



# MOUNT ALBERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Newsletter 5 • November 2007

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## Spring Has Sprung



ARBOR DAY CEREMONY AT GRIBBLE-HIRST PARK, MOUNT ALBERT (CIRCA 1939)

Mount Albert Grammar School boys planting one of the trees during yesterday's ceremony in observance of Arbor Day. Members of the Mount Albert Borough Council and pupils from schools within the borough planted about 100 native and exotic trees in Gribble-Hirst Park.

*Rich Afford is standing to the extreme right.*

This issue has as its theme scheduled trees and other important vegetation! We were prompted to concentrate on our plant life by Rich Afford's brief dissertation, entitled 'In Praise of Trees,' at a recent M.A.H.S meeting. Rich described his boyhood journeys through Grafton Gully and then inventoried some local trees. He said

'And so, when I pass through Gribblehurst Park for instance and view its lovely trees my memory reflects back to the 1930's when as a schoolboy, one Arbor Day, I helped plant those very trees which today in their maturity provide shelter in winter and a happy oasis for our ease and pleasure.

'In the grounds of Unitec there is a jacaranda believed to be the largest and finest in New Zealand which in bloom defies bravely the very blue of the sky, and there is a Japanese tan oak rare and charming, one of only two in New Zealand and some 100 years old. On the other hand, one can lament the recent felling of the Indian bead tree in St Lukes Road with its sweetly scented flowers, to be replaced by tarmac and car fumes. And I well remember that magnificent pin oak in Allendale Road which in conflict between neighbours was felled by order of court.....But where would Ferndale be without its Norfolk pines (the

'Seven Sisters') or Alberton without its lovely trees, Alice Wylie Reserve and its jubilee oaks, not to mention those thriving on our mountainside.'

'If perchance you are out walking and wander on foot up Mount Albert road you will find a seat upon which to rest your weary bones under the old oak tree which may well be the very one photographed 100 years ago when the present highway was only a country lane.'

Thanks to Richie for sharing his memory of significant trees.

### The Grass Has Riz

....but it's not unique to Mt Albert. Sorry, folks, but it's time to explode the myth! The grass species *Microlaena stipoides*, which has been widely touted as unique to Mt Albert, is in fact a grass that is not even confined to New Zealand. It was useful for lawns and planting in volcanic soils but its habitat has gradually been encroached upon by the kikuyu grass from Kenya. However, it is not rare, endangered or specifically local! According to Mt Albert botanist Alan Esler it is 'relatively widespread'

# Notable Trees

Here is a list of local trees taken from the 'Schedule of Notable Trees' in the City of Auckland District Plan. We thought sharing this information might protect us against the 'you-don't-know-what-you've-got-'til-it's-gone' syndrome. The schedule used here was updated on the seventeenth of September, 2006.

## Category

- a Historic or Cultural Value.** Associated with or commemorating an historic event. Associated with or planted by an historic or notable figure. Of spiritual or cultural value.
- b Botanic Value.** Any significant tree of species rare in the region or New Zealand. Any tree or group of trees of ecological significance providing an important habitat (including nesting sites and food sources ) for wildlife.
- c Visual Amenity Value.** Any tree or trees that have significant landmark value due to their location. Any tree or trees which make a significant contribution to the visual amenity of the immediate neighbourhood. Any tree or trees which have outstanding value because of screening or beautification functions. (Reference District Plan 5C.7.3 TREES)

<i>Address</i>	<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Category</i>
Allendale Rd, 15	Norfolk Island Pine	c	New North Rd, 830 (Ferndale)	Norfolk Island Pine (7) English Yew Pohutakawa Australian Firewheel Tree	a,c a,b,c a,b,c a,b,c
Allendale Rd, 44 *	Phoenix Palm (2) Pohutakawa	c b,c			
Burch St, 2	English Oak	a,c	New North Rd, 1062	Norfolk Island Pine Totara Pohutakawa	c c b,c
Carrington Rd (Unitec)	Titoki Brazilian Coral (3) Jacaranda Maidenhair Tree	b,c b,c b,c c	Pah Rd, 100	Ginkgo (5) Liquidambar Phoenix Palm	c c c
Carrington Rd, 184	Macrocarpa	c			
Duart Ave, 7	Tree of Heaven	b,c	School Rd, 1A	Pohutakawa	b,c
Linwood Ave, (Auckland Institute of Studies)	Pines (103)	c	School Rd, 6	Pohutakawa	b,c
Lloyd Ave, 39	Puriri (3)	a,b,c	Seaview Tce, 66	Norfolk Island Pine	c
Mt Albert Rd (Alberton)	California Redwood (2) Japanese Cedar (2) Holly	a,c a,c a,c	Seaview Tce, 35	Pohutakawa	b,c
New North Rd, 704	English Oak (5)	a,c	St Lukes Rd, 99	Persian Lilac or Bead Tree	b,c
New North Rd, 805 (Alice Wylie Reserve)	English Oak (12) Magnolia Pohutakawa Totara (2)	a,c a,c a,b,c a,b,c	Summit Drive & Stilwell Rd cnr Warwick St, 5 (road reserve)	Pohutakawa Puriri	a,b,c b,c
			Woodward Rd, 8	Norfolk Island Pine	c
			Woodward Rd, 10	Norfolk Island Pine	c

