

Celebrating
100
YEARS OF
Cheltenham
Receptions

1913 - 2013



Cheltenham Beach. Devonport. showing Kiosk. 4715

Another beautiful day begins, McHugh's of Cheltenham, 1992

On the cover: Looking south along Cheltenham Beach in 1917



Photo: Gareth Eyres

CREDIT & THANKS TO:

*Takapuna Archives, Auckland Museum, Devonport Museum, Auckland Libraries,
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100 years on

Here on Cheltenham Beach sits a building that was born amidst controversy but one which has weathered 100 years of social change, sun, storms and celebration.

Initially designed as tearooms and a changing facility for beach bathers, it has evolved into a reception lounge that hosts weddings and caters to a wide cross-section of functions.

Set in the most beautiful location you could imagine, it will continue to be a wonderful venue in which to enjoy great times and the best views Devonport, or indeed Auckland, has to offer.



Beginnings

At the turn of the 19th Century, Cheltenham Beach was the most favoured beach on the North Shore. Gardens established by William Copley on 40 acres of land in the area were a great tourist attraction, and visitors travelled by ferry to enjoy the gardens and picnic on the beautiful beach. Previously known as Whites Beach, and later Copley Beach, the name was changed again to Cheltenham Beach by Mr Copley's gardeners who had worked on England's Cheltenham Gardens.



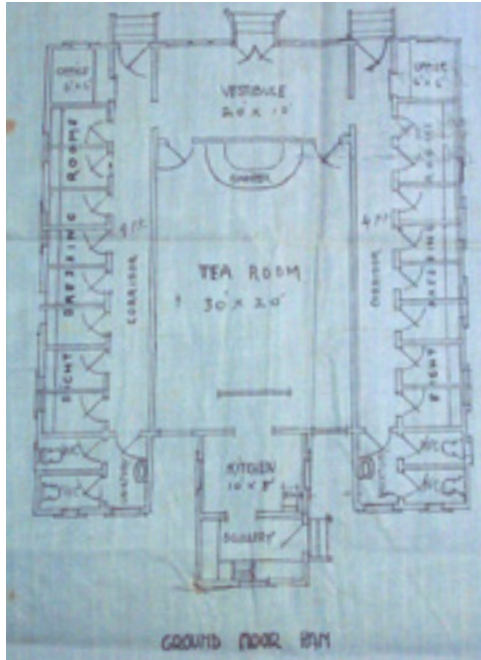
On the 2nd March 1912, a New Zealand Herald headline read, "The City Beautiful: How Cheltenham beach, Auckland's most popular seaside resort, might appear under an up-to-date system of town planning". The accompanying illustration

(above) was, "intended to show what a vast improvement could be made by the application of Continental, British and American ideas". Luckily, no-one approved of the idea and it never went ahead.

*Right: Some views of Cheltenham Beach, before construction of the tearooms, showing army tents on North Head and plenty of people on the beach.
Below: A busy day on what was a very popular beach with visitors.*



Plans & Construction



Above: Early plan (1910) by William Bartley that was obviously rejected before the 1913 build.

In 1909, the manager of the Devonport Steam Ferry Company, Alex Alison, proposed the erection of a kiosk and bathing facilities at Cheltenham Beach. However this was fiercely resisted by locals who did not want their rates spent on a facility for visitors. The Council conducted a poll and the objectors were defeated by a mere 15 votes. By 1910, local architect, Edward Bartley, had prepared plans for a kiosk and bathing sheds (left).

In 1913, the Council built an adapted version for £1200 which included tearooms, bathing sheds and conveniences.

Mayor William Handley “cut the ribbon” on 13 August 1913 and the tearooms were opened for trade under the management of Mr S G Waters.

A newspaper report of the opening, praised the spacious dimensions of the tearoom and described its green wallpaper with a seascape frieze, oak dado, and the green granite linoleum. The article went on to mention the “cosy room for private parties” which adjoined the tearooms, and the 16 cubicles for dressing and public conveniences. For sixpence, bathers would be provided with a bathing suit and towel, and one hour’s use of a cubicle, with deck chairs hired out at 6d a day.

