose structural features would have a Japanese theme. The proposed concept was the idea of the Park curator, Anthony Joines and other Parks Department managers.



The concept meant that the hillside was planted to look like a piece of forest that might naturally be encountered in Japan. Some of the trees planted on the hillside were grown from seed that came from Japan. They included Japanese maples, *Acer japonicum*, and Hinoki Cypress, *Camaecypais obtusa*, which were raised in the Park Nursery and were planted out in 1993. Most of the Japanese Cedars, *Cryptomeria japonica*, were sourced locally from Cedar Lodge Nursery, and the azaleas came from Living Light Nursery at Omata. The positioning of the paths on the Japanese Hillside were determined by the access tracks cut by diggers during the process of removing the pines.

The lower part of Japanese Hillside between Hughes Walk and Fountain Lake wasn't developed until 2001 and was the idea of Park Manager, Bryan Gould. Some trees had already been planted close to the Hughes Walk by Anthony Joines in 1993, but the rest of the slope was covered in native trees and shrubbery. In order to strengthen the identity of the Japanese Hillside. Ian Hutchinson (Botanical Records Officer at Pukekura Park) was asked in 2000 for hard landscape feature suggestions by the Park Manager and suggested a Torii Gate. This suggestion was made because Tori Gates are usually red, meaning they would match up with existing features such as the Park bridges.

Subsequently the Torii gate was built by the Parks construction team, based on design guidance/plans from New Plymouth's sister city Mishima. The construction of the gate and the planting of the lower slope with azaleas, Pieris and some additional trees selected by the Park staff opened up the whole hillside to create a complete Japanese vista.

The Torii Gate was officially unveiled in May 2001 following a sister cities convention in New Plymouth. The ceremony was attended by a New Plymouth District Council delegation including deputy mayor Peter Tennent and a delegation from Mishima City. At the ceremony the gate was named 'Mishima Gate'.



## Kunming Garden

Kunming Garden in Brooklands was a gift to New Plymouth from the mayor of Kunming city, in the Yunnan province of China, following the signing of a sister city agreement in 2003.

The pavilion, moon gate and paths were all constructed by Chinese craftsmen from the city of Dali which is a four-hour drive west of Kunming. All of the materials for these features came from China. A total of 34 tonnes of stone, timber and carvings were shipped before the project began. Limestone for the garden's stonework, came from the Kunming Stone Forest, a tourist attraction, one hours drive east of Kunming city.

The plants in the garden are all native to Asia but were all sourced in New Zealand.

The garden was officially opened on February 27, 2005.



Spring Wind Pavilion.



Spring Wind Pavilion.  
Freestyle Hand Painted Roof.

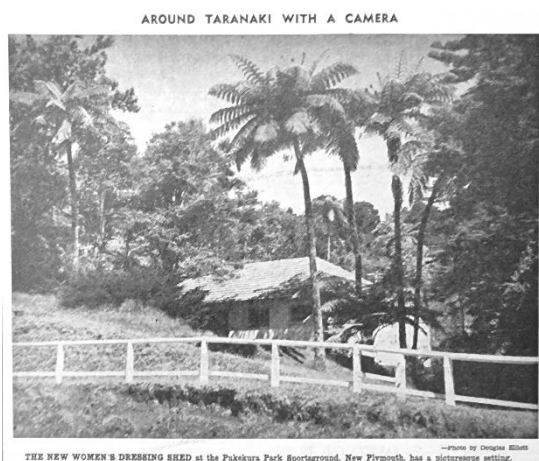
The path in Kunming Garden incorporates a floral design. All the stones were placed individually. Look carefully and you will notice that the stones do not touch. Paths like this are common in Asia and are sometimes called foot chi paths or reflexology footpaths.



## Ladies Pavilion

Early in 1948 a request for a ladies dressing shed was made to the Park Committee by a deputation representing the New Plymouth Amateur Athletic and Cycling Club and the Girls' Marching Association. It was pointed out that female athletes competing at the Park's sportsground were getting changed in their cars or in the bushes. It was hoped that the building would contain two rooms measuring 15ft x 12 feet, with showers and other amenities at the rear.

The deputation pointed out that in 1949 several women's events may be held in New Plymouth, including the New Zealand women's and junior track and field athletic championships, the national marching championships, as well as hosting a visiting team from America. The Park Committee was sympathetic to the request provided finances for the project could be found.



*TH*, March 23, 1949.

Representatives of the New Plymouth Amateur Athletic and Cycling Club attended the Park Committee meeting in May 1948 reiterating their request for changing facilities at the sportsground. The deputation stated that holding the New Zealand women's and junior track and field athletic championships at the Park in 1949 was dependent on changing facilities being available, otherwise they would have to be held at Rugby Park. After the deputation left the matter was further discussed, and it was resolved that "every effort should be made to proceed with the erection of the necessary conveniences with the least possible delay, and subject to the necessary

materials being available that the committee approves of the work proceeding immediately." The Committee received an interest free advance of £2,000 for the project.

To raise funds for the construction a committee was set up, which included representatives from the Park Committee and several local sporting bodies. One of the committee members was renowned javelin thrower Stan Lay.

The site chosen for the changing rooms was located at the south-west corner of the sportsfield. A large cutting was made into the bank creating a suitable space for the changing room as well as a future staff building. For safety reasons, ten pine trees were felled on the hillside above the new building between the Sportsground and the Tea House. An old tractor shed was removed from the site and relocated to the Fountain Lake section of Smith Walk, where it remains today.

The changing room was designed by then borough engineer Mr. R. F. Mainland and was constructed by Messrs. Curd Bros. It was completed sometime during February 1949 and construction cost was £1,318. Unfortunately, showers were never fitted.

## Liardet Street Entrance

Originally the plan was to have the main entrance at the northwest corner of the grounds onto Carrington Road (now Victoria Road) and run a path along the western bank of the stream down to Brooklands. From this a second path was to run at right angles across the valley past Breidecker's vineyard (in what is now Stainton Dell) and exit at the racecourse. Unfortunately, it was difficult to proceed with the main entrance at that location because the Board did not own town sections, 1084 and 1065. A decision was made to move the entrance to Liardet Street which at the time was the only reasonable alternative.



Liardet Street Entrance, circa 1900.  
Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2003-859).

Although people could come up Liardet Street it was not ideal. A stream that crossed the street had to be bridged and a large hill outside the entrance to the grounds had to be scrambled over. Take a step outside of the Liardet Street entrance and look at the cutting either side of the road, that cutting did not exist when the Recreation Grounds was officially opened in May 1876.

The first proper gates to be erected at the entrance were donated by George Rhind in 1885. Rhind had come to New Plymouth in 1881 to help with the unloading and erection of machinery for the new harbour. He was kept on and made Superintendent of Works. Rhind worked for the Harbour Board for about 10 years, then briefly as the proprietor of the Taranaki Hotel.

The gates were built by blacksmith James Revell. They were made of wrought iron and hung on large iron posts. Unfortunately, the foundations were not built as solidly as the gates themselves and soon collapsed leaving the gates impassable.

In 1890, Robert Hughes Senior took it upon himself to fix the problem. He engaged Arthur Mofflin to design a new entrance which included rehung the existing gates.<sup>[5]</sup> A full width concrete foundation was laid with concrete pillars supporting the gates. On the west side a smaller wicket was added for foot traffic. What was described as a smaller wicket was an opening with a turnstile.

In 1936 a decision was made to replace the gates with something much more imposing. At the Park committee meeting in April 1937 Mr. Syme of Messrs. Syme & Griffiths presented a sketch of the proposed new gates. The following month it was resolved that the plans as submitted by Messrs. Griffiths & Syme be approved, that they be appointed architects to the Board for this work and that they be authorised to prepare specifications and call for tenders at their earliest convenience.

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<sup>[5]</sup> There is a question as to whether the old gates were rehung or new gates were built. It is the author's opinion that the old gates were rehung.



Sanders Memorial Gates.

*AWN*, July 27, 1938.

The pylons and walls were designed to be finished with Mount Somers Stone but the construction estimates using this material were far more than the committee could afford. The architects came back with an alternative, which was described as “water-proofed stone, tinted blocks marked out to represent stone courses.” The fake stone finish did not sit well with long time committee member William Short who was a stonemason. The lowest tender using Mount Somers Stone was £3,636 and the lowest tender using the alternative finish was £1,575 by Boon Bros. Ltd., who were given the contract. The following month the architects came back with a finer finish which incorporated mica.

The gates were advertised as being memorial gates, however, the names of the benefactors that should appear on the memorial plaques was not clear. A marble tablet inscribed with the names of deceased benefactors including J. T. Davis, Martha King and others had been erected on the face of Cannon Hill in 1906. By 1937 the tablet had fallen into a state of disrepair and was removed. It was probably the intention to add all of the names from this tablet onto a plaque on the new gates, however, because the gates were being funded from the Sanders bequest it was felt it was only proper that his name alone should appear on the gates which is as it is today.

The old gates were taken down and relocated to the Victoria Road entrance at the end of Gilbert Street where they remain.



Relocated Rhind gates at the lower  
Victoria Rd entrance.

## Main Lake

When provincial Secretary, Thomas Kelly selected the site for the Park, he did so because of the stream running through the valley. He could see the potential of damming the stream to make a lake and have the area as a recreational reserve. He laid this out in a letter sent to Fred Carrington the Superintendent of New Plymouth on June 8, 1875. This letter was published in the Taranaki Herald, June 26, 1875.

To form the lake a 110 ft long dam was constructed across the stream, between today's Band Rotunda and Waterfall. The plans and specification were supplied by Thomas Kelly. Originally the stream followed the west bank of the lake and went through the middle of the Hatchery Lawn. At the point where the dam was constructed the bed of the stream was approximately 5m below the level of today's path.

Because of interest in the construction of the dam the Taranaki Herald published an article, June 13, 1878, describing how it was constructed. The article highlighted many problems encountered by the contractor. It was a large undertaking and everything was dug out by hand. During construction there were changes made for safety reasons. For example, an under sluice was added to the design. There was a fear that if the dam collapsed the water released would inundate the town causing a lot of damage. The under sluice was added so that the lake could be drained in case of an emergency. Following is a transcription of the article.

*Taranaki Herald, June 13, 1878 Dam Construction.*

As the public have shown a great deal of interest in the formation, construction, and the progress made with the works connected with the dam in the Botanical Gardens, and as they are now completed, a short resume of what has been done may not be out of place, and will be interesting to many of our readers. It is now nearly five months since the contract to do the work was taken by Mr. Neil, and, notwithstanding many drawbacks, it has been completed to the entire satisfaction of the Board.

Before, however, proceeding to describe what has been done, it ought to be stated for general information that had not the members of the Board pledged their own personal credit to the amount of £150, the public would not now possess as fine a piece of artificial water as there is now to be found in New Zealand. The public are certainly indebted to those gentlemen for their spirited action in the matter. We trust that members of the community will attend the Bazaar to be held in aid of the grounds, and be but half as ready to spend their money in the purchase of articles as the ladies of New Plymouth have been in making them, and a large addition to the funds of the Board will be realised.

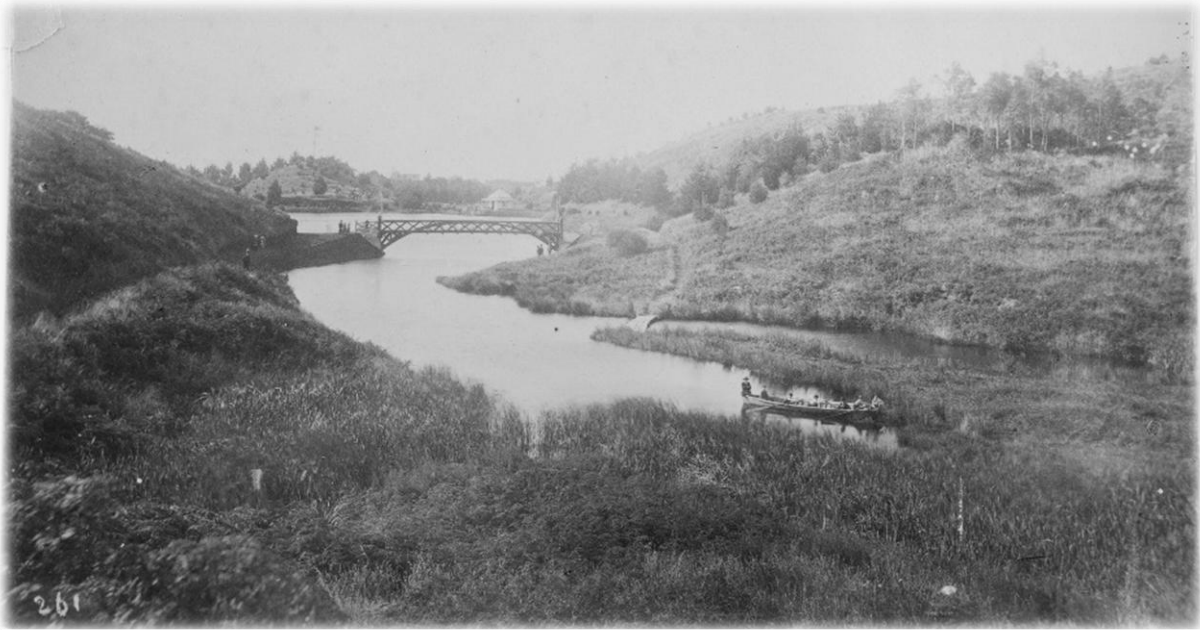
The greatest difficulty which the Contractor had to contend with was the water. Owing to the peculiar formations of the ground it was not possible to divert the stream, therefore it was found necessary to form a coffer dam some little distance above the works, in order to carry the stream by a race cut in the side of the hill clear of the proposed foundation, about 80ft across. The excavation was then gone on with, although water was still coming in too fast to admit of the work being carried on with satisfaction. The spring burst out in many directions, the strongest ones at the sides of the excavations. These springs did not show until the Contractor had got down about 7 feet through a stiff black soil, very much like peat, evidently the stream's deposit for many years, for it was full of leaves, sticks, &c., some of them being

as green as if plucked the day before. The Contractor now introduced a Californian pump, and found that by plying it every half-hour the water could be kept down. Beneath this layer of black soil was a bed of volcanic ashes about 2 inches thick, resembling powdered pumice stone. It was quite gritty, and evidently not wood ashes. This was resting on a bed of very greasy white clay, about 2 feet in thickness. At sight this seemed to be a sound bottom, but the sounding bar disclosing gravel underneath, it was found necessary to remove the clay. Large rocks then began to show themselves, and limbs of trees with the leaves still attached and quite green. Thousands of hinau berries were turned up with shells of mullusca 3 inches long. A further excavation of 2 feet brought the contractor to the bottom, which consisted of a stiff clay. Then being then down about 11 feet below the surface their contention against the water was very laborious. It was now found necessary to run a bank of clay across the excavation, 12 feet from the upper side to the former level of the stream. This being well puddled the benefit was seen at once, for the water collected behind it during the remainder of the time the contractor was at work and the excavation was tolerably dry. The foundation for the puddle wall then carried down 2 feet into the bottom. The excavation being completed the filling-in commenced, the puddle wall being kept about 2 feet below the sides, as they rose guided by plank there to prevent it spreading. This system was followed till the completion of the work.

The intention of the Board in the first instance was to have formed the dam without a scouring sluice, but further consideration induced them to alter their plans, and a deep under sluice was cut on the east bank. It was found necessary to use dynamite in making this cut, as large rocks kept cropping up; but most of the cutting was through very compact gravel cement. Three box culverts were made, each ten feet long by twelve inches clear inside, and carefully laid in a bed of puddle and well rammed for two feet over. The frame for the lift was then placed, the uprights sunk one foot in the ground and well tied at top, bottom, and middle, and collared round the mouth of the culvert to keep it rigid. A lip from the culvert went down about ten inches in the solid, and the race in front was well rammed and beaten for about twelve feet. The front of the lift is boarded with planks two inches thick up to the top, and let into the sides of the race one foot; and the puddle is continued behind all the way up, six feet in breadth. The remaining twenty-four feet is filled up with earth, and kept from falling out into the race at the end by a rubble wall eight feet high. There are of course many other little things that deserve to be noticed, but the foregoing are the principal ones. That it was a large undertaking is manifest, and that the contractors have ably performed their work, the proof is its impermeability.

We have not as yet, been able to obtain exact information to the amount of earth removed, area of water. &c., but the following is an approximate estimate :- about 3,000 yards of earth have been removed, and the area of water obtained is nearly two acres. The length of the sheet, in our estimation, comprises its beauty, as it will run back nearly 400 yards, with varying breadth. The total length of the dam across the way on top is 110 feet by 10 feet wide, with a breadth of 80 feet at the foundation. The pressure of water on the embankment will be over 400 tons—a weight which need not alarm the most timid, as the stability of the work is unquestionable.

In conclusion, we can only wish that the Board had more funds at its disposal, in order that it might continue improving and beautifying the Grounds, which are being made a popular resort for the public for pleasure and amusement.



Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2001-396).

This photo shows a path to the right of The Poet's Bridge leading to a small bridge crossing onto a spit of land. This was the original track on the east side of the lake to the south of the Park. This path continued down the Park through what is now Goodwin Dell. This changed in 1894 when the Boat Shed Bridge was constructed. Soon after this the spit of land was removed apart from two islands which remain today. The third island on the west side of the lake was formed in the same manner.

When the lake was filled two boats were donated, one from Mr. Hirst which was described as a neat and commodious pleasure boat and one from Mr. Nicoll (blacksmith) which was a 15ft iron outrigger christened "Lady of the Lake". The Board decided that they would charge one guinea if the public wanted to put their own boats on the lake for private use.

After completion of the lake the Acclimatisation Society approached the Board with the intention of forming a union so that they could use the grounds for rearing fish and birds. Unfortunately, the society also wanted to ban boating and swimming in the lake which was unacceptable to the Board.

In early 1879 a bathing shed and diving board were built (see page 176), and the lake became the first public swimming pool in town. Initially bathing was restricted to before 8am then in 1886 the hours were extended to 11am for women and children. A red flag was hoisted on the Cannon Hill flagpole to warn men to stay clear. Swimming in the lake became less popular after the public baths were opened but it was still used occasionally in the 1920s.

In 1886 the area of the lake was increased by over an acre by removing a spit of land on the east side of the lake immediately south of The Poet's Bridge in a section of the lake known as the Dardanelles.

Three islands were formed in the lake in the mid-1890s. The two islands on the east side were originally part of a spit of land which extended north from Monument Hill between the two streams feeding the lake.



Newly formed islands, circa 1893.

Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. N.Z. Ref. G-21383-12.



Manhattan Island formed in 1899, overseen by T. K. Skinner.

Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2004-248/2).

When the lake was originally formed it extended as far as Goodwin Dell. The first 100 metres at the southern end was narrow, shallow and full of raupo. This area was reclaimed in 1899 and made into what was known as Manhattan Island. T. K. Skinner supervised the project. The stream to the west of the island was filled in at some point. There was a recording of the channels around the island filling with silt following a major downpour. It may have been that they decided not to reopen the channel following that event (Ref: *TH*, April 4, 1935 page 9).



## Park Features



View of the Serpentine looking south towards Brooklands.  
Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 1497-WTW9007.

The other major work on the lake was the extension beyond the Boat Shed known as the Serpentine. This was designed and supervised by Percy Smith in 1908. One of the streams feeding the lake comes through the valley where the Serpentine is. This was dug out to form the lake extension. A gang of Māori labourers were hired to do the job and they camped in the Park during the project. Newton King was so impressed with them that he hired them to dig out and create the lake at Brooklands when work on the Serpentine was complete. While digging out the Serpentine an eel was caught weighing 25lb.

Silt has always been a major problem in the Park lakes. In 1926 when construction got underway on the Fernery it was decided to clean the lakes. The silt was so bad at the upper end of the main lake that it was becoming difficult to get the boats out of the Boat Shed. A novel approach was taken. Buckets were filled then hauled out of the lake by a winch which was pulled by the tractor the sportsground had acquired the previous year. Subsequent desilting operations have been carried out in 1966, 1996 and 2020.



Park tractor winching buckets of silt from the lake.  
Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: A.4.18).

## Maze

Back in 1892 a chap named Archibald Hood made a request to plant a maze in the Recreation Ground which was granted. Unfortunately, the maze had a very short existence, but still managed to leave a lasting impression.

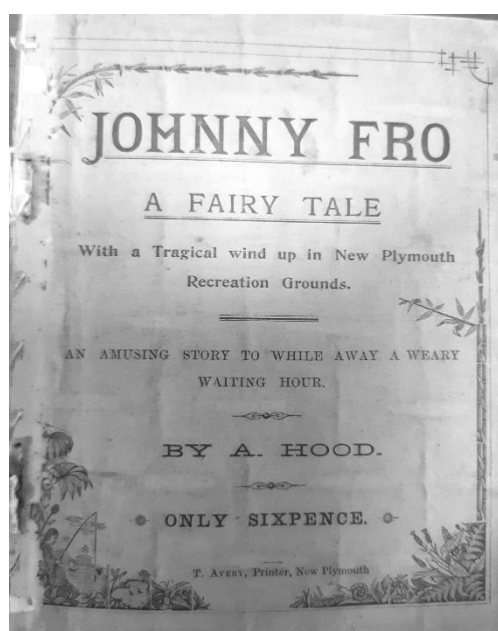
Hood had seen active service with the Royal Artillery during the Crimean War and came to New Plymouth in 1861. In New Plymouth he was attached to the Army Supply Department during the Taranaki Wars. After taking his discharge he remained in New Plymouth.

He made the proposal to construct a maze in September 1892 and by October it was reported that, “under Mr. Hood’s supervision ‘a maze’ of box thorn (between 3 and 4000 roots being used) had been made towards the head of the gully above the lakelet”. Later, in May 1893 it was reported that, “The ‘maze’ that has been formed at the southern end of the reserve will, in the course of a couple of years, be one of the attractions of the place, as the box thorn hedges are growing vigorously.” It soon became apparent that the maze was going to be high maintenance when at the end of the year Charles Edgecombe put in an account for £3 3s for labour at the maze. The Board resolved not to spend any more money on the maze for at least six months.

To try and recoup some of the money Hood had spent, he wrote a book called *Johnny Fro* which went on sale for 6d in October 1894. Hood was a literary man and had previously published a few short stories and poems. The story of Johnny Fro starts in the Park when Johnny meets a young girl named, Miss Marimemonia Breenge and it concludes in the Park when Johnny and Marimemonia get married in the maze. To read the story of Johnny Fro go to page 289.

For health reasons Hood was unable to tend to the maze himself and in November 1895 launched an appeal to raise money for the maze maintenance. A man was employed for several days in December 1895 putting the maze in order; however, it would appear that the maintenance became too difficult. In a Board meeting in 1900 it was reported that two hundred trees had been planted around the site of the old maze.

The exact location of the maze is unknown; however, it was described as being made towards the head of the gully above the lakelet. At that time the lake extended all the way to Goodwin Dell suggesting that the maze was probably in that location. Also, at that time the path to the south end of the Park went through that area.



Front Cover of Hood’s Fairy Tale  
Johnny Fro

## Old Curator's Office



In a report in 1946 Thomas Horton highlighted the need for new staff offices. He was working from part of the original tea house, built in 1905 adjacent to where the current Tea House now stands, which was moved in 1931 (when the current Tea House was built) to a dark damp spot along the path to the west of the Fernery. It had been repurposed as a ladies toilet and curators office, and because of the location the building was always cold and damp. The remaining staff were housed in the old bathing shed which had also been relocated along the same path.

In 1948 when a site was selected for a ladies dressing shed at the south-west corner of the Sportsground a decision was made to excavate the site to be large enough, that in future a curator's office/staff room could also be erected.

Plans were prepared by the City Engineer and Graham Harvey, which were presented to the committee at their December 1950 meeting. The plans were approved at the next meeting in February 1951. Due to work pressures, Harvey was unable to finish the final plans and specifications until November 1951. The following month a tender of £2,996 13s submitted by Messrs. Ashman Ltd was accepted for the construction of the building.

The Board decided to dedicate the building to the memory of Mr. & Mrs. Graham, and a dedication plaque was subsequently fixed on the exterior of the building. A couple of months earlier the committee had received notice that they had been left a large bequest on the death of Mrs. Graham. During their time in New Plymouth in the 1920s and 30s the Graham's were the proprietors of the Criterion Hotel and were strong supporters of the Park. The bequest stipulated that it had to be spent on permanent structures. Their bequest was more than £21,000 given to the Park over a period of several years. Even though the building was dedicated to the Graham's memory, their money did not directly pay for the construction of the building.

The final cost of the building was £3,296 12s 8d of which the council paid £1,500, the remaining £1,796 12s 8d was paid for using monies from the following bequests: Sanders, Attrill, Mary Freeth, Annie Hulk, Clara Bingham, E. F. Fookes and A. R. Standish.

Construction started in February of 1952 and was completed in May 1952. It comprised an L-shaped workshop accessed by a large double door, a staff lunchroom, a small dressing room with a shower, a storeroom and an office for the curator.

The building was used as the office for the Pukekura Park Curator and the Parks & Recreation Department as an administration centre. The building ceased being the base for the Parks & Recreation Department in the late 1980s but continued to be the office for the curator up until June 1999 when the curator role was disestablished. Subsequently it was reoccupied in March 2007 as the curator's office when the Park's curator role was re-established.

More recently the building has largely been vacant except for use by the Events Team during the Festival of the Lights, and as a base for the "Energy City Harriers".

The building became vacant when a new Curator's Office was built near the Fernery in 2013.

## **Pukekura Park Tennis Club**

The Pukekura Park Board received a letter in June 1910, at its monthly meeting stating that: “a movement was on foot to form a tennis club in Vogeltown, and the promoters are very desirous of utilising a portion of the Park fronting the Carrington Road and adjoining the Vogeltown entrance— lying between the entrance and the caretaker’s cottage. At present the piece of ground is hardly used and it is the very place for such a purpose as we propose. We are asked to ascertain whether your board will grant us a lease of this ground at a nominal rate. If so we are prepared to call a meeting forthwith, have the club formed, and the courts prepared for next season’s play. It is hardly necessary for us to point out that the laying out of courts and the subsequent care of them will greatly enhance the appearance and usefulness of this portion of the Park.” This was viewed favourably by the Board.

Following a meeting at the Park with the group of individuals promoting the tennis and croquet club, the Park Board received a formal application which asked for a seven-year lease, with the right of renewal for a further term, and enough ground for four tennis courts and a croquet lawn. It also requested that the courts be entirely under the control of the club and stated that the public would be admitted to the enclosure, and that none of the existing footpaths or gateways would be obstructed.

The Board decided to grant the lease of about an acre of land as pegged out, for seven years, the first two years at a shilling a year, third year £4 a year, and the remaining four years £5, payable half-yearly in advance, upon certain conditions. Two of the conditions were that the land be cleared of fern weeds and rubbish and that notice boards be put up stating that public would have free access at all times. These two conditions were later rescinded by the Board.

On June 30, 1910, a meeting for the purpose of forming a lawn tennis and croquet club, chaired by the Mayor at the Council Chambers, was attended by about seventy ladies and gentlemen. The club was formed and named the “Park Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club”. The officers elected were: president, Mr. R. Cock; vice-presidents, Messrs. G. Tisch, T. C. Schnackenberg, and Mr. Rudd; trustees, the vice-presidents; general committee, Messrs. F. W. Sandford, F. C. Tribe, T. C. List, H. J. Wells, and S. L. Mark; ladies committee, Mesdames. R. Cock, Dowling, F. C. Tribe, T. C. Schnackenberg, and Misses E. Smith, T. Okey and Hammond; treasurer, Mr. A. T. Moore; secretary, Mr. J. J. Staples. Prior to the official formation of the club the group had already been active attracting 54 men and 48 lady members. They had also sought tenders for the laying of the grass courts and the quote from A. J. Cole was accepted.

The club soon realised that their initial layout wasn’t adequate and employed surveyors, Sladden and Palmer to lay out the courts differently. After a retendering process, the job of laying the courts was given to A. J. Cole. The courts were ready for sowing by the middle of September. To get the grounds in order several working bees were organized. At one of the working bees at the end of September, the ladies selected the location for the clubhouse. It was located near Carrington Road in between the tennis and croquet lawns. In November George Lynch was appointed groundsman for the club.

The erection of the clubhouse started in mid-December. It was designed by Committee member Major F. W. Sandford who drew the sketches and supervised the building work. The construction was mainly carried out by himself and Mr. F. C. Tribe with some additional help from other club members. Major Sandford was a woodwork teacher and leading light in the scout movement in New Zealand. He was a personal friend of Lord Baden Powell, the founder of the scouting movement.

## Park Features

A garden party was organised at “Overdale”, the residence of Richard Cock, to raise funds for building the clubhouse. Unfortunately, inclement weather meant it wasn’t as successful as hoped. There was a write up about the event in *The Daily News* under the heading of “Woman’s World”, which included a description of what some of the ladies were wearing, for example: Mrs. Cock, black chiffon taffetas, black and white hat, with feathers; Mrs. Roberts, pretty crush strawberry linen, faced with black, saxe blue toque, trimmed with brown.

The tennis and croquet courts were ready for opening by the end of the year and were described as follows: “The courts are conveniently and picturesquely situated on the hill overlooking the big lake, and front on the old Carrington road. The area under the control of the club has been terraced, and the courts are on three different levels, with gradual slopes from the first pair to the second pair of tennis courts, then a smaller promenade lawn in front of the club house on a lower level, and just below it the croquet lawn. This latter has not thrived too well, and for this season the promenade lawn will probably be kept for the croquet ladies. The tennis courts are fenced with wire netting twelve feet high, and this will permit of the wide walk along the side being used with absolute safety by the spectators, whilst the players will also be relieved to know that no one can wander sort-of-aimlessly on to the playing area. A walk, to be planted with shrubs, and perhaps with flowers, will be made right round the courts; in fact, there is a very complete beautification scheme to be carried out, sufficient ground having been placed at the disposal of Club to make the courts very attractive. A handy little clubhouse has been erected, comprising an afternoon tea room, ladies’ and gentlemen’s dressing rooms, etc., and caretaker’s room, besides a small apartment sacred to the providers of the cup that cheers.”

The “Park Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club” was officially opened on January 3, 1911, by the Mayor Mr. G Tisch.

In 1923 the tennis club decided to change from grass courts to asphalt covered concrete courts and reduced the number of courts from five to four.

A new club house was built in 1933. It was designed by club member Frank Tett, who was a drawing teacher at NPBHS. Tett was a mentor to architect Terry Boon and artist Michael Smither. The clubhouse was constructed by Messrs Peterson & Co.

In 1939 the tennis club was advised by the Pukekura Park Board that they would have to move from Victoria Road within five years because the Park Board needed the land for planting a shelter belt. This was a blow to the tennis club as they had built a new club house only a few years earlier. The Park Committee considered offering a piece of land next to the Gables which Thomas Horton said was big enough for six tennis courts and three croquet greens. Because of the war the club’s relocation was deferred.



Pukekura Park Tennis Club – Clubhouse.

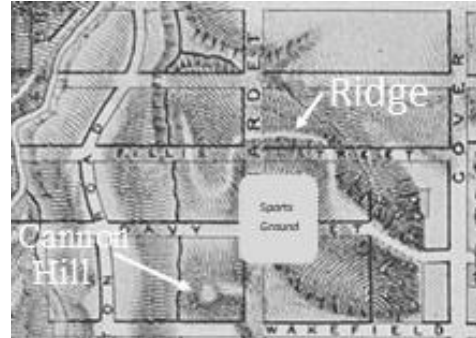
The Park Tennis and Croquet Club was eventually relocated in 1953 to its current site at the end of Kura Street. The clubhouse was dismantled and rebuilt at the new site by the Council in July 1953.

The Park Lawn tennis and Croquet Club officially changed its name to “The Pukekura Park Tennis Club” in 1975 although “Pukekura” had appeared in its title as early as the 1920s.

## Sports Ground

For many years the Sports Ground was the centre of outdoor entertainment in New Plymouth, hosting cricket, rugby, soccer, floral fetes, athletics events, brass band competitions, Anzac Day parades and several receptions for royal visitors and other dignitaries.

From its beginnings as a swampy area to becoming the famous sporting venue it is today the Sports Ground is probably the most interesting development in the Park's history. Looking closely at the Fred Carrington contour map, a ridge can be seen behind the present eastern terrace extending northward across Fillis Street. The ridge extends westward on the north side of Fillis Street, across Liardet Street, then southward across Fillis Street back into the Park. Combined with the hill of the southern terrace the contours formed a huge almost complete basin that contained a swamp that drained westward into the stream running through the Park. At the southeastern corner of the Sports Ground is King Fern Gully which in 1875 was part of the same swamp. The current level of the playing field is probably two or three metres higher than it was in 1875.



From Carrington's topographical map of New Plymouth. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2004-287).

In mid-1881 it was decided to try and reclaim part of the swamp to form a croquet lawn. This required carting in a lot of fill from somewhere; where better than the ridge outside the Liardet Street entrance. The Board applied to the council to take the fill from the ridge running across Liardet Street, and were given permission to remove two thousand cubic yards provided it was taken off the brow of the hill and for the full width of the street. Alfred Wells won the contract to excavate the fill by which time the plan was to use the ground as a cricket pitch.

In February 1882, the Board were told not to remove any more earth because Liardet Street had been left in a dangerous condition. It would seem that the Board had run out of money and the contractor had stopped work. In November of the same year work restarted on filling the swamp using a new contractor, Mr. G. Thompson. Then in early 1883 the Board called for tenders to expand the lawn. The Board's accounts show that they purchased grass seed in July of that year. By September 1884 the swamp had been filled and turfed to the extent that consideration was given to its use for cricket; however, the cricket community deemed it unsuitable and looked elsewhere.

In 1885 the Board granted the local rugby team use of the ground for practice but there are no records of any matches being played there. Although the ground had been reclaimed and grassed it was very soft when wet and not suitable for sport.

Because of its proximity to town and the protection from the southerly wind the Recreation Ground was seen as an ideal location for sport; however, the Board made it clear that they did not have the funds or desire to further develop the area. So, in 1889 a group of local sports administrators approached the Board with a plan to set up a Sports Ground Committee, independent of the Board, and develop the area into a sports ground. This was agreed to, and a Sports Ground Committee was set up in October 1889 consisting of Messrs. W. H. Skinner, H. Dempsey, R. B. Roy, W. Bennett, A. Goldwater, F. Watson, J. M. Lightfoot, W. Parker and E. Humphries.

The area was given over to the Sports Ground Committee for a seven-year term at a rent of 1s per year. They were allowed to charge for games or fetes on twelve occasions each year provided the whole of the takings were spent on improving the grounds.

## Park Features

A plan for the development of the Sports Ground was drawn up by T. K. Skinner, which the Sports Ground Committee felt was effective and got behind it whole heartedly. Skinner also agreed to supervise the work. Fundraising and clearing of trees and shrubs started immediately. Messrs. George Bros., of Omata were selected to form the athletics track, and working bees were organised to clear the surrounding hills of ferns.

The first athletics meet was on Easter Monday, April 7, 1890, in front of a crowd of two thousand people, and went off without a hitch. The events included: One Mile Handicap, Half-Mile Handicap, Boy's 200 Yards Handicap and 120 Yards Hurdle Handicap, Pole Vault, Running High Jump, 100 Yards Handicap, Quarter-Mile Handicap, Ladies Bracelet 220 Yards, 120 Yards Hurdle Handicap. There were a number of other events such as, Tug of War and 100 Yards Pick-a-back. Further improvements followed, and by the time a sports meeting was held at Easter 1891 some seated terracing had been formed.

In June 1892 the committee met with local cricket and rugby club representatives. It was agreed to allow the New Plymouth Cricket Club to play all matches and practice on the ground. Rugby was restricted to interprovincial, inter-club and cup matches, but no practices. New Plymouth Cricket Club had laid down a pitch by September of that year and the first match between teams from the East and West ends of New Plymouth was played on December 15th.

At the end of its seven-year tenure in February 1897 the Sports Ground Committee was dissolved. It was decided any remaining funds would go towards making a drinking water fountain in the Recreation Grounds (Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain).

In 1900 there was a call for more improvements to the Sports Ground and T. K. Skinner was again asked to produce a plan. He produced a very ambitious plan estimated to cost £2,000. He wanted to remove what is presently the western terrace, reclaim part of the lower lake and extend into Fillis Street. This plan met with resistance and never got off the ground.

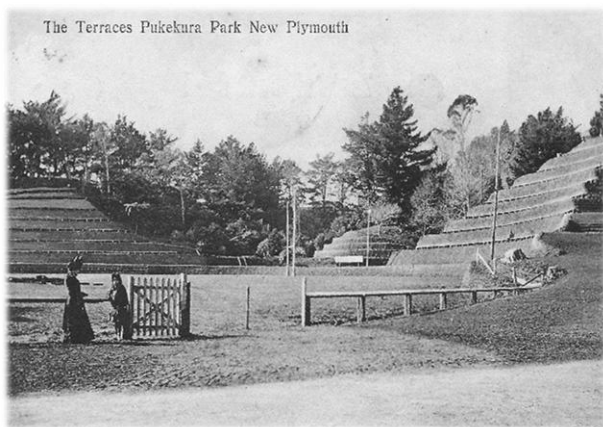
1903 the Board asked Percy Smith and Lance Sladden to prepare a scheme to solve the problem of the ground's poor drainage. The plan was completed but not acted upon. In 1904 more schemes were put forward including one from the photographer W. A. Collis.

