

# Twenty Years of Shepherd's Park



SHEPHERDS PARK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE





# Acknowledgments



Many thanks to these people who have given their time and support to the Shepherd's Park Management Committee throughout the years:

## **Chairpersons of the Shepherd's Park Management Committee:**

Victor Bond, Elizabeth Collins, Arthur Rutherford, Doug Naylor, Ian Grant

## **Secretaries:**

Fay Sara, Lesley Bailey, Marilyn Beken, Betty Kneller

## **Treasurers:**

Kay and Victor Bond

## **Committee members and others:**

Ann Mutu, Norm Larkman, Ritchie and Rosemary Way, Ces Thomas, George Shaw, Greta Neuhaus, Frank Larking, Graham Aspell, Laurel Legge, Mike Tafua, Evelyn Carter, Sonia Robinson, Ray Clarke, Aubrey Kneller, John Mooney, Henare Ngawhika, Jill Nerheny, Eric Hobbs, Steve Cook, Claire Turner, Terry Marsh, Sylvia Devlin, Ann Hartley, George Wood, Marge Mumme, Beverly Unsted, Margaret and Bruce Paine, Glenda Bostwick, Chris Whitby, Nicki Malone, Paula Gillon, Forest and Bird, Birkenhead Rotoract, Birkdale-Beachhaven Residents and Ratepayers Association, the Conservation Volunteers, Zonta, the Scout organization

## **Production of this booklet:**

Text: Elizabeth Collins

Photographs: Ces Thomas, Victor Bond

Production: Jill Nerheny, Leia Jarvis, Stuart Farley



The Arboretum - historic native trees on the Shepherd's Park headland

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## Twenty Years of the Shepherd's Park Management Committee

Beach Haven residents will be familiar with the green expanse of Shepherd's Park and perhaps wondered at our good luck in possessing such a place. This is the story of how various market gardens were gradually bought for public use and how great efforts both by local Councils and individuals have contributed to its creation.

With the final purchase in 1988 of land once owned by Ralph Shepherd to add to previous purchases, the full extent of Shepherd's Park was able to be set aside under the Reserves Act. Residents were asked to contribute their ideas for use of the land and at the end of 1991 a group of local volunteers formed the Shepherd's Park Management Committee.

Our task was to take a watching role over park use, liaise with Council and ensure compliance with the management plan. This included approval of major new developments in the park, making efforts to coordinate them and suit the landscape environmentally, and making submissions on local issues such as the Kaipatiki Bridge construction, tree protection, and Councils' District Plans.

During the last twenty years while the sports clubs have been providing physical opportunities at Shepherd's Park, we have been exercising too – working on the restoration of the native forest and preservation of the coastline once typical of Oruamo Creek. Invasive weeds had to be poisoned and trees like wattles cleared, involving

much volunteer labour by a few people.

Trees for planting projects have been grown in home nurseries; others donated and many supplied by Council. Construction of a boardwalk beside the sea and well-formed paths have added greatly to the enjoyment of a walk in the park and there are always people there doing just that.

These activities have involved working with the Parks Department of North Shore City Council to carry out projects, and contacts with helpful environmental groups such as Forest and Bird. Groups of school pupils from local schools have visited, benefiting from first hand contact with native trees and learning about their natural heritage on educational trips. Walking groups have been amazed that a place like this exists. We have tried to create the atmosphere of the New Zealand bush, providing people with some moments of quiet and peace away from the rush of the city, and we are very hopeful that many more volunteers will join us to help build on the start we have made.





# Early History



PANORAMIC VIEW OF BIRKDALE FROM BAYFIELD ROAD.

The ridge in the background is the Devil's Back (from N.Z. Graphic. August 8 1903, p 407)

The early history of Shepherds Park belongs to the tangata whenua of Kawerau, who lived here for several centuries before Europeans arrived. On the Shepherd's Park headland the sea provided Maori with fish and shellfish, as the presence of remains in middens shows.

Maori living sites were either permanent or seasonal, and the people would have been protected by the Tauhinu pa, which was strategically placed on the opposite side of Oruamo Creek, high on Te Okoaratanga, later called "The Devil's Back" by gumdiggers and locals.

In the 1830's the Kawerau people suffered a brutal series of attacks and dispossession by Hongi Hika and his invading Ngapuhi, who attacked them in the same series of raids as those carried out on their main enemy, the Ngati Whatua of Tamaki. Using his newly acquired firearms, Hongi Hika laid waste to most of the Waitemata. However, by 1840

when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, some Maori had returned to Tauhinu and were living there peacefully under the leadership of Apihai Te Kawau, the Ngati Whatua chief.

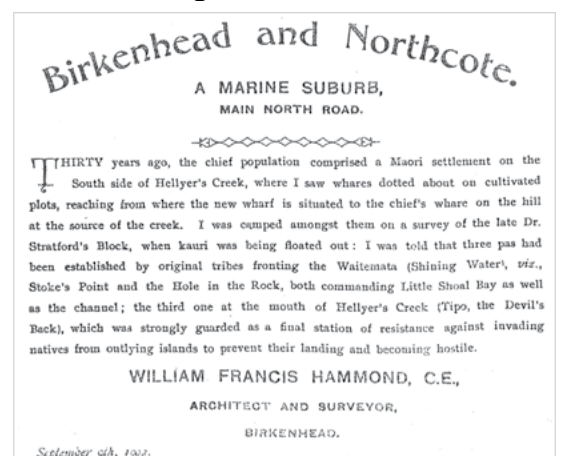
In 1841 the Mahurangi block, stretching from the Kaipara to the Hauraki Gulf was sold to the Crown (for a song) and this included the whole Oruamo Creek area. As the land passed into the hands of European loggers and traders most of the Maori population gradually left the district.

