



**Ngatimoti School**  
"Together We Excel"

# 150<sup>th</sup> Celebrations

## 1868- 2018



This burgeoning document includes the 1968 centennial booklet and the 1993 jubilee publication. A chapter to commemorate the 2018 sesquicentennial adds to the accounts of life at Ngatimoti School.

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## **2018 Introduction**

Ngatimoti School is a welcoming, vibrant place with a very rich past and an exciting present and future. There are three values I'd like to highlight as we celebrate the sesquicentennial of Ngatimoti School.

The first is connections and community. It is this sense of connection and community that is vital to the success of Ngatimoti School. The foundations of our school were developed on these values and they continue to be at its core. This is reflected in the number of former staff, students and families attending our 150th celebrations. These connections and sense of community are also evident in the successful festivals we hold each year and in the support we have from our school families and wider that contribute to our sense of whanau at Ngatimoti School.

The second value is achievement. It is not only academic achievement which we celebrate at Ngatimoti School, but achievements in a broader sense. Our broad R.I.V.E.R. values flow through our school and are a part of the expected culture.

The third refers to history, of which we are celebrating. The proud history of Ngatimoti School is marked by the strong commitment by the Board of Trustees and staff to continue to provide stellar educational and experiential opportunities for our tamariki. These three values: connection and community, achievement and history- speak of a school that has solid roots. Roots that are connected to the past and the present, while reaching out to the future.

**Andrea Goodman, Board of Trustees Chairperson**

## **Foreword**

Changes in education have added to the rich history of Ngatimoti School. We welcomed a broadening of the curriculum in 2010 and endured the introduction of National Standards shortly after. The subsequent abolishment of these standards in 2018 has given us a renewed opportunity to focus on teaching each child in an holistic and personalised way. Throughout all of the changes, one thing that has remained constant at Ngatimoti School has been a culture of revelling in our rural environment yet ensuring we stay up to date and open to all opportunities.

Our Board of Trustees is a valuable and dynamic team having responsibility for property, budgeting, policies and appointments, and also setting a direction for learning. The current vision set by the Board is for all students to become R.I.V.E.R. students, confident and able to navigate in a changing world. The R.I.V.E.R. values

(Respect, positivity, innovation, excellence and Responsibility) have formed the backbone of our curriculum during the past ten years.

This curriculum includes a clear focus on identity, well-being and creativity, as well as literacy and numeracy. Listening to student perspectives, arranging for a variety of learning opportunities, promoting environmental thinking and developing a sense of belonging and connectedness are core strategies to enable all of these strategic goals to reach fruition.

Students are at the heart of our school and to support them an excellent staff is of particular importance. Over the years Ngatimoti has been very fortunate to have a skilled, committed and caring staff. A staff who comes to school with the goal of making a difference, a staff whose work is often above and beyond the call of duty, a staff who live by our motto – Together We Excel.

Our staff, students, parents and community continue to learn, work and grow together to ensure learning in the widest sense of the word. We no longer enrol students at Ngatimoti School, instead we enrol families! I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the students, the staff, and the parents of the past and the present, who have contributed to making the school the place that it is today.

A reunion is an opportunity to bring people together to celebrate the story of Ngatimoti School and the people who have shaped it, because after all, people are the most important things in life.

Hūtia te rito o te harakeke, kei hea to kōmako e kō?

He aha te mea nui o te ao. He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

*If the heart of the flax is pulled out, where will the kōmako sing? If you ask me what is most important in this world, I will reply, 'People, people, people'.*

**Alison Turner, Principal**

## **MEMORIES..... LOOKING BACK FROM 2018**

### **Lisa Wilson (nee Furness)**

Born in 1974, Lisa Furness began school at Ngatimoti in 1979, her brother Craig started two years later. Lisa, Graeme and their youngest child, Lexus, moved back to the area two years ago from the West Coast where they had lived for the last twenty or so years. Lexus is currently a Year 6 student at Ngatimoti School.

"I lived around the Pearse Valley, my parents still live up the Pearse Valley. My Dad grew up in Dovedale. His parents and grandparents all came from Pokororo up the Graham Valley. Nana went to Pokororo School. Dad went to Tapawera.

....I remember my first day of school, hopping on the bus with my little lunch box and off I went.

I'm guessing there were about 18 children in my class. My teacher was Mrs Dodgshun – Gwen. She was such a nice teacher, a real good honest teacher. Dave Martin was the principal and he used to sit us down on the floor every day and he'd start the day off with a song playing his ukulele.

I always remember the blooming school cross country. We used to go up through Mr Ed Stevens' farm – not such a good memory as hey, who wants to run!

The swimming pool was there when I was at school, and in the change shed the wall between the girls and boys was wood. The boys used to put little holes in the wall so they could peep through. I remember ducking down having a look through the hole and you'd see another eye staring back at you ..... such a shock.

The dental clinic used to be in the carpark, the long jump pit is still the same, and pony club used to be held over the back fence, there were no houses. In the playground there used to be a great big Maypole with ropes hanging off it, I remember that was so much fun.

We had cool teachers. One of the teachers used to live down the road from the school and we'd be allowed to sometimes go and have lunch with her.

When one of our teachers was sick we had a relief teacher – Nova Davies who was lovely.

There used to be a shop and garage at the Ngatimoti Hall which was where we used to have Brownies for us girls after school. After, we would go to the garage for a K-bar or a Popsicle.

Once a week, we went to Parklands School in Motueka for what used to be called Manual Training, where we'd do cooking, woodwork and clothing. The kids still go there today but its called MOTEC now.

The school is very important to the community. If there is no school, there's really no community. For me coming back thirty eight years later, not knowing anyone as

many had moved away, I've been able to get to know people through the school community. It's how you meet people. The school gives a sense of community, and it's a great community.

I'm still friends with my best friend from Ngatimoti School, she lives at Upper Moutere now. A lot of people like me have gone away and come back because it's such an awesome area. As it's a small community school, the parents are more involved. I only have good memories of the school.

It's an awesome school, I'm so pleased that Lexus is going to Ngatimoti. I sent her there probably because I have such good memories. And it's still a good school."

### **Judy Lumsden**

Judy Lumsden and her family came to the area having lived in Canada where her children were born. Her two boys and her daughter all went to Ngatimoti School.

"We're newcomers, we've only been here twenty years. We moved over when my oldest son was six and we moved here really for the lifestyle. We bought a property on Waiwhero and found the school to be in such a beautiful location. I was happy to get involved and Bill, my husband was on the Board of Trustees for a time.

Through the Parents Group, Judy helped with the annual Ngatimoti Festival since it started in 2002.

"At that time we desperately needed extra funding. Before they'd only do sausage sizzles and little fund-raising things which used to drive me crazy. It was such a constant thing – pulling funding from the same people and asking the same people over and over again. I had bigger visions that everyone could participate in and would bring enough income so we didn't have to go every week and do sausage sizzles.

There's always been a strong group of parents who have been supportive of the school. The Festival is amazing. It is due to the people who were there at the time and the community. Everyone gets behind it. It was about starting something with a difference as there weren't any country festivals at the time, starting something totally different that involved the whole community, all the parents and all the kids.

I was on the festival committee for about seven years. It's huge now, much bigger than it was then, but its integrity hasn't changed, and it's guaranteed income for the school."

I was also a teacher's aide for a number of years. I really enjoyed this job, and I enjoyed being a swimming teacher in the summer holiday too.

The school has so much to offer. I hope the community continue to appreciate this.

## **Aleesha Durrant**

Aleesha finished at Ngatimoti School in 2016 and has been at Motueka High School for the last two years.

“My favourite memories of school were the Ngatimoti Festivals. The Festival was every October and all the classes would have different activities setting up the Festival. I also enjoyed being in the school band, which played at the Festival and the Rockfest competition.

I also really enjoyed the Enviro times. We used to go down to the stream and clean it up, make sure it was healthy and make it look good. We'd use ice cream containers to collect water sample and check the bugs and the health of the environment.

School camps were really good too, every two years we would go on one. We'd go to the beach and do all these walks. It was great to spend time with friends.

My favourite teachers were Mr Dunn in Year 7 and Mr Hepburn in Year 8.

## **David Durrant**

David Robert Durrant was born in 1932 and grew up on a farm in Woodstock, his father and he were tobacco growers. There were four boys and six girls in his family. His parents were original settlers of the Motueka Valley arriving from England in 1840.

“A lot of the family have moved away but some have stayed here. I went to Pangatotara School for three or four years. The Pangatotara School was in a paddock and the hall was on the side of the road. The School must have been an old church. We walked down and over the bridge to school.

It was a lot longer walk to Ngatimoti School when I went there for a couple of years. I had to agree to get on a bus so they had enough pupils to run a bus up here. I went to Motueka when the bus started and then to Nelson College.

The Ngatimoti School was in a paddock by the hall with bush behind it. During the war we had to have practices, in case we got attacked, so we'd have a mock air attack and the whole school had to head up into the bus and hide. That was our practice in case the Japanese came and bombed us all.

My teacher at Ngatimoti was Claude Holyoake, the brother of Sir Keith Holyoake who become Prime Minister for a while. [Sir Keith Holyoake was the 26<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister of New Zealand for a brief period in 1957 then from 1960-1972].

We had a swim hole at Orinoco Creek near the bridge.

We used to do what was called a paper chase. There were bags and bags of cut-up paper and the senior children would lay a paper trail up the Orinoco Valley, up over the hills, and we had to follow the paper trail.

My Dad started growing tobacco in those days – burley tobacco – air-dried stuff which was hung up in a shed to dry by nature. I had the bottom half of the paddock, Dad had the other half. Everyone grew a little bit of tobacco. There's only Ned Knowles left now, I think.

My six children all went to Ngatimoti School, they enjoyed their days. The most enjoyable was the old Christmas picnic at Kaiteriteri. We always used to pack up for a day, all the parents used to go and all the kids, off to Kaiteriteri for a day of sports and swimming – playing in the sea, running races, cricket on the beach.

When we were done we used to take our flagons of beer and we'd all sit around at Kaiteriteri and talk a lot. That wouldn't happen now a days, you wouldn't be allowed to do it. We used to take our own vehicles, everyone took their own families. It was as much a day for the parents as for the children. We all used to look forward to it was it was a pretty busy time of the year in tobacco but we'd all knock off to go to our school picnic as we couldn't miss that, not that often anyway.

## **Emma King**

Emma Jane King started at Ngatimoti School in 1987 when she was five years old. Her mother Joanne King (nee Smart) went to Ngatimoti School for her last primary years when her family first moved to the area, then her aunts and uncles – Sharon, Ken, Bradley, Odette, Carmen and Andrew Smart followed.

"I used to catch the bus by myself and the bigger kids looked after me. I think it was an old Bedford Van. Laura my sister started a year later than my other two sisters.

Playtime was one of my favourite times, it was awesome, we used to play in that massive evergreen tree in the corner, the kids still play there. I remember doing lots of sports and swimming in the school pool. Going to school was such a pleasurable experience – just enjoying the small community, it was like being in another little family. I started with Mrs Moran who taught the younger primary kids for a long time, she was lovely. I remember Mr Rogers and Brian Smith, the principal, and they used to wear knee-high socks.

It's a beautiful little school and is hugely important to the community. It brings so many people together. That was one of the drawcards for us relocating. My children Henry, Elvie and Nina went to Ngatimoti when we moved back. Now Henry is in Year 7, Elvie in Year 4, and Nina was in Year 8 last year and is now at Motueka High School.

I wouldn't like to see many changes to the school itself – open, barefoot, running around playing bullrush - I'd hate those things to change. I hope the school will still be here in fifty years and still offer those things. I love the RIVER values. The whole approach is good. My kids love going to school which says a lot about the teachers and the environment.

## **Maurice Grooby**

Maurice Grooby was Ngatimoti School's caretaker and cleaner for 25 years from 1989. "In the last few years, Jackie, my wife, used to love using the ride-on mower to mow the grass, it would take 2-3 hours. I don't miss anything but that's what Jackie misses." For 18 of those 25 years I was also bus driver so I had heaps to do with kids and parents and I suppose I have to mention the teachers too! Maurice retired happily in 2013.

The Grooby's were one of the founding families of the area. Maurice was a student at Ngatimoti School from 1953-1960, along with his sisters Priscilla and Coralie. Their father also attended Ngatimoti School. When I was at school we lived up the road and I used to ride my bike home for lunch. I don't know what Mum thought but we used to disappear at weekends and spend time at the school, swimming in the pool, playing around there.

My three children went to Ngatimoti. Nicola my daughter did all her primary schooling at Ngatimoti, and when we shifted to town the two boys went to Parklands School, Alexander, for one year and Andrew, for three years.

Ngatimoti School changed physically over the years, classrooms came and went. The dental clinic used to be just inside the gate. One of the jobs was cleaning that when the dental nurse was in residence twice a year. And the Plunket nurse would come a few times too.

In the earlier days the dental nurse used to do the whole thing there – drilling and all – we called it the murder house! Then it just became inspections and you'd be sent off to town for work, and the dental clinic vanished. A Dental room was set-up in the school itself next to the principal's office.

Actually, there wasn't a principal's office. Principals were teaching, they didn't do any of this Board of Trustees stuff, so didn't need an office. Brian Smith was Principal for seven years, and he only got an office in his last year at school there. A bit ironic because he got an office and then he left! Brian Smith was the principal at the time of the 125th Anniversary of the school [1993]. He was a good guy, he was so practical and had a really good workshop at home, so there were no worries about borrowing tools or anything. He had a pottery wheel which the kids absolutely loved and it was set-up in the classroom.

When I started work Barbara Greenwood was the principal before Brian. She's a lovely lady, socially you couldn't meet a nicer person and she always greets you like a long lost friend.

Kevin Ward was the principal in 1994. He was nuts, but the kids loved him. You wouldn't have known he was a school principal, he didn't wear a principal's hat. He was one of the people who started the Festival. If it wasn't for him and the group of parents who were there at the time it wouldn't have happened. They got together and thought hey, instead of depending always on local parents for handouts, they're always paying, how about getting the wider community involved. That's how it started



off. It took for a month or two before the date to prepare, then it took damn-near to the end of the year to put things back to where they should be!

I'm still great mates with some of the parents around here. A lot of the kids from the old, old families have all grown up and moved on. If I went back there today I'd probably only recognise half of the kids. The kids still greet you in town and sometimes I have to say: hey sorry but who are you? The kids and the parents were the highlight and the bus trip around this West Bank valley, the Baton run. Jackie drove the Orinoco run for a wee-while. There were always parents at most bus stops and animals and dogs. I used to carry tit-bits to throw out of the bus for them, when the kids got on.

I don't want to go back as it was our school, we did what we wanted, it was our garden. It's a bit like when you sell your house, it's gone, it's finished.

Being boss was the best part of the job! I was very well looked after, as long as I did my work I had a pretty free hand in how I did it, what needed to be done and how. Most of my recommendations or suggestions would be agreed to. Work was there to do it so you did it.

### **Alexander Grooby**

Alexander Grooby was a student at Ngatimoti from 1988 until 1995.

"I had a good time at school. Because Dad worked there it meant we were at school all the time. I learnt to drive there on the rugby field, mastered a ride-on lawn mower, heaps of work on the weekends from fixing decks, on lawnmowers, I probably learnt to use a chainsaw there too."

### **Coralie Grooby**

When I first started at Ngatimoti School in 1950 it was located beside the Memorial Hall. I remember it being a long walk to school all on gravel roads. Sometimes I would be given an uncomfortable ride to school on Mike Wells' bike. Starting school was a scary experience, being surrounded by so many children. There was no playgroup or pre-school then. I was picked on for having to wear homemade bloomers and the toilets smelt terrible. We did get a sleep in the afternoons on daybeds in the classroom.

In 1953 the school was relocated to its present site in Greenhill Road. It was a much shorter walk. Sometimes our pet sheep, Bonnie (not Mary) would follow us to school and we would have to take her home. My favourite teachers during my time at school were Annie Strachan and Les Cowles. We used to have a whole school picnic out at Kaiteriteri and we would be transported there in the back of Roy Hunter's truck. I remember Canon Corney's sleepifying religious instruction. We used to have combined schools' athletic sports days held at Marchwood Park that I dreaded. We used to play cricket after school and one occasion I was hit on the forehead by an Alan Gardiner bouncer. I remember Guthrie Beatson fainting one hot

ANZAC afternoon listening to Dan Tomlinson telling us about his wartime experiences. We had school garden plots which were judged by John Cross.

In 1969 I returned to Ngatimoti School, this time as a teacher. I remember taking the infants for a walk to Lex Fry's to see a ewe and her quad lambs. We then stopped under the Peninsula Bridge for a picnic and paddle before returning to school. I helped set up the Junior Forest and Bird branch and had many enjoyable trips at weekends with a keen group of children and parents. I was also involved in coaching netball.

In May/June of 2004 I returned once again this time as relief Caretaker while Maurice was away.

### **Trevor Rogers (Eulogy by Alison Turner)**

Mr. Rogers; the consummate teacher. He taught about Greek mythology and Maori history, he could identify rocks and he knew the best poetry to share. He knew so much but he was always curious to listen and learn more.

Mr. Rogers was a true environmentalist, I remember him feeding and protecting his eels, sharing his knowledge of harakeke and native plants and animals. He loved being outdoors; trout fishing on the river, whitebaiting, scalloping and gardening. He loved to collect – that saying "One man's trash is another man's treasure" sure rang true. His collections were valuable resources for his teaching too, and he would often bring interesting artefacts over to school to share with staff and students.

Mr. Rogers taught hundreds of kids over the years, and everyone would remember him, from Taranaki to Tokoroa, Maungarakau to Motueka. In the latter years, after retiring from many years teaching permanently at Ngatimoti, he was a popular reliever for us at Ngatimoti School. The kids all wanted to get in to his famous goodies club, and they loved his gentle but firm manner. He was a man of great patience and good humour, and he could tell some worthy, and often long, stories. Some of the kids remember his explanations taking longer than an actual game, or being able to side track him so he would keep talking and then they would not have to do the work he had planned for them!

As a teacher, Mr. Rogers was an all-rounder – a scientist, a writer, a sportsman and a talented artist. He was prepared to take risks like go travelling to far flung places like Egypt and China, yet he was so careful, and neat, and he enjoyed the simple things in life. He was always busy, always interested in what we were doing at school and always prepared to help out. He loved Madeline more than anything and this relationship was a strong model to all around him. He oozed kindness and respect, loyalty and a sense of fun. He showed a gritty determination and took pride in his work and his family.

Mr. Rogers, Trevor, passed away in June 2014, he was one of a kind, an excellent teacher and a true gentleman. The harakeke flowers at his service were made by present Ngatimoti School students, in his honour.

## **Madeline Rogers**

Madeline and Trevor Rogers moved to Ngatimoti in 1983. Trevor applied for a teaching job at Ngatimoti and got it. We originally lived in the school house before we bought this one. I was a relief teacher at Ngatimoti when someone was sick. David Martin was the principal at that time. Brian Smith was next. Barbara Greenwood was principal after Brian Smith. I did relief work up until about 1995 when I got a permanent job in Motueka. Lesley Foote was another person during that time that did relief work.

## **Steve Dunn – Deputy Principal 2009-2015**

I remember flying in from Malaysia for my interview at Ngatimoti, in the middle of winter. Driving through what I now know as Little Siberia was a bit of a shock - 1pm and still frozen solid. What was I getting myself in for?

The initial temperature shock from Malaysia to Ngatimoti was pretty hard as was adapting to the change of school/routines/expectations etc. I had come from an International School where many kids had their nannies pick them up who would also carry their bags to the car. A school where there were cleaners ready to pick up all the rubbish that the kids left after break times and where reality of what real life was really like, was lost on the majority of these kids. Label clothing, the latest technology and incredible holidays were the norm.

It was the best 'bring back down to earth' experience for me, returning to New Zealand and a place like Ngatimoti - certainly not in a negative way either.