Following five years of procrastination the Board was approached by the United Sports Committee. They proposed to take control of and develop the Sports Ground over a seven-year period, estimating to spend up to £1,300 in the process. This was a similar arrangement to that of 1889. After some negotiating the committee was given the go-ahead. The new Sports Ground Committee had its first meeting in November 1905, headed by Arthur Larwill Humphries (Skinny Humphries) an accountant and ex New Zealand halfback who had represented his country on 15 occasions.

The plan was to make the playing area larger by moving the southern terraces back 16½ yards, moving the eastern terraces back 11 yards and cutting into the hill on the western side of the main gates 16½ yards, laying new drains and raising the playing surface 4ft. The scheme was basically the same as one proposed by Collis the previous year. A lot of the fill to raise the



View of Eastern Terraces 1897. Those terraces were not properly developed until 1907.



Postcard highlighting the new terraces in 1908.

pitch was to come from cutting back the terraces. The ground was handed over to the Sports Ground Committee on, August 1, 1906. Fundraising started immediately with door-to-door canvassing for subscriptions and a handsome donation of £100 was received from the Licensed Victuallers'. By the end of the year, they had raised almost £200.

One of the first actions of the new committee was to secure 1300 yards of fill from the railway deviation being worked on in Molesworth Street. Until then the railway had run parallel to Vivian Street,

then across Devon Street on the west side of the Huatoki River. C. Kyngdon secured the contract to transport the material by horse and dray at 1 shilling/yard. During the process he had several mishaps.

The work of reforming the terraces moved rapidly taking the number of terraces from six to twenty-two. The seating capacity was increased from five hundred to two thousand with an estimated overall capacity of up to ten thousand. Four thousand drainpipes were laid, fourteen tons of special soil for the cricket pitch was transported from Longburn, near Palmerston North and the grass seed was provided by Messrs. Tohill & Co., of Invercargill. The first cricket game on the new pitch was Taranaki v Wanganui on December 26, a few days before the Sports Ground's grand opening on January 1, 1908. During the period of construction, the Liardet Street entrance was closed for safety reasons, which led to the formation of the Gilbert Street entrance.

At the beginning of 1908 electric lighting was installed, described as follows:

Electric light poles have been erected around the Recreation Sports Ground. Four powerful arc lamps will be used in addition to several smaller ones. An admirable effect will be realised in the future at all evening entertainments in the grounds, the lamps having been fixed in such a manner that not only the sports arena but the whole of the terraces are admirably illuminated. An arc lamp is also being fixed at the main entrance to the grounds.  
(TH, Feb 4, 1908)

Until 1924 dressing rooms took the form of basic wooden sheds, the first of which was built in 1891. A second shed was built in 1897 by H. Roberts, followed by a third in 1909. This was an 18ft x 18ft, shed located in the vicinity of the Bellringer Pavilion.

The first substantial building was erected in 1924. It was a single storey concrete structure designed by well-known architect Thomas Bates. The walls of this building still exist today inside the ground floor of the Bellringer Pavilion.



The original Pavilion behind Newton King's car. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: SW1923-1930.00646).



## Park Features



Fordson tractor.

Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2003 -859/3).

An iconic item at the Sports Ground was a Fordson tractor purchased in 1925. It served in the Park for over 50 years. The tractor is now in the Taranaki Aviation Transport & Technology Museum on Kent Road. This tractor was used to winch up buckets of silt when the main lake was desilted in 1927.

The Terraces were improved during the 1920s and 1930s. There was a major development in 1936. The eastern terrace was remodelled, and the bottom two terraces of the south and east terraces were connected. Also, a small set of terraces at the south-east corner of the grounds were removed and replaced with a grass slope. It was estimated that the changes would increase seating capacity by 1000 spectators.

In 1930 the New Plymouth Amateur Athletic Club paid for a new Sports Ground lighting system Installation. It cost approximately £700. It was considered one of the best in the country. Walter Graham of the Criterion Hotel donated £300 towards the cost. The running costs and maintenance was the responsibility of the athletic club.

The original pavilion building remained unaltered until 1956 at which time a second storey was added costing £5,840. The extension was designed by Ted Borrell and built by Messrs. A. L. Roberts & sons. Viewing from the upper floor was restricted by two old cabbage trees that had been planted in the 1880s, so they had to go.

Comprehensive floodlighting was installed at the Sportsground, consisting of twenty-one 1500-watt lamps mounted on 30-foot poles. The twenty-one lights were expected to produce 48,300 candlepower.



Pavilion extension almost complete.  
*TDN*, December 7, 1956.

The pavilion was extended again in 1988 costing \$160,000. On completion it was dedicated to Brian Bellringer, in recognition of his services to the community and to Taranaki Cricket. The original stucco building can be seen when entering the changing rooms on the ground floor.



Cabbage trees to be removed.  
*TH*, Nov 14, 1956.



1988 Extension under construction.  
*TH*, December 12, 1988.

## The Tea House

The Board was aware that the ladies of New Plymouth needed a meeting place and in 1905 decided to take action. The following article appeared in the Taranaki herald on March 22.

“Recognising the need for a ladies’ room at the Recreation Ground the committee of management have had plans prepared for a suitable structure, neatly designed and convenient.

The committee have been unable so far to carry out the work owing to lack of funds but are now in a position to allocate £15 for the purpose, besides having a quantity of suitable material available. The master builders of the town on being approached have generously offered to supply the labour for the erection of the building free of cost. Before it can be put in hand, however, a further sum of £25 is required and the committee trust that the ladies of the town will interest themselves in raising this amount. A united effort would undoubtedly be successful, and enable this necessary work to be undertaken without further delay. To date the fair sex have made no move in this direction but it is hoped that the committee’s offer will be taken advantage of otherwise the proposal to add to the ground’s attractions will lapse.

The plans, which were prepared by Mr J. A. Maisey, architect, may be inspected at the office of the secretary. Mr Tribe, Egmont Street.

These provide for an attractive little structure with ladies’ retiring rooms, spacious verandas and ample seating accommodation, and there is to be a tea room attached, the dimensions of which will be 10ft by 15ft. Among the conveniences will be a large copper, which will prove of service in case of public gatherings. The tea rooms are designed with sliding doors so that upon special occasions they can be opened out and the accommodation largely augmented.”

The Board used the Tea House as a meeting room in September 1905. It was first opened as a Tea Rooms under the supervision of Mrs. Connop in November of that year.

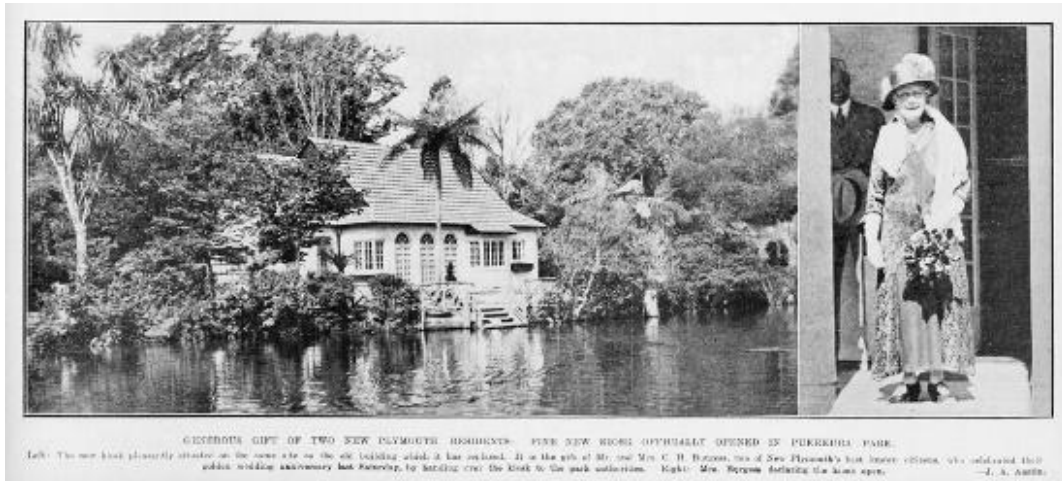
J. A. Maisey, the architect who designed the tea house left New Plymouth for Wellington in 1905 and the Tea House may well have been his New Plymouth swansong. He also designed the saltwater baths at Kawaroa.

Replacing the original Tea House with a better building was discussed as early as 1919 and the Mayor Mr. Burgess donated two years of his honorarium (£300) supplemented by £100 of his own money for this purpose. Unfortunately, the cost of building a new tea house was still beyond the means of the Board. They made do with some minor improvements to the old Tea House, carried out in 1921.

The Park got its new tea house in 1931 courtesy of Mr and Mrs Burgess. Mrs Burgess organised the tendering process herself and ultimately chose the final design. The Mayoral honorarium of £300 had been invested and was worth £430 in 1931. This sum was put towards the cost of the building. Mrs Burgess chose the design of Inglewood born architect Surrey Allerman and employed Frank Hartnell as the builder. The tea house was opened on November 14, 1931, with a grand opening ceremony. The Burgesses gifted the tea house to celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary. The building cost approximately £1,000, but their generosity did not stop there, they also donated £150 for furnishings and later another £60 for silverware.

Before the new tea house was constructed the old bathing shed and the old tea house were relocated. The bathing shed was moved halfway along the path leading from the tea house to the Fernery. The old tea house was moved along the same path closer to the entrance of the Fernery, and it was repurposed as a ladies rest room and an office for the curator.

## Park Features



Opening Day of the Tea House, Mrs Burgess standing at the doorway.  
*AWN*, November 18, 1931.

Below is a list of some of the Tea Rooms operators.

<b>OLD TEA HOUSE</b>		<b>NEW TEA HOUSE</b>	
Mrs Connop	1905 – 1908	Mr Burrows	1930 – 1942
Mr Legg	1908 – 1910	Miss Price	1942 (2 months)
Mrs Cory	1912 – 1915	Mrs Pascoe	1942 – 1950
Mrs Phipps	1915	Mrs Luxton	1950 – 1957
Mrs Webb	1921 – 1925	Mabel Jensen	1957 – 1964
Mrs Ainsworth	1925 – 1930	Lola Jane Mancer	1964 – 1970
		Molly & Tom Nagle	1979 – 2005
		Eurest	2005 – 2009
		Orsborn family	2009 – 2024
		Marnie and Simon Johnston-Saywell	2024 – present

## The Gables

The Gables was originally built in 1848 as one of four Colonial Hospitals commissioned by Governor Sir George Grey, built to cater for both Māori and European patients. The building was designed by Frederick Thatcher and built by local builder George Robinson. The building was constructed using rimu except for the floor, which was Norway spruce.

The hospital was originally located on Mangorei Road (then Hospital Road) where New Plymouth Girls High School now stands. It was mainly used by Māori until Rawiri Waiaua died there from a gunshot wound received during an intra-hapū affray that started the Puketapu Feud in 1854. Following his death Māori were reluctant to use it. The hospital was not popular as it was very cold in the winter.

During the Taranaki Wars of the 1860s the building was used as a military outpost. Later it was put under the governance of the Taranaki Hospital and Charitable Aid Board and was converted into an old man's refuge, housing five residents. The men were left to look after themselves and the property became dirty and neglected, and in 1903 a decision was made to move the residents to better accommodation. Not knowing what to do with the property the Hospital Board approached the Borough Council and suggested swapping the land that the hospital occupied for six town sections (404 – 409) on Fulford and Dawson Streets. After the exchange the Council assessed the old hospital building as being of no use to them and decided to sell it at auction for removal.



The Gables in the 1860s.  
Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2004-248).



*AWN*, July 12, 1901.

Before the exchange the building had been inspected and found to be solid except for the ground plates, and the Hospital Board said that it would help to accommodate anyone interested in saving the building. W. H. Skinner called a public meeting on behalf the Scenery Preservation Society to see if that was possible, unfortunately nothing came of it.

The old hospital went to auction on July 9, 1904, at the Newton King auction rooms, with the stipulation that it had to be removed within 14 days. The highest bidder was published as being a “well-known ‘house breaker’”. It is possible that the ‘house-breaker’ was

## Park Features

representing Mrs Newton King at the auction. It is said that Mrs. King, daughter of Doctor George St George was the person who wanted to save the building. It was purchased for £10, then a further £500 was spent on its relocation and rebuilding.

The transfer of the building would have been complicated as it was taken down piecemeal and all the timbers thoroughly cleaned and restored before re-erection at its current site at Brooklands. Newton King engaged the services of prominent local architect James Sanderson, to supervise the relocation. To celebrate the relocation Mr and Mrs Newton King hosted a dance in the reconstructed building. Mrs Newton King was dressed in a black silk gown, with a white fichu, pink flowers in her corsage. (Ref: *NZG*, February 4, 1905 page 47.)

Following the erection of the building at Brooklands it was used as a temporary residence by several members of the King family, as well as being rented out privately. When Brooklands was gifted to the city of New Plymouth in 1933 The Gables as it had become known, was part of the package. Again, it was let out to private renters until 1983. Following a two-year restoration by the New Plymouth District Council, in association with the Taranaki Branch of the Historic Places Trust and Dr Peter Wilson's biographer Gail Lambert. It was opened as an Arts Centre in 1985.



The Gables opening day as an Arts Centre.  
Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2014-0204).



The Gables today.

In 2017 the Gables was reroofed using 20,000 cedar shingles imported from Canada. Corrugated iron was considered, fortunately that idea was rejected.

It is now regarded as a building of national significance and has a 'Category 1' rating with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust.

## The Poet's Bridge

The Poet's Bridge was originally built in 1884 costing £155. James Davis one of the Recreation Ground Board members funded the bridge's construction. Davis who was an original Board member spent many hours in the Park and often thought how building a bridge halfway down the lake would prompt people to explore the Park more. At that time the lake extended down to what is now Goodwin Dell and the path around the lake was no more than a grass track, probably impassable if wet and certainly not suitable for mothers pushing prams. Few people would have ventured south of the Bathing Shed.

The amount of money to build the bridge was beyond the means of the Board so Davis with Richard Cock decided to pool a sum of £10 and enter a series of national sweepstakes costing £1 per ticket. They had some success with several small wins but eventually their pot was gone. When the £10 was lost Richard Cock decided he would drop out of their little syndicate. Davis however, continued to gamble and two weeks later won a sweepstake, winning £500, which at that time was a small fortune. (In 1883, £300 would have bought a substantial 7 room house.) The winning horse in the sweepstake was called "The Poet".



The Poet's Bridge, Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: PHO2007-030).

Probably taken on February 11, 1885, during a swimming carnival.

In June 1883, with funds available, an advert was placed asking people to kindly submit designs for a bridge spanning the upper portion of the lake. The design by Henry Vere Barclay was chosen from the eight submitted. Mr. Hooker was selected as the contractor to build the bridge, assisted by carpenter, Mr. Campbell; painter, Mr. Bellringer and blacksmith, Mr. Revell.

## Park Features

The construction of the bridge was supervised by Vere Barclay and was completed by early March 1884. The opening ceremony took place on the evening of March 10, with a lot of fanfare. A flagpole adorned with bunting was erected by the lake opposite the Bathing Shed. The Bathing Shed was illuminated with Chinese lanterns which were also suspended from the bridge. The Mayoress Mrs. Bayly performed the official honours naming the bridge "The Poet's" bridge. (TH, March 11, 1884). Following the opening the officials went to an area near the Bathing Shed and were entertained by a brass band, a fireworks display, and a group of Volunteers who performed a gun volley.

In 1936 Thomas Horton raised the issue of the safety of The Poet's Bridge and on inspection by the Borough Engineer (Mr. Clarke) it was deemed unsafe and closed to the public. The cost of repair and the cost of replacement were considered, and replacement was chosen as the way forward. Mr. Clarke's first design was a cheap metal bridge which the Park committee were not enamoured with. The bridge originally built in 1884, designed by Henry Vere Barclay was an iconic part of the Park. The view from the Tea House was used in all the promotional advertising and the Park committee wanted to maintain that. Bearing that in mind Clarke offered to come up with a design which resembled the original, which he did at the beginning of 1937. The original bridge was made from tōtara, but Clarke recommended building the new bridge from Australian hardwoods. The building contractor selected to build the bridge was F. W. Whitaker who unfortunately died of a heart attack on the bridge during its construction. The new bridge cost £1,011 0s 8d.

When the issue of replacing the bridge came to the public's attention, Richard Cock shared an interesting story about the funding of the original bridge (see below).

### STORY OF SWEEPSTAKES - MR. R. COCK'S RECOLLECTIONS BUILDING OF THE POET'S BRIDGE

(TH, February 19, 1936)

The story leading up to Mr. J. T. Davis's winning of a prize in a sweepstake and his subsequent donation of "The Poet's" Bridge, as told to a Taranaki Herald reporter by Mr. R. Cock, is of full interest. Mr. Cock was a great friend of Mr. Davis, and together they were members of the original Park Board, then known as the Recreation Grounds committee. Mr. Cock is the only surviving member of the original committee.

The sweepstake in which Mr. Davis was so successful was held in Auckland and was one of the many conducted by Mr. Adams. The sweepstake was named Tattersalls. When objection was taken to the running of sweepstakes in New Zealand Mr. Adams moved to Sydney and from there to Hobart, Tasmania, where the sweeps are still being conducted.

At the time of which Mr. Cock was speaking there was an agency for the sweepstake in New Plymouth. Mr. Davis and Mr. Cock endeavoured to persuade the others on the board to take a ticket,

but they would not be persuaded. In view of this the two put £5 each in the Post office savings Bank, then called "Von Rotter's Bank," and periodically sent for a ticket in Adams' sweep. It had been agreed that if either of them won a substantial prize they were to have a bridge built across the main lake at the Park to save the long walk round.

They won a £5 and a £20 prize and put this money back in the bank for the purchase of further tickets. At last the money was exhausted, and Mr. Cock declared that he was going to have a rest

from the sweeps for a while. Mr. Davis however, purchased two more tickets, and in one of these sweepstakes drew a horse called "The Poet." The Poet won, and Mr. Davis collected the £500 prize.

He remembered the agreement regarding the bridge, which cost in the vicinity of £300, and had it built.

Mr. Cock stated that many tickets used to be bought in the sweep, and they cost £1 each.

The committee could not decide what colour to paint the new bridge so asked the public for suggestions. The suggestion adopted came from a gentleman who had recently returned from Japan, he suggested using the same colour that he had seen on the Shinkyō Bridge at Nikkō Japan. As far as the author is aware the bridge has remained red since then. The replacement bridge was funded by the Sanders bequest.

## Jubilee Drinking Fountain

A Sports Ground Committee was set up in late 1889 with a mandate to develop the Sports Ground to a point where it could be used for most sports including rugby and cricket. At the end of seven years members of the committee felt they had achieved their goal and decided to dissolve the committee and hand back the running of the Sports Ground to the Recreation Ground Board. However, at the time the committee dissolved it still had some funds left over and the members thought it could be expended on laying on water from the town supply for a small drinking fountain in the grounds.

The executors of the Sports Ground Committee, N.K. McDiarmid and G.W. Browne, met with the Recreation Grounds Board offering the £13 they had in hand as the nucleus for a fund for a drinking fountain. They suggested that the remainder be raised by public subscription as they estimated up to £50 would be needed. Agreement was reached on the idea of constructing a fountain and its being located near the Band Stand. Mr Browne had plans drawn up for a drinking fountain which would stand twelve feet high, be on Marble columns and have marble facings.



Early 1900's Postcard featuring the fountain.

Construction of the drinking fountain proceeded rapidly under Mr Browne's supervision, even though the subscriptions for covering the cost of it were slow in coming in. It was decided that as the Diamond Jubilee, celebrating the sixty-year reign of Queen Victoria, was coming up the drinking fountain should be dedicated to commemorating this occasion. The drinking fountain was unveiled on behalf of the Sports Ground Committee by Mr. H. Brown, H.H.R. at the Jubilee celebrations in the Grounds, on the 22nd of June 1897.

The fountain was built by Stonemason Mr. J Russell.



## Waterfall

Below is an extract from an article written by George Fuller (Ref: The Magazine of the Friends of Pukekura Park, Volume 12, Number 3 October 2017.) who was the curator of the Park when the waterfall was built and played a major role in its construction.

“.....1967-68. Fred Parker was a well-known horticulturist with a garden open to the public. He was also an influential member of the Pukekura Park Committee of the day and began agitating for a waterfall in the Park. His suggestion was that it be sited on the northern face of Cannon Hill, visible from the Main Gate. Practical J.W.G. (Jack Goodwin) was concerned that it would create a ‘Scotsman’s Grandstand’ for the Sportsground! He appointed G. Fuller, now Curator, and C.I. McDowell to seek an alternative, preferably in what has become its present site. Subject to removal of a specimen weeping elm it seemed a perfect location.



Proposed Waterfall. *TDN*, July 31, 1969.

Work was to proceed as time/opportunity permitted. I had a team from the Park staff and Ian was in charge of a roving team of gardeners and maintenance crew servicing all other Parks and Reserves in New Plymouth.

The weeping elm transplanting embodied a strange coincidence. The site of the present Band room had been a private residence with a large weeping elm in the garden. When the house was demolished, the tree was re-sited beside the Fountain Lake. We now took the obstructing specimen from the newly chosen Waterfall site and relocated it in, of all places, close proximity to the newly constructed Band room! This cleared the site for action.

After the contribution of ideas from many sources had been considered, Ian McDowell with the uncanny skill for which he was noted came forth with what could be called ‘an artists impression’. Alex Brodie, a retired civil engineer on the Pukekura Park committee checked

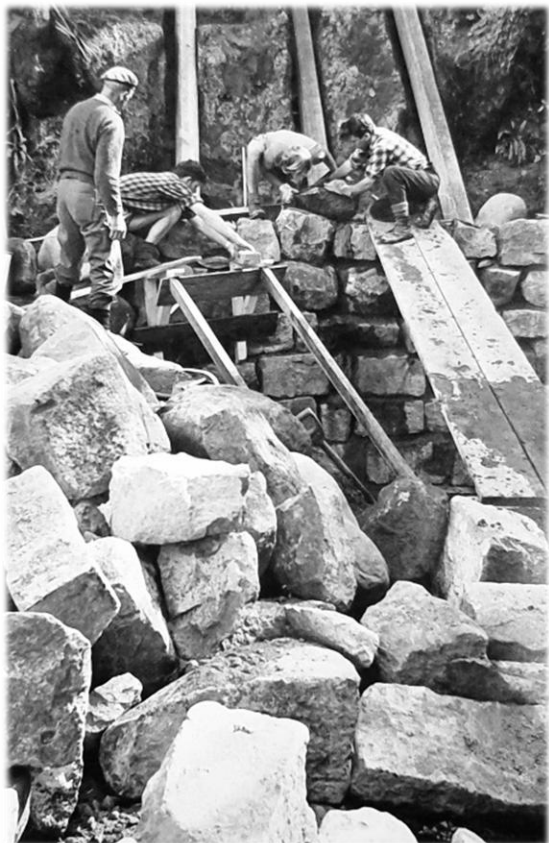
mechanical details and approved. No other documentation was made!

The fall was to be constructed of boulders set in concrete as naturally and as unobtrusively as possible. The bank allowed for a total drop of about ten metres, but this was to be broken up into four separate cascades, the uppermost violently turbulent, the lowest a broad tranquil water curtain.

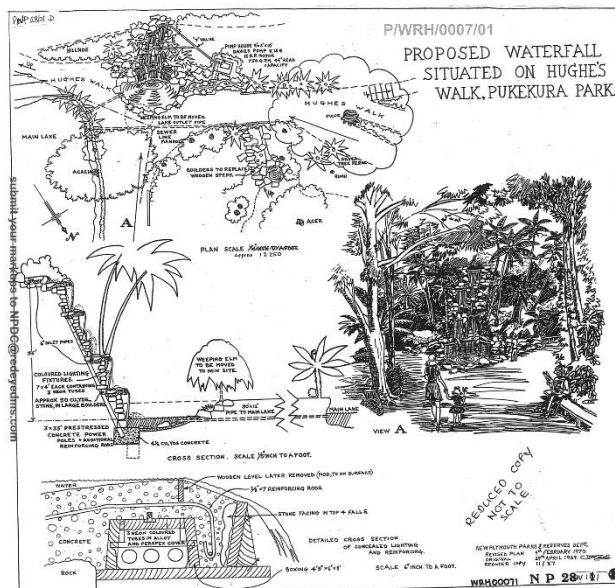
Vertical reinforcement of the structure was to rely on placement of three eleven metre power poles provided by the New Plymouth District Council Electricity Department forming a strong backbone. These would be set, slightly reclining into the bank with the tops tapering in towards

the centre, then each projection for the cascades later would be secured to that tripod with hoops of steel as work progressed upward. The placement of the poles was the start of construction on 13 August 1969.

When the poles had been seated in recesses in the almost vertical bank a depression was excavated in front of, and beneath them to form what would become the pool. Several cubic metres of concrete were poured into the depression to stabilise the bases of the suspended poles and form the bottom of the pool. One hundred tons of boulders was donated and delivered on site when the parameters of the pond were defined, but before a start was made on incorporating these a relatively formal base of squared blocks hewn by prison labour was laid in the area below the full width of the lowermost water-curtain cascade. This zone is devoid of water during operation, unlike all cascades above it. Each block/boulder was individually selected visually for specific placement by Ian or myself and I recall that we wore the skin off our fingers in our early enthusiasm. Before being bedded in concrete, each had to be rolled or slid by hand across the heavy plank spanning the pool cavity. This involved intense ‘hands-on’ activity.



Park Staff placing stones in the Waterfall. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2003 -859/3).



Proposed Waterfall drawing – 1969.

Collection of New Plymouth District Council Parks Dept.

our fingers in our early enthusiasm. Before being bedded in concrete, each had to be rolled or slid by hand across the heavy plank spanning the pool cavity. This involved intense ‘hands-on’ activity.

The fluidity of un-set concrete meant that we could only complete about two rows of boulders in a day and because this work could only be carried out sporadically when free of our normal commitments, progress was slow. The plank method was practical up to about the level of the third cascade from the top then I think we had the assistance of a crane. A selection of boulders was saved for the top section and carted to the top of the bank from where they were rolled down into place as required.

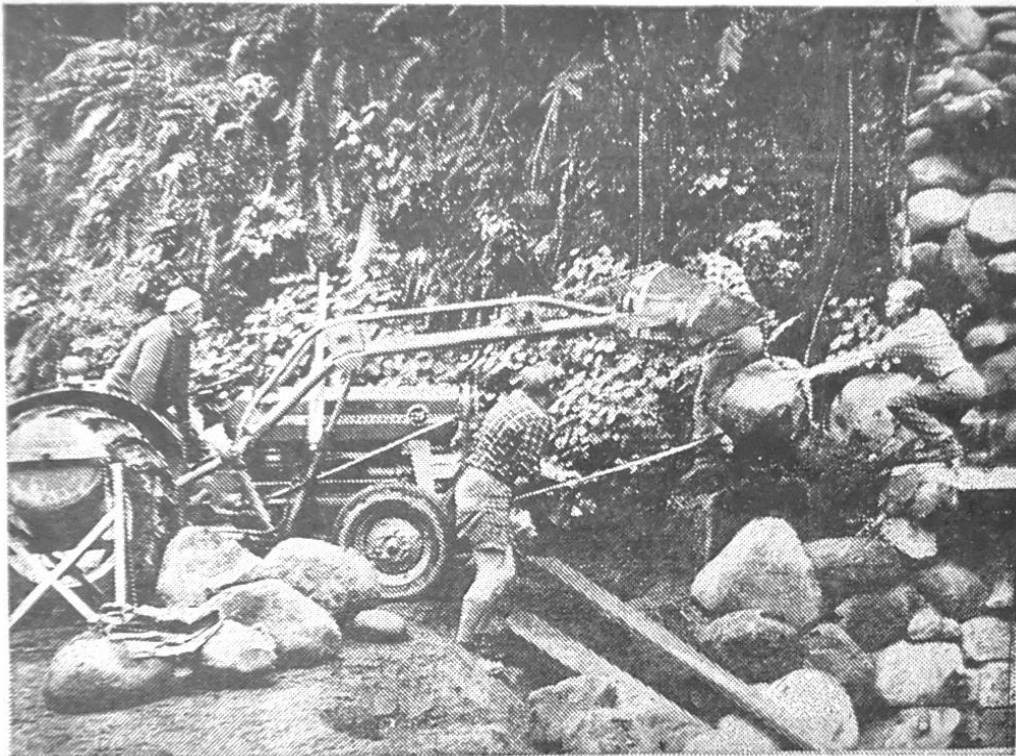
Lighting was to be totally concealed by location beneath each cascade, shining down onto the wet rocks below. This is a unique and very special feature. Not least, it avoids the need for floodlighting. Fluorescent lighting was chosen because of low maintenance and high light efficiency, the colour integral to each tube as distinct from colour filters customary with incandescent lighting.

## Park Features

The pumping machinery was to be the same as for the fountain, a fifteen-horsepower electric motor driving a 4 inch (100 mm) centrifugal pump supplying about 200,000 litres per hour.

As the new feature began to grow and assume the proportions of a spectacle and gain credibility the NZ Insurance Company contributed a gift of \$1,700 toward the waterfall costs in commemoration of opening a new building in New Plymouth.

### *No Moss Gatherer, This Stone*



**The sparkling beauty of Pukekura Park's new waterfall, when it comes into operation sometime during the coming summer, will make all the hard work and little crises connected with its construction seem well worth while. The massive stone being edged into place in this picture provided just one of the small, but quickly overcome problems associated with the construction. On the first try the boulder took exception to its position and rolled down into the excavation at the base of the waterfall. Its retrieval was accomplished only after some heavy work with a tractor and chain and some colourful linguistic urging from the sidelines.**

Construction Progress. *Sunday Express*, Sept 20, 1970.

The unveiling of a plaque recording this took place on 21 October 1970. The Mayor, D.V. Sutherland officiated. I'm not sure if it was our original concept, but it became clear as we progressed that this waterfall would simulate the dynamics of the passage of water from the source of the Waiwhakaiho River on Mount Taranaki where it crashes and tumbles over boulders then the turbulence is diminished as it approaches its confluence with the sea."

## Waterwheel

Following: is an article written by George Fuller in September 2004, which tells the story of the Waterwheel. Collection of New Plymouth District Council Parks dept.

### History of the Heritage Centennial Waterwheel

“J W Goodwin was appointed to take charge of the Park in 1949 when it had declined largely as a consequence of unavoidable neglect during World War two. His brief was ‘to attract visitors back into the Park’. He drafted a very comprehensive and forward-thinking proposal which amongst many other suggestions, emphasised maximum exploitation of water. Features suggested were a fountain, a waterfall, a waterwheel, a windmill and a water ram. By the time he retired in 1977 he had overseen the introduction and unveiling of the first three in the years 1955, 1970 and 1976.



Original Waterwheel at the Omata Dairy Factory.

Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2003-859/3).

Mr. Goodwin was very heavily involved personally with the design and installation of the fountain commemorating the visit of Queen Elizabeth II in January, 1954 but he delegated the design and construction of the waterfall to the late Ian McDowell and myself (George Fuller). This set the scene for a great working relationship to flourish and upon its successful completion, we were on the lookout for a waterwheel as our next challenge. The breakthrough came in the form of a pure accident in February 1973 when, in visiting a son engaged in holiday work at the Omata Dairy Factory, there was an electricity cut. I turned the conversation with staff to the pre-electricity era and it was revealed that relics of the waterwheel which originally provided power were still present beside the factory. I was shown the remnants of a wheel that had not turned for about forty years. It was no less than 12ft. (3.64m) in diameter by 6ft. (1.83m) wide. Twelve feet was the head of water entering the dell near Gilbert Street, making it the perfect site for such a waterwheel!

Although all the woodwork was in an advanced state of decay, the bearing housings, axle, hubs and a mass of cast iron gearing were still in great condition. Having gained acceptance of the prospect that there was a good chance that

the wheel would be restored if the relics were donated to the Park, I arranged for Fitzroy engineering to carry out an inspection. They gave a strong thumbs-up and later would not only transport the prize but also clean all the iron work and paint it where appropriate.

Meanwhile, permission had to be gained from the council to carry out the work. With a stroke of customary genius, Mr Goodwin proposed that the wheel be restored and installed in the Park as a centennial (1976) project and even got the Taranaki county council to assist with a \$500 donation.

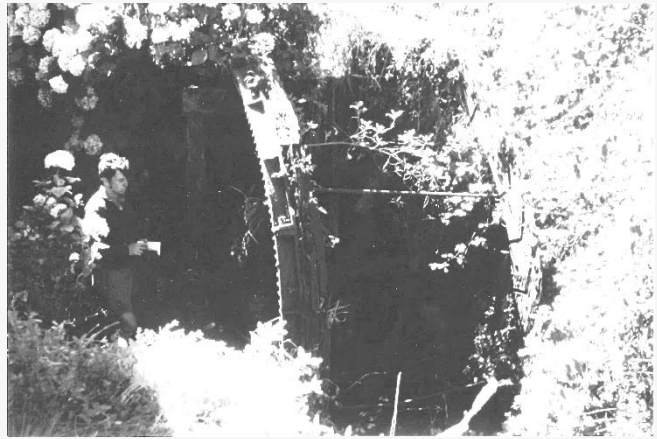
Ian had been involved with the negotiations from the outset and given this clearance, set about preparing scale drawings of the wheel before anything was removed. Based on these drawings, the joinery firm of Jones & Sandford reconstructed the wooden components and the Taranaki Harbours Board donated the two large hardwood bearing beams.

Preparation of the site was a massive undertaking because Ian and I had agreed to carry out the work with our respective teams and there weren't even access paths down into the area. In order to fully exploit viewing potential and provide the unique opportunity of being able to pass behind the wheel we laid a pathway which encompassed the entire rim overlooking the site then completed the almost parallel loop at the level of the wheel.

## Park Features

Excavating down to solid ground upon which to establish the foundations for the walkway and wheel was very laborious manual work. Ian's team concentrated on the solid stonework required behind and to the side of the wheel, using in the lower courses large blocks hewn by prisoners originally for the vault of the old New Plymouth Post Office and for kerbstones.

We were very anxious to preserve the integrity and character of the mostly native trees growing around the rim. At the time there were no mobile cranes available with telescoping derricks strong enough to be able to thread the bulky almost tonne load of the wheel between the trees so we opted to



Ian McDowell at Omata taking measurements.

Collection of New Plymouth District Council Parks Dept.

have each rim divide into two halves then carried the four components down, plus the axle assembly etc and assembled the wheel on site.

I located the wheel in 1973. Work started on the site in the summer of 1974. Assembly of the wheel started in 1975. It was commissioned to commemorate the centennial of Pukekura Park on 29th May 1976. The festival of the lights in the summer of 1976/77 was centred around the Fountain Lake, Children's Playground area so that the wheel could be featured for the first time and was certainly an unforgettable spectacle.

The stream is renowned for quickly rising into a raging torrent after rainfall, particularly through the narrow ravine just above the wheel. Had this eventuated during the prolonged activities preparing the site and assembling the wheel, the consequences would have been disastrous because the flow of the stream was carried over the site in nothing more than a flimsy ramshackle aqueduct constructed of bent sheets of corrugated iron! We were exceptionally lucky.

We were elated when upon completion and after final trimming to a tolerance of 25mm both laterally and in throw, a 10 litre (10kg) bucket of water was all that was required to get it to turn.

Over the years it has given great pleasure to an enormous number of visitors and provided a reason for many to reflect on our past and ponder over the impressive size of the machinery once required to



In search of solid ground for foundations.

Clockwise from the top: Gordon Mansfield, Ian McDowell, Vic Swan and Reg Hayman.

Collection of New Plymouth District Council Parks Dept.

generate the amount of power that would now be supplied by a relatively small motor. In so doing, it has earned a significant place in the history of the Park. In support of this and before elaborating on its retirement, I feel that I should record some special features that my research has disclosed.

**Mechanical Details:** the wheel is of 'overshot' design. That means that in order to function it requires a 'head' (height) of water greater than its diameter (12ft (3.64m)) delivered just over the top dead centre. In most situations this would involve the construction of a water-race (headrace) a sufficient distance upstream to

gain the head but the problem was solved in a rather ingenious way by the Omata Dairy Company. The factory was sited on the lower side of a long spur of land around the end of which the natural flow of a stream extended. All that was required was to dig a relatively short tunnel through the ridge for the headrace to intercept the stream at its higher level and the required head was readily gained. The required volume of water was regulated with a control gate and after use was returned to the stream via a tailrace.

I suspect in the case of most waterwheels, the power would have been taken off to the machinery at rotational speed by means of a pulley mounted directly on an extension of the wheel's axle, but this model has a very different method of power take-off. Around the radius of one rim is bolted a very heavy duty cast-iron inward-facing ring gear. In the working site this meshed with 1ft diameter (30cm) cog wheel mounted on what is called the counter-shaft. This meant that the power was delivered not at the rotational speed of the wheel but geared-up x12. This I find rather strange because the major load at Omata, the massive butter churns would have rotated at only a very slow speed, therefore gearing down would have been necessary for that particular task although other machinery would have operated at higher rotation speeds. I suspect that this feature makes the wheel somewhat unique,

designed perhaps more to power a sawmill where high rotational speed is critical.

