

NEXT MEETING THE BLOCKHOUSE BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEXT MEETING IS ON WEDNESDAY 5TH APRIL at 1.15 p.m. IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE. PLEASE NOTE START TIME OF 1.15 p.m.

SPEAKER Well known New Zealand poet and popular public speaker JAN BEAUMONT will be sharing her poems, infectious sense of humour and great outlook on life. Come along and bring a friend for a very happy afternoon.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I remember watching a movie many years ago, where a much loved member of the family died and everyone in the household immediately went to each room and stopped all the clocks. A powerfully symbolic, deeply respectful and beautiful gesture. They were here, and now they are gone and that matters!

For many members of the society, especially those of us on the committee, time took on an added significance when we learned Joyce's news last year. Like Laurie and all their family, we wanted time to stop, to halt the inevitable. Each moment with our friend became even more precious. Laurie, always at her side.

We already knew what a wonderful friend, wife, mum, sister, aunty, gran and fellow volunteer Joyce was. But witnessing her amazing attitude throughout these last few months showed us what a truly remarkable woman she was. Words cannot adequately express our love and respect for her.

We are all better people for knowing you Joyce.

Krystene



Joyce and her sister Maureen on the Armanasco House veranda 2019

Joyce Margaret Davis (nee Heron) March 24 1934 - January 30 2023

Chair; Krystene Vickers; krys@ekiwi.com

Vice Chair; Tony 626 6445 tony.joyce@xtra.co.nz

Secretary; Eileen 627 4416

Treasurer; Anne 627 8619

Life Members;

Keith Rusden, Eileen Rusden, Yvonne Dabb, Alan Cole and Brian Goodwin

Visit our website; www.blockhousebayhistoricalsociety.com

Growing up in the Bay - through the decades...

1930/1940's memories - Eileen Rusden (nee Eades)

I started school the year WW2 was declared, 1939. Joyce Davis (nee Heron) was in my class right through school. Then the Bay was a fairly isolated country village. We lived by the corner of Bolton Street and our nearest neighbor was on the corner of Puketea Street, so there were plenty of empty sections on which to play our favourite game of "rounders".

In 1941 the 'Manpower Act' came into force, and my Father was 'manpowered' into working the night shift at Stormonts Bread Bakery in Kingsland. He was on night shift all of the war years, and this left my Mother in charge at nights.

When the Japanese Invasion threat was announced, my job was to help Mum put up the blackout curtains. I remember what a grumpy old man the Warden was; if any light showed, he would come banging on the door.

At this time the School introduced air raid exercises. We had to march down and lie under the pine trees in the Domain (fondly called the 'dokie' by us kids). Our equipment consisted of a rubber to hold between front teeth in the event of a major explosion. How the kids missing their front teeth got on, I don't remember.

As the export apple crop was unable to be sent to England, schools received boxes and boxes of gorgeous apples. I well remember standing outside

the dental clinic and throwing apples to the soldiers who were on route marches from the Avondale Racecourse camp.

I can remember watching with amazement (and maybe jealousy that I wasn't old enough!) the American soldiers who would drive out in their jeeps and pick up local girls on dates – what a flurry it caused the local matrons at first, but in time it became commonplace.

One day a Yank came knocking at our door. I was intrigued to hear his accent. He asked to use our telephone and was amazed to learn no one around us had one, and he would have to go to McMurrays store to make his call.

We went to see every English war film which came out. My father would not go to American movies, but Mum and us girls took every opportunity to see Bing Crosby, etc.

Outings away from the Bay were rare. A highlight was when my older sister took me to lunch in John Courts store in Queen Street and then to see the movie "Bambi" a birthday treat. In school holidays Mum would take me into K. Road, and down in Rendells tea rooms we would indulge in afternoon tea, with a three tier cake stand. The food had to be eaten in strict order, starting on the bottom tier with sandwiches, progressing up to tier three with cake.

I certainly cannot remember ever being hungry because of food rationing. I learnt to knit about

this time, and knitted away for the war effort. I can remember my Mum packing food parcels to send to relatives in London. These parcels had to be made to certain measurements, the contents encased in heavy white calico with the address written on in ink.

In those years the adults were probably worried all the time for husbands/sons serving overseas, but I had a very happy childhood, always friends to play with; the beach, our summer playground and lots of activities with the Girls Brigade at the Green Bay Mission.



