



BLOCKHOUSE BAY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2025. Number 122

NEXT MEETING -

**The Blockhouse Bay Historical Society next meeting is on
5th February at 1.15 pm in the Blockhouse Bay Community Centre.**

Guest Speaker - What made the newspaper headlines 100 years ago? This topic was raised at a committee meeting – would it be the much the same as today or very different? So, we've done some research and Mary Marshall will lead a presentation and discussion on this topic. As a clue the main two stories on 3 January 2025 were: 'NZ Streets Awash with Guns' and 'Taylor Swift'.

Local Village News

Christmas in Candyland saw many visitors to Armanasco House. We were delighted with the turn out. Many stopped to ask questions and take in the artefacts. Visitors especially appreciated that the House was open as they could not visit on a Tuesday.

Please support our Corporate Members

Visique Blockhouse Bay Optometrists

1/1 Donovan St Blockhouse Bay
info@bbayoptom.co.nz

Shirley's of Blockhouse Bay

Women's Fashions
561 Blockhouse Bay Rd

Blockhouse Bay Dental Centre

3A Heaphy St
09 627 9970

Mystery Corner

Here is the first of our Mystery Corner items.

A cache of slides were found in the basement of 39 Endeavour Street. Some appear to be associated with Arahoe School and all were taken during the 1960-70s.

See the back cover for a sample of the photos.
Do you know any of the people in the photos?
Let us know if you do.

If you too have something of an historical nature that is a mystery - maybe a photo of people with no names or date - a long lost relative, or someone who used to live in your current home in Blockhouse Bay, send us your Mystery to share with others.

Email the photo or question that is puzzling you - to Mary Marshall (marymarshall55@gmail.com), or pop in with it to Armanasco House on a Tuesday, and we will throw it over the membership to see if anyone knows the answer.

Krystene Vickers; krys@ekiwi.com
Mary Marshall; marymarshall55@gmail.com
Anne Bell; 627 8619
Tony Joyce; 626 6445 tony.joyce@xtra.co.nz

Life Members;
Eileen Rusden, Yvonne Dabb, Alan Cole & Brian Goodwin
Visit our website;
www.blockhousebayhistoricalsociety.com



Auckland Star Boys Reunion.



Eileen Flaxman - Community Services Award 1997.

Eileen Rudge – the Star Lady

Were you a Star Boy or Girl? These were the children who delivered your Auckland Star newspaper between 4pm-6pm, Monday to Saturday. Generally, the boys handled the delivery and the girls collected payment once a week.

In Blockhouse Bay the delivery of the Star was associated with the Rudge family from 1926 to 1969. Three generations organised those deliveries.

William Rudge sitting in doorway of 55 Donovan St holding Allan Rudge



In 1926 William Rudge was the first of the family to manage the Star run. Deliveries were made on horseback and the area extended as far as Ridge Rd and White Swan Rd. Blockhouse Bay only had a few roads – more like dirt tracks – at the time.

William died in 1946 and his son, Selwyn Rudge, took over until his death in 1954. Selwyn's widow Eileen Rudge - the Star Lady - then managed the agency from 1954-64. The final Rudge member, Alan, then took it over until the late 1960s.



73 Donovan St, Blockhouse Bay.

St. Eileen Rudge lived there for over six decades.

Their delivery area went down to Portage Rd, Taylor St to Tiverton Rd, Donovan St to part of White Swan Rd and Boundary/ Margate Rd.

It would be considered a good evening if the family could have dinner in peace without a call saying a paper had not been delivered. Some boys would not deliver the last paper and take it home instead. If customers told the collectors they had missed one they had to be believed.

The Star had strict control over the running of the agency. For two weeks each year the Star provided a relief so the family could have a holiday. However, the Star decided when the two weeks would be. The agency had no say in the matter.

Here are some of the memories of Eileen from a Star Girl and Boy:

Maureen Exler – a Star Girl

'Eileen was very capable, a take no nonsense woman. If you were late or played up, she would deduct 3 pence from your wages.