In the years that followed, speculators and businessmen made their fortune from felling the kauri along Oruamo Creek, and floating out logs and sawn timber for export or to help construct the buildings of early Auckland. There was also money to be made from selling firewood, an essential item in the days before gas and electricity, and certainly a local brewing industry for a while. There are many stories about the colourful characters who inhabited this place, by then commonly called Hellyer's Creek.

The text on the early map (below) by the surveyor W F Hammond emphasises the brisk trade that operated on Oruamo Creek and notes the number of Maori whares and gardens here in the 1870's.



Apihai Te Kawau, the Ngati Whatua chief



Tauhinu Pa site opposite Shepherd's Park today



Midden at Oruamo landing



# The Settlers and Market Gardens



Later came the European settlers to try their luck as orchardists, farmers and market gardeners on the clay soils of Birkdale and Beach Haven. Many of the successful enterprises like Ralph Shepherd's were established beside the Oruamo Creek on some of the same sites as those once used by Maori.

In the days before good roads and the harbour bridge, a great deal of produce from the market gardens of Birkdale - Beach Haven was sold at the Auckland markets, being transported by sea on the small steamships which plied the Upper Waitemata in those days.

The land on Beach Haven road where the playing fields, playground and community house are now was formerly strawberry gardens cultivated early last century by the Wood family, and in later years the Unsted and Hewitt families raised plants and flowers for the market and kept an orchard there.

Ralph Shepherd's family had been early pioneers in Birkdale since 1890 having farmed in the area between Birkdale and Beach Haven roads (the corner was called Shepherd's corner for many years) and when Shepherd's park was first established it was named for the family because of their historic links with the district.

In the 1970's Ralph was still farming his headland property on Cresta

Avenue which he had developed since 1940, and where he grew daffodils, pumpkins, citrus and strawberries.

The family homestead was situated on the central headland where the turning circle is now beside the 'arboretum' (a group of mature native trees, shown inside the front cover) which once stood in his carefully tended garden. Behind the house was a large workshed where Ralph worked at his other job of making buses for Birkenhead Transport. Nearer the sea were the gardens where flowers were grown for market and where even nowadays, a few narcissi come into flower.



George Wood & Bob Walton – milking time on the farm (now Shepherd's Park sports fields)



Margaret & Jean Shepherd picking pumpkins on their property on the headland at the present Shepherds Park (circa 1950)



Mr Shepherd with a sample of his produce - 'the best strawberries in Auckland'



Strawberry picking at George Wood's property circa 1920 - Puriri Road (present day Beach Haven Road)

# Land Purchases

A number of land purchases by Birkenhead Council contributed to the formation of Shepherds Park. The squash and tennis courts were built between 1975-8 on land bought from Mr Darlow and the soccer ground and clubrooms were established on land bought from Mr Bryant in 1956.

The present sites of the upper sports field, and the community house and playground, were bought from Miss Unsted and Mr Hewitt in 1983 and 1988. Once the land occupied

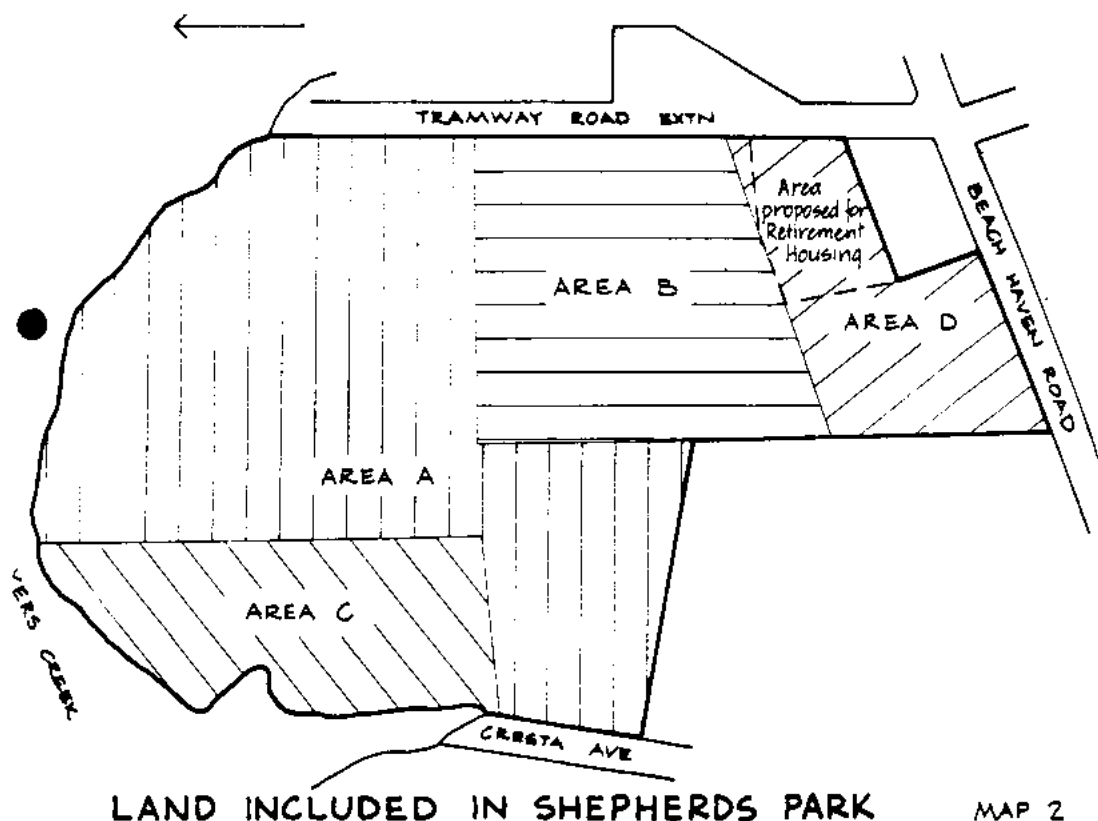
by George Wood's farm and strawberry gardens, their orchard and glasshouse on Beach Haven road was a well-known local landmark. The combined park area was now around fourteen and a half hectares and was then able to accommodate a range of community needs under the Reserves Act of 1977.

