

## A Brief History of Remuera

### Tamaki-Makau-Rau and Remu-wera

Long before the Europeans arrived, Remu-wera was probably the Maori name of an area near Mt Hobson, situated in Tamaki-Makau-Rau, on the isthmus between the Waitemata and Manukau harbours. The name Remu-wera comes from two words: remu meaning edge or hem, and wera meaning burnt. It is said to relate to an incident when a visiting chieftainess was killed and put in an umu (oven), still in her piupiu (skirt). Tamaki Maori ancestors occupied kainga (villages) and pa (elevated and usually stockaded villages), by the sea and on the volcanic cones, tending extensive cultivations of crops, principally kumara, while having ready access to kai moana (food from the sea). They moved east and west between the two harbours, always alert to attack from other tribes' travellers and war parties passing north and south through the isthmus. By the early 18th century Te Waiohau of Tamaki were the dominant group but, eventually, inter-tribal envy, friction and deceit led to their downfall. Ngati Whatua from Kaipara began sustained attacks in about 1750, killed Kiwi Tamaki, the paramount Waiohau chief, and succeeded, after an unconfirmed massacre at Maunga Rahiri (Little Rangitoto in Upland Road) in subjugating Waiohau. Thus Ngati Whatua gained complete control of the isthmus - for three generations at least. However, Ngati Whatua who remained in Tamaki were in turn attacked by Hauraki tribes and then, to devastating effect, by Nga Puhī from the north. Indeed, when the first Europeans arrived, the whole isthmus was largely deserted after this prolonged period of conflict.

### Early Maori/European Contact

In May 1840 young Dr John Logan Campbell visited the Waitemata, hoping to purchase land from Ngati Whatua. Landing in the bay of Orakei, he immediately set his heart on the Remuera slopes, but chiefs Te Kawau and his son Te Hira declined to sell – they wished to retain this fertile area. Unknown to Campbell, the Treaty of Waitangi was being signed around New Zealand at the time, limiting Maori to selling to the Crown.

A few months later, in October 1840, Te Kawau offered 3000 acres to Lieutenant-Governor Hobson for the establishment of the town of Auckland, but this did not include Remuera. Then, in 1841, Ngati Paoa sold land to the east of Remuera, called the Kohimarama Block, to the Crown.

In May 1844 a great feast was hosted by Waikato iwi (tribes) at Remuera, just to the east of Mt Hobson. Present was the pre-eminent Waikato chief Te Wherowhero, who was later to become the first Maori King. Many thousands attended the feast, which featured large quantities of potatoes, sharks, pigs, tea, sugar and tobacco; blankets were given as presents. The watercolour by J J Merrett depicts this celebrated event, with Mt Hobson prominent in the background and Governor Fitzroy arriving.

In March of that year Governor Fitzroy had issued a proclamation, which allowed Maori to sell directly to the settlers, and they acquired much of the area around Mt Hobson and the land on the southern side of the Tamaki Road (Remuera Road). Among these early European purchasers were James Dilworth and Joseph Newman. However, between 1847 and 1854,

the Crown purchased much of the northern slopes; it was subdivided and auctioned, mainly to settler-farmers. Many built large two-storey homes surrounding them with gardens and orchards and turning the scrubby landscape into paddocks of grain, cattle and sheep.

### Early Local Government

One of these Remuera residents, Archibald Clark, was the first Mayor of Auckland City in 1851, but Auckland's early attempts at local government were not always successful and this first Council was short-lived. Remuera Road began as a muddy cart track to Tamaki. After the Highways Act of 1862, the Remuera Road Board was formed to administer roads, drainage and water, with the power to levy rates and by the early 1900s there were trams, gas and electricity, metered water supplies and building regulations. Despite this, in 1913 a petition by Remuera people requested amalgamation with Auckland City Council, and after a Commission of Enquiry and a poll of ratepayers the Remuera Road Board came to an abrupt end on 28 February 1915.