\* Probably meant to be 34. Mistake on schedule.

# Some Notable Trees of Unitec Campus

Unitec Institute of Technology, formerly Carrington Polytech (founded in 1975), occupies the site of the old Oakley Mental Hospital (later the Carrington Psychiatric Hospital), in Mt Albert. The total area of the campus is 55 ha.

The original Avondale Lunatic Asylum building – now the Faculty of Architecture and Design – was constructed from 1865 to 1903. Other old buildings date from 1897. During the long tenure of the site as a mental hospital, numerous trees were planted as ornamentals, hedges, and in fruit orchards. Much landscaping work with trees and shrubs has continued over the last thirty years. While most of the tree species are comparatively commonplace, there are some individuals which come into the "monumental" or "notable" category, being exceptionally fine specimens or of unusual species for Auckland. Noteworthy in this regard is a collection of old trees surrounding the present Students Services Centre where may be found magnificent examples of jacaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*), Brazilian coral tree (*Erythrina crista-galli*), Japanese tan-oak (*Castanopsis cuspidata*), camphor laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora*) and ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*). Other interesting trees are silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), several large Turkey oaks (*Quercus cerris*) – the biggest one in front of Building 81 – and two exceptionally large camphor laurels in the grounds of Penman House (Building 55) near Entry Four. The oldest building on the campus, the original mental hospital, has several trees and shrubs of interest including holm oak (*Quercus ilex*), several sweet gums (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), and flourishing specimens of the chaste tree (*Vitex agnus-castus*) and pigeon berry (*Duranta erecta*).

Five trees at Unitec are classed as "Scheduled Trees" by the Auckland City Council. The trees (all located adjacent to the Student Services Centre) are a large titoki (*Alectryon excelsus*), and the aforementioned jacaranda, Brazilian coral trees (3 of them), and the largest of the ginkgos.

Of the conifers Unitec has specimens of kauri (*Agathis australis*), Cook pine (*Araucaria columnaris*) – in the grounds of Penman House, Norfolk Island pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*) – a very large one near Building 48, Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*), Deodar cedar (*Cedrus deodara*), Japanese red pine (*Pinus densiflora*), maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster*), ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), radiata pine (*Pinus radiata*) – including numerous old trees in Oakley Creek Reserve, numerous junipers and cypresses, and Australian brown pine (*Podocarpus elatus*) – in the grounds of Penman House (Building 55).

Australian eucalypts are well represented, including two very uncommon ones in New Zealand, green mallee (*Eucalyptus viridis*) and tuart (*Eucalyptus gomphocephala*). Commoner ones on the campus are narrow-leaved black peppermint (*Eucalyptus nicholii*), forest red gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*), and silver dollar gum (*Eucalyptus cinerea*).

There is a fine example of queen palm (*Syagrus romanzoffiana*) in the grounds of Penman House (Building 55).

Mike Wilcox  
(mike.wilcox@xtra.co.nz)

### M.A.H.S Dates To Remember

11th November (Sunday) 9am – 4pm Alberton House. Oral History Course with Mary Donald. Limited places available. Phone Kathryn 846 5227

30th November (Friday) 5pm – 7pm. Christmas Cocktails at Alberton. Members only. Come and enjoy meeting old friends and making new ones. Drinks and light refreshments. Cover charge \$5 per person payable at the door. RSVP Carron 846 1313 or Jackie 846 6250

### A Great Result...

The M.A.H.S has been in existence for just over a year now and we know that we have had many well attended functions as well as catered to a thirst for information about local history ... but there have been many other unintentional but serendipitous consequences as well. Please let us know of any such occurrences as they happen.....

