

## CROQUET.

THE ladies of the Grafton Croquet Club held an "At Home" on Saturday afternoon, the function being a pronounced success. The members of the Mount Eden Croquet Club were the guests of the Grafton ladies on the occasion. The floral decorations at the pavilion and the tables evidenced that, although the season is on the wane, and water scarce, there is still a goodly bloom to be gathered by willing hands. Of the ladies of the Grafton Club, Mesdames Donald, Edmiston, King, Coleman, Thornes, Leo Myers, Alexander, and Carlaw gave time and labour to make the afternoon an enjoyable one, Mrs. Rold especially sparing neither time nor trouble in looking after the comfort of all. Friendly games were played before and after the tea adjournment, the gathering being one of the most successful of the season. The club now is so popular the lawns are found to be too limited, but by next season it is expected this will be remedied.

## MOUNT EDEN CROQUET CLUB

THE members of the Mount Eden Croquet Club extended a hearty welcome to the Grafton, Parnell, Remuera, and North Shore Croquet Clubs, on their spacious lawns at Mount Eden yesterday afternoon. Ten lawns were prepared for play, the tennis courts being brought into requisition. The Croquet Club has not a large membership, but great interest is taken by the members, who practice daily. Mr. Heather is president of the combined Tennis and Croquet Clubs, with Mr. Hull as secretary. Mesdames Udy, Kenderdine, Moginie, Hudson, E. C. Beale, Horace Walker, and Miss Elliott, formed an efficient committee of management for the day, and the tables, laden with dainties, showed they had been ably helped by their fellow members. The table decorations were in blue, light and dark blue being the colours of the club. The result of the play showed that three players in class A and class B respectively had both an equal number of games. Mrs. Carlaw (Grafton), in class A, drew a bye. The game between Mesdames Thornes and Smith (Parnell) resulted in a win for Mrs. Thornes. Mesdames Thornes and Carlaw drew for the prize, there being no time to play the game, and Mrs. Thornes won. The prize was a heavy silver-mounted scent bottle. Mrs. Carlaw received a pretty basket ornament as a consolation prize. In class B Mrs. (Dr.) King (Grafton) drew a bye from Mesdames (Dr.) McDowell (Grafton) and Harry (North Shore). Mrs. McDowell won the game, the final draw resulting in Mrs. (Dr.) King receiving the prize, a silver-mounted scent bottle, and Mrs. (Dr.) McDowell an ornament as a consolation prize. Mr. Heather presented the prizes.

### Mt Eden's Places for sport:

After all the building the inhabitants of the Borough had more leisure time and began to look to sports as a means of recreation - the most respectable of sports of course, such as tennis, bowls and cricket, gentlemen's sport. Those dedicated to their sport sacrificed time and money and today these ground are still in operation.

Tennis was the first with its beginnings in 1886 with the club forming and leasing a plot of land from Mt Richard Udy's dairy farm on Mt Eden Rd. Two more grass tennis courts were laid in 1900 and in 1950's the club added squash as it was becoming popular and the club became known as the Mt Eden Tennis and Squash club and is still on the same site today the club Bowls started in Mt Eden in 1896 with the foundation of the Mt Eden Bowling Club on Mt Eden Rd, croquet became a popular sport for the ladies and a green was laid on an adjoining property in 1904.

Cricket was played at the Eden-Roskill Cricket Club and sometime around 1901 a group of keen cricketers played friendly games on a small section of land they rented to the west of Eden Park. In 1903 they founded the Eden District Cricket Club and due to their success they purchased 15 acres to form Eden Park. This land was on the edge of a cabbage tree swamp and at times in winter a lake where boats were rowed. In the summer it was rough and scrub-covered, the grounds were gradually developed and pavilion built. Flooding continued to be a problem and in 1924 cricket amalgamated with Rugby and today we have an international playing venue equal to any in the world, Eden Park is the home of Auckland Rugby, Auckland Cricket, the Blues super 12 franchise and hosts international games for visiting teams.