### Life in the Young Suburb of Remuera

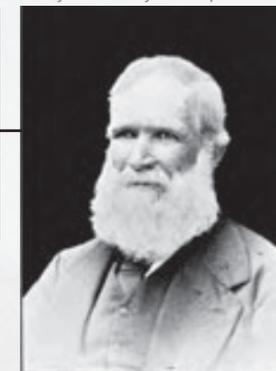
Many single-teacher schools educated Remuera children until, following a survey showing that there were 270 inhabited houses, with 200 boys and 150 girls of the age 5 to 15 years, the Remuera District School was established in 1873. Meanwhile, churches of several denominations built up congregations and opened busy Sunday Schools. Two of the permanent churches built later by the Methodist and Anglican communities feature on the walk, as do two early Remuera schools. One of the first shops in Remuera was L J Keys' grocery store on the Clonbern Rd corner. By 1910 Mr. Keys had been joined by George Lawler the bootmaker, The Lancashire Dairy Co, The Post and Telegraph Office,

Fred Blott the Chemist, as well as a butcher, fruiterer, confectioner, book-maker and plumber.

Trams were an early mode of public transport, at first horse-drawn, with a "return loop" at Temperance Terrace (now St Vincent Ave), then electrified in 1904. Later the service was extended to Green Lane, then Upland Rd and finally to Meadowbank; a branch line ran down Victoria Ave. The trams were replaced by buses in about 1956. The Tudor Theatre opened in 1928 as both a cinema and dance hall and was the centre of social life for many years. It closed in 1973 and the building was demolished in 1980 to be replaced by the Tudor Mall.

**Archibald Clark (1805-1875)**, arrived from Scotland in 1849 and established a large clothing manufacturers business. He was Auckland's first Mayor in 1851, an MP and lived on a large property next to what is now King's School.

*Courtesy of Auckland City Libraries Special Collections*



*Courtesy of Auckland City Libraries Special Collections*

**Sir Edwin Mitchelson (1845-1934)** was born in a Queen St cottage and developed interests in timber and kauri gum, shipbuilding, horse racing and breeding, education and St John ambulance. He was an MP, Chairman of the Remuera Road Board and Auckland's Mayor at the same time. He was knighted in 1920.

*Courtesy of Auckland City Libraries Special Collections*



*Ladies College Remuera*



*Hocken Collections, Uare Taoka o Hakena, University of Otago #S06-219*

*Joseph Jenner Merrett watercolour 'Native Feast held at Remuera, May 11 1844'*



Brochure Layout and Map Design by  
CKH DESIGN

## REMUERA HERITAGE WALK



### ST AIDANS TO MOUNT HOBSON



## The Remuera Heritage Walk

Start at the corner of Ascot Ave and walk down to:

- 1 Saint Aidan's Church 1905.** A tiny church was built by eastern parish-ioners to save trudging to St Mark's each Sunday. It has been enlarged extensively, although it has lost its lovely lawns, trees and the winding path, along which newly-wed couples would walk, to the lych-gate.

*Courtesy of Auckland City Libraries Special Collections*



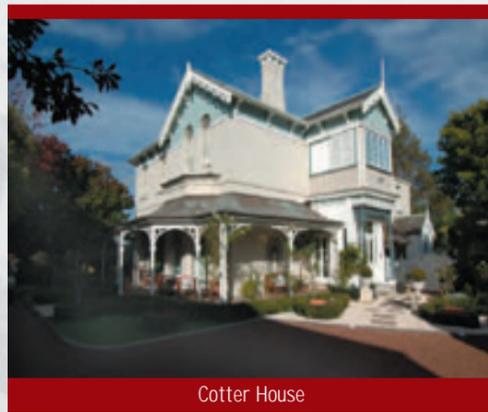
St Aidan's Church

*Return to Remuera Rd and head towards the library, noting:*

- 2 Elmstone 468 Remuera Rd 1904,** for V J Larner, its castle-like upper level can just be glimpsed above and between the houses. The original gates are still on the corner of Orakei Rd.

- 3 Remuera Community Library 1926,** was opened on its present site on 31 July 1926. Designed by architects Gummer & Ford this Neo-Georgian building was an innovative open plan design allowing flexibility, spaciousness and light throughout the building. It won a prestigious New Zealand Institute of Architects gold medal in 1928.

