



The Way We Were

by Peter Buffett

Tui Glen — early tourist centre

West Auckland has long provided attractions and venues for those on sight-seeing trips and holidays.

The Central Hotel Auckland Guide for 1902 noted that a day trip to Titirangi or the Waitakere Falls and Cascades were 'the best inland excursions about Auckland'...

For a price, Cook's Tourist Office provided transport and guide, a waggonette and pair cost two people £1/10 (\$3) for a view of Titirangi's Kauris.

Picnickers could eat their hardboiled eggs and pressed meat at Waitakere's Falls and Cascades for an all inclusive £1 (\$2) train fare to Swanson and horse hire.

By 1920 better roads and increasing numbers of reliable motorcars brought people for outings in scenic West Auckland. Mrs Knight's Ferndale in Henderson Valley with its tea kiosk, 1500 square foot dance hall and camping sites set among native bush and streams, catered for daily and long-term tourists. Half a kilometre from the middle of Henderson between Edmonton Rd and the Oratia Stream, Tui Glen was also catering for the motoring holiday-maker by the 1920s.

Registered in 1925 as New Zealand's first camping ground, Tui Glen had been purchased in 1912 by Claude Brookes. Brookes was a successful engineer with a business in Eden Crescent specialising in oxy-

acetylene welding and marine work. Motor vehicle overhauls and engine construction also became an important part of Claude Brook's work.

Following their acquisition of Tui-Glen's six hecatres in 1912, the Brookes family worked hard at clearing the land, landscaping and planting trees and shrubs.

Always innovative, Brookes attempted to transport the family home from the city to his developing park aboard a couple of barges. Just off Shelly Point, Te Atatu, one barge — and half the house — foundered and sank. Undeterred, the remaining portion of the Brookes home completed its journey to later become a holiday cabin.

Brookes bought a nearby orchard and house in 1915, using income from the apple orchard to defray costs on the increasingly popular picnic spot.

Recognising the growth potential for motoring trips and holidays, Mr Brookes installed his first holiday cabin in 1921. Using a deck cabin from the old sailing ship 'Wainui', Brookes began to build up his supply of permanent accommodation, ready-made buildings being barged up the creek from the Waitemata, others being built on site.

Throughout the 1920s, playgrounds were built, hire boats brought in, fireplaces installed, even a beach complete with diving board was created using sand brought up the creek from Shelly Point.

Brookes maintained all the while both engineer-

ing and camping businesses. By 1930, Tui Glen had become one of Auckland's major attractions and among the finest picnic and camping areas in New Zealand, fully serviced with electric light, water, tennis and games areas, swimming, children's amusements and even a laid on radio system. Costs were reasonable at 4 shillings (40 cents) for an overnight stay for one carload. Half day picnickers paid half a crown (25 cents) to use the Glen's facilities.

C.F. Brookes passed the camp over to a company, Tui Glen Ltd, in

1945, development of the park apart from a skating rink having reached its peak.

The Henderson Borough Council also had a share in running the still popular camping and picnic area from 1963.

Today Tui Glen is still a calm, green oasis in the centre of an urban development, providing among the Phoenix palms and oaks planted by Claude Brookes, camping, caravan and cabin sites with all amenities for those wanting to relax in shady quietness not too far from the middle of town.