



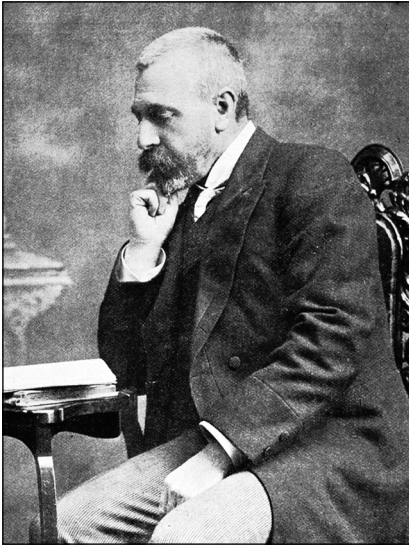
MOUNT ALBERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Newsletter 19 • July 2012

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Sir George Fowlds CBE (1860 – 1934)

‘Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might’.



New Zealand's new cabinet minister: Hon.
G. Fowlds. Minister for Education and Public
Health. c.1906

Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland
Libraries, AWNS-19060809-6-2

Many will already be familiar with the well documented public life of former Mt Albert resident George Fowlds, a précis of which is as follows. He was a member of the Mt Albert Road Board; a member of the House of Representatives for Auckland City and Member of Parliament for Grey Lynn. In 1906 George Fowlds was included in the new cabinet, with the portfolios of Education and Public Health. In 1916 he was appointed to the Auckland University College Council and in later years assumed Chairmanship of the College Council. He was also one of the founders of Massey Agricultural College and Chairman of the Board of Governors until his death. He was knighted in 1928, being created a Knight Bachelor.

Local resident Andrew Littlejohn is the great grandson of George Fowlds, and Andrew shared some of the Fowlds family history and stories with us in a recent interview.

George, the youngest son of Matthew Fowlds and Agnes Craig, was born in 1860 at ‘Greystone Knowe’, Fenwick, Ayrshire, Scotland. As a young man, George set off for Cape Town, South Africa in 1882 where he worked as a labourer and then as a book-keeper. He married Mary Fulton of Glasgow in 1884 and in 1885 they migrated to New Zealand.

By 1888 George had his own business, George Fowlds Menswear, in Queen Street, which prospered and for more than 40 years was one of the leading menswear stores in Auckland. From about 1920 a Wellington branch of the store was operated for many years in Manners Street. The store building in Wellington was owned by George's three daughters, separate to the ownership and running of the business. George Fowlds was considered a very fair businessman and it is understood that he implemented a profit share arrangement with the store staff.

In 1889 he built a home in New North Road, Mt Albert, which he named ‘Greystone Knowe’ after the old family home in Scotland. (The house was listed as being owned by his wife Mary Fowlds.) George and Mary raised their seven children at ‘Greystone Knowe’ and the family regularly enjoyed hosting many large social gatherings there. The children attended Gladstone School and George contributed funds to build the school swimming pool.

In 1911, George purchased land from the Spragg family and built a holiday home (named ‘Waiata Tui’ – The Song of the Tui) for his family at the top of Mountain Road, Waiatarua. The family used to go there for holidays and for Christmas. In about 1936, William Forrest Fowlds, the youngest son of George and Mary, purchased the property.

‘Greystone Knowe’ was sold in 1926 and George and Mary moved to Belmont Avenue (now known as Ferner Avenue) Mt Albert. Subsequent owners of Greystone Knowe converted the large family home into flats, and today the property is called Vi Anna. You can still see a peek of the house down the long driveway at 884 New North Road, Mt Albert.

George Fowlds came from a missionary type background and was involved in the Congregational Church in New Zealand. As Minister of Education and Health in the Liberal Government 1899 – 1911 he had a lot to do with the Maori communities and his Liberal Party colleagues Apirana Ngata, Maui Pomare and Peter Buck. There were big initiatives at the turn of the century to improve Maori health and education. Fowlds did an extensive tour of the Maori schools in the East Coast, Bay of Plenty and the Central Plateau regions to see firsthand the quality and standard of teaching in the Native Schools, travelling was done on horseback in the more remote areas. The family had a close association with the Maori communities particularly in the Rotorua area.

George Fowlds was the New Zealand Government representative that attended the opening of Parliament in South Africa in 1910, and was involved in the return of Governor George Grey's archives from South Africa which are currently held in the Auckland City Library.

Following the death of George Fowlds in 1934, his wife Mary lived with her daughters May Craig Fowlds (who married Arthur Bailey, they lost their only son Irwin Fowlds Bailey in WWII while flying with the RAF) and Agnes and Colin Littlejohn. Mary Fowlds died in 1943.

MT ALBERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Sir George Fowlds cont'd...

Andrew Littlejohn's paternal grandparents were Agnes and Colin Littlejohn who were married in the Mt Albert Presbyterian Church in 1923. Agnes was the second eldest daughter of George and Mary Fowlds. Colin Littlejohn on his return from WWI, resumed teaching at Waitaki Boys High School in Oamaru, he was then appointed as the first Headmaster at Takapuna Grammar School in 1927, before going on to Auckland Grammar School as Headmaster from 1933 – 1953.

