

# AUDREY GRACE NEWTON

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER 1938-1946 Wellington Kindergarten Association

## SUPPLEMENTARY PHOTOS

(all images from Audrey Newton Archives)



# Childhood 1920-1937



Artist: Audrey Newton



## FAMILY LIFE in WELLINGTON

Audrey was the second child of Grace Fardell and Howard Newton and younger sister to brother Eric.

Howard arrived from UK in 1912, with 'a pound in his pocket' seeking business opportunities. Howard worked for NZ Oil Company (Paterson and Sons).

Grace also came from England. After their marriage she cared for the home and their two children, Eric and Audrey. A fulltime maid assisted with household work.

Howard and Grace were active in their community. Grace served for a time on the Wellington Free Kindergarten Association. Both supported Audrey's work in kindergarten







## 1934 First day of secondary schooling

Attends the private school, Queen Margaret Girls' College for three years between 1934 and 1936.

A close connection existed between school and Wellington Free Kindergarten Association. School Headmistress, Miss Irene Wilson was a member of the Kindergarten Association. Founder of kindergarten in Wellington, Miss Mary Richmond supported the school. In Audrey's first year, Richmond gave the end of year school speech.

Kindergarten teaching training for girls promoted within the school



**Audrey (aged about 14)  
Photographed wearing  
one of her early home  
sewn dresses**

For early twentieth century women, sewing machines enabled the production of ready made clothing and made it easier for women to sew their own clothes.

From the age of 12 Audrey made her own dresses. An early form of creative expression





# Kindergarten teacher



Artist: Audrey Newton

**Audrey Newton and friend  
with children.**

**Roseneath, Wellington**

**Knitting for the war  
effort?**





## Audrey's first day at kindergarten – February 1938

'The teachers' were underpaid and the girls who volunteered for the work, volunteered, not for a living, but for a mission. No one would question the value of the work.

Newspaper Clipping, 'Centenary Party Kindergarten Movement' (August, 1937) ATL,



Intake c1938

## Story telling c1940

‘You knew the story and you showed it to the group and you had to highlight the learning of these stories so it wasn’t just telling a story that children would like.’

Interview Helen May with  
Margaret Bennett, 1994





# Teaching at Ngaio

Audrey taught at Ngaio and Wellington South Kindergartens.

The Principal, Miss Wilson determined where teaching staff were placed.

Wearing the standard kindergarten smock!





A summer lunch with kindergarten friends



# The construction project Wellington South Kindergarten 1940



Artist: Audrey Newton

## Enid Wilson's monthly education report 1940.

At Wellington South, the big children are carrying on an interesting piece of work creating a house out of a large packing case. It has a proper sloping roof (the boards of which have been nailed by the children), two very large cotton reels act as chimneys and are at present being painted. This interest arose from watching building operations next door where an additional room has been added to Mr ---- home. Miss Newton has shown interest and resourcefulness in developing the children's interest. Dramatic play is being stimulated and interest is always keenest in something the children have created for themselves











The images tell a story of children working together in the construction and painting of a house. Immediately evident is their unselfconsciousness and complete absorption as their work. This engagement is seen in their facial expressions and gestures, and in their failure to be distracted by the nearby photographer. A sense of connection is evident: while completely absorbed in their own part of the creative enterprise, the children seem alert to the activity of others, working harmoniously in close physical proximity to each other, and using their individual skills to complete the shared task. Their “creative play” has become real – the children are engaged purposively and energetically in the occupations of building and painting. These ways of engaging in learning reflect what Dewey referred to as “four natural and interconnected impulses in children” (Wolfe, 2002, p.176): social, constructive, investigative and expressive. The project provided children with the opportunity to work socially, to communicate ideas, and to investigate how to make a house.

Sewell, A., & K Bethell, (2009) ‘Building interests: A 1940s story of curriculum innovation and contemporary connections’. *New Zealand Journal of Teachers’ Work* , Volume 6, Issue 2, 101





‘Although we are loath to make demands of this nature at the present time, the staff still feel that they unable to carry on without further financial assistance. We have discussed the following basis for salaries, which we feel, is the minimum that will need our need.

- Assistants: Commencing at £120
- Directors: Commencing at £160
- Directors of Training centres should receive an additional £10.00

The staff also feel the provision should be made for superannuation.’

*Letter from teaching staff to Council, Wellington  
Free Kindergarten Association 1942*

**The outcome was a win for the staff. Council found the money and staff received a significant salary increase on the proviso that it was a one off.**

**Staff salary  
claim  
1942**

Letter from  
teaching staff  
to Council,  
Wellington  
Free  
Kindergarten  
Association

# Promotion: Kindergarten Teacher Trainer



**Artist: Audrey Newton**



**Student teachers WFKA c.1944**



A national meeting. Audrey Newton third left, Enid Wilson far left







Wellington Free Kindergarten Association

Wed - 29<sup>th</sup> May, 1946.

My dear Audrey,

I feel this is the right moment to write & say some of the things I want to say. Having just said goodbye to you I am facing the fact now that you really are going out of my life as far as Kindergarten work is concerned & I feel strangely sentimental about it.

Over a long period of years I have had to lose many people on my staff who have been valuable & whom I have not wanted to part with both for the work's sake & because of my own personal feelings. Your going is affecting me as deeply as any & much more than many - At the moment I feel bereft.

Experience can teach us all a great deal & there is much that you will learn in the coming years because

## Audrey resigns

"Over a long period of years I have had to lose many people of my staff who have been valuable & whom I have not wanted to part with both for the work's sake & because of my own personal feelings. Your going is affecting me as deeply as any and much more than many. At the moment I feel bereft. ... All the time I have felt that your possibilities justified any efforts I was called upon to make in contributing to your development. It is hard to part with you so soon though & to face having to cover some of the same ground all over again. Although I shall be glad if I can have the hand of a mature person who can really step into my shoes I scarcely hope to find anyone who will work in such complete harmony as we have."

