

# CHANGING NEW PLYMOUTH STATE HOTEL POHUTUKAWA TREE NOW DOOMED

(By Fred. B. Butler.)

SO many properties have of late changed hands, or undergone rebuilding, that it will take quite a few articles to give their changing activities and the various vicissitudes of their being. A while back we dealt with the Red House Hotel—now the State Hotel. This article will deal with the premises east of the hotel. Let us take them in their order from the hotel.

Next the hotel, and a part of the present architectural design of the hotel, is the present Sunbeam Milk Bar. What can we get of its past? Originally it was part of the hotel property, and had its separate identity as a property when it was sold by Richard Langman's estate to Richard Welham on September 2, 1896.

As little is known of the place before this, let us start from, and trace its history from the start. On October 1, 1866, a livery and bait stables was opened here by Filewood and Purse, and in August of the next year J. Hall and Company, moved here. Where they moved from or what was their manner of business is not known. Next a Mr. Bland was here as a draper, clothier, and grocery store, retiring from business on April 20, 1873. The next record is of Richard Welham, a fruiterer and green-grocer having the premises, as stated before, purchasing them from the estate of Richard Langman on September 2, 1886. (He leased them first then purchased them for £250.) That is the shop with living quarters above.

#### Sold as Bakery

He sold to David Arthur Lealand, baker, brother of Percy Lealand, another baker lower down Devon Street on the other side of the street, now Wright's bakery. D. A. Lealand died in 1910, and his executors leased the premises, and bakehouse to a William Banks, from Auckland.

He was followed on May 1, 1917 by Farmer, Haw, and Henry who had a lease. They were followed by Findlay's Bakery. The Lealand trustees sold the premises to John Somerton in June 1922 for £2500. The leases of the premises that followed were in February 1924 to Herry Meadly, followed by Arthur William and Cyril Percy Lealand in September 1925, who went bankrupt in May 1926. Following this it has remained as Somerton's Bakery. The present premises were erected (in Devon Street) at the beginning of this century, and the shop was attached to and part of the bakehouse with a driveway entrance between it and the hotel, with rooms over the driveway.

The shop became a separate premises in November 1944 when Mrs. Shaw opened the Sunbeam Milk Bar, followed in May 1948 by Mr. and Mrs. Dewe, and in June 1949 by Mr. and Mrs. Wilkins. They in turn, sold to the present leasers of the premises—Mr. and Mrs. Pearson.

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pohutukawa and the Sunbeam Milk Bar premises.

The next premises are section No. 1440—now in two parts, the western part being a house, which has a more modern one as frontage to it. The eastern part is now "Betta Model Aeroplane Supply." The whole section was originally choice Number 442, and was selected in 1841 or 1842, but by whom I do not know. In December, 1861, Miss Sarah Ward of Halifax, England, was the owner and in July 1862, she sold the section with the house that is now at the back to Mrs. Elizabeth Collingson Clarke, for £55, who next year became Mrs. Tolliday, then later Mrs. Richard Welham, the life of the baker mentioned in the beginning of this article. She died in February 1897.

In 1900 the owner was Stephen Hooper, of the Red House Hotel. In 1919 the property, now in the name of Mrs. Hooper was increased by part of the section behind it to enlarge it. Edwin Whittle of the Red House was the purchaser in May 1920 for £2200. Some time before this the more modern front was added to the old place and in doing so the new building covered a well. In later years a cat fell in the well—it not being covered over. Whittle died on February 24, 1927 and his estate sold it for £1880 in October 1946, to Ruby Duggan. This is the house now standing. The other half of the same section was sold in July 1876 by Mrs. Tolliday (formerly Mrs. Clarke) to H. S. Lee for £100. At this price it must include the shop now on the premises, so they must have been built prior to this date.

#### Picturesque Place

This shop was a fine, picturesque place, with quaint dormer windows above, since removed when the upstairs front was replaced with a new front in December 1946. On August 1, 1876, Lee sold the property to W. H. Roberts. In default of payment of mortgages, the New Plymouth Friendly Society made a sale of the place to John Danahy for £140 in May 1890. Their mortgage was for £250. Before this time Richard Moverley, a plasterer and stone-mason, lived here. In December 1893 Danahy sold for £299 to Joseph Attrill, a bootmaker, he selling to E. P. Webster for £1000 in July 1911. In 1909 T. Rahally was here as a bootmaker and from 1914

David Newsham followed the same trade here, purchasing the premises in November 1922 for £1600.

