



MOUNT ALBERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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Tony Mayes: Making an impact in Mount Albert and beyond

Tony Mayes has been described as a champion volunteer who has always been prepared to put his hand up to help others. One of his many volunteer roles has been as a Mount Albert Historical Society committee member. A cancer diagnosis two years after his retirement meant that Tony had to curtail some of his activities, and MAHS has been the beneficiary. Tony is an original 'number 8 fencing wire' kiwi who cannot resist a challenge.



Tony at work for MAHS.

Early years spent in the backblocks of Torbay in the 1940s set the pattern for learning while doing. On Glenvar Road, Tony's family lived on 30 acres of scrub, which they 'sort of farmed'. His father broke in enough for them to have cows, chooks, and ducks, as well as vegetables, and fruit trees making them largely self-sufficient. Getting in and out of Torbay meant a one-mile walk or, when Tony was little, a taxi ride to the nearest bus.

Because of the distance, Tony studied by correspondence for a year before beginning Browns Bay Primary School aged six. He remembers a Standard Four teacher he was 'dead scared of and always seemed to run foul of'. In

Form One, however, he 'became her best pal'. She had obviously found his measure and had him fixing old sewing machines and other equipment.

Tony won a thrift essay competition one year, so was well rounded. He went on to Murrays Bay Intermediate and then Rangitoto College, to which he could bike. In 1959, at the end of the Fourth Form, he left school. He 'couldn't get away fast enough!'

At home his father, a very good gardener, was a role model for the young Tony. He was a foreman at the Heards Chocolate Factory in Parnell, and then worked for a Venetian Blind Company, where Tony learnt all about blinds during his school holidays.

His practical skills were impressive, and helped him to his first job at a car wrecking yard opposite the old Albany pub. These skills made him a dream employee who could 'just get on with the job'. Tony's father had sold him his old 1929 Whippet, which the gravel road, he recalls, 'shook the living daylights out of', but it made him very handy with the equipment in the wrecking yard.

Soon after starting at the yard, Tony was offered an apprenticeship with an auto-electrician, earning 30 shillings a week. With a friend he would catch the bus into town, to the Electric Construction Company in Fort Street. Among other things, he also then learnt to drink, in the Britomart pub.

At weekends Tony continued work at the wrecking yard. During his 5-year apprenticeship, three weeks of each of the first three years were spent in Wellington at the Technical College in Petone. With other boys, he travelled there by train and was housed in Trentham at the Immigration hostel, 'an absolute dive'. Their

complaints about mice droppings in the sugar were summarily dismissed, so they had it analysed at the college and proved their claim. The mice aside, those trips were a highlight.

His apprenticeship complete, Tony then worked as an auto-electrician in Manurewa and then, 'chasing the money' to feed his passion for cars, in Tokoroa and Murapara, where he became a union representative in the Timber Workers' Union. In his spare time Tony was into motor racing, and would travel through to Mount Maunganui to the saloon car racing.

However, when his former boss in Manurewa offered him his job back, Tony jumped at it because of the bigger car racing scene in Auckland. In 1970 he was building a Triumph Vitesse racecar, and in 1973 got involved as auto-electrician for the Ford Works rally team, a big team with four cars and four good drivers.



Tony driving his Triumph Vitesse.

But then he 'met this lady at a party in Auckland and traded the car for her'. Even though 'the lady', Pam, was unimpressed with the racecar meet that he took her to on their first date, and 'still doesn't go to race meetings', it was obviously a good decision, as they recently celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary.

So in 1974 Tony sold the car, retired from active racing, married Pam, bought a house in Lynfield, and started a business building electrical systems for rally cars, and another for mobile car tuning. He also began importing auxiliary lighting for rally cars from France, and then built a shed for storage. But in 1980 the big OE beckoned.

Tony and Pam sold the Lynfield house, bought another one cheaper on Mount Albert Road, and set out for six months in Britain and Europe, their trip of a lifetime.

On returning home to Mount Albert they began their family, and the house gradually became too small for them. They moved to St Lukes Road, to a large farmhouse that was ideal for their four, and later five children, although Tony and Pam 'rattle around in it a bit these days'. The girls went from Saint Lukes Road across town to Kristen School in Albany while the boys went to Mount Albert Grammar School. Both Tony and Pam were committed to every aspect of their children's education, and Tony's volunteering took off in earnest.

Two of their daughters were involved in trampolining, and Tony spent 10 years as President of the Auckland Trampoline Association. Two played the piano accordion, and Tony joined the committee of the New Zealand Federation of Accordionists (NZFOA), and ended up its President too.

Tony, the 'nuts and bolts man', enjoyed the practical side of these roles, but the politics behind the scenes not so much. He was pleased when trampolining came under the auspices of gymnastics because it was going into the Olympics, and he was able to relinquish his role. Local concerns then kept him busy for many years.