There still remained another piece of land which appeared a desirable addition to the park. This was the orchard and market garden established at the end of Cresta avenue in 1940 by Ralph Shepherd. It included patches of native bush and exotic trees and a coastline giving wide views along Oruamo creek from Hobsonville to Glenfield, with a close view of the Greenhithe escarpment across

## Schedule of Areas:

	<u>Date Acquired</u>	<u>Legal Description</u>	<u>Area</u>
A	1956	Lots 156 to 163 DP 20048 C.T. 484/178	6.9765 ha
B	1983	Lot 2 DP 99986 Recreation Reserve to Vest	2.9575 ha
C	1988	Lot 155 on Plan 682 C.T. 503/110	2.8226 ha
D	1988	Part of Lot 1 DP 99986 Part of C.T. 54C/863 (transfer not yet completed)	1.6581 ha
Total Area			14.4087 ha

Of area D, approximately 5,870m<sup>2</sup> will be used for a retirement housing project.



LAND INCLUDED IN SHEPHERDS PARK

MAP 2



# Land Purchases (cont.)



the creek. Over some years there had been discussion over sale of this land and when negotiations with Birkenhead Council stalled at one stage it was sold to a land developer. Plans were drawn up for a road and a housing subdivision on the headland with fifteen sections extending down to a coastal reserve strip.

There was much discussion in Birkenhead Council during the consent process, centering on environmental issues, and the possible adverse impact a subdivision of the Shepherd land would have on the sensitive coastal area. Several development plans were submitted which were not satisfactory, either on the grounds that they did not allow adequate public access to the foreshore or would intrude into the legal esplanade reserve, but the Council finally voted in favour of a coastal dispensation.

Local residents became annoyed that a beautiful wild place that many used for passive recreation was in danger of becoming just another road in Beach Haven. Lesley Bailey and Elizabeth Collins asked the Beach Haven Residents and Ratepayers Association to write a letter to the Minister of Lands voicing its disappointment at his approval of the coastal dispensation which allowed the development to finally get planning consent. Luckily however, at this stage a downturn in the national economy had an unexpected positive result. Through the mid-eighties, at the same time as decisions on the housing development were being discussed and delayed, economic conditions were worsening and the recession of that decade started to bite. Thus it was that in 1988 the Shepherd property was bought from the developer by a recently elected Birkenhead City Council, with the strong support of the new mayor Ann Hartley. This acquisition opened up the aspect of the park to the water and has been the focus of the bush restoration projects carried out by local volunteers under the guidance of the Shepherds Park Management Committee.

*Note: the article reproduced at right is from 'View City News', published by Birkenhead City Council, 1988.*

## NEW RESERVE PURCHASED

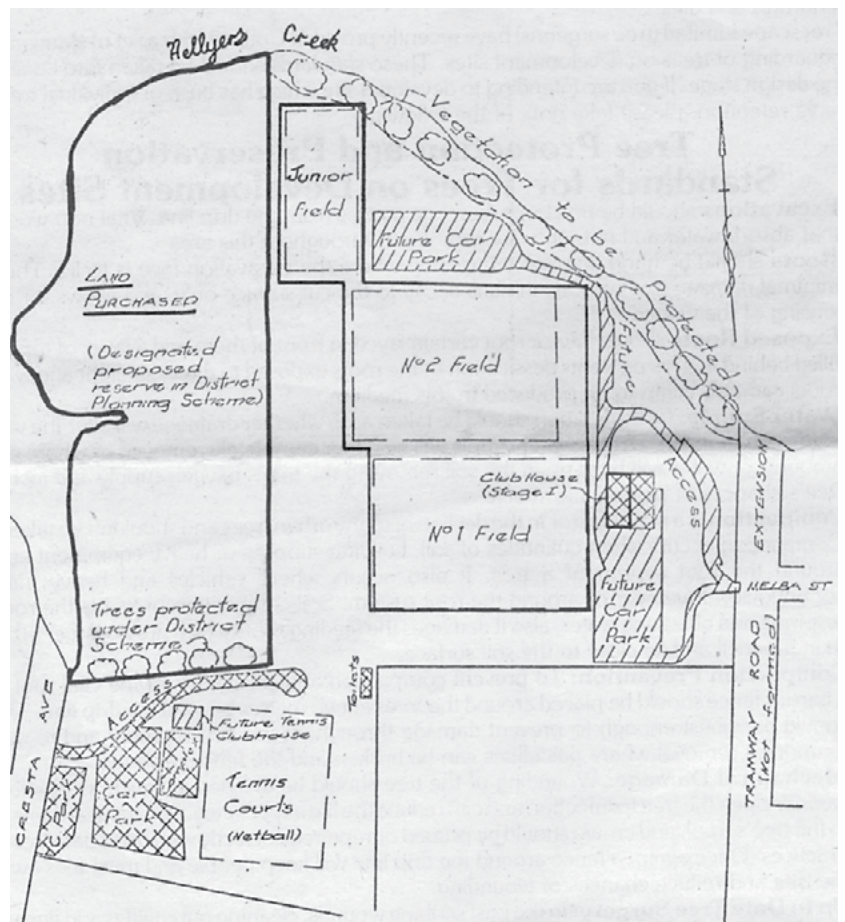


The Cresta Avenue land looking toward the Shepherds Park Recreation Centre.

