

## MOUNT ALBERT GRAMMAR SCHOOL TIMELINE

This timeline is of significant events in the history of the school. It is a summary in running order and not necessarily in full sentences. If anyone is aware of an important omission, please make it known.

There is a cavalcade of notable and illustrious Albertians in every field of endeavour, not recorded here. Likewise, many firsts; the school was the first to introduce Geography and Biology and the first to establish a library, silent reading period during an English period. The HOD English, John Hooper Harvey and the Headmaster, Frank William Gamble were men of vision.

The list is curated by Brian Murphy, Archivist.

1919: The Board of Governors of the Auckland Grammar School decided to build this school here, on 16 ½ acres of the Kerr-Taylor farm.

1921: Foundation stone laid.

1922: Classes began before the construction was complete. Officially opened by Governor General, Viscount Jellicoe.

1924: Old Boys' Association Incorporated, Association Football introduced. School wins the Rugby 1<sup>st</sup> XV Championship for the first time.

1925: David William Fell MA, aged 26, was the first Master of the School to die in office. He was given a brass plaque in the Hall when it opened. Later, staff members who died in office were given a plaque of the same size. It is a dolorous reminder of mortality.

1926: Hall opened. There is a large brass plaque marking the event.

1927: School House opened at 807 New North Road in an old gentleman's residence on six acres of land. New School Bell donated by the father of Les Kinnear. It had been the Mt Albert fire bell.

1928: Four new classrooms added to the north wing. They are now thought to be part of the original building so seamlessly are they integrated.

1931: School won the Earl Roberts Shooting trophy. This was a postal shoot for schools in the UK and throughout the British Empire. To win it was a prestigious achievement.

1933: School Farm, 20 acres, purchased from the Kerr Taylor family by the Auckland Savings Bank and leased to the school.

1934: Main top field completed by 400 relief workers during the Great Depression.

1935: Free place system abolished by first Labour Government. Previously if you did not pass the Proficiency examination in standard six, later Form 2, now Year 8, you could not go to a secondary school. If you did not pass the Senior Free place, you could not go past Form 4, Year 10.

1938: The *Annus Mirabilis* of Mount Albert Grammar School sport. The school won every team and individual championship in every sport played among schools at the time. A dressing shed was built most probably in this year. No photographs of it have been found and it was demolished before the first gymnasium was built.

1939: World War Two began. Before it ended in 1945, 197 Old Boys had fallen.

1941: First pupil Rhodes Scholar – Sir Alan Stewart, University College, Oxford. The first from the school was a teacher Percy Croft Minns 1930. Balliol College, Oxford. Also 1941 saw the first of nearly 30 comprehensive newsletters to many Mt Albert men stationed overseas. They were written and cyclostyled on foolscap paper. They were very fulsome and put together by two full time teachers, Jack Horrocks and Nelson Body.

1942: The school had nine of its fulltime staff of 21 overseas in uniform and for the first time there were three women teachers, who were all very well qualified, but they did not go into the staffroom; different times.

1943: Old Boys Servicemen reunion at Maadi Casino, Cairo. We have the document they signed.

1946: Silver Jubilee. First history of school written (JH Harvey). Physical Education becomes a time-tabled subject. Headmaster Gamble retires.

1948: Polio. Epidemic, school closed for the first eleven weeks. An additional 18 acres of the Kerr-Taylor farm was gazetted as an addition to the school grounds, extending the site to 35 acres, not including the farm.

1949: The first Parents Day was held at the school. There were tours of the school in action. A new agriculture classroom called “The Outer Lab” was established, long since demolished.

1952: An enormous fair, the Gala Day, was held. It took some organising. There were all sorts of events, stalls, rides, bands, a procession up Alberton Avenue. Hundreds of paying customers, personalities of the day. In one afternoon, 1200 pounds was raised, in 2023 dollars that is \$82,500.

1953: Free textbooks introduced.

1954: First Gymnasium opens, later put to new use. Headmaster Caradus retires. M.A.G. Pie, first pupil publication. This year only. There were later short-lived ones, very unofficial.

1956: Memorial Pavilion (Grandstand) opens on ANZAC Day. There has been an annual ANZAC Service since. Main block painted for the first time. New tennis courts (six), asphalted. Duke of Edinburgh visited for four hours in December.

1958: The 'New Wing' was opened. It is joined to the main building, though in a different architectural style.

1963: Four new classrooms were added to the New Wing.

1968: D and T blocks opened.

1969: Headmaster Nairn retires. It was his aim to have the whole school in permanent buildings, without any prefabs. He succeeded.

1971: New School House, in a group of separate buildings, opens. It was built on the lower hockey field. Although we lost a playing field it is much more comfortable than the old house in New North Road. It has been renovated several times.

1972: Golden Jubilee of school: Events, second history of school written (JG Brown). Golden Jubilee Trust established.

1975: Shelter shed demolished. It was shelter from the rain. There were two little rooms within it. One was for prefects and the other was the tuck-shop, ran by the caretaker.

1976: New library building opens, there was a tiered lecture/AV/film venue, plus several classrooms and an office. It was built on the platform that was originally developed for two tennis courts and later held the Armory, holding .303 rifles for cadets. Also, the first metalwork shop was erected there.

1977: Golden Jubilee of School House. Events: History writer (CR Hemus).

1979: Last printed copy of the top pocket-sized *Calendar and School Lists*. Later one also had a reading guide. School developed ones continued for a while but they were never as useful as the printed ones. Over time, class lists appeared in *The Albertian*, the school's annual magazine.

1981: Woolf Fisher Scholarships established.