Ngatimoti School reminded me that kids should still be kids, that wearing bare feet is still ok, playing rugby at lunchtime with both boys and girls is acceptable. It also showed me about what community spirit is all about. People pitching in to help others, in particular with transport for school activities as well as getting kids to sport during the week and on weekends. The amazing experiences that the festival offered on the day for the thousands that turn up, alongside the experiences that the local children gained from the funds raised. Without parents, both present and past as well as other local people, the success of the festival would not be possible.

Regular trips on the bus routes reminded me about the beautiful place these kids grew up in. Do they realise how lucky they are? Did I realise how lucky I was to be teaching in such a wonderful place?

Some of the best memories of mine in the six years I was at Ngatimoti were the school camps to Red Deer Lodge at Lake Rotoiti, the amazing development of the stream project, the incredible facilities and the technology resources the school developed in that time.

Most importantly, working with a great bunch of educators who always had the best interests of all students at heart was very rewarding.

As a teacher though, one of the most rewarding aspects of my time at Ngatimoti is bumping in to so many of my ex-students who display great manners and respect. The majority of them have got a great work ethic and are excellent members of the wider community. Many of these skills were either taught at school or reinforced at school from the similar messages they received at home.

Teaching and education continues to evolve and many schools have lost the traditional values that fortunately Ngatimoti maintains whilst moving with the times.

Ngatimoti School - a special and unique place for any child lucky enough to attend.

### **Debs Godsiff – Teacher**

Debbie Godsiff , teacher for seven years at Ngatimoti School. Debs was always prepared to give 100% of herself to her work. She could have her feet in gumboots traipsing around environmental projects, her arms reaching out to the community or welcoming the community in to school, and her heart and soul, teaching every student as an individual, caring for them as people as well as learners. Debs and her daughter Freya, moved to Blenheim in 2018. At the 2017 end of year assembly, Lili Fitzsimmons and Wolfgang O’Donohue-Rogers spoke on behalf of the students, and presented her with a kowhai tree.

“A tree is a symbol of growth, but remember Debs that although this tree may put down its roots in Blenheim, it started as a seed in Ngatimoti. We hope you will look at it, enjoy its shade and shelter, and think of us often.”

Being a teacher at Ngatimoti School is such a joy  
Sharing ideas and work stories – boy oh boy!  
Dealing with kids, and their parents, is just part of your week  
Gardening, painting, teaching and studying like a geek.  
Debs, you fitted it all in, and then some more  
Teaching for you is never a chore.  
You want the best for every child, you really do.  
And because we want the best for you, we bid you adieu.  
Enjoy your new house, your garden and your new school  
Remember what you have learned here, and always stay cool!

### **Lou Betts**

“I’ve been around here for 20 or so years, we moved to where we are now 17 years ago. I was born in England. I met Ian, my partner - who’s also English, here. We have three children - two who’ve finished at Ngatimoti and are now at Motueka High, and Harry, our youngest, is in year 8 this year.

I’ve a few different roles in the school – netball is one. Ten years ago there was no netball happening so another parent, Dianne Boyes, and myself started to get some happening again. We started with one team, technically an intermediate team but eight year olds were in it as well. We won one game and it’s progressed from there.

About five years ago, when all her kids had left here, Dianne moved on. I have had support from parents and from some of the older kids. So that's good leadership skills for them.

When Dianne left, to remember her and all the work she had put in, she donated the Dianne Boyes Trophy to give out at the end of the season for a year. It's doesn't necessarily go to the most outstanding player but to the player who embraces netball. This year the trophy was awarded to Tasmin Nelson-Knauf for her determination and commitment to the game for the eight years she has played for Ngatimoti School.

We play in the Saturday competitions organised by the Motueka Netball Centre against all the other primary schools. There are usually about twelve teams in the years seven and eight grade, and years five and six who play. Years seven and eight teams have their first real competition. All the younger age groups play a modified game and it's more based on skills than score.

At the end of each season we have a prize-giving here at the school. It's a fun day, the parents are involved, we get them out there with the kids and have a couple of netball games.

Apart from being a parent, I've been involved in the festival committee for the last 10 years helping organise the stalls. About four and a half years ago, Ian and I took over from Maurice Grooby as cleaner and caretaker of the school. We share the job and I do the cleaning of the school.

A couple of years ago I began to do some teacher-aiding. I'm in Heather's class, four mornings a week. I enjoy working in either of the junior classes.

Ngatimoti School is an awesome place. It's a nice place to work and I feel very lucky that my kids have been through the school here.

## **Ian Stephens**

"I'm the current caretaker of the school, and drive the school bus on the Baton run.

I took over the bus driving first, then the caretaking. I do the grounds, the maintenance, and look after the swimming pool. Luckily I'm a bit of a handyman so it works out well. You start off in spring and the grass has grown heaps so you're mowing like mad and then the pool kicks in so you're committed with that and the mowing a bit. In April, the pool has just stopped, mowing will slow down and start to come in early every morning to light the fires. There's not as many fires as we used to have, only the four.

For the first time this year we have solar panels on the roof for the pool. It gave us a month extra season, the pool opened a month earlier than usual, but we did have a real hot period – February weather in November and December - so it wasn't a real indicator of whether the panels kept the pool warmer or not!

With the 150th anniversary of the school, the Festival will be a different one this year for sure. It will be a special one, have to tidy the place all up! If there were no flaxes, no ferns and only evergreens it would make the life of a caretaker and gardener a dream.”

## **Ned Knowles**

“My grandfather, Joseph Knowles, came out from north west England up above Manchester, via Australia, as a young man on his own. He and his wife had twelve children six boys and six girls. He was the only one who moved out of Britain as far as I know. I don’t remember my grandparents as they were gone before I was born.

Frank Knowles, my father, had three boys and two girls. I was born in 1924. My eldest brother was Frances. Dale was the third one of the family - he was the champion who came off his bike when he was 18.

The Knowles home school was run by one of my father’s sisters, my aunt Kate Knowles. My grandparents allocated one room in the main house and turned it into a schoolroom. The old man, Joseph, had a punt or a dug out in the river. He’d go across and pick up the children who lived on the other side of the river and bring them over here for their schooling. And being him – my grandfather made the desks and what have you, and all the stuff that he wanted - he was quite a do-it-yourself chap. At Torrent Bay there’s a set of French doors that he made for the house in 1860 or 70, and they’re still in use. Once they put the bridge in down here they shifted the Pangatotara School off the Peach Island up to here.

Sawn timber was not plentiful in those days. Saw mills complete were bought out in the first ten years. And a flax mill started. They stripped flax here in Lower Moutere. I’ve a picture of a load of dried flax fibre being taken down to the old Motueka wharf for shipment. For in those days it only took about two hours to get to Nelson by steam boat. By road, or track rather, it took the best part of the day.]

When I started school at Pangatotara down here, I was about so high and my legs weren’t long enough to ride a bike, although I was about six or seven, and I had to walk. I spent up to 1937 down there.

Once I could ride a bike I went to Ngatimoti, mainly because Kiwi Holyoake’s brother was teaching there. He was the only one that had a few clues about teaching and about people, kids. He got the best out of the whole lot of us.

The school was the house by the hall. Where the house on stilts is, the two rooms are the original two rooms which are up at the new school (Greenhill Road). They’re still in use I think. I biked up every morning and back again three and a half miles to school.

Once we had a week of snow on the ground. For the first two days it wasn’t too bad, but by the end of the week we were cold and wet. There was water from one end of the corridor to the other ‘cause of the all the snow coming in on boots.

The only chap who could bike on the snow was Owen Win over in the Pokororo there. He had two inch tyres, balloon tyres, on his pushbike and he could ride through the snow. All of us were falling, we hadn't got a hope.

That happened in 1937 or 38. It was after Pokororo had amalgamated with Ngatimoti. We had Kelvin Mytton, two Heath boys, Owen Win and somebody else from up there, besides two or three girls who came down too.

Cyril Heath ran the school bus, and I think it must have been an ex-ambulance because he could get about 10 in. It wasn't a car or a station wagon. It was a bus which would have been used for an ambulance with room for a stretcher in the back and a few other things.

It was a happy time for me at Ngatimoti School. The teacher Mr Strachan was one out of the box. He even came out and played with the kids at lunchtime. He played with us, not so much organised us, just played with us, which made such a difference. We'd sit down and eat our lunches and then off to play. There was a bit of smut about him in later years but I never came across that.

I never used a slate. From '31 onwards it was pencil and paper at school. Ink was only for standards three, four, five and six. There was an inkwell in the desk which had to be filled every morning. They mixed it up from powder sent by the Education Board, and they had a square dispensing bottle with a lip on it so it could be poured into the inkwell.

Also at Ngatimoti we had a barometer sent to us, a rain gauge, and a temperature gauge. Every morning it had to be read and recorded, and the results went to the Education Board as far as I know. The recordings were collected daily from every school, every lighthouse, and every boat for the weather forecast.

By then radio communication was coming in. In 1939 when I was still at school, one of the Beatsons had a radio that could pick up London. He invited the two top classes to come up and listen to the declaration of war. The radio would have been run by glass-cased batteries which Mr Strachan would have charged up from his water wheel. It cost 1/6 to get it charged.

I was a bit 'thick in the plank' so it took me an extra two years to get through the six standards. My primary schooling ended in 1940. I went to Nelson College to study engineering and was there for two years. I learnt enough there as well as going to tech two nights a week. Being a day boy at College meant I could go to tech at night. So I learnt to use a gas torch and a forge and a few things like that which helped me when I got into a job because I could do most things without having to be shown.

In 1940, the school organised a trip to the Wellington Centennial Exhibition that ran for six weeks. Schools were invited to send over a class or those suitable for a week. I got extra time off from college to go to Wellington with the primary school group. We were boarded in the Basin reserve underneath the grandstand where all the teams had their showers and toilets. They put bunks into there.

The trams pulled up outside in the morning. We got a cut lunch. Six or eight trams came up and they were 'chocko'. Not only did we go to the exhibition but we also went to parliament and we went to the zoo, organised by tram.

We went to Wellington by boat overnight. We had a better service with Wellington then than what you've got now. You could pick your tomatoes in Nelson at four o'clock in the afternoon and they'd be on the ocean for six o'clock the next morning in Wellington. The mail was the last on and the first off.

It cost 12/6 for the night over. In the evening we'd have a cup of tea and biscuit and then be woken up the next morning with a cup of tea and biscuit. Providing it was reasonably calm you'd have a good night's sleep, if it was a bit rough you just about had to tie yourself into the bunk.

When I was 'called-up' in 1942, I was working for a company and they were an essential industry so they appealed my call up until I was twenty. When I got to the factory in Foxton it was brand spanking new, it had been built around 1938/39 to process New Zealand Flax which was turned into wool bales.

All my children went up to Ngatimoti for primary. My eldest child did six months at Parklands in Motueka before Ngatimoti was extended at the Greenhill site because there was no school bus before then. The school was operating from two class rooms and a temporary one in the old house. They got up to 112 children one year, and the school needed four rooms.

Jimmy Beatson was part of the school committee. Don Whelan was the chairman at that time, and he came down one day and said: You have volunteered to take Jimmy's place on the school committee. Jimmy had gone up north somewhere. I was there for seven years but I was never elected.

During that period we built the bars, and the tennis court. I took my welder up to weld the fence around it for a starter, and a few other odds and ends. I was quite willing to do the physical work. I wasn't able to do any of the other work. I never got one mark for spelling and reading in my whole time of education.

My wife and I both had the feeling that at a country school like Ngatimoti there was very little friction amongst the kids themselves. It wasn't only the schooling but they were given outdoor education of doing things for yourself, which was way ahead of what they could teach in town. What comes out of those schools like Ngatimoti, like Tapawera, is the best in education and gives the kids a good grounding.

### **Guthrie Beatson**

"There have been five generations of Beatsons to go to Ngatimoti School. We have always had a relation at the school since it started.

William Beatson, my great, great grandfather, arrived from England with his family into Nelson 1851 and his son David moved to Orinoco in 1862. The first generation to go to school here was my grandfather, Guthrie Beatson. He and his siblings went to



the school when it was up past the church. He went to school for a number of years but when his eldest sister married he was kept home for a year as the home help. He had to do things like plaiting his two younger sisters' hair, which apparently, he could tie their hair so tight that their plaits would stick out straight. When he went back to the new school in Orinoco in 1894 all his contemporaries had moved on so he left school at the end of that year at about aged thirteen.

Grandfather Guthrie and his brother George purchased the Peninsular Farm at Ngatimoti in 1903. Our family has lived here for the last 115 years. My father, Richard, started school in about 1917 when it was sited up past the church and was at school when the move was made to the site by the Ngatimoti Hall in 1925. My two elder sisters and I attended this school until it was moved to the present site in about 1954. Prior to the school moving my younger brother and sister were taught in a pre-fab at the new site. The one kilometre split must have been a bit of a problem for the teaching staff.

The school toilets were external. The girls had theirs, which were completely roofed. The boys' toilets were roofed in part, but the urinal was unroofed, the concrete went up about three feet and then there were boards. Blackberry grew through the boards and, I remember us as little boys seeing who could pee the highest up the wall, we eventually killed the blackberry.

There used to be a lean-to shed where coal and stuff was stored, and they also had dried milk in there. So in winter you'd bring your cup, and the older kids would make cocoa for us, at about 10 o'clock in the morning.

This was only a few years after the World War 2 and Mr Billy Martin, the headmaster at the time would have us stand to the raising of the flag. From the way he talked it was as if he'd almost gone to war on his own – he was a territorial type. There were about 60 or 70 kids at the school at that time, I suppose. It was getting a wee bit crowded and I ended up being in the same room as my sister, Susan.

The building that shifted from the old site was the two classrooms with the steep pitched roof, now with the staff room and office added. For the first year while the move was going on, we were schooled in the old Rathgar house. The younger kids had the pre-fab down where the swimming pool is now but were later housed in a new classroom next to the pear tree. This building had the staffroom and toilets.

Most of the local properties adopted a particular name and the house where the school was, was known as Rathgar. The intention was that the house was to be demolished as soon as the new school was up and running and as a fund raising scheme the local parents took on this job. It was during one of these working bees that my father claims to have come up with the idea of turning it into a hall. Some rooms were retained and walls knocked out to give largely what we have now. The kitchen at the back was cleaned out and incorporated at a later date. This project was not part of the Education Board programme and that is how the School Hall came to be owned by the school and the community and not the Education Department.

For the new school there was an enormous amount of work that went on there. We had working-bees with all the parents bringing their trailers and tractors for levelling out the site. At one-time sheep were grazed on much of the land to raise a bit of extra cash for the school.

In 1957 there was a big flood and it scoured out some of the lower lying paddocks around the district. This was particularly so for Kos Newman's across the river from the school. Mr Newman was a tobacco grower and, after getting in scrapers and a bulldozer for a week or so fixing his paddocks, they moved over to the school. They drove straight across the river and spent a couple of days smoothing out, levelling and contouring the grounds as they are now.

We walked to school and back every day and for the kids who lived further away there was no bus. This came in some years later. Cyril Heath ran a car and picked up the kids that came from the Graham Valley and Pearse Valley areas. When the bus did start Dan Tomlinson drove it for a number of years. And with the weight limit on the Peninsular Bridge, the kids all had to disembark and walk over the bridge with the bus driven over empty.

At the old Ngatimoti School we used to go straight across the paddock to a small pool in the Orinoco River. Later on we'd swim under the Peninsula Bridge in a small area which the teacher's pegged and roped off. It seemed a bit silly to us as we spent most of the summer holidays supervised but with access to the whole river.

In the 1950s, it was decided all kids should learn to swim and that all primary schools in New Zealand should have a swimming pool. Our pool was built in 1958 when I was in standard six. At the opening the older kids stood along the edge of the pool and ceremonially dived in together. There was always an argument that my hands touched the water first which was pretty important at that time. [Photo]

We played some interschool sports – rugby in the winter, and netball. In summer tennis and cricket. We'd play against Orinoco and Dovedale. There was also an inter-schools athletic sports day at Motueka Memorial Park.

I remember that in our classroom there was a mercury tube barometer that had a cup at the bottom filled with mercury. If you 'accidentally' happened to give it a bump you could knock some of the mercury out onto the floor then it was great fun trying to pick it up, holding it in your hand, trying to get it back together again,

As kids there was always the bravado talk about pinching the teacher's strap and cutting it up. When we were still down at the old school, my cousin Noel and I did flog the teacher's strap from the cupboard in the classroom. It was leather, about 50 mm wide, 4-5mm thick and it was folded in half with a handle cut out at one end. Opened out it was about 700mm long. We took it home and hid it up on top of the tobacco kiln. Later on we got it down and cut it up into pieces and gave them away to the other boys. We were found out but didn't get into trouble but did get some short term kudos. Noel's father Sam did replace the strap with an old razor strop. We did get a bit of notoriety for it.

Somebody else must have done the same thing earlier because we found an old strap hidden in the sub-floor of the school when we were playing.

My wife, Elisabeth and I were again involved in the school again as parents with our kids in attendance. It has always been a great country school and being quite small, the headmaster has a big influence on the culture of the school and it has had its moments during its history driven by the different headmasters. The kids have a country attitude which is probably quite different from a lot of the urban kids.

I was on the school committee, before the Tomorrow's Schools started and I was involved when Tomorrow's Schools was brought in. I was very scathing of it at the time and my opinion has not really changed since. This continual changing and striving for the delivery of a better standard of education has not always been beneficial for the children in my opinion.

A major event for the school was the addition of the tennis courts. At the time, about 1983, they were doing up the road, along the front of the school. Fulton Hogan may have been doing it, I can't remember, but certainly Mike Newman was involved with his trucks and he put in a lot of time in carting in the basecourse gravel at no cost to the school. Ewan Martin, the school committee treasurer at the time, was one of those who organised it. The Tasman District Council put a lot of money into it too.

The tennis courts are a great asset to the school and with the community there was an understanding that if the school is not using them then the community can. Soon after they were built local tennis and netball clubs started up which ran for a number of years.

The school has excellent play grounds and also has the adjoining reserve which could be used as play grounds if or when required.

A school has always been the hub of a rural community and is an essential part of the community but a school cannot operate without that community's support.

For us having been in the district for so long, it's a real sense of belonging by being part of the school. As part of my family the Beatsons and the Breretons have been involved in the community for five to six generations and continue to be involved in the community. As a family our history at Ngatimoti gives us a sense of belonging, our Turangawaewae, this is where we can stand.

### **Elizabth Beatson**

The community got involved in the school a lot. We'd have working bees with all the parents, and it would bring everyone together.

In my time it was the role of the parents to organise the other activities. We had netball, hockey, softball and tennis. All the parents really worked together. You trusted the parents who took your children to practice and games. In those days, we didn't have car seats and you could squash about 10 kids in your car, including the boot of the station wagon - no problems.

We had Girl Guides, and Cubs and Scouts which I was taking. Not all at the same time, of course, the activities were dependent on who was coming through the school and everyone did them.

We'd have our Christmas celebration each year when Father Christmas used to come. The teachers and the Playgroup would work it out with Les Maas when he could bring Father Christmas in his helicopter. Then we'd say: At 3'oclock we'll stop and Father Christmas will come. All the kids, wide-eyed, would be there watching waiting for presents and lollies.

## **Jennifer Beatson**

"I started school in 1979, but I recall coming to playgroup and those kids at playgroup were the ones that I grew up with.

When I started at school, the Hall was the school library. The walls were lined with books and journals. Some of my early memories are watching films in the hall - the long, dusty curtains being pulled to watch a film on the screen, the teacher loading a big reel onto the projector and the constant click, click, click..., and trying to stay awake.

I was probably the last year that went through before the really big technological changes took place. There was that big purple copying machine that smelt which only the big kids were allowed to use, you'd put the paper in, turn it and it would make copies. It wasn't long before photocopiers came in.

It was a time of real growth for the school while my brother Craig and I were at school. There were up to 140 children. Prefab classrooms were added, they have gone now and a new library was built.