Right: An early watercolour of the kiosk from around the time of construction.

Below: The Cheltenham kiosk and tearooms soon after construction in 1913.



Bathing issues

By 1915, bathing at Cheltenham had become so popular that Council was obliged “to regulate the conduct of bathers . . .”.

Sunbathing was actually illegal with one having to be either dressed or swimming! A newspaper report on January 11th 1916 described how five young men were charged with “remaining dressed in bathing costumes only on Cheltenham Beach”. The report further described a witness who said, “. . . on the previous day he had seen three bathers lying on the beach and when he approached them they crawled down the beach to the water’s edge and each put one foot in the water and claimed that the bylaw was being complied with”. On hearing this and other equally absurd incidents, the magistrate declared the bylaw regarding sunbathing to be impossible to rule on.



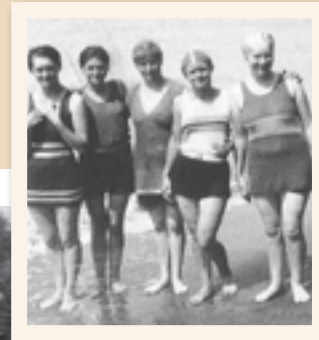
Above: A cartoon of the times about the contentious issue of bathing sheds.

In 1926, the bylaws were again reviewed with the inclusion of rules to shield kiosk users by restricting “any person or persons from loitering, standing, obstructing, or interfering with any person using the kiosk or bathing facilities”. Nor could any person under the influence

of liquor, who was unclean in person or dress, or suffering from an infectious or offensive disease enter the kiosk. Bathing costumes were not permitted in the kiosk or on the verandah, and there would be no smoking or expectorating in the kiosk!

Right: The sort of bathing attire required at the time which, despite its modesty, still caused offence.

Below: Rebellious bathers at Cheltenham Beach!



