

**Enid Trower turns 100**

# Kiwitahi identity celebrates her centenary

Enid Trower shares a birthday with the Queen of England – April 21. But Enid was born eight years before Elizabeth, which means in a couple of weeks she will turn 100.

Enid Kelly was born in Devonport at the tail end of World War I, to Charles and Nina Kelly. They lived in Empire Street, and Charles was a commercial traveller. She was the first child born into the family, and was followed by her sister Joan and then, three years later, by George.

George farmed on Kuranui Road Morrinsville for some time, but unfortunately contracted polio and died at the age of 30. Joan lived at Narrowneck in Auckland, until she retired to Whangamata in her eighties.

Enid's grandmother purchased a house in Victoria Avenue, Remuera, and it was decided the family would go and live there with her.

Enid vividly remembers a turret-like addition being added on to the roof of the house, with windows on all four sides, giving a 360 degree view over Remuera.

Still in Auckland, Enid met a young



ABOVE; Enid Trower turns 100 on April 21. RIGHT: Enid as a young woman. BELOW RIGHT: Max Trower, who passed away in 2004, with Enid.

man called Maxwell Bassett Trower at Mabel Johnson's Dance Class, and they courted until World War 2 intervened and Max, as he was known, was sent overseas with the New Zealand Army.

They corresponded for five years, and when Max returned, they married on October 26, 1945.

During this time Enid worked for a dental practice with three partners. One of the partners, Ted Nash, went to America to learn how to make porcelain crowns for false teeth, and when he returned he taught this skill to Enid. She made false teeth for the clients of the dentist who employed her, Maurice Priestly.

The American Armed Services were renting a house opposite Enid's family in Remuera, and on one occasion a senior office knocked on the door and asked if Enid would be their hostess for social events they were planning.

It was during one of these evenings the news came in through the

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American's official communications that the first salvo had been fired in the Battle of the Coral Sea.

Enid was then detained at the headquarters until 4am for security reasons, as the Americans were concerned she might announce this sensitive news to the press in New Zealand.

Joining a Health and Beauty Movement, Enid gave demonstrations on stage, often wearing a bowl on her head as an exercise in deportment.

This group slowly developed into a dance troupe staging concerts for the troops, and Enid travelled as far as Wellington to entertain.

After they were married, Max farmed at Te Awamutu, in shares with his brother Ted.

Enid stayed in Auckland with their two young children, Chris and Jill, with Max travelling up each weekend to visit his family, until a house was built on the farm to accommodate them. Building restrictions after the war made this a complicated and lengthy process.

After seven years in partnership, Max purchased Ted's share of the farm. In 1960 they sold the farm in Te Awamutu and shifted to Kiwitahi Station Road Morrinsville, and Enid has lived there since then. Max passed away in 2004.

Enid was a busy farmer's wife, spending a lot of time in the kitchen baking for the workers at harvest and hay-making times. To deliver the food to the other side of the farm, she had an old truck which had to be push started.

On her own, she put the baking and the children in the truck, pushed it to get it going and then had to leap in to the moving vehicle and drive across the paddocks to the hungry workers.

If she couldn't get the truck going, she knew the workers had a long walk back across the farm to get their meal.

Max and Enid travelled extensively, and she remembers one trip in particular. Max wanted to take Enid to Egypt as he had been stationed there during the war.

But arriving at the border a very self-important customs official decided that as they hadn't been vaccinated against yellow fever, they had to be quarantined.

The seven days planned in Egypt were passed locked in a military compound. Enid, never one to accept things without a fight, made such a fuss about the conditions a cleaning team was sent in to make the place a bit more habitable.

Their luxury, pre-paid accommodation was enjoyed by other members on the tour who were lucky enough to get past the customs official.

Once back home, Enid found out from the Egyptian Embassy the vaccinations were not actually necessary to enter Egypt.

She thinks she may have annoyed the customs man when she mentioned they were travelling on to Israel after Egypt – as political tension between the two countries was high at the time.

In 1953 Max and Enid purchased a house at Lake Tarawera, and have spent many long summers there, often staying for four months.

Their old launch, powered by a Ford 10 motor, was named the 'Mary Queen.' Much later this boat was replaced by a 19 foot launch 'Bonelle,' with a Volvo Penta inboard motor.

Enid has always been very artistic, and taught herself to paint in oils and then in watercolours. Several of her works hang in her house and many more are appreciated by family members.

She also enjoys spinning and weaving, and embroidery, and has been an avid bridge player for many years. After giving up tennis at the age of 90, she started playing golf croquet.

She attributes her time spent playing bridge as the reason she has stayed so mentally active.

Enid is indeed 'as sharp as a tack!'

She has five grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren, and attributes her longevity to several factors - keeping fit with tennis and golf, and to her long-held habit of drinking hot water.

*TOP: Enid on the beach some time in the 1940s. RIGHT: Max and Enid in their courting days. BELOW: Enid as a child with her 'baby' in a pram - actually a very tame bantam chicken!*