Joyce (2nd row, 3rd from right), Eileen (3rd row, 2nd from left)

1950/1960's memories - The Marshall Family by Mary and David Marshall

Sometimes when I (Mary Marshall) sit in Mai Sushi, I look out over the road to The Block but I don't see the restaurant. Instead I see the Mobil service station that stood there for many years. Other times I look round the walls and wonder if the full wall mural is still on the wall covered by layers of beige paint.

Our parents Betty and Jim Marshall emigrated to NZ in 1949. Our father had come home from WWII determined to leave the UK for a better life. It could have been Canada or Australia or the USA, but ended up being NZ. NZ was really the choice because there were some distant relatives living there. Mum says that at that time the only thing she knew about New Zealand was a poster in her local butcher's shop that depicted green fields dotted with white sheep.

In 1949 they arrived in NZ, along with 4 year old son, David. At first they lived in Clark St, New Lynn and our father worked at Ashley Tanneries. The street in New Lynn is now under the Lynnmall car park. David was later joined by 3 girls: Alison, Mary and Joanne, all born in the 1950s.

In 1952 they purchased a dairy in Blockhouse Bay High Street. This was a brand new building and was next door to Penman's Stationers. Penman's was next to the post office and the hairdresser and was just down from McMurray's 4 Square. Opposite and next to the garage was Patel's greengrocers. Yes, that dairy was on the site of what is now Mai Sushi. As for the mural, that was painted by Ernie Evans – a local artist who was also well known in the local theatrical scene. The mural, all in blue, that took up nearly all one wall, depicted a bucolic pastoral scene, hence the name of the dairy, the Pastoral Dairy.

The photo taken in 1952 shows David standing outside the dairy with his sister Alison in the pram. Probably taken in December 1952.



Mum manned the dairy with help from her mother Annie who had also emigrated to NZ. Eventually our father tired of the back breaking work at the tanneries and joined in at the dairy. He would also catch the bus into Farmers Store in Hobson St twice a week in the evenings, to help stock shelves for some extra income. As he was over 6 feet tall he was in demand to reach the highest shelves.

Those were pre freezer and microwave days. Mum regaled us with some of her memories – of fighting with David to scrape the bottom of the large tub of hokey pokey ice-cream, from which they served ice cream cones. Many pieces sank to the bottom and were a treat to scrape out and eat. This was real hokey pokey back then with big lumps of the stuff in the ice cream, not the uniform sized bland product that is sold today. Back then of course biscuits did not come in packets but in large tins, from which the biscuits were weighed out according to the customer's requirements. There were usually a number of broken biscuits in each tin, so these were either sold as "broken biscuits" or went home.

Then there was the woman who had ordered some chocolate Easter eggs well in advance of Easter. They were hard to get – no Warehouse full of them from about February on as is the case today. She picked up her precious cargo on the Thursday morning before Easter and kept them in the car all day. As it was a hot day they melted! She turned up late in the day for replacements but by then most of the eggs had been sold much to her annoyance. The dairy did lunches for the pupils at BHB Primary as well. Parents placed the orders for the lunches in the mornings and they were delivered to the school for lunchtime. David always considered himself lucky as he got a takeaway school lunch every day!

In those days of absolutely strict shop trading laws – where you could buy a hammer but not nails - our Father was caught in a sting operation selling a packet of cigarettes – not to an underage person but selling them on a Sunday.

Other ridiculous regulations abounded. Ice cream was sold in rectangular cardboard packets. Mum came up with the idea of selling a slice of ice cream between vanilla wafers – an early icy slicity. They were very popular and sales boomed. So much so, that the rep from the ice cream manufacturer came in to see why sales had increased. When he learned what was happening he put a stop to it, saying we could only sell the ice cream in whole packets, not in slices. To her dying day (at 99) Mum railed against this. Everyone lost - customers, dairy and manufacturers. David used to work in the shop as soon as he was old enough, around 8 years old – certainly not permitted now. From about 10 years old he was also one of Mrs. Rudge's Star newspaper delivery boys, going from house to house delivering the Star after school.

Later they sold the dairy and opened a wet fish and fish & chip shop on the other side of the road. Mum was busy then with 4 children and Mary can remember as a treat being able to have fish and chips for lunch when she was at school, as the shop would take orders in the morning and deliver them at lunchtime. She got special treatment and had tomato sauce with hers, but did not have a takeaway lunch everyday as David did. Again David was pressed into service in the shop and after school every day was in charge of peeling the potatoes and making the chips. An onerous task that he remembers to this day. He said he must have peeled untold tons of potatoes and made millions of chips!