Date 6 Aug 1905

Mt Eden Rd & Valley Rd intersection





Covers period  
1927-35



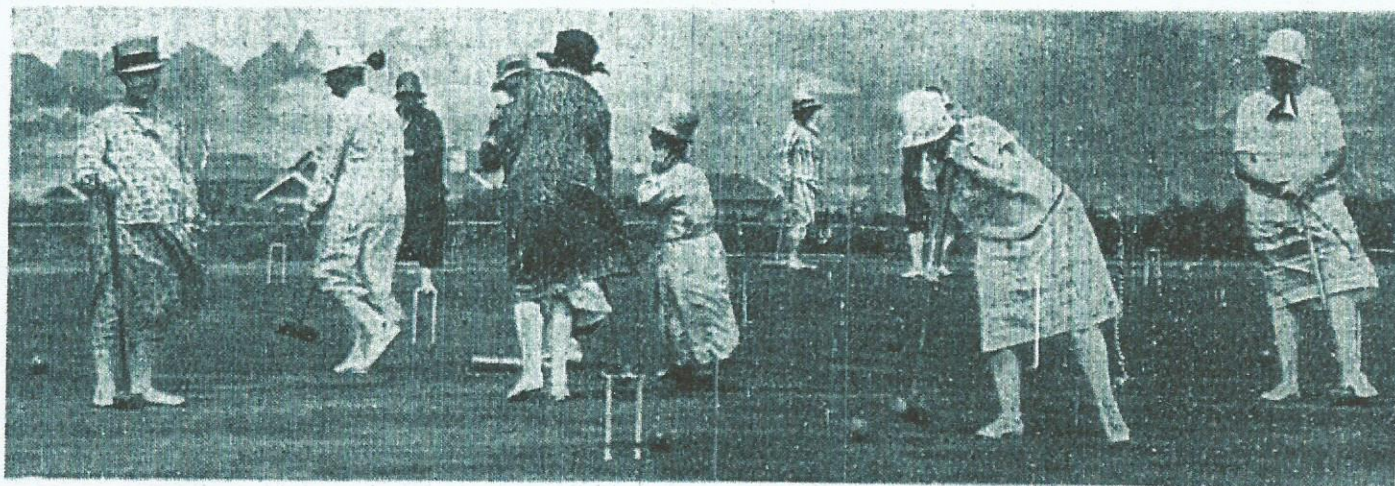
Mt. Eden Croquet Club held an "At Home" on Thursday afternoon, to which were invited a number of players from other clubs.. The lawns are adjacent to the bowling greens. To give more room for play, the Bowling Club very graciously gave the use of one of the greens for play. The music, which greatly added to the enjoyment, was supplied by the Bavarian Band. A dainty afternoon tea was provided by the ladies of the club, the tables being artistically arranged with yellow and purple flowers. Progressive croquet was played, the winners being Mesdames Smith and Young, first grade, and Mesdames Hodgson and Vause, second grade. The prizes, which were very handsome, were presented by Mr C. Hudson.





2010 Mt Eden Croquet Club clubhouse  
and northern end of lawns . . .  
and southern end of lawns  
— location Mt Eden Bowling Club





THE MOUNT EDEN CROQUET CLUB "AT HOME" YESTERDAY AFTERNOON.  
A photograph taken during the progress of play. Members of Auckland and suburban clubs were guests at the Mount Eden green.



THE CROQUET SEASON OPENS.—Scene at the Mount Eden Croquet Club yesterday after the official opening of the greens by Mrs. R. Hamilton, president of the Auckland Croquet Association.



STOKES ROAD

EPSOM AVENUE

Nicholson  
Park

PORONUI STREET

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Mt Eden 1959

0 5 10 15  
Meters

Scale @ A4  
= 1:1,000

Date Printed:  
27/12/2016



**Auckland  
Council**  
Te Kauhira o Tāmaki Makaurau





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Mt Eden 2012

0 5 10 15  
Meters

Scale @ A4  
= 1:1,000

Date Printed:  
27/12/2016



**Auckland Council**  
Te Kaurihera o Tāmaki Makaurau



Herald 20.11.1925

### NICHOLSON PARK PLAYGROUND.

Sir,—A large number of mothers in Mount Eden in the vicinity of Nicholson Park, must have been disappointed when they read the report of the opening of the Mount Eden Croquet Club. When a collector asked me for a sub. for a children's playground I willingly gave what I could spare and promised more when the playground was started. But all we have got is a beautiful lawn for tennis and croquet and smart dressing rooms and everywhere the children are asking "When is our playground going to be ready?" When there are tennis courts in every direction I do think the children might have had their playground first.

A MOTHER.

pany reqi daily.  
(New Zealand Herald, 1944-07-19)

## USE OF CLUB PAVILIONS

### QUESTION OF RECOVERY

"I think we should see now about recovering these places," said the Mayor, Mr R. J. Mills, at a meeting of the Mount Eden Borough Council last night, when an inquiry as to the likelihood of the Mount Eden Croquet Club regaining its pavilion from the Air Force for the coming season was being considered. Mr Mills said the small clubs concerned in the taking over of pavilions and premises had been very patient.