In winter we had little potbelly stoves with solid steel guards surrounding them. The guards were really high and really hot. You could melt wax crayons on them. It was a daily struggle not to try melting them - boy did you get into a lot of trouble with the teachers if you did! It must have been the bane of winter.

Arbor Day was a big thing for a few years and that's when the trees which run along the front of the school were planted. School had its own sports teams -there was a really active pony club, a full-on netball club with senior adult teams, and we did scouts and cubs.

When I was about seven or eight Trevor Rogers started as one of the teachers. He was such an enthusiastic teacher, he started up a hockey team and a softball team. He brought to the school a whole lot of things that we hadn't had before. Art was his passion. All of a sudden we were doing all this art in the classroom which we hadn't done before. For me, Mr Rogers was like a breath of fresh air.

Now I am a parent of children at Ngatimoti School. It's a beautiful school and I feel very proud to be involved. When we recently upgraded the original classroom, the one that was dragged up from the Memorial Hall, I had really strong feelings about

maintaining the visual values of the school. Being able to modernise and maintain the sense of history was important to me. It would have been really easy to turn it into something standardised and kind of boring. We had to compromise a bit but I think it worked out beautifully.

All my children have attended Ngatimoti School. The enduring success of Ngatimoti School is partly because of the community which supports it. A strong community helps to make a strong school.

### **Craig Beatson**

I started school in 1982. It was a fantastic school. I remember breaking windows. The Hall used to have a great big sandpit where the deck is now. I was playing in there and I biffed a stone at the window straight above the sandpit and smashed it. And I got into trouble for it. I must have been pretty young.

I managed to break another one when I threw a hard ball of rolled up paper at someone and missed. Dad fixed it. Back in the day, Dad would just head down to the school and fix things, not like now. I did get into a bit of trouble, I got a good telling off. The worst bit was going home to tell your parents. Then poor old Dad had to go down and fix it.

My children are at Ngatimoti now.

### **Orinoco School - Coral Bannister (nee Beatson)**

Just on this small piece of concrete we learnt our ball skills, hooping, roller-skating, bouncing balls, hop scotch. The boys would be outside doing boy things playing rounders, bulrush. Bulrush was always a popular one

### **John Beatson**

The sports field/play areas were on the north side of the school site.

That's why I reckon the water was so bad, you had the leaves and the duck droppings in it.

The toilets were out here. They were long drops. The new school had flush toilets. The school site was north of the present house site. I remember one

I remember them having several working bees, pouring the concrete. The land belonged to the Whites and was given to the school. I remember occasionally going across and having lunch with the Bretherens. That was in the 60s and you wouldn't do that now. Dave Canton lived across from school.

## **Terry Beatson**

I would have started in 1954. The pool is the original school pool and still kept by the present owners.

## **John Beatson**

There was a big nail down in the changing shed and I brought it up and Rex Biggs decided to put it under the wheel of the teacher's car. When we left school this day, I remember everyone standing around looking and when the teacher took off it didn't do his tyre any good whatsoever. It bugged it. The teacher at the time would have been Louis Nicholson. Louis Nicholson and Joyce Beatson (Auntie Joyce) were what they called pressure cooker teachers. They put them through very quickly. I remember Auntie Joyce asking us what we thought of Louis Nicholson and it wasn't much.

The playing field is between the present house and the road. This is where we played the important game. I remember scoring a try one day and there being a root sticking up, it stuck into my knee and folded the skin over and I've still a scar there today. We used to walk across the field in the frost in the morning and make patterns much like the cougar lines. Most of the time we went to school barefoot. I remember coming down the metal road barefoot to school. Then we had plastic sandals to come to school when they came along. I remember coming back from swimming, must have been a lunchtime. John was dubbing me on his bike, I was sitting on the cross bar. I got my foot in the spokes and we ended up "arse over kite". The changing rooms at swimming weren't that private, we just went into the rubbish and got changed, there were no sheds. I remember John doing some swimming training for the 800 yards in a small pond, in the Orinoco Stream, backwards and forwards. It went on for about ½ an hour.

## **Rex Biggs**

"I was born here in 1944 about the time my Dad bought the tobacco farm in Waiwhero Road, second house on the left. I went to Orinoco School and used to ride my push-bike to school about two and a half miles on the gravel road.

They built a new school when I was there at Orinoco. Volunteers built a swimming pool but it hardly got swum in. There were only about 22 kids in the school. There was only one classroom and one teacher. When I first went the teacher was Tom Johnston, then somewhere along the line Bernie Coleman came along who was easy-going, liked to spend time down at the river - we used to swim in the river in those days.

Then Louie Nicholson who was a real dog – I copped the strap a bit, he'd hit your arms and you'd get blood blisters. If you didn't get 15/20 for spelling you'd get the cuts. It had holes through the strap and slits in the side, it was a lethal bit of leather. It went on for a while until the committee decided to take it off him. He was sacked for other reasons too. You wouldn't get away with it nowadays.

I'm the 2nd oldest in my family, my oldest brother is dead, my middle sister is dead, and my youngest sister lives in Christchurch. We all went to Orinoco and I think my

sister was there when it closed and must have gone on to Ngatimoti School. [Photo of Orinoco school kids]

When I finished at Orinoco I went on to Motueka High then I worked on Dad's tobacco farm for a little while.

I worked as a shepherd on the Land and Surveys farm in about 1967/68. Then I went to Brisbane and was working on a poultry farm for 19 months. I got married over there. When my wife Margaret and I came back here I was contract shearing for about eight years. We bought the Brereton's old homestead, a 24 acre block, where we had a tobacco farm until it closed down after the government, under Muldoon, deregulated the industry. We brought up the family there too. The kids walked to school as it was so close.

Our kids all went to Ngatimoti School – Jodie, Brad, Wayne, and Michelle. They loved it there and have fond memories. As a parent I was on the school committee for a while, Margaret was involved a lot more. I was more involved with transporting kids.

We were always very proud of the school and involved in school activities. For quite a few years I used to take the little fellas for Saturday Rugby and organised trips out of the valley, took them out to play rugby in Motueka and Moutere. I was also involved with the scouts.

After we sold the farm we moved to the original Dairy at the foot of Church Hill. We lived there for 22 years but when Wayne got sick, we decided it was time to move down to be near Wayne and his family (he was living in Dunedin). He died before we moved down but we were there a lot while he was sick. Margaret is in her 80s now and has chronic arthritis, I'm her carer, so it's also good to be close to better healthcare services down in Dunedin.

Wayne died from Lymphoma in 2015. Wayne was a brave guy. He had been involved in the TV industry and he rode his scooter, a 300cc Vespa, from Dunedin around the South Island and back again for 7 days to raise money and awareness for Leukaemia and Blood Cancer New Zealand. Seven Sharp followed him on part of his journey.

He left a legacy here at the school by which to remember him – a trophy for the kid who has shown tenacity, creativity, a sense of humour, helpfulness and respect for others over the years. The school down at Broad Bay has a trophy to present too. A part of grieving, I guess. Wayne's wife, Amie Richardson, and their two boys Oli and Jasper live in Broad Bay on the Otago Peninsula. They're good kids. They come over once a week and stay over every fortnight.

Jodie lives in Waimate – two hours north of Dunedin – while Brad lives in Neudorf and drives trucks from Nelson at night. Both boys got their truck licences at 16 when they were in the army. Michelle lives in America. The valley still remains really important to all of us.”



Trophy recipients L to R Maya Gravalas 2016, Wolfgang O-Donohue-Rogers 2017, Joelle Post 2015



Wayne his Vespa (Stuff Article 11 February 2015)

## Colin Strachan

When I first went to school, the school was on the end of the Orinoco Road (Waiwhero Road) where it meets the river. I think they must have built a new one on Greenhill Road, but I don't remember going to primary school there. I have never forgotten my first day getting taken to school on Dad's bike. I still have a vivid memory of being stuck at a desk along with a Brereton girl to keep an eye on me. It was all new to me and I had no notion that I was going to school. It was a bit of the shock to the system. At that stage there can't have been too many pupils as there were two rooms but only one was being used. I was born in 1932 and I think I started school at five or six and the original school was still in use then. I don't remember much about the school itself, I wasn't greatly interested. I didn't play any sports as I wasn't keen on groups of people, but I was into hunting all my life.

To begin with Dad took me to school on his bike and that wasn't a motorbike. I guess he came and got me later in the day although that didn't continue for any length of time. I had to do it the hard way and walk to school. It wasn't that far, about three quarters of a mile, maybe even not that far, half a mile from our road gate. It was a nasty surprise I wasn't prepared for it in any way. But eventually I got used to it I suppose.

The school was down near the Hall and the land was besides Todd Heath's blacksmith shop and garage. The water supply for some reason came from the Orinoco. There was a spring on this side up on the hill in the bush, but the water was obtained from the other side of the Orinoco. It sounds a bit balmy doesn't it? I expect it was a galvised pipe that came across

The original Black Bridge was a wooden one that was about forty metres upstream from where the Bridge is now and it used to house bats.

The school didn't have a swimming pool. I was never much of a swimmer, but I remember we went up the Orinoco a bit and there was a pool there, sort of more or



less opposite the school. I hated going to swim, because I never liked cold water and the Orinoco was always very cold.

The school had a playground and beyond that was farmland. I can't remember who it belonged to, it might have been a distant relative. He was the last person to use a horse and buggy for his transport. Every Sunday he and his wife would appear at Church in the horse and buggy.

I don't remember many names from school, but Norma Heath was one. I remember the first day I arrived at school she was a senior girl at school and I was tucked in under her wing first day at school too. Avalon Thorn was at school, he came from up the river, they had the hop gardens and the hop kiln. I don't remember much more than that.

Colin's farm was at the foot of the church hill and ran southward up the Orinoco Stream.

### **Angela Strachan**

We came out from England in 1959 and settled in Tauranga. I would have been about 11. My family were builders, then citrus growers and then kiwifruit growers. They had to learn it all as they went along. They would have been one of the first kiwifruit growers. I married Brian in 1972 and we lived in Central Road. We moved up to Ngatimoti when my daughter Amanda was born

### **Arthur and Rita Woodcock**

Arthur Woodcock attended Pangatotara School for a few months until it closed in 1944. The classroom had an open fire, there was a row of pine trees (not these factory pine trees), a swing in the playground and a cup of cocoa at morning tea time. I had a little bike that I used to ride to School on. Mrs Hart was the last teacher to teach at Pangatotara School.

The Groobys at Rocky River attended Pangatotara, Cedrick was one name I remember. I also remember a fellow called Clive Williams and a Margaret Williams.

### **Pangatotara School – Margaret Woodley**

I started school at four and a half. All classes in one room and we had to write on a piece of slate. We used to get malted milk in the winter time. It was boiled over the open fire in a bucket and made from a powder and water. I did not like it and I would tip it out in the sand under the one and only swing we had to play on. The only other thing we had to play with were a few balls. My brother Clive Williams used to tow me to school as I was too small to ride a bike.

Miss Janette Hardy was one teacher we had. She used to board with us. It was her first school after training college. One other teacher was Miss Boyd.

The Groobys that lived just north of the Rocky River Bridge had a bull dog that used to chase us as we went to and from school. This is where most of the Groobys in the photo lived.

The children of George and Rhonda..

The family lived in the now little cottage at Rocky River Bridge. Our home was the second next down river.

When I was at school there was a pedal organ in it. Coupled with the bell tower and the building looked like it may have been a Church before it became a school.

When Pangatotara closed in 1944. We rode down to Brooklyn School – all on a gravel road.

### **Lynette Kerrigan ( nee Harris)**

My parents were Jack and Thelma Harris. I have two brothers Robin and Eric and a sister, Mary.

Jack was the local Post Master for many years. He served on the Ngatimoti School Board and Federated Farmers Board.

Thelma was active in the Country Women's Institute, gardening and hop picking at Thorns Hop Gardens. She also liked going to night classes for woodwork at Motueka High School.

Jack and Thelma both worked as volunteers for St Johns Ambulance in Motueka for many many years and both received the QSM medal for their work.

They lost their son Robin in the polio epidemic in 1956. He was in the Iron Lung for one week and was paralysed from the neck down. He died from complications from pneumonia later, two weeks before his 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.

My eldest son Lindsay also went to Ngatimoti for one or two terms.

My memories of the school:

- My teachers were Miss Kelly, Primers to Standard 1. Mr Henderson, who was a strict teacher, from Standard 2 to Standard 5 and Mr Martin in Standard 6.
- The old school desks, 2 people sat at them. Seats and desks were all joined together
- The old pot belly stove where hot malted milk drinks were made in the winter
- The world map on the wall above the blackboard, it was back to front as far as east and west goes! To this day in my mind I still see it and have to correct my concept of east and west. Mr Martin changed it to the back wall that last year to correct the direction

- One morning at assembly, where we were all in class lines, snowflakes started to fall but never settled. We never had snow right down while I lived there, but it did come as far as White Rock Hill
- Knucklebones was the 'in' game at play and lunchtime
- I loved swimming at the Peninsula Bridge. We did go to the Orinoco Creek also but it wasn't so good
- The terrible old toilets, one for girls and one for boys, which were really unusable
- Bus coming and taking Standards 5 and 6 to cooking and woodwork classes, usually on teachers' day off which meant we didn't get the holiday like the rest of the school, that peeved us off a bit!

### **Kate Speer (nee Strachan)**

I attended Ngatimoti from 1950 - 1958.

I also taught as a PA there in 1966, and some relief teaching in 1980.

My sister Cynthia Black also did her PA year and some later relief teaching at Ngatimoti.

Our mother, Mrs Annie Strachan, née Fitzsimmons of Wakefield, had a long association with the district. She began her teaching career at the tiny sole charge Pokororo School, about 1927, boarding with the Bests, and walking across the Pokororo foot bridge to reach the school. On her first day she arrived to find two of the big boys astride the school roof, keeping a look out. She thoroughly enjoyed her two years there, before embarking on a 12 year stint of full time teaching, mainly in the Auckland district.

She came back to Ngatimoti to marry local farmer Ken Strachan, and when their two daughters were school age, Annie did many sessions of long term relieving, both at the old school (by Memorial Hall) and the Greenhill Road one. By the 1950s a few children were the offspring of some of Annie's original Pokororo pupils.

Many years later this story was related back to me: Mrs Strachan and Mrs Winnie (Robbie) Beatson were called in again by then Principal Alan Shanks to fill the gaps. I must have been about 15 at the time, and apparently I said to a local woman, "Oh poor Mr Shanks, he's got Mum and another old duck teaching for him!"

### **Tony Brereton**

All of my primary school years were at the site down by the Hall. My father went to the school up by the Church and my grandfather went to Pokororo School. My father used to ride a pony to school when he went. Both my children, Kay and Bob also did all their primary schooling at Ngatimoti. My grandchildren Caleb and Chris currently attend Ngatimoti School.

Ngatimoti School was down by the Memorial Hall. The tennis court wasn't there when I went to school, but the RSA had a working bee and built it for the local tennis club and the school. It was put in about 1949. My first memories of going to school, were some very large boys. They were very intimidating by their size. There were some very large girls too. There was no secondary school so students stayed at school until they were 15 back then. They probably weren't very badly behaved except that when you went into bible class you had to go and sit in between two of the big boys as it was all done in one room. These big boys seemed to take a delight in giving a squeeze or a pinch and making us squeak.

School was always very cold. Our parents took us to school back then by car, and generally took two or three others. They eventually organised a school bus, which was done by a private car by Mr Heath up the Graham Valley. He picked several of them up along the way and Mrs Newman from next door did the rest. The only person in those days to still drive a horse and trap was Mr Ralph McGaverston, he lived in a house on the school site with his sisters in Waiwhero Road. He had Newman's farm over here on the Westbank Road and he used to come over in the horse trap and go home in the horse and trap every day.

I can remember when the school was changing sites and they had some of the younger ones over at the present site and the older ones as the old site by the Hall. I remember having a teacher, Mr C B Henderson, who was out of the Army. He was a disciplinarian and supposed to be straightening people out. I remember he played in the Ngatimoti Rugby team one Saturday over at Thorns. I think it was one of the last year's Ngatimoti had a rugby team, I'm not sure, but anyway there was a melee at one stage and Mr Henderson had to be carried off and sit in someone's car for the rest of the game. Next week he was very docile and was nursing some injuries. Nobody was particularly sympathetic. The other thing I remember about Mr Henderson was after he left, he went to Tasman or Ruby Bay. He came back for the opening of the Ngatimoti Hall. He had an old Bedford van which very small and not very powerful and some persons unknown put a potato in his exhaust pipe. He had to be taken home by someone else that night. That again didn't engender a lot of sympathy for Mr Henderson.

We always took sandwiches for lunch, made of either marmite, dripping or peanut butter. Occasionally you got something special like tomato or meat, but not very often. Sometimes you got a bit of cake. On special occasions when you were playing rugby you got a bit of orange. The bread was only delivered on Tuesdays and Thursdays so you tended to get used to stale bread for your sandwiches.

There was a blacksmith's shop on the corner where the hall is now. I don't remember it but I was told it was on the same site as the hall. I remember the garage being built, which was later the fire station. Jim Moore built the garage and lived there. He was always known as Dinty Moore because of the cartoon of Jeeves and Maggie. It was Dinty Moore and Jeeves and Maggie. So Dinty was his name.

I remember the ground being flooded at one stage and for some reason we didn't get home and the water seemed to be about knee deep and we weren't allowed to use the toilets, but it didn't seem to cause too much grief.

Once the new Ngatimoti school site was up and running we played cricket up there. My recollections of that, were we had two very keen supporters. Mr Waghorn who lived over the road, he used to turn up regularly to spot where the ball went in his paddock because he grew tobacco across the road and he had an uncanny knack of knowing which plant it went to each time. This saved people floundering through his tobacco. The other one was Mr Beatson who lived across the road on the corner of Greenhill Road. He preferred to watch cricket, but the preference was that he did the gardening. He became a very good multi tasker in that he could use the binoculars and a shovel at the same time. There were some good times with the cricket and it was a pity the club folded up. One other memory of playing cricket was when Tom was playing. He hit the ball which then landed in the back of a truck going past which was apparently going to Blenheim!

We used to wear tweed shorts and in the winter you wore a woollen shirt. In the summer you wore khaki trousers and a light shirt. You didn't have t-shirts in those days. The girls wore dresses of various descriptions. There wasn't a school uniform until you went to High School. The clothing was pretty consistent as there wasn't a great variety. Footwear was mainly bare feet, otherwise it was sandals in the summer time. I remember there being quite a lot of clover in the school grounds and quite a lot of stings. They used a thing called a blue bag on which a small round thing that they used to put in with the washing to make washing whiter. For some reason it had a magical effect on rubbing on a bee sting. It wasn't psychological.

We used to play knuckle bones as well, but we used real knuckle bones from a sheep. The girls played hopscotch a lot in the winter too. Another thing we played a lot was marbles. There were quite a lot trees around the perimeter of the ground, some of them are still there and there was a certain amount of climbing up in them.

The school as I remember usually had about 60 children and about 25 at Orinoco. There were two school rooms and a corridor and a place to make morning and afternoon tea.

Rugby balls and footballs were all made out of leather. They got quite slippery on wet days as they took in a lot moisture and got quite heavy. Otherwise it wasn't too much different from today.

I remember sitting under the pear tree while we were playing cricket when we weren't batting.

We had boiled lollies back in those days, they were a bit like marbles and had colours on them. We had chewing gum, fudge, toffee and jubes and then minties came out.

We used to get a crate of milk brought up every day with the mail car, which used to get quite warm. We also used to get malted milk in the winter. We used to have a cup of that at morning playtime. I didn't like milk so I didn't consider it very nice but some people liked it. It came in milk bottles with the old caps on it and had a thick layer of cream on the top.

We used to play sports against Orinoco, but they generally struggled to get a team so we used to play against Dovedale and Riwaka and once or twice against Parklands which was never a very good result for us. Riwaka wasn't either as they were considerably bigger schools.