In exercise of a power of sale under mortgage the premises were sold for £750 in March 1945 to the present owner, Gordon Pono Smith of the "Betta Model Aeroplane Supplies." The premises are at present in course of enlargement with a new building on the Devon Street frontage on the east.

#### Cawthray Motors

The blank land now to the east of the last mentioned premises are the site of future premises for Cawthray Motors. Here is the history as recorded. These notes do not profess to be complete; they are merely all that has been collected. There may have been a few other tenants or owners of the premises dealt with in these articles, and again, sometimes, the names may have got out of order, but as far as possible, all these notes are checked.

#### Selected in 1841.

This property is section number 1441 and was Choice No. 445 from the New Plymouth Company in either 1841 or 1842, to whom is not known as that is in the records removed from our Survey Department to Wellington recently. The first owner I know of was James Smart in December 1861. He died in June 1863 and his three heirs each received the sum of 5s from Smart's daughter, Jane, whereby she inherited the property and 80 acres at Tarurutangi.

She, on March 4, 1873, sold the section for £225 to Mrs. Eliza Hammerton. At that price, for those days, it must have had the house on it, so the house was built prior to that date. The Hammerton family called the place "Bankfield," which name remained though the family sold the place soon after to Francis Ullathorn Gledhill, a New Plymouth merchant. A number of complicated mortgages followed, and on the bankruptcy of William Humphries, New Plymouth merchant, the property was sold for £300 to Miss L. H. Barnes, in 1885, and she held it till June 1923, when she sold to Walter and Arthur Ambury for £2550.

A Miss Chapel was living here next; then Mr. H. G. Armstead. The property again changed hands in July, 1928, to Garnet H. Saunders. After his death his executors sold the place to Cawthray Motors in March, 1946, the present owners. From 1931 till the building was demolished, H. Reedman, herbalist, etc., lived there and carried on his profession. The house was demolished three years ago, and the frontage levelled in May last year.

It will be observed that all the properties mentioned have changed hands of recent date, or the premises demolished.



A view of the New Plymouth properties mentioned in the article on this page. On the left is the Bettair building, just visible beyond it the old house. The State Hotel building is visible just beyond the pohutukawa tree.

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What was the driveway was changed to a shop early in the 1930's when it was a hairdresser's establishment of R. G. Gillingham. He was followed by P. T. Tucker who was killed by an electric shock from the hair cutter on November 6, 1941. The next I know of is being opened by Misses M. and D. Hopcroft as a beauty salon on October 1, 1945, which recently became the Denver Beauty Salon of Miss Betty Harvey, the present occupiers.

#### Magnificent Pohutukawa

Probably the finest tree in the shopping area of New Plymouth, and certainly the finest one on Devon Street's business area, is on the corner of the next premises. Of a glorious symmetrical shape, it apparently not having been cut or trimmed at any time, this pohutukawa is a finer specimen than the one preserved on the south-east corner of Cameron and Leach Streets. Of late, however, the tree has been cut round at its base. It will have to go in the interests of progress when new premises are erected on the site.

#### Demolished in 1954

The house on this section was demolished in November last year and the timber auctioned on the property on December 20 last. This property with that of the bakehouse on its west, was the land chosen when surveyed for an absentee owner in either 1841 or 1842 as choice No. 441. In June 1862 Thomas Smith of Blackpool, England sold it for £60 to Richard Langman, who built the Red House next door. This Smith may have been the original owner by selection, in which case he would be an absentee owner.

Langman lived in the house built here. On the death of Langman in August 1892 it was a trust and came into the Clow brothers' possession in 1936. John Somerton purchased the premises in July 1936.

As stated, the remises were demolished and sold at the end of last year. The western part of this section (owned by Smith, then Langman) was sold by Langman's executors in 1893 to D. A. Lealand as stated in the details of the premises, related before this. This sale refers to the unbuilt land, between the

section behind it to enlarge it. Edwin Whittle of the Red House was the purchaser in May 1920 for £2200. Some time before this the more modern front was added to the old place and in doing so the new building covered a well. In later years a cat fell in the well—it not being covered over. Whittle died on February 24, 1927 and his estate sold it for £1880 in October 1946, to Ruby Duggan. This is the house now standing. The other half of the same section was sold in July 1876 by Mrs. Tolliday (formerly Mrs. Clarke) to H. S. Lee for £100. At this price it must include the shop now on the premises, so they must have been built prior to this date.

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