The power output of the wheel was calculated at about 4.5 horsepower (3.5kw). The butter churns were like large wooden vats turned on their side, rotating on a horizontal axis like a drum on its side. Once the cream had been added each was sealed. Around the inner surface of the churn wall was mounted a series of paddles through which the cream surged in agitation as the churn rolled. While it was still in fluid form the burden of rotation was even and therefore relatively light but as the agitation of the paddles transformed it into butter that all changed because as a solid it was scooped up by the paddles and for a critical short period the loading became very uneven and taxed the waterwheel to its limit. The manager revealed that a critical skill was to be able to anticipate this stage at a point just before it happened, disengage the wheel, allow it to rev up unladen then re-engage it whereupon the momentum gained from its spinning tonne weight would generate just enough power to jolt the churn into completing the process.

Most waterwheels to my knowledge are evenly balanced, both in vertical as well as horizontal plane; i.e. a line taken through the centre in both plan or side elevation will produce mirror images. Not so with this wheel because in plan the massive weight of the cast iron radial gearing on only one rim results in major structural imbalance. Add to this the heavy unbalanced stress imposed by the operation described above and it is no surprise that such wheels were of such rugged construction.

There is another significant difference between the two rims. It relates to the fixture of the hub of each to the axle. With all the structural drama that has occurred since installation in the Park, both have been radically modified. That on the power take-off side was a snug fit on the axle and keyed rigidly to it in a conventional manner but the other had several millimetres of tolerance, the slack of which was 'taken up' by tapping in a series of thin wedges and sheet-metal shims, some of them piggy backed.

The significance of this was explained to me by the manager. Being aware of the inherent imbalance of the wheel and fact that the late stages of butter churning imposed extreme unbalanced loading on the same side, it is very easy to understand that the wheel would become stressed out of shape (trim). To counter this, when it was idle and as required, someone would enter the wheel with a hammer and tap back into place any dislodged wedges or shims and replace any that had vibrated out and been lost. This maintenance procedure would have been used to restore the trim on a regular basis but because the wheel would never be laden in its new site, we foresaw no reason to make provision for the procedure.



First job at the Waterwheel site is cleaning out the rubbish. Curator – George Fuller  
*TH*, April 2, 1974.

## Park Features

When we had the faithfully restored wheel installed in the Park we did not couple the counter-shaft because of constraints of space, sound and safety. Another modification was to replace the grease-cup bearing lubrication with two copper high pressure hydraulic lines for remote servicing with a grease gun. Locke access was provided to both sides but because the wheel would never be laden, somewhat naively as has transpired, we presumed that it would turn 'forever' with very little need for servicing. It quickly shattered our dream. The incessant turning of the unbalanced tonne mass at idling speed 24 hours per day over a prolonged period without regular attention was sufficient to gradually work the authentic shims and wedges loose and upset the trim. We just could not keep up with the demand for attention and at one stage replaced the steel shims and wedges with wedges of puriri hardwood but they were also chomped up.

There ensued a period of years during which numerous very clever and generous well-wishers offered 'the perfect solution' to the point where the original hub assembly is no longer recognisable having had spacers, brackets and flanges of various types welded in for stability. However, the relentless movement continued to impose stress on weaker components resulting in breakage of diagonal wooden braces and wear around the seat of steel tie-rods etc., progressively destroying equilibrium.

With the advent of mobile cranes with telescoping derricks the wheel was removed for 'repair and strengthening' between Sept. and Dec. 1989 and yet again in the 1990s but it has continued to relentlessly self-destruct into what is now a very unsafe condition. This coupled that with the benefit of hindsight it is obvious that it was unwise to locate it in direct line with the ravine upstream which converts high flows into an uncontrollable raging torrent of immense destructive power means that its removal and replacement with a wheel of simpler, balanced design is the logical action to take.

In the foregoing I have endeavoured to record the historical background of the wheel but perhaps of greater importance, I have gone to some length to emphasise what I consider to be the great mechanical and heritage significance that it embodies. My purpose has been to impress that this is no ordinary waterwheel and therefore in retirement, still justifies a high level of recognition."

George Fuller

The Waterwheel was formally opened on 1 May 1976, by Mr L.D. Hickford (County Chairman) and Mrs Audrey N. Gale (Chairman of the city's Parks and Recreation Committee). It was finally retired in December 2004, and replaced by an entirely new Waterwheel, designed by New Plymouth engineer Michael Lawley and built by carpenter Dave Carnahan. The installation of the replacement wheel took place in November 2005, in time for that year's 'Festival of Lights'.

The replacement Waterwheel is 3.6 metres high and 1.6 metres wide, replicating the dimensions of the centennial heritage wheel. The new Waterwheel has

been sited to the east of the main stream so it is out of the firing line of the stream when it is in flood. The flume has a controlled intake designed to guarantee a constant regulated flow of water to turn the wheel, even when the flow rate of the stream is at its lowest or highest. Unfortunately, the old cast-iron gear ring was fitted to the new wheel. This was done to keep some of the wheel's authenticity. The imbalance caused problems, and the new wheel had to be removed in September 2007 for repair. The cast-iron ring was removed and the wheel has been relatively trouble free ever since.



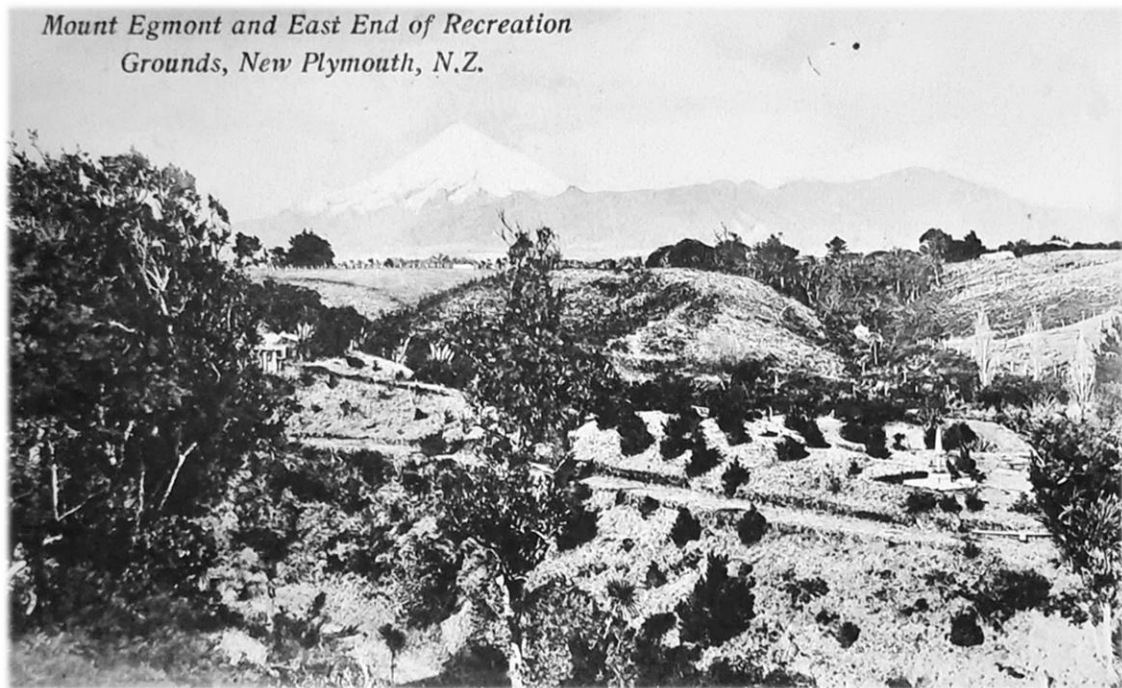
New Waterwheel ready to be installed.  
*TDN*, Nov 1, 2005.

## Wiggins Memorial

The name Monument Hillside relates to a memorial built in 1903 for Trooper Wiggins who died of enteric fever (typhoid) while on active service in South Africa during the Boer war.

The Recreation Grounds Board was approached by Wiggins' work colleagues from Bank of New South Wales, regarding the construction of a memorial. The Board agreed to the proposal even though there was some opposition to siting it in the grounds.

The memorial was an obelisk made of imported polished grey granite. The stone arrived in August 1903. The erection of the monument was entrusted to W. F. Brooking (builder / undertaker).



Postcard circa 1906. The Wiggins memorial is above the path at the right side of the picture.

Unfortunately, the monument was subject to vandalism on several occasions. In 1919 the marble column was rolled down the hill and some of the iron railings were smashed but subsequently repaired. It was damaged again in 1929 and again repaired. It was finally removed from the Park in November 1934.



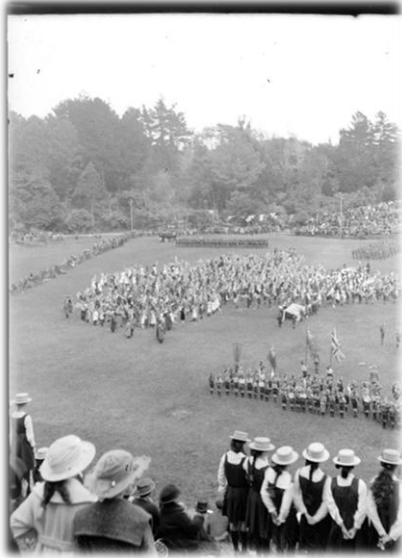
*AWN*, February 4, 1904.



## Royal Visits

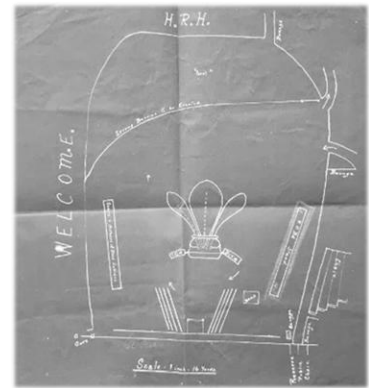
### 1920 - Prince of Wales

May 3, 1920



The Press Collection,  
Alexander Turnbull Library.

It was planned that Edward, Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII) would arrive at New Plymouth by train at 8.55am. The party would then make their way to the Park for a reception after which they would go onto the Boy's High School. To get to the High School the cars carrying the royal party planned to drive through the Park from the Sports Ground by way of Racecourse Walk. To do this Racecourse walk was widened. The time of departure from New Plymouth was set at 11am. A few days before the visit the arrival time was changed to 10am reducing the stay to just one hour, resulting in the visit to the Boys High School being cancelled. A lot of work went into the visit and one of the highlights was the forming of the Prince of Wales feathers on the playing field by 1536 children holding pampas plumes. The words of the motto were formed using 70 children. Also, The letters H. R. H were formed on the southern terrace by the Technical College students and the word welcome was formed on the eastern terrace by students of the Girls High School. Following the visit the school children were entertained and fed, organised by Mrs Burgess and her helpers.



Plan to show where the children would stand to form the Prince of Wales Feathers. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2003-862/1).

### 1927- Duke and Duchess of York



*Auckland Weekly News*. March 10, 1927.

March 3, 1927

This visit was of similar brevity as the 1920 royal visit. The Gilbert Street entrance was used on this occasion taking the royal party past Fountain Lake and entering the Sports Ground by the pavilion. The royal couple became King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1936. Queen Elizabeth, known after her husband's death as Her Majesty the Queen Mother, remained very popular in New Zealand.

**1935 – Duke of Gloucester**

On January 4, 1935, Prince Henry the Duke of Gloucester, third son of King George V, visited New Plymouth.



**WELCOME TO THE ROYAL GUEST: SCENES ON THE TOUR AT NEW PLYMOUTH AND FLOCK HOUSE**

New Plymouth's official reception to the Duke of Gloucester took place in the terraced amphitheatre of Pukerua Park and was a bright function. A shower of rain fell, but the Duke put on a raincoat and walked between the ranks of children. He received a fine ovation from the crowds.

- 1. Children waiting to the Duke at Flock House.
- 2. His Royal Highness meeting Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Foreman at New Plymouth. Mr. Foreman, who is a Maori war veteran, has met every previous Royal visitor to New Zealand.

- 3. A general view of the reception at Pukerua Park, New Plymouth.
- 4. The Duke speaking to a little girl patient from New Plymouth Hospital.
- 5. Inspecting the parade of Boy Scouts at New Plymouth.

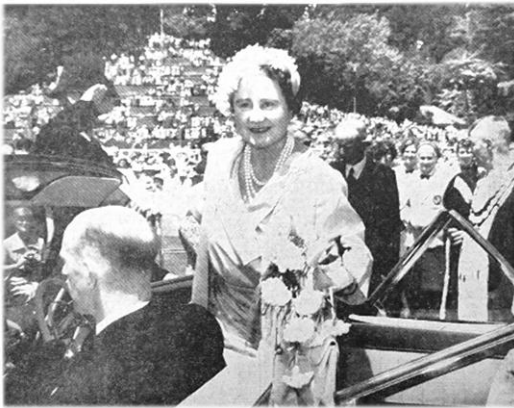
*Auckland Weekly News, January 9, 1935.*

### 1954 – Queen Elizabeth II

On January 9, 1954, Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh visited New Plymouth. This was the first visit by a reigning monarch.



Christensen, Edward Percival, 1907-1982. Royal tour party at Pukekura Park, New Plymouth. Tourist and Publicity. Ref: 1/2-042140-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.



TH, February 6, 1958.

### 1958 – The Queen Mother

On February 6, 1958, the Queen Mother visited New Plymouth. She was welcomed by an estimated crowd of 16,000 at a reception in the Sports Ground.

### 1970 – Queen Elizabeth II

On March 20, 1970, The Queen and Prince Philip visited New Plymouth. They attended a reception at the Bowl of Brookland and were entertained by the Spotswood College's Madrigal Group. The group sang three pieces, Cantate Domino; Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child, featuring soloist Julie Eales and The Little White Hen.



The Spotswood College Madrigals led by Miss McLafferty.  
*Taranaki Photo News*, April 18, 1970.



The Queen and Prince Philip with D V Sutherland at the Bowl of Brooklands. *TPN*, April 18, 1970.



Prince Philip talking to member of the Madrigals. *TPN*, April 18, 1970.



*TPN*, April 18, 1970.



Walking through Brooklands. *TDN*, November 11, 2015.

### **2015 – Prince Charles**

November 9, 2015

Prince Charles and Camilla visited New Plymouth. As part of a brief visit to New Plymouth they had a walk through Brooklands.

## Sporting Events

This chapter highlights some of the memorable sporting moments in the history of the sportsground at the Park.

### 1890 - First Athletics meeting

The first organised event in the sportsground was an athletics meeting on April 7, 1890. This was organised by the Sports Ground Committee which had been formed in August 1889 to complete filling in the swamp and creating a sports ground. An audience of about 2,000 people attended. Events included: running, running high jump, obstacle race and canoeing. A bicycle race was on the programme but had to be abandoned because the ground was too soft. A vaulting event was also started, but was abandoned because the only available pole was an inferior one. Athletics became an annual event. The judges were Board member J. T. Davis and R. G. Bauchope.



Athletics Event circa 1893. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2003-859/3).

### 1892 – First Cricket Game

The Sports Ground was used for cricket for the first time December 15, 1892 when teams of the New Plymouth Club representing East and West ends played a game. No match report was printed for the game.

### 1893 – First Rugby Game

When the Sports Ground committee agreed to let Rugby matches be played on the ground they restricted it to interprovincial games only. The first game was on September 2, 1893, Taranaki v Auckland. Taranaki played in amber and black. The team was: Full, Robinson; three-quarters, A. Bayly (captain); A. Good, H. Good; half, A. Humphries; wing forwards, W. and C. Bayly; five-eights, Robson; forwards, Hughes, Lambie, Coffey, Hawken, Livingston, Ryan and Sangster. The ground was soft due to rain in the days leading up to the game. About two thousand spectators attended. Taranaki led 2-0 at half time, having scored an unconverted try. Unfortunately, the home team ran out of steam and Auckland ran in two tries in the second half to win 4-2.

## Sporting Events

### 1894 – First Intercolonial Rugby Game

The first intercolonial match at the recreation ground was between Taranaki and N.S. Wales. September 1, 1894. The Taranaki team was: Full back: L Allen, 11st 10lb; three-quarters, H. Good, 13st 10lb; A. Bayly, 12st 4lb; A. Good, 12st. Halves: R. B. Lusk, 12st 10lb; A Humphries, 9st. Forwards: Lambie, 13st 2lb; Pearson, 12st 8lb; Watson, 13st; Hughes, 13st; Livingston, 12st 7lb; Sangster 12st 12lb; Wells, 12st 8lb. Wings: W. Bayly, 11st 10lb; A. George, 11st 8lb. (Note: 11st ≈70kg, 12st ≈76kg, 13st ≈83kg). The final score was a win to Taranaki 21-6. In the middle of the game the players had to contend with a heavy hailstorm.



Collection of Hawke's Bay Museum Trust.  
Ruawharo Tā-ū-rangi, 1436, Accession No 48/46.

### 1896 – First Interprovincial game against Nelson

The first interprovincial rugby match, against Nelson, was played in August 1896. The visitors arriving at 6am by the steamer, *Mahinapua*. Taranaki won 17-0. In January, the Sports Ground also hosted the first interprovincial cricket match between the two provinces, which Taranaki won by 59 runs.

### 1903 - North Taranaki Cricket XVIII v Lord Hawke's XI

An interesting game of cricket was played in January 1903. Lord Hawke a famous English cricketer organised a team of talented amateur English cricketers to tour New Zealand. The team was sponsored by the New Zealand Cricket Council to the sum of £2,200. They knew that they were better than the provincial teams in New Zealand and allowed them to field more than eleven players. When they played a team from north Taranaki at the Recreation Ground the local side was allowed to field eighteen players. Just as a note, the pitch back then was about twenty metres shorter and twenty metres narrower than it is today. Unfortunately, even with this huge advantage the local side lost by over an innings. Taranaki scored 86 and 131 and the Lord Hawke's team scored 320. The Taranaki team was: W. Perham, E. Gudgeon, L. Spencer, F. H. Robertson, A. R. Gardner, C. Clegg, A. S. Hassell, F. C. Robertson, W. Weston, A. Steeds, E. Whittle, Moore, L. Carter, E. O. Lightband, V. Elliott, G. H. Clarke, W. Skelton, G. Braund.

### 1904 Taranaki Rugby v Britain.

In August 1904 the big sporting event of the year was the rugby match between Taranaki and Britain which drew an estimated crowd of 9000 people. People came from all over Taranaki to watch the game. Unfortunately, it rained for most of the game. The Taranaki team was: Full back: E. F. Fookes, 12st 7lb. three-quarters, H. D. Thompson, 10st 12lb; Stalker, 13st 4lb; H. L. Abbott, 13st 4lb. five eights H. Mynott(captain), 11st 4lb. Half J. Hunter, 11st 2lb. Wings: W. A. Guy, 12st 9lb; J. Thomas, 12st 7lb. Forwards: A. McMinn, 11st 12lb; F. Glasgow, 13st; H. A. Wilson, 13st 11lb; J. O'Sullivan, 13st 11lb; W. Glenn, 13st; R. Douglas 13st 7lb; W. McKay, 13st 3lb. (Note: 11st ≈70kg, 12st ≈76kg, 13st ≈83kg). The ground was very soft and the ball slippery. There was a lot of kicking in the game which ended in a nil all draw. The game highlighted the need for better drainage for the pitch. The ground was considered the best in the district for spectators, but the worst for playing on.

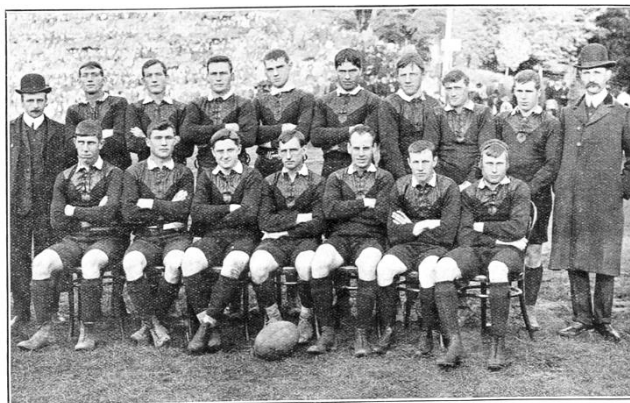
### 1904 - First Interprovincial Soccer Match

In September 1904 Taranaki played its first interprovincial soccer match. The game was played in the Recreation Ground against a team from Auckland. The local team was expected to lose badly as it was a fledgling team up against a well-established one. The Auckland team had agreed to come to town to help promote the game. The pitch in the Recreation Ground was in a sorry state, very heavy, carrying a lot of water and stifled the passing game of the visitors. A game of hit and chase by the Taranaki team resulted in an unlikely win to the home side. A second game was organised to be played a few days later but the venue was changed due to the poor condition of the pitch.

The Sports Ground was transformed in 1907. The playing field was raised several feet, new drainage was laid, the playing area was increased, and the terraces were remade increasing the capacity of the ground considerably. This transformation attracted the New Zealand Championship Athletics Meeting on February 26th 1908. The weather was fine for the meet and a crowd of around 4000 attended.

### 1908 Taranaki Rugby v Britain.

On July 15, 1908, Taranaki played a British team and came out victorious with a 5-0 hard earned win. The team was: Full back: A. Hardgrave. three-quarters: D. Cameron, E. Dive, C. Sheahan. Five-eights: H. J. Mynott, J. Hunter. Half: J. Coleman. Wing-forward: T. Sheahan. Forwards: J O'Sullivan, H. Rothery, J.D. Crowley, A. Smith, Tamu, H.G. Whittington, M. Chain. An unusual event happened during the game when E. Dive ran in to score



THE TARANAKI RUGBY FOOTBALL TEAM WHICH DEFEATED THE BRITISH TEAM AT NEW PLYMOUTH BY 5 TO NIL, ON JULY 15, 1908.

Taranaki Team. *AWN*, July 23, 1908.

the only try of the game. The following appeared in the match report. "As Dive streaked for the line one male spectator furiously brandished his hat in one hand and a yelping fox terrier, held by his two hind legs, in the other. When the Eltham player crossed Britain's line the spectator gave the dog a heave. Out in the air it flew. Four terraces below a lady wearing a large hat was jumping excitedly in her seat. Suddenly a heap of squirming doggy landed on that new hat and smashed it to pieces, fortunately without injuring either the lady or the dog."

### 1910 – Taranaki XV Cricket v Australia XI

March 1910 the Taranaki XV cricket Team played an Australia XI and earned a deserved draw. Taranaki scored 166 and 157 while the visitors scored 168 and 138 for 8 when the game was stopped for bad light. Taranaki players were: Smith, Weston, Lash, Inman, Cole, Greatbatch, Robertson, Perham, Dunlop, Eggleston, Pratt, Clegg, Hill, Clarke and Southall.

### 1913 – Taranaki Rugby v Australia

In September 1913 Taranaki rugby team played Australia. It was a tight game, but the visitors prevailed 11-9. The Taranaki team was: Full-back: L. Hill. Three-quarters: G. Loveridge, J McLeod (captain), G. Meuli. Five-eights: S. Cameron, R. Roberts. Half-back: C. Brown. Wing-forward: R. Taylor. Forwards: Back row, H. Whittington, G. Hawkins; Second row, Ward, Prouse, Pini; front row, M. Cain, H. Dewar.

## Sporting Events

### 1914 - Taranaki ladies Hockey v England

August 1914 the Taranaki Ladies Hockey Association put up a team to play a touring team from England. The local girls were totally outclassed going down 9-0. After the game the English girls were asked to comment on their opponents. One of the comments was that the New Zealand girls run about ten miles too far in the course of the match.

Taranaki team: Goal: M. Arthur. Right back: A. Stott. Left: E. Lynskey. Right half: K. Penn. Centre: L. Stott. Left: S. McCracken. Forwards: E. and T. King, M. McEwen, E. Reid, M. Stohr. Emergencies: Back, E. Andrews; half, A. Fryday; forward, L. Hughes.

### 1921 – Taranaki Rugby v Springboks

Probably the most famous sporting fixture at Pukekura Park was the Rugby game against South Africa in July 1921. This was the first time the Springboks had toured New Zealand. A crowd of about 15,000 attended. Special trains came in from Hāwera, Stratford, Toko and Patea carrying a total of 2500 passengers. Thousands more came in by car.



A LINE-OUT IN THE MATCH. SPRINGBOKS VERSUS TARANAKI, AT NEW PLYMOUTH. L. Esrp, phot.

Taranaki v Springboks, *AWN*, July 28, 1921.

The game was a hard-fought draw. The Taranaki team: Full-back: Kingston

(Clifton). Three-quarters: Hickey (Clifton), Dick Roberts (Okiawa, captain), Sykes (Old Boys). Five-eighths: Roberts (Okiawa), Coutts (Inglewood). Half-back: Atkins (Okiawa). Wing-forward: C. McAllum (Tuakap). Forwards: Fogarty (Hāwera), Spratt (Patea), West (Hāwera), Masters (Stratford), Kivell (Stratford), Cain (Clifton), Campbell (Clifton). The Springboks were well looked after during their stay.

One of the activities on offer was a hunting party at Mr. Halcombe's property at Urenui.

### 1927 – Taranaki Soccer v Canada

In May 1927 the Taranaki soccer team played the Canadian national team. It was the first match of their tour. The Canadians won 10 – 1. The Taranaki team who played in chocolate and amber was: Goal: Royston. Full backs: Davis and Beare. Half backs: Freakley (captain), Brown and Stewart. Forwards: Bremner, Spedding, Ramsay, Hill and Humphreys.

### 1928 – Taranaki Cricket XI v Australia XI

The Taranaki cricket team played Australia in March 1928. It didn't go well. Taranaki were all out for 138 in their first innings. Australia replied with 427 and Taranaki could only score 112 in the second innings, beaten by an innings and 177 runs. The Taranaki team was: C.N. Kingstone, O.M. Nasmith, H.J. Grayson, B.B. Wilson, J. Cheevers, M. Falconer, Stan Giddy, S.A. Lay, L. Petty, A.M. Wilson, L. H. Giblin and T. Young (12th man).



## Sporting Events

### 1930 – Taranaki Rugby v Britain

The British rugby team toured again in May 1930. This time they dominated the Taranaki team scoring five tries to Taranaki's one. The final score was 23-7 to the visitors. A crowd of about 15,000 watched the game. Taranaki Team -Full-back: C. Hunt, 12st. Three-quarters: N. Hunter, 12st 4lb; H. W. Brown, 12st 4lb; K. Fookes, 12st 3lb. Five-eights: D Johnston 11st; E. Owen, 12st 4lb. Half-back: C. Brown, 11st 6lb. Wing-forward: A. Guy, 12st. Forwards: C. Wills, 13st 1lb; R. Clarke, 13st 11lb; P. Ward (captain) 14st 8lb; Ike, 16st 1lb; A. Kivell, 14st 2lb; W. Robinson, 12st; J. Young, 12st.



Britain v Taranaki. *AWN*, May 28, 1930.

### 1931 – Taranaki Rugby v Australia

In September 1931 Taranaki rugby side beat Australia 11 – 10. The game was watched by 8,000 spectators. Apparently, the Australian team were disappointing. Taranaki Team - Full-back: Collins. Three-quarters: Hunter, Watson, Sullivan. Five-eights: Peterson, Crawford. Half-back: Gudgeon. Wing-forward: Guy. Forwards: Wills, Murphy Walter, (Captain), Clarke, Baldwin, Lusk and Gargan.

### 1936 – Taranaki Cricket XI v M.C.C. XI

January 1936, Taranaki cricket played a touring M.C.C. side in a game that ended in a draw. The visitors batted first and made 221. Taranaki were then bowled out for 66 but were not asked to follow-on. The M.C.C batted again making 214 for 5 declared leaving Taranaki to make 369 runs in just under 3 hours. Taranaki were 138 for 9 wickets when stumps were drawn. Taranaki Team: H. Barker, W. Barker, S. Betts, T. Larkin, O.M. Nasmith, M.P. Donnelly, A.W. Priest, W. Dormer, E. Christensen, T. Pritchard, W. Groombridge.

### 1942 – First ladies Cricket Match

The ladies played cricket at Pukekura Park for the first time in January 1942. It was a nine-a-side game between ladies from the New Plymouth Women's Cricket Club.

### 1953 – Central Districts v South Africa

In March 1953 Central District played South Africa in a two-day cricket match. CD batted first and made 238 with A.A. Hunter making 105. South Africa bowled 114 overs. CD batted throughout the first day and an hour into the second. South Africa went into bat at 11.30 on the second day and made 228 in 84 overs falling ten runs short of CD's total. The game ended in a draw. CD played the game as though it was a five-day match. 6,000 people attended day two of the game.



CD v South Africa. *TH*, May 20, 1953.

### 1963 – New Zealand v Australia - Hockey

In July Pukekura Park hosted the first hockey test match between Australia and New Zealand. Australia won 3-2.

### 1967 – New Zealand XI v Australia XI

In March 1967 New Zealand played Australia in the first Test Match of the series. The match was transferred to New Plymouth because of earthworks at the Basin Reserve, Wellington. New Zealand won by 159 runs.

## Appendices

A - Taranaki Botanical Garden Act 1876

B - Pukekura Park Land Acquisitions

C - Miscellaneous Documents

Handing Over the Park - TH, Oct 17- & 18, 1929

Transfer of Brooklands – TH, March 12, 1934

Thomas Horton's Brooklands Report -1933

Fate of the Brooklands Homestead

Horton's 1946 Park Assessment Letter

Saxton/ Goodwin Report - 1951

Jack Goodwin's 1960 Report

Ideas for pukekura Park - 1968

D - By-Laws

E - Johnny Fro

F – Ye Mercury

## A - Taranaki Botanical Garden Act 1876

The original parliamentary bill of 1875 drafted to set up the Recreation Ground had some issues, and the Governor never signed it off, but after a few modifications the Taranaki Botanic Garden Act 1876 finally passed in September 1876 allocating almost 49 acres of land to the Board of Trustees.

### Taranaki Botanic Garden Act 1876

Public Act 1876 No 24  
Date of assent 29 September 1876

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**An Act to constitute a Board of Trustees, and vest in it certain Public Reserves at New Plymouth, for the purposes of a Botanic Garden and Public Recreation Grounds.**

members of such Board shall hold office until they die, resign, or become disqualified under the provisions of this Act.

**5 Board a corporate body**

The Board so constituted shall be a corporate body in fact and in law by the name of the **Board of Trustees for Public Recreation**, with perpetual succession and a common seal, and with full power and authority by that name to sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, defend and be defended in all Courts, and in all cases and suits at law or in equity whatsoever, with power to take purchase and hold all goods chattels and personal property whatsoever which may be required for carrying out the provisions of this Act, and also to take and hold all such land hereditaments and premises as may be transferred to or vested in the Board for the purpose of public recreation, or as endowments for the Board, or for any other purpose in connection with the improvement or management of any lands vested in the Board for the purposes of this Act.

**6 Disqualification of members**

If any member of the Board shall be directly or indirectly concerned in any contract with the Board, or shall receive or be entitled to receive any money or emolument for any work done or to be done for the Board, or shall be absent from three consecutive meetings without the consent of the Board, or shall be adjudicated a bankrupt or insolvent, or take the benefit of or be brought under the operation of any Act relating to bankrupt or insolvent debtors, or shall become a public defaulter, or shall become convicted of felony, his seat in such Board shall become vacant.

**7 Members may resign**

It shall be lawful for any member, by writing under his hand addressed to the Governor, to resign his seat in the Board, and upon the receipt by the Governor of such resignation, the seat of such member shall become vacant.

**11 Application of moneys**

All sums of money which shall be received by the Board, whether by grant or by donation, or in any manner howsoever in respect of the lands vested or to be vested in them, shall be applied in managing administering and improving such lands, and generally for carrying into effect the purposes of this Act.

**12 Board may lease land**

It shall be lawful for the Board to lease any of the lands vested or to be vested in them, not exceeding one-tenth of the whole thereof, for any term not exceeding twenty-one years, subject to such rents and conditions and in such manner and form as the Board shall think fit.

**13 Offences**

Whoever shall do or attempt to do any of the following things upon or within the boundaries of the said lands, without the permission of the Board, shall be liable to a penalty over and above the damage done not exceeding ten dollars:—

- Light a fire.
- Wilfully break a fence or part of any fence.
- Wilfully break or cut any tree or plant.
- Shoot at any bird or animal with a gun or other instrument.
- Wilfully dig or cut the sod, or damage any dam or watercourse.
- Wilfully take away destroy or injure any bird or animal being upon the said lands, or any egg of any bird.
- Take away any wood shrub plant or any other thing.

The expression "ten dollars" was substituted, as from 10 July 1967, for the expression "five pounds" pursuant to section 7(1) Decimal Currency Act 1964 (1964 No 27).

**14 Penalties**

Any person who shall be convicted of any breach of any bylaw made by the Board under the powers contained in the tenth section of this Act shall be liable to a penalty of not less than ten cents and not exceeding ten dollars.

**Preamble**

The Preamble to this Act was repealed, as from 19 November 1907, by section 2 Statutes Repeal Act 1907 (1907 No 40).

**BE IT THEREFORE ENACTED by the General Assembly of New Zealand in Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—**

**1 Short Title**

The Short Title of this Act shall be the Taranaki Botanic Garden Act 1876.

**2 Land in Schedule 1 vested in Board of Trustees**

The lands specified in Schedule 1 hereto, shall, subject to any leases or agreements affecting the same already entered into, be vested in and held by the Board of Trustees for public recreation herein constituted, in trust for a botanic garden and public recreation grounds, without any conveyance or assurance.

Section 2 was amended, as from 19 November 1907, by section 2 Statutes Repeal Act 1907 (1907 No 40) by omitting the words "From and after the passing of this Act" and "and comprised in the said recited deed of grant".

**3 Lands in Schedule 2 vested in Board of Trustees**

The lands described in Schedule 2 hereto, and held upon trust by the Superintendent as public thoroughfares, shall be, without any conveyance or assurance, vested in and held by the said Board in trust for a like purpose. . . .

Section 3 was amended, as from 19 November 1907, by section 2 Statutes Repeal Act 1907 (1907 No 40) by omitting the words "comprised in the said recited deed of grant", and the words "Notwithstanding anything herein contained, such portions of Davy and Wakefield Streets as are described in Schedule 2 hereto shall not vest in the Board until the owners of the land adjoining such portions shall have given their consent by deed to such vesting, or until such adjoining land shall have been conveyed to the Board." after the words "for a like purpose".

**4 Constitution of Board of Trustees**

The Board shall consist of seven members, to be appointed by the Governor, and notified by Proclamation in the New Zealand Gazette, of whom four shall be a quorum, and the

**8 Vacancies**

If a vacancy occurs in the Board through death or through any of the reasons aforesaid, it shall be lawful for the Governor to appoint a fit and proper person to fill the vacancy.

**9 Powers of Board**

The Board so constituted may exercise all or any of the following powers:—

- (1) Lay out enclose and plant the land held by the Board, and build thereon in such manner as they shall think fit, and sell give or exchange any spare plants seeds or specimens they may have in their possession.
- (2) Cause such parts of the said lands to be laid out for carriage-ways, and such parts thereof for foot-ways, as they may think proper.
- (3) From time to time to make stop up divert widen or alter any bridge-ways or watercourses in upon through across or over any part of the said lands.
- (4) Do anything which may be requisite for the proper and beneficial management and administration of the said lands or any part thereof.

**10 By-laws**

It shall be lawful for the Board from time to time, with the consent of the Governor, to make alter and repeal by-laws for the safety and preservation of the property upon the lands vested or to be vested in them, and for repressing such impropriety in the conduct of visitors as may tend to immorality profanity injury breach of the peace or discomfort of other visitors, and otherwise for the more efficient and regular government of the said lands, and such by-laws shall be published in the New Zealand Gazette, and in some newspaper circulating in the Town of New Plymouth, and shall come into operation on the date to be fixed thereby, not less than one month from the approval of such by-laws by the Governor.

# Appendix A

The expressions "ten cents", and "ten dollars" were substituted, as from 10 July 1967, for the expressions "one shilling", and "five pounds" pursuant to section 7(1) Decimal Currency Act 1964 (1964 No 27).

- 15 Penalties how recovered and applied**  
All penalties and forfeitures under this Act may be recovered in a summary way by any person appointed in that behalf by the Board to sue for the same, and shall be applied as other moneys under this Act are directed to be applied.
- 16 Annual statement to be forwarded to Governor**  
In the month of December in each year the Board shall forward to the Governor a statement of all moneys received or expended by them during the preceding year, and of all moneys at such date in the hands or under the control of the Board, and the Governor may, if he shall think fit, order such statement to be published in the Provincial *Gazette*.
- 17 Board may exchange lands with the consent of the Governor**  
It shall be lawful for the Board, with the consent of the Governor, to exchange portions of the land described in Schedule 1 hereto for other land adjoining such land: Provided that the land received in exchange shall be of the same value or extent as that given by the Board; and for the purpose of effecting such exchange it shall be lawful for the Board to execute such conveyances and instruments as may be deemed necessary.
- 18 Governor may dissolve Board**  
The Governor may, on the petition of the majority of the members for the time being of the Board, or of two-thirds of the rate-payers of the Borough of New Plymouth, dissolve the said Board, and on such dissolution the said lands vested by this Act shall vest in the Borough of New Plymouth, and be managed by the said Borough as the Board is authorized to manage the said lands.