We didn't have a swimming pool obviously and some of the time we used to go across Mr Haycock's paddock and swim in the Orinoco River. Sometimes we used to march up to the Peninsula Bridge and they used to put a rope around us and some pegs in and we weren't supposed to go outside of that. It was only ever about knee deep. Usually the whole school went up together and some swam and some watched.

There were no health and safety rules. There were rules though and if you didn't stick to them you would most likely get the strap. I guess you could say the teacher was the health and safety ruler. Broken limbs and things were generally done at home at the weekends. There weren't a lot of injuries at school.

We didn't get the cane until we went to High School. There was a strap at Ngatimoti School when Mr Henderson was there and someone got hold of it and cut it into pieces and shared them around the school. But he came up with a new one. They were usually the same thing as the old razor strop.

We had singing lessons at school and they were compulsory. Someone would play the piano.

When Kay and Bob, my children, went to school the school was obviously in its new location on the corner of Greenhill Road and the Motueka Valley Highway. The tennis courts were built about the time Kay went to school. The swimming pool had already been built by then. The locals built the swimming pool, they had a working bee. I guess the money was provided by the Education Department, but it was basically built by voluntary labour on the weekend and in their spare time. I went over and helped and I think it was built while Rose and Tom, my younger brother and sister, were at school. It was the only way you got things done in those days was to use local labour.

When I was at school reading, writing and arithmetic were the essentials. Spelling was very important, we used to have whole class spelling where the teacher would call upon someone to spell. We would get told off for not writing neatly enough. We worked in exercise books with pens. The desks were wooden and had an inkwell in them. There weren't ballpoint pens at that stage. Marks were taken off for untidy writing. In maths you had to write the whole sum out – you couldn't just put the answer down as you'd get marked down for that.

We used to have a guy called Mr Cork every once and a while to talk about growing things and insects. I can remember he organised putting in a lily pond down at the school in the creek. It was about as big as a dining table. They put some lilies in it and ran it out of the creek. They had goldfish in it too. One bright lad who shall remain nameless discovered that if you picked a reed long enough from the bullrushes, you could put it down on top of the goldfish and if you sucked hard

enough you could lift the goldfish out. In the winter the ice on the pond was hard enough for group of kids to stand on without breaking it.

The school used to get some fine frosts down there and the only heating we had was an open fire in each of the classrooms. The school only had two teachers when I went there. There wasn't a library down there. We used to have the Country Library Service, which was a bus that came round. It used to leave some books, not very many, that you could read. They came back about every month.

The only school trip I can remember was a group of us boys went on a trip the Freezing Works and looked through the Freezing Works. We used to go for the occasional nature walks. We took a trip up the White Rock. You didn't go on school trips back then.

We used to raise the flag every morning. It was just after the war years and raising the flag was very important.

The roads were gravel so in winter it was pretty good as the roads were icy and it was bit like tarseal. Once the frost melted it wasn't as much fun as there were lots of rocks on the road. The roads weren't as wide back then either.

There wasn't a caretaker as such in those days. We used to have to do the gardening in the few beds we had. We used to grow a few vegetables in it and that was our horticulture. Sometimes it was a form of punishment to get sent out and dig the garden. The teacher and the students did most of the upkeep at school.

We always had a school picnic at Kaiteriteri every year.

When I was at school I remember there being a polio epidemic which was quite serious. It was before vaccines. That would have been during the 1950s. There was one boy at school that got it and recovered to a certain extent. He had a crook leg. It had a big effect on people's lives. We used to have a school nurse around every so often, that would check everybody's hair for lice and they gave us some sort of medical examination. I think it was something like sight and hearing like they do now. The lice checking was done in front of the class, you were pulled up and they parted your hair and peered into it. There was some advantage in discovering you had lice as you weren't allowed to go to school until you had got rid of them.

There weren't as many changes to the pupils like there are these days. People once they lived in the Valley stayed there, so you started school at 5 and went all the way through until High School.

### **Caleb and Chris Brereton**

Caleb and Chris Brereton are the fifth generation of the Brereton family to attend Ngatimoti School. Caleb is a Year 8 and Chris is a Year 5 this year. Both have had all their primary schooling at Ngatimoti School. We feel privileged to have been able to continue that history.

School camps were always looked forward to. In year 1 to year 2 we went to Quinneys Bush and we got to go on water slides, go carts we also got to roast

marshmallows. In year 3 and 4 we went to Marahau and did things such as collecting cockles, kayaking and fishing. In year 5 and 6 we also went to Marahau and did things such as looking for possums in trees, kayaking, roasting marshmallows and collecting scallops. In year 7 and 8 we get to go to Totaranui.

We still get to play Basketball, Football, Rugby, Man Hunt and Bullrush. We are lucky that we still get to climb trees and have great outdoor areas.

We both like the being able to learn about preserving our environment with trips to our Wetlands up at Ian Thorn's farm and across to the stream at Hadley's farm. As well as learning about the environment we have fantastic technology in our classrooms to help us with our classwork.

We've also liked competing in inter-school sports for Ngatimoti School, such as Miniball, Touch Rugby, winter and summer sports Tournaments.

We've enjoyed learning how school has changed over the last 150 years. In 2018 School Teachers are a lot less strict than back in the 1800s-1980s. We don't get the strap, we don't get the cane and we also don't have the dunce's hat. Nowadays if you're naughty you simply have to write out the school rules or sit on the step for our playtime.

#### **Joelle Post (Student 2008-2015)**

From the day I turned 5 to the day I received my leavers' certificate, Ngatimoti was always a great school to me. I enjoyed my time at Ngatimoti as it is a small country school and it's not just the learning is great, but the teachers and staff, the students, and the environment surrounding the school all contributed towards my fulfilled enjoyment during my eight years attending there.

I hold many memories of the school closely to my heart. School camps, sports days, festivals, field trips, enviro groups - every adventure was one of its own and each was a delight to the students and teachers involved. Each year I longed for the festival to arrive. Helping dad with the animal tent, brushing the cow, feeding the goats, catching the runaway rabbits and preparing for the big day was my favourite time of the fair. I always feared the cow wouldn't poo for the cow pat bingo, or one of the pets would escape, but I was a good little cowgirl and I kept everything under control!

Ngatimoti School provided me with lots of laughs, confidence and opportunities within the school. I feared speech competitions but somehow I ended up at the interschools competition and I remember being so nervous I struggled to stop my hands from shaking and my voice from trembling. I left at the end of Year 8 feeling like I was leaving a part of me behind, the school was always so full of joy and happiness. Even after leaving three years ago I still so closely remember my days there and how much I enjoyed every opportunity and the challenges I took within the school. To this day, I always attend the festival and I enjoy being welcomed by all the friendly staff and students. I especially enjoy watching the newer students take on the roles of the school and I know that these students will love the school as much as I did.



**TIMELINE 2009 - 2018**

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<p><b>Principal:</b> Alison Turner</p> <p><b>Secretary:</b> Amanda Cole</p> <p><b>Teachers:</b> Tim Graham (T1/2) Steve Dunn (T3/4) Amy Dell Gloria Bridger Heather Reid</p> <p>Mural “what does it look like to be healthy?”</p>	<p><b>Principal:</b> Alison Turner</p> <p><b>Secretary:</b> Amanda Cole</p> <p><b>Teachers:</b> Steve Dunn Bruce Whitwell Amy Dell Liz Wijnands Heather Reid Rachel Perry</p> <p>Indigo Room built</p> <p>Green-Gold EnviroSchool accreditation</p>	<p><b>Principal:</b> Alison Turner</p> <p><b>Secretary:</b> Amanda Cole</p> <p>Teachers Steve Dunn Suskya Goodall Liz Wijnands Jo Hadley (Part time) Darrin Andrews (Part time) Heather Reid Debbie Godsiff</p> <p>Indigo Room opening: 13 April</p>	<p><b>Principal:</b> Alison Turner</p> <p><b>Secretary:</b> Amanda Cole</p> <p><b>Teachers:</b> Steve Dunn Lauren Soper Darrin Andrews Michelle Jacobs Heather Reid</p> <p><b>Teacher Aides</b> Judy Lumsden Mechthild Laufkotter</p> <p><b>Education Review Office visit</b></p> <p><b>Caretaker</b> Maurice Grooby</p> <p><b>Property:</b> Toilet block converted to sports shed. New classroom (Room 5) built and opened as Junior classroom.</p> <p><b>Camps</b> Seniors to Lake Rotoiti Middle school to Marahu Juniors to Quinney’s Bush</p>	<p><b>Principal:</b> Alison Turner</p> <p><b>Secretary:</b> Amanda Cole</p> <p><b>Teachers:</b> Steve Dunn Maegan Copping Debbie Godsiff Lauren Milnes Heather Reid (T 1/2) Cheryl Isles (T3/4) Jo Hadley</p> <p><b>BoT Elections:</b> Graeme Anderson Sue Boissevain (Chair) Jennifer Beatson Marios Gavalas</p> <p><b>Caretaker:</b> (August) Ian Stephens</p> <p><b>Cleaner:</b> (August) Lou Betts</p> <p>Concrete loop track opened</p> <p>Sandpit built</p> <p>New sick bay &amp; Admin re-vamp</p> <p>New logo </p>	<p><b>Principal:</b> Alison Turner</p> <p><b>Secretary:</b> Amanda Cole</p> <p><b>Teachers:</b> Steve Dunn (away T1/2) Debbie Godsiff Lauren Milnes Jorena Hadley Heather Reid Joshua Leenhouders (T1/2)</p> <p><b>Teacher Aides:</b> Judy Lumsden Mechthild Laufkotter Amanda Cole Glenn Bathgate</p> <p><b>Caretaker:</b> Ian Stephens</p> <p><b>Cleaner:</b> Lou Betts (Jodi Timms whilst Lou had shoulder op)</p> <p>Mural “Precious Energy”</p> <p>Sailing on the Steadfast</p> <p><b>Camps:</b> Seniors to Lake Rotoiti Middle school to Marahu Juniors to Quinney’s Bush</p>	<p><b>Principal:</b> Alison Turner</p> <p><b>Secretary:</b> Amanda Cole</p> <p><b>Teachers:</b> Steve Dunn Debbie Godsiff Lauren Milnes Jorena Hadley Heather Reid</p> <p><b>Teacher Aides</b> Judy Lumsden Mechthild Laufkotter Amanda Cole Glenn Bathgate</p> <p>Bike Shed moved to become “Wood Shed”.</p>	<p><b>Principal:</b> Alison Turner</p> <p><b>Secretary:</b> Amanda Cole</p> <p><b>Teachers:</b> Malcolm Hepburn Debbie Godsiff Lauren Milnes Heather Reid Kathy Stephens</p> <p><b>Acting Principal</b> Tony Draaijer for Terms 2-4</p> <p><b>Teacher Aides:</b> Lou Betts Kirsten Braniff</p> <p><b>Board of Trustees</b> Jennifer Beatson Andrea Goodman Lauren Milnes Marios Gavalas (Chair) Mike Whitaker Chops Prouting</p> <p>Concrete Rebound Wall built</p> <p><b>Camps:</b> Seniors to Totaranui Middles to Marahu Juniors to Quinney’s Bush</p>	<p><b>Principal:</b> Alison Turner</p> <p><b>Secretary:</b> Amanda Cole</p> <p><b>Teachers:</b> Malcolm Hepburn Amber Beech Debbie Godsiff Lauren Milnes Heather Reid Kathy Stephens</p> <p><b>Teacher Aides:</b> Lou Betts Kirsten Braniff</p> <p>Solar panels installed to heat pool</p> <p>Room 1 &amp; 2 (Library) refurbishment</p> <p>School Van purchased</p>	<p><b>Principal:</b> Alison Turner</p> <p><b>Secretary:</b> Amanda Cole</p> <p><b>Teachers:</b> Malcolm Hepburn Lauren Milnes Heather Reid Rochelle Roberts Kathy Stephens Amber Beech (T 1)</p> <p><b>Teacher Aides:</b> Lou Betts Kirsten Braniff</p> <p><b>Board of Trustees</b> Jennifer Beatson Andrea Goodman (Chair) Lauren Milnes Marios Gavalas Mike Whitaker Chops Prouting</p> <p>150<sup>th</sup> Ngatimoti School Anniversary</p> <p><b>Camps:</b> Seniors to Totaranui Middles to Marahu Juniors to Quinney’s Bush</p>

## **1993 – 125<sup>th</sup> Reunion**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This booklet has been published for the Ngatimoti and Consolidated Jubilee Committee to help celebrate 125 years of primary schooling in the lower Motueka Valley.

We have been fortunate enough to have Mr Graeme Marshall, a freelance writer and author of outdoor recreation books and a former teacher at Ngatimoti School (1988-91) to compile this booklet, ably assisted by Elaine Haycock (Ngatimoti pupil 1964-71) and our present school principal, Brian Smith.

Graeme's brief for compiling this booklet was to update and add to the 1968 Centennial booklet. In doing so, he has included as much as possible of the written and photographic material that was sent to him for possible publication.

Pets' days, the end of year concerts in the Ngatimoti Memorial Hall, picnic day at Kaiteriteri Beach, Friday night folk dancing, visits by Mr John Cross (to judge school gardens) and Mr Hood (with his films starring chimpanzees on road safety), stoking up the pot bellies with coke on winter mornings, our daily dose of school milk and our class trip to the West Coast with teacher Mr Shanks and parents are just some of my happy memories that have been revived while preparing for our Jubilee.

I hope this booklet, together with the Jubilee Celebrations will bring back similar happy memories for you of your school days at our primary school.

Maurice Grooby  
(Pupil Ngatimoti School 1953-60)

## **FOREWARD**

The last 25 years has seen great changes at Ngatimoti School and in NZ Education. With the disestablishment of the Education Boards, the administration of schools was undertaken by locally elected Boards of Trustees.

These boards are now responsible for governing the school which includes – policy preparation, budgeting and staff appointments. School Charters have been developed and these set out specific goals. Boards of Trustees now have to be Good Employers and follow relevant awards. School Boards of Trustees are now allocated an Operational Grant to cover all costs incurred at school, except salaries.

1993 has seen for the first time in NZ Education history, the introduction of a NZ Curriculum Framework. This document will cover all years of schooling from new entrants to the completion of schooling that is from years 1 to 13. These seven essential learning areas are Language, Mathematics, Science, Technology, Social Sciences, The Arts and Health.

Teaching techniques have changed with staff now being facilitators of learning providing opportunities for children to inquire and find out rather than disseminate facts for pupils to learn. Children are now taking more responsibility for their own learning. Computers are now an everyday part of learning and you will see evidence of this during this celebration.

I would like to thank the Jubilee Committee for their dedication and enthusiasm over the past two years in the preparation for this reunion. I extend to you all a warm welcome and best wishes for a memorable reunion.

Brian Smith  
Principal

## EDITOR'S NOTE

I feel privileged to have been asked to edit this publication. If by so doing, I have in some small way helped to enhance the enjoyment that I know former pupils, staff members and friends of the schools will experience at the reunion then my efforts have been vindicated. From my experience some years ago when I undertook a similar task for the Tapawera and district schools, some people will feel disappointment that there are many gaps and that the record is not complete. Regrettably, this is inevitable when one is placing much faith in time jaded memories, and also because repeated requests for information simply did not come to light.

For various reasons little information was forthcoming on some of the smaller schools, and because of other calls on my time it was simply not possible to personally interview all the people whose names were given to me.

This booklet then is something of a pot-pourri of historical fact and anecdote. In many ways I feel the latter has more relevance and so for that reason I have sometimes reproduced in full the memories which have been so painstakingly recorded and passed to me. To all those people a big 'thank you'. Your efforts are appreciated.

To mention the names of all who have made my task easier is to tempt fate. Omissions are inevitable, but at great risk of missing someone who has made a major contribution I thank particularly members of the Jubilee Committee, especially Maurice Grooby, Ian Thorn and Elaine Haycock. Elaine has spent many hours typing the text. Thanks too to current Principal, Brian Smith for his computer and layout expertise. Others who must be mentioned include Terry Leahy, Dick and Joyce Beatson, Anthony Canton, Robin Hinton, Pat Beatson, Kath Beatson, Don Whelan, Les Waghorn and Madeline Rogers. We must not forget those who compiled historical notes for the 100<sup>th</sup> reunion which have been reproduced again in this publication. That committee, including Jack Brereton did a superb job.

I trust that Jubilee will be a joyful occasion for the young and old.

Graeme Marshall  
Ngatimoti  
October 1993

## NGATIMOTI SCHOOL

1868-1968

The difficulties which the small community had to contend with before the school became a reality can only be imagined. The only financial help promised by the central Board of Education under the Provincial Government was forty-eight pounds per annum for the teacher's salary, but not until a site was secured and a building provided did this apply.

The earliest known record of the school's beginning is contained in a minute of the Central Board of Education on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1868. The resolution reads, "a request by the inhabitants for the declaration of a school district at Nga Timote be for one month....." A month later on 5<sup>th</sup> March the Board recorded "That the offer of the inhabitants of land for school purposes be accepted and that upon such land being conveyed to the Board and a suitable building erected thereon, before the expiration of the present educational year the district shall be proclaimed a school district under the act and a salary of £48 be set aside for the teacher." The local people had also to locate their own teacher!

The reaction was such that the school was ready for occupation by the first 18 children on 17 August 1868. Of the choice of sites we know the following: one acre offered by George Young, five acres offered by William Marshall. Mr Marshall owned the property now farmed by Messrs J Stringer, T Beatson, L Barnes and H Haycock.

The inspector was instructed to consult with the "inhabitants" and report to the Board on the merits of the particular sites, so it appears that Mr George Young's offer was accepted, but this must have only been the beginning. A committee minute of 26 August 1874, resolved: "That the chairman, Mr A Gower write to Mr W C Hodgson in an endeavour to get the school acre conveyed from Mr Geo Young to the Central Board of Education." A later minute reads "That Mr Walter Guy's offer of land be accepted."

The boundaries of the district were gazetted on 25 July 1868 and appeared in the Nelson Provincial Government Gazette of that year. Boundaries were again gazetted in 1869 under the central government.

When the school opened it had neither floor nor chimney, and was not lined or painted. This gives an idea of the need for a school felt by the settlers who desired at least an elementary education for the increasing number of children. It also gives an idea of the strain on the limited finances of the area when one considers the short interval between the Board approval and the opening some four and a half months later. It is no longer known who built the school or how the finance was raised. It could well be that all except the nails were provided by interested people, even to felling the trees, pitsawing the timber and building as well.

The ultimate irony is struck with the 1868 attendance register, the title page of which supplies this information.

LONDON. Publishers: The National Society for the Promoting of the Education of the Poor.

The eighteen children who attended on that first day 17 August 1868, were as follows:

Jane Remnant, George Remnant, William Remnant, George Marshall, Ann Remnant, Eva Parsons, Andrew Marshall, Richard Marshall, Mary Canton, Alfred Parsons, Henry Canton, Arthur Remnant, William Marshall, Ellen Remnant, George Remnant, Matilda Parsons, Martha Remnant, Eliza Remnant. There were two Remnant families, that of George and Christopher. George Remnant Snr took title to section 10 of 110 acres in June 1864 and lived near to the vacant house adjoining Mr R Smith's residence. Christopher Snr owned "The Peninsula" and his home adjacent to Mr R G Beatson's present dwelling, possibly as early as 1868.

Mr Henry Young was the teacher for the first two years and apparently lived with his brother George at the Post Office on a site near to Mr Fred Biggs' buildings.

### **Jottings from Early Days**

Mr Young's Attendance Register provides snippets of life. When it is realised that except for small areas in the vicinity of the few existing houses the whole area was a virgin bush with roads, not yet surveyed. It was not until 1876 that a road from the Orinoco River mouth to Waiwhero was gazetted. Bridges in the area were non-existent and another forty-six were to elapse before the Peninsula Bridge was built.

The register annotation "No attendance – wet" appeared frequently.