Ratepayers and residents of Beach Haven will be pleased to learn that on 15th June Council took possession of 2.8227 hectares of land in Cresta Avenue.

The land, adjacent to the Shepherds Park Sports Complex (see map below) has an extensive water frontage and beautiful stands of protected trees. It was purchased, after extensive negotiations, for the sum of \$425,000.

Another asset the residents of Birkenhead can be proud of!



View of Hellyers Creek from the new reserve in Cresta Avenue

# The Management Plan

## Shepherds Park Management Plan

With the purchase of the headland area it was at last possible for the various areas to be brought together as a whole and planned for as a neighbourhood park, to provide something for most people. The construction of the Auckland Harbour bridge in 1959 had led to a big increase in the local population, including many young people who were already being catered for by the sports facilities at Shepherds Park. Their popularity meant that the Birkenhead City Council felt it necessary to upgrade and add to them.

However many people enjoyed the relaxed life style and pleasant outlooks that Beach Haven affords and were keen to see the rural atmosphere retained. They felt that opportunities for walking and passive recreation were also very important for families and older people.

The Reserves Act under which the land in Shepherds Park had been vested recognises the need for a formal process through which local people can express their views on the management of a new park and comment on ideas for development that might be proposed by Council. It favours the idea of a management committee of local residents.

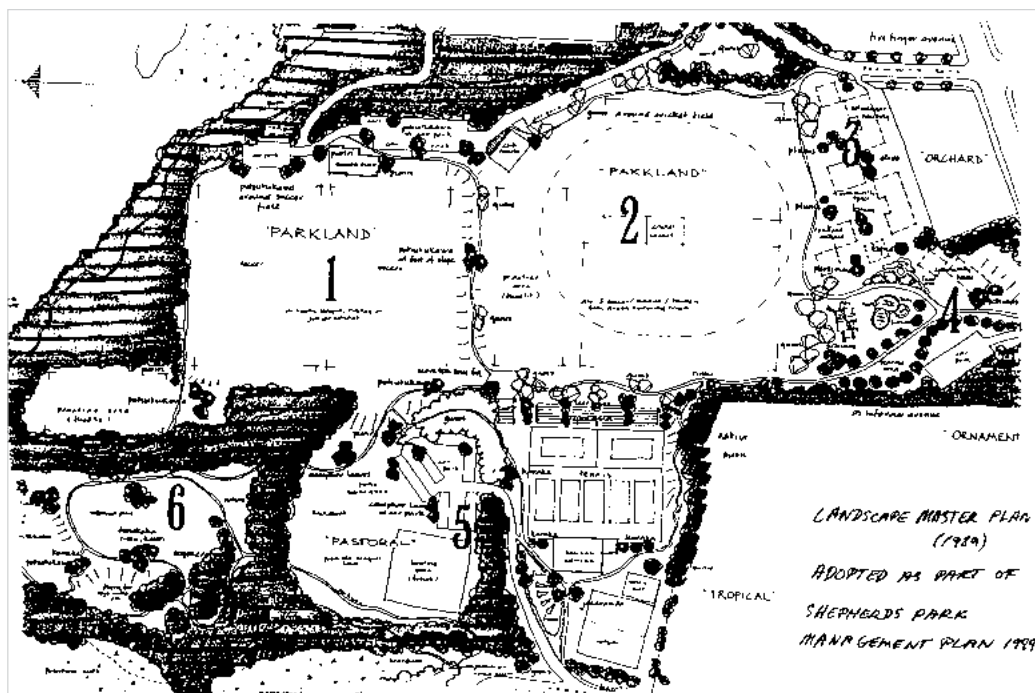
The local populace had to be consulted, so in 1984 a meeting was held to inform residents and get specific suggestions for use of the park. At this meeting many ideas for the park were suggested. They fell into two categories – active pursuits such as bowls, archery, children's play equipment, more playing fields, a fitness trail, a golf driving range. On the other hand, many people wanted to preserve trees and native bush, establish ornamental gardens, a cooperative vegetable garden, a botanical garden, a foreshore walkway and build a Community House and crèche.

With the community's wishes in mind in 1998 the Birkenhead Council commissioned a Draft Management Plan and a Master Landscape plan from Works Consultancy. It divided the park into active and passive leisure areas and provided space for the majority of the public's requests. The draft plans were opened for public submissions, and through the Residents and Ratepayers group, Lesley Bailey and Elizabeth Collins made a detailed submission, recommending that native bush and specimen tree preservation should be included in the plan. In addition the foreshore and headland would not be modified, the historic Maori middens would be properly protected, and the formation of a management committee guaranteed. A strong submission for a Bowling Club was received from Alan Tanner and Arthur Rutherford and it was later established. As amalgamation with North Shore City neared there was a rush to get the plan approved but with the help of Keith Rogers the Council included many of the local suggestions in the final Management Plan.

Then came the major part of the land development involving the clearing of remaining trees and the scorched-earth bulldozing of an extensive area. This was the area where the present upper sports field,

Community House, crèche and pensioner village were built during 1989. The loss of the old familiar shelter belts and the disappearance of the last remaining orchard in Beach Haven was keenly felt by many residents who found it hard to imagine that it could all be transformed into what we see today.

