



MT VICTORIA

Historical Society News

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Home and Hania Streets

Alan Olliver will present an illustrated social history of these two streets, uncovering a wealth of new material on the residents and businesses, and cultural and recreational activity which has occurred in this part of Mt Victoria.

Sunday April 3, 2.30 pm
Tararua Tramping Club Hall, Moncrieff Street, Mt Victoria.

Because of Covid, please register your interest in attending, in case we have to postpone the talk. Contact Alan on 021 1229875.

In February we took a group of Walk Wellington guides on our *Working Class Early Mt Victoria* walk. (It's been a very popular walk; in addition to this one, there were the two tours conducted in Heritage Week last year and one for Historic Places Wellington in February.)

As a consequence, Walk Wellington sent this small article to include in our Newsletter:

Walking the city

Walk Wellington is a voluntary organisation that leads walks in Wellington city. Recently, 11 of our volunteer guides and 2 partners had the pleasure of a historical walk in Mount Victoria with Jo Newman from the Mt Vic Historical society.

We thoroughly enjoyed the focus on working class people, their houses and the people that built them. It was obvious that these stories had required meticulous research, as the stories of everyday people, such as labourers, waterside workers, printers, servants; are not well recorded or easy to find.

It gave us fascinating insights into the lives people led in this area up to 150 years ago, and was very stimulating and interesting for us, as people who enjoy showing others the city we live in and love. Thank you to Jo for sharing her depth of knowledge and love for the area with us.

Over the last two years, with the loss of so many overseas visitors, the demand for our walks has greatly diminished. We are still available to lead a walk at 10am every day, but now require a pre-booking through the Information Centre or through our website.

In addition, we are keen to have more locals come on organised walks with us. So as well as our daily walk, we are keen to lead walks in Wellington for any interested community group. We will arrange times and length to suit the group, and ask for a koha to help support our organisation.

Information is available at www.walkwellington.org.nz, or at information@walkwellington.org.nz.

Why not get a friend or two together and organise a walk to explore another part of the city before the winter!

“Anyone for Tennis?” A history of the Brougham Hill Tennis Club

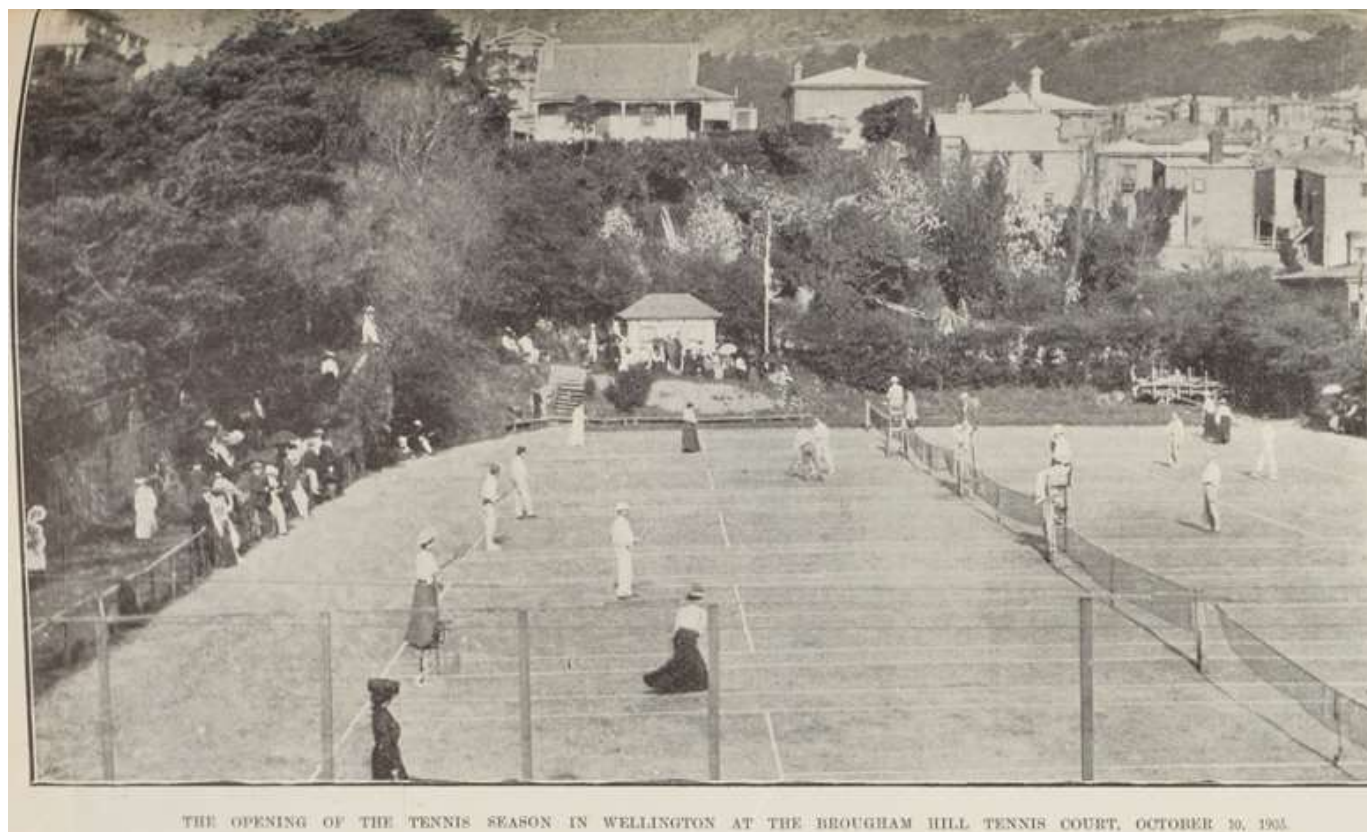
The first “modern” tennis club in NZ was Auckland’s Parnell Lawn Tennis Club founded in 1877. Locally, the Thorndon Tennis Club was founded in 1879. With a growing interest in tennis and limits to membership, it would seem inevitable that new clubs would be formed.