January 30 1869 provides "No attendance – burning bush near school."

March 23 1869 was the occasion of Mr W C Hodgson's first inspection visit which continued twice a year for some years.

June 30 1869. In the remarks column: "The school closed for one week during this quarter for laying of floor and building of chimney." A year later a similar entry appears for the lining of the building and painting. In addition to the inspector's twice yearly visits it became the custom for the committee to ask private people to examine the children at the end of each year. Among those asked were Mr E Fearon, Rev Samuel Poole, Mr H G Tarrant, and the Rev David G Rodger.

### **Notes from Mr W C Hodgson's Reports**

"The school is regarded as a great boon by the inhabitants. Pupils lacking that activity of mind and spirit of emulation." August 1870: "Though the roads are worse and the distance greater than a Motupipi, the daily attendance is nearly twice as great (still only 54%) as at the latter school. It should also be recorded to the credit of the inhabitants that they built the present schoolroom and provided a site at their own cost; following the good example set them by the people of Motupiko."

June 1874: "Nearly all scholars read with an odd upward inflection at the end of each sentence. The effect upon a stranger is excessively ludicrous and no pains ought to be spared to bring about a reformation in this respect."

Less optimistic is "That children arrive at school in no fit state either physically or mentally to assimilate what is being taught."

June 1876, on attainments: "Steady improvement, one third of pupils marked as good writers, arithmetic generally accurate and dictation tolerably free from mistakes."

### **Committee Notes**

Amenities were still non-existent and in March 1875 it was resolved: "That an Abyssinian will be dug at the North-West corner of the grounds and that Mr John Canton be employed at seven shillings per diem to dig same." The total cost of pump, pipe and digging totalled seven pounds and ten shillings.

December 1876: "The tenders be called for the supply of materials and erection of two conveniences." One wonders how they managed till then.

### **The School in Community Life**

The schoolroom soon served as a dance hall, a church, a polling booth and general meeting place. At a committee meeting in 1874 it was resolved: "That the Brethren denomination be allowed the use of the schoolroom on alternate Sundays at 2.30pm for public worship, that the Church of England have the use on the other alternate Sunday morning and that the above congregations be responsible for school property.

This state of affairs appears to have continued amicably until the Anglican Church was built in 1884. The Brethren continued to use it until the early part of this century.

The story is told of a lad from a well-known family who broke the monotony by liberating a five pound tea tin of mice during service. A sack of oats newly threshed in Lower Moutere took the blame from the well satisfied culprit.

July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1870. The school was declared an official polling booth for the district by George Ferguson Bowen, Governor of New Zealand.

Tenders were called each year for a supply of firewood. One from Mr Henry Hudson for the supply and delivery of two cords of matai was to be all heart at eleven shillings and two cords of birch at nine shillings, a total cost of one pound eighteen shillings.

January 1875: Payment for building porch on school – Shingles £1/7/0, timber £4/13/0, labour £4. Application for a grant from the Board was refused.

June 1873: The Ngatimoti Library Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Alex O'Brien. Henry Young was secretary and the rest of the committee members

were George Canton, A Gower, and Richard Sutcliffe. The school saw service as the library until 1923 when it closed.

### **The Second School Building**

An entry in the recently unearthed original attendance register of 1889 explains the non-attendance of children from 29<sup>th</sup> July to 23<sup>rd</sup> August while a new school was built pinpoints the erection date. A committee resolution of 29<sup>th</sup> September records "That the account of Webley Bros. for £176/17/3 be paid and the letter containing the cheque be registered.

The building was in use as a school until 1923 and stood until 1947 as a public hall until its demolition in that year. Whether the new school was on a slightly different site from the original is not known but there are references to work being done on the "old school" or "shelter shed". The last of these repairs was an instruction to a committee member to board up the windows of the "shelter shed". The pupils could quite conceivably, have made it impracticable to replace the glass.

### **The School Roll**

From the eighteen pupils who attended in 1868 there was a slow but steady increase until 1891 when the roll stood at sixty-one. This represented the crest of the wave of first generation children. Miss Cara Haycock was the assistant teacher from 1888 until 1893 when pupil numbers apparently only warranted only one teacher. Miss Haycock was appointed sole teacher towards the end of 1896 and continued as such until 1902. There was another peak in attendance in 1921-22 when numbers rose to nearly fifty. There was a decrease to 1934-35 when the roll stood at only twenty. Pokororo School was consolidated in 1939 and with the gradual extension of bus routes the roll again climbed. The increase may be described as partly natural and partly geographical.

The absence of minute books from 1897 to 1930, leaves this period of school records bare of information. However one of the school's more colourful teachers, Mr Geo. O. Fair, taught from circa 1902-08. This brother Arthur was later to become Mr Arthur Fair, Chief Justice of New Zealand.

Prior to the 1900 the second official teacher, Mr Richard Sutcliffe was noteworthy. He apparently came out in 1842 with the intention of teaching, but was not accepted because of his single status. It is thought he conducted a small private school in the area. He was appointed to Ngatimoti in August 1870 and was to become the longest incumbent teacher, his resignation being received by the Board in September 1886. For diverse reasons he was not always popular either with the pupils or the committee. On one occasion soon before he resigned, the committee decided to close the school. The following morning two of its members attended to return books and other school property to the pupils and teacher to make the closure a fact. The Education Board was notified of the committee's action but a month later the school was reopened, the Board presumably "call the committee's bluff".

From the end of the First World War, with Orinoco School just under two miles away, Pokororo on a new site six miles distant and Pangatotara School a nearly equal



distance, the old Ngatimoti School was now situated right at the end of the area it was supposed to serve. There were probably mixed feelings when the school was rebuilt on a new site adjacent to the present Memorial Hall, but a new era was beginning and progress was inevitable.

The new site was purchased from the Daniell Family; and a great deal of toil with horses and scoops, shovels and wheelbarrows, was done on the very uneven surface before erection. This central site seemed ideal but later proved damp, limited in size, and shaded by bush to the north. The building was opened in February 1924 under the head teacher Mr Allan R Wills, who had been at the school since 1920.

With the universal explosion in population following World War II and the consolidation movement in the area, with the exception of Orinoco, the rapid increase in the roll was seen locally as a need for further expansion. When the present site became available it was only through prolonged and persistent representation by the committee, and particularly its secretary Mr C E F Beatson, that the authorities were prevailed upon to agree to its acquisition. The committee saw this as virtually the chance of a lifetime.

A sizeable residence on the new area was to be demolished but local foresight enabled it to be saved and converted to a school hall, a purpose which it still serves.

At the beginning of the third term in 1954, school re-opened in the new buildings which consisted of a new infant room, staff room, ablution block, and the two renovated rooms from the old site. Local effort continued and with the Education Board assistance, two years later the Board Chairman, Mr B F Spiers, performed the opening of the swimming pool. At the same function Canon S Corney unveiled a cairn at the corner of the school ground commemorating the district "NGA TIMOTE", a name which had been found carved on a totara tree, circa 1857.

The swimming bath referred to above was a worthy community effort, the whole of the concrete floor and walls being run in one day.

The present school commenced with a roll of 84 in 1954, and this rose slowly to 104 in 1961, a total only surpassed in 1965 when the total reached 113. Mr C H Holyoake is another teacher with a record of long service to education in the area. He taught at Pokororo School from 1929 and was transferred on promotion to Ngatimoti in 1937 and continued as head teacher until 1942.

Direct associations with the Prime Minister the Rt Hon K J Holyoake are of interest. His mother, Miss Esther Eves, was the first teacher at Orinoco; his youngest brother Oscar also taught there for some three years from 1929-31; and Claude was at Pokororo and Ngatimoti as mentioned above.

No record of the school in the last twenty-five years would be complete without mention of Mrs K C Strachan who on numerous occasions relieved for both brief and extended periods. Her joy in teaching transferred to her daughters who both trained as teachers and taught in the local school.

The school in 1968 possesses a well-equipped library, radio and sound system, slide and movie projectors, duplicating machines and typewriters, as aids to furthering the children's education. A new primer classroom was erected last year and the older section of the school renovated and extensively modernised. Pupils have advanced successfully to many fields of higher learning so that the past accomplishments of the school can be viewed with pride, and confidence held for the future.

### **Teacher's Salaries**

1868: £48 per annum

1869: £12 per annum allowance in lieu of house

1874: £100. This was the official allowance granted but until June 1879 only £6 per month was paid.

1888: Miss Clara Haycock commenced under Sam M Scott as an assistant teacher and received the magnificent sum of £12 per annum.

1897: Miss Haycock in sole charge at £75 per annum.

Miss Eves at Orinoco, then an aide school of Ngatimoti, received £80 per annum.

1902: End of the system of the committee paying the teacher's salary.

1919: Orinoco teacher receiving £130 and Ngatimoti head teacher £170.

## NGATIMOTI SCHOOL

### Teachers

(Many dates of early teachers not easy to confirm accurately)

1868-70	Henry Young	1926-28	Miss Agnes T Somerville
1870-86	Richard Sutcliffe	1928	Miss K W Sutcliffe
1887-92	Samuel M Scott	1929-31	Mrs E M Parkes
1892	Alexander Douglas (May to July)	1932-34	Miss Marjorie J Espie
1892-95	Harold L Ellis	1934-35	W F Walkey
1895-96	W A Hall	1936-37	Miss Linda S Junker
1897-02	Miss Clara Haycock	1937-42	Claude H Holyoake
1902-08	Geo O Fair	1943-45	Miss Gladys M Sutton
1909-12	Hugh H Horner	1946-48	Frank J L Scott
1912-13	Miss Kathleen Hewetson	1949-52	Chas B Henderson
1913-14	E Fisher	1953-56	Wm L Martyn
1915-16	Miss Ellen Robinson	1956-59	Leslie K Cowles
1916-20	Harold S Silcock Miss O'Leary (relieving)	1950-61	Alan C Shanks
1921-26	Allan R Wills	1962	Mr Saunders (relieving)
		1962-68	R W Parker
		1968	E T Bennett

### Assistant Teachers

1886-93	Miss Clara Haycock (Salary £1)	1953	Mr K C Strachan (long term relieving)
1890- 1916	Miss Ella Haycock	1954	Miss K L Fry
	Miss R Huffman	1954	Mr R Fry
	Mrs N Pownall	1954-55	Mr G Baxter
	Miss Welham		T Lilburne
	Miss Burgess		Miss E Jones
	Miss Jean Wills		Miss Dianne Harris
	Miss Dorothy Steel	1955-57	Terence J F Leahy
1926-28	Miss Marion Moore	1957-58	Mrs Leahy
1929	Miss Freda Brunning	1957-59	Mr Ken Clifflen
1939	Mrs Nancy K Gardiner	1958-60	Mrs Clifflen
1940-41	Miss Rita J Holland	1960-62	Mr A E Jarvis
	Miss Melva L Cole	1960-62	Miss Reader
1947-48	Miss Gladys Kelly	1961	Miss Cynthia Strachan
	Miss Kathleen J Eddy	1962	Miss Pat Carney
	Miss Davis	1962-64	Miss Jenny Overy
	Miss Dennis	1963	Mr M Parkinson
	Miss Muntz	1963-65	Mr R Vander Plas
1950-51	Miss Pam Davis	1966	Miss Kathleen Strachan
1953	Miss L Thornton	1967	Miss Kay Riley

### 1968 Assistant Staff

1966-68	Mr Murray Taylor	1968	Miss Lorraine Watson
1966-68	Miss Jean Millen		

Although records supply some dates and some assistant names, the remainder are from memory.

### Ngatimoti School Teachers

1969 Mr E Bennett, Mr M Taylor, Miss C Coulter, Miss C Grooby, Mr B Doobie  
1970 Mr E Bennett, Mr B Dobbie, Miss S Vincent, Miss C Grooby  
  
1971 Mr E Bennett, Mrs C Rynhart, Miss O Haycock, Mr B Dobbie  
  
1972 Mr E Bennett, Mr B Dobbie, Mrs C Rynhart, Mr L Beauchamp, Miss Miller  
(Term 3)  
  
1973 Mr E Bennett, Mr Duncan, Mrs C Rynhart, Miss Rogers  
  
1974 Mr E Bennett, Mr Duncan, Miss Rogers, Mr C Rynhart, Mrs M Tomlinson  
(Term 3)  
  
1975 Mr E Bennett, Mr J Briasco, Mrs K Masters, Miss L Foote  
  
1976 Mr E Bennett, Mr J Briasco, Miss L Foote, Mrs J McNeur  
  
1977 Mr E Bennett, Mr J Briasco, Miss L Foote, Mrs J McNeur  
  
1978 Mr E Bennett, Mr E Gardner, Miss P Cotter, Miss L Foote  
  
1979 Mr D Martin, Mr E Gardner, Miss L Foote, Mrs M Moran, Mrs G Dodgshun  
  
1980 Mr D Martin, Mr E Gardner, Mrs M Moran, Mrs G Dodgshun  
  
1981 Mr D Martin, Mrs J Egarr, Mrs G Dodgshun, Mr Moran  
  
1982 Mr D Martin, Mrs J Egarr, Mr E Gardner, Mrs M Moran, Mrs G Dodgshun  
  
1983 Mr D Martin, Mr T Rogers, Mrs C Lorking, Mr E Gardner, Mrs M Moran, Mrs G  
Dodgshun  
  
1984 Mr D Martin, Mr T Rogers, Ms F Birch, Mr E Gardner, Mrs M Moran, Mrs G  
Dodgshun  
  
1985 Mr D Martin, Mr T Rogers, Ms F Birch, Mr E Gardiner, Mrs M Moran, Mrs G  
Dodgshun

- 1986 Mr D Martin, Mr T Rogers, Ms F Birch, Mr E Gardiner, Mrs M Moran, Mrs G Dodgshun, Mrs J Howell (Term 3)
- 1987 Mrs B Greenwood, Mr T Rogers, Ms F Birch, Mrs M Moran, Mr E Gardiner, Mrs J Howell (relieving)
- 1988 Mrs B Greenwood, Mr G Marshall, Mr T Rogers, Mrs M Moran, Mrs J Howell, Mrs J Knight and Mrs R Marshall (part-time teachers)
- 1989 Mrs B Greenwood, Mr G Marshall, Mr T Rogers, Mrs M Moran, Miss L Foote and Mrs R Marshall (part-time teachers)
- 1990 Mrs B Greenwood, Mr G Marshall, Mr T Rogers, Mrs M Moran, Mrs R Marshall and Mrs N Davey (part-time teachers)
- 1991 Mrs B Greenwood, Mrs C Lorking, Mr T Rogers, Mrs M Moran, Mrs R Marshall and Mrs N Davey (part-time teachers)
- 1992 Mr B Smith, Mr T Rogers, Mrs M Moran, Miss L Foote and Mrs R Marshall (part-time teachers)
- 1993 Mr B Smith, Mr T Rogers, Mrs M Moran, Miss M Ansell (relieving Term 1), Mrs R Marshall and Miss L Foote (part-time)

## WHO REMEMBERS?

In the early 1890's – if there are many left to remember – they told of teacher's inclination to doze over the table and of the time a paper bag of flour was affixed over his head. A sudden loud noise and a satisfactory result for all concerned but the sleeper. Rumour had it that the dozing may not have been altogether natural.

The old well. Even in those days the school well was inclined to provide water that could be a bit off in very hot weather. At these times it was the custom for two bigger boys to collect the water for drinking from the nearest creek. On the return trip a spell was needed after which the bucket somehow got capsized and more water had to be collected. This could be continued indefinitely.

The boy who wrote in his diary for the day, back in the early 1900s. "Geo Fair not in a very good mood today." He got off with a caution apparently. Perhaps the teacher thought the entry was only a reasonable observation on that particular day.

The unorthodox and rather unsuccessful use of the knot hole in the floor of the classroom?

The time someone caught a sparrow which Miss Jean Wills placed in a chalk box of odds and ends with a view to having a nature study lesson on the said sparrow. Probably at someone's suggestion Fred Grooby opened the box and the sparrow escaped – through the window and away with a few yards of fine twine round its legs. Remember Miss Wills' consternation and wasn't she as game as Ned Kelly?

The trouble there was over a boy's pants getting ripped.

What other teacher was great hearted enough to take three senior boys for a trip round the North Island on his honeymoon?

The painful results from someone doubting the power of John Greenwood's air rifle.

School ponies: Jimmy and Barney, Tommy and Proddy. Barney and all the leg work to get him up to full throttle. To stop: Hard back on the reins and both feet hard on the floor. Proddy not much to look at but a beggar to go! The time he crash-landed at the bottom of the Church hill. Stan chief pilot, Tom second pilot and Janet or Grace navigating. Proddy was at fault – tried to land without the undercart locked. Damage negligible! (Four up was the limit of his licence.)

Tommy and Kate always looked as if they belonged. Can you still see them? Tommy's ears back and neck at full stretch – Kate's hair flying – a great sight.

Jimmy – the first on the job and the last to leave – as game as they are made.

Jimmy and his youngest "owner" performing some extracurricular activities with Jimmy in a buggy. Hope he was always careful where he Parkes!

What an aroma the well water still had in 1923!

The time shanghais (catty rubber from Tisdalls at 1/- a foot) were all rage.

The three mugs who got into trouble for murdering an owl in Guy's bush with the above.

Being sent out by the teacher to meet pupils who were persistently or perhaps only consistently late for school and the unforeseen results.

Being "forcibly" removed from a swimming hole in the Orinoco by an irate landowner armed with a shovel, and some having to return afterwards to retrieve their clothes to cover their lack of any.

Or the time some girls reported bathers at "Haycock Rails" (this was a famous place on the road in those days) for riding bikes around an area near the road in the altogether. Just a bit of back luck those girls arrived at the wrong time.

A ceremony one night with a handsome leather strap adorned with some intricate Chatham Island engraving on it. The strap was raised to the top of the flagstaff and afterwards divided equally among those attending. Who still has a piece?

Playing cricket in Mr J C Strachan's paddock. Someone trying out new wicket-keeping gloves, letting the ball go through his hands and getting hit where it hurts most.

The marvellous times we had at Dovedale playing cricket – most enjoyable matches and a really terrific spread the Dovedale people put on.

A trip to the Tableland by older boys and the teacher very much disliking getting wet feet. Whoever went anywhere on the Tableland and didn't get wet feet in any case?

Or a trip to Wellington by senior pupils when CBH was at school. The trip over and back on the Arahura – or was it the Matangi? A visit to the engine room and talk with the first engineer Mr David Parks. The day in Wellington with trips to the zoo and a visit into the signal box at the railway station.

Over the years school and community news has been passed on to the residents of the district by way of newsletters and the like. In these days of word processors and photocopiers preparation of the copy is relatively simple compared to the laborious methods of yesteryear.

Parents have frequently taken responsibility for the production of all or part of these vital links between school and home. Such an example is the THE KUKU, a magazine having its origins in the early days of World War Two. For some time this was edited by the late Sid Thorn. Copies still surviving provide a fascinating glimpse of life in the district at that time as the few snippets reproduced below will evidence. Today's pupils would find it difficult to comprehend that even a trip to Motueka was an event of some significance then, as was the arrival of a new resident or piece of earth-moving machinery. Many former pupils will no doubt harbour fond memories of those less complicated times.

Below are some items from the March 1940 issue of THE KUKU.

Local News: On December 7<sup>th</sup> the bulldozer came into the district and on December 10<sup>th</sup> it went over the bank at the lime works.

On December 11<sup>th</sup> the Pangatotara School held a Paddy's market.

On December 15<sup>th</sup> the new Bishop of Nelson and his wife will visit the Ngatimoti School and give out the Sunday School prizes.

On December 13<sup>th</sup> we heard that Jimmy White is now much better. We hope he will be able to have a good Christmas dinner.

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, the Ngatimoti Pig Club brood sow had eight bonny piglets.

On February 28<sup>th</sup> Mr Holm, a Government deerstalker has been staying for a few nights at Mr R Heath's shed. He also shot five hundred deer up in the mountains.

