



MOUNT ALBERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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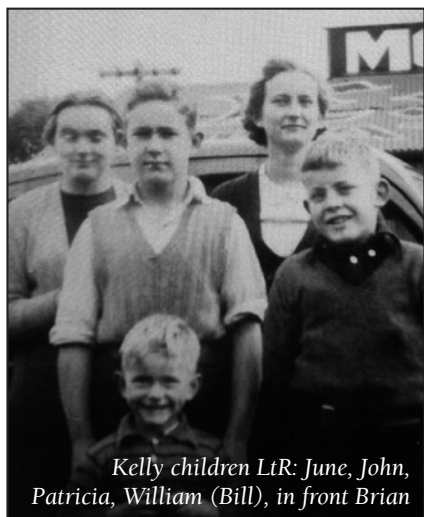
PO BOX 77-002 MT ALBERT AUCKLAND 1350 • PH: 09 626 6664 • WWW.MTALBERTHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG.NZ

Kelly's Gang



Kellys Garage late 1960's

In 1929 a little wee service station near the corner of New North Road and Asquith Avenue which had previously been a milk transfer station was bought by John Reginald Kelly and his wife Marjorie Frances Kelly nee Rush. John Reginald (known as Reg) grew up in Kellyville Road, Mercer. His father Reginald Kelly was born in Melbourne of Irish parents who had immigrated to Australia but who in 1863, when Reginald was 3 years old, moved to Auckland.



Kelly children LtR: June, John, Patricia, William (Bill), in front Brian

Reg started as an apprentice in steam engines. He went off to WW1 and when he returned refrigeration was in vogue. So Reg retrained as a refrigerator engineer before he became a motor mechanic, as in the early

days cars would have been very far and few between.

The Kelly Garage consisted of a house that the family lived in with the office in the front room and petrol pumps out in the front yard. Reg and Marjorie had five children. Pat and June the oldest, were young girls when they moved in. John, the oldest boy, was the only child born on the premises. William (Bill) and Brian were born down the road at Glamis Hospital. John and Bill attended Gladstone Primary and then Bill went to Mt Albert Grammar but John either genetically or being born on the premises wanted to be a mechanic no matter what, so he attended Seddon Technical Institute. Like his father he also had a love of steam trains for the whole of his life.

By all accounts Reg was a brilliant motor mechanic and he had an eclectic taste in cars. His 1936 Reo, an early luxury performance car is now in the Southwards Car Museum in Paraparaumu. Reg made his own parts for most cars. His youngest son Brian mentioned that if he talked about buying a part for his car, his father would say "no we'll make it". Reg developed a wide range of skills, that most motor mechanics today would envy. He was ahead of his time, as there was very much a recycling mentality in the business.

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Reg also built the first hospital patient lift mechanism for the Wilson Home in Takapuna. Mt Albert local, Dr Paterson spent a lot of time at the Wilson Home and had a problem getting patients into the pool so Reg designed and made a pool lift for them around the late 1930's – early 1940's. Reg made most of the tools required for the business and during WW2 when you couldn't get parts for cars he just made those as well.

As the five children grew they helped out in the business with John and Bill entering the business when they graduated from school. Pat and June in their younger days worked with Bill in the forecourt.

John worked in the Kelly Workshop with his father and Bill ran the forecourt. The Kelly's Workshop of today is still the original building. The petrol pumps were all different. There was Big Tree (Shell), Plume (Mobil), Atlantic and the red flying horse (Mobil).

John was a very keen cyclist and a member of the Manukau Racing Club and the Auckland Cycling Touring Club. Through the Auckland Club he met his future wife Mary Gosse who, in her hometown of Hutt Valley had been a member of the Hutt Valley and Petone Amateur Cycling Club and joined the Auckland Cycling Club when she came to work in Auckland.

When John married Mary in 1959 the Kelly Garage had four brands of petrol. Shell, Mobil, BP and Caltex. Mary helped John's mother with the bookwork and Mary remembers the day her mother-in-law told her they were going 100% with Caltex as Moyes down the road were with Shell and up the road was Mobil. They were one of the last service stations in Mt Albert to go with one brand.