## Schedule 1

A R P A R P

ALL those town allotments, containing by admeasurement 30 acres 3 roods 38 perches, numbered respectively 1047, 1048, 1064, 1066, 1085, 1087, 1104, 1105, part of 1106, part of 1109, 1110, 1111, 1112, 1113, 1114, 1115, 1116, 1118, 1124, 1125, part of 1126, part of 1129, 1130, 1131, 1132, 1133, 1134, 1136, 1140, 1143, 1144, 1145, 1146, 1147, 1148, 1149, 1150, 1151, 1152, 1153, 1154, 1155, 1156, 1157, 1161, 1162, 1163, 1164, 1165, 1166, 1167, 1168, 1169, 1170, 1171, 1173, 1174, 1176, 1177, 1180, 1182, 1185, 1186, 1187, 1188, 1189, 1190, 1191, 1192, 1193, 1194, 1195, 1203, 1204, 1205, 1206, 1207, 1208, 1209, 1210, 1211, 1212, 1218, 1219, 1220, 1221, 1222, 1223, 1224, 1225, 1226, 1227, 1234, 1235, 1236, 1237, 1238, 1239, 1240, 1241, 1242, 1243, part of 1244, 1254, 1255, 1256, 1257, 1258, 1259, 1260, 1261, 1262, 1263, 1264.....

30 2 38

A R P A R P

All those pieces or parcels of land containing by admeasurement 10 acres 1 rood 37 perches, being town allotments:—

L.....	2	3	37			
Part of M.....	0	1	10			
X.....	7	1	0			
				10	2	7
				41	1	5

## Schedule 2

All those streets containing by admeasurement 7 acres 0 roods 14 perches, comprising:—Liardet Street, from town boundary to Fillis Street; Davy Street, from Carrington Road to eastern boundary of Section 1133; Wakefield Street, from Carrington Road to eastern boundary of Section 1173; Bell Street, from Carrington Road to western boundary of M; Shortland Street, from Carrington Road to eastern boundary of Section 1264 ...

John Street, from Gover Street to L.....	0	0	13			
--	---	---	----	--	--	--

All those streets containing by admeasurement 7 acres 0 roods 14 perches, comprising:—Liardet Street, from town boundary to Fillis Street; Davy Street, from Carrington Road to eastern boundary of Section 1133; Wakefield Street, from Carrington Road to eastern boundary of Section 1173; Bell Street, from Carrington Road to western boundary of M; Shortland Street, from Carrington Road to eastern boundary of Section 1264 ...

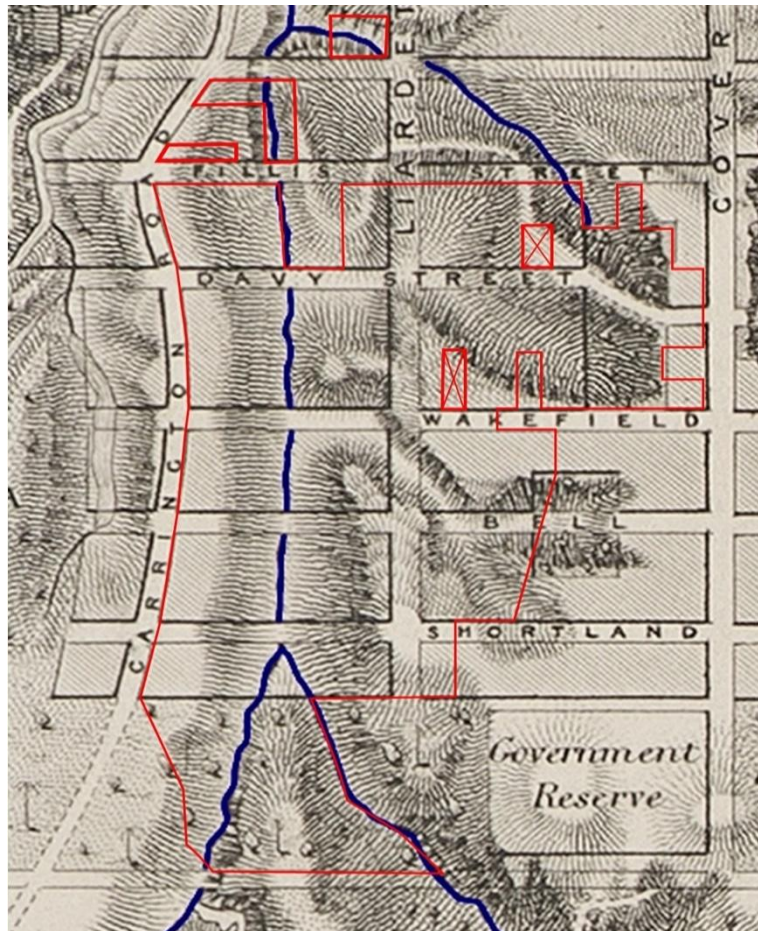
Davy Street, from L to eastern boundary of allotment 1133.....

	7	0	14			
				7	2	1
Total.....	48	3	6			

## B - Pukekura Park Land Acquisitions

This chapter gives an overview of the land acquired by the Park. It is not 100% complete. For a more detailed description see the NPDC 2004 Park Management Plan which details all the land acquisitions with title numbers and deed numbers.

The last act of Taranaki's Provincial Council on JUNE 30, 1875, was to pass the *Botanical Gardens and Public Recreation Grounds Bill 1875*, which enabled public land to be utilised for recreation. It is widely assumed that the Bill allocated 39 acres of land, however, at the first Board meeting in August 1875 it was recorded that they were granted 47 acres. When the Bill went for approval to the Governor-General there were some issues, and he was advised not to sign it into law. After the Bill was amended it was passed by the new Colonial Parliament in September 1876 as the *Taranaki Botanic Garden Act 1876*. The new Act was comprised of 48 acres, 3 roods, 6 perches of land. Prior to September 1876 the Board had acquired more land some of which must have been incorporated into the new Act.



Taken from Carrington's original relief map of New Plymouth.

Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2004-287).

Superimposed is the area of the Recreation Ground defined in the Taranaki Botanic Garden Act 1876. This shows what the terrain was like when the trustees first got the land.

## Appendix B

The Taranaki Botanic Garden Act 1876 (see page 251) defined the Recreation Ground showing it to be approximately 49 acres, made up of 109 quarter acre town sections, some areas of paper roads and some green areas such as Area L, M and X. An interesting aspect of the act is section 18 which stated that “The Governor may, on the petition of the majority of the members for the time being of the Board, or of two-thirds of the rate payers of the Borough of New Plymouth, dissolve the said Board, and on such dissolution the said lands vested by this Act shall be vested in the Borough of New Plymouth, and be managed by the said Borough as the Board is authorized to manage the said lands.”



The original boundary of the Recreation Ground as defined by the Taranaki Botanic Garden Act 1876.

Base map: Carrington's Plan of New Plymouth, 1842.

Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2004-285).

## Appendix B



This map is an overall picture of land acquisitions for Pukekura Park without Brooklands.

Turquoise line indicates the current boundary of Pukekura Park.

White numbered sections – original whole sections.

Yellow numbered sections - these sections were acquired later.

Section with numbers, half yellow and half white indicates a part section.



## Appendix B

The map on the previous page shows the makeup of the Recreation Ground as far as the original southern boundary, which was the northern edge of Holsworthy Road. The turquoise line is the modern- day boundary of the Park.

Town sections with white numbers represent the original whole sections granted in the Taranaki Botanical Garden Act 1876. Two sections originally granted which do not appear on this map, 1047 and 1048 which are where the model train is situated on Gilbert Street.

Sections with yellow numbers were purchased later.

Section with numbers, where 2 digits are white, and 2 digits are yellow indicates a part section.

As well as numbered town sections the Board was also given areas marked “L” and “X” and part of “M” plus the areas of the streets within the boundary. These are all detailed in the Taranaki Botanical Garden Act 1876.

Other sections, such as 1182 and 1064 which are outside of the current boundary were part of the original quota but were released, usually as part of a land swap.

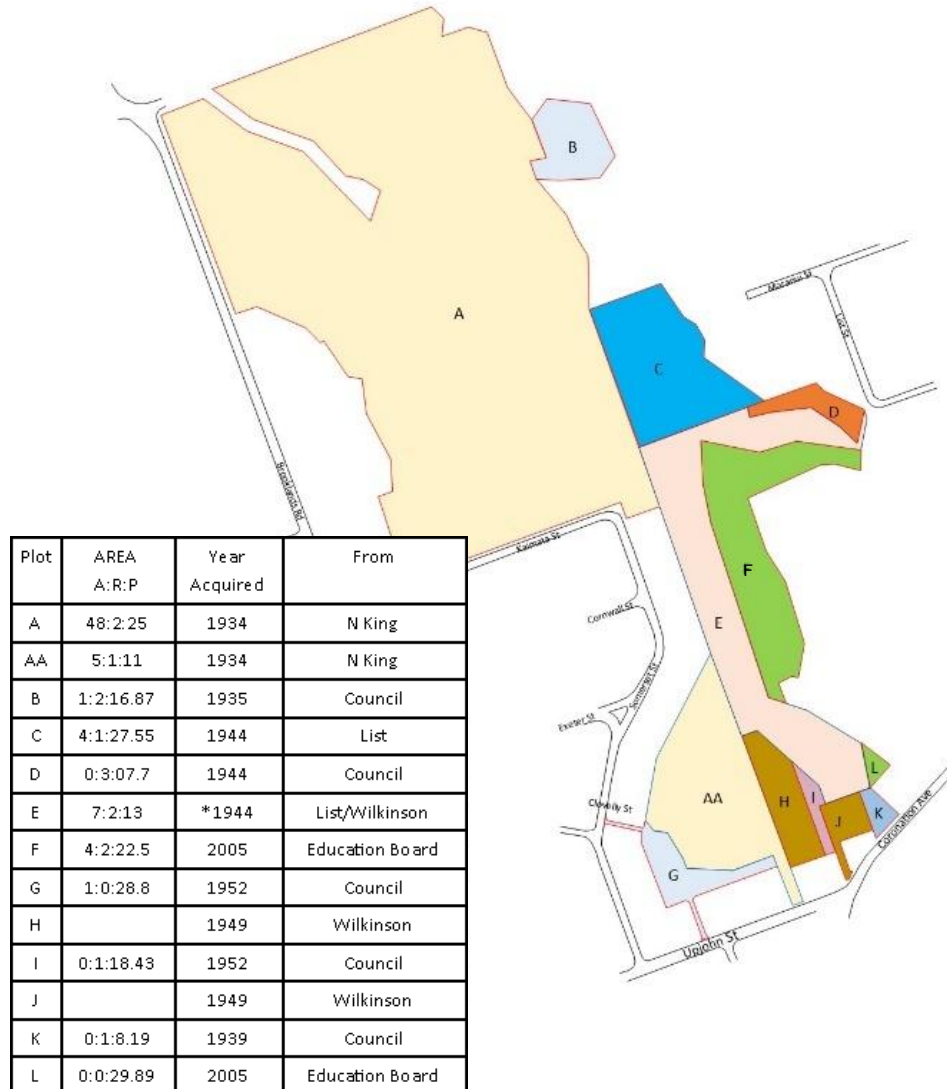
### **Changes to the Recreation Ground area. Purchases, swaps and donations:**

- 1876 Section 1172 purchased for £62 14s from Mr. Stephenson.
- 1876 Section 1175 purchased for £50 from Mr. Hammerton.
- 1886 Section 1086 purchased for £40 from Mr. Dorsett.
- 1891 Sections 1107, 1108, 1127 and 1128 also part sections 1106, 1109, 1126 and 1129 purchased for £125 from Mrs Harriet Fookes. This block of land was originally known as Māori Reserve No 12.
- 1893 Section 1084 purchased for £25 plus a piece of land. Bought from Mr. Dingle. The piece of land exchanged was possibly section 1064.
- 1894 Section 1135 purchased for £16 16s from Reginald Bayley.
- 1899 Section 1182 transferred to Jockey Club as part of a land swap for the 3.5 acres below.
- 1901 3.5 acre block of land to the east of the Serpentine was transferred to the Recreation Ground from the Jockey Club. This area is Section D part 4 Sub1 – 3.2.0.
- 1917 Section of Holsworthy Road at southern boundary of Park transferred to Park.
- 1922 Section 1117 on Fillis Street purchased (Kindergarten plot).
- 1965 Section 1196 transferred from the estate of Harry Frethey.

## Appendix B

### Brooklands/ Maranui Gully Land Acquisitions

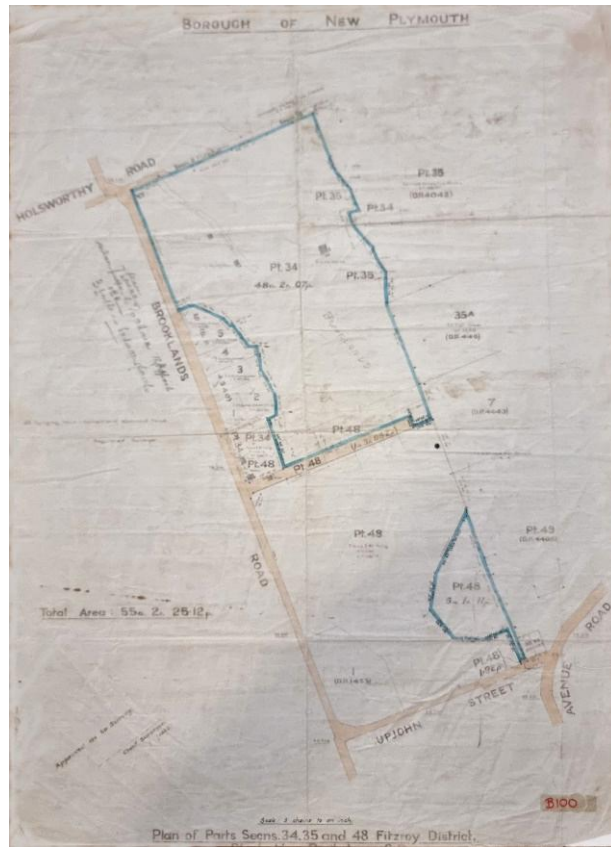
LAND SECTIONS THAT MAKE UP BROOKLANDS AND THE MARINUI GULLY



Brooklands and the Maranui Gully is a collection of parcels of land most of which were gifted to the town. The first parcels donated were from the Brooklands estate of the late Newton King, an area of over 53 acres. This prompted Messrs. List and Wilkinson to gift approximately 9 acres of the adjoining Maranui Gully. (\* Although this was gifted in 1934 it was not officially part of Pukekura Park until 1944.) Mr. List had promised to gift a second plot which was part of the list garden, once his wife had decided she could no longer look after the land. It would seem that with the outbreak of war getting help was difficult prompting her to hand over the land (plot C on above map). To access this land from List Street the Council purchased a small area (plot D on above map) from the List estate.

The other significant parcel of land is the plot marked F on the above map. This was acquired from the Education Board in 2005. It had been part of the Highlands Intermediate grounds.

Appendix B



Parcels of land gifted to the town by the Newton King estate in 1933. The total area being 55 acres, 2 roods and 25.12 perches. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC 2014-042).



Parcels of land acquired from the List estate in 1944. The larger section being 4 acres, 3 roods and 32 perches was part of the List garden that had been promised by Mr. List when his wife could no longer look after it. The smaller section being slightly over 3 roods in area was purchased by the council for £100 from the List estate. Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2014-043).

## C - Miscellaneous Documents

### Handing Over the Park - *TH*, Oct 17- & 18, 1929

*Taranaki Herald*, October 17, 1929.  
**THE CEREMONY AT THE PARK**

#### **Control Vested in Borough. Board Members Retain Interest.**

After more than 50 years of highly successful work on behalf of New Plymouth's most beautiful possession—Pukekura Park—the Park Board to-day formally handed over the Park to the care and safe keeping of the New Plymouth Borough Council. This move, made necessary by the increased cost of maintenance of the Park consequent upon its development, is to all intents and purposes merely handing over the Park's liabilities to the community by a body dependent in the past on voluntary subscriptions. Those men who constituted the Park Board when the negotiations with the borough were completed, and who had continued the invaluable work of developing the Park, will still retain their active interest in the Park as members of the "Pukekura Park Committee."

#### **HISTORY OF THE PARK - ADDRESS BY PIONEER MEMBER.**

At 2.30 p.m. the guests were welcomed by the present chairman of the board (Mr. F. Amoores) and an inspection made of a group of historic trees planted on the occasion of the formal opening of the Park on May 29, 1876. One of the trees is an English yew—to-day it is little more than a stump—planted by Mrs. T. K. Skinner. The second is a puriri planted by Mr. R. C. Hughes, and the third a rimu planted by Mrs. M. A. Hughes. Next comes a Norfolk Island pine planted by Mrs. Thomas Colson, and then a pinus insignis planted by Miss Jane Carrington, daughter of Mr. F. A. Carrington, superintendent of the province. Last of all is a pinus radiata, planted by some person unknown, which is said to be the finest specimen of its kind in the North Island. These trees are all situated to the west of Cannon Hill, near the upper end of the lower lake.

After a brief tour of the Park the gathering assembled at the tea kiosk for afternoon tea. An address appropriate to the occasion was then made by Mr. R. C. Hughes, a member of the present board, who holds the remarkable record of fifty-four years continuous service as a member of the board. He was chiefly responsible for the establishment of the Park in 1876.

Mr. W. H. Skinner, who has played a leading part over a number of years in the development of the Park, also gave an address, and then Mr. Hughes formally handed over to the Mayor of New Plymouth (Mr. H. V. S. Griffiths) the deeds by which the Park, after fifty-four years' existence under board control, is now vested in the borough.

Reference was made by the Mayor to the two puriri trees at the Liardet Street entrance to the sportsground planted by Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Burgess on July 21, 1919, to commemorate the declaration of peace, and Mr. Burgess replied.

The ceremony was completed by the planting of a kauri tree by the Mayor in the recently developed portion of the Park alongside the fernery.

#### **MR. HUGHES' ADDRESS.**

"I wish to thank my fellow members of the board for the compliment which they have paid me in asking me to speak on this occasion. It is an occasion of some moment, because it marks the death of the board and the birth of, the new governing body.

"It is now 54 years since the board came into existence, the Ordinance of the Taranaki Provincial Council under which it was constituted having been passed in June 1875. The part I took in bringing this about has already been published, so I shall say little on that subject. I desire, however, to mention the names of some others who are entitled to thanks. The Provincial Secretary, the late Thomas Kelly, M.L.C., and the late Arthur Standish, who was then Provincial Treasurer, with Mr. F. A. Carrington, the Provincial Superintendent, warmly supported the proposal to dedicate a part of the town for a recreation ground. I desire to mention also the name of Peter Elliot, an old member of the Council, who fathered the question which I tabled asking the Provincial Government to provide land for that purpose. The Government selected the present site. It consisted of 109 quarter-acre sections and three larger allotments, with intervening streets, the whole containing 48 acres 3 roods 6 perches. The Provincial Executive obtained a transfer of these sections and allotments from the Education Board for a piece of land on the Smart Road.

#### **ROUGH LAND SELECTED.**

"The site so selected for a Park was a rough piece of unfenced ground, broken by numerous gullies and containing not an acre of level land. The whole was covered with fern, furze and tutu. It was no light undertaking to convert this into a Park, but the Government gave a small subsidy. The Ordinance as originally drawn vested the land in the Town Board of New Plymouth with a subsidy of £400.

The Board, however, refused to accept the responsibility. Thereupon the Provincial Secretary intimated that he would drop the measure. I, however, opposed this course, and offered to get trustees to take the responsibility. Trustees were secured. They were John Gilmour, Isaac Broad, Harris Ford, James Thomas Davis, Thomas King, Robert J. Collins and myself. It was a strange acknowledgment of the public spirit shown by these gentlemen that the Executive reduced the subsidy to £200.

The Trustees at once entered upon the discharge of their duties and from that time the work of supervision and control and the providing of funds has been carried on by trustees.

"Of the original trustees I am the only one left. Of the members of the Provincial Council, under whose legislation the board was constituted, the only survivors are Mr. John Andrews, formerly of Huirangi, now of Fitzroy, and myself.

### **PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ABOLISHED.**

"My diary shows that the Council was prorogued on June 30, 1875. It never met again, for on October 12 of that year the system of provincial government throughout New Zealand was abolished. The question of abolition had been a burning one for years. Abolition was opposed by Sir George Grey, superintendent of Auckland, Dr. Featherston, superintendent of Wellington, and Mr. MacAndrew, superintendent of Otago. Our own council also opposed it, but Parliament saw fit to pass the Abolition Bill.

"These facts are worthy of mention because abolition meant a great loss to Taranaki, whose land revenue from that time became colonial revenue. This did not seem fair to Taranaki, seeing that other provinces such as Canterbury and Otago had sold most of their lands and had used the proceeds to develop their respective provinces.

"It was, however, fortunate for this district that the Provincial Council in the session just ended had passed an Ordinance providing for the construction of a harbour at New Plymouth and appropriating for that purpose one fourth of the land revenue. How deeply indebted is this community to the foresight of that last Council.

### **EXAMINATION OF LAND.**

"Returning to the history of the Park, my diary contains under date October 3, 1875, the following entry: 'Having been appointed one of the Board of Trustees for the Recreation Ground, I went with the other members and the deputy superintendent, Mr. Standish, to inspect the scene of our future labour, We found the land, nearly fifty acres, admirably adapted to our purpose.'

"The formal opening of the grounds is thus described in my diary under date Monday, May 29, 1876: 'The Recreation Board having arranged for the public planting of the first tree on the Queen's birthday, were compelled by the weather to postpone the ceremony till to-day, when it took place with a little eclat. Miss Jane Carrington was the heroine of the occasion. The superintendent made a little speech. Tom King followed with a little speech, the band played, and the profanum vulgus, led off by myself, cheered for all concerned. I, Pross and mother planted trees.'

"The agreement for the transfer of the Park was effected only after most careful negotiation. The first proposal of this kind was made about four years ago by a member distinguished by her zeal and energy. While recognising her claims for consideration I felt bound to vote with the majority of the board in opposing it.

### **HANDING OVER CONTROL.**

"About twelve months ago I was taken by surprise when a leading member of the board announced that he thought that the time had come to hand over the Park to the Borough and let ratepayers provide the funds, as we had come to the end of our tether. Again, I opposed. I pointed out that from the beginning we had carried on under financial difficulties, but yet we had carried on. To hand over the grounds to the Borough would be suicidal, just like the act of a man who cut his throat because he was in difficulties. However, negotiations were opened with the Council. It was the object of the board to obtain an assurance that the management of the Park would not suffer by the change and that there would be a continuity of design in development. The Council readily agreed to a suggestion that the existing members of the board should continue in control as a committee, the Mayor being added. This arrangement solved the difficulty. Thus, the community now have the assurance that the grounds will be maintained and developed on the lines which in the past have proved so satisfactory. The position then may be expressed in the saying, 'Le Roi est mort; vive le Roi' (The King is dead; long live the King). It also finds expression in the maxim 'Non moritur Rex' (The King never dies), and also by the homelier saying, 'John Brown's body lies mouldering in the grave, but his soul keeps marching on.'

"The board is transferring to the Borough an area of land substantially greater than the 48 acres 3 roods 6 perches with which it was endowed. The board acquired from time to time various sections within its boundaries and some adjoining the grounds, so that the area has been increased to 55 acres 1 rood 8 perches.

### **TERMS OF AGREEMENT.**

"These are the terms of the agreement with the Council: The board undertook to pay off all its liabilities by means of a bank overdraft. Upon due payment of all their liabilities the petition to the Governor-General for the transfer of the Park would be presented. His assent would automatically vest the Park in the Council, which, in that event, undertook to pay off the board's overdraft provided it did not exceed £900.

"The board undertook to execute a deed of trust to secure that the following trust funds would be applied to the purposes set out opposite the description of such funds respectively, namely:- Newton King Trust, £3000. Income to be applied in the first place to erection of tea-rooms in the Park, in the second place to maintenance and upkeep of fernery, and thirdly general maintenance and improvement of Park. C. H. Burgess (£300, plus interest £120, £420); Josiah Attrill Trust, £100; Annie Hulke Trust, £100; Mary Ellen Freeth Trust, £50; all for permanent improvements. "Thus, the Council will take over an area of land substantially greater than that with which the board was endowed and will have the income derivable from the foregoing trust funds.

"It will have been noted that I opposed the transfer of the Park to the Borough. It is well therefore that I should give reasons. Councillors are not selected because of their knowledge of horticulture or arboriculture or the management of Parks and playgrounds, but by reason of their fitness to discharge the very important duties imposed upon them by the Municipal Corporations Act. Moreover the personnel of a council is always changing. Thus the reserves committee of a newly elected council might have very different views as to the management of a Park from those held by their predecessors. Hence there would be a want of continuity of design in management.

### **A TRAMWAYS SUGGESTION.**

To illustrate the necessity for eternal vigilance one might mention a proposal made to our board by the council about three years ago, when the extension of the tram to Vogeltown was being urged. The Borough Council actually asked the board to permit a

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tram line to be opened up and carried through the Park. The line was to enter from Gilbert Street, to cut through the plantation of native trees, pass between the lower lake and the lovely fern dell waterfall, cross the brook, and strike into the steep hill side near the caretaker's cottage, thence along the hillside to Vogeltown. This would have involved the cutting down of many valued trees and plants, including pines of 50 years' growth, and not only those in the direct route, but also all overhanging trees that might threaten the safety of the line. What a scene of desolation. On the one side high steep clay banks, on the other the slopes covered with spoil from the cuttings. You need not be told how I voted in this case. Fortunately I was not the only opponent, and the scheme was vetoed. This is why I am so pleased that the management of the Park will be in the hands of a committee composed at the outset of members of the old board. Later on a proposal to construct a thoroughfare through the Park was made, but not by the council this time. This was a car route from the Liardet Street entrance to the Racecourse, to enable visitors to inspect both reserves without the trouble of alighting. Again I was in opposition, objecting to the felling of trees which would be involved, and believing that it was more important to preserve the rights of our own citizens and their children to the peaceful and safe enjoyment of the Park than to make things easy for tourists who were merely 'doing the sights.'

### DESTRUCTION OF TREES.

"It seems to me that the capacity of a local body to manage an ornamental reserve is questionable when one considers the experience of a certain locality. Before proceeding further I ask members of Borough Council to bear with me in my criticism and to accept my assurance that I am not here to find fault, but am merely animated by a love of trees and a desire for their preservation where possible and to encourage people to regard trees as friends and companions. One of the beauty spots of our town was the Henui Cemetery sheltered with its fine trees and bounded by the beautiful Henui River. Visitors from outside were loud in its praise. However, the reformer has been at work and tree after tree has been felled, and this to such an extent that the pines which encircled it and gave it, an air of privacy and repose have mostly disappeared, revealing acres of white tombstones. Doubtless some of the large pines in the central part of the grounds might well have been removed, but to my mind some of the finest specimens should have been spared, so that here and there they would have broken the sky-line just like the stately oaks and elms which adorn an English churchyard. A notable feature of the cemetery was a double row of fine old Norfolk pines, sixty years old, which formed an avenue leading from the entrance to the mortuary chapel—an avenue not to be equalled in any other cemetery in New Zealand. Every tree in this noble avenue has been cut down. Beneath the shelter of one of the pines lies the body of William Morgan Crompton (my old schoolmaster), one of the Commissioners who laid out the cemetery and had these trees planted.

### TREES AND THE AXE.

"Oh! for a poet like Newbolt, gifted with imagination to visualise the scene and give expression to the indignation of the old Commissioner upon hearing the thud of the axe, just, as in "Drake's Drum," Newbolt visualised Drake, in his hammock "slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay," roused at the thought of another Armada, exclaiming: "If the Dons sight Devon I'll quit the port of Heaven, and drum them up the Channel as we drummed them long ago." It is interesting to note that while Drake never ceased to think of Plymouth Hoe, Crompton, in planting these trees, did so for the sake of New Plymouth at the Antipodes.

"It was some comfort to me a few months ago to observe still standing an old and very large macrocarpa on the slope behind the mortuary chapel, a tree of immense size which afforded shelter from wind and rain; but, alas! on a recent visit I found that it had fallen a victim to the woodman's axe—a boon, perhaps, to someone in search of cheap firewood. Even on the occasion of a later visit I noticed that the work of destruction was still going on. A large sycamore about two feet in diameter lay on the ground near the entrance gate, and beside it a large well grown oak—more cheap firewood, I suppose. "It is a relief to pass from these criticisms and give a few words of praise.

### SOME EARLY WORKERS.

"When one considers what has been achieved in converting this rough locality into a Park, the unique beauties of which have gained distinction for New Plymouth, one feels bound to hold in grateful remembrance those who have laboured to produce this result. It is, however, impossible in this brief memoir to do justice to all, but at the risk of being invidious I venture mention a few whose names occur to me. Our first secretary, who did good pioneering work, was Robert J. Collins, afterwards known to fame as Colonel Collins and Auditor-General. Our next secretary was Mr. Reginald Bailey. He drew a large plan showing how the grounds should be laid out. Often was his tall athletic figure to be seen after office hours engaged like a navy in excavating the foundations of the massive dam which controls the waters of the upper lake. Mr. Harold Tribe was a later secretary. He presented the board with the concrete platform and steps near the band rotunda which give access to the lake. "Mr. T. K. Skinner was a surveyor from whose thoughts the Park was rarely absent. He marked out the levels of our principal walks. He used to spend day after day in the grounds working gratuitously with his chainman. James Thomas Davies was another enthusiast. He gave nearly all the money required for the construction of the "Poets' Bridge." Mr. Clement Govett was an ardent supporter. He was chairman for years. When a man about to make his will was unable to decide how to dispose of a particular sum Mr. Govett would give direction to his thoughts—sometimes to the benefit of the Park. Mr. Thomas Colson, a neighbouring resident—a lover of trees and plants—spent much time in the grounds working and overlooking the caretaker.

"Mr. Percy Smith was another enthusiast. Among his activities he supervised the work of extending the upper lake as far as Brooklands, employing for this purpose a gang of Māoris. It was at his instance the place was named "Pukekura Park" instead of "Rec," which it was generally called. Mr. Richard Cock has been of great service, both as a member of the board and its chairman. Although not now a member he still retains much interest in the Park. Mr. C. H. Burgess was for some years chairman and was of great service. Being Mayor during part of this period he very generously refused to make use of his honorarium as Mayor, but devoted it to the purposes of the board. This explains the presence of the substantial sum of £420 among our trust funds. Mr. W. W. Smith was superintendent for a long time. He encouraged the planting of native trees and ferns, of which he introduced many new specimens. He exercised a wide influence on students of botany and natural history. His attainments in

## Appendix C

these sciences caused him to be much sought after. Mr. F. P. Corkill was for many years a member of the board and its chairman for some time. In the latter capacity his energy was productive of good results. "To the ladies of New Plymouth the board owes much for their services in raising funds. One of the earliest was Mrs. Humphries, the widow of Dr. Larwill Humphries. Many a fair and entertainment she carried out, assisted by her five daughters and other ladies. Mrs. Richard Cock and Mrs. Harris Ford also did good service in this direction. In more recent years Mrs. Burgess has played a distinguished part in raising funds and in ornamenting the Park.

### **PARK'S CARETAKERS.**

"The excellent condition of the Park owes much to the care and energy of Mr. Horton, the present superintendent, assisted by a good staff of workmen, a staff more numerous than was available for his predecessors.

"In recent years I have played but a secondary part. Although to be found at the meetings I have been content to give place to the younger and more energetic members of the board, namely to Messrs. C. Burgess, H. Dempsey, F. Amooore, P. Stainton, C. E. Bellringer, W. C. Weston, J. M'Leod, and W. F. Short, all of whom have shown much energy and resourcefulness. For the design of the fernery of which we are so proud we have to thank Mrs. Lovell, of Hawera. In the carrying out of the design the board is greatly indebted to Mr. Horton, Mr. Victor Davies, and Mr. Besley. The board is very fortunate in its secretary, Mr. Stainton. For thoroughness and efficiency he has had no equal.

"Of the board's employees during all these years, one holds a kindly place in my memory. Darby Claffey—a short, thick-set, Irish peasant. For many years Darby was our only workman. Though poorly paid he carried on cheerfully. Want of learning did not detract from his capacity to work—many a chain of ditch he dug; many a sod bank he built. When spoil and debris increased beyond the capacity of his wheelbarrow the board provided him with a little cart, and for the cart a little donkey. With these Darby was as happy as if he were back once more in old Ireland. Darby and his donkey were famous features of the grounds for many years. His Irish humour always was a pleasant characteristic. An odd instance occurs to me. On one occasion he was asked by a visitor if we possessed a specimen of a certain plant, of which the visitor gave its botanical name. Darby, innocent of botany said: 'Yes, come and I'll show you.' When they reached the spot the plant shown was a fine specimen of gorse in full bloom.

### **ANOTHER BEAUTY SPOT.**

Before concluding I would like to draw attention to the opportunity of preserving for the town one of its finest landscapes—the view of the Huatoki Valley with snow-clad Egmont beyond. The owners of the land adjoining the Carrington Road, who have been offering it for sale, have now withdrawn the land from sale, intending ultimately to build on it. The erection of buildings would block this noble view. From my negotiations with their land agent I am inclined to believe that for the sake of the town the owners might be induced to sell the part near the Vivian Street bridge. The acquisition of this would largely preserve the view. It is possible that the owners would be content with a small deposit and leave the balance at interest. "In conclusion, let me say that the holding of this ceremony to-day will be justified if it shall have roused in our citizens a determination, to continue the work of beautifying our town and make it deserving of Its name, 'The Garden of Taranaki,' as Taranaki is known as 'The Garden of New Zealand'."

### **SUNDRY JOTTINGS**

#### **POINTS OF INTEREST.**

The first trees were planted on May 29, 1876, by Miss Jane Carrington, daughter of Mr. F. A. Carrington, member for the district in the House of Representatives and, superintendent of the province, who laid out the town of New Plymouth in 1841. She planted an oak representing Great Britain, a puriri for New Zealand, a Norfolk pine for the South Pacific Island, and a pinus insignis for America.

The largest attendance of people at the Sports Ground was over 12,000 on the occasion of the Rugby football match between Taranaki and the Springboks on July 16, 1921. A start has been made with a scheme of labelling trees and shrubs with their botanical and popular names. The formation of the upper lake was undertaken in 1878.

The ducks on the lake are descendants of six dozen teal and hybrid ducks bequeathed to Mr. W. W. Smith by the late Mr. Taylor White, of Weber, Hawke's Bay. Mr. Smith, who was their curator, presented the ducks to the Park 15 years ago.

Custodians of the Park in their order of service are as follow:- Messrs. C. Carnell, Breidecker, D. Claffey, C. Edgecombe, R. Mace, W. W. Smith and T. H. Horton.

"Pukekura" means "Hill of the Red Parrot." It was a tapued bird reserve of the Māori in pre-European days.

The first fish hatchery, at the head of the lily pond, was built nine years ago and was succeeded about five years ago by the present building.

The whale jawbones surmounting the tablet dedicated to deceased benefactors were placed there about 14 years ago. The whale, which was washed up on the beach, was exhibited in the Park, but the remains were destroyed upon becoming in a poor state of preservation!

The pair of swans on the upper lake were brought from the river Avon, Christchurch, about nine years ago.

The position of secretary to the board has always been honorary. The following, in order of service, have taken office: Messrs. R. J. Collins, R. Bayley, H. Ford, F. P. Corkill, E. H. Tribe (twice), C. H. Drew, and P. C. Stainton.

Electric lights were Placed at convenient, points nine years ago.

The shed at the lower end of the upper lake was used by swimmers until about five years ago, when it was taken over for use by the superintendent.

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There are eight ways by which legitimate entrance is gained to the Park—from Liardet Street, Gilbert Street, Carrington Road (three gates), Brooklands Road, Racecourse and John Street.

The area of the Park is approximately 58 acres. The original area was 48 acres 2 roods 9 perches, but sections of an aggregate of about 10 acres have been added. Chairmen of the board include. Messrs. Thomas King, J. T. Davis, R. C. Hughes, F. P. Corkill, Percy Smith, W. L. Newman, C. W. Govett, H. Ford, C. E. Bellringer, H. Dempsey and F. Amoore.

The monumental fountain, commemorative of the jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign, was erected in 1897, the year of the jubilee.

The tablet dedicated to the memory of deceased benefactors contains the following names: J. T. Davis, Martha King, Peter Madsen, Clement William Govett, Isabella Small, R. H. Govett, Helen Romaine Broham and Ann Hulke.

The band rotunda was erected about 30 years ago, the smaller bridge on the upper lake about 25 years, and the accommodation pavilion at the Sports Ground about six years ago.

### **A BOTANICAL SURVEY TREES' RAPID GROWTH.**

The Park offers a very extensive field for the naturalist, and many fine and rare native trees are growing therein. Kauris grow rapidly. One fine specimen is 33 feet in height, with a trunk six inches in diameter at a distance of four feet from the ground.