"They are not the only ones who have been patient," remarked a member.

"I think we should support the HERALD in its statements," said Mr N. C. Snedden.

It was decided to support the club's application and to make inquiries about the recovery of occupied premises.





**CROQUET "AT HOME" AT MOUNT EDEN CLUB—A general view of the play during the afternoon.**

*Auckland Star 24 Feb 1928*



*current Eden-Epsom Tennis Club site*

The initial idea of including croquet was revived in 1896, and two croquet lawns were laid, this game being seen as a fitting sport for the ladies. The ladies were more partial to tennis, however, and the number of croquet players dwindled. Those remaining finally left and joined the club at the top of Valley Road.

Two more tennis courts were laid in 1900 and the pavilion, built early on, was gradually upgraded. In the late 1950's, when squash was becoming popular and the club was in need of added income, it was decided to set up squash courts. These were completed in 1963, and that which at its inception was to be a tennis and croquet club, became a tennis and squash club.

Today the club, which has remained on its original site for just over a hundred years, has six all-weather astrograss courts, six squash courts, and a well-appointed club house. It is still one of the strongest clubs in Auckland. Many of its members represent the second and third generations of their families' involvement in the club.

Seven men met in Waites Hall in 1896 and decided to form a club to play what they considered 'sport of the highest and best kind'. This was the foundation of the Mt Eden Bowling Club. After their first meeting the seven men decided to come back together in a week's time, having canvassed for new members. There were no new members when they met together a week later, but they decided to go ahead with the formation of the club and purchased three allotments for a playing area at the top end of Valley Road, fronting Mt Eden Road. The grounds having been levelled and grassed, the club opened for play the following year. It wasn't long before numbers increased and many Mt Eden gentlemen were bowling on the greens.

A croquet lawn with two small greens was laid on the adjoining property in 1904, and croquet became a popular sport for the ladies. They shifted to new facilities in Nicholson Park about 1925, where the Council had prepared a croquet ground, made possible by the fund-raising efforts of club members. The croquet club closed in the 1960's.

By 1910 membership of the Bowling Club was well over one hundred and increasing, and the grounds were now in a poor state. The bowling club members discussed shifting to new grounds at Nicholson Park, but as part of the area in mind was Crown land controlled by the Epsom and Mt Eden Domain Board, they were refused the lease of the land. Two more acres were added to the playing area in Valley Road instead.

When the club again requested the lease of land at Nicholson Park in 1926, it was granted and a building fund started for the pavilion. The site required much work before it was to look anything like a bowling green. It had been a quarry from

which tons of scoria had been taken, and was cavernous and rugged with veins of rock jutting upwards. The site was filled in with all kinds of rubble—tree trunks, rocks, old cars—before it was levelled off and the topsoil laid. The greens were formed by the Borough Council, and officially opened in October 1929. The pavilion was built and completed for the following season.



Mount Eden & Combined Bowling Club  
Brian Wilson Photography

In the late 1970's the club merged with the Auckland Combined Services Club when their land in Brentwood Avenue was taken. As there are few men from the Services remaining the name is to be changed back to The Mt Eden Bowling Club. Membership is now around 170, 54 of whom form a ladies' section of the club. The only indication of the former state of the site is on one of the greens, where there has been a gradual settlement of the overlay.

In 1908 a group in the Balmoral area met in St Alban's Hall to form the Dominion Road Bowling Club. The following year they bought property in Mont Le Grand Road and laid bowling greens and tennis courts. With a membership of 41 the club opened their greens in November 1910. A small ladies' croquet club was opened in the same year. The club name was changed to Balmoral Bowling Club in 1931. The two-storeyed pavilion was built in 1957 as part of the Jubilee celebrations.

Eden-Roskill Cricket Club, which represents Mt Eden, has an interesting history in connection with Eden Park. As there are no facilities in Mt Eden for cricket, the club has its headquarters in Keith Hay Park, Mt Roskill, although its history and association remain tied closely to Mt Eden.

Sometime around 1901 to 1902 a group of keen cricketers played friendly games on a small section of land they rented to the west of today's Eden Park. In 1903 they decided to found the Eden District Cricket Club.



