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Tui Glen kept thousands of holidaymakers happy

By MATTHEW GRAY

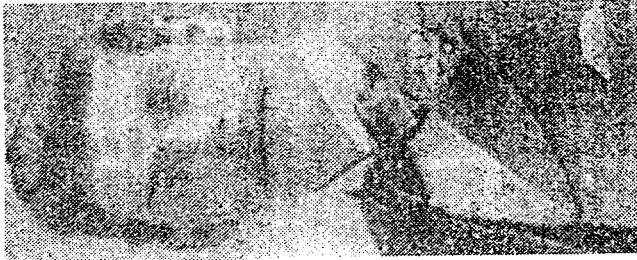
Claude Brookes was a man of the sea. Soon after 1900 he piloted his launch up the Henderson Creek to discover what would become his second love — 6ha (15 acres) of land known today as the Tui Glen motor camp.

The Auckland engineer continued to visit the area, buying his first 28ha (70 acres) in 1910. Claude spent every holiday clearing the land and replanting it with fruit trees. He and his wife Mary finally decided to establish the property as a summer residence.

The first cottage on creek by barge. Unfortunately construction was hampered when the vessel sank near Te Atatu while carrying the third section of the building.

Once refloated it continued its trip, closely followed by the Brookes family and many of their possessions.

Claude's son Colin remembers the



PARK FOUNDER: Claude Brookes discovered Tui Glen while on a boating excursion along the Henderson Creek.

cottage. The 79-year-old spent the two first years of his life there.

"In those days Henderson was a small place with only five shops," he recalls.

"There was the sawmill, two grocery stores,

a bakery, and a blacksmith."

The lack of conveniences did not deter Claude, who bought more land in 1918, naming the entire property Tui Glen.

"He couldn't have chosen a better name," says Colin.

"Kowhai trees lined the river banks and there was an abundance of tuis."

After the second purchase, the Brookses moved into another house on the property and began planting the grounds in English trees.

As the elms, oaks and chestnuts grew so did the property's parklike appearance.

The area was becoming increasingly popular with boaters — many of whom used it, or the nearby Henderson Falls, as a meeting spot.

"The creek was still quite navigable at that stage," says Colin.

"It was not uncommon to see big yachts and launches moored there."

Tui Glen was also

gaining a name with locals. For years its grounds were used (free of charge) for church picnics and the annual Foresters' Carnival.

Its popularity proved a lifesaver, as Claude's engineering business began to falter during the Depression.

Selling the business, he put all his energies into developing his land as an amusement park.

By the time it was officially opened in 1924, Tui Glen boasted 40 va-riety rides and attractions.

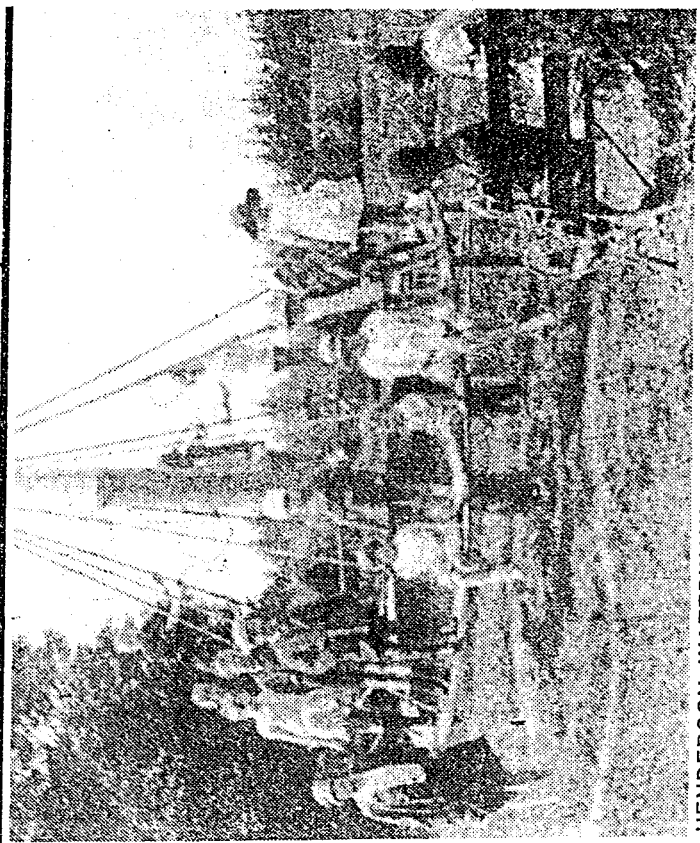
Fox sixpence (5c), a family could spend the day at Tui Glen.

"They'd come out for the day from Auckland," says Colin. "I can still remember the stream coming the day we opened."

Employing staff, Claude also began to expand Tui Glen's camping facilities, erecting toilet blocks and building cabins.

One of the first was the former chief steward's cabin off the scrapped ship Wainui.

By the end of World



HENDERSON WATERWAYS: Easily navigatable well into the 1920s, Henderson Creek was a popular playground for Tui Glen campers.

War II, the camp had up to 50 amusements, including donkey rides, tennis courts and a skating rink.

Sand freighted up the creek by barge had been used to create a beach along the water's edge, where Claude built a diving platform.

In 1946, Colin bought the campsite from his father. But times had changed along with people's respect for the property of others.

"During the war, when many fathers were away overseas, we began to have problems with vandalism," says Colin. "I think much of the discipline in the homes disappeared in those years." Tightening security, Colin kept the park open to the public. Urbanisation slowly took its toll, and with it came pollution of the area's waterways. Campers were advised not to swim in the creek after it was deemed a health risk in the 1950s. Claude Brookes died during

that decade.

Colin sold the park to the local council in 1967. He kept a small parcel of land for himself, where he lives today. At the rear of his property sits the former cabin from the Wainui.

Tui Glen bears little resemblance to the camping ground of old. The council closed its park attractions, saying they were too costly to run.

The roadway leading to the park has been named Claude Brookes Drive.