In September 1990 a meeting was held to appoint a management committee and the first meeting was held in the October of that year in the brand-new Community House in







**MINUTES OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING  
OF THE SHEPHERD'S PARK MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE  
HELD AT BEACH HAVEN COMMUNITY HOUSE,  
SHEPHERD'S PARK  
THURSDAY 25 OCTOBER 1990 AT 7 P.M.**

**PRESENT:**

Mr Keith Rogers (Chairperson, Onewa Community Board)

Mrs Joyce Stephenson (Chairperson, O.C.B. Community Development Committee)

Mr Paul Tate (Committee Secretary, O.C.B.)

Mr Ian Murray (Parks Officer, N.S.C.C.)

**MEMBERS:**

Beachaven Community House rep. Mrs Lauren Legge  
Beachaven/Birkdale Residents Association rep Mr John Barr

Beach Haven Tennis Club rep Mr Tony Rowe

Birkenhead United Associated Sports and Football Club rep – Mr Jim Pettigrew

Onewa Community Board rep – Mr Gordon Martinsen

Mrs Lesley Bailey

Mr Victor Bond

Mr Trevor Bruce

Mrs Evelyn Carter

Mrs Elizabeth Collins

Mr Max Horler

Mr Doug Naylor

Mr John Rugis

Mr Frederick Rutherford

**APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS:**

**CHAIRPERSON:** Mr Naylor (Volunteered)

**SECRETARY:** Mr Rutherford  
(volunteered)

Mrs Bailey, secretary for Kauri Point Centennial Park and Chatswood Reserve Management Committee, acted as secretary for this first meeting.

**SOME FUNCTIONS OF THIS COMMITTEE:**

To carry out "preliminary vetting" of proposals coming from the community, outside organisations, etc.

If feasible, to support applications and assist them in putting their proposals.

To act as a conduit to the Onewa Community Board.

To facilitate the implementation of the management plan.



Unsted & Hewitt property, pines and macrocarpas



Works backhoe digger in operation



Earthworks - upper field construction



Community house, crèche and pensioner housing - the first buildings built



# Early Settlers Memorial Avenue

The planting of a pin-oak avenue to remember the early settlers of the district was the first community event held in the park in 1991. This was organized by the Management Committee, with the North Shore Parks department and the Ratepayers Association ( which has its origins in the Birkdale Fruitgrowers Association.) Today the trees provide summer shade and autumn colour.

Fifty - eight trees were contributed by members of the original families of the district and also by present residents and organisations. They were planted bordering the newly-formed footpath beside the upper sports fields, the event being celebrated with a wonderful afternoon tea brought by donors, at the newly built community house. A list of the families remembered and the donors is displayed in the Birkenhead Public Library.

The following years saw the gradual development of new sports facilities and playground equipment. Sonia Robinson (Community House) and Jill Nerheny (Community Coordinator) advocated a children's playground and Arthur Rutherford a Bowling Club, opened in 1995.



Shepherd family with their newly planted oak



Verran family and Ann Hartley



Beach Haven Garden Society members



Ready for planting (1991)



And now (2012)



# The Park in Use - Early Nineties



Construction of a children's playground was advocated and strongly supported by Sonia Robinson (Community House) and Jill Nerheny (Community Coordinator)



Birkenhead cricketers and others were pleased to have another ground



Alan Tanner and Arthur Rutherford pushed strongly for a Bowling Club



# Attacking the Headland

In the early years, the committee's focus centred on the headland, which was still much in need of attention. Those in the group who had promoted the concept of passive recreation when the management plan was being drawn up were keen to retain the natural atmosphere and resisted suggestions for further activities in this area.

Council was asked to provide funding to extend the bush cover between the Bowling Club and the central grass-covered area on the headland. An old citrus orchard where dumped cars had been buried as part of the Council's initial clean-up, by that time boggy and full of weeds, was replanted with kanuka, coprosma and manuka to make a nurse crop or understory for the future planting of larger forest trees. Nowadays there are young kauri and other natives, many of them donated by Forest and Bird, growing well in that area of bush at the end of the Cresta Avenue entrance track.

Problems remained with invasive weeds (in later years Council funded some professional weed control.

Sunday morning working bees began and a patch of large wattles was felled by committee members, friends and families. Rotoract and Forest and Bird members did great work against honeysuckle and woolly nightshade and Rotoract built steps part way to Oruamo landing as well as funding some seats.



Asparagus fern weeds strangling young tawapou trees



Blocked culvert floods new native planting



The nurse crop is planted - kanuka, coprosma and manuka



Firebugs - again



'Wiwi Springs' or 'Hobbs Bog' (named by Eric Hobbs)



# Park Facilities



A couple of old rakes



A toilet at last!



Long awaited rubbish bins prove popular

38a BULLETIN Thursday December 14, 1995 Page 3

## Seats in the park

Beach Haven residents can now rest comfortably for a while on strolls in Shepherd's Park.

Birkenhead Rotoract and the Shepherd's Park Management Committee have installed nine wooden seats in the park.

Rotoract donated \$2000 from funds it had raised towards helping the community.

Four of the benches were constructed by the Oruamo work skills group. The same group, together with Birkdale Timber, last year donated to the park two picnic tables with special children's seats attached.

The committee is made up of Beach Haven residents who meet monthly to discuss the community's wishes for Shepherd's Park.

**SEATING ARRANGEMENTS:** Norm Larkman and Victor Bond install one of the new wooden park benches at Shepherd's Park.



Rotoract workers building steps to Oruamo Landing



A new gate at the Cresta Avenue entrance helped stop dumping of rubbish and unauthorized vehicles entering



# Friends of Shepherds Park



1997 brought a new period of development with new member Ces Thomas and his vision of creating a future native New Zealand coastal forest with all the various species contained therein.