Blockhouse Bay Primary, Blockhouse Bay Intermediate and Lynfield College was a familiar route for the children in the Bay. Before BHB Intermediate opened, there was of course Avondale Intermediate or Wesley Intermediate (David went there) depending on the draw. David was a foundation pupil of Lynfield College in 1958 and Mum was on the first PTA.

Mary and Joanne went to the 75th anniversary of Blockhouse Bay Primary (photo). She was a bit dubious that she would know anyone but as she registered she turned and recognised the person behind her. She said "Hello Mary" and Mary said "Hello Ellen" - (Ellen Larsen). She had forgotten that we had all followed that same school route. She remembers meeting Allison Martin who was in her year and whose father was one of her teachers at BHB Primary School.

We had moved to Terry St in the early 50's, number 48 opposite the entrance to the Park and where was later the Bowling Club. The area behind our house was strawberry fields, as BHB was well known for strawberry production back then. These fields belonged to Cliff Billingham and were a paradise for the Terry Street kids, David included, who would sneak into the fields in the evenings to pinch strawberries and hope not to get caught. The area around the Bowling Club and creek was also not the trimmed green lawn and paths you see today. It was overgrown bush and scrub and it was a child's paradise. We would head off for the day, only returning home when a shout out from one of the Mums recalled us. The big boys dammed the creek and hunted for eels and small trout.

Many a summer day was spent at Blockhouse Bay Beach (pre sand fill days). It was pretty muddy when the tide was out but safe swimming for us and lots of room to spread out on the lawn area. David built a pram dinghy and used to go out fishing there. He remembers also going out spearing for flounder with our father and others of the locals on the mud flats at low tide in the evenings.

If it was raining there was always the Kosy Cinema. It was a regular Saturday afternoon visit. When we had the milk bar, David used to go to the Saturday afternoon matinee showing at the Kosy every Saturday. He always had to leave the theatre early before half time (so never got to

see the end of the weekly serial) to rush across to the milk bar to serve the film goers with their ice creams and stuff. Then he would rush back to the theatre just after half time. He complained that he always used to miss the start of the main movie as well!

After our father died the shop was sold and Mum started working for Zena Abbott who had her avant garde A-frame studio just down the road from our house in Terry Street. She wove exciting creations out of wool, coloured with barks and lichens.

Mary left NZ in 1975 on her OE. It ended up lasting 9 years. David went on his OE in 1970 for 6 months and never came back to New Zealand to live! (He now resides in France). When Mary came home in 1984 the difference in BHB was visible. Roads were now curbed and channelled. There was an air of prosperity. Children had grown up and left home and money could be spent on other things. Houses had fences and decks. The 1950s and 60s had been decades of expansion, When David went to Lynfield College in 1958 there were 93 pupils in his year. Ten years later, when Mary started there were 1,300 pupils in the College.



Betty, Alison Mary and Joanne Marshall 82 Donovan St 1962

1970/1980's memories - Susan Whitefield (nee McIntosh)

I was born in 1969 and grew up in neighbouring New Windsor on Mulgan Street. I have fond memories of walking to and from New Windsor Primary school every day with my friends who lived further down the street. Weekends and holidays were lots of fun with all of the neighbourhood kids hanging out at one house or another. My mum did not drive when I was growing up, and in the early years she would do her grocery shopping at the superette on New Windsor Road just before it turns into Boundary Road. The superette was a Four Square if I remember rightly and was always referred to as "Hanks" – the name of the owner.

When I was a bit older and once Foodtown opened in Blockhouse Bay, my Dad would drive Mum on a Thursday after work to do the grocery shopping – the one late night it had. There was no Saturday shopping back then. While mum was doing the shopping, my brother and I would stay with Dad and we would visit some of the local shops on the main road. I remember there being a florist where Bay Law is now as well as a menswear store, a music shop, jewellers, stationary/bookshop and an appliance shop up the end where the two cafes are now. Later when I was older, I remember there being a children's book store called Jabberwocky which I loved going into. On wet and cold winter days when mum was in the supermarket, Dad and us kids would play games like 'eye-spy', 'animal, vegetable, mineral' or play 'noughts and crosses' or 'hangman' on the foggy windows of the Austin van that Dad drove.

1990/2000's memories - Sofya Vickers

I am very fond of the Plunket building that still looks just the same whenever I visit the Bay, where my mum along with four others went 25 years ago with their newborns to join a Coffee Group in Feb 1999. Their children: Josh Whitefield, Henry Styles and Lana Nicholson have been like the siblings I never had. We remained close all through our school years and still catch up for a coffee at The Block whenever I am home for a visit from Wellington. No matter how much time has passed when I catch up with any of these three it is like it's been no time at all. Our fifth member Brad and his family moved to Australia before he started school, but we have stayed in contact with them too.