The family moved from the house in 1962 and in 1969 the house cum service station was demolished and rebuilt incorporating a hydraulic tyre and lubrication bay. Rock had to be blasted out and eventually the Watson's house

next door was pulled down to allow better access to the garage. In the 1970's the garage entered into its third and final transformation as the building we know today.

Reg handed the business on to John and Bill and retired. Reg was still active and taught his grandson Chris to drive when he was 83 and died ten years later at the grand age of 93.

Around 1988, John Kelly sold his share in the garage to his brother Bill. Things were changing so much in the car industry that John was finding it hard to keep up and his health was failing.

Kelly's Workshop had always been a part of the business and John Peck a mechanic who worked for John and Bill Kelly took over the lease of the workshop when Bill took over the business. John Peck inherited all the Kelly customers but never changed the name from Kelly's. Today John Peck's son Richard continues to run the business.

Bill later suffered ill health and the decision was made not to renew the lease to Caltex for the pumps and shop. But times change and the petrol pumps were no longer financially feasible. The new lessee after 2 or 3 years, chose not to renew and the garage was closed.

Bill was still alive when the garage closed down and Caltex removed the tanks and decontaminated the area. Bill's family still own the whole site. Since the petrol station part of the site closed it has had a number of lessees and is today the home of Sprout Café and the Saturday morning market- and Kelly's Workshop still goes on!



Reg and Marjorie Kelly c. 1970



Reg's Reo car

M.A.H.S Dates To Remember

November 27, 2015 (Friday) 5pm. Alberton House, 100 Mt Albert Road

A Mt Albert social occasion our annual Christmas gathering at Alberton House. Drinks and nibbles, carol singing and entertainment. We are pleased to announce that the wonderful violin and piano combination of Mr Reg Towers and Mr David Rawnsthorpe who were so outstanding last year, have consented to return this year. A treat not to be missed! Members only \$10.00 p.p. RSVP to Brian ph 6266664 or email him at bjstevens@value.net.nz

Mt Albert Historical Society book on Mount Albert. The Society will proudly be launching this book later next year and to that end we are looking for Platinum Sponsors to make a donation of \$1,000 each. Your name will be featured in the book acknowledgements as a Platinum Sponsor, and you will receive a copy of the book signed by the author. You and your partner will be invited as a VIP to the launch of the book next year. Please contact Judith Goldie ph 817 6279 or Mary Inomata ph 846 4509.

A delightful addition to the Alice Wylie Reserve

If you visit the Alice Wylie Reserve and walk through to the oval grass circle there is an attractive rustic table in view. This is the outcome of a vision of Alice Wylie who approached our local board with the intention of donating the cost of a table. The design and installation was a joint effort between Alice and the Albert/Eden Local Board.

Alice's hope is that it will once again bring social occasions to the reserve, such as the weddings we have had in the past but which have now fallen away. Certainly it has enchanted the kindergarten aged children from Bright Beginnings, who during their visit, decorated the table top with flowers, twigs and leaves and declared it to be Alice's birthday cake.

So thank you Alice and the Albert/Eden Local Board as it adds greatly to the ambience of the reserve.



Pre schoolers from bright beginnings



Alice's table October 2015

2015/2016 MAHS Committee

We congratulate the following MAHS office holders and committee, elected at the recent AGM. Patron: Alice Wylie Chair: John Childs Treasurer: Judith Goldie Committee: Anna McGlashan; Brian Stevens; Tony Mayes; Mary Inomata; Victoria Turner; Rebecca Albiston-Dautermann; Dr Michael Bassett and Brian Corban.

Ed note: I had never heard of the Southwards Car Museum before interviewing the Kelly Family and my interest was piqued enough to find out the following information. I hope you find it as interesting as I do and consider the possibility of a future visit.

The Southward Car Museum is an automobile museum housing a collection of over 250 vehicles, as well as three aircraft, located on Otaihanga Road, Otaihanga, just north of Paraparaumu on the Kapiti Coast of New Zealand's North Island. The museum is run by a charitable trust, incorporated in 1972.

It is approximately an hour's drive from downtown Wellington and is situated between the North Island Main Trunk Railway to the west and State Highway 1 to the east.