Agnes and Colin Littlejohn had one child, Colin McGregor (known as 'Mac') who married Judith O'Brien from Seatoun, Wellington. They in turn had four children, the eldest Andrew and three daughters.

Andrew Littlejohn is interested in researching and recording his family history and we thank him for sharing some of this with the society. Andrew can be contacted at a.littlejohn@barfoot.co.nz or by phone 846 7573.



Greystone Knowe, New North Road, Mt Albert, Auckland. c.1895
Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 255a-A11597



Looking south east showing Geo Fowlds store on the corner of Queen Street and Fort Street decorated for the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York. c.1901
Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 2366-7558.

AUCTIONS.

**TO-MORROW, at 11 o'Clock.
MOUNT ALBERT.**

**DOUBLE-SEATED BUGGY (Extension Hood),
SET OF HARNESS, HORSES WELL-BRED ST.
BERNARD PUPS PIGEONS, A SPLENDID
PIANO. HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE AND
EFFECTS, OIL PAINTINGS, BOOKS, ETC.**

RICHARD ARTHUR

(Commission Auctioneer and Agent),

Has been favoured with instructions from Mr George Fowlds (who is about to pay a visit to England), to sell by auction at his residence, Graystone Knowe, Mount Albert, on Wednesday next, at 11 o'clock a.m.

HIS HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE AND EFFECTS,
consisting of Drawing, Dining, Bedroom and Kitchen Requisites – A Superior Piano (iron frame), by Ascherburg, Mahogany Sideboard, Walnut Drawing-room Suite in Rep, Carpets, Oilcloth, Rugs, Mirrors, Oil Paintings, Pictures, Books, Ornaments, Iron Bedsteads, Chests of Drawers in New Zealand Wood, Marble-top Washstands, Duchess Suite, Tables, Looking Glasses, Chairs, etc., Crockery, Kitchen and Cooking Utensils, Tools.

A Good Double-seated Buggy, with Extension Hood. Set of Harness, Chestnut Buggy Mare, a Young Bay Horse, saddle or harness. Six well-bred St. Bernard Pups (7 months), Good Tumbler Pigeons.

On View morning of the day of Sale.

The Sale will commence outside.

A Special 'Bus will start from the Mart at 10 o'clock a.m.

Auckland Star 21 March 1893, p8

CITY FIRM'S ANNIVERSARY

GEORGE FOWLDS, LTD. FOUNDED FORTY YEARS AGO.

The staff and friends of the firm of George Fowlds, Ltd., were last evening the guests of the managing-director, the Hon. George Fowlds, at a dinner held in the Pacific Club to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the firm. Among those present were Mr. P.G. Lee (president of the Wholesalers and Warehousemen's Association), Mr. F.A. Hellaby (president of the Chamber of Commerce), Mr. G. Ashley (representing the Drapers' Association), Messrs. A.C. Caughey and J.W. Shackelford, also Messrs. R. Cleghorn and N.H. Miller (managers of the Auckland and Wellington branches of Fowlds, Ltd.)...

... A number of speakers extended their congratulations and referred to both the good name enjoyed by the firm of Fowlds and to Mr. Fowlds' high standing in both local and national affairs. Their eulogistic remarks were acknowledged by Mr. G.M. Fowlds.

Excerpt from article Auckland Star 16 June 1926

An extensive collection of personal papers of George Fowlds are housed at the University of Auckland Library and are available for viewing.

Further detailed information on Fowlds Park can be viewed on the Timespanner website <http://timespanner.blogspot.co.nz/2010/07/walk-through-fowlds-park-mt-albert.html> entitled 'A Walk Through Fowlds Park, Mt Albert' by Lisa Truttman, July 2010.

M.A.H.S Dates To Remember

25th August (Saturday) 2pm: MAHS AGM and presentation by Sir Harold Marshall. Ferndale House, 830 New North Rd, Mt Albert. The AGM will commence at 2pm followed by the presentation. Sir Harold will illustrate experiences enjoyed by his extended family centred around their iconic Kiwi bach, which has been in his family for 71 years. Refreshments provided. Gold coin door donation appreciated.

13th October (Saturday) 1pm: Visit to Mill Cottage, Henderson. Members only visit to restored Mill Cottage, Henderson. Bus leaves from outside Senior Citizen's Hall (next to Rocket Park). Steeped in history, including old New Lynn railway station photos, a replica waterwheel by the river, and photos, artifacts, and scale models on show. \$15 inc entry and Devonshire tea. RSVP to Brian Ph 626 6664.

30th November (Friday) 5pm is the date of this year's annual Christmas function at Alberton House. So mark in your calendars now!

Tidbits

Did you guess who the third Prime Minister who lived in Mt Albert was?