The tree is 21 years old. Several good specimens of tānekaha are showing vigorous growth. There is the "celery topped pine" of Hooker. The three species of totara are growing rapidly, and there are groups of fine specimens ranging from five to 39 years old. Ages of the rimu trees, of which there are several varieties, range from 17 to 34 years. Miro, planted from 14 to 25 years ago are growing robustly and are graceful young forest trees. A charm of the Park is the puriri trees, of rapid growth. The most magnificent specimens growing south of Kawhia are in Mr. Newton King's garden, adjoining the Park.

The pinus insignis trees show the best and straightest growth in New Zealand. There are some splendid specimens of pinus torreyana, which yields good timber for furniture and general work. The tree is a native of Puget Sound (Washington). American redwood pines, which produce valuable timber, are showing good growth. The six species of tree ferns are most admired by visitors from overseas. Taranaki is the home of the magnificent mamaku, the "King of Tree Ferns." There are seven species of native orchids, which are of great interest in the flowering season. The large island at the head of the upper lake was planted with 27 species of native plants 27 years ago. With two exceptions they succeeded well, and are a good illustration of the comparative growth of native trees under favourable conditions. There are 44 species of native ferns and 28 native mosses in the Park. Some of both orders are of beautiful and rare forms. The Park also contains a fine series of specimens of kaimomako, kaikawaka, kaiwhiria, kakaramea, kakahha, karaka, karo, kumarahou, kōwhai, kohekohe. Agerautangi, hohoeka, horopito, maire, mairehau, monoau, and mauku grow luxuriantly. paratawhiti (horseshoe fern), patatē, puahou, putaputaweta and puwhaureroa (the bird catching tree) are well represented. Five species of rata, two timber trees and three climbers, flourish.

In the very beautiful fernery, recently built, the Park Board has been assembling a complete collection of the many ferns for which the New Zealand flora is noted. It is hoped that this fernery will finally be the most complete in New Zealand.



*Taranaki Herald*, October 18, 1929.

## **CEREMONIAL TRANSFER - HANDING OVER PUKEKURA PARK**

### **Borough Council Take Control - Park Board Delivers Title Deeds**

It was as though Nature approved the decision of the Pukekura Park Board to hand over the title deeds of the Park, and with them the control of the grounds, to the Borough Council when, on Thursday afternoon amidst bright sunshine, and in the balmy air of an ideal spring day—a perfect day for such an occasion—the ceremony of handing over the control of the Park by the one body to the other took place in the presence of a very representative assemblage of citizens, especially of those still living who had been associated with the establishment of the Park and the descendents of others who had taken a prominent part in its development, and those of a later generation who had played a part in developing what had been so well begun.

The occasion was in every respect a notable one, and marked, in a way which nothing else could do, the recognition that the Park is the heritage of the people of this district for all time, and that as it is theirs to enjoy so is it theirs to maintain and improve. While the ceremony marked the end of the work of the Park Board as such, and the vesting of the grounds in the Borough Council, who will hereafter be charged with the responsibility of providing the wherewithal to maintain and develop the grounds, it did not mean that those who have done so much in this direction in the past will cease from their good works, for the management of the Park is to remain in the hands of the members of the board as a committee under the council, and they will continue the work which has been planned.

Neither did it mean that in the future there will be no call upon the public for funds for the maintenance of the Park. There will always be scope for the expenditure of any money given to the Park, and such gifts and contributions will always be welcomed, and as stated at the gathering on Thursday, any gifts of money made to the Park will be utilised in effecting permanent improvements. In time, however, the maintenance of the Park will become a charge upon the general body of ratepayers, and it is in this connection that the authority of the Borough Council will be exercised. It scarcely required the assurance of the Mayor to satisfy the past members of the board, or the citizens in general, that nothing would be done by the council to jeopardise the future of the Park because of the change in the controlling body.

The proceedings of Thursday afternoon were not only of a ceremonial character, but they were of a very enjoyable nature. Everyone appreciated the walk through the grounds, and the talks given by the curator (Mr. T. Horton) on the trees planted by the early settlers, and also the pleasant gathering at afternoon tea, and especially the very interesting resumé of the history of the Park given by Mr. R. C. Hughes, who has been an active member of the board ever since the Park was constituted over 54 years ago. The occasion will long be remembered by those privileged to participate in it, and no one fears that the Park will suffer anything from the formal change in the controlling authority.

### **CHAIRMAN WELCOMES VISITORS**

Gathered around the first tree planted in the Park, the chairman of the board (Mr. F. Amooore) extended a cordial welcome to the visitors, and outlined the programme which had been arranged. Mr. Amooore said it was his privilege and pleasure as chairman of the board to extend to all a welcome to beautiful Pukekura Park. As they knew the function had been arranged for a two-fold purpose, to formally hand over the Park to the borough and to do honour to those men and women—the early pioneers—who had the foresight to secure the land and carry on the work which had transformed it into the beautiful Park it was to-day. The Park, he said, was vested in trustees in 1875, and was then a piece of waste land—nothing more than a raupo swamp—but it was taken in hand by those pioneers and trees were planted, thus starting the work of beautification. Some time later—about ten years—work was started on the Sports Ground, which was also a raupo swamp in those days. This was drained and the work of laying out the ground proceeded with. To-day it was one of the finest sportsgrounds in the Domain.

With regard to the board, the citizens had been very fortunate in obtaining the services of men who had so willingly given of their time and money to the upkeep of the Park. Lack of money had always been a source of trouble to the board, until to-day the burden had become so heavy it found it could not carry on without assistance from elsewhere. The board therefore looked around to see what was the best thing to do, and thought of the borough. It was felt that the borough was the proper authority to hold the deeds of the Park, which should be a charge on the rates. Very soon he hoped it would be an entire charge on the rates instead of a partial responsibility as to-day. At the same time he wished to acknowledge the way in which the people had assisted in the past, but in the interests of the Park, he felt that the whole of the finance necessary for its upkeep should be assured.

### **FIRST TREES PLANTED**

Escorted by Mr. Thos. Horton (superintendent), those present walked around the lower lake, inspecting enroute the pinus insignis tree planted by Miss Jane Carrington, daughter of Mr. F. A. Carrington, superintendent of the province, a pinus radiata, the rimu planted by Mrs. M. A. Hughes, puriri planted by Mr. Robert Hughes, yew tree planted by Mrs. T. K. Skinner, and Norfolk Island pine planted by Mrs. T. Colson, all on May 29, 1875.

### **MAYOR PLANTS A KAURI**

The party then proceeded to the gully in the vicinity of the fernery and leading to the racecourse, which has during the past few years been transformed into one of the most picturesque corners of the Park. Here the Mayor (Mr. H. V. S. Griffiths) planted a kauri, after which Mr. Horton escorted the visitors through the fernery, explaining the work that had been done here and what it was proposed to do in future. An adjournment was then made to the tea kiosk, where the guests were entertained to a delightful

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afternoon tea served by Mrs. Ainsworth. Later Mr. Amoore announced apologies from Mesdames F. E. Wilson, Newton King and Deacon, Messrs. S. G. Smith, MP., T. C. List, R. Cock, W. C. Weston, V. C. Davies, Devenish, Deacon, and Dr. Brewster.

### "FATHER OF PARK"

Mr. R. C. Hughes, described by Mr. Amoore as the "Father of the Park," then addressed those present, his speech, which was listened to with great interest, being published on Wednesday.

Mr. Hughes made special reference to the work of the late Mr. T. K. Skinner who had laid out the Park, spending day after day with his chainman working gratuitously in that direction.

At the call of Mr. P. E. Stainton (hon. secretary of the Board), cheers were given for Mr. Hughes.

### AN ENTERPRISE OF HOPE AND ENERGY

Mr. W. H. Skinner acknowledged the compliment which had been extended to him in asking him to say a few words, and presumed it was due to the work of his family in connection with the grounds, and particularly that of his brother (the late Mr. T. K. Skinner) who was largely instrumental in the laying out of the grounds as they saw them to-day. So far as he personally was concerned, his work had been in starting the sportsground, though not as they saw it now. It was started without capital, but with hope and energy, and that work had been followed by others until they saw it to-day as Mr. Amoore had said, one of the finest sportsgrounds in New Zealand. In the pioneer days the valley which formed the Park was all wooded, and only a remnant of the permanent forest remained at the far end of the upper lake. It would be interesting to many of them, perhaps, to know that out of this valley came the timber with which many of the early houses in New Plymouth were built. The main timbers of St. Mary's Church were obtained here.

### RING OF REDOUBTS

Continuing, Mr. Skinner said that during the Māori war period the Park was considered to be one of the most dangerous approaches for an assault by the Natives on the town, and therefore a ring of redoubts and sentries were provided with the object of preventing such an attack. He thanked Mr. Hughes for his kindly references to his brother and himself, and congratulated the board which had worked so arduously in the interests of the Park.

Like Mr. Hughes, he had his doubts as to whether it was a wise step to hand the Park over to the borough. From his experience in different parts of the Dominion, it had not always been a success where local bodies had had control, and New Plymouth was not so fortunate as the cities of Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch, for instance, where they were able to devote very large sums of money for the upkeep and beautification of their Parks without it falling heavily on the ratepayers. This was an experiment so far as New Plymouth was concerned, and he hoped he would live long enough to see it a success. There was an element of danger, but on the other hand the cost of upkeep was mounting up every year, and the development of the grounds must go on, and the ratepayers as a whole should pay for it rather than the board having to rely on the generosity of the same few people all the time.

### DEEDS HANDED OVER

Mr. Hughes then handed to the Mayor the deeds of the Park, remarking that the area of the ground originally was 48 acres 3 roods 6 perches. Purchases made from time to time, however, had increased the total to-day to 55 acres 1 rood and 8 perches. In addition to this the board handed over its trust funds, viz., the sum of £3000, which was given by the late Mr. Newton King, £300 plus £120 interest from Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Burgess, £100 from the late Mr. J. Attrill, £100 from the late Mrs. Hulke, and £50 from the late Mrs. Freeth. He handed the deeds and trust moneys over in every confidence that the Borough Council would guard and treasure it for the town, and that they would regard it as a sacred trust and never part with an inch of it.

### RESPONSIBILITY RECOGNISED

The Mayor, in receiving the deeds, said this was a memorable day. In accepting the deeds of Pukekura Park from Mr. Hughes, he did so with a full recognition of the responsibility that passed with them to the Borough Council as representatives of the citizens of New Plymouth. He assured Mr. Hughes and those associated with him on the board at the present time, that the council was mindful of that responsibility, and that it would be the duty of this and subsequent councils to cherish this beautiful Jewel that they had set in their midst—one of the most priceless jewels in Taranaki. It would be their duty and privilege to develop the Park for the people of New Plymouth, of Taranaki, and New Zealand, and far beyond New Zealand.

He was sure the fears expressed by Mr. Hughes that the council would need watching were quite groundless. The council dare not do anything in connection with this Park that would jeopardise its beauty. The present council, he was sure, would not, and future councils dare not because there would be such an outburst of public sentiment against them. It was Mrs. Burgess who first suggested, when she was a member of the board some ten years ago, that the Park be handed over to the borough. The council would not only endeavour to maintain it in its present state, but as the people's representatives, see that an adequate amount was provided year by year to ensure the Park being still further improved. In this connection they were delighted to have the assurance of the present members of the board that they were prepared to remain on the board so that nominally the council would simply be the guardian of the Park to provide the necessary funds whereby the board could continue its work. The council would do everything possible in this direction. He trusted that Mr. Hughes would live many years to watch the progress of the Park and see it growing in beauty.

Fifty-four years had elapsed since the first tree was planted in the Park by Miss Carrington. That tree as they had seen, had flourished, and he expressed the hope that the kauri he had planted that afternoon would be flourishing 54 years hence, and be a monument to mark the occasion of the transfer of the Park to the council. His Worship referred to the trees planted at the

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entrance of the Park by Mr. and Mrs. Burgess to commemorate Peace Day, and trusted that these too, would be protected and cared for by the people of New Plymouth for all time.

### **PIONEERS' VISION**

Mr. C. H. Burgess congratulated Mr. Hughes on his most interesting address, and also said how he had been impressed with the wonderful memory Mr. Hughes had. Mr. Hughes and those associated with him from the beginning had wonderful vision of what this town was going to be, and of what they could make of this place. Looking back 54 years one could not help but realise too that those concerned must have had stout hearts to have tackled the work involved. Men like Reggie Bayley and others were not afraid to take their coats off and do a hard day's work for the public. Mr. Hughes had given yeoman service for the last 54 years, and the speaker expressed the hope that he would live many years longer to look after the Borough Council. At the same time he was satisfied that no council now or in the future would destroy the features of the Park. Personally he thought it was the duty of the Borough Council to take over not only this asset but other Parks. New Plymouth would be a big city before many years had gone by, and it would be impossible for the different committees to carry on extensions that would be necessary. There was no reason why the Borough Council should take over the actual working of the Parks, but they should take some responsibility for financing them. In fact, if New Plymouth was to be made the watering place they all expected it to be, the council would have to take greater responsibilities still. The Mayor said he wished to place on record their appreciation of the magnificent service rendered by members of the board during the past 54 years. The town owed them a great debt of gratitude for the sacrifices they had made individually and collectively during that long period.

### **DONATION OF £100**

Mr. Amoores announced that an anonymous donor, to commemorate the occasion, had given a cheque for £100, the stipulation being that it be used for permanent improvements in the Park. This, Mr. Amoores added, was the policy of the board. It was its intention to utilise every donation for providing some permanent improvement so that it could be handed down for posterity.

The proceedings terminated with the gathering again honouring Mr. Hughes by singing "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow."

### **BOARD MEMBERS 1876**

Messrs. R. C. Hughes, J. Gilmour, Harris Ford, J. C. Davis, Thos. King, R. J. Collins.

### **BOARD MEMBERS 1929**

Messrs. F. Amoores (chairman), C. E. Bellringer, H. Dempsey, H. V. S. Griffiths, R. C. Hughes, Jas M'Leod, F. Parker, W. F. Short, G. M. Spence, P. E. Stainton (hon. secretary), R. W. Tate, W. C. Weston, Thos Horton, F.R.H.S (superintendent).

### **PAST MEMBERS OF THE BOARD\***

Mrs. C. H. Burgess, Messrs. Clement Govett, F. P. Corkill, W. L. Newman, Harris Ford, Percy Smith, W. A. Collis, T. K. Skinner, C. Carter, M. Fraser, C. H. Burgess, R. Cock, D. Hutchen, E. Dockrill, F. T. Bellringer, A. E. Watkins, G. Tisch, W. Ambury, H. Stocker, G. W. Browne, F. Jackson, F. E. Wilson, E. H. Tribe, J. Hayden, A. S. Brooker and A. T. Moore.

\*A notable omission from the list of Board members was that of James Davidson who was Board chairman from 1881 until his death by suicide in 1885.

## Thomas Horton's Brooklands Report -1933

### BROOKLANDS REPORT

A Report on Brooklands compiled jointly by Thomas Horton and Tom Boulton (Brooklands Head Gardener). This report for the Park Board was done to highlight the volume of work required to successfully incorporate Brooklands into Pukekura Park once it was officially handed over. It was issued on December 30, 1933.

#### FENCES

The boundary fences all require overhauling. Some new posts and battens will be required, and where new wires are necessary, we can use spare wire from intermediate fences, that we recommend be removed. It is imperative that all boundary fences be put in good order promptly, so as to ensure safety from stock. The boundary of the Brooklands area, (excluding the bush gully near Upjohn Street) is roughly 100 chains. To repair the boundary fences efficiently, it will require 78 posts, 4 strainers, 100 battens and 5 stays. The bush gully area at the far end of the estate, containing 5 acres 1 rood 11 perches has a boundary of approximately 39 chains, and of this, 24 chains require to be erected. For this purpose, we require 80 posts, 4 strainers, 200 battens, 5 stays, 5cwt wire and staples. Total material required, and cost, is as follows:-

158 totara posts @ 2s 3d = £19 1s 10d

8 Strainers @ 10s = £4

300 Battens @ 15s = £2 5s

3 Cwt Barbed Wire @ 19s = £2 17s

2 Cwt Plain Wire @ 16s = £1 12s

25 lbs Staples @ 3d = 6s 3d

10 Stays, 12ft long, 4 x 3 = £1 16s

Total = £31 18s 1d

#### DIVIDING FENCES

There are over one hundred chains of dividing fences. Some of these are in good condition, and in others, repairs are necessary. The dividing fence between the orchard and garden, we recommend should be removed, and this will give us all the material necessary for repairing the other dividing fences. The fence in front of the homestead, we suggest be moved out at the North-east corner, so as to enclose the small group of trees at present exposed to stock. Practically all the wires on boundary and dividing fences will require to be tightened up.

#### ORCHARD

The old orchard, we suggest, should be destroyed, trees grubbed out, and the area prepared for planting. We recommend this area be planted in assorted native trees. At the Western side of the orchard, there is at present a row of pines, affording fair shelter from Westerly winds. This shelter belt should be strengthened and considerably fortified, by planting additional pines or other suitable shelter trees on the vacant land at the western side of the present row of pines. The row of Lawsoniana now growing between the orchard and front garden shrubbery, we suggest, should be dug up, and replanted approximately twenty-five feet from their present position. In close proximity to the Lawsoniana hedge, are some dilapidated old pines and a smothering growth of Eleagnus. We advise these be grubbed out later on.

#### PARKING SITE

We recommend that a suitable area near the gate leading into the orchard and to the right of the main entrance gate, be reserved and prepared for this purpose.

### **SHELTER BELT**

All that area between Messrs Grundy, Bond and Shepherds boundary, on the western side of the bush, we suggest be planted with suitable shelter trees; and that this shelter be extended (at least half a chain wide) along the whole of the Southern side of the bush to Mr. List's gully.

### **BUSH PATHS OR TRACKS**

We suggest that all the old bush tracks be opened up and clearly defined, and new tracks formed where essential. That notices be erected where necessary, asking visitors to keep to the defined tracks and not to injure or mutilate trees, or remove ferns or plants. The opening of the bush paths as indicated will reveal a much greater extent of bush than most people think there is, and we are of the opinion that walks through this portion of the property will become very popular and enjoyable. A really good job of these tracks can be made without the necessity of cutting or damaging much of the growth. It will be necessary to cut through a dead log or two, and to remove a little of the debris, but we advise leaving everything as natural as possible. From these paths, visitors can obtain a glorious view of the whole bush area, and there should be no reason or excuse for anyone not keeping to the regulations. The historic puriri tree and one or two other trees of special value and interest, we advise, should have a low protecting fence erected around them.

Many of the trees in the native bush are threatened with ruin by the phenomenal smothering growth of a noxious climbing plant. To save the trees it will be advisable to remove this as much as is possible. Quite a lot has already been removed, but it is a slow and tedious job, much of the growth being difficult to get at.

### **VEGETABLE GARDEN AND SMALL-FRUIT AREA**

We advise that this area be cleaned up, trees and plants eradicated, posts and wire removed and the whole of this part be levelled up and prepared, so as to extend the lawn over to the bush. There are two small hedges, (Escallonia and Fuchsia) that may have to be removed to enable this scheme to be carried out. When completed this will be a very decided improvement. We think this work should put in hand as soon as possible. A very fine specimen of Fagus Purpurea (Purple Beech) now growing outside the entrance gates, together with two or three other specimen trees, could be planted on this new grass extension, which we think would considerably enhance the beauty of the garden. There are several large flowering shrubs, now overcrowded and getting ruined, which should be transplanted to more suitable positions, notably the Ghent Azaleas and one or two ordinary Azaleas. This should be done next Autumn.

The summer-house and garden seats want overhauling. This work is urgent. A few more garden seats should be provided, and at least half a dozen erected in the bush.

### **BUILDINGS**

The Gables: This has a tenant in and we have not inspected, but the hedges around the property have recently been trimmed, the paths cleaned up, and the place looks spick and span.

The Bungalow: The building is in fair condition, the papering of a room, a little paint, and small repairs to the spouting, will make it good. The electric range, copper and tubs, having been removed, these will require to be replaced. The garden and shelter hedges need trimming up and grass cut and fences repaired.

The Vinery: This is a well constructed house, in excellent order, and only requires painting periodically to keep it in first class condition.

Conservatory and begonia House: This is in fair order. Some repairs are necessary. It requires painting.

Propagating House: This also requires painting; otherwise this is in good condition.

Potting shed: We advise this be removed to a more suitable position, one of greater privacy. This building and the out-door frames are in fair order, but are in the wrong place for a public park, and are too small for requirements.

Motor garage Near Gate: We advise this building be removed to a position at the back of the trees, near the south-east end of the old barn, to be used as an implement, tool, potting shed, and general purposes for the permanent staff. This building to be efficiently screened from public view. The old potting shed could be attached to this building as an office and store-room for records, seeds, spraying materials, etc. A private room of this nature is essential.

Old Stables and Barn: The group of buildings comprising the above are in a dilapidated condition, and should be removed. Some of the iron and best of the doors and timber might be used to advantage in the construction of temporary conveniences for the public. The old building adjoining the dairy at back of the house, we think should also be removed. It is in bad condition and a source of danger from fire.

The Homestead: We are not reporting on, presuming you will be getting a more expert report than we would be able to furnish.

### **CONSERVATORY**

This is well stocked with suitable plants for requirements, and features of the place at this time of the year.

### **RHODODENDRONS**

If the Board finally decide to adopt the site that has been recommended for the Sanders Rhododendron Dell, then a great deal of preparatory work will be necessary, such as digging, draining, fencing, etc. There is a swampy area between the old Park boundary and the Brooklands lake, eminently suitable for a sunken bog or iris garden. We suggest this work be put in hand as opportunity offers.

### **CONNECTING PATHS**

There are three paths in the Park, that can quite easily be extended into Brooklands.

No 1. is the lower bush path starting at the steps by the Tea House. This goes right through the park bush, and can be carried on through the bush in Brooklands, on the racecourse side of the lake, as far as the bridge.

No 2. is on the Western side of the arm of water beyond the boat house. This can be taken right on, following the bank at the Western side of the lake, and merging into another path on the hillside, right in front of the homestead

No 3. is what we know as the "totara" walk. This can be extended along the hillside, under the park-like trees growing in No. 1 paddock, and thence on until it junctions with No. 2 in front of the house. From this path, a beautiful elevated view will be had of the bush, lake and proposed Rhododendron Dell.

We are making no report on that portion of the estate between the main drive and Brooklands Road, unless you desire us to do so. We think cattle and other large stock should not be allowed in the paddocks where English trees are growing. Breeding ewes and lambs should be used to graze in these parts.

We think we have given you a fairly full and detailed report of Brooklands as it is, and our suggestions for its improvement, and we think the suggested work will take two or three years to carry through. This, of course, depends on the amount of labour that will be available to assist the permanent staff.

Thomas Horton F.R.H.S T. C. Boulton

Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2003-860/1).

## **Transfer of Brooklands – *TH*, March 12, 1934**

### **“Brooklands” Opened**

#### **LARGE GATHERING OF CITIZENS**

##### **Sunshine and the Song of Birds**

#### **IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY ON THE LAWNS**

##### **Inspiring address by Governor-General**

The glorious sunshine in which the country was bathed on Saturday afternoon was in striking contrast to the dismal prospect of a fine day which the weather of Friday afternoon and evening presented for the opening of ‘Brooklands’ on the following day, and the hopes had slumped badly then, they were at once revived when Saturday broke a perfect day and remained so throughout. So the ceremony which had been so well planned for the handing over by the trustees of the estate of the property of ‘Brooklands’ to the borough of New Plymouth as a public reserve, and its official opening as such by his Excellency the Governor-General, Lord Bledisloe, was carried out in its entirety without the necessity of any modification and in complete conformity with the program of proceedings that have been arranged. The ceremony was a simple one, but was made appropriately impressive by the less conventional character of the proceedings, and with a recognition of the spiritual significance of the gifts of Nature that is scarcely usual on ceremonial occasions.

Tribute was paid to the maker of the garden, appreciation expressed of the action of the trustees of the estate in handing over the property to the public, and thanks returned to them for the wonderful gift to the town by its chief representatives; and in declaring the property open as a public reserve Lord Bledisloe struck a high note of inspiration from the love of Nature's gifts, and in a blaze of golden sunshine, to the accompaniment of the liquid notes of some of the loveliest of New Zealand's native birds, “Brooklands,” which for the past half-century had been a private garden, became a public reserve for all time for the people of New Plymouth.

### **THE GATHERING CROWDS**

#### **LARGE ASSEMBLAGE ON LAWNS**

##### **PRELIMINARIES TO PROCEEDINGS**

It soon became evident at an early hour on Saturday afternoon that New Plymouth was going to do honor to the memory of the man who made “Brooklands” and to show appreciation of the action of his executors in making the beautiful property the heritage of the people of the district for all time. Crowds wended their way to the gardens, some in cars, some by bus, and many on foot, and when the time arrived for the ceremony to commence there was a gathering of several thousands of citizens surrounding the lawn upon which the dais had been erected for the occasion. To the left of the dais was the special accommodation for the invited guests, while on the right was the gallery erected for the choir, and the public stretched away across the lawns beyond the begonia house. So well planned had the arrangement been that everything worked smoothly, and during the gathering of the assemblage the Taranaki Regimental and New Plymouth Municipal Band (under Captain F. W. G. M’Leod) played a program on the lawn little distant from the Dais. The High School cadets, under Major V. E. Kerr, paraded and mounted the guard of honour for the Governor General. Photographers were busy all over the grounds taking pictures of the gathering crowds and the incidents connected with the proceedings.

When the Governor General and Lady Bledisloe arrived accompanied by Captain Tweedie, A.D.C., they were met by the Mayor of New Plymouth (Mr. E. R. C. Gilmour), the chairman of the Pukekura Park Board (Mr. J. M’Leod), the member for the district (Mr. S. G. Smith, MP.), and Mr. Truby King, representing the family of the late Mr. Newton King.

The band played the National Anthem, and after His Excellency had inspected the guard of honour the vice-regal party was escorted to the enclosure, where the members of the late Mr. King's family were presented to Lord and Lady Bledisloe, who were then escorted to the special seats on the dais. Here a beautiful bouquet was presented to Lady Bledisloe by Miss Lynette King, her Excellency showing her appreciation of the gift by kissing the child.

### **THE CEREMONY**

#### **PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING**

The ceremony proper thereupon commenced, Archdeacon Evans leading the assemblage in a prayer of thanksgiving for the gift, the givers and the recipients, followed with the Lord's Prayer and a silence of two minutes in memory of the late Mr. and Mrs. Newton King. The prayer offered was as follows: “Almighty and most merciful Father: the creator and Preserver of this wonderful universe; the author and Giver of every good and perfect gift, we thank Thee for preparing so wonderful world for Thy creatures to dwell upon. “Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to praise Thee.” All Thy works proclaim Thy goodness and mercy. We thank Thee for all the provisions Thou hast made in Nature for the happiness of mankind; for the life giving lights on the sun, for the silver beams of the moon, and for the distant stars that guide the wanderers on their way. We thank Thee for the cleansing seas; for the flowing rivers; For the trees, and flowers, and green grass that beautify the earth; for the changing seasons that bring joy and plenty to us all; and for the myriad voices in which nature hymns her gratitude to Thee. We thank Thee, O Lord, to-day for the gift of this beautiful addition to our Park, and pray for a blessing upon the givers and receivers. May this place, so full of happy memories, be made a blessing to all who shall visit it. May the many tokens of

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Thy goodwill and blessing which we see around us be a great inspiration to us all, leading us to praise and magnify Thy Holy Name. Through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior - Amen.

### The Music

The assemblage led by a large choir and orchestra, which included all the pupils of the Girls High School and representatives of New Plymouth musical organizations and church choirs, sang two verses of Kipling's "Recessional," and after thanks had been given by the chief citizens for the gift of the property they also sang two verses of the hymn. "Now thank we all our God." After the Governor-General's address in officially opening the grounds, the choir under the direction of Mr. R. Laurie Cooper, sang *Te Deum Laudamus*, to the setting by Jackson.

### Greater Than Monetary Gift

In formally handing over the property to the Borough Council on behalf of the trustees of the estate and the members of the family of the late Mr. Newton King, Mr. Truby King traced briefly some of the little-known history of the property. He stated that the first selection for suburban and rural lands in the new settlement was made by ballot in June, 1842, but at the selection of town sections in November, 1841, the first choice was granted Captain King, the chief commissioner of the New Plymouth Company, and the first resident Magistrate at New Plymouth. The privilege was applied to the suburban selection as well, as Captain King also acquired, by choice, the 50 acres adjoining the town belt, which became known as "Brooklands." The late Captain King was unrelated to the family of Mr. Newton King except in name. Captain King's father, Mr. George Cutfield King, was granted 250 acres by the Government, and that section extended from Frankley Road and included what is now known as "Maranui."

On his death the property was cut up, and in 1888 a portion of it was purchased by Mr. Newton King, so that the place had been in the family for nearly half a century. "As you see it to-day," said the speaker, "it is very different from what it was at that time." It had evolved to its present state through a process of transition and development and not so much according to any design or plan made at the beginning which was to produce the result seen to-day. Gradually orchard gave way to trees and flowering plants, and these again to flower garden beds; "but it was all done under the guidance of my father," said Mr. King, "with the expert assistance of Mr. Boulton as head gardener, who is still on his job to-day." (Applause).

The late Mr. King, said the speaker, was a great lover of flowers, and was passionately fond of his garden. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to allow those less fortunate than himself to share in the pleasure of his garden, and for that reason he made a practice of throwing "Brooklands" open to the public periodically. Of all the many and varied activities of his father, said Mr. King, no investment gave him such a return or was attended with so few disappointments as his garden. As trustees of his estate it seemed to the speaker and his brother Eliot that they could best give effect to their father's wish to do something to improve Pukekura Park by handing over "Brooklands" to the borough for the enjoyment of the public, for in the difficult times like the present the providing of the monetary gift as in the will meant a postponement of the bequest for many years. In giving "Brooklands" they were not only carrying out his wish, but to the fullest and highest degree by making the acquisition of "Brooklands" for all time of much greater value than a monetary gift could be worth. (applause). In handing over "Brooklands" the members of the family did not part with what had been their home without a deep feeling of regret. It held for them all many deep and happy associations, but they were glad to know that the merging of the property with the beautiful Pukekura Park was for the purpose of administrative control. "Brooklands" would always be "Brooklands," and it would always retain its own identity. He therefore had great pleasure in handing over to the Mayor, for the people of New Plymouth, the property of "Brooklands" as a gift from his father's estate. (Applause).

### Commemorating Great Gift

The gift to the public was acknowledged firstly by the Mayor, then by the chairman of the Pukekura Park Board, and also by Mr. S. G. Smith, M.P., on behalf of the citizens of the New Plymouth electorate.

In his address of thanks the Mayor said:

It affords me very great pleasure to accept on behalf of the people of New Plymouth this wonderful gift.

Nearly 59 years ago, several of the pioneers of this town, amongst them Mr. R. C. Hughes, whom I am pleased to see with us to-day (applause) commenced the great work of transforming what was then a piece of waste land into the thing of beauty it is to-day—beautiful Pukekura Park. On May 29, 1876, the first trees were planted in Pukekura. That day has proved to be a memorable one in the history of the borough.

To-day is an equally historic occasion for we are commemorating the gift of an area as great as that of Pukekura Park—an area already complete in all respects as a Park, and in its own way equal in beauty with Pukekura, which it immediately adjoins, and of which it forms a natural extension. With the addition of this area, New Plymouth will have a Park second to none in the Dominion, comprising over 100 acres, and situate almost within a stone's throw of the central portion of the town.

No finer gift could have been thought of. "Brooklands" has always been one of the show spots of New Plymouth. The late Mr. Newton King played a very important part in the development of this town and district and in his lifetime he used to delight in throwing these grounds open to the public on certain Sundays throughout the year. Now that he has passed away and these grounds have been handed over to the people, this great Park will be for him a wonderful and lasting memorial. On behalf of the people of New Plymouth I most sincerely thank the family of the late Mr. King and the trustees of the estate for this great gift.



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We accept the gift, and with it the responsibilities which attach thereto. "Brooklands" and Pukekura together form a goodly heritage for the people of this district for all time.

The people to-day gladly recognise that as these Parks are theirs to enjoy, so they are theirs to maintain and improve, and this sentiment will without any doubt whatsoever descend from generation to generation. May "Brooklands" and Pukekura be and remain things of beauty and a joy for ever.

"In conclusion," said the Mayor, "it is my great privilege to cordially welcome your Excellencies to-day, and to express on behalf of the citizens of the town our grateful and intense pleasure at your presence among us on this important occasion, and to again assure you, as the representative of his Majesty the King, of our sincere and lasting loyalty and devotion to the throne."

### **Administrative Custodianship**

Mr. McLeod said it was his great pleasure, as chairman of the Pukekura Park Board, to accept the administration and custodianship of this beautiful Park, for a description of which words failed him. While many persons were familiar with the beautiful surroundings immediately around the house, many were quite unfamiliar with the beauties there were beyond, right up to the "Highland" estate. The whole town had always had a pardonable pride in "Brooklands," from its scenic and historic point of view, and the late Mr. King had derived a great deal of his pleasure in the place by sharing the grounds with his fellow townspeople. He had a great deal to do with the advancement of this province, perhaps more than anyone who had lived in the province.

Though he was well known in the town, he was perhaps better known in the more remote parts such as the Ohura, where he himself had been a real pioneer; but no work he had done had created such a lasting memorial to himself as the development of the beautiful grounds which that day were being handed over to the people of New Plymouth. Although the development had come gradually, it had been a result of the guiding hand and long vision of its owner. The responsibility of the new owners would not be lightly undertaken. They recognised there would be criticism, much of it, perhaps, of a helpful nature, for as time went on there were bound to be changes. Nothing would be done, however, that would interfere with the natural beauties of the surroundings. (Applause.) And nothing would be done to interfere with the native bush within the property. The speaker pointed out that around the whole of that bush there would be planted belts to protect the bush from what were termed "ground draughts."

He also stated that though the public might not be aware of it, the Newton King trustees had also given an area of four or five acres of bush beyond the immediate boundary of the homestead property, and to give access to it, and make the whole one large reserve, Messrs. List and Wilkinson had given an area of seven and a-half acres of the "Highland" estate to connect with this and the upper area of the estate. (Applause.) That was a wonderful piece of bush that had not yet been opened up. The speaker expressed the appreciation of the board of the action of the trustees in transferring the cash bequest from the estate into something which money could never have bought, and in the name of the committee and the people they represented he thanked them for their wonderful gift.

### **An Asset to the Dominion**

Mr. Smith said he was proud to be associated with this occasion as the representative of the people of this district in Parliament, and also as chairman of the Education Board, to represent the children of this district in the welcome extended to their Excellencies to New Plymouth. Mr. Smith spoke of the great interest in the unemployed of the Dominion evinced by their Excellencies, and of the wise counsel and helpfulness of his Excellency during the time the speaker had charge of the administration of that department of the Government's work. Both their Excellencies had shown a very practical sympathy with the unfortunate unemployed of the country.

Recently, said the speaker, he had had the privilege of participating in a ceremony held for the purpose of thanking their Excellencies for their gift to the country of the property at Waitangi, whereat the Treaty of Waitangi had been signed. That was an event of Empire significance. To-day they were assembled to thank the trustees of Newton King estate for their magnificent gift to this town. The speaker referred to the legislation which had to be passed before the gift could be made possible, and he pointed out that Parliament was very careful always to scrutinise all "promoted" legislation, and every possible investigation was made into this matter before the Bill was passed.

The trustees of the estate, the seaside committees who had given up their interests in the bequests in order to make this wonderful property available to the borough, had all played their part, but the speaker said he wished to pay tribute to the town clerk (Mr. F. T. Bellringer), who was one of the most efficient local body officers he had ever met in the course of his public life. (Applause.) The speaker said he could appreciate something of the feelings of the members of the late Mr. King's family in parting with this wonderful property, which was now passing out of their immediate control.

When he first met the late Mr. King in public life he was a political opponent of the speaker, but he never found him anything but a sport and a gentleman. Side by side with him in his work in this place and for the community there had been Mrs. King, and the speaker said he also wished to publicly acknowledge the part she had played as a good wife, a great mother and a fine citizen of this town. In conclusion he returned grateful thanks to the trustees of the estate for handing over this wonderful property to the people of this town, and in doing so they gave it to the Dominion and to all visitors from abroad. He hoped that whatever happened in the future those responsible for its care would always view "Brooklands" from the point of view of a great asset more than a mere garden, and he hoped it would become an increasing attraction to the townspeople and to every visitor to the district.

## BENEFACTANT PUBLIC GIFT

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S ADDRESS,

On rising to perform the official act of declaring the grounds open as a public reserve his Excellency the Governor-General said that seldom had the inhabitants of any town met to signalise so beneficent a public gift as that which was so happily being observed that afternoon. The family of the late Mr. Newton King was widely known through two of its members—Sir Truby King and the former owner of this beautiful property. The one had perhaps been the instrument through whom more than anyone else more human lives had been saved, and the other had left what must be an indelible source of continual enjoyment for all time for the fortunate inhabitants of this locality. Proceeding, His Excellency said:

"I cannot conceive any function more thoroughly congenial to me than that which I am invited to perform in declaring this lovely property open to the public as the result of the beneficent bequest of your late, much respected townsman, Mr. Newton King, eventuating in a happy arrangement between the borough and Messrs. Truby and Eliot King, as his trustees, favourable alike to both. A 'Vice-Regal' opening seems hardly to do this reserve justice for there is something truly regal about it, not only in its appearance and equipment, but in its proprietorship seeing that ever since 1842 when this fertile portion of the Taranaki plain was settled by my fellow West Countrymen from the Old Land, it has been owned by a 'King.' No better lot can I wish for it than that it continue to be 'regal' in the majesty of its unspoiled beauty and in the deference and respect shown to it by posterity.