Late in April, Mary Inomata received a letter from Lower Hutt. It was from Noel Parsons who had recently joined M.A.H.S and was delighted to hear mention of Valda Le Grice in the tale about Benfield Avenue. Mary was able to connect Noel and Valda and they apparently enjoyed a one hour phone call just 'catching up'. These two old friends had met nearly seventy years ago but lost touch over thirty years ago. A great result!

### Historical Botox

A section in which we fill in any gaps and repair damage made by previous issues. Email corrections to Carron at [Rumbaugh@xtra.co.nz](mailto:Rumbaugh@xtra.co.nz) or send to:  
The Editor, M.A.H.S, P.O. Box 77002, Mt Albert.

**Re: Local Walk 4** Fantastic feedback about the walk along the Ballast Line! We have been sent screeds of additional information to the extent that the next issue of this newsletter is probably going to be entitled 'Oh! Ballast!' I mistakenly mentioned that the line went down Sadgrove Tce. It actually wended it's way between Sadgrove and Mt Albert Rd. We will show you a map....

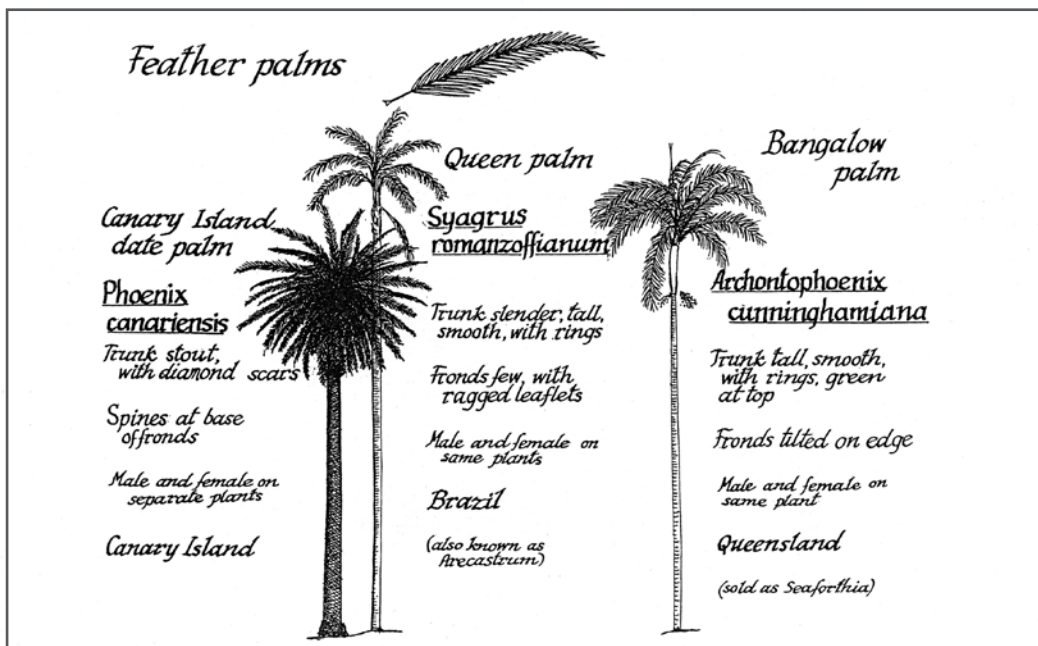
Who knows the story behind the Coronation Oaks in Burch Street? Information to the editor, please.

**Have you remembered to pay your subs?** Please send your cheque and completed form to:  
The Treasurer, PO Box 77002, Mt Albert, Auckland