1982: Diamond jubilee of School. Events: First Leaver's Dinner at Polish House, Morningside. Evan Gray organised it and ran it for many years.

1984: Second Gymnasium opened by Albertian Prime Minister, Sir Robert Muldoon.

1987: Short-lived Board of Governors for the Mount Albert Grammar School for Boys.

1988: Headmaster Hall retires. Board of Trustees first appointed. Many other changes in education under the banner of Tomorrow's Schools.

1991: School Hall renamed the FW Gamble Memorial Hall, by the Old Boys Associations.

1997: 75<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of the school. Events: Third history of the school and the most comprehensive ever, *Tradition and Change* (RCJ Stone and NAC McMillan). Logo developed by John Stradwick, Head Prefect. Fundraising for pool using professional fundraiser. First 14 inductees into newly established Hall of Distinction.

1998: Aquatic Centre opened by Prime Minister Jenny Shipley. A joint venture; the school and the Auckland City Council.

1999: Third tennis court. The six courts were sand filled and would also serve as netball courts in winter. A small building was also built. It served as a storage for tennis nets.

2000: The year of a major event. The first girls arrived. Third form only, to grow with the school. About 150 girls. E Block opens, turned out to be a leaky building. Prime Minister Helen Clark, MP for Mount Albert, distributed inaugural badges to the first girls.

2004: Last year of Foundation Girls. First big revamp of D Block and establishment of D Block Quad.

2006: Library gutted and rebuilt a new and extended, to abut the 'New Wing', lower level became red and green rooms of the library. The upper level opened on the new wing and became a science workroom. Headmaster Taylor retires.

2007: Quad makeover complete and renamed the Albertian Quadrangle. Observatory built. First Scholar and Arts Lions awarded and likewise first Premier Teams captains badges presented.

2008: Liddell scholarships established. Front steps redesigned.

2009: The launch of the Mount Albert Grammar School Foundation, a registered charitable trust able to raise, receive and manage funds for general or specific purposes. It incorporates the Golden Jubilee Trust and several smaller trusts.

2010: *MAGS Flavours* cookbook launched.

2011: Redeveloped E Block reopens. Third gymnasium opened by Prime Minister John Key. Now two functional gyms.

2012: 90<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Celebrations.

2014: First Fine Arts Show with works of professional artists for sale. It replaced the annual Art Auction of pupils' work ran by the staff of Anne Duncan Real Estate.

2015: D Block rebuilt and a new companion building was constructed by it. The two are joined by an atrium which is used for functions. Headmaster Dale Burden resigns.

2016: D Block renamed for the fourth Headmaster, Maurice Hall. The new building houses the Mathematics Department and Mr Hall was the Head of Mathematics when he first arrived here.

2017: The Number 1 rugby field was renamed the BG Williams Field at a luncheon at School House. Rugby Royalty, All Blacks, Senior Administrators, of New Zealand Rugby and members of clubs, Ponsonby, Barbarians, Manu Samoa and many other dignitaries. Bryan Williams, lawyer, stellar All Black and a man who has given back to the game and the community and was later Knighted.

2019: Two top scholars were honoured at Parliament in 2019. Miriam Leonhardt was the top female scholar in New Zealand with seven Scholarships: Earth and Space (O), Physics (O), Statistics (O), Biology, Calculus, Chemistry and German. Johnathan De Pledge was top Scholar in Physics, he also had four other scholarships, Calculus (O), Statistics (O), Chemistry (O), Earth and Space Science (O).

2020: The opening of the two-storey Science Building by the Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern. It is called the William Caradus Building for the second headmaster who started in 1922 as the first Science Master.

2021: The opening of the GL Weir Sports Centre by Weir's daughter-in-law Jane Weir. Gordon Lindsay Weir was a foundation pupil, head prefect, captain of both cricket and rugby. He became an Auckland representative rugby player and the school's first New Zealand test cricketer 1930-1937. He returned here to teach, was HOD English, Deputy Headmaster and Acting Headmaster. He Became the worlds' oldest test cricketer. Also, in 2021 Whaea Tui Gallagher, Board of Trustees Deputy Chair, presented Korowai (feather cloaks) to Head Prefects Marcus Savelio and Hana Hilson. They returned in 2022 and fitted Head Prefects of the Centennial Year, Wesley Donald and Lucy Taylor with the same Korowai.

2022: The schools' Centennial. Many events with hundreds of Albertians both local and international returning. The fourth history of the school, *Change and Tradition* (Deborah Dunsford). Many Centennial souvenirs produced and 100 year logos on all playing sports gear. Many Centennial games, bags, hats, wine bottle labels, tours, private get togethers. There was a service, a luncheon, other functions, a dinner. The E Block was rededicated to fifth Headmaster, Greg Taylor. The Centennial walkway was opened, it is also a new War Memorial and the Flag was raised for the first time. The farm was gifted to the school by the ASB Bank. The girls' boarding house, Centennial House was opened at 45 Lloyd Avenue. Everyone in the school was presented with a Centennial badge. The new wing was again gutted and reopened with the ground level for Dance and the upper level an enormous new staffroom with a much-extended kitchen, and a viewing deck overlooking the Sir BG Williams Field and the cricket wicket for summer. The new staff room has been named for Warwick Gibbs as the WOH Gibbs Room. This is his 50<sup>th</sup> year in the classroom. All these festivities were under the aegis of Headmaster Patrick Drumm.

2023: Progress is well underway with the School's first three-storey building to be named for the third Headmaster, Murray Nairn.

2024: The Centennial of the Old Boys' Association, renamed the Albertians Association in 2002.

2027: The Centennial of School House.

Brian Murphy  
Archivist