On March 7<sup>th</sup> some deer came down and ate some sweeds (sic) out of Mr Mytton's paddock.

The KUKU also featured war news, garden club reports, a childrens' page and pupils' work. The following joke indicates that people were still able to enjoy a good laugh despite the grim times.

Joke: Pat (returning from war): "Well Mike, the thing that struck me most was the number of bullets that missed me".

THE KUKU will certainly be remembered by many former pupils.

Parents have been entertained by their children's literary efforts over the years in various newsletters and the like. The Editor wonders if the writers of these efforts recall their appearance in a 1964 collection of creative writing.



## **Fishy Tales**

One morning in the classroom  
The teacher told me some fine tales  
About the wonderful fish he caught  
The fish he caught were make believe  
Or sometimes made of sticky chocolate  
I think he boasted a bit too much  
About the fish he never caught

Sandra Vincent F.2

## **The Mud**

In the mud  
Four steps forward  
Four steps back  
And a nice big  
Skid in the mud

Eric Harris Std 4

## **WOODSTOCK SCHOOL**

According to noted local historian JNW Newport, Woodstock School opened in 1882 with children from Thorpe to the West Bank of the Motueka River attending. The children from the west side had to cross the river by either horse or punt as there was no bridge until the Baton suspension bridge was erected in 1906.

Mr Les Mytton remembers how the Mytton family used to cross the river in a canoe from their home to the road on the east bank. The older ones were used to handling the canoe and looked after the younger ones.

When Miss Elizabeth Phillips (Mrs James Anglesey) taught there in 1898-1900 there was a roll of 25 children, the surnames being Mytton, Turner, Burton, Humphreys, Durrant, Langman and Eyles. Earlier families who attended included Hall, Horneman and Loveridge. One older man still has memories of school days when Mr Cowles was a teacher. He had a long stick to reach down maps from the walls. However, it was also used to hit pupils round the legs!

The school closed for a period from about 1908 as there were insufficient pupils. Two members of the Eyles family then rode ponies and attended the Stanley Brook School. Some other travelled to Dovedale School. A new building was erected on a new site in 1922 and remained in use until consolidation with Tapawera in 1943. The building was then removed and re-erected at Shenandoah in the Maruia Valley.

### **Teachers – Woodstock - Opened 1882**

Jan 1886 – Nov 1891  
Dec 1891 – Sept 1895

Miss Sheppard  
Miss Wornach

Oct 1895 – Feb 1897	Miss Brereton
Feb 1897 – May 1898	R K Cowles
May 1898 – Jan 1902	Miss Phillips
Jan 1902 – Jan 1903	F D Best
Jan 1903 – Apr 1906	Hugh Horner
Apr 1906 – July 1907	Sophie Williams
July 1907 – Mar 1908	M C Larkin
Mar 1908 – Jan 1909	G Win
School closed Jan 1909 – Jan 1917	
Jan 1917 – Aug 1919	M Dickson
Aug 1919 – June 1924	R Papps
Jun 1924 – July 1924	E Muncaster
July 1924 – Dec 1926	E M Williams
Jan 1927 – Sept 1927	A Balfour
Sept 1927 – Oct 1927	K Shirtcliff
Oct 1927 – Feb 1928	A Greig
Feb 1928 – Feb 1935	N Marshall
Feb 1935 – Nov 1937	R Craig
Nov 1937 – Sept 1940	N Holland
Feb 1939 – Sept 1938	N Marshall (relieving)
	R McKenzie (relieving)
Sept 1940 – Dec 1941	A C Eyles
Feb 1942 – May 1942	E Solly

Moved to Tapawera May 1942.

## **ORINOCO SCHOOL 1894-1956**

During Miss Eves' two years as a teacher an incident occurred which for her must have been most disconcerting. There had evidently been complaints about the language of some of her male pupils and on catching one of them in the act, she resolved to really bring home to him the seriousness of the offence. She apparently dealt most severely with him, to the extent she was out of breath with wielding whatever weapon was to hand. The boy seemingly unhurt and when she desisted he turned to her with no sign of discomfort and said "Well b..... you!"

The sequel to this found in the committee minutes of 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1896, read "Resolved on the motion of Mr A White and Mr T Thomason that Messrs Thomason and J Wills wait on Miss Eves for an explanation re the letter received from Mr Holmwood." On 30<sup>th</sup> May a minute read: "Resolved on the motion of Messrs White and Thomason that the secretary write to Miss Eves exonerating her from all blame and requesting her to receive the boy again without apology."

From the foundation notes, written by Mr DI Llewelin at the time of the school jubilee in 1954, which are gratefully acknowledged, it can be stated that the school commenced on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1894. Account books of the time reveal that Miss Eves, the first teacher, received her first month's salary of £6/13/4 on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1894.

The school was built by M Wilkes of Richmond for approximately £160 and operated as a side school of Ngatimoti School until 1900 when it became an autonomous body. The first committee's members were Messrs Roger Lloyd, Chairman; Charles Stebbings, Secretary; Thomas Thomason, William and Alfred Hill. Mr Alex White proved a benefactor to the school by the giving the land for the building site and playing area.

The old building deteriorated with the passage of years until the Board decided to hold referendums to decide whether to consolidate on Ngatimoti or to rebuild. The result was that a new school and a schoolhouse were erected, the latter being the first official teacher's residence. The school was ready for the children in October 1955 and the schoolhouse was occupied in 1958 by Mr T Leahy. In the next few years there were fewer new entrants and this, allied with a voluntary shift of children by parents to the larger school at Ngatimoti, necessitated closure at the end of the first term in 1965.

The once neat school ground is now a sheep paddock with the swimming pool the only remaining structure to serve as a reminder of the past. The war memorial plaques dedicated in 1955 by Canon Corney have been transferred to the shrine at St James' Church. During its 71 years the school has been a centre for local life in addition to providing elementary education for some 300 pupils.

### **Orinoco School Teachers**

Miss Esther Eves 1894-96

Miss Matilda Brereton 1897-02

Miss C O'Brien

Miss I Bastin

Mrs Olive Raikes  
Mr H Freeman  
Mrs Winifred Winter 1924-30  
Mr Oscar H Holyoake 1929-31  
Miss Rose Gibbs  
Miss Nina Baigent 1935  
Mr Vernon W Sadd  
Miss Woodley  
Miss Doreen Llewellyn 1941  
Miss Florence Kelling  
Miss Thomason  
Mr Walter Gee  
Mr Thomas Johnson  
Mr Lewis Nicholson  
Mr Bernard Coleman  
Mr John Penketh  
Mr Donald Henderson 1957  
Mr Terence Leahy 1958-60  
Mr Barry Mason 1960-61  
Mr Douglas Hasler 1961-65

### **Chairman**

Roger Lloyd 1900  
Alex Strachan (also commissioner for many years)  
CB Brereton 1932-34  
SI Llewellyn 1934-50  
CF Rose 1950-52  
AP Beatson 1957  
FW Biggs 1952-56, 1964-65  
NI Mayson  
JI Llewellyn 1958-60  
EM Goodwin 1959-62

## **POKORORO SCHOOL 1883-1939**

Named after the native grayling, a small trout-like fish, in Maori “Upokororo”, which was plentiful in early times and easily caught in Sandy Creek up till 1920.

From the arrival of the Salisbury Brothers in 1854 there was a gradual influx of settlers who by 1880 would have felt the need of a school for their young families. Early in the decade there arrived in the district a young educated Englishman. Evan Satchell, whose abilities must have been soon used to advantage for not long after his arrival he was teaching a class of 16 children. The children were of varying ages and lessons were conducted in a mud walled, raupo thatched whare across the creek behind Mr Walter Win’s residence, on land then owned the Pattie brothers, Robert, David and Leslie.

Within a comparatively short time another school was built nearer the river. With one re-building it was to remain there until 1914 when it was moved to the mouth of the Graham River.

The first teacher in the official school was Miss Alexander, who was followed by Miss Lydia Bradley, during whose term at Pokororo of 10 or 11 years the school was destroyed by fire. The painter had placed tins of varnish near the open fire to warm and he had gone to a neighbour’s for lunch. The flammable varnish exploded and nothing could prevent the complete destruction of the building and early records it contained.

While the school was being rebuilt on or very near the same site, school was continued in part of Salisbury’s house near the suspension bridge spanning the Motueka River.

Until the first bridge was built, pupils living on the east bank relied on a boat or canoe to cross, so were quite frequently absent when the river was in flood.

With the gradual opening up of side valleys the population in the upper parts became greater so it was decided to move the school to a more central site near the mouth of the Graham River.

The building was cut into sections and erected on the prepared site probably at the time between the opening function of the suspension bridge and the commencement of the 1915 school year. This building remained in use as a school until falling rolls and the introduction of the school bus services prompted consolidation on Ngatimoti. The building continued to form the focal point of local functions until 1952 when it was demolished to make way for a more modern structure now known as the Pokororo Hall.

Records of teacher’s and committee members’ names are lost, but it is known that two committee chairmen, Mr James Haycock and his son Mr Leslie P Haycock served considerable terms. The family tradition continued with Mr Noel Haycock who held the office of committee chairman at Ngatimoti School from 1961 until 1973.

## **Pokororo School Teachers**

Mr Evan Satchell  
Miss Alexander  
Miss Knapp  
Miss Bradley  
Mrs P Coleman  
Miss Demment  
Miss Horne  
Miss G Win  
Mr H Boyes  
Miss Ladley  
Miss Leila G Small 1913-15  
Mr A Lewis 1916  
Miss Woodman  
Miss Cleweer  
Miss J Bradshaw  
Miss Helen R Griffen 1922  
Miss Edna M J Smith 1923  
Miss Freeman  
Mr J R Clark  
Miss Annie C Fitzsimmons 1925-28  
Mr C H Holyoake 1929-36  
Mrs N K Gardiner 1937

## Looking Back

As I look back all those years ago when I taught at the old Pokororo School, which was situated in a paddock surrounded by large pines; and with just a track along the side of the river leading to the school from the rickety swing bridge, a feeling of nostalgia comes over me.

The memory of being chased by a bull along that track, my running up the left bank and climbing over the fence, whilst the animal went straight on still fills me with the wonder of my escape.

There was a lovely school garden, tilled by the children, who knew more about plants than I, so that the various seeds were all put in at the right time.

It was hard work for a young teacher in those days. We had to have an average of 42 children to have an assistant. All classes had to be taught, so that for a time I myself paid a helper to teach the primers.

One had to be strict to keep order and I now regret the times when the strap was brought forth. I learned later to do without such an article.

There were pleasant times, the committee was good and kept us in lovely slabs of wood for the winter's large fires.

A child would spot the inspector on his surprise visit, walking down the path, so that by the time the said inspector arrived, all in school were silent and in good order.

We even introduced the play "Dame Durden's School," and had great fun therefrom.

When the first Great War began we, with the help of parents, made garments for the Nelson Red Cross to send to Belgium relief.

Oh! I must not forget to tell that before the war we took the older children of the school, over the then muddy hills to see HMS New Zealand in Nelson Harbour. A committee man drove us in a wagonette. It certainly was a red letter day!

Yes! Many more tales could be told and being young and inexperienced, I learned many lessons myself at the old school, and from the dear people who housed and fed me.

Lleila G Bassett (nee Small)

## **PANGATOTARA SCHOOL**

Pangatotara School was consolidated with Motueka School in 1944. The extension of the Ngatimoti School bus routes to include the Baton and Pangatorara Bluff bridges drew a number of pupils from these school areas to the Ngatimoti School.

### **School Notes**

When the Central Board of Education under the auspices of the Provincial Government was formed in 1856, Pangatotara School was listed as one of 22 then in existence in the Nelson District. The original school site was on what is now known as Peach Island, and the first teacher was possibly a Mr Horneman. At a later date the school was moved to the east bank of the river near M DJ Taylor's residence. The description at that time places it "Half a mile above Woodman's Bluff".

An inspection report of 1910 notes: "Pangatotara School closed during the year".

This school which was a side school of Whakarewa School contributed its pupils above Standard 4 to the parent school. Members of both the Whelan and Knowles families attended this school. The elder girls in Mr JD Knowles' family when of sufficient age for some years conducted an "assisted" school at their home, instructing pupils distant from Whakarewa. A pupil teacher's "assistance" in 1880 was seven shillings and sixpence per week!

The school at Alexander Bluff Bridge was built in the early 1900s and was known as the Rocky River School to differentiate it from the one above Woodman's until some years after the latter school closed.

Teacher's names located in the Board Records

Miss Jean Wills, 1913-15  
Miss Leila Smith, 1917  
Mrs Melba F Caigon, 1922  
William S Kelly, 1923-24  
Miss Edith Fittal, 1925-27  
Miss Clarissa Eban, 1928-29  
Miss Ailsa Corrie-Johnston, 1931  
Edmund Knynett, 1923  
Charles RG Masters, 1933-34  
Alice F Bush (relieving) 1935  
Mrs Mabel Stubbs, 1937-41

The later Mr Percy C Williams was for many years chairman of the committee.



## LES WAGHORN REMEMBERS

At 87, Les Waghorn is probably the oldest ex pupil attending the Jubilee, Les attended the original Ngatimoti School before and during World War I. While many events have slipped from his memory he was still able to recall incidents which occurred all those years ago.

Some of the memories were of painful experiences such as walking to school on frosty mornings in bare feet. Few children had the luxury of shoes for going to school in, and the usual procedure was to run through the shady, frosted areas and dawdle in those places which the sun had reached.

Les recalls that some of the teachers were very strict. He remembers especially a Mr Fisher who used to beat the pupils for even the most minor misdemeanours. Mr Huffman, on the other hand was strict but fair.

A Miss Robinson who boarded with Jack Strachan must have been popular with Les as he recalls her quite vividly.

He also remembers currying favour with Miss Hewetson by catching and saddling her horse for her most days. She often rode side saddle.

Another teacher was nicknamed "Fatty Few Clothes" because she seemed to wear the same clothes all the time in direct contrast to another, more fashionable lady with an extensive wardrobe.

A fellow pupil was Colin Everett, who rode to school each day from the Pokororo area. According to Les he was a gangling, lanky chap who set his horse in a canter all the way and crossed the river just above the present day Peninsula Bridge if it was up at all. It was common to judge whether it was safe to cross by checking the level of the water on a certain rock.

Swimming was a somewhat perilous affair and usually took place on the property now owned by Colin Strachan. In those days the Orinoco had many deep holes so swimming there was something of an adventure with thoughts of huge eels never far from the mind.

Highlights of Les' school years were events like dances in the hall for which virtually the whole community turned out to. The trick en route was to keep out of the mud and arrive in a reasonably pristine state.

The annual sports exchange with Pokororo was eagerly anticipated by the children as the host school always provided a tasty picnic.

Trips were very rare. Les recalls only one trip to Nelson throughout his entire school days, though cycling to Motueka was a reasonably common occurrence.

Asked if he enjoyed his school days, Les replied, "Not really," and became much more animated when describing his days mustering cattle off the Tableland and cutting bush tracks, but that's another story.



**Ngatimoti School Circa 1890-1910**  
(Courtesy Nelson Provincial Museum)



**The Girls**  
**1928**



**Ngatimoti School  
1953**



**Form 2 and Mr L Cowles  
1958**



A Netball Team  
1965



Std 4 and Form 1 and 2 and Mr Parker  
1965



**Ngatimoti Girls Tennis  
1965**



**Staff (L to R) Mr van der Plas, Mr Parker (Principal), Miss E Martin  
1965**



**Procession**

**1968 Celebrations**



**Opening Ceremony Cannon Corney  
And Warren Stephens**



**Are they jealous?  
Mike Brereton, Mit Brereton,  
Charlie Stevens**



**Levelling the grounds at the Greenhill site**

**Staff (L to R) Mr M Taylor, Miss C Coulter, Miss C Grooby, Mr E Bennett (Principal)**

**1969**



**Ngatimoti School Banking Cup being presented to Bruce Tomlinson by Murray Taylor**

## THE RIVER, STUMP AND RASPBERRY GARDEN

The modest booklet produced to mark the occasion of the 125<sup>th</sup> jubilee would not be complete without two very fine publications. The River, Stump and Raspberry Garden was written by Ngatimoti School old boy CB (Pat) Beatson and published by the Nikau Press in 1992. While Pat is quick to point out that the book is not a definitive “history” but rather his own personal reminiscences, there is much to delight anyone seeking information on education in the district in the early part of the century. Along with chapters of great interest on many other facets of life in Ngatimoti during Pat’s childhood, the section on his school days is a feature of the publication, and certainly required reading for people of all ages. Due to the dictates of available space it is simply not possible to reproduce the chapter in full, but a few snippets may revive memories.

“My first teacher was Mr Fisher, a bearded man with a strap sticking out of his hip pocket. My most vivid memory is of sitting at the long desk with the other boys and of Mr Fisher coming past, looking at the work on our slates and hearing some of the boys sharing their spelling. Victor Grooby, sitting next to me, must have done something to displease him. Victor held out his hand an inch or so above the top of the desk. Down came the strap three times. I was terrified, by the noise as much as anything else – the smack of the leather on his palm and then the rap of his knuckles on the desk.”

How would modern pupils handle these calculations which Pat came across in an old Southern Cross standard six arithmetic text?

1. To be done by decimals: A man paid 50 pounds, 2 shillings and sixpence for 26 acres, 3 roods, 18 perches. How much did he pay per acre?
2. If 15 men can reap 15 acres in 14 hours, how many men can reap 6 acres in 12 hours?
3. I sold a watch for 12 pounds, 19 shillings and 6 pence, thus losing 13.5 percent. At what price should I have sold it to gain one fifteenth of the cost price?

Wow!

Another highly recommended publication is that being released at the reunion produced by Kath Beatson and Helen Whelan. The Editor has had the opportunity to view some of the material making up the book. The district history covers every imaginable aspect of life and is highly recommended as it will undoubtedly rapidly gain rarity value. The time devoted to this publication is immense – without doubt a labour of love.



## NGATIMOTI SCHOOL 1927-1935

We lived across the Peninsula Bridge where Guthrie Beatson now lives. The school was over the bridge, down the river, across the bridge over the Orinoco creek and next to Mr Ted Heath's blacksmith's shop. This was a great source of delight with the forge bellows at the ready to make the coals glow. If you were lucky you could watch Mr Heath shoeing a horse. I remember well the smell of singeing horse's hoof as he fitted the red hot shoe on the hoof before he plunged the shoe into a bucket of cold water, then taking the nail out of leather apron and hammering it in and nipping off the nail point as it came through the top off the hoof. Later he had the only garage, where there was a bowser which dispensed Big Tree benzine.

On the way home there were several places we might dawdle for a while. The first was Haycock's hazelnut trees. There we could go and steal nuts, which we cracked and ate on the way home. This was so exciting that Miriam Haycock, the youngest of the household would come with us to enjoy the thrill of pinching with the rest of us criminals.

The next pause was the gravel pit to look for tadpoles to take home for pets. I don't think any of them survived very long. I started school in 1927 and my first teacher was Miss Field. I have no idea who the headmaster was.

Once a year, before the first term, a farmer (Mr Haycock perhaps), mowed the grass in the playground, leaving it in long winnows round and round the grounds. In this, we infants used to build playhouses. At that time the "big kids" had vegetable gardens which were the envy of my life, though I can't remember having one myself. We played games like "Drop the Handkerchief", "Oranges and Lemons", "Sheep, sheep come home" and later, a rare game of "Footy" with the boys – there were only about 20 children in the school at that time.

One memorable occasion was the one and only paperchase I took part in. A few big boys set off with bags of paper torn up into little bits, which they dropped in dribbles as they ran. We followed after, giving them a start up the hill behind the school. One Tree Hill, and down the side jumping down a steep bank on to the paddocks to Pownal's where the trail ended I supposed. I must say I felt nearer death than ever before in my short life.