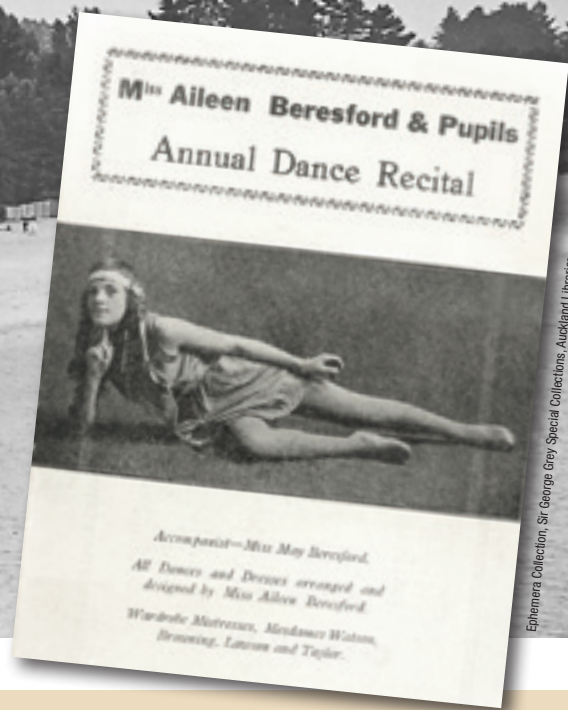
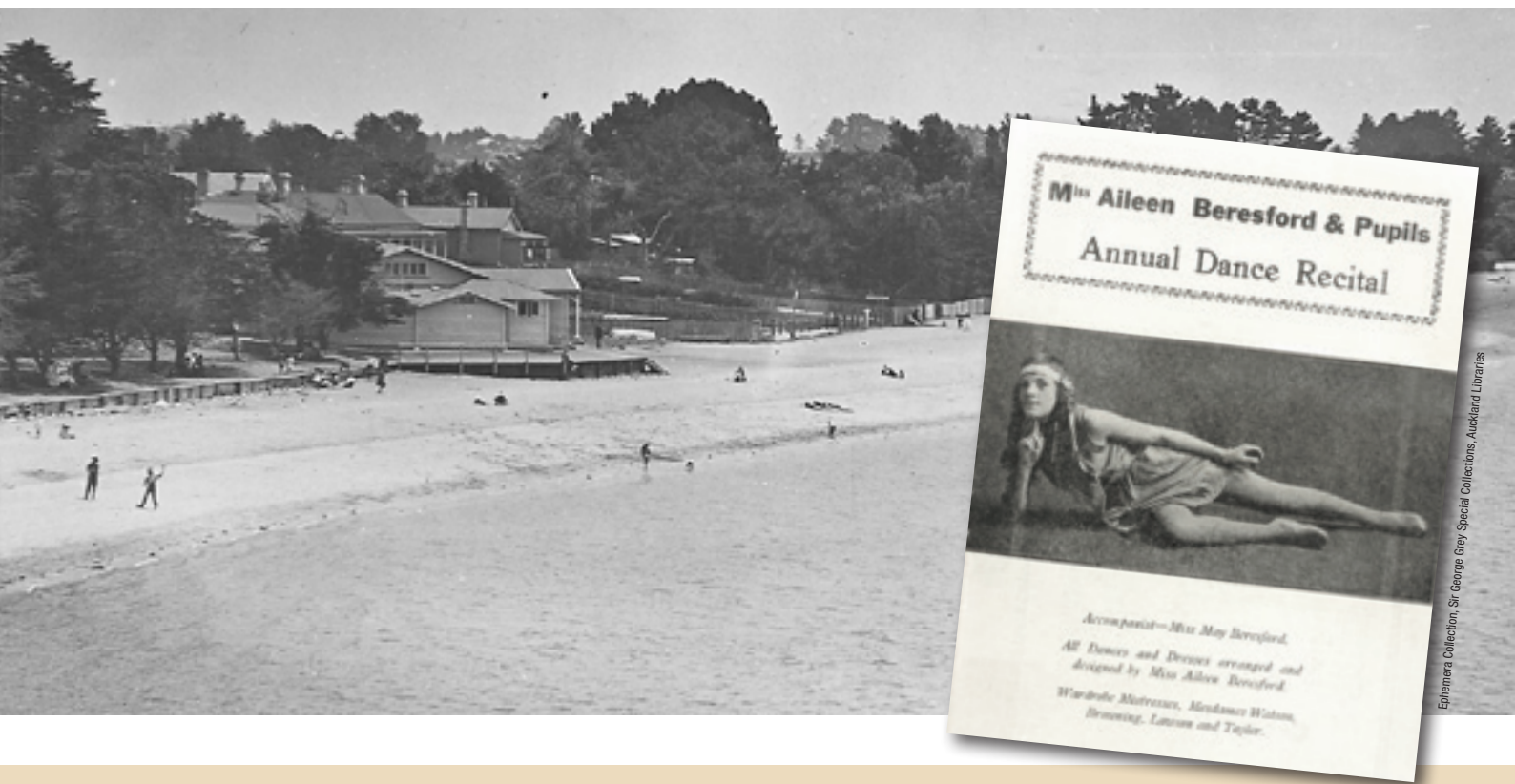
The 1920s



During the 1920s, the popular teashop served “delicacies” and the venue began to offer entertainment such as dancing and jazz bands. “Miss Beresford’s top class dancing school” regularly held dance nights at the kiosk and bands provided music for patrons to enjoy the latest dance crazes.

At that time, locals stayed in their own small communities so that those at the southern end of Cheltenham Beach rarely ventured to the northern end. Likewise, residents nearer Devonport stayed within their own domain, seldom visiting Cheltenham.