"Pukekura Park, aided by the scenic background of the Empire's most lovely mountain, stands unrivalled among the municipal Parks of this Dominion," his Excellency continued. "Now that it is supplemented and complemented by this unique property and the valuable link of Native bush supplied by the munificence of Mr. T. C. List and Mr. C. A. Wilkinson, it is safe to say that, unless the ruthless hand of the vandal descends upon it in days to come, no scenic reserve in New Zealand will ever surpass in attractiveness that situate in this delectable valley, which in its comprehensive beauty is henceforth the property of the inhabitants of New Plymouth.

### Unique in Two Respects

"New Zealand possesses many outstanding natural advantages for which it may well thank a beneficent providence," the speaker, proceeded. "Its fertile soil, its almost perfect climate, its standard of health, the physique and wholesome traditions of its people and the hitherto barely tapped wealth of its natural resources. But in two respects it is absolutely unique in the world. One is the number, variety and grandeur of its beauty spots within a relatively small area and the other is its Native bush which has no rival in the world. And there is economic value as well aesthetic delight inherent in Nature's generous equipment.

"I make bold to utter a prophecy to the truth of which only your grandchildren can confidently testify,' said his Excellency. "It is that New Zealand's main source of wealth will not be found in sheep-breeding, goldmining, petroleum wells (laughter) or even dairy farming, but in its tourist traffic for hundreds of thousands will flock here from all over the world to see that sun-kissed land in the Pacific which Nature has most abundantly endowed with her aesthetic jewels. For every £50 that may accrue from the shortsighted felling in face of temporary economic stringency of some forest giant such as the great kauris of the Waipoua forest, at least a million pounds is lost to posterity in the permanent commercial value of the natural beautification of the Dominion, quite apart from the spiritual inspiration which its contemplation evokes in every normal civilised being."

### A Centre of Enlightenment

"And why should not New Plymouth be the centre of enlightenment for this purpose to the whole Dominion," his Excellency asked, "radiating sanity and foresight as well as a love of the beautiful, bringing to men's hearts and minds the pure happiness and mental peace which flows from contact with unspoilt nature and an intimate knowledge of her incomparable treasures. New Plymouth is well fitted for this much needed pioneer task. Her children are trained in the schools to know and to love Native plants and to cultivate thereby that capacity for observation which is a priceless equipment for every vocation in life. She has a sufficient rainfall, which while promoting growth is also some safeguard against destruction by fire, an equable climate, a rich, deep porous soil and a volcanic subsoil. In the matter of variety of types of indigenous timber trees and plants she is ideally situated in a geographical sense. Here North meets South and sub-tropical and temperate plants alike flourish in profusion—plants characteristic of the flora of both islands. It is significant that here in this generously equipped reserve is to be found, close to the extreme southern limit of its natural habitat, the largest, and symmetrically the most perfect, Puriri in the Dominion, and what tree can claim in its durable and fine grained timber, its foliage, its flowers and its fruit, greater allround beauty or utility? You have, too, tree ferns and todeas of a size and quality which even Westland would find it difficult to emulate.

### A Word of Warning

"I see around me," said Lord Bledisloe, "not merely Native bush and well-trimmed English lawns, but also fine specimens of exotic trees imported from Great Britain and elsewhere 90 years ago, the most striking being the great Spanish chestnut with a lateral spread of 90 feet—a truly wonderful tree, and I can say so with confidence, because I have on my family estate the oldest and finest grove of Spanish chestnuts in England, containing one tree of 24 feet girth at breast height but none with such far spreading lateral branches as yours. In this connection I may venture to utter a word of warning, although conscious that it is unnecessary to do it, so far as your present enlightened borough authorities are concerned. It is this. Do not on any account, and however great the temptation may be, mix up your Native and your exotic trees, even if a love of the Old Land or a pride in the "Devon, glorious Devon" of your ancestors should stir up sentiment in favour of incursions of the latter into the sacred

## Appendix C

precincts of the former. If you or your children effect this promiscuous intercourse this magnificent environment of pure Native bush will be for ever ruined in the eyes not only of expert botanists but of those who love symmetry and arboreal compatibility and who deem Nature's primeval plan to be better even than that of the most experienced landscape gardener.

"Just as well nigh on a century ago your pioneer forefathers made English homes and clustered round English firesides amid New Zealand surroundings so let New Zealand Native bush continue to constitute, without exotic adulterant, the verdant belt of this reserve, however much you may Anglicise the area which it encloses.

"Finally," said his Excellency, "let me exhort you to encourage the birds, and especially the bellbirds, and other Native songsters. Half the joy of country life is furnished by the delicate beauty of colour, conformation and song of the birds. But birds need for their sustenance and happiness nectar and berries, and if they are to thrive and add to human joyfulness trees and plants which can furnish them must be adequately provided.

"I now declare 'Brooklands' reserve open to the public," concluded his Excellency, "and trust that it may be a source of health, happiness and recreation, physical, spiritual- and mental, to people of all classes, and ages belonging to both races, for many generations to come." (Applause.)

### **Presentation Programme**

On the conclusion of his address his Excellency was presented by the Mayor with a specially bound copy of the souvenir programme, and in acknowledging the gift Lord Bledisloe said he wished to congratulate those who had prepared such a memento of the occasion. Apart from the excellent letterpress contained in the programme there were some of the finest landscape photographs he had ever seen (and he was able to speak with some knowledge of photography) in any publication. He said he would value the gift very much.

The official ceremony concluded with the singing of the National Anthem, led by the choir and orchestra.

The members of the Borough Council, the members of the Park Committee and the invited guests were then presented to their Excellencies and all were then the guests of the committee at afternoon tea served in the residence, the rooms of which had been most tastefully decorated for the occasion with flowers from "Brooklands," Pukekura Park and the nurseries of Messrs. Duncan and Davies. A happy and informal time was spent here, and then Lord and Lady Bledisloe walked through the grounds of "Brooklands" to Mr. T. C. List's "Maranui" property, leaving from Avenue Road on their return to the North Egmont Hostel.

Altogether the afternoon's proceedings were carried out with care for every detail, and the occasion will remain a happy memory for all who participated in it.

Afternoon tea was served to the public in the romantic setting "under the spreading chestnut tree.'

### **RELIC AT "BROOKLANDS"**

#### **CANNON FROM HARRIET WRECK.**

#### **AN AMUSING TRADITION.**

If it is not the most beautiful of the objects at "Brooklands" a cannon which rests in the old fireplace, the only surviving part of Captain Thomas King's home, is certainly one of the most mysterious.

It has been there ever since anybody connected with "Brooklands" can remember but how and where it was acquired is not known. No one can say whether it was acquired by the late Mr. Newton King or by the former owner of the estate, Captain King.

It is, however, stated that the cannon is a relic of the barque Harriet which was wrecked on the Harriet Beach, near Rahotu, some years before the first colonists arrived in Taranaki.

To sight-seers the cannon has always been of great interest, and in fact there grew up an amusing tradition about it. The tradition as related by Mr. Newton King to numerous visitors was as follows:—Soon after the wreck of the Harriet the captain was standing on the beach watching his ship being battered to pieces. A bystander asked him why he was so disconsolate to which captain replied that he was not worrying so much about the loss of his ship, as the fate of a cannon on board. A Māori on the beach, hearing this, immediately plunged in, and battled his way through the breakers to the ship, bringing the cannon ashore.

"And," Mr. Newton King used to say. "if you look closely you will see the teeth marks where the Māori brought the cannon ashore in his mouth."

## Fate of the Brooklands Homestead

CONFERENCE BETWEEN THE MEMBERS OF THE NEW PLYMOUTH BOROUGH COUNCIL AND THE PUKEKURA PARK COMMITTEE - April 12, 1934.

Present:- His Worship the Mayor (Chairman), Crs. Amoore, Anderson, Brown, Darby, Grayling, Hill, Smith and Stainton (New Plymouth Borough Council) Messrs J. McLeod C. E. Bellringer, E. King, W.F. Short, F. Parker and T. Horton (Pukekura Park Committee).

Apologies were received for the absence of Messrs E. J. Carr and V. C. Davis.

1. The Conference considered most carefully and exhaustively the question of utilising in some way for public purposes the Homestead at Brooklands either on its present site or by utilising the materials for the erection of a Teahouse or Pavilion, but that reluctantly came to the conclusion that no such course was feasible.

Some of the reasons leading to this decision were as follows:—

- (1) The use of the building as a Mothercraft Home as desired by the Plunket Society is undesirable, In that:—
  - (a) the building is in the centre of a Park and it would be necessary, in order to enable the building to be used for the purpose mentioned, for an area of ground to be enclosed therewith for domestic purposes, and to ensure the privacy of the patients. To do so would seriously detract from the value and beauty of the existing gardens as a Park;
  - (b) the use of the building for the purpose mentioned would mean that the Park drives would require to be open for the use of tradesmen's vehicles;
  - (c) the building, which is of wood and was erected many years ago, would require a very heavy expenditure to recondition it for the purpose mentioned, and, in addition, the annual maintenance charges would be very great;
  - (d) the use of the building for any purpose other than as a Tea Kiosk, Art Gallery, Botanical Museum or similar public purpose would destroy the Parklike atmosphere of the Reserve.
- (2) The objections set out in paragraph (1) apply equally to the suggestion for the use of the building as an Eventide Home of Rest or Convalescent Home for Old Ladies.
- (3) the use of the building as an Art Gallery or Botanical Museum is not feasible, In that:—
  - (a) the building being of wood in a very dry condition, the risk of valuable paintings or other works of art being destroyed in a fire would be too great for a public body to accept. Possible donors of works of art would also be deterred by this risk from adding to any collection established.
  - (b) apart from the question of fire risk, the Council is not in a position to incur the great expense of reconditioning the building, purchasing paintings and other works of art and providing a Caretaker for an Art Gallery.
- (4) The demolition of the building for the purpose of using the materials for the erection of a Tea Kiosk or pavilion is not desirable, In that:-
  - (a) a building of this nature at Brooklands is not necessary at present, and, if erected some time in the future, should be of permanent material to give a long life with a minimum expense for annual upkeep.
- (5) The Conference also considered the question of whether for sentimental reasons the building should not be retained in its present position. In view of the age of the building, and the materials of which it is constructed, it was recognised that it was only a matter of time when the building would deteriorate to such an extent as to compel its demolition. No good purpose would, therefore, be served by leaving it for a period which, after all, would be a very limited one, but one in which the annual maintenance costs would be heavy.
- (6) It was also felt by the members of the Conference that the substantial extensions of the lawns in conjunction with the judicious planting of a limited number of specimen trees and shrubs thereon similar to the existing lawns, which would be possible after the removal of the Homestead and the vegetable garden area immediately behind the building, would materially enhance the whole of the outlook from the point of view of a public Park.

2. That after the most careful consideration of the whole of the circumstances, and with the utmost regret that no other course is possible, this Conference is unanimously of the opinion that Homestead at Brooklands should be removed.

## Horton's 1946 Park Assessment Letter

The Chairman, Pukekura Park Board, Nov. 1946.

Dear Sir,

Realising the deterioration that is rapidly going on in this Park and Brooklands, I desire to draw your attention to some the most urgent work that requires doing. The fact is, that practically all the work is more or less urgent and as there is so much requiring attention, I suggest the most urgent be put in hand as early as possible, (say during 1947) and the balance might be spread over a period of say 4 or 5 years.

The time to complete the whole of the improvements suggested, will of course depend on the amount of money and labour available. Very serious further deterioration will take place, in fact several of the buildings will become useless, if neglected for a longer period.

During the war years practically nothing was spent on the maintenance of buildings and permanent structures, and prior to the war, the annual monetary grant from the Council was too small for the satisfactory maintenance of such buildings etc.

I know that to carry out my recommendations it will require a large sum of money, but I feel it to be my duty to draw your attention to the matter, and after all, (no matter what the cost) is Pukekura not worth it?

The Park has a reputation far beyond our own country. If we are to maintain that reputation it will be necessary to carry out the works suggested and when these are all completed, an increased staff will be essential to maintain it as it should be maintained. We have always worked with too small a staff and much maintenance and improvements that should have been done, have simply had to be left undone. The war and the shortage of permanent labour, has to an extent contributed to the deterioration referred to. There is sufficient repair work to keep a handy man, such as a rough carpenter and painter, permanently on the staff. When there is a bush and forest area of the Park and the parts where pines and other exotics are growing that should have regular attention, requiring the services of two more men.

If the staff could be increased by these three men, then the whole Park could and would be maintained much more efficiently than hitherto. First of all are the houses and other buildings.

The Superintendents house. This requires two coats of paint and new spouting and a little interior painting. Wood, tool shed and gates also require painting. Estimate of cost £55

House at Brooklands known as The Bungalow. House, shed and gates all require painting and new spouting, new flushing and lavatory outfit. £60

The Gables. This being a very old building and minor repairs only having been done over the past 15 years, requires a very extensive overhaul. Some floor joists have decayed, some weather boards require replacing, windows and doors adjusting, chimney and fireplace must have some attention. The roof leaks badly in places and the house, shed and gate requires 3 coats of Paint. £250

Brooklands. The implement shed, office lavatories and gates require painting, at least two coats. £50

Pukekura. The Pavilion in the Sports Ground requires painting and new spouting, boiler room put in better condition and the concrete floor re-surfaced. £35

Reporters room, ticket Boxes. Railing around the playing area and gates require painting very badly. £50

The Engine and Implement shed. Much of the iron is decaying, new iron required and the shed thoroughly overhauled. £15

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Band Rotunda. This badly requires painting and roof inspected for leaks in the iron. £25

Mens Lavatorys. These are in a deplorable condition and I suggest that a new building is absolutely necessary. I can't enumerate all the details of their deterioration and unsuitability but advise you to inspect them. Cost £250

The staff room and tool sheds. A new site should be found for this building. The position of the present building is very damp, being under large trees and close to the foot of a hill. Nothing can be kept dry during winter months, and tools get rusty and deteriorate and mens clothing kept there for changes etc., are practically always damp. Cost at least £200

The Ladies Rest Room and Office. These require a complete overhaul, new spouting and painting. £60

Fernery Conservatory Begonia and Propagating Houses. These comprise a group of six glass houses with two potting-sheds attached. These require a complete overhaul. There are many leaks and some broken glass, ventilators are in bad order and all the houses require at least two coats of paint. These buildings have not been repainted since their construction 19 or 20 years ago. Rough estimate £250

Superintendent's Office. For many years a small room attached to the Ladies Rest Room has been used for this purpose. This is situated in a very shady and damp position and all books, papers and records, are perpetually damp and mouldy and many books are absolutely ruined. In spite of using a small radiator during the winter and wettest periods, it is most unhealthy and unsuitable. I suggest that provision be made as early as possible for a new office. Probable cost £100

The Boat House. The present house is beyond repair and a new building is definitely necessary. The late chairman and myself went into this matter some time ago and we agreed that something was urgently required to be done to provide better accommodation for the boats. but on account of the shortage of material and high cost of labour, it was decided to leave the matter in abeyance for a time. This may cost about £150

This brings us to the latest of the buildings in the Park.

There are several other jobs I wish to draw your attention to.

The Pillions at the Main entrance and the wall in Fillis St., are getting smutty and black and should be cleaned and re-surfaced, and the doors or gates in this wall badly require painting. The Main gates require painting too. The iron work has all been cleaned and prepared ready for this to be done. Say £35

The Main Drive and Parking area is beginning to break up and should be re-surfaced and put in good condition. Approx. cost £25

Terrace seating needs attention. Many new blocks are required to replace those decaying, and broken seats must be renewed. Cost £30

The Poet's Bridge. As you know the framework of this bridge is constructed of steel. This steel work in many parts has rusted and corroded. This requires to be removed and cleaned off, preparatory to treating with a coat of material for the purpose, and then the whole bridge painting with two coats of paint. If this is well and faithfully done, it should maintain the bridge for many years in good condition. Approx. cost £60 to £80

The Boat—Shed Bridge. This is the smaller bridge by the boat shed. This has been partly repaired, but requires further strengthening and painting two coats. £25

Brooklands Lake. This requires another clean out. Rushes have grown and developed there to an incredible extent and should be removed. The foot—bridge over this lake has been torn or pulled to

pieces by vandals and what bit of framework is left is decaying. I do not recommend its re-construction, as it served no very useful purpose and would be very expensive. £100

The main Lake. The streams, (one from the Highlands and one from the Brooklands Road areas) that feed this lake have brought down such large quantities of silt since the lake was last cleaned out, that it is almost filling up the water ways and the upper reaches of the lake. It is one of the most serious problems we have to contend with.

The dam constructed to trap the silt at the Brooklands Road end, is not capable of holding it back. The water after heavy flood rains comes in with such a rush from the Vogeltown and Brooklands Road areas, that although the dam catches a good deal the silt, the bulk of it is carried into the lake and deposited there.

This deposit has got to be removed sooner or later or the trouble will extend and it will be more difficult to contend with. There must be at least a thousand yards of silt already there.

I think the removal of this is too big a job altogether for men and barrows and that machinery will be necessary to remove it. The undertaking is altogether too big for our own staff to attempt and as I think it requires the services an Engineer. I suggest that the Borough Council be asked to allow their Engineer to report on the work or perhaps to undertake it. £500

Fences gates and Park Entrances. There are approximately 4 to 4 ½ miles of post and wire fencing around the boundaries and various other parts of the Park. Hundreds of battens require replacing, some posts and strainers renewed and wires tightened up. There are 27 gates or other entrances to the Park and must be kept in good order and condition. Cost to put in order £40

The Fordson Tractor and Mowing Machines are now very old and the periodical cost of repairs to these machines is heavy. I suggest in the not too far distant future, new and modern machinery to replace them be procured. £500

Seats. At least half a dozen new portable seats are required in Pukekura Park. £40

I cannot close this schedule of proposed improvements, without reference to the Pine Trees.

These are *Pinus radiata* and they are growing old and dangerous. They are nearly all of them over 60 years of age and some are 70 years old and as a result of old age are getting thin and grey in their foliage and as they have practically ceased growing, all the lower branches and many of the higher ones have died, and periodically they break off and fall to the ground and so are a danger to pedestrians.

This variety of pine matures at thirty-five to forty-five years of age and after that they deteriorate. What should be done about them is a matter for you to consider and decide.

I might mention that where any group of Pines have been removed in the Park, there is now growing groups of native and other trees, many of which are permanent, tall growing, skyline conifers. They are all doing remarkably well, and hill tops formerly growing old ragged looking pine trees are now being covered with permanent heavy foliated and beautiful trees, which ultimately will be the admiration of everybody. After only being planted a few years, many are twenty to thirty feet high.

( signed )

Yours faithfully,

Thomas Horton

Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2004-248/3).

## Saxton/ Goodwin Report - 1951

### Graham Bequest

#### REPORT ON NEEDS OF PUKEKURA PARK COMMITTEE CONSIDERS

##### 33 SUGGESTIONS, *TH*, November 16, 1951

THIRTY-THREE different projects of a total cost, based on rough estimates only, of nearly £50,000 were placed before the Pukekura Park Committee at its meeting in New Plymouth last night when the committee was considering how the bequest of approximately £16,000 left to the Park by the late Mrs. L. R. Graham would be spent. The projects were contained in a report prepared by the committee

chairman, Mr. D. F. C. Saxton, and the Park curator, Mr. J. Goodwin. It was not suggested that they represented a definite programme or that all of them be undertaken and apart from a decision to build a new administrative block, for which tenders will be called, no action was taken at the meeting on the report.

Mr. Saxton said that he did not include any maintenance work and it might well be that other members of the committee or of the public might have ideas which could be added to the list for consideration.

Some of the projects were listed under the heading of necessary work; others could be regarded as not urgent but of value in increasing the beauty, amenities, and in certain cases, the revenue of the Park.

The planting and replanting proposals were extensive and involved planned development over a period of years. Much of this was absolutely necessary. The life of the pine trees that had been the background of the Park for 70 years was drawing to a close and section by section blocks of pines would have to be removed and replaced by other flora. In due course nearly all of both sides of the main lake valley would have to be replaced block by block with predominantly native trees similar to the planting already done in the area between the Horton Walk and the Fillis Street gully.

"My own view is that our planting policy far transcends in importance any of the other proposed man-made amenities and should be given appropriate attention," Mr. Saxton said. "Whether we like it or not, the character of the Park must undergo a profound change in the replacement of the pine trees. With their high and rugged grandeur these trees really made Pukekura Park, in combination with the lakes and tree ferns but their comparatively short effective life cycle of 70 to 80 years makes it inadvisable to replant pines of this type."

### FUTURE PARK

"The future Pukekura Park can be visualised by standing in the centre of the Poet's Bridge and looking north. From the top of Cannon Hill to the left of this perspective is old Pukekura Park, with its rugged, sombre dignified background of pine trees. To the right of Cannon Hill will be a glimpse of the new Pukekura Park with its sky line of native and a few exotic trees such as Norfolk pine, cedars and redwoods. The new sky line is more delicate and graceful with its spire effects, but loses the sombre grandeur of the pines.

The transition period will be to some extent an unhappy one, but it is inevitable. Cannon Hill will always be the focal point or most panoramas from any angle in the Park, and the greatest care should be exercised in the choice of trees for this and adjacent localities. Except for the inescapable change mentioned earlier, I suggest the committee should do everything possible to retain to the fullest degree the present character of the Park." Mr. Saxton continued.

As the committee had rightly eliminated any scheme to admit vehicular traffic through the main valley of Pukekura Park, Mr. Saxton said, he and Mr. Goodwin had examined what they considered to be the only other possible schemes for admitting traffic to the Park-Brooklands area.

The first was to admit traffic from the top of the racecourse walk, bring it round the crest of the flat area at the top of the eastern side of the valley, and emerge into the parking area to the west of the racecourse grandstands. Such a crescent drive would be reasonably practicable because the area to be traversed had no important flora on it, the eastern boundary alongside the racecourse was already planted with shelter and background trees, and it would cause only limited interference with the serenity and general atmosphere of the main body of the Park. However, as the object of such a



drive would be to obtain a panoramic View of the Park, and as this would not be obtainable because of existing and new essential plantings on the east side of the valley, the proposal was eliminated.

#### **PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE**

"This left as the second, and, in our opinion, the only other practicable alternative, a drive commencing at the intersection of Brooklands Road and Brooklands private road passing through the present rhododendron dell (in any case landscaping and alteration of this dell is proposed), following round the south side of Brooklands lake to the vicinity of the magnolia campbellii and returning up the hill along the line of the present track, rejoining Brooklands private road near the Gables. There are strong pros and cons to this proposal. Mr. Goodwin and I neither champion nor condemn it. but we feel it is worthy of consideration." Mr. Saxton said.

He had not mentioned additional grandstand accommodation. because in his opinion grandstands, say, in the horseshoe bend or the pavilion corner would spoil the appearance of the amphitheatre, and on only very few occasions at present was there justifiable demand for such large capital expenditure.

Taking a long term view, however, he recommended that the committee should consider the possibility of cutting back the southern terraces flush with the women's pavilion. This would not prejudice the plantings on the southern hill and would probably give Just the amount of extra space required on the sportsground for championship athletic purposes.

"Because of the heavy cost of maintaining the sportsground, I further suggest that any major expenditure on the sportsground should be by way of subsidy on efforts made by the various sporting bodies, rather than by unconditional grants," Mr. Saxton said.

The report listed proposed developments and their approximate costs as follows:-

#### **BUILDINGS**

Administrative block (Cost subject to tenders). Women's rest room near fernery (£500). Replacement of bridge by boathouse (£200). New boathouse (£2,400). Men's and women's conveniences near north-east corner of the sportsground (£1,250). Partial reconstruction of fernery and begonia houses (£2,000). Aviary (£1,600). Aquarium (£3,000). Soundshell (£4,000). Extensions to men's pavilion (£2,500). Pergola and shelter by tea kiosk (£1,000). Conveniences in area between Pukekura Park and Brooklands (£2,800).

#### **OTHER PROJECTS**

Playground and conveniences by existing children's swings (£3,700).

Access to Fillis Street gully and levelling (£250).

Development of Gilbert Street section as commercial caravan Park (£2,800).

Floodlighting sportsground (£3,000).

Future of three areas (on Gover, Rogan and Upjohn Streets) not required for planting. (£3,000 for staff house on one.)

Vehicular road around south side of Brooklands lake (£4,000).

#### **PLANTING AND REPLANTING**

Tennis and croquet club area.

Cleaning and planting bed and borders of Brooklands lake, and planting northern and eastern borders; landscaping of rhododendron area; development of sportsground eastern horseshoe as maple or other specialty dell; development of lower racecourse horseshoe as rhododendron dell; development of upper racecourse horseshoe as hydrangea and azalea dell; replanting east Brooklands kohekohe horseshoe and background hill; clearing and replanting of List Street entrance gully; clearing and development of Maranui basin and Maranui horseshoe. (£2,500)

Removal and replacement of existing pine trees in groups in a planned long-distance scheme.

General replacement of poor quality flora in groups in a planned long-distance scheme.

Completion of List street bush walk.

#### **GENERAL**

Production and sale of guide book of Pukekura Park and Brooklands. (£300).

Waterfall (£4,000).

Fountain (£3,200).

## Jack Goodwin's 1960 Report

### **Plan for Pukekura Park's future development, TH, August 12, 1960.**

A report made on the future development of Pukekura Park, New Plymouth, by the curator, Mr. J. W. Goodwin, includes plans for extensive tree planting and beautifying of certain areas, new walks, opening up new areas, more lighting effects and further recreation facilities.

The chairman of the Park committee, Mr. D. F. C. Saxton, said today that it had still to be decided how many of the suggestions in the report would be implemented.

Mr. Goodwin reviews the growth of the Park and outlines suggested ways it may be developed. His recommendations for specific areas include the following:—

#### **Sportsground**

Clear overgrowth along enclosure fences, repair fences and strengthen the growth of hedges, plant some bold groups of tree ferns to add character to the plant cover. Remove bamboo and weedy growth and thin to give better trees more room, particularly pohutukawa. Plant skyline trees on top and behind the eastern and southern terraces, strengthen growth behind western terrace but avoid tall trees which may cast shadows on the cricket wicket.

#### **Fillis Street Gully**

Clear specimen trees and where possible prune to single leaders. Plant more native skyline trees. Replant with as comprehensive a range of native plants as is possible.

#### **Fernery Gully**

Lower reaches concentrate on fern undergrowth with associate trees. Central area of colourful beds and borders of annual and perennial plants. Upper areas as open and spacious as possible. Feature iris and astilbe for Christmas colour and gradually increase the range and type of low growing materials to give colour for the greater part of the year. Thin the skyline trees on the hillsides.

#### **West Of Lake**

Remove the poorest of the pines in groups sufficiently large to enable replanting of taller trees for skyline effects, while ensuring that remaining groups are sufficiently large to enable felling without damage to younger plantings. This process could take from 25 to 50 years depending on the public safety factor.

Coniferous trees should be according to their ability to withstand wind. A few pine species may be needed but mass planting is not advocated. Lightly thin the existing thuya and redwood near the racecourse.

#### **Above Lake**

Thin to encourage the development of existing rimu, miro, tree fern and others. Where room is available, incorporate colourful subjects. Above the boat-shed improve the fern margin along the walks, clear existing matai, rimu and other native trees and where possible plant native plants. On the shoulder of the hill above, gradually eliminate all rogue totara and replenish with subjects suitable to break the southerly wind.

#### **Fountain Lake**

Margins have been planted with hemeracallis, hydrangeas and ferns. There is ample scope in the lake for further fountain and water effects subsidiary to the central feature.

#### **Lower Park**

Gilbert Street walk to fountain lake, gradually remove undesirable growth and plant to beautify the approach, plant the slope up to the back of the western terrace, with shade-tolerant shrubs in the foreground and miro and kauri in the background.

Children's playground, reinforce the shelter from the westerly winds. Introduce colour wherever possible. Central area below the fountain lake, plant more palms in shady areas.

#### **Western Hillside**

Camellias have been planted from the Victoria Road entrance near the curators residence to provide colour and check ground draught; plant the hillside above the fountain lake with tree ferns and in the background. When silver poplars fall, replace with medium growing coniferous trees.

#### **Cannon Hill**

The lower portion of the western side has been planted with flowering and foliage subjects to supplement existing trees. The top of this hill has been planted with a group of hardy coniferous trees, which will provide skyline and background effects from several prominent parts of the Park.

#### **Old Tennis Court**

Some supplementary planting is necessary and a foreground planting of hardy subjects will be necessary some years before the removal of the old hedges on the Victoria Road frontage. It is desirable that a new, colourful and attractive planting should be made inside the Shortland Street entrance.

#### **Lake Margin**

Wherever possible, colourful azaleas and other hardy subjects should be planted to give colour and colourful reflections. Some rimu have been opened up on the western hillside and autumn colour

planted in open spaces. The pines at the back on this hillside should also be removed in rotational groups as soon as the growth on the old tennis and croquet area reach a reasonable size. Danger factors may necessitate the removal of some of these in the near future, particularly the leaning macrocarpas on the northern end. At this point above the north-western corner of the main lake some tree ferns will be damaged but these should be replaced and consideration could also be given to the construction of an illuminated waterfall.

#### **Western Boundary**

Lawsonia trees are encroaching on the footpath and have been trimmed back for many years. Eventually they will require replacement as they will not refurbish after heavy cutting and in their bushy form are subject to the Cyprus canker disease.

There is little of any value inside and it may be desirable to clear this area and make another shelter planting while the present shelter is intact. On the slopes leading down to the main lake are most of the trees cut back some years ago to improve the view of the mountain.

Practically all the silver birch have died and some oak trees are the only ones worth saving. This area could well be planted up in low growing deciduous trees banked with low growing conifers or evergreens.

#### **Brooklands**

Mr. Goodwin points out that Brooklands is different from Pukekura Park and the difference should be preserved.

He says that every effort should be made to preserve and improve the two major features. The last of the old rimu trees has fallen; but the bush area is still a good example of the original New Plymouth native bush. The kohe kohe's are showing signs that they have reached the end of a life cycle while the undergrowth has deteriorated under the trampling of many feet.

This bush should be preserved as near as possible to the natural state with the eradication of seedling exotics and replenishment where needed by local native trees.

The second feature of Brooklands is the spacious lawns and some magnificent exotic trees. The flower beds are colourful and attractive in season but with the spread of major trees it now seems desirable that the siting of flower-beds should be rearranged in relation to the dominant trees. Walks require re-alignment and the edges more permanently defined. If possible further tree surgery should be carried out and provision made for the possible replacement of lesser trees as some have become infested with borer.

The approach via Brooklands Park Drive and the northern bank to the look-out, require consideration in relation to the Brooklands Bowl area.

The area extending behind the soundshell required some thinning and planting, with the preservation of groups of tree ferns and the distinctive character of the area.

The corner east of the look-out and south of the bowl may well be planted in selected pine species to perpetuate the name "Festival of the Pines" and eventually shelter the soundshell and lake from the southerly wind.

#### **Brooklands Bowl**

The first section up the valley from the bowl is predominantly native trees and should be preserved in its present form. The more open area has been planted in exotics for many years and there is considerable scope for clearing and replanting preferably in autumn foliage subjects to supplement the spring and autumn colour of the large Ginkgo tree. Eucalypts have almost all toppled over in the swamp area and eventually should be replaced with medium growing coniferous trees.

Some redwood and cryptomeria have been planted in the upper end of this arm of the valley and more are desirable for the only shelter for this and the central portion of the upper area is that provided by macrocarpa trees in the Highlands School property adjoining the Park boundaries.

It is desirable that a walk should be formed up the central valley and that a branch walk should lead up the side valley leading to Coronation Avenue.

#### **Kaimata Street Frontage**

It would be desirable if possible to improve the appearance of the fence but it is felt that the Park would again become a rubbish dump if the fence were removed.

There is the same problem here with the lawsoniana shelter as on the south - western boundary of Pukekura Park. The only satisfactory answer is to clear some of the trees on the inside and plant subjects for the main shelter as soon as possible. When this has grown to a suitable size the old shelter could be removed and replaced with lower growing rhododendrons and camellias which would provide a dense ground cover and beautify the Park as seen from Kaimata Street.

The Western boundary of Brooklands extending down about halfway to the plantations has been rather thickly planted in lawsonia and macrocarpa. The remainder of this boundary is a gully planting of native trees but it will be necessary to clear gorse, blackberry and other rubbish in the central area.

It is desirable to plant some shelter on the north-eastern side of the pine plantation to provide for the future and the eventual removal of the pines as they commence to open up.

## Ideas for pukekura Park - 1968

TH, May 3, 1968.

Provision of a water wheel, a hydraulic ram, animated tableaux and a garden for the blind ...these suggestions for the development of Pukekura Park were included in reports presented recently to the Pukekura Park Committee.

The reports were compiled by the deputy director of the city council's Parks and reserves, Mr A. D. Jellyman; the Park's curator, Mr G. M. Fuller; and the Parks and reserves technical assistant, Mr C. I. McDowell.

Here are some of their suggestions:

### Mr Jellyman

Expansion of the Pukekura and Brooklands Parks areas' to include all the racecourse area is envisaged by Mr Jellyman.

"I would like to see a far wider use of the racecourse," he says. If a permanent riding school (based on the paddocks now used for Jumping events) were established, the public could hire horses and traverse the upper reaches of the Park.

Considerable spectator interest could be aroused if a sport such as polo were played at the racecourse. Model aeroplane clubs could use the centre of the racecourse.

### PONY TRAIL

Mr Jellyman suggests a pony trail, traversing the Brooklands bush through the "Maranui" area to Welbourn Park.

All public entrances to Pukekura Park should be conspicuous, appealingly landscaped, and tell people where the various points of interest are and how to reach them.

Picnic areas, including tables and seats and barbecue-incinerators. should be established.

Water flow from the lake could be harnessed to operate a hydraulic ram which would create something with perpetual movement and historical Interest.

A curtain-type waterfall could be sited on Hughes Walk, on the bank near the weeping elm and rubber tree.

### ALPINES

The two upper arms of the Stainton Dell area should ultimately be the home of a very fine collection of woodland and moisture-loving plants. If the area on the right of the fernery entrance were reconstructed to double its size and renovated, it would be an ideal site for a collection of Mt Egmont alpine plants.

A "nature trail" system, if adopted, could be of immense benefit to schools.

Selected pieces of play equipment would make the Brooklands Zoo more attractive to children. The area in front of "The Gables" would make an ideal site for a model village and ultimately the rest of the house could accommodate aquariums.

The area just inside the Brooklands Park gates could be effectively developed into a garden for blind people, featuring scented flowers and foliage plants.

Brooklands Park could be a very suitable venue for outdoor exhibitions of sculpture and arts and crafts.

### Mr Fuller

The children's play area is surrounded by areas which hold great potential, says Mr Fuller. He suggests the provision of artificial "animals," as at Kowhai Park, Wanganui.

The outlet from the fountain lake lends itself to the provision of a water fall which would be visible from the children's playground if a vista were opened and pathways formed.

Three very fine vistas radiating from the fountain could be opened. The existing vista of the mountain from the kiosk area should be retained.

### **CHRISTMAS**

A stream cutting across and down one side of the hatchery lawn area would provide a perfect setting for the recently-introduced Christmas feature.

The sunken lawn near the kiosk is within the view of practically everyone who visits the Park and should be developed as a feature of special character.

The fernery has an unsuitable site and is adversely affected by the evergreen trees nearby. The future of the trees could be weighed against the undoubted worth of the fernery.

During the presence of the nativity scene at the Park, the fernery and the kiosk could be opened nightly. From the Christmas holidays to the end of February, the fernery could be illuminated. "We must 'sell' our fernery more effectively and not expect people to hunt so intensively in unfamiliar surroundings. or oblige them to pass closely to what can only be described as a rather sinister-looking toilet," says Mr Fuller.

### **Mr McDowell**

Eventually a restaurant providing evening entertainment including a tourist souvenir shop could be built says Mr McDowell.

A suitable site for an exhibition hall might be at the southern end of the racecourse. He suggests the same area for the establishment of a transport and technology museum.

More covered shelters, vandal-proof if possible, could be built within the Park.

### **WHARE**

An A-frame building with ample porch would provide shelter at the head of the hatchery lawn. The two main barge boards could be carved and surmounted with a figure to emulate a whare.

Toilet facilities need urgent reconstruction. he says.

The open lakes need urgent bank fortifications to prevent undermining of tree ferns and loss of shady circumferential walks and reflections.

Animated tableaux could be considered in areas such as the ferneries lawn.

If a low retaining wall along one side of the kiosk dell incorporated an open shelter with picnic tables, people could look out on to a water wheel which would make ideal use of the water in this area.

