

David and Sydney Lumsden and their contribution to Newmarket's history

From David:

It was indeed a privilege to be the Mayor of Newmarket from 1974 – 1989, supported by my wife, Sydney who was a hard-working Mayoress.

As it happened, I was the last mayor of Newmarket, as in the mid 1980's, the Government of the time decided small Borough Council's like Newmarket should be amalgamated into a larger Council entity – in the case of Newmarket it was to become part of a new Auckland City.

I am 81 years old now, and have been married to Sydney for 60 years. Our memories of Newmarket are fond, warm and almost without exception positive, so I won't discuss the amalgamation of the Borough any further – except to say that we resisted it.

Newmarket was a small pocket of Auckland packed with character and characters. It had a history as a borough council dating back to 1885, with its growth into a centre starting well before that, because of its location on or near the junction of three important early roads – Epsom Road (now Parnell Road and Broadway); Tamaki Road (now Remuera Road); and Khyber Pass Road. It was soon also at an important junction of Auckland's southern and western rail lines and Newmarket was again strategically positioned when the motorways came to Auckland in the 1950's.

As the home of some major industrial uses such as: Lion Breweries; Abel's; Hayes Metal Refinery; and Cashmore's Timber yard; along with many strong smaller businesses, Newmarket prospered, while also upholding a residential role. The retail and office roles of Newmarket also grew, especially in the early 1980's. A key change during my term as Mayor came with the construction and opening of the "Two Double Seven" shopping centre on Broadway. This consolidated Newmarket as a retail and business centre serving the wider Auckland community.

Amongst all of this activity, I am pleased to say that the Newmarket Borough Council was able to establish itself a reputation for being efficient, friendly and practical as it managed and supported Newmarket's growth and character.

I must acknowledge the important contributions of the Councillors and of the small but hardworking staff of the borough. Both were a competent and pragmatic group of men and women who had a pride and loyalty for Newmarket which allowed them to work extremely effectively as a team, and in the interests of all of the Newmarket community. Special mention is due to John Compton, the Town Clerk/ CEO who led from the front in all of these respects, and provided great support to me and the Councillor's in implementing our decisions and ensuring things ran as smoothly as possible in Newmarket.

My association with Newmarket well and truly preceded being elected as mayor in 1974. I owned and operated a business on Khyber Pass Road selling imported Persian rugs for some years before being asked by the then incumbent Mayor of Newmarket, Bill White, to stand as his replacement in 1974. I went to school and grew up in the area, having met Sydney at Parnell Primary School (there was no Newmarket Primary School back in those days) and married her in Scotland when we were both on our "O.E" (Overseas Experience) year, before returning to Newmarket. Little did I realise at that time that I had wooed a woman with the perfect attributes to become a Mayoress. In that role she not only supported me, but also applied her initiative, cheerfulness and energy into a range of activities specifically led by her and the 24 equally enthusiastic members of the Mayoress's Committee.

I will leave her to explain some of the details of those activities, as they will be remembered by some who were involved, as being just as important to them and/or their families as anything I was able to achieve in my term as Mayor of Newmarket.

From Sydney:

Like David, I have many fond memories of Newmarket both during and before my time as Mayoress.

I have been asked to particularly recount, for the record, the structures activities in the borough provided by the Mayoress's Committee:

(a) The Newmarket Old Folks Association:

On the first Saturday of each month (excluding January/February) the Mayoress's Committee provided afternoon tea and entertainment in the Social Hall of the NZ Royal Foundation for the Blind in Parnell Road. This continued a caring tradition instigated just after World War II. I always felt the importance of caring for our Seniors – all the more so now that I have become one !

(b) Housie for Senior Citizens:

Always being one who hoped helping out and working could also be fun, the Housie mornings held for senior citizens each Thursday certainly met that brief. Held at Outhwaite Park House the event grew to the point where the regulars would bring their own lunch and the pikelets, scones and muffins I prepared for morning tea would be finished up at afternoon tea time for those still playing. Baking consumed much of the Wednesdays before Housie Thursdays but the pleasure it gave was obvious and very heart warming.

(c) The Donaldson Memorial Christmas Cheer Fund:

Named after its founder, Mrs Annie Donaldson (Mayoress of Newmarket 1921-1944), this activity involved sponsoring, organising and managing the Christmas Cheer Fund which provided books and toys for sick children faced with having their Christmas at Auckland Hospital. The Newmarket Business Community were incredibly supportive and generous towards this and in the final year of the Borough also enabled the funding of two pressure pumps for use in the children's ward of the hospital.

(d) Christmas Goodwill Gift: - The Mayor and the Town Clerk the week before Christmas personally delivered to each pensioner in the Borough a bottle of port, a bottle of wine and a small Christmas cake sponsored by the Newmarket Business community and without a doubt this was very much appreciated.

My fondest memories of Newmarket were the lovely people and sense of community and caring which it engendered. I was lucky enough through Newmarket and David's position as Mayor to meet people from all walks of life, many of whom have been lasting friends. We all shared in common a sense that Newmarket was special and had a character and qualities which are worth remembering, cherishing and learning from.

My sincere thanks go out to the many folks who made that so.