*Left and below: Some views of Cheltenham Beach, the kiosk being a relatively new feature on the landscape.
Below right: A flyer for a Miss Beresford's dance recital in the 1920s, a regular feature at the kiosk in this era.*



The 1920's



Left: What looks like a 'box brownie' family portrait from around the 1920s/30s looking back towards North Head and the kiosk.

Above: 1920s Christmas card featuring the kiosk.

Right: Overview of the beach from around 1920.



The 1930s



Municipal Kiosk and Rangitoto from Cheltenham, Auckland, N.Z.

The establishment was initially known as the Municipal Kiosk (left) but, from around 1934, it became the Cheltenham Kiosk (top right).

The beach continued to be very popular and Council tendered out the management of the kiosk every 12 months. Some managers were also appointed Constable and charged with keeping order around the kiosk area.

Ian Barlow recalls that, in 1931, his father, Mr N Barlow, the then tenant, ran the shop selling ice cream and lollies. A fruit machine was later installed, much to the delight of young men, and Mr Barlow hired a silent film projector, showing penny pictures in the tearooms. Mrs Barlow provided morning and afternoon teas, and the venue hosted

weddings, balls, dances and many a political meeting.

A storm in 1934 removed the tent used for men to undress for bathing and improvements were required to accommodate them. At that time, the shop section of



the building was condemned due to its proximity to the gentlemen's conveniences.

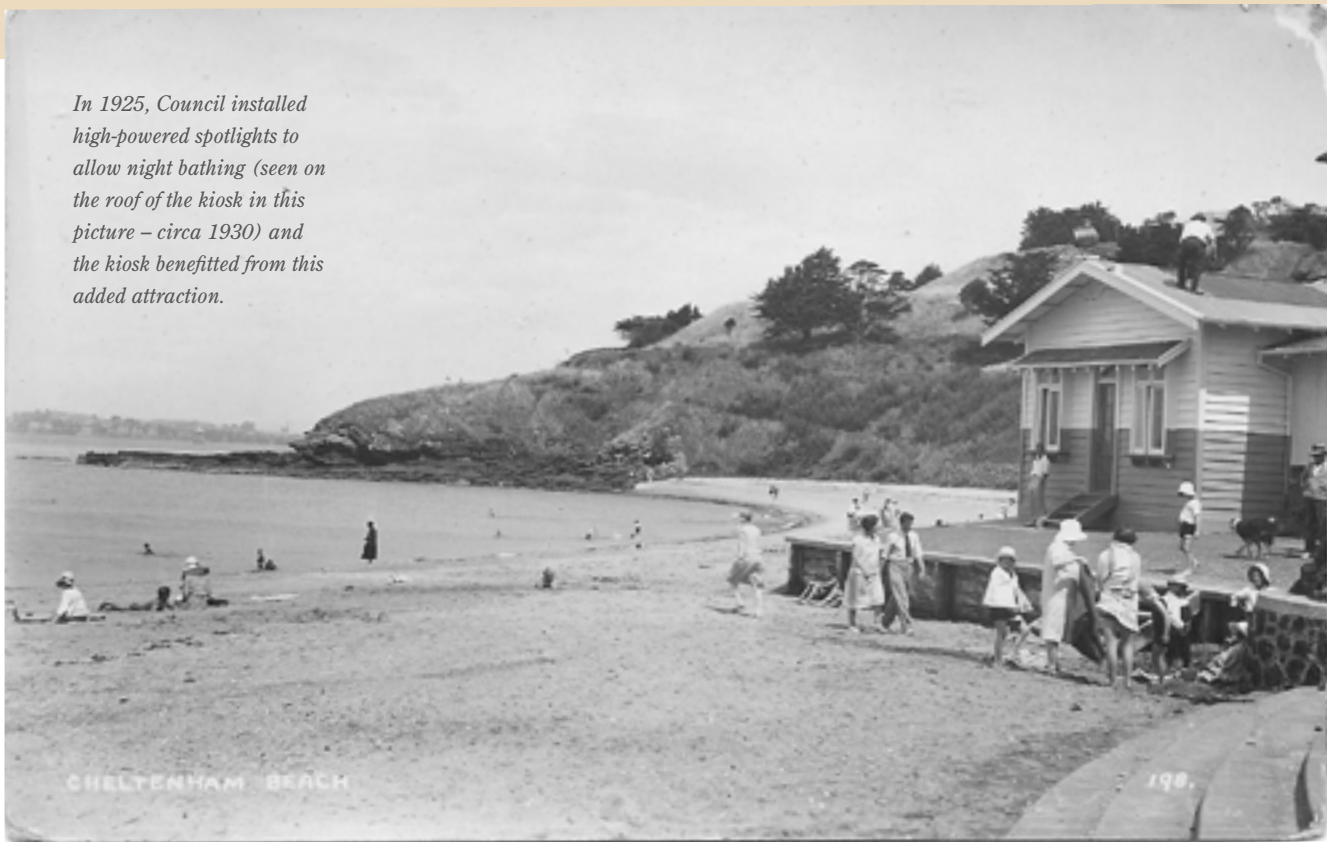
By 1937, Council considered pulling the kiosk down but, instead, the floor of the tearoom was strengthened for dancing.

