



RENOWNED REMUERAITE: SIR EDMUND HILLARY KG, ONZ KBE (1919-2008)

Remuera has been home to more than its share of celebrated New Zealanders, including politicians, high-ranking officials, professionals, business magnates,

impresarios, inventors, artists and authors. But the most renowned and admired Remuera-ite was a mountaineer.

In 1935 a shy teenaged Edmund Hillary moved with his family from Tuakau to 730 Remuera Road (not far from Waiatarua Road), where he helped his father and his brother Rex with bee-keeping. He served in the Royal New Zealand Air Force during World War II and in May 1953, with Sherpa Tenzing Norgay, the 33-year-old Hillary became the first to reach the summit of Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain. His characteristically laconic (now world-famous) comment to fellow expedition member George Lowe after this achievement was: 'Well, we knocked the bastard off.'

Hillary was knighted in June 1953, and in the same year married Louise Mary Rose. Her parents Jim and Phyllis Rose (the former a descendant of prominent Remuera pioneer Archibald Clark) subdivided their section for the pair. In 1956 the young couple moved into the newly built house at 278A Remuera Road, where Hillary would live until his death 52 years later.

Following his ascent of Everest, Hillary founded the Himalayan Trust, which offered practical help in the form of schools and hospitals to the Sherpa people of Nepal. Tragically, in 1975, his wife and youngest daughter Belinda died in a plane crash en route to the village of Phaplu, where he was helping to build a hospital.

In the ensuing decades, Hillary continued his philanthropic work in Nepal, undertook more adventures – notably expeditions to both the North and South poles – and enjoyed a successful spell as High Commissioner to India in the 1980s.

His humility and generosity, combined with his extraordinary sporting and humanitarian achievements, cemented his status both as a beloved Kiwi icon and an internationally respected figure. He died in Auckland on 11 January 2008, aged 88.

Above left

This photograph of a casually attired Hillary in middle age was taken by the Remuera photographer Frank Hofmann.