# Audrey Newton

## Occupational Therapist 1947 - 52

Audrey carried her experiences of, and key beliefs about, kindergarten teaching into occupational therapy work, such as caring for children's holistic needs, responding to their emotions, building on their interests, and encouraging independence and creative play. Importantly, she recognised children as individuals with rights instead of passive objects of care and charity.

Arriving loaded with activities  
for her work with children at  
Templeton Farm Colony,  
c1950.





**“I am engaged!! ... Isn’t  
positively, astonishingly  
wonderful.”**

Letter from Audrey to friend, 1952

Marries William (Bill) Sewell  
in Wellington at St Johns  
church Willis St.

Enid Wilson & Ted Scott  
provide the flowers for the  
reception held in Mt  
Victoria.



# Post marriage connections Wellington



**Artist: Audrey Newton**





Ongoing connections – WFKA Graduate Teacher reunion 1956

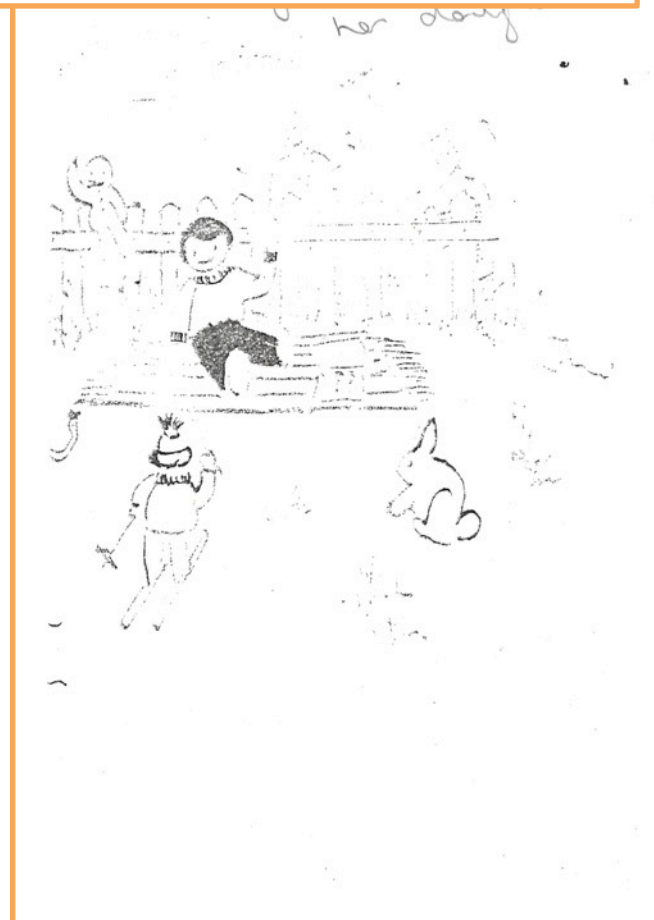


**WFKA Graduates Association Reunion, ca.1966**  
**Maidstone Park, Upper Hutt**





**‘Tomato Sauce’,**  
a story about her daughter  
written and illustrated by  
Audrey Sewell, nee Newton,  
Karori Playcentre c1961



# Tomato Sauce

There was once a little girl  
and her name was Alison.  
She had fair hair and blue eyes  
and she was nearly four.  
She liked all sorts of things.  
She liked having tea-parties,  
going visiting with mother,  
eating bacon and eggs,  
but, best of all,  
she liked tomato sauce.

She liked tomato sauce  
on her toast for breakfast.  
She liked tomato sauce  
on her fish for lunch.  
She liked tomato sauce  
on her dinner at night.

SHE JUST LOVED TOMATO SAUCE.

One day her Mummy said to her,  
"Wouldn't it be funny if you  
ate so much tomato sauce, that  
instead of Alison sitting at the  
table, there would be a bottle of  
TOMATO SAUCE!  
However would it get dressed?  
It couldn't wear socks and shoes,  
or pants or a frock,  
perhaps just an old scarf  
tied round its neck  
and a hat!

WOULDN'T IT LOOK FUNNY!

When it was the day for  
play centre,  
Mummy would have to walk  
down the road with a  
TOMATO SAUCE bottle  
in her hand!  
Wouldn't the play centre  
children laugh!  
However would a tomato  
sauce bottle  
ride a bike  
or push a pram  
or pull a truck?

And wouldn't a tomato sauce bottle look funny riding in a  
tram when Alison's Mother went shopping!

Or sitting in Alison's seat at Sunday school!



And Alison and her Mummy  
thought of all the funny things  
that would happen if Alison  
REALLY WERE a bottle of  
tomato sauce instead of  
a little girl!

Mummy said, "I am so glad  
you are really you,  
and not an old bottle of  
tomato sauce,  
because I'd much rather  
give you a cuddle and a kiss  
when it is time to go to bed.

Alison said she was glad  
she was her own self too,  
and not an old bottle of  
tomato sauce  
because she loved having  
kisses and cuddles  
at bedtime.

But, even though Alison  
and her Mother talked about  
how funny it would be if  
Alison were a TOMATO SAUCE bottle,  
it didn't stop her from

She still has it

on her TOAST for BREAKFAST!



and on her FISH for LUNCH!



and on her DINNER at NIGHT!





**All photographs from the  
Audrey Newton Collection –  
held in private possession**

Compiled by Kerry Bethell and Alison  
Sewell, Massey University 2016