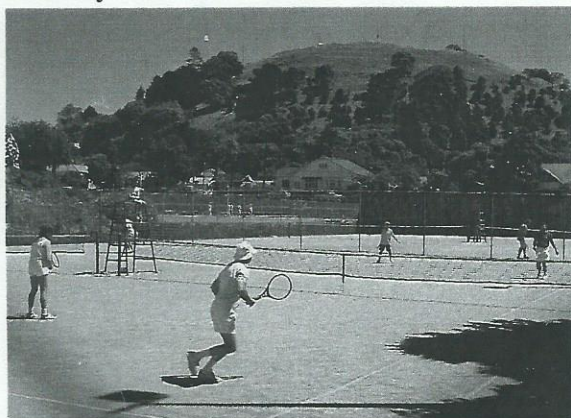
courts on the property, which they used and maintained until they merged with the Eden-Epsom Tennis Club. From this time the council took over the upkeep of the property, developing it into a centre for the use of groups in the community.

The Centre, run by the council, is available to be used by any community group. It is presently used for after-school programmes, holiday programmes, pre-school, Plunket, and a support group for the elderly. The courts are used on a casual basis by those living in the area, for tennis, netball and soccer.

Nicholson Park is the only organized sports grounds in Mt Eden, with facilities for bowls, tennis, and hockey and soccer practice fields, which are used by various clubs on long-term lease.

Before Nicholson Park became the well planned grounds we know today it was used by children in the neighbourhood as a place where they could chase rabbits, build huts and play hide-and-go-seek. Prior to this near the end of the last century, the area was extensively quarried and tons of scoria had been removed. This left an area of rough, loose ground and rocks where little else but manuka and gorse grew. The land had been set aside as a road reserve under the Epsom and Mt Eden Domain Board, and in 1916 it was suggested as a site for the Auckland University College and was passed over to the Auckland City Council and the Mount Eden Borough Council jointly. Nothing came of this, and in 1922 it was classified as recreation reserve to be developed and administered by the Mt Eden Borough Council.

Nicholson Park was developed into a sports park in the 1920's. This began with the preparation of croquet lawns in 1924, by cutting gorse, and bringing loads of clay for fill. The same year a part of the reserve, where the bowling club is now, was leased for quarrying for two years. In 1925 the children's playground was put in, with money donated by Mr O. Nicholson and Mr H. Nicholls, and was officially opened by Mayor Potter in February 1926.



*Mount Eden Tennis Club, Nicholson Park*  
Brian Wilson Photography

The tennis courts, which are now used by the Mt Eden Tennis Club, were formed in 1926. These were leased by the Seddonian Tennis Club, Old Boys of Seddon Technical School in Wellesley Street. As numbers of Seddon Old Boys fell the club opened up the membership to the public, and changed the name to Mt Eden Tennis Club in 1931. During the years of World War II, tennis balls like soccer balls were hard to come by and required a permit. The club secretary took the initiative however, and recruited several ladies who had worked for Reid Rubber to make tennis balls. These sold at 12s/6d (\$1.25) a dozen. The club continues today with over a hundred members. The original four chip courts which required raking and watering have been increased to six, four of which are now in synthetic grass.

Another six courts formed across the road from these are used by the Auckland Lawn Tennis Association, and are the headquarters of the ALTA Junior Section. The association has been the scene of many popular junior tournaments with up-and-coming players such as Chris Lewis, Julie Richardson and Brett Steven progressing through the junior ranks.

By 1927 Nicholson Park was largely developed with playground, croquet lawns and tennis courts, and only the old quarry area remained in a rough state. Filling and levelling of this area then began, to form the bowling club and sports grounds. The bowling club grounds and pavilion were completed in 1929, and the grounds for soccer and cricket completed and ready for use by 1931. The women's bowling club was later formed at the end of the 1930's. Drainage work being carried out in the borough made fill available as necessary for these grounds. Much of the work was done by relief workers, as these were the depression years. By the 1960's the croquet club, which had few remaining members, wound up. The land was then divided between the bowling club and the tennis club.

Much of the development of the area was funded from the estate of Mr James Young. The work, carried out largely by the council, transformed an area of rough waste land into neatly laid out sports grounds providing for the community's sporting needs.



Mt Eden C.C. - Nicholson Park  
26/10/10

Fred Thomson  
22 Village Dr  
Pakuranga (Age 93)

The club had two lawns south of the old (existing) clubhouse. They covered the artificial green area and went back to the stone wall. About 1960\* they only had 6-8 members so closed and moved to the Carlton C.C. - taking all momentoss with them.

(Phone conversation 5/6 2055)  
Fred member Mt Eden B.C.

Yearbook suggests 1967