Ces produced a plan which divided the park into areas and organised the planting of trees, grasses and shrubs which were the most suited to each area.. His own home plant-raising project provided many of the native plants now growing there. He worked with Glenda Bostwick and Chris Whitby, two committed parks officers, to achieve much more than hitherto.

An experienced noxious weed operator, Steve Cook, was also employed for some hours weekly and he worked many hours as a volunteer so committed was he to the project. It would be impossible

to estimate how much volunteer labour Ces put in, often being at the park from dawn to dusk. His anger and dismay that thieves would steal young trees shows clearly in his letter to the NSTA.

Ces aimed to extend the committee's band of helpers by creating the Friends of Shepherd's Park through advertising and newsletters. In 1998 a large group of enthusiastic 'friends' gathered for an introductory walk in the park and a planting ceremony.



Young plants grown by Ces Thomas (2000)



Ces's greenhouse full of native seedlings (2000)



Ces Thomas received environmental awards from Auckland Regional Council and North Shore City Council



Friends of Shepherd's Park (1998) Walk and planting - Ann Hartley, Grant Gillon, Ann Cowley (These rewarewa are now surrounded by native bush at the top of the Cresta Avenue entry track)

Newsletter no 1 June 1998

## Friends of Shepherd's Park

### Greetings

*In spite of the weather, we had an excellent turnout of old and new members for our introductory walk through the park on Sunday the 7th June, concluding with a welcome sausage sizzle arranged by Jill Nerheny.*

*Three rewarewa trees were supplied by the Council and were planted on the headland to mark the occasion. We invited Ann Cowley (Community Board), Ann Hartley and Grant Gillon MP to do the honours. They were assisted by some of the younger generation, David and Christopher Eade, Conrad Gillon and Freya Renner.*

*We were pleased to recognize Ann Hartley, who as mayor at the time, played a major part in securing the Shepherd property as parkland.*

*We will be organizing working bees on a project by project basis. The next project will be weeding preparatory to planting. This will be held at 9.30 a.m. Sunday June*

*See you there*

*Ces Thomas 4836601*

## Greenie sees red

The work projects in Shepherd's Park are achieved by volunteers donating their time and labour.

The thieves who pinched the newly planted trees have stolen from their own community.

I hope the trees do well. It must give the thief a warm glow when they look

at them knowing that they stole them.

If they are that keen on native flora, why not join the group? They will find it much more rewarding to give than take.

**CES THOMAS**  
Project co-ordinator  
Friends of Shepherd's Park



# Boardwalk to Oruamo Landing (1999)



The idea of a coastal boardwalk was first suggested in submissions to the management plan and it was with delight that we heard there were funds available for this purpose. The boardwalk through the mangroves is environmentally friendly because it provides access to the shoreline without damage to the estuarine environment. It extends the range for walkers and provides a peaceful place for bird watching and study of the saltmarsh native plants.

It was also possible for the historic midden at the landing to be protected and for this some bluestone rocks which were already there were formed into a protective wall. The work on these amenities was done by professional council contractors and the barbecue opening catered for by professionals Glenda Bostwick and Chris Whitby.



Sea views and saltmarsh



Boardwalk completed



Pile driving for boardwalk



George Wood and Eric Hobbs celebrating the boardwalk completion (1999)



Historic midden damaged and tussock burnt (1998)



Making use of stone found on site to protect the midden



# The Turnaround Planting Project



A turning circle was necessary to enable easier access to the headland both for volunteer working bees and fire engines or police on occasion. The central flat area which was the site of the old Shepherd homestead was ideal for this and also for a native planting project. A good number of Friends of the Park attended with Forest

and Bird donating trees.

The area was flattened by Council machinery and prepared by the Shepherd's Park committee. On planting day a large number of kauri and other natives, such as gahnia, toetoe and pigeonwood were planted, and more kauri were planted around the lone kauri in the arboretum.



Turnaround planting celebration (2003)



Turnaround area flattened



Kauri and other natives planted



Turnaround planting thriving (2005)



Barrow boy is Ces Thomas mulching



# An Outdoor Classroom



School and walking groups were welcomed to Shepherd's Park by Ces. He developed an Oruamo Creek Nature Trail guide which includes a varied range of native plants, both growing naturally and planted as part of the restoration project.

After entering the park at Cresta Avenue, the coastal boardwalk (after the excitement of nearly falling in) leads the children to Oruamo landing, and the foundations of the old Shepherd boat-house. The trail notes plants which grow naturally in these intertidal saltmarsh conditions and the sea birds (herons, oyster-catchers and pied stilts) feeding on the mud-flats at low tide.

A shelter designed by Ces Thomas and Heather-Ann McConnachie was built near the turning circle, and this building featuring two linked fale fits the site perfectly. It is designed as an educational classroom and originally featured Maori and settler history and natural history information panels, but after several incidents of vandalism they have been removed and stored for future use in a more public place.