During the OE, Tony became interested in town planning and saw the need to protect residents from the adverse effect of some local planning decisions. As a member of the Mount Albert Residents' Association (MARA), of which he was Treasurer for 7 years, he had the chance to sit down with town planners and talk about local issues.



Tony and Pam.

It was at a MARA meeting, when a local constable talked about Community Patrols, that Tony, who had been working as an anti-graffiti volunteer for a number of years, was inspired to set up the Mount Albert group.

Community Patrols are citizen volunteers, trained to keep an eye on their communities. They drive or walk the local streets watching out for suspicious activities, and are in contact with the police when on their watch. Tony set up the local branch in about six months. Having been in business himself, he was able to get local businesses to support them with donations. A car was loaned by Goodwin Real Estate, and various pieces of equipment, including torches, high-visibility jackets, and cellphones, were purchased immediately. A car was purchased later and when the Z garage at Kitenui Ave asked about sponsorship, they began filling the tank of the patrol car. In all, 15 volunteers did 4 hour shifts, and Tony was part of the group for six years.

The Community Patrols worked with MARA on research to prevent the opening of another liquor shop in Mount Albert Village. Their work led to the clearing up of Ballast Lane beside the railway line and the start of work on the shopping centre.

Through those years Tony served on school committees and a board of trustees. He was a member of Jaycees and Kiwanis, the latter making him the subject of 'This is your Life', with only Pam being in the know. And alongside all of this volunteering, Tony was still working.

One of his last enterprises grew out of his attendance at the Avondale Sunday Market. Every week he drove his musician daughter there to busk, to finance her musical studies in the United States. Tony spotted a gap in the market and set up Tony's Mobile Alarm Services. From a gazebo at that Market, he took orders for alarms, which he fitted the following week.

Through this work Tony became involved with a security company that needed alarms in their vans, and for the next six years he worked all over New Zealand installing alarms for them. He turned one of his garages into a factory where he 'built some high-tech stuff'. An Australian company found out what he was doing, and for many years he 'did a lot of work for them'.

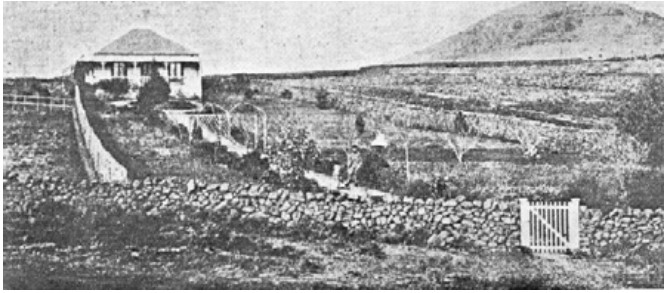
At the age of 70 it was time for retirement on his terms. His home would be 100 years old in 2022 and he was interested in researching that. MAHS was the obvious next step and his contribution continues to enhance our society. When MAHS moved into its new offices in Ferndale Annex, Tony was on hand with his tools.

He has volunteered in the wider community but is also there for those close at hand. An elderly neighbour with a 1976 Escort – like the one he worked on as a young man into rally cars – relies on Tony to keep it maintained, registered, and running. Tony is also the liaison between MAHS and the Mount Albert Business Association.

He describes his 75 years as 'an interesting life'. He has packed in more than most, but says modestly that he has not gone very far away from the auto-electrical. He is in the patent office as an inventor of security cases used by firms both here and overseas. The young boy from the backblocks in Torbay has understood the need to move with the times and continually re-invent himself – 'otherwise you stagnate'.

Tony has never ignored a challenge. The champion volunteer has loved the involvement in the community. 'You got out and did!' and Mount Albert has been the better for it.

The Garlicks of Ferndale



The original Fern Villa.

Ferndale began life as a square box of a house called Fern Villa. Built by George Fitness and Son on a vegetation-free and stony chunk of land carved off the Kerr-Taylor estate, it was ready for occupation when Jonathan Tonson Garlick married Ann Elizabeth Jane Houghton in 1865. In 1881, Fern Villa was extended to create the large, verandah-wrapped house that survives today. The architect of this addition appears to have been Edward Bartley, who (the following year) designed the Methodist Church directly across the road.

Jonathan Tonson Garlick (1841–1898), who was born in London, arrived in New Zealand in 1861 on the *Mermaid*. His mother and three of his siblings had come a year earlier. Two more siblings followed.



Jonathan Tonson Garlick.

In London, the young Garlick had worked as an accountant and cashier. He pursued this career and a spot of share-broking in Auckland as well, eventually buying into a large drapery business under the name of Holloway and Garlick. After name-changes and an increased focus on furniture, the firm was by 1897 known as Tonson Garlick Company Limited. It was also known as The People's Furnishing Warehouse, and occupied several shops on the site that was to become the St James Theatre in Queen Street, with a factory behind in Lorne Street.

The business prospered despite several devastating fires, the last of which, in 1928, cleared the site for the theatre. The furniture manufacturers won an award at the 1888 Melbourne Exhibition. Several pieces by the firm are in the Auckland War Memorial Museum's collection. Typical of the day, some are elaborately decorated with 'Maori' carving and details drawn from New Zealand flora.