Of course the most dramatic event was in 1929. I was 7 when the Murchison earthquake hit us. At that age my memory may be a bit unreliable. We had just come in from morning playtime when Mrs Parkes, our teacher, asked if we would like another playtime. We obeyed very promptly and went outside near the road where she organised us to play "Drop the Handkerchief". I could only think she had lost her reason. I was stunned when I tried to run around the circle and my legs didn't work properly. I stopped and looked up to see Haycock's very tall chimney swaying to and fro. Then, scattering bricks, it collapsed completely. My father came after a while to see how we were getting on. I think the teacher was pretty glad to see him. He told us all to go straight home – no playing on the way. In fact, if he heard of anyone who didn't go straight home, he would be really angry – that was certainly enough for me. I got my bag and with my older sister Dot and cousin Phyllis we scampered off as far

as the bridge, which we crossed very cautiously as it was swinging about rather frighteningly.

We looked forward with great enthusiasm to the inspector's visits. The only one I remember was Mr Overton. He was rather like a benign but remote uncle, not surprising really as I believe he had about 10 children of his own. I just loved being called up to read to him. One of his enchantments was that he often nibbled at the bit of chalk. I tried it myself a good many times, but found it an unrewarding pastime.

The other visitor was Mr Cork, the nature study specialist. He looked at the rather desiccated gardens, but we enjoyed his visits when he recommended, in our hearing, that we should hug a tree, feel and look at the bark etc. I also remember his question when our teacher, Miss Espie, told him we were going to make an expedition to Green Hill and he asked "Is it outside a City Wall?" I was a bit shocked at his irreverence at quoting a hymn having been brought up in a truly Godfearing home, but I was also very amused at his aptness! Of course, after the business of embracing trees I knew for sure he was a pretty dotty "townie".

I was one of the last people to sit the Proficiency exams in its final years. We were taken to Dovedale School, where the inspector supervised the exam. I will always gratefully remember him because when he took us for spelling, never my long suit, he said the word very clearly. When he came to "vehicle" he pronounced the "h" and said "ve-hi-cle", stressing the "hic". It certainly gave me an extra mark.

Joyce Beatson

## TEACHING IN THE FIFTIES

My early memories of teaching at Ngatimoti and later at Orinoco, would not be viewed very favourably by young teachers or Teachers Union today.

I arrived for my first permanent teaching position in May 1955 to stay with Jack and Betty Brereton up on the hill. They made me very welcome and made me feel part of the family. They were able to give me a brief run down on the local gossip and the community happenings as well as school life as both were workers for the school and all their children had attended Ngatimoti School.

As a young teacher in my second year of teaching I was given the pre-fab for my class of Std 1 and 2 children. While waiting for the arrival of two classrooms from the old school which had been down by the Memorial Hall, the headmaster had to teach Stds 3-6 children in the bedroom and the lounge of the old house. He managed to keep control of these children in two different classrooms by means of a mirror which he had positioned on the wall in the hallway. Not an ideal way to watch over or educate active children and no doubt there are some fine tales told of this experience. This situation continued until the two classrooms were placed between the new junior block and the old house or hall as it is now. While alterations were taking place my pre-fab was often surrounded by a field of mud which made getting in and out quite perilous.

Before Ngatimoti School had a pool, swimming sessions took place in the Motueka River. Teachers would march their classes down to the Peninsula Bridge for a dip in the water with myself as their instructor. I would often spend all morning in the river teaching all classes. These lessons were quite challenging as the sloping floor of the river would cause panic for some of the shorter members of classes. The better or more adventurous swimmers enjoyed swimming out to the concrete piers in the middle of the river. A few years later when I was teaching at Orinoco, swimming lessons were just as hazardous. We would walk down the road to a small and often muddy creek which had very steep sides. I would have to lift all the junior pupils into the creek for their swim and then lift them out again as it was impossible to clamber up the slippery sides.

Sports days, pet days, folk dancing festivals and folk dancing club, the camera club, flower shows, and scouts kept life busy and enjoyable during my time in the district between 1955 and 1959. Some memories were not so enjoyable such as the day the whole district were digging out the grounds for the swimming pool. While digging, Mr Waghorn chopped off the end of a finger and then calmly carried on working as if nothing had happened. Or later, when Sid Thornton was buried up to his neck in a cave-in of the shaft they were digging. He was there for some time before he could be rescued and his life was in danger with the pressure of the soil on his body. Or the day the milk monitors tipped the school milk down the drains where it curdled and blocked all the pipes around the school. This milk came up daily from Motueka to Don Lamont's mail van. The school had to send to Motueka for a plumber to come and clear the mess up. Later, while at Orinoco, I was digging up the garden at the new school house and had just placed bean stakes in the ground when I was surrounded by water seeping up. I thought I had discovered an unknown spring but

found out to my cost that it was the polythene pipe which connected the house to the school for its water supply.

During the big flood of 1958 when the river rose 23 ft and almost came over the Peninsula Bridge, most of the district was swamped. Willie Waghorn had a great time in his canoe paddling around their house to rescue necessary gear. During this time Mr and Mrs Don Whelan were due to leave for an overseas trip. All roads were blocked and so they left for the airport on the back of a bulldozer over the hills.

My wife and I lived in Mr Doug Strachan's small house up on the hill which he told us would have been used as a hay barn had we had no use for it. After we left to live in the new school house at Orinoco, Ken and Pat Cliffin lived there for a year. Often on his way up the road to feed his animals, Mr Waghorn would throw up a swede or two to help feed the teachers. Cream was available by the bucket from Eddie Beatson's cowshed opposite the school gate. Life in the country was great!

I was talked or tricked into taking Scouts in the Memorial Hall. When Ken Cliffin arrived at Ngatimoti, I persuaded him to help me and often it wasn't clear just how had the most fun – the scouts or Ken and myself. Ted Canton and Dick Beatson started a Cub Pack and enrolled the first girl cub in the district, Judith Beatson.

These were happy years in the Valley which I have tried to share with you. My best wishes to you all and to all who can remember these happenings.

Terry Leahy

## RECOLLECTIONS – OCTOBER 1962 – MAY 1968

Gwenda and I arrived at Ngatimoti on a very wet and cold October afternoon. Our life at Ngatimoti was about to begin after having completed five wonderful years in the East Coast (North Island) school at Whangaroa. We were to experience a completely different but none the less rewarding lifestyle. We relished the opportunities to become part of the hopes, aspirations and challenges so typical of New Zealand communities in the sixties.

Some of the memories as they tumble from our minds include the following:

- Being touched by the humble welcome and gift of eggs from Mrs “Greenhill” Grooby, soon after our arrival.
- Coming to value the kindness of so many people in the valley, especially from Esther and the late Sid Thorn. It was an unforgettable sight to see their collapsed hop garden one summer afternoon. Just as unforgettable was the immediate response from so many people to help salvage the crop and provide the biggest variety of scones in our experience.
- Always feeling better for hearing the cheery greeting from our roadman, Frank Pierce – not to mention the late sessions in Frank’s “clubhouse” after our Sunday cricket.
- The enjoyment of monthly meetings at the CWI hall with practices for the choral festivals. How inconsiderate it was of Gwenda to break her leg the day prior to their Ngawhātu concert, when she had a lead part.
- As Principal of Ngatimoti School I became increasingly impressed with the positive and independent working attitudes of the pupils. This was definitely a community where co-operation was so vital. The nature of the tobacco industry depended on total involvement to get the tobacco plants in, nurtured, harvested and dried.

The job of Principal was made so much easier through this co-operation – from pupils, school committee, PTA and staff. I do recall however objecting to a phone call received in the hours of darkness from a single (nameless) female staff member. The request was to help recover her torch, which had fallen down the “long drop” and was still going. My offer to hold her by the ankles while she groped for the torch was declined! End of phone call.

One of the pupils who stands out in my mind was “young” Tommy Brereton. Tommy as a bright lad with an impish sense of humour. He was also physically very big. On one of the rare occasions that I had to reprimand Tommy, I stood up to my full 5 feet 6 inches and proceeded to let Tommy know the error of his ways. At the height of my onslaught Tommy looked down at me and very kindly said “Sir would it be easier for you if I sat down while you told me off?” From that point on it was all over.

However Tommy was to teach me yet another lesson. This time a cricket lesson! Our east bank cricket team was playing the rival west bank team, which we had never previously beaten. But on this occasion, playing on a personally doctored school wicket, my spin bowling was providing to be devastating or so it seemed. With nine wickets down and needing 25 runs to win, I strolled young Tommy. I bowled my first lethal spinner. Tommy with feet firmly anchored on the crease,

simply swatted at the ball – result – the ball cleared the grounds and ended up in the swimming pool. The rest of the over is too agonising for me to recall. It is sufficient to say that Tommy scored the rest of the runs (all boundaries) to give Barry Heath's west bank team the win. "Sorry about that Sir", smiled Tommy as he strode back to a hero's welcome.

The Friday night folk dancing evenings started by the late Roy Hunter and held in the school hall, proved so popular that we moved into the Memorial Hall, where Gwenda and I somehow found ourselves in charge with occasional extra help. They were really fun evenings.

Gwenda and I definitely felt the richer for our experiences at Ngatimoti.

Dick Parker

## TALES FROM ORINOCO

Anthony Canton, a pupil at Orinoco recalls some of his school experiences. Anthony now lives in Greymouth after fascinating experiences in far flung places like Sarawak where he served on VSA.

Tom Johnson: My first teacher. I remember him as a very kindly serious and deeply religious man. I can still remember us all singing hymns.... "In this World of darkness soooo we much shine. You in your small corner and I in mine." Whenever anyone had a birthday he would buy them a book for a birthday present. Plus we used to get little sorts of sermons every now and then all about how Jesus loves you and how we should be kind and loving etc – all good stuff!!! I'm sure it didn't do us any harm.

Coronation: I recall that we all marched around the school grounds. We had all been given little medals. I remember saying to whoever was next to me. "This is just like Dad in the Army."

Mr Cross: Was the nature study man who used to visit the schools. He was explaining that cicadas actually live underground for years crawling up the trees and changing into the adult form. Two of us boys found an empty skin and stuck it down a hole with the top sticking out, and exclaimed, "Hey, here's one that is climbing out". Mr Cross was quite pleased about it as it proved his point.

Swimming: We had a long walk to Swainstons (now Hadfields) swimming hole. Girls changed behind one lot of blackberry bushes and the boys behind another. No doubt my daughters growing up with school swimming pools and changing sheds would find it all rather primitive but we thought nothing of it.

I recall the day I was to try out for my 880 yards sticker on my swimming certificate. The first was for 50 yards. I got cramp and had to withdraw. I got a sticker all right but it wasn't for 880 yards.

Winter: Cocoa for the girls and malted milk for the boys. Later I think it was just cocoa. Skipping was the in thing in winter, especially on those freezing Orinoco mornings.

Mr Coleman's Mayflower: One teacher, Mr Coleman had a Mayflower car which we used to say was 'tinny' and useless etc. Mr Coleman took it in good fun until one day someone wrote in the dust on it 'tiny'. I remember him complaining that whoever did it couldn't even spell the word correctly.

Mr Dustin: the Arts and Craft Advisor who used to visit the school. Most people called him Mr Dustbin. He was quite a character.

School concerts: These were always a highlight of the school year featuring children's items in the form of plays etc. At the start an auction was held, but the big event was Father Christmas. One year he was played by Mr Don Llewellyn, and I remember him saying to me, "and don't go wandering around Greenhill too much"

and to my brother “and don’t go hanging around the red bridge with the girls”. I couldn’t fathom out how Father Christmas knew so much about everybody.

The Hayter: The school had a motor mower called a Hayter which I recall was a big powerful machine, and we used to think it was called that because it ‘hated’ the grass. We enjoyed wonderful grass fights.

Technical: Standard 5 and 6 pupils used to take the bus with the Ngatimoti kids to ‘tech’ in Motueka. Boys did woodwork and girls did cooking. We had a teacher we nicknamed “Gwip” because he used to say, “You gwip the hammer”. He also taught my Dad so he had been there some time. I think it was Mr Stuart. After he retired we had a younger teacher, Mr Marshall I think.

The great thing about ‘tech’ was going into town at lunchtime and buying pies from the Joyanne cake shop. Mmmmmm – I can still taste them.

We always thought the Ngatimoti kids were rather naughty – very noisy and daring to do all sorts of things that we Orinoco kids would never do. I sometimes wonder what they thought of us.

Schools Music Festival: Another big event. I recall at that time my dad was an artificial breeding technician and plastic pipettes, which were disposable came into use. Les Cowles was the headmaster at Ngatimoti and one of the children, I think it was Guthrie Beatson, brought one of these to school. Mr Cowles asked if he could use it for a conductor’s baton as each school used to put on an item. This he duly did and I still remember my dad and Dick Beatson trying to keep a straight face and my dad later saying he wondered what the audience would think if they had known where the baton has been!!!

Anthony Canton



## MEMORIES OF THE SIXTIES

Our family moved to the Motueka Valley in June of 1962. We discovered later that the farm was located right next to the where the 'old' Ngatimoti School had been situated until 1957 (close to the present Memorial Hall), before being moved to its present site in Greenhill Road. The five children in our family were associated with the school from 1962 until 1977.

For me, at ten years old, starting a new school was an adventure. During my three years there (S4 to F2) I remember:

- Biking the mile to school, past the Peninsula, the RSA Hall and the school house, shivering in the wind that blew from the close, snow-covered peaks of Mt Arthur, Sugar Loaf and Crusader. Winter in Ngatimoti was a freezing experience with frosts frequently down to 18 degrees Fahrenheit and thick ice on puddles which never melted. I always had chilblains on my toes and heels, but we had fun making tracks on the frosty lawns and writing messages on frosty windows.
- Dick Parker – our cheerful headmaster who showed good humour and discipline and gained high results from his school pupils. On rare occasions, when displeased he called us 'laddie' or 'lassie' in a stern voice and I remember a few F1 and F2 boys being sent down the corridor to the office where the strap was duly administered. Mr Parker LOVED charts – we made and displayed hundreds.
- Other teachers I remember in a positive way were Jenny Overy the infant teacher and Murray Taylor, Terry Grace would sometimes relieve in the senior classroom – he was especially strict about mental arithmetic revision and tested us first thing every morning. Mrs Gwenda Parker taught classes in reading or music and later on trusted me with fortnightly 'hairsets' and 'comb ups' (of my mother, June's arranging!)
- A visit from Mike Parkinson, a tall dark teacher who seemed 'famous' to me because he sang the 'Pinky Bar' confectionary advertisement on the radio.
- Mrs Dorothy Vincent drove the bus for senior class to attend manual training classes at Parklands School in Motueka. Mr Silke taught us both sewing and cooking and was strict but kind. I especially remember making Cornish pasties and having to hide them from those awful boys on the bus! We learnt to sew fine seams by hand as well as the old Singer machines.
- Remember the old pot-belly stove in the corner of the senior room which smoked and never really heated the place properly.
- Lining up with our mugs for hot cocoa (or Milo, I can't quite remember which) on winter days. It was made in a large stainless steel bucket and woe to the one on duty who forgot to turn the zip on in time to make this welcome playtime drink.
- A Greenhill Road farmer's bull chased a cow into the school grounds one lunch hour. The bell was rung and everyone told to stay inside until the red-faced

owner was located and herded the pair out from under the goal posts on the school field.

- School concerts in the Ngatimoti Memorial Hall. We all walked the mile from school for practices. I remember playing “Apple Blossoms” on the piano far too quickly and without much expression because of concert night nerves!
- Remember the barber, Francis Overend coming to school regularly to keep the men and boys looking well-groomed. That was before the Beatle hairstyles came into fashion. Haircuts only cost a few shillings then.
- Folk dancing in the school hall on Friday nights. We danced the Gay Gordons and Military 2-Step in time to a scratchy old record.
- Remember “The World We Live In” broadcast to schools in its stirring introductory theme and usually interesting content about current events. This was followed by a music lesson over the air.
- I remember my dad, Laurie Barnes going to school committee meetings along with Sid Thorn and Noel Haycock. Dad used to mow the school lawns with the tractor mower and carefully prepare the wicket in time for Saturday competition cricket games against Motueka and Dovedale. We children tagged along to help but usually we played tennis on the school courts, swam in the pool or climbed the old pear tree on the bank.
- Ngatimoti School holds happy memories for me and my brothers and sisters. I returned in the early seventies for brief periods as the school dental nurse and then saw the pupils from a staff member’s perspective – I’m sure they would prefer to forget!

I remember the school as a strong community based centre, with dedicated teachers, hard-working parents in a beautiful outdoors rural environment.

Robin Hinton (Barnes)

## HAPPY DAYS AT NGATIMOTI

I well remember that June Day in 1955. The door closed and my mother was gone. I raced to the door only to be beaten by Mrs Lilburn, my teacher who despatched Vivienne Whelan to lock the other door and to get some blocks for me to play with. These I duly threw at Mrs Lilburn and so my formal education began.

The first few days I spent wandering about the playground holding hands with Ruth Hunter who also started on the same day. Dianne Beatson, one of the more senior pupils at the time seemed to me to be the only kind person there – she took me to her parents' home just down the road from the school every lunchtime and so allowed me to escape this place people called "school" for an hour every day.

Time passed, I settled in and actually began to like the place. Mrs Annie Strachan was now my teacher – she used to bring off-cuts of wood which with imagination became bulldozers, trucks or scrapers in the sandpit. Many amazing civil engineering feats were achieved, only to be destroyed by some careless oaf's foot.

A patch of plantain weeds grew in the playing field and a game we played involved picking a seed head with a long stem. By folding the stem in a loop around the seed head and a quick flick of the wrist the seed head could be propelled some considerable distance. Ron Beatson was particularly good at this.

Mrs Strachan used to take us for swimming lessons in the Motueka River. The water was shallow and cold under the shade of the overhanging willows. We had to lie on the slippery stones and try to kick our feet in about 15 cm of water. Usually this ended in the stubbed toes or other equally painful experiences – few of us actually learnt to swim. Alan Anderson, who could already swim seemed to enjoy these occasions by finding little eels under the stones which often caused panic amongst the swimmers.

At about this time the school committee members were working on construction of the school swimming pool. I clearly remember the time when a fellow pupil came up to me and said "Ha ha ha, your father has just been buried in the well". It turned out that a well was being dug in Les Waghorn's paddock to supply water for the swimming pool. After Mr Francis Knowles had finished with his mechanical digger my father, Sid Thorn, was down in the well using a shovel – the well sides collapsed and Dad was buried up to his neck. The shovel caused severe damage to his knee resulting in him being hospitalised for the next five weeks.

Time moved on until we had a teacher by the name of Mr Ken Clifflen. I remember three particularly enjoyable projects with him. One involved building a Maori meeting house under the trees by the swimming pool. This involved lashing together a manuka stick frame and then a trip to a swamp on Mr Jack Mansfield's property at Waiwhero Road to get raupo leaves. These were bundled together then used to line the walls and thatch the roof.

The next project was making an Indian tepee and Indian clothing out of sacks and hessian.

Thirdly, we made an Eskimo kayak. Manuka sticks were lashed together and covered with hessian, many coats of tar later and the kayak was ready for launching. The swimming pool was the chosen venue and I think Ray Gardiner was the Eskimo. The craft was carefully placed upon the water – surprise – it floated but oh, what a list it had. Eskimo Ray prepared to enter the craft but before he could the kayak listed more and then sank.

School milk comes to mind. These half pint bottles of milk spent the day in the hot van of Mr Don Lamont, the mailman before being delivered in time for afternoon break at 2pm. The cream was usually so thick that unless the bottle was shaken vigorously before removing the top nothing would come out. For some strange reason I really liked this milk and remember many races with Alan Anderson – who was also an avid drinker – to see who could finish first or how many we could drink.

Then came a reliever, Terry Grace was his name. Addition, subtraction and tables were his game. Each morning twenty questions, and if you should hesitate you blew he lot. I hated those tests, Terry, but thank you for them now.

