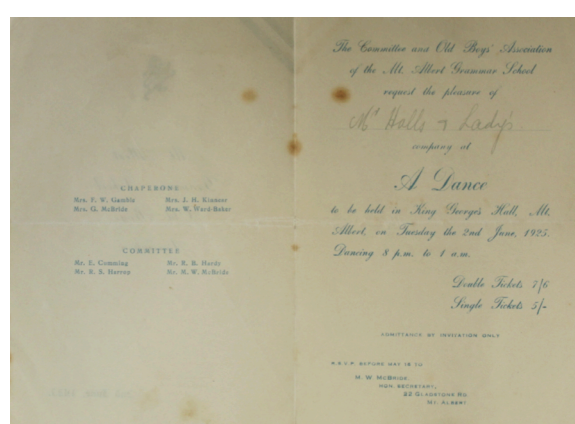


A HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL IN 100 OBJECTS

A 1925 INVITATION TO A DANCE

Size: Opened, 8in x 6in / 200mm x 150mm

Description: A buff-coloured card with blue copperplate script announcing an invitation to a dance organised by the Mount Albert Grammar School Old Boys' Association held at King George's Hall, Mt Albert. On the inside, left, is a list of chaperones and committee members, and on the right is information about the dance itself; place, time, prices etc. This particular invitation is to 'Mr Hall and Lady'.



Discussion: The chaperones were listed, not only by their married names, but by their husband's initials as well. They were:

Mrs F.W. Gamble
Mrs G. McBride

Mrs J.H. Kinnear
Mrs W. Ward-Baker

Mrs Gamble was the wife of the Headmaster, Mrs Kinnear was the mother of Les Kinnear, Mrs McBride was the mother of Murray McBride and Mrs Ward-Baker was the wife of a Board member and a benefactress of the school.

The listed committee members were:

Mr E. Cumming
Mr R.S. Harrop

Mr R.B. Hardy
Mr M.W. McBride

Eric Cumming was the Head Prefect of 1923 and the convenor, Reg Harrop was already a go-getter, Bob Hardy was, as a member of staff, a wise older head and Murray McBride was secretary/treasurer and a general live wire.

On the right in the same copperplate hand as on the front is:

The Committee and Old Boys' Association
of the Mt Albert Grammar School
request the pleasure of
Mr Hall's & Lady's
company at
A Dance
to be held in the King George's Hall Mt.
Albert on Friday 2nd June 1925
Dancing 8pm to 1am

Double Ticket 7/6
Single Ticket 5/-

ADMITTANCE BY INVITATION ONLY

R.S.V.P BEFORE MAY 16 TO
M.W. MCBRIDE
32 GLADSTONE RD
MT. ALBERT

The King George's Hall was next to the Post Office, which was on the west corner of Gladstone and New North Roads. The Post Office was replaced by a modern one which was soon closed. That building is now a café. The Hall site is the adjacent car park and part of a line of shops.

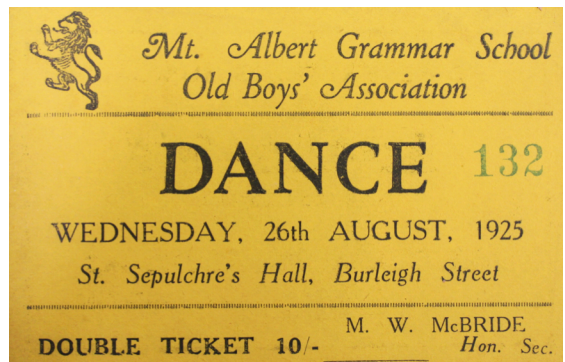
The first intimation that this hall was in the offing was a piece in the New Zealand Herald (26 April 1912 p9) headed:

A HALL FOR MOUNT ALBERT.
MEETING OF RESIDENTS.