We girls went to the customers houses once a week to collect the money. It was a very trusting safe time and environment.

I recall that Eileen swam every day and knitted beautiful Fair Isle pattern jumpers. When the girls went in to see her there were so many papers on the chairs and tables they had to sit on the floor!

David Marshall - a Star Boy

'Mrs. Rudge was the "Star Lady" and was in charge of distributing the Auckland Star newspaper every night to all the subscribing homes in Blockhouse Bay and nearby area. Back then, this was just about every home – no social media then! To manage this Mrs. Rudge had a team of Star boys who each had a delivery round every afternoon after school. Over the years there must have been hundreds of boys who worked for Mrs. Rudge and I was one of them.

At the time, I was about 9, I used to work in my parent's milk bar after school. Mrs. Rudge came into the shop one day and asked my father if I would be interested in doing a paper round. I thought that this was a great idea; the only problem was that I only had a decrepit old bike that was not possible to use for a paper round. My father said we could buy a new bike but I would have to pay it back from my earnings. We went and bought a brand-new Raleigh 3 speed, just the best at the time, and I was ready to start my paper round. The Star paper bags were fitted over the bike cross bar, filled with newspapers and off we went.

My delivery round was from the bottom end of Blockhouse Bay Road, including Matata Street, Puketea Street and up to Bolton Street. Every day but Sunday we would be out, come rain or shine, delivering the Star. Rainy days were not so pleasant, especially slogging up Blockhouse Bay Road with full sacks of newspapers. Some of the customers were nice and would give you a drink or a biscuit and a little present at Christmas. These were the ones who had their newspaper delivered to their door!

I was a paper boy for around 18 months as I recall. It was an enjoyable time and all of the Star boys were good mates. Eileen Rudge – Mrs. Rudge to her boys – has lingered in my memory over all this time, even though it was 70 years ago now. No-one ever had a bad word to say about this lady, and she was a lady, and all her boys were very fond of her. Always ready for a chat and a laugh as you loaded up your bike with the papers. It has been a number of years since you have passed Mrs. Rudge, but I am sure that out there, there are still many of your "boys" with their memories of you."

Being a Star boy could be handy at times. One Starboy was given detention at Lynfield College and told he had to stay after school for it. He told his teacher he couldn't as he had a Star round. The teacher then let him off the detention but did come up with some other form of punishment.

Eileen moved to Blockhouse Bay in 1935 and lived here until she passed away in 2001.

The local beaches of Sandy Bay and Blockhouse Bay would see Eileen swimming whenever tide and weather permitted. Eileen often befriended new families as the Bay expanded and would take the children off to the beach for a swim.

Saturday night was a night out at the Kosy picture theatre. She would be there every Saturday regardless of what the movie was. She sat in the same seat and heaven help anyone who dared to sit there on a Saturday night.

Eileen married Charles Flaxman in 1969, another Bay resident who sadly passed away in 1989.

Eileen entered a talent contest – singing – and won. Encouraged by this, she took some lessons from a Miss McLeod and then sung regularly in the Iona Presbyterian Church Choir. She was also member of other community choirs, performing charity concerts at rest homes and other small venues.

Eileen was involved in many community activities and was recognised for those contributions in 1997 and 2001 when she received awards from Auckland Council.

She will be remembered as a straightforward woman – if she asked for something to be done it could seem more like a demand than a request. However, one former neighbour recalled that Eileen was the first to introduce herself to them and kept the contact going throughout the years. She would go to the market for her neighbours at any time.

Mrs Rudge, the Star Lady is undoubtedly one of Blockhouse Bay's characters. Two reunions of Star boys and girls have been held. She is remembered fondly by all of her former Star boys and Star girls.



Star delivery boys collecting their papers.

Mary Marshall

With special thanks to Alan Rudge, Maureen Exler and David Marshall.

Mystery Corner

A cache of slides were found in the basement of 39 Endeavour Street. Some appear to be associated with Arahoe School and all were taken during the 1960-70s.

Do you know any of the people in the photos?
Let us know if you do.