David Lange - He lived with his wife and brought his first child home to 540 New North Rd from 1973 to 1977 until he was elected as MP for Mangere. It is also the place where he cut off two toes whilst mowing the lawn!

PRINCE OF WALES ESTATE

We have had recent dialogue with a local resident who lived in Wairere Ave and knew the area was referred to as Prince Of Wales Estate. She wondered if we knew why it was called this. The estate was purchased by J Logan in 1921 and as the Prince of Wales had visited New Zealand in 1920 the assumption is that it was named in honour of his visit.

In his advertising J Logan always referred to the estate being at the end of Roslyn Road (now Rossgrove Terrace) and specifically mentions Margaret and Parkland Road as being part of the estate. We also know Veronica, Chatham and Norwood were dedicated roads within the estate.

If you have any further knowledge of other streets within the estate or why it was named as Prince of Wales Estate we'd love to hear from you.

CHARMING PRINCE OF WALES ESTATE.

THE GARDEN ESTATE OF MOUNT ALBERT

Laid out in latest style with ROCK GARDEN and PLANTATION RESERVES and bounded by a stream planted with willows and other trees.

THE REASON WHY YOU SHOULD BUILD YOUR HOME HERE:

GOOD ROADS AND PATHS, GAS, WATER AND ELEC LIGHT.

HANDY TO 3RD TRAMS AND BUSES. LANDSCAPE VIEWS

New Railway Improvements will bring Estate about 13min of Queen Street, and values are bound to rise.

OWNER

J.M. LOGAN,

23, SECCOMBES ROAD, EPSOM.

Phone 2770

Or Agents 440

Auckland Star 21 November 1924, p3

News from the Past...

PRINCE ENJOYS HIS PLAYTIME

Rotorua, April 30, 1920

Returning to the Grand Hotel from a private dance last night, the Prince of Wales astonished a porter by creeping quietly downstairs. Looking round, he found in the office the slate on which instructions are written as to the time guests are to be called.

He wrote for a minute and then dashed upstairs again. The porter looked at the slate and found an instruction to call Lord Louis Mountbatten, the prince's cousin, at 5.30a.m. and Lord Claude Hamilton, his equerry at 5 o'clock.

The porter carried out the instructions. Lord Hamilton, it is stated, was inclined to be annoyed when he heard loud knocks on his door as the town clock was striking the hour of five, but he decided to resume sleep.

At 5.30 Lord Mountbatten received his call. He was more insistent

than Lord Hamilton. He wanted to know why he had been called before cock-crow. The porter brought the slate and to his credit, he it said, he did not smile. Lord Mountbatten read the instructions and then he remarked, somewhat crisply, that the porter need not wait. He had recognised the prince's handwriting. What happened later is not known.

The prince rode on a merry-go-round for the first time in his life last evening. It is on a vacant section opposite the hotel, and before dinner he walked out through a back gate with three of his staff.

He mounted one of the horses and, paying his sixpence, gaily twirled while the organ ground out some homely tunes. He returned to the hotel hardly noticed.

NZ Herald 30th April 1920

Former Mount Eden Railway Station

Malvern Road

Nestled below the railway embankment in Malvern Road, Mt Albert, lies the former Mount Eden Railway Station. The building dates back to 1912.

About 1994 the building was bought by Auckland Lawyer Richard Beca. At the time, the building had been vandalised, set fire to and had become the home for street kids. He then had to find a long flat site to accommodate the long and wide building. Former railway land in Malvern Road was subsequently found and purchased.

Early one morning the building was delivered in two pieces to the site. Over the next six months the building was altered in terms of plans which were prepared by well known Auckland Architect Nicholas Stevens. The former station then became the home for Richard and his family.

Richard was particular about wanting the form and look of the building to remain as a station. As a result the canopies were not enclosed and most changes were internal. This included removing a myriad of small rooms to create an open plan living area at one end with bedrooms and bathrooms at the other.

The works included restoring the double hung sash windows, retention of the tongue and groove walls and the original Australian hard wood floors.

In addition a stone retaining wall was built along the road and a traditional garden established around the building.

A vehicle access was established and the overhangs of the building provide a useful carpark for family vehicles.

The building retains some of the original external seating and inside are remnants of its former use including a station clock, platform signs, and railway notices and staff lockers.

Today Richard and his family enjoy a comfortable home with the exterior of the building still in its largely original form.

As it sits on a long frontage it has become a local landmark and contributes to the character of Malvern Road with its many wooden transitional houses.

John Childs
May 2012



Malvern Road, Mt Albert
MAHS collection 2012



Malvern Road, Mt Albert
MAHS collection 2012

**Interested in becoming a
member of MAHS?**
email: info@mtalberthistoricalsociety.org.nz

**Mt Albert Historical Society
AGM 2pm 25th August 2012
Ferndale House, Mt Albert**

**For further information on the Mt Albert Historical Society visit
www.mtalberthistoricalsociety.org.nz**