Brougham Hill Tennis and Croquet Club was founded in October 1899. The Club leased Town Acre 297 in Lloyd Street (now called Hania Street), from John Pattinson. The nominal rent was £25 per year. John Pattinson lived on the Town Acre on what is known today as 100 Brougham Street. The courts were located where The Street City Church’s Life Centre, ex Rehabilitation League Centre, is at 21 Hania Street today.

Credit for the negotiations in setting up the club went to Henry Hurley – a Bank of New South Wales clerk, and a keen cricket and tennis player. He lived at 77 Brougham St (on the corner with Pirie St.). His brother, George Hurley, became the first President of the Club and was soon followed by John Aitken, Mayor of Wellington and resident of 2 Levy Street. The Howe brothers were step-grandsons of John Pattinson. They lived next door to him at both 102 Brougham Street and 19 Lloyd Street. They held offices in the Club for almost all of its years of existence. John Howe was treasurer for 40 years and William Howe was secretary from 1911 until 1942.

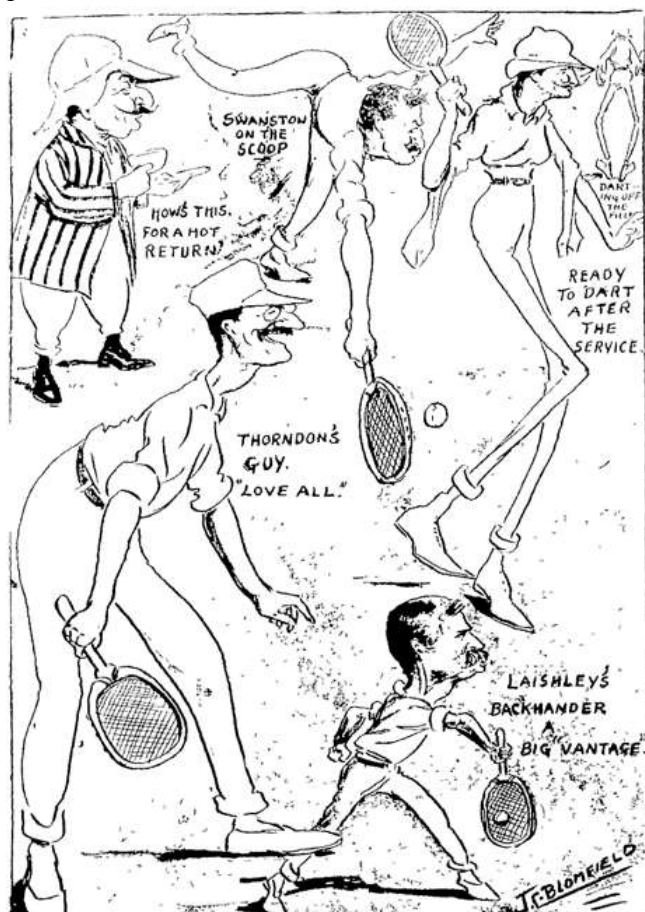
Earlier this year I made contact with Dave Randal, a descendent of the Howe family. His great grandmother Erma Howe (1893-1985), daughter of John Howe, recalls in a memoir just before she died, that there was a Chinese garden on this site. “When the Chinaman left there was a still a great many vegetables left and people just swarmed into the garden to get them.”

In setting up the Club, members were called on to help prepare the courts - an arduous job of excavating down three feet, removing the soil and filling and rolling it with clinker and rock before it was topped with asphalt. Five courts were laid out, with room for a pavilion and a tea room. Membership grew from an initial 58 to over 100 with a waiting list for membership by 1903, making it the largest club in Wellington at the time.



Erma Howe said “the club flourished and many many hundreds of people have played there and won fame for themselves, namely Kate Nunneley, Eva Travis, May Spiers, Arita Howe, Doris Howe, Harry Parker, R.N.K. Swanston, Fred Laishley and many others.

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“Then, any visitors to Wellington who wanted a game were always made welcome, either to play tennis or up at our home.” However, she said, my grandfather made it very clear that there would be no Sunday play. This was one of the conditions on renting the grounds for tennis.

The club was also successful in local and national championships. For example, Arita Howe was the 1926-7 New Zealand Women’s Single’s Champion. Arita’s cousin, Doris Howe and Dulcie Nicholls, were the 1931 New Zealand Women’s Double’s champions. Doris’s success was not surprising. She is quoted as saying “I never really had a job. I just played tennis night and day.”

The Club appears to have gone out of existence by July 1942, possibly folding soon after John Howe’s death in February 1941.

The Rehabilitation Board purchased the courts for an arts and crafts factory and artificial limb centre for disabled servicemen returning from World War 2.

Left: J R Blomfield cartoon "On the tennis courts - At Brougham Hill Contests", Free Lance, 21/11/1908

BHTC Committee
Members c.1920s

Front Row
Left: William Howe,
Treasurer
Right: John (JAB) Howe,
Secretary

Back Row
Middle: Sir Kenneth
Douglas, Vice President
Right: Dr Smythe, Vice
President

Others unidentified

Source: David Randal



Sources: Dave Randal and National Library Papers Past.

By Alan Olliver