



# MOUNT ALBERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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## A Century of Mt Albert Weddings - 1860s – 1960s

### 1860s Wedding

Weddings are still the main social ritual of western society and express the changing customs and styles of the time. In the first half of the 19th century weddings in New Zealand were very low key. For most early settlers arriving in New Zealand from Europe, marriage was largely a practical, primarily economic partnership although attraction would have played some part in many decisions to wed.<sup>1</sup> It was celebrated very simply. Brides would wear a plain coloured frock which would continue to be their “best frock” for years to come. This unidentified couple show the bride in the high neckline, full sleeves and crinoline skirt of the 1860s. Brides up to the end of the century favoured posies with lace or paper ruffs. White weddings were inspired by a series of royal weddings of Queen Victoria’s children in the 1860s and by the 20th century were common even amongst working class families. The bride wore a floral headdress and white gloves, a symbolic meaning of maidenhood. Men from at least the Edwardian age through to the late 50’s also wore gloves though I have not been able to discover why.



### 1914 Ethel Penman & Harvey Turner

Ethel and Harvey married in October 1914. Although New Zealand had entered World War One in August of 1914, the general opinion was that “it would all be over by Christmas” so weddings of the period were still a display of social standing and status and this applied to the wedding dress. Ethel’s was probably made of silk satin, ornate and decorated with flounces and pin tucks. Edwardian style shows in the close fitting sleeves with some sleeve head fullness and in the high dog collar neckline. Her 2 yard square traditional veil would have been held in place by a floral head dress usually made of orange blossom. Ethel’s wedding veil is a mob cap style which appeared shirred in front. The popularity of this mob cap style of bridal head dress stayed for some 20 years. Edwardian brides favoured large trailing bouquets.

### 1926 May Penman and Ray Thompson

As we can see the photo style of a seated bridegroom and standing bride was to show off the brides dress. Flapper dresses were straight and loose, and dropped the waistline to the hips. The double layer skirt, and scallop hemline were both ways of creating the optical illusion of the skirt length appearing shorter than it really was. May’s gown was white georgette with silver and bead trimming and her embossed net veil was arranged each side with orange blossom and lily of the valley. She carried a sheath of Christmas lilies which were popular in the 1920s and 30s. Her train was held by two little flower girls, her nieces Marjorie Turner and Joan Penman.

May wore white stockings with her flapper wedding gown and high heels which were in vogue at the time reaching two inches high. Silk or rayon stockings were held up by garters. Hems lifted steadily through the decade. No longer restrained by a tight waist and long trailing skirts, the modern woman of the 1920s was an independent thinker, who no longer followed the conventions of those before her. It wasn’t until the Wall Street stock market crash of 1929 that the roaring 20s era of glitz and glamour came to an end; and with it, the flapper dress.<sup>2</sup> Pearls were de rigueur. By 1926, shorter dresses were very much the fashionable norm for younger and older women.



<sup>1</sup> I Do Sandra Coney pge 15

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia 1930–45 in fashion

<sup>3</sup> TeAra.govt.nz/en/interactive/30806/wedding-fashions-1890s-to-1950s

<sup>4</sup> Wikipedia

<sup>5</sup> nzhistory.net

<sup>6</sup> TeAra.govt.nz/en/marriage-and-partnering/page-4

# MT ALBERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.



## 1935 Alma Clark and Reg Morgan

Feminine curves were highlighted in the 1930s through the use of the bias-cut in dresses. By 1930, longer skirts and natural waists were shown everywhere.

In women's fashion, the era was dominated by Hollywood glamour. In the 1930s, Hollywood movies encouraged a sleeker, more glamorous look. Movie costumes were covered not only in film fan magazines, but in influential fashion magazines such as Harpers Bazaar and Vogue and influenced what women wore until war-time restrictions on fabric stopped the flow of lavish costumes from Hollywood. Alma loved the movies and was very avant garde for the

times. Her wedding gown was gold lace with flutter sleeves and a Juliet cap without a veil. Her shoes were gold satin. Alma's family still have her wedding gown. Note the appearance of the 'calla lily' spray. These, with arum lilies were in vogue in floral bouquet fashions of the 1930s. Their sculptural effect matched the sinuous lines of the bias-cut wedding gowns of the period.

Incidentally until 1933 the legal marriage age was 12 for girls and 14 for boys. From 1933 it became 16 years for both sexes.



## 1941 Nancy Rowe and Roy Turner

World War Two had started and Roy had already been called up.

Roy and Nancy were married on 23 December 1941 at St Matthews church in Auckland. Roy was training with the army at the time and had leave for a few days to get married.

We see him here in his uniform though he did not go overseas until 1943. Despite war material rationing, Nancy was able to have a traditional gown very much in the style of the late 1930s. The two yard

square veil and floral headdress continued to be de rigueur as were the rope of pearls. Nancy carried a sheath of white lilies.