The 1930's



This busy day at Cheltenham Beach, with the kiosk visible at the far left of the image, is possibly the 1936 Jubilee celebrations.

In 1925, Council installed high-powered spotlights to allow night bathing (seen on the roof of the kiosk in this picture – circa 1930) and the kiosk benefitted from this added attraction.



The 1940s - 50s



Around the early 1950s, the verandah was closed-in and the phone box was updated.

There is little record of the kiosk during the World War II years and into the early 1950s.

Business benefitted from being close to the army camp on North Head, but the artillery practice

in the evenings was known to shatter windows. A blackout was in place for some time which meant keeping evening functions concealed.

During the 1940s, others sought

approval to establish tearooms and other facilities along the beach but these were declined by Council.

Lease holders during this period included:

<i>E E Thomas</i>	<i>1939-40</i>
<i>Ida Cordelia Banfield</i>	<i>1941</i>
<i>Mrs R W Harman</i>	<i>1944</i>
<i>William J Lee</i>	<i>1945</i>
<i>Mr & Mrs G M Petty</i>	<i>1946</i>
<i>James and Mrs Arbor</i>	<i>1946</i>

With a move away from being a kiosk with changing sheds, more emphasis was placed on receptions, and many wedding functions and dances were held at the kiosk during the 40s and 50s.



Above: The wedding of Patrick and Kathleen McHugh (John McHugh's parents) in 1950.

Right: Images from the 1956 wedding reception of Miles Williamson & Mary Owen. While it is hard to get a clear impression from these photos of the decor and layout of the kiosk at this time, they show something of that era.

The 1950s - 60s

Cliff Trillo became manager at some time in the 1950s. He went on to establish Trillos Cabaret at Westhaven and, later, Trillos in downtown Auckland.

Major changes were undertaken from 1958 onwards when caterer Ronald Rees became caretaker and manager. Provision of costumes and towels for bathing continued, along with morning and afternoon teas on the closed-in verandah, and improvements were made to accommodate private functions.

Mr Rees wanted to make further changes, so Council obtained a change in legislation which allowed Mr Rees to change the function of the kiosk from tearooms, which he claimed was no longer financially viable, to a reception room. According to Mr Rees, the word 'kiosk' was misleading and no longer appropriate for a reception lounge, and the name was changed to Cheltenham Receptions in 1963.

Boundaries were adjusted to

allow for a public road to be built, and a neighbouring property owner agreed to the release of land and the "extinguishment of all riparian rights and rights of water frontage to the said property" in order to improve access to the building.

Extensive alterations were carried out, including to the front of the building which acquired a brick facade. The old brick chimney was pulled down and the bakery extended towards the front of the building.