The building under construction



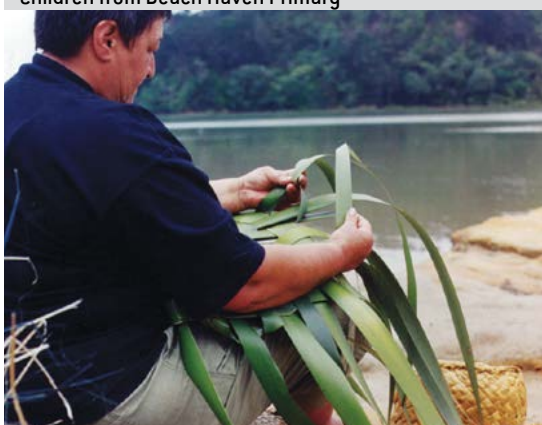
The shelter features two linked fale



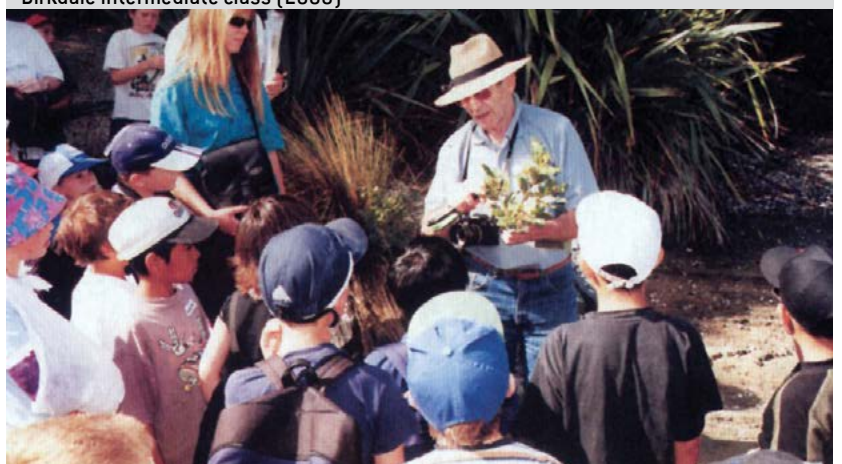
Children from Beach Haven Primary



Birkdale Intermediate class (2000)



Judy Te Hiwi demonstrates harakeke weaving



Nature study at the landing



# The Fay Sara Walkway



In 2007 the Committee discussed the formation of a new path to link the Community House and sports fields with the headland area. This was already a common way for walkers to go if they were going down to the headland from the Beach Haven Road entrance, but a section of it was very wet. With the Fay Sara path wheel-chairs and mobility scooters can also go the full distance.

A wheel-chair friendly pathway was promoted as a way of enabling disabled people access to the headland and the

wonderful water views. Sylvia Devlin enthusiastically researched possibilities and consulted various organizations who offered advice. Since our long-time secretary of seven years, Fay Sara, was at that time becoming disabled due to a medical condition, it was named after her.

The Shepherd's Park Committee pushed for Council funding, which was provided, and a concrete path was constructed beside the sports fields. It joins with a bush path wide enough to enable access to picnic tables by the fale, and another connected bush path leads to the Lookout over Oruamo Creek. Committee helpers happily gave advice and joined in the construction process.

In 2008 the path was opened by Fay Sara cutting a ribbon at an opening ceremony, and young people in wheelchairs and the public used the path for the first time



Sylvia Devlin, Fay Sara and George Wood at the opening



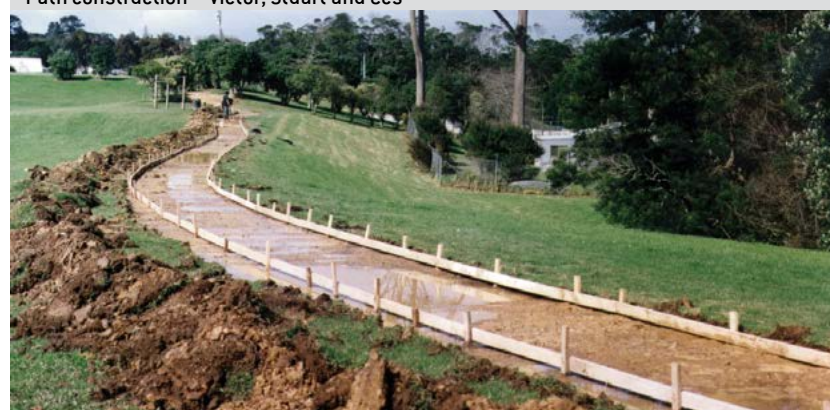
Consultation group from Age Concern and CCS with Fay, Ces and Victor



Path construction – Victor, Stuart and Ces



Young people in wheel-chairs try out the path



Stretching to the headland



# Presenting the People



Eric Hobbs and Elizabeth Collins outside the Boardroom/Shed. When not down a manhole, Eric as a Community Board member was an invaluable link with bureaucracy, always willing to help out the underdog and the committee. Elizabeth was chair of the committee for three years soon after it was formed.



Ces Thomas, David Prescott and Steve Cook. Ces is described by Ann Mutu as "our guiding visionary in having the park restored with natives." David Prescott willingly contributed to the park by providing much powerful help on working days.



Memorial plaque to Eric Hobbs, George Shaw, Greta Neuhaus, Frank Larking, Norm Larkman and Kay Bond, all past committee members.



Fay Sara gets in some spade work. An experienced and efficient secretary, Fay joined the committee after the Friends of the Park walk in 1998 and was secretary for seven years



Sylvia Devlin and Steve Cook planting a tree! Steve Cook contributed immensely to the park through his weed-killing expertise and volunteer contribution. Sylvia was a great help with publicity and was a major contributor towards the Fay Sara pathway.



# Presenting the People



The chairman Victor Bond makes hay near the arboretum. Victor served seventeen years of faithful service as chairman continually making our presence known at Community Board meetings and running the committee with the help of dog Louie.



Frank Larking with Ces Thomas. Frank was well-known for his devotion to beach improvements at the Beach Haven wharf. Other parks in the area – Larking's Landing, Tui park and Charcoal Bay – were discussed at Shepherd's Park meetings and often Parks Department help obtained.