The Second World War disrupted the usual flow of goods and information into New Zealand. News of the latest fashions coming out of Paris was curtailed, and clothes rationing limited sartorial options. The sheath of flowers was still the most popular choice. Brides during the Second World War were far more restrained, often choosing street wear as they were hindered by food and fabric shortages as well as the belief that extravagance was inappropriate when nations were in peril and men going off to die.<sup>3</sup>

*Dior's 1947 collection dubbed the 'New Look' was a revelation of beauty and luxury, with long, full, fluid skirts, cinched-in waists and soft shoulders – the antithesis of militaristic wartime fashions. British Vogue put it like this: 'There are moments when fashion changes fundamentally. This is one of those moments.'*<sup>4</sup>



## 1951 Betty Pearce and John Wigg

The 1950s were a relatively conservative period for weddings as little changed during the decade. As prosperity returned after the war there was a revival of the gown made for the wedding alone. Heavy satins were popular creating a sculptured look in wedding dresses. Sleeves tended to be long and close fitting, veils became less important and headdresses were perched on the crown of the head. Longer trains had returned and Betty's gown conforms to all these points. Her Juliet cap sitting further back on the head than earlier times. From the 1950s on, brides tended to choose smaller arrangement of flowers. Note the horseshoe that she carries for luck.



## 1963 Mary Stanton and Hisashi Inomata

The arrival of television and jet travel shrank our world in the 60s. We were exposed to other places, ideas and influences.<sup>5</sup>

In 1960 we had our first TV transmission and Snell's double gold in Rome. It was observed by one publication in 1965 that opposition to the Vietnam War was causing New Zealanders to behave 'in ways quite uncharacteristic of the species as recognised by their ancestors'. This is definitely a decade of rebellion for women, as they are beginning to have a mind and fashion sense of their own.

In 1963, the young look was sweeping through the fashion world like a great

tsunami. This look included knee-high skirts, sleeveless dresses, lower heels with pointy toes and close-cropped, natural hair. Dresses in the 1960s were often high waisted in an empire style which shows in Mary's gown which was satin princess line with a French Alencon lace bolero top and a short veil. Her choice of a knee length wedding dress and pointy toe shoes were pure 60s. Newer neater styles of wedding spray bouquet fashions were popular in the 1960s. Mary carried a smaller spray of red carnations with ribbons.

The rules around marriage – customary and legal – began to loosen in the 1960s. The changes were part of a shift in New Zealand society as the youth culture of the 1960s emerged.<sup>6</sup>

Multicultural marriages became more common. The marriage vows were conducted in English and Japanese for the benefit of Hisashi's family. This photo was taken inside a church which had been very uncommon until the 60s.

M.A.H.S Dates To Remember

February 20, 2016 (Saturday) 2pm. Ferndale House, 830 New North Road, Mt Albert

Waterview Tunnel Project photographic record. Our speaker Dianne Smith has had the unique opportunity to have obtained an amazing photographic record of the construction of the vast Waterview Tunnel Project.

She will present a 45 minute illustrated overview of this huge undertaking, which since the start, has continued to attract worldwide attention.

On completion it will have an impact on infrastructure and development, not seen since the opening of the Harbour Bridge. \$2 entry. All Welcome.

Home Sweet Home

Finally, in the tenth year of our existence Mt Albert Historical Society have a place to call home.

It is 869 New North Road, Mt Albert which is a historical building in itself. It was built before 1910 possibly by Arthur Carr a builder, as a drapers shop for his wife Kathleen. By 1912 Mrs Carr was Mt Albert Post Mistress and the shop served as a post office until the early 1930's. It has had a chequered career over the years, during the 70's it was used by the Mt Albert Senior Citizens and in the 2000's by the Mt Albert Community Police. The building is owned by Auckland Council and we do have to share it but we are in good company with Neighbourhood Support Auckland, Mt Albert Patrol Cars and Mt Albert Residents Association. Eventually we would like to be open to the residents of Mt Albert on a Saturday morning from 10am to 1pm so we are in need of two volunteers at a time to be there to help with any enquiries. Please contact Mary on 8464509 if you are willing to participate occasionally.



869 New North Road

News from the Past...

A GOOD STORY

On Monday last a young clerk in the employ of an Auckland firm secured leave of absence from his employers to go to New Plymouth to attend the wedding of his sister (telegraphs the Taranaki Herald's correspondent). Next, one of the partners received the following wire: "Wedding postponed Friday; can I stay?"