**Are you interested in becoming a new member?** Membership application forms are available from Kathryn phone 846 5227

# Tattersfield Palms

*Feather palms*

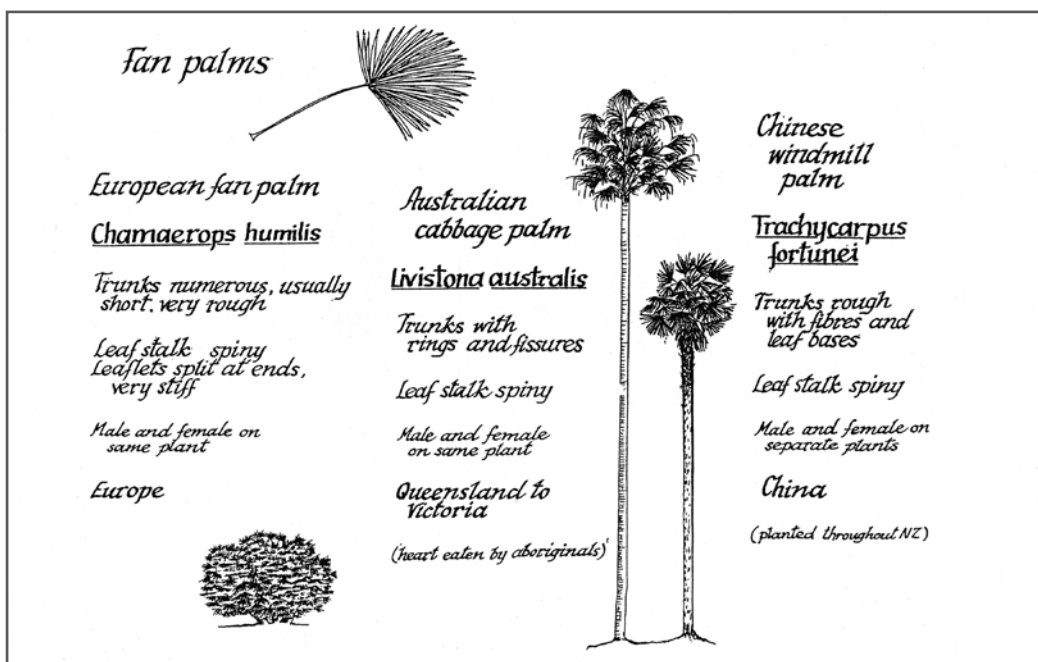


*Canary Island date palm*  
**Phoenix canariensis**  
Trunk stout, with diamond scars  
Spines at base of fronds  
Male and female on separate plants  
Canary Island

*Queen palm*  
**Syagrus romanzoffianum**  
Trunk slender, tall, smooth, with rings  
Frons few, with ragged leaflets  
Male and female on same plants  
Brazil  
(also known as *Arecastrum*)

*Bangalow palm*  
**Archontophoenix cunninghamiana**  
Trunk tall, smooth, with rings, green at top  
Frons tilted on edge  
Male and female on same plant  
Queensland  
(sold as *Seaforthia*)

*Fan palms*



*European fan palm*  
**Chamaerops humilis**  
Trunks numerous, usually short, very rough  
Leaf stalk spiny  
Leaflets split at ends, very stiff  
Male and female on same plant  
Europe

*Australian cabbage palm*  
**Livistona australis**  
Trunks with rings and fissures  
Leaf stalk spiny  
Male and female on same plant  
Queensland to Victoria  
(heart eaten by aboriginals)

*Chinese windmill palm*  
**Trachycarpus fortunei**  
Trunks rough with fibres and leaf bases  
Leaf stalk spiny  
Male and female on separate plants  
China  
(planted throughout NZ)

*The Tattersfield palms at Allendale Rd*

The palms at 34 Allendale Rd were planted on the 4½ acre Tattersfield property by Clement Wragge (1850-1922) a well known weather fore-caster, and a nurseryman, also from the North Shore who probably grew the seedlings. They were planted soon after Wragge arrived in N.Z. in 1910 and before Peter Tattersfield was born in 1912.

Many other palms around Auckland had the same origin, possibly including the Senegal palm once growing in the centre court of St Lukes shopping mall.

Drawing and Text by Alan Esler



# Off Shoots

## Pink Tea Tree

*Leptospermum scoparium* (cultivar *Keatleyi*) was discovered in the far north in 1917 by Mt Albert's very own Captain Edward Keatley. Captain Keatley was employed by the Northern Steamship Line and sailed in twenty two steamships, from the smallest in the fleet to the largest. He had begun his career as a ship's boy in 1885 and worked his way up the ranks. The variety of manuka named for him has larger foliage than normal and its flowers are very large, pale pink singles. Many modern cultivars have been bred from this plant. Captain Keatley lived with his large family in the old 'tropical style' villa still in existence at 16 St Lukes Rd. The retired sea captain evidently ran a nursery and had an impressive garden which has been decimated by subdivision. Remnants can still be found among the trees on the roadside berm outside the original property. Edward and Edith Keatley are buried in the St Lukes cemetery.