*Turn down St Vincent Ave and immediately behind the Library see:*



Cotter House

- 4 Cotter House c1848,** 4 St Vincent Avenue is one of the oldest houses in Auckland. It was built in early Victorian style with Regency elements for an early settler, well-known teetotaler Joseph Newman, who died childless at 77,

some months after a billboard advertising whisky fell on his head. The house with surrounding land was sold to Thomas Cotter, a prominent Auckland solicitor and King's Counsel, whose family owned it until 1926, when the land was further subdivided.

- 5 St Paul's Methodist Church 1922,** 12 St Vincent Avenue was built for Remuera's Wesleyans who, until this date, had been accommodated in temporary premises. One was Mr J L Wilson's Shore Rd Mission Hall, called "The Barn", which was later moved to Clonbern Rd, and finally to the present site as part of this church's hall complex. The foundation stone was laid by Eliza Gilmore – sister of A C Caughey, co-founder of Smith & Caughey.



St Paul's Methodist Church

*Return to Remuera Rd and walk just past the Village Green entrance to see:*

- 6 Brick shops 1929** at 411-413 Remuera Road. There is an attractive leaded frieze above the windows. These two-storey shops replaced the wooden building constructed in 1902 as the Remuera Road Board office, which later became the first Remuera Public Library after the demise of the Board in 1915.

*Courtesy of Auckland City Libraries Special Collections*



The First Remuera Library

*Walk through the archway to the left of these shops to enter:*

- 7 The Village Green** is a pleasant diversion from Remuera Road. It was used for Council yards and stables after Remuera's amalgamation with Auckland City in 1915. Prior to this it housed Remuera's first fire station.

*Return to Remuera Rd through the pergola, and arcade.  
Look across the road to Cole's Building on the corner of Victoria Ave:*

- 8 Cole's Building 1923,** 382-394 Remuera Road. Wylies Pharmacy was the first tenant, occupying the corner shop for 70 years before moving to Airlie Court. The middle units have always included a fish monger and a butcher. The end shop was initially a motor garage workshop, later becoming The Avenue Sevice Station.

*Cross at the traffic lights and look back at:*

- 9 Wooden Facade Shop c1909,** 385-387 Remuera Road is one of the oldest commercial buildings still standing. The roof parapet appears to be an early "modernisation". It can be seen in the photo further along from L J Keys.

- 10 Remuera Pharmacy 1909,** 375-377 Remuera Road. Fred Blott opened in 1909 as the local Chemist. Frank Sanft carried on from 1944 until 1953, when Bruce Culpan took over, retiring only in 2003. The adjacent shop in this building, which was the Post & Telegraph Office from 1910 until 1914, has operated as New Zealand Dry Cleaners for more than 50 years.

*Then cross Victoria Ave to:*

- 11 Old Remuera Post Office 1914,** now the National Bank. The Post and Telegraph Office moved from across the road, as mentioned above. This landmark corner building was a good example of early 20th century civic architecture. The design, fashionable in the Edwardian period, was influenced by Italian Renaissance style. Though extensively modified, the rustication can still be seen at first floor level and in the ground floor structure which is partially concealed under the enclosed verandas. In 1974 the Post Office moved to the adjacent site on Victoria Ave.

*Courtesy of The National Bank - Remuera Branch*



The Post and Telegraph Office

*Walk on along Remuera Road to opposite Clonbern Road and look back to imagine the trams and L J Keys on the left hand corner.*

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- 12 Old L J Keys Store (pre 1907)**

*Courtesy of Auckland City Libraries Special Collections*



Remuera Road circa 1911

*Continue on the same side of the road and look across to:*

- 13 Hellaby Building 1926,** 357-365 Remuera Road was built for Frederick Hellaby, whose firm's butcher shop was next-door in a much older building. For many years there was a fruiterer on the corner next to a home cookery.