Visitors are a common part of any school and Ngatimoti was no exception. Mr Dan Tomlinson came each year to take our ANZAC service complete with some enthralling tales about the war. Another exciting visitor for me was Mr Arthur Lydiard, coach of the famous NZ four minute miler, Mr Peter Snell. I was asked to propose a vote of thanks. This was my first real speech and I remember the pride I felt when he came up to me afterwards and said what a good job I had done. Mr A H Reed, New Zealand's long distance walker called in one afternoon. He was on his journey from North Cape to the Bluff and spoke to the school under the old walnut tree which stood where Room 4 is today. Some years later Mr Dick Parker became our headmaster. I remember Dick as a teacher who everyone respected and wanted to please. It was no trouble to keep the class quiet when Mr Parker left the room. Dick, along with some of us schoolboys played Saturday cricket for one of the two Motueka Valley teams. Tom Brereton, a pupil, loved the occasions when one team met the other. Tom was known as a big hitter and Dick himself fancied himself as a spin bowler so who could forget schoolboy Tom dispensing headmaster Parker's bowls over the boundary for six, several times in one over. Dick was keen on all sports and I remember many rugby coaching sessions during the lunch hours of the winter teams.

During Form 1 and 2, we travelled by bus driven by Mr Dennis Brereton to Parklands School once a week for manual training. Boys to woodwork and girls to cooking. These were enjoyable times, especially eating some of the girls cooking on the way home. On one occasion the girls made some coconut-ice biscuits which looked particularly inviting. After the usual pleading and grovelling in the bus on the way home we were permitted to partake of these pink and white delicacies. Unbeknown to us Maureen Eyles (Fenemor) and I think Maureen Fry had prepared some squares of soap neatly coated with coconut – we definitely bit off more than we could chew.

I look back on my time at Ngatimoti School with many pleasant memories and close by thanking Mrs Lilburn for closing the door on that June day in 1955.

Ian Thorn

## **A LENGTHY ASSOCIATION**

We arrived at Ngatimoti in May 1968. Soon after the South Island was rocked by a major earthquake, which we subsequently learned was centred at Inangahua Junction the area we had so recently left. The bush fields and prosperous farms of Ngatimoti were in direct contrasts to the forests and mountains of the Coast, and we settled in happily for a 13 year sojourn in the Valley.

Ted enjoyed his years as principal at Ngatimoti. He had a simple straightforward philosophy to education – it is very important, full of challenge, and to be enjoyed. He was always accessible to parents and pupils had great respect for his fairness. He encouraged community involvement in the school: established the tennis club and defensive driving courses.

In winter his first task of the day was a pre-breakfast visit to the school, where he would light the fires in the four classrooms, so that when the pupils arrived on the buses on frosty mornings, they would be greeted by a warm glowing pot-belly. Summer, by contrast meant long hours in the sun mowing the lawns and generally keeping the school grounds in immaculate order.

In 1980 Ted was seconded by the Education Department to introduce the taha Maori programme in the Motueka and surrounding schools. This involved teaching over 1000 pupils each week in 6 schools. Work as ITM was demanding, but a teaching experience he undertook with pride and pleasure. He retired from teaching at the end of 1981 and we moved to Motueka, but our family memories of the years in the Valley are cherished as are the friendships built up over that time.

Apart from teaching activities Ted played a full part in district community affairs. During his years at Ngatimoti he was involved with the Rotary Club: was the Vicar's Warden at St James Church; the chairman of Motueka Maori Committee; and a member of the RSA, the family court for young offenders, the JR McKenzie Trust, the Whakarewa Trust Board, and a lay member of Synod.

Mrs Elaine Bennett

## MEMORIES OF NGATIMOTI

When I sat down now, 22 years after I last left Ngatimoti School and think back on my days there, my overwhelming feelings are of a place and of times that were and remain, some of the happiest memories of my life to date. The memories are as vivid as if it were only yesterday that I was at school, and my fondness for the place has not diminished one iota.

Now that I have children of my own I tell them stories nearly every night of my days of growing up in Ngatimoti and of all the different adventures I would go on, always starting with, "When Daddy was a little boy in Ngatimoti...". Whenever we manage to get a holiday back in the Motueka region we always take the children out for a drive to Ngatimoti, visit the school, swim down at the bridge, and generally show the children where I grew up and some of the things I used to do.

Teachers' families need to get used to moving, we shifted three times while I was a child, but of all the places visited, and as far as I am concerned Ngatimoti is and remains "home". The place just has that effect on me. I love it!!

As the child of a teacher, and better still the principal, we had a real advantage – the whole school was our playground. We had a tennis court, a swimming pool, a rugby paddock, you name it, we had it.

Mind you, we also had the task of getting out of bed at 6 every morning in the middle of a frost laden winter morning and trudging off to school with Dad to light all the pot belly stoves so that the rooms were warm for the start of the school day. We also had the cleaning of the swimming pool to do, the mowing of the school lawns, the stacking away of the school firewood and coal, the cleaning of the school toilets and the sweeping of the classrooms each night.

A small price to pay though when one considers the benefits we had.

My career is now that of an architect, and I have specialised in the area of educational architecture. I have been to literally hundreds and hundreds of schools in that capacity and I have only ever visited one other school, on the banks of Lake Karapiro in the Waikato, that has even come close to matching the special ambience that I feel Ngatimoti School has.

To my mind, Ngatimoti School is a real jewel in the Ministry of Education crown, a place with a unique and very special place in my life, and I am sure, in the lives of many others who have been associated with the school throughout its long and wonderful life.

Paul Bennet  
Wellington

## **ONE SMALL STEP FOR A MAN, ONE GIANT LEAP FOR MANKIND**

The scene as set. The venue, Murray Taylor's Room 2 at Ngatimoti Primary School, on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> day of July 1969.

All of the Room 2's desks and chairs were moved out to the assembly room, the wooden floors were swept and the cane mats set in neat rows in readiness for Ngatimoti's future scholars to watch history unfold.

I recall with clarity the absolute excitement, the anticipation of the experience we were about to indulge in to watch man's first steps on the moon – live. In my lifetime this would prove to be the start of a technological revolution. The black and white television (today's equivalent of the big screen) was strategically located on top of the school's oak piano. With rabbit ears delicately undergoing manual fine tuning the children watched as the NZBC logo got clearer whilst the audio clarity diminished during Dad's patient efforts to manually fine tune the outdoor broadcast!

Ready to go ... then the presenter explains there will be a delay of 30 minutes.... A quick play on the jungle gym and then in no time at all the entire school was back in Room 2 land all seated and ready for the most progressive event, we were told, to take place this century. The presenter told us the picture was live with a delay of only some 2 seconds between when it happened and when we saw it. Suddenly Ngatimoti Primary School was linked directly to the moon. Amidst the black and white snowing, we, along with 600 million other people, got to see the first man in the world place his feet on the moon's surface. We heard that the "eagle had truly landed" whilst Neil Armstrong mumbled his history making first words.

In 1969, I didn't see the astronaut attired with branded products such as Ray-Ban glasses, a Rolex watch or Nike-Airs. People then talked about the appropriateness of money being spent on sending people to the moon as opposed to cancer research. For me, simply driving a lunar module, flying Apollo 2, playing with my porridge as if it were the moon's surface and watching the "Thunder Birds" all helped to mould the innocent childhood daydreams and adventures of a 10 year old boy lucky enough to grow up in rural Ngatimoti.

## FROSTS AND PET ROCKS

Of all the family, I would think that the memories and marks of Ngatimoti are most strongly left in me. I lived in the school house beneath the chestnut tree on the hill from age 3 (1967) to age 16 (1980), so for me Ngatimoti represents the transition from tricycle to bicycle, to motorcycle to car – toddlerhood to childhood to puberty to young adulthood.

I broke my first bone at Ngatimoti, courtesy of Kim's generous but not extremely cautious pushing of my three wheeler. I rode my first two-wheeler unaided down the slope between the top field and the rugby field – I earned my first dollar at Don Whelan's walnut grove and had my first car drive around the school rugby field – many firsts and thinking back – many lasts. Winters at Ngatimoti School were the last time I've drunk Milo served from a 2 gallon steel bucket; Form 2 was the last time I ever got to be class monitor; my first day in the primers was the last time I have cried uninterruptedly from 9am until 3 in the afternoon.

Having subsequently gone a little further afield than Motueka it's funny to remember our fears/contempt/covert admiration of the townies. Inter-school sports exchanges were full of a kind of xenophobic fascination with these creatures. The hints of a lifestyle far more worldly and exotic than that enjoyed by we simple river folk meant that pupils from Parklands, Motueka South, Lower Moutere took on a mystique vaguely equivalent to a Paris model stepping into downtown Taihape. I recall our trips further afield were a bit more truly exotic. My father took Forms 1 and 2 to Queen Charlotte Sound, where we stayed at a kind of chalet-type holiday camp. Apart from the scenery, the walk, the fishing and complete beauty of the place, the most remarkable thing about the trip was the attack of communal hysteria that apparently over took the entire female contingent of the student body – perhaps it was something in the water, but it threatened to leave us with a bus 50% full of corpses for the return journey; we did make it back pretty much intact.

Pet days were important dates in the social calendar. I was never really a contender in the mainstream categories of competition but I tried to corner the field in the "Special Pets" section. Although I have fond memories of leading my pet chicken in the animal parade, I remember being devastated the next year when Kim Whitakers turtles took the ribbon ahead of my pet rock. Oh well!

I do wish I could be back for the reunion and I have a zillion questions I'd love answered. Do kids still sneak into the pool at weekends and jump off the pump shed roof? Do pea trucks still drive past in summer dropping off great vines of succulent peas? Does the dental nurse still give out bumble-bees made of drill boxes? Has anyone found the time capsule I buried in the front lawn of the schoolhouse? It is interesting how deep the scars (both literal and psychic) run from one's childhood environment. As far as I can tell, although I haven't been for there for many years, about 50% of my dreams still take place in Ngatimoti. Even though my dreams are of myself as an adult, the location is as often as not the tranquil little hamlet up the river where I passed most of my formative years. Best wishes for the reunion. I'll dream about it.

Michael Bennett



## MISS NEW ZEALAND

Excitement, excitement, excitement – yeah! Miss NZ is coming to visit our own country school. Mrs David Durrant’s sister has only recently been crowned, and whilst visiting her sister in the Valley had graciously agreed to visit us.

It was with trepidation the girls from F1 and F2 viewed the event. A feeling of gaucheness allied with country bumpkins image mingled together – fancy us meeting a real life beauty queen! It seemed unbelievable, akin to that buzz experienced by Elvis fans when they visit Graceland and get to touch his tomb, or perhaps that build-up and anticipation preceding a sneeze, and then the relief when it is all over.

She stepped out of the car to “oohs” and “aahs” and the click of cameras. (yes even I took a photo). She seemed so beautiful as she walked gracefully down the path between the school hall and the tennis court, each step closely followed and monitored by shy country pupils. I don’t remember much about her talk but I do remember our awful thinking and dreaming.

But, all good things come to an end. She moved back in to the car, and was driven away. We let out our collective breaths, went off and played rounders with the boys. Life went on, but dreams didn’t.

Gillian Bennet  
(Gillian is currently teaching in Rotorua)

## **DOROTHY VINCENT**

Pangatotara bus pupils from the mid-sixties to the late seventies will well remember Dorothy Vincent. She also drove the “manual” bus to Parklands. Dorothy, fondly known as “Ma Vincent” to the kids, was more than just a bus driver – she was an institution.

With her typical motherly attitude, Dorothy kept a close watch on the kids. For example, one particular 5 year old of the Williams family consistently forgot to bring home jerseys, shoes etc. In desperation, after many trips up to the school to retrieve these possessions the frustrated parents warned the child that he would have to go barefoot if he forgot his shoes again. Inevitably this happened and one little boy was out waiting for the bus, mid-winter, with very cold toes. Never again did he come home without his gear, not because he remembered but because, from then on, Dorothy made sure she kept an eye on what he wore and wouldn't let him on the bus after school without them.

Dorothy drove a little Fiat Bambina and sometimes the odd youngster would hitch a ride on the way up to the school to get the bus. This mainly happened when tennis or some other activity was the ‘in’ thing at school. Occasionally it got to the stage where there were so many youngsters wanting to go early that Dorothy would take Reg's big car so that she would have room for them.

I am sure many families will have their own anecdotes re. Dorothy's driving days and week-end of the reunion will see them revived.

Dorothy died earlier this year but “Ma Vincent” will live on in the memory of all those youngsters who travelled in her bus.

Jill Williams

## THE MARTIN YEARS

My seven and half years at Ngatimoti School has left me with many happy and lasting memories. I taught in a district interested and dedicate to its school. It was in many instances the social centre. I was fortunate also in having a competent and dedicated teaching staff and a hard working school committee to support me during those years. The children were pleasant country kids, keen and eager and responsive.

Much happened during those seven and a half years. The administration block was upgraded and the two new classrooms built, or was it one and a half? Remember squeezing more than 20 children in a half classroom around the back, Eric? The roll peaked at over 140 and space was scarce. "Bums on seats" would get us the much needed new buildings, they said but bureaucracy moved slowly in those times. Harsh letters and phone calls finally won us the rooms. With the community support many projects were undertaken such as the building and financing of the two full-sized tennis courts, landscaping and planting of trees and shrubs, the installation of a solar heating unit for the swimming pool and some upgrading of the school hall. The era of technology swept amongst us and photocopiers were purchased. The school library was built during this time also. We cribbed an extra four metres of space, traded on the condition that we undertake its painting. Whilst the quality of the paint job survived close scrutiny and inspection, it didn't win us any more contracts!

The concerts, the musicals "Frog Prince" and Pied Piper", the instrumental items, the choir all took their turns at entertaining. I am sure they were appreciated by the district. I even had the dental nurse brandishing her trumpet down the aisle of the Memorial Hall once.

Field days at the end of the year and many exchanges for sports events were part of the scene. I can recall picnic days at Kaiteriteri and my car being discreetly jacked up. No wonder 10 people waited back to see me go nowhere.

Outdoors education camps took us to Marahau, Golden Bay and the South Islands West Coast. My greatest difficulty on these occasions was controlling the camp mums. Rocks in sleeping bags, pyjamas tied up in knots, cabins booby trapped, but they still managed to feed and look after 30 plus children with efficiency and skill. I'll never forget that family doctor of yours in Westport, Nova.

I still pass the school, occasionally stop and walk around, but always look back with nostalgia. Challenging years, yes but for me rewarding. Thanks for the memories.

Dave Martin

## **TOMORROWS SCHOOLS**

My appointment to Ngatimoti School as principal in 1987 was not only a special milestone in my teaching career but it also coincided with the beginning of what has been the greatest upheaval in the New Zealand education system since it began. Thirteen curriculum changes in 1988 heralded the way for 1989 and the implementation of the Tomorrows Schools, the speedy demise of the old Education Boards and Department. We moved into business mode, becoming accountable for not only the children's education but the financial, property, personnel and professional management of the whole school. We were on our own. The extent of the changes was reflected in the move from Banda to photocopier, typewriters to computer and now phone to fax.

The administrative and technological changes did not however detract from the real essence of Ngatimoti, the community involvement. Field day judges, ANZAC visits from Dan Tomlinson and the generous donation from the Ngatimoti RSA when it disbanded, good neighbour Les Waghorn, Pat Beatson sharing his early memories of the school with us before they were published, visiting Coralie Grooby's house, visits to White Rock, Jenny Shearer and her band of willing workers raising funds for the library and resource upgrade, the Friday lunches with the saveloys and yummy cakes. We were never short of help when it was needed.

Being 'country' did not detract from the quality of the children's education. The dedication and professionalism of staff saw an update of the curriculum document and resources. Their ability to keep informed and up-to-date in so many areas was impressive. I have special memories of the exciting and wide ranging display of work and field days, end of year performances, and the sharing at assemblies, science fair successes, the Motueka music festival and overall high standard of academic achievement, sporting success and cultural events.

Ngatimoti is a school I shall remember for its caring staff, diverse community, hands-on involvement of parents, the sheer beauty of the location and most of all the children.

Barbara Greenwood

## **ODDS AND ENDS**

### **NGATIMOTI**

By 1874-76 R Sutcliffe was Ngatimoti teacher and inspector commented on the rising inflection of the children's speech. Otherwise the children's work was improving (Reports of schools from Nelson Government Gazette. 1869-70, 1874-76)

The report of 1877 stated that one quarter of scholars had not returned being wanted at home since the January floods. Otherwise copy books were neat, numbers were 26 and the teacher was Mr Sutcliffe. (Colonist, 7 July 1877).

An advertisement appeared in the Colonist inviting tenders to make an addition to the Ngatimoti schoolroom. (Colonist, 25 Oct. 1877.)

The new school was opened on the Tuesday 5 Feb. to replace the old school built about 40 years previously. The settlement had grown elsewhere, so 18 months ago a new site was chosen in the centre of the settlement. Here three roads to Motueka, Dovedale and Upper Moutere met. The settlers had levelled and sown the playing area, the two new classrooms were 21'6" by 19'6" by 17'6" and the corridor was 28'7" by 7". There was adequate shed accommodation and a septic tank had been installed, the furniture and equipment had been renewed. A.R. Wills was the head teacher.

The school committee entertained visitors at a luncheon in the decorated corridor. Present were Education Board members and officials and the builders and plumber. The school committee members were Guy Beatson, L. Health, T Brereton, J Beatson and A Brereton. Mr Sutcliffe was present as the oldest resident aged about 80, and as his father had been an early school teacher of Ngatimoti. There were speeches and toasts. It was noted that the committee had been able to raise £75. The opening ceremony took place in the afternoon with more speeches. Then Mrs [Matilda, presumably] Whelan turned the key in the door and those present were able to inspect the school. Afternoon tea was served under the trees. (Nelson Evening Mail, 6 Feb. 1924)

### **PANGATOTARA**

June 1869 Pangatotara had about 33 pupils. Mr Brown was the teacher and attendance suffered due to the site of the 1877 school which was near swamps and streams, a likely cause of keeping children away.

In 1874-76 Mr Deck was schoolmaster at Pangatotara and the school has been removed to a more central site with already an improvement in attendance. (Reports of schools from Nelson Government Gazette, 1869-70, 1874-76).

On New Year's Day 1877 there was a school tea party with races for the children, cricket for men and rounders for women. The children recited and received their prizes after having their tea (Colonist, 9 Jan 1877).

By July 1877 children's attendance was still affected by summer floods. There were 19 scholars with Mr Hale as teacher (Colonist, 7 July 1877).

## **DOVEDALE**

The Dovedale School 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary was held 8 Nov 1877 with a party and a ball. (Colonist 1 Nov 1877)

Mrs Rita Jones, now residing in Auckland, makes note of the fact that she attended Pangatotara School in 1942-43 and wondered if the school is still standing.

Mr Don Grady, former pupil, noted author and journalist is attending the Wakefield School reunion at the same time but hopes to be able to visit at some time during the weekend.

Mrs Hazel Williamson (nee Remnant) now living in Thames mentions that she is the last of the Remnant families who attended both Pangatotara and Ngatimoti Schools from approximately the early 1900's to 1933-34. Her father, Mr Christopher Remnant was Chairman of the Pangatotara School for many years.

Rona Hulme (nee Black) of Te Puke was a pupil at Woodstock School around 1918.

Dorothy Crust of Richmond recalls that Mr Scott had the pupils clean up the strip of garden between the semi-circle of concrete and the old netting fence. He then purchased named gladioli bulbs for each pupil to plant. Mrs Crust's bulb was named "Black Magic". She also recalls air raid practices during World War Two.

Cynthia Jonas of Stoke was a pupil from 1946 and also taught at Ngatimoti.

Diana Wessel (nee Gardiner) attended Ngatimoti School in 1948-49. Her family lived where Laird and Raewyn Jenkins now live.

Mr Norris Hudson of Stoke attended the original Ngatimoti School from about 1915 or 1916. He recalls that Mr Silcock was the headmaster. Mr Remnant lived next door.