The museum's collection includes Marlene Dietrich's Cadillac cabriolet, a 1915 Stutz Indianapolis race car, gull-winged Mercedes-Benz, a 1950 Cadillac "gangster special" that belonged to gangster Mickey Cohen, and an 1895 Benz

Velo, imported to New Zealand in 1900.

The car collection was the work of Sir Len Southward and his wife, Vera, Lady Southward. They began collecting cars in 1956. After achieving success in business, Sir Len dedicated time and money to buying and restoring old cars, adding to the collection.

The Southward Car Museum was opened in December 1979, and after his retirement Sir Len devoted his time to the museum.

The museum is a purpose-built building, featuring a 6000 square metre exhibition hall, engineering workshop, gift shop, and small cafe, and is set in six hectares of park-like grounds.

The building also includes a 474-seat theatre, and features a 1929 Wurlitzer theatre organ, which was originally installed in the Civic Theatre in Auckland. **Wiki pedia**

Centennial Celebrations for the Mt Albert Baptist Church

During September of this year Mount Albert Baptist Church of New North Road celebrated their 100 year Centennial, from when it was first constituted in September of 1915.

Kicking off the weekend celebrations was a Centennial Dinner and Ball on the Friday evening in the War Memorial Hall, followed by an Edwardian High Tea Saturday with vintage games for children, an artifacts display with every church roll from all ten decades. Sunday saw an all community Church service followed with cake cutting by the longest present day members then a shared lunch, meant several hundred people got to participate in multiple functions throughout the weekend.

In 1913 Mt Albert's inhabitants were about 10,000 and with no Baptist church in Mt Albert two local families, the Turners and Penmans living on Selwyn Avenue and New North Road respectively, were actively involved at Mt Eden's Baptist church where they walked to and from each Sunday, for morning, afternoon and evening services and Sunday school, sometimes up to three times each Sunday. After reviewing and canvassing the area of Mt Albert, they met at the Penman's home known as "the Rocks" where they decided the time had come when Mount Albert should have its own Baptist Church commencing with a small building only. Two weeks later after each contributing funds, a section was bought on the street frontage of New North Road for just 4 pound an acre, totaling 378 Pounds. After six weeks voluntary labour they proudly produced a 40 foot x 20 foot building by January 25th 1913. Of the two visionaries Harvey Turner and Ross Penman who were made life trustees of the property, it was Ross who declared "it was not due to laziness to walk to Mt Eden each Sunday that this Mt Albert work has commenced but because we have looked to the future."

The first morning service had 82 attendees and 59 in the evening. The Sunday school began two years before the church was constituted so every year since Sunday School Anniversaries were celebrated with three services, a scholars tea and the famous Sunday school picnics when wagons and tents were hired to be erected on farms such as Winstone's farm, Cornwall Park or Milford.

Mr J. A Penman was appointed church secretary in 1915 a role he carried out for 26 years. Being a master builder he built 13 Baptist Churches in the Auckland area and many homes and business premises.

Within 20 years of the first building being built, many changes were made to provide capacity for the growing numbers, bringing it to a 5000sqft building from an 800sqft building. By 1953 after purchasing five properties adjacent to Alberton Avenue, a new clean cut brick church was built, being one of the first post war churches to be built in New Zealand at the time. The foundation stone was laid by J A Penman himself then aged 88 years old.

Many of his grand and great grandchildren are still active present day members.

Mount Albert Baptist Church has always had a community focus shown by its commitment to community focused activities from the 900 plus Cradle roll, Girls and Boys Brigade, 80 plus overseas missionaries, all age Sunday schools, choirs, tennis club, mens running teams, basketball, musical theatre and dramas performed internationally and nationally by Source Theatre, branch churches in Edendale, Sandringham and Owairaka, Kids Club, ESOL classes, Care and Craft groups, Out and About Club, Baptist Womens League, Toy Library and their very own Daycare since 1972 now Kids Forever.

By Rebecca Albiston Dautermann



*The first Mt Albert Baptist Church
1915 800sq ft*



*Enlarged Mt Albert Baptist Church showing
tram lines and vacant corner section. C 1935*



*Mt Albert Baptist Church Sunday School
Anniversary day 1945*