Rosemary Way with a hefty wheelbarrow load of native grasses.



Ritchie and Rosemary Way have contributed greatly to the park. Ritchie is known by his energetic spade-work on the Cresta Avenue entry track, which is why it was given the name 'Ritchie's Way' by Ces and Victor.





## Victor Bond

I was fortunate to have grown up in one of London's greener suburbs but began to see trees and gardens slowly disappearing under units and blocks of flats and now they are long gone. When the Council convened the Shepherd's Park Management committee I saw my opportunity to help salvage a beautiful part of the North Shore for the future and salvage was the operative word. It was an overgrown rubbish dump.

Committee meetings took place in the Community House and still do. It was a very large committee in those days as all the sports bodies were well represented. These days we are lucky if half a dozen turn up for a meeting. On some occasions my dog Louie has made up a quorum. At one meeting a member wanted all dogs banned from the park. Louie stood up and walked out of the room in silent protest. That motion lost traction amid the laughter.

The Parks Department was not willing to buy seats for the park and as contractors were replacing the play area at Tui Park I salvaged some timber and banged together two seats for the headland. The two seats on the headland are the originals and now about twenty years old.

Native trees were in short supply. Some trees were donated and some fell off the back of an Auckland City Council truck. Amalgamation means that the County Council now has them back. Clearing to ground only prepared the ground for every other kind of weed that we didn't want and without the development of modern herbicides we would not have stood a chance.

Sunday morning working bees usually ended with coffee

Hobbsie) or quite often lunch. It was often Shepherd's Pie.

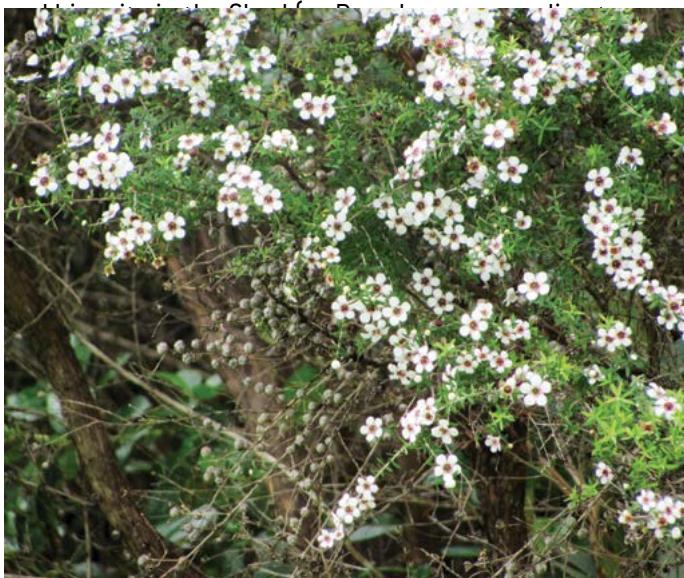
## Ritchie Way

Rosemary and I met Ces Thomas for the first time in early March 2001. That Sunday morning he was working on the side of the road near the Ruru Track. We had six karaka trees in pots which we had raised from seeds and we asked if he could use them in the park. Ces smiled and invited us to bring them down the following Sunday and he would show us some places where we could plant them.

I clearly remember pulling out a dead sapling to plant a karaka in its place, only to be kindly shown that the kahikatea wasn't dead; it only looked dead. That was the first of many valuable lessons that we learned from Ces. Over the years we developed a profound respect for that man. He was the driving force behind the restoration of native flora in the park.

We spent many hours digging out privet, ginger, woolly nightshade and other weeds and planting new trees, flaxes and shrubs. And we spent a great deal of energy wheeling mulch around the park to smother weed growth around new trees. We also spent many hours weeding paths. Now that the bush has grown high enough to shade the paths weeding is no longer necessary in most places. We also dug drains and cleared fallen litter from the invasive gum trees.

I spent so much of my time looking after the roadside and pruning back the trees that overgrew the road that Ces and Steve began calling the road Ritchie Way.







Kanuka nurse crop newly planted beside the Cresta Avenue entry path (1990)



... and today

## Anne Mutu

Having lived in Beach Haven for over fifty years I knew the area before it became a park. When the park was laid out a pioneers' walk was to be planted and a notice was put in the paper for families to donate a pin-oak. My husband and I decided that we would also donate a tree. In about 1996 I saw a notice advertising an AGM for the park's management committee and decided to attend as I often used the park to walk our dog, and I joined the committee at that time. While I approve of and support the sportsgrounds I didn't want to see the whole park covered in and devoted to sports. Having joined the committee my fears proved groundless in that respect. My particular job has been to look after the piece of bush to the left of the Beach Haven road entrance. For many years now I have battled to overcome the infestation of the Moth Pest Plant. I must have pulled out literally thousands of young and not so young seedlings and they are still coming up. The first year I filled nine supermarket bags with the choko-like seed pods. Our committee still keeps an eye on the park and we do what we can but it's a big job and we could use more interested and younger members to help with the work, although we are fortunate to have Ian, a very keen and active younger man as chairman.



Planting kauri trees donated by Forest and Bird amongst the kanuka (1999)



Ian Grant, the present chairman, manages to fit in many working hours in the park as well as careering through the Woodhill forest in a 4WD. Always handy with a heavy machine of some kind, older committee members look at him with grateful thanks for lifting the 'dad's Army' image we have somehow gained over twenty years.



# Celebrating the past 20 years (1990 - 2010)



The present Committee on a boat trip to celebrate 20 years (Shepherd's Park in the background)



Conservation Volunteers with the present committee – Victor, Elizabeth, Terry, Ian, Anne

## ... and looking to the future