### **MUSIC**

The synchronisation of the main fountain effects with music seems an admirable suggestion. Besides supplementary jets of water, another consideration would be natural gas flares at water level. If these were not feasible here, they might be installed to light the hatchery lawn.

Below the fountain lake, incorporation of river boulders (after vegetation was cleared) would make a delightful watercourse to the waterfall. Bridges could be designed to spring or leap over the water in Japanese fashion.

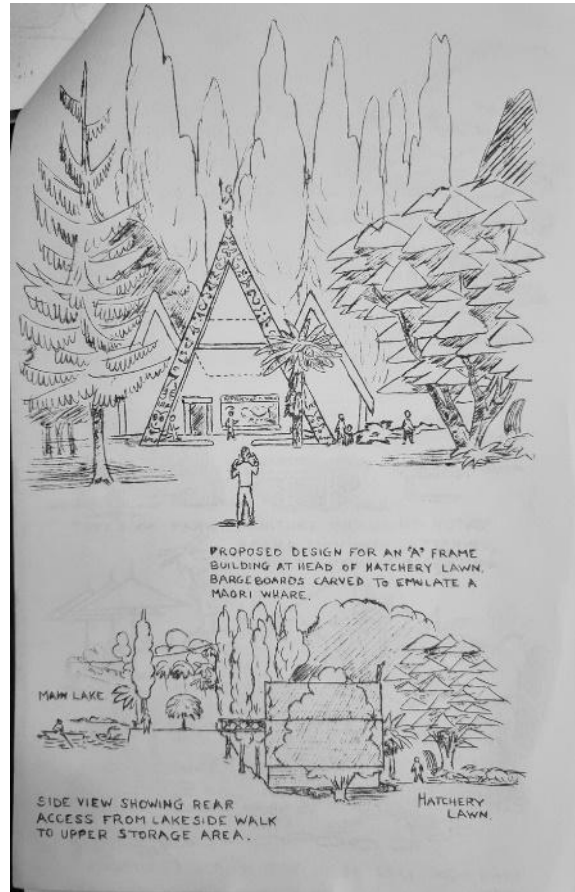
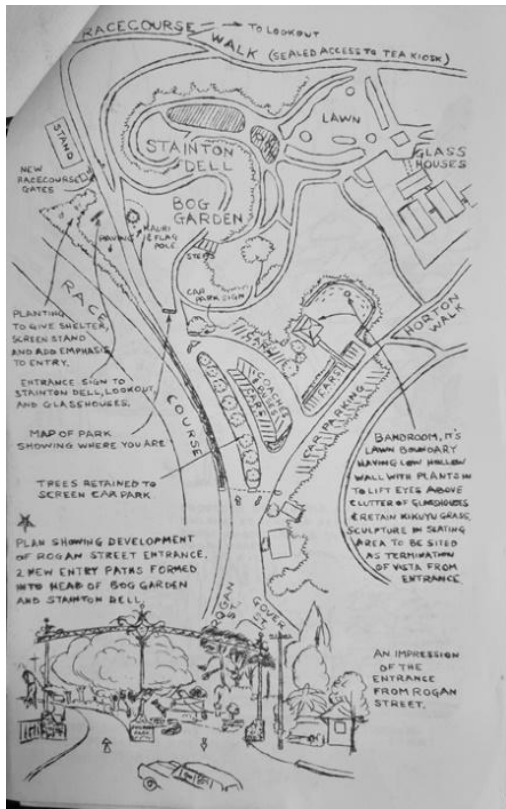
Assistance in designing features, especially those of architectural merit, should be sought. Competitions might be held to obtain the best possible solution for a particular feature.

Additional key staff might include an entertainment and recreation supervisor (for exhibitions, competitions, displays, dances, bands, circuses, sports etc.), a Park ranger (to guide on nature or pony trails and police the Park) and a play leader alternating with Pukekura Park and other play centres within the city.

Appendix C

These sketches were part of Ian McDowell's full report which was extensive

Left. Ian's vision for the development of the Rogan Street entrances.



Above. Proposed two level building at the south end of hatchery Lawn with access from hatchery lawn and from the lake-side walkway. This was to be a rest area and information centre.



Left – top. Restaurant and tree-top walk at Brooklands.

Left – bottom. Development of the Sunken Dell in front of the Tea House.

A copy of the 1968 reports including sketches can be found in:

Collection of Puke Ariki (Ref: ARC2003-860/4).

D - By-Laws



BYE-LAWS OF THE TARANAKI BOTANIC GARDEN BOARD, NEW PLYMOUTH.

Colonial Secretary's Office,  
Wellington, June 10, 1879.

THE following bye-laws made by the Board of Trustees for Public Recreation at New Plymouth are published in accordance with the provisions of "The Taranaki Botanic Garden Act, 1876."

G. S. WHITMORE.

BYE-LAWS.

1. It shall not be lawful to take or admit any dog into the gardens, and any dog found in the same shall be shot or otherwise destroyed.
2. No person may put up or erect a swing in any part of the grounds, unless with permission in writing of the Board.
3. No person may erect or keep any stall or booth, unless with the permission in writing of the Board.
4. Any person acting under the authority of the Board may summarily prevent the erection of, or remove or pull down, any stall or booth about to be put up, or put up, contrary to the above by-laws.
5. No person may climb or get up any tree.
6. No person may fish in the lake or in any part of the streams that run through the grounds, or set night lines, without the permission in writing of the Board.
7. No bathing shall be allowed after 8 o'clock a.m.
8. No children will be allowed admission to the grounds, unless accompanied by an adult.
9. No person will be allowed to pass through the grounds after dark, with the exception of those residing in the grounds.
10. It shall be lawful for the Board, on the occasion of fetes and all other gatherings held under the auspices or authority of the Board, to impose or authorise the imposition of charges for admission to the ground.
11. Any person who shall be convicted of any breach of any of the above by-laws shall be liable to a penalty of not less than one shilling and not exceeding five pounds.
12. These by-laws shall come into operation on the 1st August, 1879.

R. BAYLEY,  
0172 jy 9 16 Hon. Sec. and Treasurer.

TH, July 16, 1879.

BROOKLANDS BY-LAWS

CONTROL OF RESERVE

RULES FOR VISITORS.

PRINCIPAL ONES OUTLINED.

A draft of the principal by-laws governing the new Brooklands section of Pukekura Park was received last night by the Park Board from the New Plymouth Borough Council. The by-laws will be set out upon a notice to be erected at the entrance to the reserve and a breach of any one of them may involve the offender in a fine not exceeding £20. The by-laws state:—

No vehicle other than a wheeled chair or perambulator is permitted to enter this reserve.

Vehicles may not be parked outside the gates except in parking places provided.

No person is permitted to enter or be in the reserve between half an hour after sunset of any one day and six o'clock of the morning of the next day.

Dogs or other animals will not be permitted to enter the reserve under any circumstances whatsoever.

Persons entering or leaving the reserve must do so through the gateways, entrances or exits provided.

Passing through the bush, except upon the paths specially laid out for the purpose, is strictly forbidden.

Wheeled chairs or perambulators must not be taken on any grass plot or lawns.

Picking, removing or damaging flowers, ferns, shrubs or trees, climbing trees, interference with birds or birds' nests are strictly forbidden.

No person in the reserve is permitted to have in his possession any flower, plant, shrub, axe, saw or garden tool.

Lighting fires in the reserve otherwise than in a place provided by the council for the purpose is strictly forbidden.

Picnickers must gather up all bottles, paper, remnants of food and other litter and place the same in the receptacles provided for the purpose.

TH, February 27, 1934.

**BY-LAWS OF TARANAKI BOTANIC GARDEN BOARD, NEW PLYMOUTH.**

Colonial Secretary's Office,  
Wellington, 25th March, 1895.

**T**HE following by-laws, made by the Board of Trustees for Public Recreation of the Taranaki Botanic Garden, having been approved by His Excellency the Governor, are published in accordance with the provisions of "The Taranaki Botanic Garden Act, 1876."

P. A. BUCKLEY.

**BY-LAWS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR PUBLIC RECREATION OF THE TARANAKI BOTANIC GARDEN.**

In pursuance of the provisions of "The Taranaki Botanic Garden Act, 1876," the Board of Trustees for Public Recreation hereby repeals the by-laws of the said Board heretofore in force, and in lieu thereof hereby makes the following by-laws:—

1. *Interpretation.*—The word "garden" means the lands vested in the said Board by virtue of the said Act. Words imputing the masculine gender include females; words imputing the singular number include the plural number; and words imputing the plural number include the singular number.

2. The garden shall be open daily from sunrise to sunset, and no person shall without the permission of the Board enter the same or remain therein except during such time: Provided that this by-law shall not apply to any person *bona fide* going to or from any dwellinghouse in the immediate vicinity of the garden.

3. No person shall fish or take fish in any manner, in or from any lake or stream within the limits of the garden, or from the banks of any lake or stream which may be within the limits of the garden, except with the permission in writing of the Board.

4. No person shall within the limits of the garden shoot, snare, or destroy any bird, or take or destroy the nest or eggs of any bird.

5. No person shall take, carry, or use firearms, or any fireworks or explosive, or any weapon or instrument of a dangerous character, or bows and arrows, or catapult or shanghai, within the limits of the garden except with the permission of the Board.

6. No person shall throw sticks, stones, earth-tussocks, or other missiles within the limits of the garden.

7. No person shall introduce any dog, or permit or suffer any dog (unless led) to follow him within the limits of the garden, and any dog found within the limits of the garden (unless led) may be destroyed by any person authorised by the Board either generally or for any particular case.

8. No meeting or assemblage of persons of any kind for picnics, sports, games, or any other purpose whatsoever shall be held within the limits of the garden without permission in writing from the Board, and no games or sports shall under any circumstances be played or held within the said limits on Sundays.

9. No person shall leave bottles, glass, crockery, paper, remnants of food, or other litter within the limits of the garden.

10. No disorderly persons, vagrants, or persons of bad repute shall be allowed within the limits of the garden.

11. No person shall walk or otherwise trespass on the beds, grass-plots, or borders within the limits of the garden, and no person shall sit upon the edge of any turfed terrace or embankment, or climb or jump up or jump down over the face of any turfed terrace or grassed embankment.

12. No person shall ride or drive vehicles of any description whatever on the paths within the limits of the garden, or over places other than those set apart for the purpose by the Board.

13. No barrows, bicycles, triecycles, or other vehicles (except perambulators and bath-chairs) will be allowed within the limits of the garden without leave from the Board.

14. No horses, donkeys, sheep, goats, or cattle shall be allowed in the garden without the permission of the Board.

15. No person shall go through, climb or ride over or through, or damage any fence, locked gate, or barrier, or other property belonging to or in custody of the Board, or take, deposit, or remove any wood, earth or gravel, or break or cut any flower, plant, shrub, or tree from or within the limits of the garden.

16. No person shall bathe in any lake or stream within the limits of the garden, or from the banks of any lake or stream which are within the limits of the garden, except at the places that may be provided for the purpose, and during the hours notified as set apart for the purpose.

17. No person shall sell or offer for sale any article of food or merchandise, or any liquors (intoxicating or otherwise), or any kind of drinks, or carry on any trade or calling within the garden without permission in writing from the Board.

18. No person shall remove, disturb, break, destroy, cut names, letters, words, figures, or devices on or deface any fixed or movable seats, gates, bridges, or trees, or any property of the Board within the limits of the garden.

19. No person shall within such limits as aforesaid use any obscene or profane language, or commit any breach of the peace, act of indecency or other impropriety, or insult or annoy any other person. No person shall behave riotously or boisterously within the garden so as to annoy others, or shall call or whistle after any person in a manner calculated to annoy other persons.

20. No person shall destroy, deface, or injure any inscription or any label attached to or connected with article, or tree, or shrub, or other plant within the garden, or any copy of these by-laws hung up or affixed at any entrance to or in any part of the garden.

21. No person may put up or erect a swing in any part of the garden unless with the permission in writing of the Board.

22. No person may erect or keep any stall or booth unless with the permission in writing of the Board.

23. Any person acting under the authority of the Board or any constable may summarily prevent the erection of or remove or pull down any swing, stall, or booth about to be put up or put up contrary to the above by-laws respectively.

24. Any person who shall be convicted of any breach of any of the above by-laws shall be liable to a penalty of not less than one shilling, and not exceeding five pounds.

25. These by-laws shall come into operation six weeks from the date of the approval of the same by the Governor.

Made by the Board of Trustees for Public Recreation of the Taranaki Botanic Garden, at New Plymouth, this 7th day of September, 1894.

F. P. CORKILL,  
Chairman.  
HARRIS FORD,  
Hon. Sec.

I approve the above by-laws, this twenty-fifth day of March, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five.

GLASGOW,  
Governor.

TH April 10, 1895.



## **E - Johnny Fro** **A Fairy Tale by Archibald Hood**

### **INTRODUCTION.**

My old sixth-standard mate, Johnny Fro, had got about fourteen days over the turn of some sort of fever, when I called at his mother's place to see how he was getting along, and should it be agreeable, to keep him company for a short spell. As I went into the house, Johnny was stretched flat on his back on a couch, right under a window, looking down into an orchard, holding in his hand a lot of pencilled papers. "Hullo, Birrel! It is you, is it? How good it is of you to come," he sang out cheerily. "Awfully glad to see you, Johnny," I said. "Does the doctor say when you may get about again? The boys are all awearying to have you once more in the sports. But, dong it, Johnny! tell me, do, what's all this writing about on these scraps of paper which your fingers are 'round?" "Oh, this is a Fairy Tale, Bir, which has been floating in my mind like a panorama, and which I've been putting into words the best way I can." "Of course, the-once-upon-a-time sort," I jocularly remarked. "I like fairies myself well enough to read about, but bother the plaguy things, they always have a trick of keeping away from anyone alive having a sight of them—don't they now?" "No, no, my boy," seriously said Johnny. "Such isn't, I think, always the case; because, lately, since getting better, I've been looking upon and talking with fairies the same as I now do, this very minute, to you, and that too you will probably be enlightened upon if you only take the trouble to look over these papers. Here—have them! To avoid confusion, every one of the slips is distinctly numbered. But, Bir, have you now the time?" Then and there I managed to pretty-well make out what Johnny had been occupying himself with during his convalescence. Afterwards, I took the following copy, which can, I can confirm, be thoroughly depended upon as giving almost word for word of the text.

### **CHAPTER I.**

ONE night, lately, while all alone, conning over my lessons, I kept walking round and round different outskirts of the town, heedless about where my feet led me. Finally, I found myself leaning over the rails of the Poet's Bridge in the Recreation Ground.

It was a fine clear night, and the waxing moon's light, coming between the shadows of the trees around, sparkled like bright silver on the still sleeping waters. There I gazed for so long a time at the beautiful surrounding patches, that bit by bit I felt my eyelids getting unusually heavy. Most likely, I think, I might have gone to sleep straight off, in this upright position, had not I heard a gentle foot fall on the other end of the planks from where I was placed.

At this instant there was something somehow set me all aquiver. I lifted my head, and turned my face aside, and what I then saw, I am quite sure, as long as there is breath in my body, will never pass from my memory. This was a girl, so altogether enchanting as to outrival any prize painting. She asked me, with a frank, sweet voice, on drawing towards me, something or another, but what that something or another was—well, I could not in the least be certain about. The truth was, for the moment, I could neither speak, nor neither could I clearly comprehend. She had gone several paces beyond me ere I could collect myself; then afraid that she might slip me altogether without having a word to say, with no little effort, I managed to call out— "Hie!"

At this rude hail, she slowly drew herself up, turned her face around, and—Great Stars! threw upon me the glances of such eyes, as never, I am sure, has been seen in the face of anyone else: for dazzling lustre I feel convinced that no gems could ever cap.

"What's it? You called, didn't you?"

At a loss for any proper reply to this question of hers, I feigned a false one, saying— "Excuse me, will you—do ! Isn't your name Miss Grim?"

"Miss Grim," she repeated, with a puzzled countenance, and slowly pronouncing the name, as if spelling out the letters. "No," she immediately said, with a most bewitching smile, "I am neither grim by name, nor grim by nature—Marimemonia Breenge is the name I am known by. Will my horse be safe, do you think, tied up to a post at the entrance there beyond? I never care about riding after dark down that steep, lumpy, road. I'll be back within a-half hour or so."

"Oh, I'll see to't all right enough," I eagerly replied, "if that's all the time you mean to be away; it will be longer than that, I daresay, ere I think about leaving the grounds here."

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“Really, so kind of you, if you would. I'll hurry back as fast as ever I can.” Then, in an alluring manner, she took herself away, saying, “I'll likely see you, then, as I come back.”

With this, Miss Marimemonia Breenge proceeded on her errand. At the upper entrance I found the horse all right. I didn't weary much waiting; I was much too full of joy for that.

Pretty precise to her time, Marimemonia once more put in her appearance. On rejoining, she kept chatting away with such volubility, and smiling and laughing with such graceful gestures, that I thought could not well be withstood, even by a king. Whilst I, on the other hand, like a silly—oh, how enraged I was at my own incapacity—remained all the while as though tongue-tied! Strange it was, however, that no sooner was I alone again than I could recall to mind easily enough scores of smart quips and taking phrases, ay, and utter them too, with the utmost ease to vacancy, where nought they could avail! Well, and such a precious nunny was I, when so very badly I wanted to engross and shine!

On homeward starting, I kept slapping at my breast and giving voice to all sorts of ridiculous nonsense.

When, lo! out of the cup of an arum lilly, bordering the path, such a queer looking womankin of a figure sprang, robed as seemed to my fancy in wreaths of airy down!

There's no use in saying that I was not dumbfounded with this totally out-of-the-way experience. I was more than that, I was clean beside myself with terror, until a few kind and courteous words from the diminutive sylph quite reassured me.

“Be calm, be calm!” said she, in a tone low, and yet commanding, melodious, yet distinctly audible. “I am Gismorelborom, the Queen of the Fairies in these sylvan shades, and I may freely aver, without a vestige of arrogance, that whatever I undertake to go in for I am seldom balked in the accomplishment of— mind that now, will you! I have just got to know, that all of a sudden you have become alarmingly infatuated by that trig and wholesome looking maid that you met, for the first time to-night, on the bridge beyond there. Possibly she may be hard to win, and when she is won, it will be harder still to win Graspacute Breenge, her money-grubbing sire. 'Tis said that one Noxe something, I forget the surname, stands now the favourite. However, the proverb which is pat among you mortals is a good one, which says: Patience and Perseverance works wonders. You take heart, you do! If you do as I bid, I'll stake my regal position—I will—on the prosperous issue. The conditions are these: That every day you try to resist evil, and do all the good that ever you can; for each morning ere the clarion of the cock, without cognizance, there will be put into your pockets certain tokens corresponding to either the good or the evil which you may have done from one period of supply to another. The greater and the lesser in value of these you must put separately and carefully away, inasmuch as whoever has the greatest show of the first of these tokens when Marimemonia's birthday comes around, which happens to be on Midsummer day next, will stand— for so oddly determines her father—the greatest show for Marimemonia's hand. Now, mystified mortal! there's something all cut and dry, isn't there, for you to work upon ; something that ought to spur you on to virtue, something which holds out a mundane reward. But toos ! I now must away, or otherwise summons some of my courtiers around, I am positively forgetting myself standing here all this while, unaccompanied, talking to you.”

### CHAPTER II.

SUBMISSIVELY entreating her not to leave just yet awhile, I cried—

“O! thou highly exalted Elfin Queen! I should ever so much desire to look upon these courtiers which just now you made mention of.”

“Oh, how I have been yearning for a long time for the opportunity to have a good look at sprightly and gayly arrayed courtizans! Although, if the truth be told, men, now-a-days, pretend to jest at pomp and rank; but, for all that, I am perfectly well aware that such is merely a make-out—the inner core of their heart, I am quite sure, is still inclined to hanker after pageantry.”

“Perceptible mortal, I do delight to hear you talk in such a candid and sensible way ; it evinces that your bringing up has been in the right direction. Just conceive, in a world like this is, so many variations in alike species. Is it consistent, feasible, or even possible, to do such a thing as to altogether abolish social distinction? The thing is utterly outrageous and entirely ridiculous. Follow me, will you, to the jutting floral-plot underneath, where the long-link path branches off from the topmost terrace, whereto I shall give instructions to my herald to summons thither together my liege courtiers; then you'll be enabled to give a flat contradiction to the industriously circulated misconceptions which avers that no such things as fairies now, or ever did, exist.

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Well! the ignorance of mortals, on very many points, is distressing, painfully exasperating, and, to a sensible well-informed mind, positively intolerable."

When we arrived at the place indicated, Gismorelborom stooped and plucked from the green sward a hay-stem, placed it between her ruby lips, producing a shrill, piping sound, which in a jiffy was attended to. And then, lo! as if they had, then and there, bounded out of the bowels of the earth, a troop of fairies were before my eyes ! They all in concert made a low obeisance to Queen Gismorelborom, which she, with an imperious bend, most graciously received.

Then, in the first place, she commanded to nearer approach her person five of her titled maids of honor, calling them one after the other respectively by name, which were, if I remember aright—Assyld, Corinta, Sirbyne, Istorel, and Borbece.

Each of these were most beautifully draped in light refulgent robes of a gossamer-like texture, fringed with gold edging, and flecked with delicate clots of azure; with light coral chaplets on their crowns, from which swept, pending to as far as the loins, in minute undulations, their auburn-tinted hair.

They were exceedingly pretty, I thought, but of that peculiarly, in contrast to any mortals.

Afterwards, I was introduced to the Lord Chamberlain, Master of the Rolls, Almoner, Goldsticks, and other potent dignitaries, who also were gorgeously equipped. Lastly, I had the honor of being presented to Tipwip, the Court Jester and dwarf, whom I had the utmost difficulty to properly distinguish, being, as I calculated, little bigger than an eardrop, However, he bore himself with an air of imposing hauteur, and indeed, a little later on, I ascertained that Tipwip really was rated as the most notable in all the Queen's household—a regular all-round sort of attendant, holding the combined offices of jester, tipstaf, archer, and alchemst-in-chief. At times, in the ordinary affairs of mortals, playing the very deuce—such as causing them to love to distraction that which, without his influence, they should have positively abhorred, and loath that which they would have loved, misplacing movables, chattels turning upside down, making honey sour, milk acrid, and vinegar sweet. In short, doing all sorts of madcap mischievous things, for the amusement of the august court. No sooner did the lowering of the mace declare the reception ceremony over, than the Queen signified that it would be her pleasure for Tipwip to delight the company with a song, to which, with the utmost alacrity, Tipwip, with this, as under, complied: —

The moon is in the Cairy,  
The dew is on the blades;  
Our couch is nice and airy,  
Beneath the leafy blades.  
But what still, does most thrill,  
Our bosoms with delight,  
Is that our gracious fairy Queen  
Presides o'er us to-night.

No more winds Artic chill us,  
Quite balmy is the air;  
Under the weeping willows,  
To maidens, swains love declare.  
But what still, does most thrill,  
Our bosoms with delight,  
Is that our Gracious fairy Queen  
Presides o'er us to-night.

All looks serene and glad, oh!  
By hedgerows, dells, and brakes;  
Fair Egmont throws her shadow,  
Deep in the sleepy lakes.  
But what still, does most thill,  
Our bosoms with delight,  
Is that our gracious fairy Queen  
Presides o'er us to-night.

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This song of Tipwip's was received with thundering claps of applause. Every one of the courtiers, and sundry other attendants, joined with hearty enthusiasm in the refrain. Of a truth, I myself was, more than once during its execution, on the eve of putting in my own voice in the exhilarating strain, but wisely, I think, forebore—concluding that it would not very well harmonise along with any of theirs. Following a brief interval of general conversation, several of the princely courtizans, as if with one accord, commenced to chant, with lively measure, these few lines given as under:—

We are folks jolly, who scorn melancholy,  
And never a wrangle e'er causes a strike;  
Ay! we are the fairies, controlling the dairies,  
And turns from the churn any butter we like.

For some reason or another unexplained, the Queen Gismorelborom declined to give her approval of the above, and shortly following commanded music to be struck up for a dance. Aye! was I not surprised to note the loyal and ready compliance of these puny ærial forms. Lo, the pleasure of their sovereign, thought I, could hardly have been fully communicated ere all the midget partners were promptly in their places. Then, at once, the enlivening music struck up, which set the whole concourse in rapid motion. The lightening speed, like to sparks from an anvil, in which these most clever, dainty ærials went twisting and twirling through the intricate and sinuous evolutions, dazzled me with profound amazement. I had never in all my life imagined that anything short of a cannon ball could attain to the like velocity. One moment, beheld them in circles, another in curves, another in columns, and another again they deployed into lines, and, throughout all, not the slightest hitch whatever took place in all their puzzling manoeuvres. It is not sufficient to say that I was deeply engrossed—I was infatuated beyond expression.

“Mortal, what think ye of our revelries?” her majesty deigned to ask.

“Incomparably clever ! Incomparably clever!” I bewilderingly repeated.

Overcome, at length, with the strain which such a giddy spectacle produced, I betook myself apart to rest and to restore composure.

“Ah, me!” I then ponderingly said to myself, “ After what this night I have been a conscious witness of, can I ever think otherwise than that Nature places before our eyes things, perhaps, not one-half of which is discerned ! Up till now I could never conceive that two distinct kinds of people are living at the same period, and in the same place, and one of them to be unenlightened of the presence of the other.”

While thus astride on a log, deeply meditating, the dwarf came briskly towards me with a sort of bouquet, no longer than a tin-tack, in his hand.

“Inhale this grateful aroma,” said he, putting it to my nose, and from thence consciousness with me for the time was suspended.

### CHAPTER III.

When I awoke, I found that it was clear daybreak, and, at the same time, that I was tucked up comfortably in my own bed. Incident upon incident of the previous night's revelations, bit by bit unfolded. The best test, I thought to myself, that I could make of the reality or otherwise of what I imagined to have seen and heard would be, that which bore reference to what was promised to be put into my pockets. Therefore, losing no time, I took hold of my clothes lying over a chairback by my side, and carefully searched one after the other of the pouches. I was dreadfully disappointed. I found not a single wrap had been deposited in any of them. “The whole affair is nought but a sort of a will-o'-the-wisp delusion,” I testily uttered. “What a Zany I must have been to think that anything at all reliable would emanate from such a shady quarter.” But, somehow, quite unaccountable it was, I felt as though my nature had entirely changed in the direction of finding myself, imbued with kindlier and more generous impulses—I begot, as I thought, a new-born deference to age; a new-born pity for distress and indigence. Something clean out of my ordinary practice, I got up and lit the fire, put the kettle on, cleaned the boots, and helped my good mother to prepare the breakfast. Having partaken of that repast, I strolled towards the beach, where I observed an aged cripple, called Dan Durbow, struggling with all his might and main to get a limb of driftwood up the terrace, to replenish his stock of fuel. I hastened to the old man's side, and asked him to allow me to drag it for him. Old Dan, for a time, seemed as if taken quite aback with surprise, but suddenly yielded. When I had got the wood at the top of the cliff, the delighted old cripple exclaimed—

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“Well, my shturdy young buchul, in throwth, but oive now for a long toime thought that sich loike obloiging dispoitions wid bhoys, as you've now showed, had entoirely deserted creation. Yunker, God bless you; an' if e'er you take a woife, begorah, though she were an aphrodite, let her have loads of the ever needy stingo.”

Then it struck me that I had a message to deliver at the other end of the town. On passing along the principal street, I noticed a little girl weeping bitterly alongside a shop door. I ascertained that the child had let drop a half-crown, which had trundled after falling and dropped through a grating into the cellar. At my instance leave was got to go underneath to search. Luckily, after a while, the fugitive coin was recovered. Then the change which instantly appeared in the little creature's countenance, from lines denoting stinging grief to those evincing unbounded joy, were, I considered, ample recompense for the service I had done.

Back, on my way home, I encountered a mob of youths seeking amusement by inciting the anger of a poor, half-demented soul, familiarly known by the name of Skoop. Skoop at this juncture stood at bay flourishing a great stick in his hand, roaring out with all the power of his lungs—

“You blackguardly vermin I'll be upside with everyone of you, if you should find the weight of this bludgeon on your bare scalps.”

This menace of Skoop's was met by a salvo of loud laughter from the assailants, one after another of them shouting—

“Come on. Skoopy, Skoopy—you come on! You're not game, Skoopy, to back your threat; there are too many of us here to be at all frightened for your noisy ranting.”

At this point, in lieu of chiming in with my mates as customary, I began to remonstrate with them, and to call their conduct unmanly, wicked, cruel, and absurd.

“Well, well, what a whirlround,” holloed out big Jack Sumbry. “Scissors! what next, I wonder. Johnny Fro, turned—well, I declare—goody-goody.”

“Calling one names don't break any bones,” I said “but if you take me for one of those goody- goodies, who so make out merely to hide their silliness and cowardice, you are, I tell you, this time, on the wrong track.”

On giving them this taste of my mind, I kept all the while, bit by bit, creeping in the direction of Jack, as if I meant to have a set-to. Jack suddenly withdrew, under the flimsy pretext that he saw someone coming whom he didn't want to. The other boys followed suite by clearing off, and Skoop for the occasion was left unmolested.

The rain came down heav'n's hard towards noon, and I kept in the house doing a few necessary odd jobs. However, at about three o'clock it ceased, and I then made my way to the furthest outskirts of the place, to pay a visit to a friend. On my way thither, at a certain point, I was in the very nick of time to render assistance to an elderly lady who, as I was passing, had the misfortune to slide down a slippery bank and plunge into a deep mudrut. I ran into the slush—nearly up to my boot-tops—and offered her a purchase by stretching out my hand. However, despite the uncomfortableness of her situation, she, much to my bewilderment, edged, as it were, back from the proffered aid, saying—

“My kind young friend, never you mind me for the present—that you may do afterwards. First, look—do, if you can lay eyes anywhere about on my muff—I've lost it. Oh, how sad; whatever shall I do if I can't find my muff. James Crowl, my dear, dear, husband—now in his grave, eight years now come Lammas-day—bought it for me, sir, in Shoelbred's shop, Oxford Street, London, when we were newly married; and at the time, I mind, I said to him: la, that's much too good for me, James.” Then, dear, dear me—ah! he gave such an “unarmored” look, and then he said, he did. —“Is it too good for Queen Victoria, on the throne of England? for, if not, it's none too good for you, Jane.” “Hoh-ho! and may-be after all this dreary length of time, its lost at last. He, dead and gone now eight years ago come Lammas-day next coming.”

To the extreme delight of this ancient lady, I found the memorable muff a few paces up the bank, behind a clump of gorze. She then, without further hesitation, stretched out and took hold of my hand, and when once more on solid footing, became profuse with thanks, which, by the way, were much ampler for the recovery of the muff, than for her own personal delivery.

For that day, there was nothing further of moment occurred. As soon as I awoke by daylight though, on the morning following, my very first care was to have another grope at my pockets. When, lo! however—am I able to fully convey the extent of my joyous exuberance? —in one of the trouser pockets, there were actually nothing less than thirty-three pieces of the current precious metal, and in in my coat pocket, one solitary piece of dull cold lead. It boots not to say that I was in a perfect phrensy of rapture at this altogether mysterious affair, and amazed at the

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curious way that the tokens had found their way hither. It was as much as ever I was able to do to keep the matter a secret from my poor mother. When my excitement had in some measure wore off, I began to rack my brain about what I had done amiss so as to earn the leaden medal. I kept a long time tickling with my fingers at my ears, as if I were trying to get at the bothering thing that way, but still the misdemeanor whatever it was, continued a perfect puzzle. Ha, ha, ha! I had it at length; yes, I had it at length, and that too, without the slightest chance either of there being any mistake about it. The cat must come out of the sack: I had turned up my nose at cold saveloy for supper!

### CHAPTER IV.

Direct payment for well-doing is not the thing, the goodness therefrom looks like stage grief, but simulated for reward. But, tell me, who is there that could well decline anything, not exactly highly culpable, whereby to try and win one of the most radiant maidens that has ever yet graced creation! As a matter of course, with such an object in view, all my bent now was to make as many good records as I could, and to keep the leaden tokens down to the lowest possible ebb. And, truly, it was almost incredible, the way in which I did succeed.

Why, what can be thought of it? In less than seven weeks' time, I positively was in the possession of eleven hundred gleaming pieces of gold; the which, when nobody was about, I stowed carefully away in a stout calico bag, under a loose board in a dark corner of our scullery. I likewise put away the pieces of lead in another place of security, and proud was I to note that the total number of the latter was but trifling.

All this while, I had never, but on one occasion, clapped my eyes upon my unrivalled Marimemonia, and that was on one day as she rode close by our house, accompanied by a great lumbering hulk of a chap, carrying a face upon him as rubicund and round as a prize mangel. This casual glance though, at Psyche, turned out rather a bad job for me, as upon the following morning, very much to my dismay I found that I had a good few extra leaden pieces, all through my quite inadvertently wishing some sort of evil would speedily overtake this detestable escort of hers.

After this occurrence, how intensely was my yearning for another interview with my all-absorbing nymph. I hardly dare venture to correspond or seek for communication through the medium of a go-between, through fear of punishment following for audacity; and thereby running the risk of at once spoiling the whole game. It could only be by opportunity, I plainly saw, that my craving desire stood any chance of getting gratified; and, under whatever auspices it was, I was not kept very long awaiting for the fulfilment of my wish.

One day, as evening was coming on, a retriever dog, limping badly, was making its way for the South Road. I noted at every few paces, the poor brute had to stop a second or so, to allay its torturing pain. Not altogether, I confess, without a little misgiving for my safety, I ventured in a chary way towards it, patted it on the shoulder, timidly raised the affected limb, examined the foot, and thereon discovered a nasty looking gash.

A woman in the neighbourhood, while standing looking around her at her porch, had likewise taken notice of the crippled animal, and humanely brought some hot water, a sponge and soap. I immediately set to and cleaned the wound and soothed the effected part.

There was a flash brass collar around the neck of my patient, and on glancing at the inscription, oh, how deeply interested I suddenly became. For thereon I read, "G. Breenge, Walliwalli Villa, Junction Road."

I had barely completed my work of mercy, when, down the way a bit, a covered sulky came spanking round the corner. At this object, like a shot—lame foot and all—the dog bounded forward. Then a voice, like the sweetest melody that ever was heard, called—

"Gordon, you naughty dog, Gordon. Where have you been?"

The sulky drew up near to where I was standing, and—O day! how can my ecstasy be adequately described?

The Jehu thereof was none other than Miss Marimemonia Breenge, all by herself.

In making my salute, I am under the impression that I did so by raising both hands at once to raise my hat, and began my address by saying, "Your dog, Miss Breenge, has had a nasty cut on one of its forefeet."

"Oh, has it?" she unconcernedly replied. "It must have lost me, and got itself hurt while I was in attending the Bazaar."

Then, most intently fixing upon me her matchless luminous eyes, she added, "Lah! now I know you—you're Master Frost, who kindly looked after my horse one night at the upper entrance to the Recreation Ground."

Ye gods, how crushed I felt!

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At this precious instant, I should have gladly welcomed being pitched-forked to Jupiter, or any other distant planet.

In the first place, blundering so aggravatingly with my name, together with accosting me as if I had merely been some needy-nobody of a lackey.

Then in a petulant and sheepish sort of style, I fear, I answered, "That my name was Fro and not Frost."

This enlightenment which I made, most apparently must have touched her understanding a bit, inasmuch as straightway, somehow or another, her manner changed from the nonchalant to the affable, interested, and tender.

With a frank ring in her voice, she at length exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Fro! I really do beg pardon. But now, mind do, that we are both of us quits, for the difference, you'll see, is not anything like as great between Frost and Fro, as it is between Grim and Breenge."

It boots not to say how much this smart, well-merited hit, uplifted me and made me again quite reconciled, infatuated, and more enraptured with my vis-a-vis than ever I had been before.

After a little more parleying, she asked, with mild solicitude, if I should mind jumping up and taking charge of the reins, as there was an awkward bit of road a little way further on that she always had a dread of passing. Did I mind?—what a doubt!

I did mind this behest that she made. Why, I minded it with phrensical delight, there never could, I think, have been an injunction with so much alacrity acceded to.

I expressed my pleasure to oblige, took my seat by her side, with the broad back of Gordon for a foot-mat, discarded the whip, and allowed the old horse to trudge along at any sleepy pace it had a mind to.

While thus, elbow to elbow, in the outset, did not I open her eyes considerably, by duly apprising her that I was not by any means the sort of young fellow that most probably she might take me for. Then gradually I enlarged on the incalculable intensity of my overwhelming passion, to all of which she demurely and passively listened. But O—cruel! She evinced no indication—no, not the slightest—of her being in the least smit with a similar passion. Continuing then for a painful duration, in moody abstraction, after a while, she broke the ice by beginning to regard me with a sad, downcast, and pensive look, and in a tremulous voice, said—

"Do you know that my papa is going to put me up, in a way that may justly be regarded, as it were, for auction, on my next birthday—mid-summer day next?—when I'll be eighteen years of age. Oh, how utterly horrible. It quite upsets me to think of it. I am to be knocked down to the highest bidder, and that will be—mind I've no doubt of it at all—" Here, visibly, tears started to flow, and audible sobs were heard. "And euh! I very much fear that the highest bidder will be the very lowest, lowest in my esteem of all, and that is Noxey Fob— plague him."