Below: Cheltenham Reception Lounge in 1962 and a menu from the late 70s.



The 1960s - 70s

The lease was taken over in 1966 by Mr Radaly who made further alterations to enlarge the reception room, and make it more attractive and convenient.

The family lived on the premises and, despite the long hours and hard work, they ran a successful business and thoroughly enjoyed their time there.

The rooms were used almost exclusively for weddings, balls and other functions, although Mrs Radaly served afternoon teas most Sundays. Liquor licensing was not an issue at that time so clientele would either bring

(Right): A Cheltenham Reception Lounge menu from the late 1970s showing the fare on offer and some interior shots from that time.

their own alcohol for weddings, or it was provided by the operators. Patrons were mostly locals, there being virtually no tourist trade at that time.

1973 saw the lease taken over by Michael Kessell.





MENU ONE

\$7.00 per head

- Cold Stew or Savoury Vegetable
- Roast Chicken Portions or Hot Casserole
- Chicken
- Baked Ham on the Bone
- Potatoes Baked or as French Fries
- Deep-Fried Schnapper or Steamed Fish
- Savoury Rice
- Chow mein or Beef Curry
- Madras in Cream Sauce
- Roast Leg of Lamb or Lamb Casserole
- Garlic Loaves filled with Cheese
- Fruit Salad & Ice-Cream
- Chocolate Log or Pavlova
- Pier Wine Trifle or Apple Strudel
- Tea & Coffee

A supper can be arranged at an extra cost of \$2.80 per head
Potato Chips with cheese dips and peanuts on request @ .80c per head
Dinner Mints .50c per head
Cheese Platters .80c per head

MENU TWO

\$7.50 per head

- Cold Stew
- Savoury Vegetable Dish
- Chicken Portions Cold or Hot Chicken Casserole
- Baked Ham on the Bone
- Potatoes Baked or as French Fries or New Potatoes (in season) with mint
- Deep-Fried Schnapper or Marinated Steamed Fish
- Oysters in the Shell
- Fried Rice with Cashews
- Roast Pork or Bani Goring (spiced breads)

Menu Two continued

- Madras in Cream Sauce or Beef Straps
- Schnapper
- Garlic Loaves filled with Cheese & Tomatoes
- Fruit Salad & Ice-Cream
- Chocolate Log Roll or Cheese Cake
- Banana Alaska or Pavlova
- Trifle or Boysenberry Sponge
- Apple Strudel or Apple Crumble
- Tea & Coffee
- Extras include Scallops .80c per head
Crabfish \$1.00 per head

MENU THREE

\$8.50 per head

- Cold Stew
- Savoury Vegetable Dish
- Noodle Salad
- Roast Chicken Portions either Cold Casserole or Deep-Fried
- Baked Ham on the Bone
- Potatoes Baked Baked or French Fries
- Sweet & Sour Schnapper or Marinated Steamed Schnapper
- Scallops in White Wine Sauce
- Oysters in the Shell
- Fried Rice with Cashews
- Beef Straps
- Bani Goring or Madras Curry
- Garlic Loaves with Cheese or Tomatoes
- Fruit Salad & Ice-Cream
- Banana Alaska or Pavlova
- Trifle or Boysenberry Sponge
- Chocolate Log or Cheese Cake
- Cornet Suet
- Apple Strudel or Apple Crumble
- Tea & Coffee

Tentative Bookings held for one week only
All confirmed bookings must be made with a deposit of at least \$50.00

John McHugh took over the lease of the building in 1981 and renamed it McHugh's of Cheltenham. John refurbished the building and opened up the southern corner to take in the beautiful view of that end of Cheltenham Beach, and North Head.

John is proud to have carried on the tradition of serving top class food at McHugh's luncheon buffet to locals and tourists, and maintaining a superb venue for weddings and social occasions.

The 1980s to the present day by John McHugh

Growing up, I was privileged to spend summer holidays at a family friend's house at the end of Arawa Ave on Cheltenham beach. We often bought ice cream at the kiosk on our way to explore the rock pools or North Head. Fast forward to 1981 . . .

