

## Middlemore Hospital - Historical beginnings

As we enter into a period of growth and re-development it's important to understand our historical beginnings. Each issue of Project Excel News will take you on a journey through the past 59 years.

### So where did it all begin?

Opened in 1947, Middlemore Hospital became part of the Auckland Hospital Board group of hospitals principally to service the then sparse but increasing South Auckland population.

It was a unique hospital of its time, being located at the end of a road, not really wanted, because it was in 'the country' with the main trunk railway dividing the site into two segments:

- A** The main site accommodated the main hospital (Wards 1-10), main nurses home (now the Assessment, Treatment and Rehabilitation Unit), nurses home extension (now the mental health services site), orderly accommodation block, plus boiler house, maintenance workshops, garage and recreation centre.
- B** The Orakau road site, over the railway line contained the household staff quarters and residence houses for the medical superintendent, lady superintendent (matron) and the house manager. The latter two houses were not occupied as such but were utilised by house medical staff with families.



The completed Hospital - early 1950's



The front entrance of the Hospital - early 1950's

All buildings were timber framed, with pink stucco walls, white trim and orange coloured clay tiled roof. The hospital wing and accommodation blocks were two-storied with the ward bedrooms and verandahs being sited to make maximum utilisation of the sunlight, fresh air and park-like vistas.

The hospital grounds were laid out and planted by Mr Arthur Farnell, the board's head gardener, who not only provided large expanses of grassed areas, flower gardens, rose beds etc. but an extensive tree-planted border of specimens he collected from his many botanical tramps around New Zealand.

Augmenting the grounds, the hospital was blessed on the north and east boundaries by overlooking two adjacent park-like public golf courses and to the south, over the upper reaches of the Tamaki Estuary, open farm land until the first line of steadily encroaching Papatoetoe houses.

During its first ten years Middlemore Hospital developed its own identity with specialist units of medicine and surgery plus the super-specialist units of plastic surgical/dental and orthopaedics. These latter units received world recognition for their work over the years.

*Information courtesy of Middlemore Memories – the first 50 years of Middlemore Hospital by David Scott*