

COME INTO THE GARDEN

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

John Webster



The repertoire of Victorian music includes the 1857 composition '*Come into the Garden Maud*,' derived from an 1855 poem by Tennyson. For years it remained as an ideal party piece and two of my seven paternal aunts enjoyed it. Therefore I was familiar with it from quite a young age, but never completely understood why Maud needed to go into the garden. Remembering this song made me recall other events.

Over the years my parents were intrigued when I recited memories of the past as they said that some events had occurred from, at least, the age of three, if not before.

I remember well my first day at primary school in 1950 as I obviously did not understand that when the bell rang at twelve it did not signal that school was over. I walked home alone surprising my mother. She returned me the next day and from then on I always stayed the full time. I do recall one year all pupils were given packets of sweet pea seeds to plant at home. The school did not have a garden of any kind. My brother and I have lost the memory of why the seeds were given except that it may have been connected to the 1953 Royal tour. I do remember the flowers blooming against the wall of our old garage but never saw them again as we moved house.

My maternal grandparents lived at the isolated settlement of Pawarenga in the Hokianga district. Before settling there in 1913 grandma's father had been a baker in Tuakau continuing his trade in Broadwood after