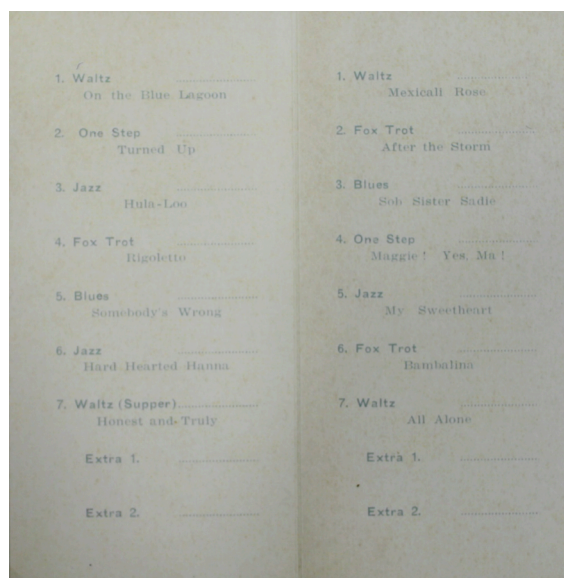
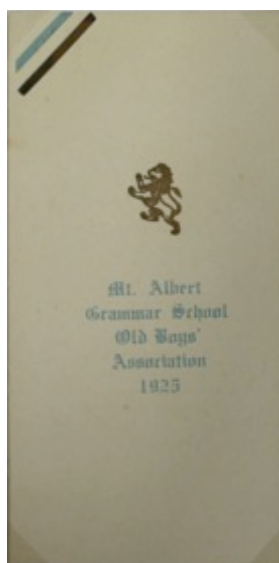
"At a meeting of Mount Albert residents held in the Methodist Schoolroom last night, it was decided to push forward the work of erecting a social hall as speedily as possible."

The hall was duly built, named for King George V, whose coronation had been in 1911.

The dance must have been a success as there was another one in August, at a different location. Also, there was a price hike, 7/- single and 10/- double. Each ticket was stamped with an individual number.



There was also a dance card dated 1925. It was likely that it was for the August dance rather than the earlier one.



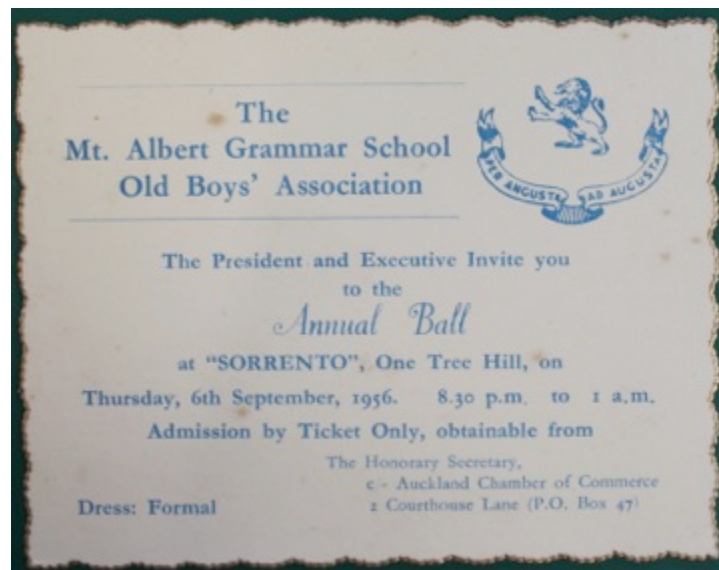
Beside each named dance there was a line for a dance-partner's name. There were seven dances and two extras before a supper break, and seven dances and two extras after. The dances and numbers were:

1. Waltz _____
On the Blue Lagoon
2. One Step _____
Turned Up
3. Jazz _____
Hula-Lou
4. Fox Trot _____
Rigoletto
5. Blues _____
Somebody's Wrong
6. Jazz _____
Hard Hearted Hanna
7. Waltz (Supper) _____
Honest and True
- Extra 1 _____
- Extra 2 _____

1. Waltz _____
Mexicali Rose
2. Fox Trot _____
After the Storm
3. Blues _____
Sob Sister Sadie
4. One Step _____
Maggie! Yes Ma!
5. Jazz _____
My Sweetheart
6. Fox Trot _____
Bambalina
7. Waltz _____
All Alone
- Extra 1 _____
- Extra 2 _____

St Sepulchre's (The Church of the Holy Sepulchre) still stands, in Khyber Pass Road. It is a handsome wooden Gothic Revival building with a prominent steeple. Its hall, unlike King George's Hall, is still in use (2014).

