

# Birkdale Forever

By Cliff Utting

What is wrong with the name “Birkdale”?

Birkenhead. Birkdale and Chelsea used to be three areas making up Birkenhead. In 1927 a small area from Kiwi Rd to the Birkdale Wharf was subdivided and the subdivider advertised it as Beach Haven. Later, Aeroview was also added but was not fully developed for another 20 years. Beach Haven became summer baches and the haunt of yachties and others attracted by the cabaret. These were a thorn in the side of the residents of the rest of Birkdale, consisting mostly of fruit growers whose orchards were frequently raided.

The name “Beach Haven” remained to distinguish the area from the more sedate and hard working settlers of Birkdale.

Birkdale was established nearly 100 years ago and became a closely knit community of its own. Residents organized an annual horticultural show, athletic sports days, a cricket club, a theatre and other cultural activities. Owing to the absence of metalled roads, they mostly used water transport to Birkdale wharf. Possibly this lack of communication with Birkenhead and their many requirements - particularly roading and water - made the residents particularly keen on local politics. They took an active part in the affairs of the borough council from its inception 90 years ago., supplying five mayors and many councilors. Now this old solid community which did so much to establish and maintain their district, to say nothing of the pioneering spirit which prevailed, is gradually being forgotten and pushed aside.

The first shock came when the 19 memorial trees, planted in the school grounds to the memory of those killed in World War One, were unceremoniously bulldozed out. Then the Birkdale wharf became Beach Haven wharf. As Birkdale develops for residential, the name “Beach Haven” is spreading. The latest insult to the memory of the pioneers was in the June 22 issue of the North Shore Times Advertiser when the old people’s home in Birkdale Rd was called Beach Haven. This was not only the centre of Birkdale but one of the oldest and largest orchards in Birkdale, farmed by Mr Walton a former mayor.

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