The employer reflected that the postponement of weddings was somewhat unusual and especially a postponement to Friday, an "unlucky" day, also being a keen football follower, he remembered that on Saturday Mt Albert Grammar and

New Plymouth High School were to play off for the Moascar Cup. Therefore he wired his clerk this reply: "you may stay; hope Grammar wins."

One can imagine the feelings of the youngster when he went to the telegraph office and thus acknowledged his attempted deception.

"Sorry tried to bluff you, realise you are too much of a sport to be fooled. Thanks for permission, will barrack hard for Grammar."

Hawera & Normanby Star, Volume XLVIII, 30 September 1924, Page 2

Editors note: Unfortunately for Mt Albert Grammar, New Plymouth Boys High retained the Moascar Cup with a 12:3 win.

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The History of the Moascar Cup

Every time schoolboys play for the Moascar Cup, they are continuing a tradition that began on the sands of Egypt toward the end of the First World War.

The fighting over, some troops remained until the early months of 1919, partly because there were not enough ships available to get them home. British, New Zealand and Australian soldiers camped at Moascar in Ismaila, at the northern end of the Suez Canal, east of Cairo, formed the Ismaila Rugby Union and organised a rugby competition.

The Ismaila Rugby Union then organised a cup - described as "a handsome Irish cup" - and had it

mounted on a piece of a wooden propeller blade from a German aircraft shot down in Palestine. Thus, the Moascar Cup came into being and was won by the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Unit and Depot, which won nine of its ten matches. The rugby was not just an idle kick around in the sand.

The Cup was brought home and presented to the New Zealand Rugby Football Union on condition that it be a challenge trophy for secondary schools. It continues to be played for, nearly 100 years after the end of the war and is one of the most coveted prizes in First XV rugby.

Ron Palenski

1 Mt Albert Heritage Study page 72



# MT ALBERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

*Glennys McGlashan has kindly shared a childhood memory with us from when her family lived at 9 Allendale Road, Mt Albert.*

## THE WEDDING

I was seven years old and I was extremely interested in what was happening in the house next to our home in Mt Albert in the summer of 1947. The house had been let as the owner had departed for an overseas trip for a year. The tenants were a man and woman who were thought to be a married couple as they introduced themselves as the 'Wrights'. I was often lonely as my brother was eight years older than me, and I regularly visited the Wrights and they welcomed me with biscuits and sweets and treated me as a friend. I rode my tricycle up and down the their lovely wide concrete paths and chattered to them regularly about my toys and what was happening at Mt Albert Primary School where I was a pupil.

Imagine my parents' surprise when I came home one Saturday morning and announced that I needed to wear my very best dress that afternoon as I was going to a wedding with the Wrights. After some discussion, my family agreed that I was probably confused but as I insisted, my mother allowed me to wear a pretty yellow hand smocked dress with short puffed sleeves and a large bow tied at the back. My mother had made the dress which was a fashionable item for little girls in the late 1940's. I was also allowed to wear my best black patent leather shoes. My mother tied up my hair with a ribbon to match my dress. I happily skipped over to the neighbours and found Mrs Wright attired in a full length, beautiful white lace wedding dress and veil. Mr Wright was clad in a smart navy suit, white shirt and tie. They explained that I was to be their flower girl, and my

duties were to carry Mrs Wright's train very carefully as we all walked down Allendale Road and around the corner to the Mt Albert Presbyterian Church. I felt very excited and full of importance at my sudden role as flower girl and we began our little regimented procession out of the gate past my own house. My astonished parents, grandmother and brother were staring out of our lounge windows between the white net curtains and I gaily waved to them as I held up the flowing bride's train off the footpath. At the church another lady and man were waiting for us and I was told that they were the witnesses. The marriage ceremony was fairly brief and when it was over, the adults were laughing and seemed very happy and excited. We all walked back to the Wright's house, not worrying about carrying the train much to my disappointment. We had a delicious afternoon tea of sausage rolls and cream cakes. With my tummy full of these treats I returned home to a barrage of questions from my family.

This all happened in 1947, when values and expectations were quite different than they are today; defacto relationships were unknown or not talked about, and people were very conservative in their views. My family talked and laughed about the Wright's wedding for years and my role as flower girl. I have often thought of the Wrights and wondered if their marriage lasted and what happened to them after the owner of the property returned from her overseas experiences.



*Glennys Brough aged 7 at 9 Allendale Road*



*Glennys Brough aged 7 at 9 Allendale Road*

### **To Relatives of Bill Caughey, John O'Hanlon and Clifford Jackson**

Are you related to Bill Caughey, John O'Hanlon or Clifford Jackson? A recorded interview was conducted with each of these three people in 2009 by MAHS. The society would like to locate a relative of each of these people to sign an agreement to make the interviews available to the public for research purposes in the research centres of Auckland Libraries. If you are a relative or can help locate a relative please telephone Mary 846 4509.