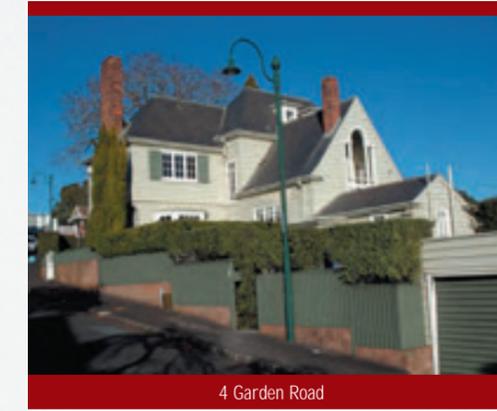
- 14 Skeltons Building 1928,** 339-345 Remuera Road was built for Robert Skelton, a carrier and one of Remuera's first businessmen. Today, the end one of three shops retains its original frontage, with tiles, leaded frieze, and oak trim. In 1931 a man entered the Bank of New Zealand premises next door, showed a demand note and attacked a teller with a sandbag. The dazed bank officer grabbed a revolver, fired twice and his fleeing assailant fell dead on the footpath outside.



Skelton's Building

*Walk along to:*

- 15 Garden Road** was originally the driveway into Ladies College where famous aviatrix Jean Batten was a student. Walk down to see the house at Number 4, an eclectic architectural mix with French and Italian influences, designed by prominent architect C. Reginald Ford as his own residence. The houses on either side at 2 & 6 are more Arts & Crafts style. All three remain largely as they appeared in the 1920s.

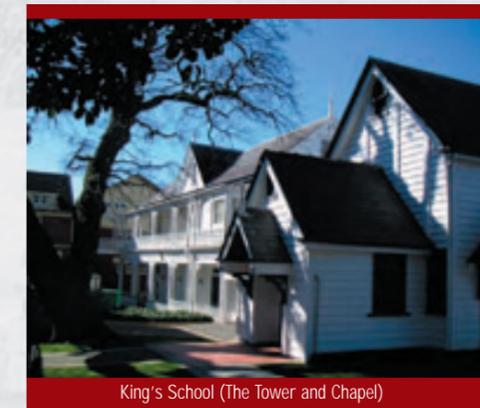


4 Garden Road

*Return to Remuera Rd, continue walking along the same side and look across to:*

- 16 Burns House 1905,** 273 Remuera Rd behind the Bridge Club, is another example of Arts & Crafts style, built for Robert Burns (of the John Burns hardware family) on part of James Dilworth's estate. It is rumoured to have been the site of the first Auckland Golf Club's 16th green. Having been owned by Wilson and Nathan families in the 1930s and 1950s, it was taken over for a bridge club in the 1970s. Robert Burns' second (1911) home can be glimpsed at the rear of 267 Remuera Rd.

- 17 King's School,** 258 Remuera Road began as King's College in 1896 in the house later called "The Tower", built for David Graham, brother of the founder of Ellerslie, Robert Graham. The nave of the Chapel, near the road frontage, was formerly stables built for the second owner, James McCosh Clark who was Mayor of Auckland 1880-1883. The remaining part of the original residence can be seen behind the chapel



King's School (The Tower and Chapel)

*Cross Remuera Rd at the pedestrian crossing in front of King's School, walk along noting other old houses and their original owners; most were built between 1905 and 1912 on part of what was the Dilworth Estate.*

- 18 253 Remuera Rd,** Edmund Mahony, solicitor
- 19 251 Remuera Rd,** Hon. Joseph Tole, Minister of Justice
- 20 243 Remuera Rd,** Sir Henry Buckleton, Bank of New Zealand manager
- 21 239 Remuera Rd,** Sir John Reed, Supreme Court Judge
- 22 235 Remuera Rd,** Ernest Robertson, Medical Practitioner

*Cross Market Rd here, taking care as there is no pedestrian crossing.*

- 23 233 Remuera Rd,** Porter's lodge, for Sir George Elliot's gateman

*Walk up to the entrance to:*

- 24 Mount Hobson / Remu-wera (143m high)** is one of Auckland's better preserved and least modified volcanic cones. Formed some 25,000 years ago, it has a horse-shoe shaped crater opening to the southwest. Terraces and pits are still evident from the Maori occupation. In the 20th century, water reservoirs were built on the summit and the lower southwest side – still evident here is the concrete base remnant of a WWII medical store for the US Navy Mobile Hospital in Market Rd – now Dilworth Junior School. As you walk up the path from the entrance, you will soon come to a stone seat – a memorial to Remuera boys who died in WWII. This overlooks a field of jonquils and daffodils which bloom in winter or early spring.

*Courtesy of Auckland City Libraries Special Collections*



View From Mt Hobson circa 1904

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