Once I got to intermediate age I went to Wesley Intermediate and I caught the bus that left from the bus stop near Dickey Street. There was also a bus that left from Blockhouse Bay, but it was so full that it was worth the short walk up the hill to get the quieter New Windsor bus. Wesley Intermediate were the best years of my school life.

Later on I went to Lynfield College and now my children go there. My first day of college I remember meeting all of these new faces and learning which intermediate schools they came from – I was so naïve, I didn't know where half of the intermediates were, or there even was a Blockhouse Bay Intermediate.

When I was 7 years old, I broke my tooth and had to go to the dentist at Blockhouse Bay up the stairs. I remember loving the big fish tank in the reception area. Later when I left school, I stayed with the same dentist and loved looking at the big aerial photo on the ceiling of Blockhouse Bay from the 1960's while the dentist was poking around in my mouth. I still go to the same dentist all these years later.

Growing up in the Blockhouse Bay/New Windsor area was full of wonderful memories, where neighbours got together and helped each other. Now I am proud to be a true Blockhouse Bay resident, having lived on McFadzean Drive for over 30 years raising my family in this wonderful community.

Josh, Henry, Lana and I started school in 2003 at Blockhouse Bay Primary school. In my first week there I noticed none of the children playing on the junior school playground went anywhere near the surrounding trees. I asked one of the teachers why none of them had gone exploring. She lent down and told me in a very serious tone "You don't want to go in there, the tigers might get you!". That was enough for me - I wasn't going anywhere near the tree line. Their deception worked a treat. Now there are high fences around the entire school. However while I was there my dad was able to ride straight in on his bright red Vespa, with me on the back, past all the teachers in the staffroom, across the car park and through the back field, dropping me off right outside my classroom - much to the principal's dismay.

This probably wasn't a good look for my mum who was on the board of trustees at the time, but I thought it was pretty cool.

My dad often found a way to tap into my adrenaline junkie side. When the Bay was nice and quiet, usually on a Sunday, he would let me and my friends stand up on the back of his ute holding on to the roll bar for dear life as he drove down Endeavour street to the beach and back up to our house. When my friends came round they would often ask to go for a spin on the ute. This continued for a few years until they installed a security camera down near the beach carpark and we thought it best not to risk being caught on tape.



My Green Bay cousins and I headed down to the beach one day to find a massive mound of sand sitting there which hadn't been spread out yet. To us small kids, making it to the very top of that giant mountain was achieving King-of-the-Castle status, only to be pushed back down by another cousin stealing your place moments later.

Growing up on Endeavour street I spent a lot of time with my friends down at Blockhouse Bay Beach. When I was little, I loved to climb along the low hanging Pohutukawa tree branch over the playground and sit there watching the world go by. When I got a little older my favourite spot changed to the edge of the cliff

at Te Whau Point. It was always a peaceful place to sit surrounded by water on both sides. However I would never tell my dad where I was going, as the walk up there is quite dangerous in parts where the path is very narrow due to erosion over the years. It is still a special place I show my non-Auckland friends when I visit with them, just to prove there are still lovely places away from the now very busy city.

Likewise, Craigavon Park and the many walkways through the bush are peaceful places I love returning to. There used to be an awesome spinning ride in the Craigavon Park playground, with four tyre seats up in the air. The whole thing spun round and as each person kicked off the centre post, covered in timber slats, it made the opposite person go higher. Good times.

I always loved the Blockhouse Bay Santa Parades, where the whole community would come together to watch. All my friends would be there, we could play on the bouncy castles and other rides. And eat candy floss among other treats from the food stalls. In 2005 Lana and I got to dress up as fairies and sit up on the back of an open top sports car in the parade, so cool.

Every week, we would pop up to the shops and grab our rental videos (and later dvd's) from the video store on the corner by the roundabout. Where the vape store is now. As a kid, the video store seemed huge; we spent a lot of time there carefully selecting our weekend movies. In the summer, all the parents had keys to get into the primary school pool on the weekends. There were always lots of our friends there too, it was great fun. The year I got my first bike, Mum & Dad took me up to the school and taught me to ride it on the netball courts there.

Driving home from the city you could always see the beautiful tall pine trees at the edge of the Blockhouse Bay Primary grounds where they backed onto the Foodtown car park (now Countdown, but everyone I know still calls it Foodtown). I loved being able to see where home was.