Under ordinary circumstances, at this most distracting revelation, how I should have vehemently denounced such a proceeding with wrathful words. "But once bit is twice shy." The dread of an extra supply of the leaden pieces deterred me, so in the best way in which I could, I swallowed my rising indignation, and past it off quietly by merely saying—

"Bah! Noxey Fob's not everybody." "Pooh," I continued, "for as far as that goes, I may give a greater bid for you than he myself."

"No; could you now?" betraying with the one breath, disbelief and curiosity.

"But, oh my! you've no idea about Noxey Fob, for even supposing you should happen to get the better of him, you see he's such an immense giant— he is; besides, too, so dreadfully vindictive, that I verily believe he would never rest satisfied until he had crushed you under his feet as flat as he would do a toadstool."

Most heroically I replied to this intimidating harangue— "Never mind all that. I'll stand all the racket—mind, providing that you would for ever afterwards stand by me—that is, supposing that everyone else on the eventful day I should out-bid."

And she said she would!

## CHAPTER V.

DAYS came, and days went. At length the day of days wore around—midsummer day—Marimemonia's birthday. As for myself, everything was in readiness prepared for the singular competition. Had received the previous night, from the most fashionable tailor, a flash suit of kaupukapuka tan-coloured tweed, provided myself with a high-crowned broadleafed Parisian silk hat, a gold watch chain—one of those massive cable patterns—

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patent leather highheeled boots, and eye-glass—affecting a learned and decorous mien—besides all the several details which go to make up a young gentleman of—well, lofty aspirations and affluent means.

Upon this morning, however, when everything was considered complete, “a rift was discovered in the lute.” I counted over my gold pieces before taking to the road, and could not for the life of me make out more than nine thousand five hundred and one—all told ; whereas, calculating from a former computation, I ought to have had the full ten thousand ; yet, there was not anywhere the least thing disturbed around where I had them concealed, and neither my mother nor the maid, Marimemonia had set eyes on any suspicious vagrant about. Finally, fearing that the worry over this misadventure might tell against my looks at the very crisis which I eagerly desired to look my very top best, I resolved to disabuse my mind of the trouble. Shortly after doing so, and my natural composure restored, the thing at once dawned vividly on my mind that the counterpoise of lead tokens had, no doubt, been by the agency of the sprites subtracted.

Notwithstanding the delay which this outward hitch had caused, by means of a light spring fly, I got to Walliwalli Villa in sufficiently good time, where I at once discovered that three others, on the alike errand, had preceded me; all of them, I particularly notified, were furnished with great swelled-out, strong, leather reticules.

Prompt to the pre-arranged time, Marimemonia's exacting papa appeared in the large drawing-room. He was a lankey-figured person with, as I thought then, a rapacious-looking countenance.

The first of the aspirants who was called to show the validity of his claim, was a dumpy boob of a man—bordering seemingly on three score years, wearing a foreign expression—named Syllas, and who wretchedly stuttered with his words. “He-he-here,” he said, “Me-me-mes-mester Gras-gras-grasp Cute Bre-e-e-nge, wha-wha-what I come to do-do-do fo-fo-for your shwe-shwe-shweet child.” Mr. Syllas then placed upon the table two hundred twenty-pound notes, in addition to scrip of the Taranaki Aluminium Electrical Extracting Company, rated as equivalent in the share market to eight thousand pounds.

When Mr. Breenge had satisfied himself of the number and of the genuineness of the notes, he took hold of the scrip in his hand, looked it over and, with a depreciative wag of the head exclaimed, accompanied by a loud fillip of the finger—“Whoogh ! assuredly and positively, separately and collectively, not worth a snap.”

The next was a gentleman all the way from Tasmania, with the name of Tryton Psalter on his card, who put in a letter of credit for the modest sum of five hundred pounds, but with documents setting forth his proprietary rights in Mount Huxley, which were estimated at forty millions.

“This letter of credit, which you have first here presented, I can very well believe to be genuine,” remarked the wily sire, “But, but, as for the proprietary documents—whoogh! assuredly and positively, separately and collectively, not worth a snap.”

Noxey Fob—Marimemonia's terrible giant—was next in order called to see what he could do, by way of backing his pretensions. Anon, Noxey drew from his sable bag, money of mixed kinds, altogether totting up to nine thousand five hundred pounds—aside, I said, exactly one pound below mine—with a list of shares that he was prepared to give, I thought he said, as a lateral settlement, which he held in the Poneoh Chrom and Plumbago Company.

“This liquid specie now before me, is indeed highly satisfactory, very, very gratifying indeed, and in all probability may carry the day, Mr. Fob; but, as for these papers, you might just as well have left them in your desk, for assuredly and positively, separately and collectively—whoogh! they're not worth a snap.”

Noxey's heavy eyebrows fell a little at this latter clause of the speech.

“Now, my conceited little fellow,” said Marimemonia's paternal parent, turning towards me, “What's it that you've got to show—out with it! I presume, a savings bank pass-book with an old packing case shanty or two when some of your friends are gone, perhaps the value of one of my old nags.”

Oh, how I boiled!

But soon a sudden change came upon the faces of the lot of them on my coming to cover more than half of the large table with my pieces of gold—their looks, at this supreme instant, would have made an interesting photo—and counted therefrom nine thousand five hundred and one current sovereigns of the realm.

After recovering from the stupor, which not unnaturally this wonderful surprise threw them all into, Mr. Breenge briefly intimated that the award was mine.

“A couple, only a couple, more pounds, Mr. Fob,” he said, with a wicked twinkle in his deep-set eyes, “and you'd now have stood in different shoes. It can't be helped my dear sir, better luck the next time ; there's no getting



## Appendix E

away, you see, from the highest bid, and, at the same time, you must acknowledge much the most desirable currency.”

Then the gigantic Noxey Fob waxed most irrationally wrathful, and, with a livid visage, swore by everything that he could get his tongue around, that he would leave no stone unturned to upset the marriage.

“You,” he said, sharply turning round and facing me, “You, you, you ! you conceited parcel of nothing badly put together. I’ll chuck you, I will—a gun shot length out there into the sea, and what then, my precious little puppy, can you do?”

I answered, “I can then swim ashore!”

### CHAPTER VI.

With the impatience incident to youth, I could not on any account brook the idea of delaying the marriage. I would, independent of all opposition, have the ceremony gone on with almost right off the reel. At length, after a wearysome palavering, it was finally settled that it should take place on the afternoon of Christmas Eve, in the church of the parish. So as to avoid, were it possible, any tumult, it was arranged that the party, consisting of but a few friends, should quietly foot it to the aforesaid place. The hour for the service was fixed for three o’clock, and we started from Walliwalli Villa shortly before noon.

An awkward occurrence took place while we were on the way thither which, I daresay, for fully an hour’s time delayed the advance. One of Marimemonia’s bridesmaids had tripped over a gorse stump obtruding on the path and injured her left ankle, causing her to swoon right away.

Happily, however, the maiden was quite herself again when the procession got to as far as the head of the Recreation Ground.

But lo, then, to the complete astoundment of everyone of us! Who, at that time, did we descry coming hastily towards us—all in a broil and quite out of breath?—the very clergyman who had been engaged to officiate at the nuptials.

“To the total exclusion of all respectable people, the church is almost surrounded,” he said, addressing Marimemonia’s papa, “by the ruffianly myrmidons of one Noxey Fob, ready at a concerted signal to perform any malicious deed. Moreover, by the rarest chance imaginable, I also got wind that they designed to lay violent hands on the bridegroom here, and enforce him into a vehicle all ready waiting for the purpose of his abduction.”

My heart jumped again at this!

“Being a man of peace, after giving the matter mature thought, I deemed it prudent to eschew any scene of turbulence by coming to meet you and recommending the sacred function to be held at your own house.”

His reverence had scarcely as much as cleared his throat, when a rider in hot haste approached to give the information that there were a formidable party gone on horseback for the purpose of doing some baleful depredation at Walliwalli Villa: on their coming to know that the parson had closed up the edifice and made his decampment, as they surmised, to the country residence.

Marimemonia, who throughout the whole of this hubbub had not been in the slightest degree disconcerted, then thus spoke—more by way of a jest, as I took it, than anything else—“Why, bother it all ! can’t the thing be done right off in the centre of the Maze here—see, right at hand. Oh, la! wouldn’t it look so romantic?”

At the first, this advice of Marimemonia’s was treated as being inapposite, frivolous and nonsensical. Yet, on further weighing the matter well over, the scheme did not appear to be at all a bad one, providing that his Reverence had no objection.

After further deliberating, the result turned out that, by the aid of a guide, in a few minutes more the party found themselves in the very centre of this famous labyrinth.

But alas, alas—there were still in store for us a much more painful, vexatious, and perplexing crisis than ever. The focus of interest now shifted to Noxey Fob himself.

Arriving—wherever he had sprang from—at the outside of the place at the very instant almost that we arrived at the inside!

A good job it was that, though near, we were in a way far apart.

He commenced his hostile efforts by bellowing out, like a “bull” of Basin—“Look you here, look you here! I’ll very soon spoil this wretched little game of yours—cunning, and all, as you take yourselves to be; I’ll very soon make Fro, there, dance to and fro on hot cinders I will.”

## Appendix E

A little further on, had it not been out of place on the occasion, one might have felt disposed to burst out with uncontrollable laughter whilst espying, over the half-grown plants, the manner that Mr. Fob fumed, writhed, wriggled, circled, twirled, twisted, halted, advanced and retired, in his phrensical efforts to get to the middle. Howling vehemently out all the while threats of terrible consequence.

At every enforced pull-up on coming thump up against a blind ally, he would stand a minute or two, giving his head a vicious scratch, and ejaculate—“Darn the plaguy, pestering place—darn it, darn it, I say! ”

Bravely, however, despite the interruption, the service was proceeded with. When concluded, another grave matter had to be thought over, which was this—“how were we to get out and effect a riddance of such a formidable and enraged miscreant?”

Just while we were talking over this difficulty together, a sweet concord of shrill voices came floating through the air—voices which had only to be once heard, as I had heard them, to know who they belonged to. Such were Queen Gismorelborom and her Elphin followers; but, of course, anyone versed in fairy lore would know quite well that they could not appear visible under the light of day; still, for all that, they could be plainly heard, and chanting the words of the following ditty: —

Periwinkle, tip, tip toe!

Queery, peery, peep, peep bo!

Perplex'd mortals this much know,

We attend where o'er you go;

The good to shield, the bad to bow,

Now Tipwip here will show you so.

The very moment this spiritual stave wound up—TipWip must have been alert—an ass grazing hard by, suddenly raised a deafening vociferous “he-haw, he-haw!”

Coupled with this lugubrious noise, the company became paralysed with profound amazement on their then observing Noxey somehow escape clean out of the Maze, and in a mad helter-skelter manner fly towards the donkey—all the while paying the most extravagant adulations to the dun, shaggy brute, calling—“O ! my blessed, blessed pearl, Marimemnonia. My peerless ruby, beyond all price, I am coming. Noxey ! your Noxey, has heard your dulcet voice, and he's coming.”

On his proceeding as though he were about to hug this very rarely flattered kind, the long-eared One let its hind-quarters fly up in the air with the force of a discharge of dynamite, sending Noxey spinning right slap-bang into the lake, as dead as Titus Audronicus. People maintain that his carcass forms the foundation of the Islet—the nearest to the Brooklin Bridge. Possibly that may be all nonsense; however, the above Islet goes by the name of Noxey—yea, even to this very day.

### EPILOGUE—

To a burrowing stream,

Life likened may be;

With restricted light's beam,

From the source to the sea.

Lo! nearer and farer,

Distant worlds are shown;

To know that they are there,

Nearly's all that is known.

In this world of ours,

Subtle mysteries abound;

Having depth of hidd'n powers,

Beyond man's wit to sound.

There's a push or a pull,

With all things on the move;

Time, but builds to annul,

Nothing stable does prove.

Do our best in our age,

And no duty disown;

The good Fairies assuage,

If we mean to get on.

# The Mercury.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1883.

NEW PLYMOUTH: Printed for ye benefite of ye funds of ye Recreation Ground and Sold in ye Olde English Fayre held in ye Great Hall yclept Alexandra, which for the nonce is changed into a street of ye Olden Tyme. This paper is sold to every one for ye small sum of THREE PENNIES, but no change is returned to those who give Sylver.

**YE** Hostelry known by the sign of ye "TARANAKI TAVERN," kept by mine hoste CHARLEY COOMBER, who is well known to all who visit hys house to sell nothing but the best of lyquors. His rooms for those who require to pass the night in town are spacious and airy, and ye table for feasting of many is covered with all kinds of meats, ye vegetables in season, and pastry delicious to ye taste. For good old English cheer, CHARLEY COOMBER'S is ye house to go to; and when pheasant shooting is on, visitors will find him an excellent sport to go with for a day. At ye sign of ye Taranaki Tavern, Brougham-street, New Plymouth.

**DAVID CALLAGHAN**, Baker, Confectioner, and Wholesale and Retail Grocer, joining the Town Bridge, in Devon-street, New Plymouth, carries on business in ye same manner as he has carried it on during ye last twenty years past—whych 'is, to do justice to all that please to favour him with their commands. He believes in a ready-money business, and by this means is able to sell a good article at a reasonable price. Those who deal with him will find great advantages. At ye Olde English Fancy Fayre he has "ye Olde Chelsea Bun-house," at whych visitors may obtain vydant and delicious drinks that will delight and refresh ye inner man. At ye Olde Chelsea Bun-house in 1839, 240,000 buns were consumed on Good Friday. Maister DAVID CALLAGHAN expects that the same result will take place on ye first night of ye opening of ye Fayre.

**TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT WELL IN THE STOMACHE.**

**AS** ye Citizen of ye Town, and those living in ye Suburbs, and ye wives of ye Citizens should know where to send for a leech—or, as they are now called, Doctors—for at times they may have bodily ailment or paynes in the stomache, we do therefore, for their guidance, publifh ye names of ye gentlemen who will bleed, physicke, or otherwise treat them in a manner professional after the practices of legalized leeches or doctors. The following are ye names:—

- Dr. P. J. O'CARROLL, Devon-street East, New Plymouth.
- Dr. J. MURRAY GIBBES, Leach-street, New Plymouth.
- Dr. H. B. LEATHAM, Devon-street East; but who intends shortly to move to his new residence, corner of Courtenay and Liardet-streets.
- Dr. G. ST. GEORGE, Hygeia Lodge, Courtenay-street, New Plymouth.

**TUTOR ET ULTOR.**

**AS** there are many of hatty temper who get into difficulties through not being able to control the *os humeri*; and some who find it difficult to recover money that is owed them; and others who are called unjustly to pay for things twice over; and as some buy property and want it transferred by deed—we think it right that the address of all ye Gentlemen who attend ye Courts, criminal and civil, should be made known to the world at large through our paper. They are—

- Messrs. STANDISH & HUGHES, Devon-street West.
- Mr. OLIVER SAMUEL, Devon-street East, near the Town Bridge.
- Mr. J. B. ROY, Brougham-street South.
- Mr. H. R. RICHMOND, Devon-street West.

**TO ALL THOSE WHO ARE SEVERELY TROUBLED WITH THE CARE OF VALUABLES AND MONEYES.**

**YE** commercial intercourse with other cities having become more frequent of late, and as persons who have the care of valuables and moneyes are in bodily fear of losinge ye same, it has been thought advisable by ye proprietors of ye large money-changing Corporations to establish branches in New Plymouth—accordingly they are as follows:—

- Bank of New Zealand, corner of Devon-street and West and Rube street—W. B. BULLOCK, Manager.
- National Bank of New Zealand, Devon-street East—W. HUNTER, Manager.
- Bank of New South Wales, Brougham-street—W. BREWSTER, Manager.

**YE OLDE ENGLISH FAYRES.**

**THEIR ORIGIN AND FOUNDATION.**

**WHY ONE WAS HOLDEN IN NEW PLYMOUTH.**

**BY** WAY of introduction to ye Olde English Fayre, it may be as well to give some account of ye origin and hystory of Fayres as in general. Etymology as usual will help us somewhat to ye early hystory. No doubt ye word comes from ye French *fairs*, and like most French words may be traced back to ye Latin; but as to ye exact Latin word there is a controversy between *forum*, a market-place (which seems likely enough), and *feriae*, holidays, which is the more generally accepted derivation. If we look upon a Fayre as an occasion for genuine commerce, for buying and selling merchandise, then ye market-place origin will take the fancy; if we regard it as an opportunity for amusement, ye holiday. "Ye Olde English Fayre" is intended to combine both. Ye visitors will buy—assuredly they will buy—fairings; but they must enjoy themselves withal, see ye show, and make holiday.

But know you that holiday was originally holye-day; that Roman *feriae* were sacred days; that ye Christian church borrowed ye term for her own sacred days.

Olde English Fayres were therefore originally instituted as gatherings for ye purposes of religion, business, and amusement, and were under ye absolute control of ye clergy. Ye tolls, revenues, and trade monopolies connected with ye fayres were given by Royal charter to ye prelates and dignitaries of ye Church. Not only were ye bishops in a position to say what people should do at ye fayres; they were able to restrict ye liberties of ye section of ye public whych did not patronize these re-unions. Ye citizens of London were obliged to keep their shoppes closed on ye days on whych the Fayre of the Abbot of Westminster was open. Ye tradesmen of ye neighbouring towns, as well as those of ye towns in whych ye gatherings took place, were not allowed to carry on their ordinary business during ye time of ye fayre. If ye bishops were holding a fayre at Winchester, for example, they could order ye closing of all ye shops in Southampton. "If they desired to trade at all they had to trade in ye Bishop's fayre, or to obtain special leave from him to act otherwise. So thoroughly was ye Bishop of 'ye olden tyme' master of ye situation, that he had his officers posted along ye highway to see that no trade was carried on outside ye fayre. If these officials detected anyone infringing ye Bishop's privilege they were empowered to seize ye goods, and whatever had been bought or sold became ye Bishop's property if ye transaction had taken place within a distance of seven miles of ye fayre." License of this sort was accorded, not for one or two days merley, but sometimes for a week or a fortnight. By permission of HENRY III., ye Bishop of Winchester, who was Lord Paramount, was allowed to extend ye time of keeping ye Fayre of St. Giles' open from three days to sixteen days. Such a permission ye Bishop would seldom find it hard to get. It was because ecclesiastical dignitaries ruled ye Kings that they were able to rule ye people.

**PROCLAMATION TO CLOSE SHOPS IN TOWN.**

It being ordayne'd so in ye olden tyme, His Worriph ye Mayor of ye

Borough yclept New Plymouth—Maister William Bayly—who is all-powerfull, and whose wishes ye wise citizens do desire to please, has issued ye following Proclamation to all ye lawe-abiding subjects:—

**PROCLAMATION TO YE PEOPLE.**

**ORDER CONVEYED AND PUBLISHED BY YE WORSHIP YE MAYOR AND COUNCELLORS OF YE BOROUGH OF NEW PLYMOUTH RESPECTING YE HOLDING OF A FANCY FAYRE IN YE HALL YCLEPT ALEXANDRA, ON WEDNESDAY AND FOLLOWING DAYS—YE 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13 OF FEBRUARY, 1883.**

**Whereas** in the reign of our well-beloved and worthy Superintendent of ye Province once known as Taranaki—one Maister Frederic Alonzo Carrington—an Ordinance was made for ye benefit of ye citizens of ye New Plymouth Borough, whereby a large and elegant piece of ground to ye south of ye town was set asyde for ye recreation of ye people, and it was entrusted to ye care of Maister Thomas King, of ye Bank of ye Colony; Maister Robert C. Hughes, of ye Lawe Courts, both Civil and Equity; Maister John Gilmour, of ye Honourable Company of Ironmongers; Maister Harris Ford, of ye Honourable Company of Saddlers; Maister John Thomas Davis, of ye Honourable Company of Plumbers; Maister Isaac Broad, of ye Honourable Company of Watchmakers; Maister Robert Joseph Collins, in Her Majesty's Trayned Band; and wherem ye sayde Maisters King, Gilmour, Collins, and Broad did retire from ye above position, Maister John Barton Roy, of ye Lawe Courts, both Civil and Equity; Maister Thomas Kingwell Skinner, of ye Honourable Company of Architects; Captain James Davidson, of Her Majesty's Plantation Army; and Dr. James Murray Gibbes, a Bachelor of ye Medical Profession, have taken their place. And as ye sayde above gentlemen found ye funds at their disposal were insufficient to lay out and to beautify ye same elegant piece of ground according to ye taste of ye people; and as it is wise and just that means should be obtained to beautify it in a manner worthy of ye town, I, William Bayly, Mayor of ye Borough yclept New Plymouth, do desire, ordayne, and authorise all ye desyre, ordayne, and authorise all ye town to close their shoppes on ye evening of Wednesday, ye seventh day of February, 1883, at ye hour of six o'clock, and that no business shall be done after that hour, nor on ye following evenirgs, except at ye Olde English Fancy Fayre, that ye necessary moneyes may be raised for beautifying, as above stated, ye ground yclept Botanical Gardens, that ye publick may enjoy what pleasure they please when walking within their precincts.

Given under my hand, in presence of ye Councillors, in ye Towne Hall in Brougham-street, in ye sixth day of February, in ye second year of my term of office.

(Signed) WILLIAM BAYLY, Mayore of Neu Plymouth.

L. H. CHOLWILL, Towne Clerke.

**BERRY & NEWMAN** have large stocks of Builders' Ironmongery, Galvanised Iron, Fencing Wire, Cement, &c.

**HOWELL BROS.**, Corrugated Iron, Bidding, Spouting, Zinc Depot, Gill-street, New Plymouth.

**NEWTON KING**, Auctioneer, Land and General Commission Agent, Devon-street, New Plymouth.

**To the PRINTER.**

**S I R,**  
I AM a confant frequenter of ye Publicke Gardens, yclept ye Recreation Grounds; and a more suitable piece of ground could not have been founde. But Nature is vifible there. Nature unadorned is very beautiful. What is more pleafing to ye eye than a fayre damofel? But a fayre damofel who has just got out of her night-gear is not so pleafant to look at as a damofel tidied up. So with ye Publicke Gardens: if Nature was tidied up, how much more beautiful would she look! Help, then, with your moneyes, ye good work of Maifter Davidson, of Doctor Gibbes, of Maifter Skinner, of Maifter Ford, of Maifter Hughes ye lawyer, and of ye other Maifters who hold ye beautiful grounde in truft. Let everyone plant a tree in ye beautiful grounde, and each can watch it grow. Let each tree represent the quarter of a pounde of sterling money, which every owner of a tree should give on ye first day of each year to ye Maifters who have ye grounde in truft. Ye tree will grow and ye money will grow; and ye Garden will be a pleafant place for ye young maifters and damofels to do their courting in. Let all this be carried out, and we shall have a Publicke Garden to be proud of.  
A REAL FRYEND.

**To the PRINTER.**

**S I R,**  
YOU have asked for contributions for ye "Old English Fayre Paper." I send you ye following, hoping it will be worthy of filling in a corner.

**ON YE MERCURY.**  
In the year hundred and eighty-three This paper was printed and issued, you see. Ye seventh of February was 'e holy-day; Ye little boys bawled out and thus did say— "Who'll buy this paper? Who'll buy? who'll buy?" We are trying to sell ye Mercury. Please buy a copy—threepence is the charge; If your eyesight's bad, the type is large. Money we want for our beautiful grounds; We collect it thus in pennies and pounds. Three pennies is the price of the paper—it's low For a memento of ye Old English Show.  
TOMMY YE POET.

**To the PRINTER.**

**S I R,**  
WISH this put in your paper, and will pay you your charge for doing so.  
Professor FURLONG.

New Plymouth gents and ladies fair, Who prize a nobby head of hair, Professor Furlong's shop, you know, Is just the house where ye should go. He'll cut your hair, and curl it too, And treat you to a rare shampoo. Throughout the town his razor's been Remarkable for shaving clean. Tobacco and cigars he sells, And all the news in town he tells. Ambrosial scents and rich perfumes, And sundry other use ul wares, Including grease from savage bears— All really good. And be it known There's not a better shop in town.

**THE OLD BELLMAN'S CRY.**  
O flour of the ovens! A replyr in paffe! Fragrant as honey, and sweeter in tafte! Hail to the bellman, who sings as he runs, "Smoking hot, piping hot, Chelfea buns!" As flaky and white as if baked by the light; As the flesh of an infant, soft, doughy, and slight; The public devour thee like Goths and Huns, "Smoking hot, piping hot, Chelfea buns!" Prelates, and princes, and lieges, and kings, Hail to the bellman, who tinkles and sings, Bouche of the highest and lowliest ones! "Smoking hot, piping hot, Chelfea buns!" Like the home of your birth, or the seat of a flower, Or the blith of the morning on field or bowter, There's a charm in the sound which nobody shuns. Of "smoking hot, piping hot, Chelfea buns

## THE RECREATION GROUNDS. HISTORY AND PROGRESS.

**THE** PUBLIC are well aware that the Recreation Grounds Board is in almost a helpless state of impotency. It is, therefore, useless to expect the members to do anything towards carrying out improvements in the grounds under their charge without additional funds being placed at their disposal. Several private persons have taken the matter up, and a few gentlemen have come forward with praiseworthy liberality in order to carry on the work of ornamenting and improving the grounds, so that the town need not be ashamed of the place that has been set apart for public recreation and amusement.

With a view to raise money, advantage was taken of the proprietor of "Ye old English Fayre" visiting New Plymouth, and it is to be hoped that the result of the show will be a large addition to the Boards funds.

As the public have shown a great deal of interest in the formation, construction, and the progress made with the works connected with the Botanical Gardens, a short *resumé* of what has been done may not be out of place, and will be interesting to many of our readers. Before, however, proceeding to describe what has been done, it ought to be stated for general information that had not the members of the Board pledged their own personal credit, the public would not now possess as fine a piece of artificial water as is now to be found in New Zealand. The public are certainly indebted to those gentlemen for their spirited action in the matter. We trust that members of the community will attend the "Old English Fancy Fayre" to be held in aid of the grounds, and be but half as ready to spend their money in the purchase of articles as the ladies of New Plymouth have been in giving their aid. If so, a large addition to the funds of the Board will be the result.

### FORMATION OF THE RECREATION GROUNDS BOARD.

The last act of the Provincial Council of Taranaki, before Provincial Councils were abolished in 1875, was to pass an Ordinance making over to trustees about ninety acres of land adjoining the town of New Plymouth for the purpose of a "Botanical Garden and Public Recreation Grounds." The trustees appointed were:—Mr. Thomas King, Mr. John Gilmour, Mr. Robert Clinton Hughes, Mr. Harris Ford, Mr. Robert Joseph Collins, Mr. James Thomas Davis, and Mr. Isaac Broad. The Ordinance, however, proved to be *ultra vires*, so the following session of the New Zealand Parliament, an act, entitled the "Taranaki Botanical Gardens Act, 1876," was passed validating all that had been done; and on the 16th November, the same year, the trustees were again appointed by the Governor—only Mr. Broad having resigned, Mr. Thomas Colson was gazetted in his place.

The Board at once set to work, and plans having been prepared by Mr. Reginald Bayley for laying out the ground, contracts were called for clearing the place and making pathways, as well as for fencing off portions that required it. Having done this, a very interesting ceremony was then gone through, namely, the planting of the first tree in the grounds. This was accomplished by Miss Carrington, and as the account may be interesting on this occasion, we reproduce it.

### PLANTING THE FIRST TREE.

Monday, May 29th, 1876, was one of the most beautiful days of the season, and shortly after two o'clock a large number of persons had congregated on a hill in the Recreation Grounds just facing the entrance, in readiness to see the ceremony of planting the first tree gone through.

His Honor the Superintendent (F. A. Carrington, Esq.) with Miss Carrington and Miss Jessie Carrington (now Mrs O. Deacon) were early on the grounds with a number of friends. The Members of the Recreation Board—Mr. T. King (chairman), Mr. R. J. Collins (hon. secretary), and Messrs T. Colson, H. Ford, J. T. Davis, J. Gilmour, and R. C. Hughes—were also

present, and in various ways engaged in arranging preliminaries.

The Band (under the leadership of Mr. W. R. Townsend) was there and played several popular pieces. At about half-past two, everything being arranged,

Mr. T. KING (Chairman of the Recreation Grounds Board), addressing his Honor the Superintendent, said it was now upwards of thirty-eight years since he (Mr. Carrington), as representative of the New Zealand Company, surveyed and laid out the Town of New Plymouth; and his Honor would no doubt remember that he then set apart land that surrounded the town as broad belts and also made large reserves for recreation purposes. Some time afterwards Governor Fitzroy came down here and dispossessed them of those lands, and took from them their recreation grounds. Many years had elapsed since then, but lately it has been through his Honor's means that some amends had been made, and they had had restored to them a portion of that which had been taken away, by setting apart the land for the recreation grounds. Such being the case the trustees considered that it was but fitting that his Honor should be present, and take part on the occasion of the planting of the first tree in the grounds.

His Honor F. A. CARRINGTON said, as Mr. T. King had stated, he had surveyed the town; and, when doing so, had set apart land for a wide belt round it. He had, also, laid out a spot for Victoria Park and another for a Botanical Gardens; besides reserves for other purposes. Then difficulties of a native character arose, which debarred the Company from acquiring the land, and the belt round the town was taken from them by the act of Governor Fitzroy to compensate settlers who had been turned off other land; and, inasmuch as this was the case, he had carefully considered the matter, and thought it only due to the Corporation that some reparation should be made for what had been taken away. He was shortly going to the Assembly, and he would make it his special duty to see that land was awarded them; and if there was no land in the town then he would try to get other lands somewhere else in lieu thereof, as an endowment for such lands as the town had been unfairly deprived of. It was a just claim, and he believed it would be heeded. At all events, he would try what he could do. He thought they could make a very pretty place there, and which, he had no doubt, would be visited by a great many, and who would have an opportunity of spending a very pleasant day in walking through the grounds.

His Honor, accompanied by his eldest daughter, were then taken to the spot prepared for the planting of the first tree, which was a British Oak. Here Mr. J. T. Davis presented Miss Carrington with a neatly polished little spade, on one side of the handle of which was the following inscription:—"To plant the first tree in the Recreation Ground, New Plymouth, May 29, 1876." On the other side was "Presented to Miss Carrington." A large hole had been dug and the tree placed in it, which was held by Mr. T. Colson, whilst Miss Carrington very gracefully lifted some of the earth with the spade and threw it over the roots. Mr. T. Colson then took her to the north side of the mound, where a Puriri, as representing New Zealand, was planted in the same manner. The same ceremony was gone through on the west side, where a Norfolk Island Pine, representing the South Pacific Islands, and on the south side a Pinus Insignis, representing America, were planted. Having performed her pleasing duties, and declared that the trees were planted, three cheers were called for Miss Carrington, which was lustily responded to. His Honor was then loudly cheered, and after three cheers for the Recreation Ground Board, the ceremony was brought to a conclusion by the band playing the National Anthem.

After the ceremony the place assumed quite an active appearance for all along the walks might be seen persons in groups busy at work planting different kinds of trees the growth of which we have no doubt will be as carefully watched and cared for as if they were in their own gardens. When the

Public Domain is visited by their grand children or great-grand-children, they will be able to point with pride to the trees which then will be of large size, and say they were planted by their ancestors. The ground turned over in readiness to receive the contributions of visitors, presented quite a garden-like appearance from the number of shrubs and flowering plants brought to the grounds and set by visitors.

### THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE LAKE.

In 1877, it was proposed to make a lake in the grounds. Mr. R. Bayley, then a member of the Board and hon. secretary, was requested to prepare plans for the same. The successful tenderers were—Messrs. Neal, Claffy, and Power, who at once commenced operations. The greatest difficulty which the Contractors had to contend with was the water. Owing to the peculiar formations of the ground it was not possible to divert the stream, therefore it was found necessary to form a coffer dam some little distance above the works, in order to carry the stream by a race cut in the side of the hill clear of the proposed foundation, about 80 feet across. The excavation was then gone on with, although water was still coming in too fast to admit of the work being carried on with satisfaction. The springs burst out in many directions, the strongest ones at the sides of the excavations. These springs did not show until the Contractors had got down about 7 feet through a stiff black soil, very much like peat, evidently the stream's deposit for many years, for it was full of leaves, sticks, &c, some of them being as green as if plucked the day before. The Contractors now introduced a Californian pump, and found that by plying it every half-hour the water could be kept down. Beneath this layer of black soil was a bed of volcanic ashes; about 2 inches thick, resembling powdered pumice stone. It was quite gritty, and evidently not wood ashes. This was resting on a bed of very greasy white clay, about 2 feet in thickness. At sight this seemed to be a sound bottom, but the sounding bar disclosing gravel underneath, it was found necessary to remove the clay. Large rocks then began to show themselves, and limbs of trees with the leaves still attached and quite green. Thousands of hinau berries were turned up with shells of mullusca 3 inches long. A further excavation of 2 feet brought the contractor to the bottom, which consisted of a stiff clay. They being then down about 11 feet below the surface their contention against the water was very laborious. It was now found necessary to run a bank of clay across the excavation, 12 feet from the upper side to the former level of the stream. This being well puddled the benefit was seen at once, for the water collected behind it during the remainder of the time the contractor was at work, and the excavation was tolerably dry. The foundation for the paddle wall was then carried down 2 feet into the bottom. The excavation being completed, the filling-in commenced, the paddle wall being kept about 2 feet below the sides, as they rose and guided by planks there to prevent it spreading. This system was followed till the completion of the works.

The intention of the Board in the first instance was to have formed the dam without a scouring sluice, but further consideration induced them to alter their plans, and a deep under sluice was cut on the east bank. It was found necessary to use dynamite in making this cut, as large rocks kept cropping up; but most of the cutting was through very compact gravel cement. Three box culverts were made, each ten feet long by twelve feet clear inside, and carefully laid in a bed of puddle, and well rammed for two feet over. The frame for the lift was then placed, the uprights sunk one foot in the ground, and well tied at top, bottom, and middle, and collared round the mouth of the culvert to keep it rigid. A lip from the culvert went down about ten inches in the solid, and the race in front was well rammed and beaten for about twelve feet. The front of the lift is boarded with planks two inches thick up to the top, and let into the sides of the race one foot; and the paddle is continued behind all the

way up, six feet in breadth. The remaining twenty-four feet is filled up with earth, and kept from falling out into the race at the end by a rubble wall eight feet high. There are, of course, many other little things that deserve to be noticed, but the foregoing are the principal ones.

About 3,000 yards of earth was removed, and the area of water obtained is nearly two acres. The length of the sheet comprises its beauty, as it runs back nearly 400 yards, with varying breadth. The total length of the dam across the way on the top is 110 feet by 10 feet wide, with a breadth of 80 feet at the foundation. The pressure of water on the embankment is over 400 tons—a weight which need not alarm the most timid, as the stability of the work is unquestionable. The whole of the above work, which extended over a period of six months, was personally superintended by Mr. R. Bayley, and carried out to his entire satisfaction; the cost of the dam was about £180.

The Board has worked and worked until they have made the grounds what they now are; but there is much yet to be done. The following is a description of them.

On entering the grounds from the Carrington Road, there is an ornamental pond, which Mr. Hughes has had constructed at his own expense. A few yards lower down a ladies' bathing-pond has been erected. Further on, within a few yards of the lake, Mr. T. Farlong has expended a considerable sum of money *pro bono publico*. He has erected a fountain with a jet of about 9 feet, which plays in the centre of a neatly finished basin formed of tuff soda, and of suitable extent. There is also an ornamental earthen basin about five feet high, into which the fountain plays, and the spray afterwards descends to the lower basin. The effect of the fountain is heightened by a series of well formed cascades running past it from the lake immediately above. Close to the fountain an ornamental pond has been made of considerable extent, in which are gold and silver fish. A short distance from Mr. Farlong's fountain is another one which is a gift of Dr. O'Carroll. It is in the centre of the pond, near the lake, and the Doctor has gone to considerable expense in procuring it and having it fixed. When the full design of the ground is carried out there will be three ornamental ponds at regular intervals, extending from close to the entrance at the Carrington Road up near to the lake.

On the other side of the hill where there is at present a swamp it is most likely that another series of ponds will be made with cascades, so that visitors standing at the top of the hill will have the delightful prospect of three ornamental ponds on either side and the lake in front. It is not expected that all this will be completed for some time, but it has been set out on the plan of the grounds which has been prepared.

Mr. Farlong has also erected on the crown of the hill a flagstaff, on which is fixed a large "tell-tale" mirror, which proves of itself to be very attractive to visitors. It is a large glass ball which reflects the surrounding objects for a considerable distance.

In the lake on either side are two statues of the "Graces," which are also the gift of Mr. Farlong. It is needless to say that they adorn the lake and arrest the attention of visitors. The pavilion on the bank of the lake is also a source of attraction, especially when on a summer evening the band is discoursing sweet music, which floats over the water.

Another gentleman has intimated his intention of erecting a small iron bridge across the lake and situated nearly at its head for the convenience of the public, so that they can cross from one side of the lake to the other without being under the necessity of making a long detour as at present. This will be a useful as well as an ornamental gift, and we feel sure it will be duly appreciated.

It is gratifying to find gentlemen of sufficient public spirit to bestow both time and money to the accomplishment of the improvements we have mentioned, and it is one of the surest guarantees that the





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