Having completed my hospitality course at ATI, and with two years' experience with the Lion Breweries hotel management team, I was ready to take on the world in my own business.

After appearing before several Devonport Borough Council meetings, I was successful in obtaining the lease on the Cheltenham Reception Lounge.

Because the Council had no schedule of any fixtures or fittings, it was stripped bare of everything by the previous tenant, including all the internal doors. That made for an interesting start but did provide an opportunity to stamp my mark early on. I was able to refurbish with the latest trends of the time.

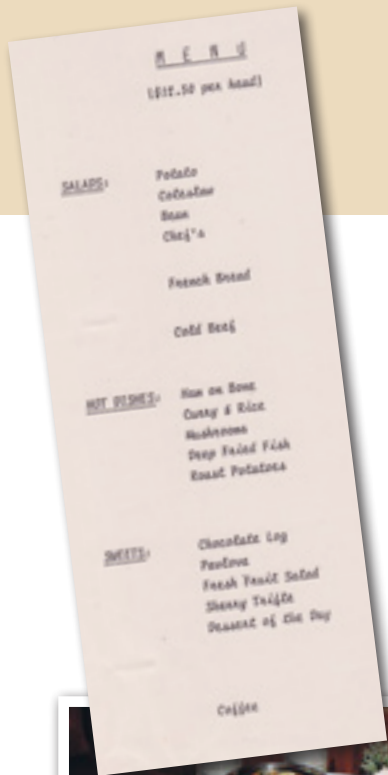
I decided to give the kiosk its fourth name change and called it McHugh's of Cheltenham. It was important to me to brand my new business as I intended to be in catering for a long time.

I was fortunate to have supportive parents, Patrick and Kathleen McHugh, who were

able to invest with me in our new venture. My mother, armed with all her fantastic dessert recipes, became totally involved in the day-to-day running of our kitchen, Pat concentrated on business advice, and the extended family became staff.

In our first year, we introduced a daily buffet lunch while working hard on the private function market, most of which were wedding receptions.

Our buffet lunch was a great success, particularly with the fledgling tourist market where we were able to offer a truly New Zealand experience with the iconic seaside location.



Left (background): An overview of Cheltenham in the 80s and one of John's first menus – ahhh . . . pavlova and chocolate log!

Below: McHugh's all decked out in the 80s for the wedding of John's sister, Joan Mary McHugh (Pivac).



The 1980s to the present day



qualified, competent chefs to take us to another level of catering, particularly in the important wedding market. The refurbished building was an immediate success and reconfirmed McHugh's as a market leader in Auckland.

McHugh's has hosted a huge number of wedding functions, corporate events and milestone celebrations over more than 30 years.

We continue to offer our buffet lunch each day which is supported by a large number of regular customers.

The Cheltenham kiosk location remains unchanged with the



Internal alterations revealed the amazing new views of North Head and the southern corner of the beach.

In 1989, I successfully retained the lease and embarked on a total refurbishment of the building. With a brand new kitchen design, we were able to attract highly



wonderful backdrop of Rangitoto and the sparkling water of the Waitemata Harbour.

After 100 years, the kiosk remains a vital link within the Devonport community, North Shore and the wider Auckland market.

Its presence has been felt by generations of families who have come to rely on this very unique location for their special celebrations, and we are privileged to be part of its history.

Right & opposite, bottom: McHugh's today is a much more sophisticated reception lounge in the same beautiful location. Serving at the bar (right) is another generation of the McHugh's family, John's niece, Elizabeth Priest.





Watercolour by New Zealand artist, Peter McIntyre, presented to the late Cliff Trillo on leaving Trillo's Westhaven, before establishing Trillo's Downtown. Cliff Trillo was a well known figure in the Auckland hospitality industry and early proprietor of the Cheltenham kiosk. The painting is now owned by John McHugh.