Ferndale as we know it today.

Mrs Garlick (1847–1947) was known as Jane or Jinny, not Annie (as is shown in the memorial window in the Mount Albert Methodist Church, and other evidence). She was the daughter of John Houghton, a prosperous draper from Birmingham and Northampton. Having brought his family to New Zealand on the *Kinnaird* in 1862, he owned land in Mt Eden and at Te Hana, north of Wellsford. Houghton appears to have been closely associated with the Albertlanders, a group of settlers in the Kaipara area who were largely drawn from Non-Conformists from the Midlands.



Ann Elizabeth Jane Garlick.

As hardly more than a girl, in 1862, Jane Houghton walked with her brother and a guide from Mangawhai (though she claimed Whangarei) to the Albertland settlement. Both the Garlicks and the Houghtons were fervent Baptists. They belonged to the congregation of the Wellesley Street Chapel from the mid-1860s until the establishment of the new Tabernacle in Queen Street.

Houghton was Superintendent of the Mount Eden Baptist Sunday School. JT Garlick followed him in that role, 1866–8. The Mount Albert equivalent was founded by the Garlicks in cooperation with the Methodist Church in 1868. Garlick was its Superintendent for 17 years.

Ferndale, as we now know it, hosted the Mount Albert Mutual Improvement Society from 1883 to 1891. Mutual Improvement Societies originated in the north of England in the second half of the 19th century amongst Non-Conformists. The aim of the Mount Albert venture was (typical of the movement generally) to 'interest and improve' the Young Men's Bible Class of the Wesleyan (and Baptist) School. Discussion groups and a wide range of activities (in due course open to women) met

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regularly at the Garlick residence. The last meeting (in 1891) was attended by 'upwards of 150 people'. The podium was 'tastefully decorated à la Japanese'.

An extension of the Garlicks' fervent Baptist affiliation was their commitment to the Temperance Movement which flourished from the 1880s onwards, in association with the emerging Women's Movement. JT Garlick door-knocked his way from Avondale to Kingsland with a petition and (when invited) entered houses, praying with families and getting them to 'sign the pledge'. Following the passing of the Licensing Act in 1881, local licensing committees controlled the consumption of alcohol in their districts. The Garlicks played no small role in ensuring that an application for the establishment of a tavern in Mount Albert failed. Mt Albert remained 'dry'. Garlick was sure that the fires that plagued his furniture business were the work of the thwarted publican.

JT Garlick was Treasurer of the Baptist Union 1887–97, and of the Tabernacle from 1895. He was a Deacon from 1891. He donated a railing for the rostrum in 1895 and left the 'Tab' money in his will. During a schism in the Tabernacle's congregation, Garlick staunchly supported the charismatic, but strictly conservative, pastor, Thomas Spurgeon.

In 1898, JT Garlick decided on a world tour, to visit furniture businesses in Europe and America, and his birthplace, London. There he attended the annual conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour, and delivered a paper on 'Christian Endeavour in Auckland'.

In England, he spent much time with Spurgeon, who had returned there to assume the pastorate of the London Metropolitan Baptist Church. It was at the pastor's residence (called 'Auckland') in Camberwell, South London, that JT Garlick, aged 57, died of influenza and complications. He is buried in the West Norwood Cemetery. Jane Garlick got no further than New York in a bid to reach him before his death, and returned to Auckland to find her father John Houghton had also died.

She herself lived another 50 years, playing an active role in Mount Albert affairs, especially the Bowling and Tennis Clubs. The Mount Albert Bowling and Croquet Clubs are built on land donated by the Garlicks. Jane was a keen gardener and planted the stand of Norfolk Pines that are a Mount Albert landmark. Just prior to her death, Ferndale was bought by the Mt Albert Borough Council. Jane continued to live there until her death in 1947, five months short of her hundredth birthday. The Garlicks had five children, the sons all involved in the furniture business until its demise in 1928.

Don Bassett, 2019



The People's Furnishing Warehouse.



Cabinet by J Tonson Garlick & Co. Auckland War Memorial Museum.

M.A.H.S Dates To Remember

1st July 2019 – 30th June 2020 subscription fees for MAHS are now due. The \$20 can be paid by cheque, or directly to bank account 12 3029 0402365 00.

Sunday 7th July, 2pm, The Clay House, 39 Lloyd Avenue

Mid-Winter Christmas: MAHS members Geoff and Jenny Dainty will share this occasion with us in their home. You *must* register to attend this event: info@mtalberthistoricalsociety.org.nz or 846 4509.

Saturday 24th August, 2pm, Ferndale House

MAHS Annual General Meeting. Dr Eric McKenzie, mycologist, is to be the guest speaker.

Saturday 19th October, 2pm, Ferndale House

MAHS event: David Veart writer, archaeologist, historian, and cookbook enthusiast will be the guest speaker.