*In conversation with John Stacpoole*

## The Trees in Stilwell Road.

The largest trees in Stilwell Rd were planted by Rev. Thomas Joughin, a Methodist minister who owned 7 Stilwell Rd from 1925 to possibly 1942. The trees include several puriri, a cedar, an acmena and a conifer and are around eighty years old. Rev. Joughin was born on the Isle of Mann in 1863, entered the ministry in 1887 and died on the 10th January, 1942. Seven Stilwell Rd was subsequently bought by Alan Esler who was Regional Botanist with the D.S.I.R from 1970 to 1990. He planted the palms on the street, which were grown from seeds, in the early 1970's. The three varieties he planted are a queen palm, a kermadec nikau and a kentia. All three are the same age.

*In conversation with Alan Esler*

## Local Flavour and Colour

In our neighbouring streets we are blessed by many feijoa trees that were planted in the berms and fruit prolifically. They can, for example, be found in Guardwell Tce, Martin Ave, Verona Ave and there is a veritable grove in Challinor Cres. Does any one know any more about the philanthropic thinking that caused these trees to be planted.?

We extend a big thank you to Gus Schick the keen gardener who has planted some decorative (and tasty?) vegetables on the corner of St Lukes and New North roads. They are currently doing very well amidst some pretty spring flowers. Gus says he regards the area as a 'community garden' and enjoys the positive feedback from passers-by. Incidentally, this small piece of park land was once occupied by the Stacpoole family home which was lost to the road widening.

At the end of Leone Tce, on the public land by the railway path, are two or three very large pittosporum planted by a woman in the last house who wanted to screen the sight of the railway line from her bedroom window! Also, on the same piece of public land, there is a macrocapa planted in about 1990 on the spot where a local man died after a random and senseless knife attack....This plot of land has recently been tidied up, underplanted with some natives and fringed with hebes. Thank you to the resident (or council) responsible for this.

## Local Walk 5

### **A walk along the length of Allendale Rd, on the mountainside of the road, with historian and architect, John Stacpoole.**

Late in September three members of M.A.H.S were lucky to be able to accompany John Stacpoole on a walk along the length of Allendale Rd. Subsequently, John produced some well researched notes that complemented his observations on the day. The following draws on only a part of what he has written, the complete transcript has been carefully stored. The return journey along Allendale Rd will be described in a later edition

**The walk starts at the north east end of Allendale Road at its junction with Lloyd Avenue and proceeds along the even numbered side.**

Number 6 was built post world war two for one of the Sims family of Entrican and Sims, the wholesale provision merchants in Customs St east. The earlier Sims house at the south west corner of Richardson Rd and New North Rd was a substantial villa demolished to make way for Peter Beaven's 'nobby houses'. On the other hand, the Entrican house in Alexis Ave with entrances also in Violet St and Kitenui Ave is in good shape although its glazed boundary walls have been broken into.

Number 8 was built 1914/15 for H.T.(Tom ) Merrit, an indent agent who previously lived at 193 Gladstone Rd, a rough cast house wide to the street, close to Benfield Ave. Mrs Merritt was an English school teacher before her marriage and obviously influenced the design of both houses. The Merritts did not stay long. By the mid twenties the occupant's name is given as Warren, followed by T.R. Congalton who became Town Clerk, Mt Albert, in 1931 and held that post until 1957. After a few years he sold number 8 and moved to a house he had built at 27 Stilwell Rd.

On the other side of the bowling greens a pleasantly proportioned bungalow was occupied by Hugh Blundell, described as a manufacturer.

**Take care crossing over Mt Albert Road and continue along Allendale on the same side as before.**

On this corner was a family of Smerdons related to the Bockets who lived on the opposite corner of Allendale at its south west end.

Number 22 belonged to Patrick McCallum, number 24 was a typical bay villa, like its two neighbours, but was 'modernized' by the architect Llew Piper in the 1940's. Number 26 (on the corner with Stilwell Rd) was occupied by Mrs Masefield, connected to the Kaipara Masefields at Batley. This house had had several owners but seems to have been first occupied by a Mrs Brooks or Brookes.

The Brookes name connects it to number 28 on the opposite corner of Stilwell Rd. This house has the marked characteristics of an ornamental bay villa but, unusually, has a prominent attic floor as well. It was apparently built for Albert Eugene Brookes, himself a builder, who was married about 1904 to Mabel Ellen Stephenson, the eldest child of Mrs Eliza Annie Butterworth by her first husband, Alfred Stephenson.