The dances were popular as the Old Boys' of the day were in their late teens. As time went by they favoured reunions and dinners. However they were still having an Annual Ball, a more formal affair than the earlier dances, if the ticket is any guide.



It was held at Sorrento, One Tree Hill on

"Thursday, 6th September, 1956 8.30pm to 1 a.m.

Admission by Ticket only, obtainable from

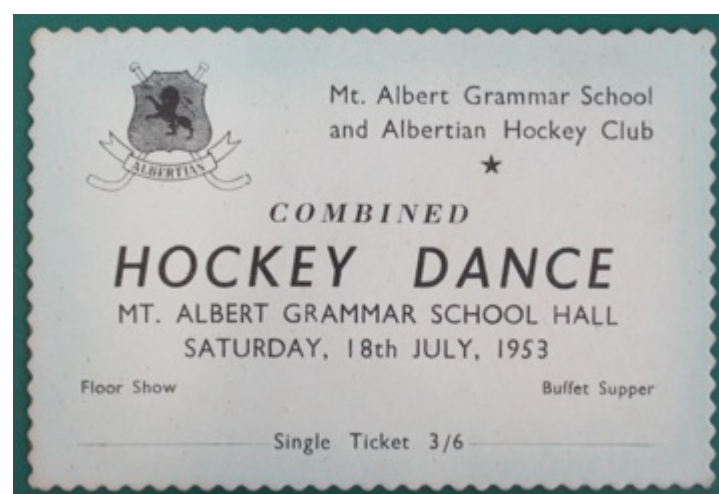
The Honourable Secretary,

c/- Auckland Chamber of Commerce

2 Courthouse Lane (P.O. Box 47)"

Dress: Formal

Another deckle edged ticket was for an earlier combined Hockey Dance for the Albertian Hockey Club and the School First XI. It was held in the Hall on "Saturday, 18th July, 1953". There was a Floor Show (really) and a Buffet Supper. A Single Ticket was 3/6 (35c).



There were School House dances. The tables and chairs were moved out of the prep room, the room was decorated and girls from Epsom Girls' Grammar School, Epsom House, were bussed in.

The following image was taken by Nelson Body (who also donated the Hockey Dance ticket).



On the back is "Pre. Room as decorated for House Dance, Oct 19th 1935, F. 7.9 6 secs."

The dances continued as long as the old School House (1969). In the 1975 *The Albertian* the House Notes were written by Paul Kirschberg and his reported included:

"Thanks to the prevailing liberal attitude, the House Boys' social life reached a new tempo, Fifths and Sixths had the opportunity to attend several dances. Those present at the inter-hostel dances wasted little time in enjoying themselves."

Back to the more formal annual Ball. The Old Boys' Association gave way to the Prefects' Ball, like the Hockey Dance, held in the Hall. The Ball seldom got a mention in *The Albertian*, though 1966 saw one such comment:

"The M.A.G.S. Prefects' Ball has an enviable reputation in the hierarchy of Auckland School Entertainments ... All the traditions were observed – the Gold and Blue streamers from the centre [this involved throwing a rope over a central hammer beam], the coloured lights, the glittering chain main screen."

The "chain mail screen" would have been strips of holed aluminium, from which milk bottle-tops had been punched out. That did not detract from the magic of such Balls.

In more recent times, and with the arrival of girls in the School, the now-named School Ball is organised by a Ball Committee and is an elegant affair held in a plush locale.

The following image is the invitation to the 2004 Ball, the year in which foundation girls were in Form 7/Year 13.



The theme was “Once upon a time...” All Balls now have themes. This invitation was:

To attend the Mount Albert Grammar School Senior Ball
In the Grand Ballroom of
The Carlton
Saturday 24th July 2004
7.00pm – 12.12pm (sic)
Tickets \$60 per person

Formal Dress

Please bring this invitation with you

Whether it’s the dances of 1925, the School House dances, the Old Boys’ and then the Prefects’ Balls or this year’s more expensive dress-up School Ball, they all have one thing in common; young people getting together for an enjoyable social occasion.

Brian Murphy