Mrs Butterworth lived on the adjoining property later known, in Tattersfield ownership, as Puriri Puke. The house is found up a right of way at number 34 and is notable for a splendid group of palms planted by Clement Wragge in the early 1900's. The isolation of the old house led to its use as a fever hospital during the typhoid epidemic of 1922.

Mrs Butterworth was the only birth child of William Winstone who lived on the next door property of Tyntesfield. This was built later than Puriri Puke, when William left the two storeyed house in Summit Drive which he had moved there in 1896 from Symonds St.

Tyntesfield is found in Allendale Rise. It is a big, square fronted, single storeyed house, Italianate with a low hipped roof. The eaves are occasionally broken by little gables and the walls by double hung window bays. It was used as a girls home for many years but today is in private ownership.

To the left of the Allendale Rise gateway is a house built in 1926 by noted Arts and Crafts architect, Basil Hooper, for a member of the Lambourne family. Hooper designed at least six other Mt Albert houses and renovated St Lukes church.

On the corner with Douglas Ave is a very good example of a 1920's bungalow. It is admirably suited to its site. It was built by Blair, a warehouseman. On the opposite corner at number 52 is an attractive home built by architect Frederick Brown for Arthur Page, the second generation in the Kingsland firm of produce merchants. At number 58 is a u-shaped group of single storeyed houses built on the site of Ainslie, a grand two storeyed late Victorian house with tiered verandahs across the front and a tennis court at one side. (See 'Our Streets' newsletter 4)

**Return to start of walk.**

## Our Streets

*This issue draws on the knowledge and recollections of several readers who give some insight into the history of Maybeck Avenue.*

Doris Selwyn makes the following contribution about Maybeck Avenue. Leo May and Owen McIntyre made some small amendments. (1)

'The May family arrived in New Zealand from England in the 1840's. They owned a house in Mt Roskill which they onsold to the Winstones and then it became the Akarana Golf Club House.(It no longer exists as the golf club has new rooms.) Their front gate was way up on Richardson Road, I think their driveway must have become Winstone Road.

The May's son Joseph was born in Auckland on the 15th June 1850. He married Marie Maier who had been born in Germany but came to New Zealand, with her younger brother Fidel, as a teenager on board the 'Fumenoth'. Marie and Fidel either came out with their Uncle Richard Beck or to him. Richard Beck had a jewellery shop in Queens Street (or possibly Queens Arcade). *(His name appears on an early local Mt Albert map advertising the sale of J.R. Randerson's property. This subdivision map '...also shows residences of the following: A.K. Taylor, F. Battley, J. Melville, J.T.Garlick, J. W. James, R. Beck....'The map is dated 1875. Ed.)* (2)

Joseph and Marie had five children, three girls and two boys. Their names were Freda, Ida, Marie/ Molly, Francis/ Frank and Joseph Richard (Dick). The first home occupied by the May family was on the left hand corner of New North Road and Maybeck Avenue (looking from New North Road). However, it burnt down.'



*The May family from left to right using names supplied by Leo May: Ida, Marie (nee Maier), Richard, Marie, Francis, Joseph snr, Freda)*

'Their second home was on the right hand side corner of Maybeck and Asquith Avenues (if going along Maybeck towards Asquith). (The May homes had been built on sites diagonally opposite at either end of the street.) I don't know the location of the Beck family home in Maybeck Avenue but the Beck's could have lived with the Mays or in an adjacent dwelling.

Ida McIntyre (nee May) lived with her husband Keith at number thirteen next door to her parents. After Joseph May died on the 3rd August 1916 Dick continued to live with his mother, Marie, until she died many years later on 24th June 1957 aged ninety three. After his mother's death, Dick moved in to the McIntyre home. He had horses in the paddocks behind the houses in Maybeck Avenue which went up as far as the Mt Albert Grammar hostel. He was a very keen race goer.

The graves of Joseph May and Marie May (nee Maier), Richard Beck, Judith Beck, Joseph Richard (Dick) May, and Fidel Maier are marked with stones in the St Lukes churchyard. Freda Oxenham (nee May) is also buried there.'

### References

- 1) Letters and conversations with Doris Selwyn, Leo May and Owen McIntyre 2007. Photographs from Leo May.
- 2) Auckland Museum Institute. Map Collection. Call No DU 436.12 Map40

## Mount Albert Optometrists

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