



News & Views



Summer 2020-2021

Our Women's Network North Shore • PO Box 34-383, Birkenhead, Auckland 0746 • info@own.org.nz • www.own.org.nz

OWN



Happy Holidays

Eat some chocolate
Drink some wine
And the night is mighty fine

Grab some shortbread
And some cider
And a roasted turkey slider

Have some eggnog
And some cake
Disregard the stomach ache

Dip some fruit in crème anglaise
And enjoy the holidays!

Mariya Olshevska
(Canadian blogger)



OWN is a women's network which connects women through a variety of activities and events which enhance feelings of belonging and well-being

Dear OWN members . . .

This year, because of COVID-19, it has been a topsy-turvy time for OWN members. Having to stay inside and keeping a 2-metre distance when out and about has been hard, especially for those living alone, but we seemed to have come through virtually unscathed. Our events and get-togethers have been few, but enjoyable when meeting up with friendly faces.



Our **OWN AGM 2020** and **High Tea** became a combined event (photos below). This was because:

- we had to have the **OWN AGM** before the end of the year, and
- we did not want to miss out on our annual **High Tea**, which is looked forward to so much by our members.

It was attended by 30 women and three Board Members. *Te Aorere Chan* did the karakia. The election of OWN officers took place, with one person resigning and two new members offering their services.

We wish to thank *Joan* for her years of tireless service to OWN as Chairman, and also to *Chris Griffiths* for the great work she has put in as a Committee Member. We wish both ladies well.

Sarah Thorne demonstrated crafts associated with High Tea giving us some terrific ideas to try ourselves. The theme for the day was *Counting Our Blessings* inspired by *Anne Mutu's* heart-warming story. *Te Aorere* did a mihi which was wonderful. *Emma's*

OWN Committee 2020 / 2021

| | | |
|------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Chairman | <i>Judy Brocherie</i> | |
| Secretary | <i>Lennie Crawford</i> | |
| Treasurer | <i>Beate Matthies</i> | |
| Officers | <i>Val Bird</i> | <i>Marje Enyon</i> |
| | <i>Pat Bish</i> | <i>Anita Knape</i> |
| | <i>Jos Coburn</i> | <i>Joan Lardner-Rivlin</i> |



Own Catering supplied the delicious lunch, which was up to her usual high standard. *Jeanette*, our pianist, provided a musical background as she tickled away on the ivories.

An occasion like this does not happen on its own. Many thanks to our Secretary *Lennie*, who did a great deal of the organising with the Takapuna North Community Co-ordinator *Sarah Thorne*. We also thank *Sarah* and the *Takapuna North Community Trust Board* for their invaluable help, which means so much to us.

I would like to wish all our members a **Happy Christmas** and holiday time with family and friends, and look forward to seeing you all in 2021.



Judy Brocherie
Chairperson



The previous issue of **OWN News&Views** had a typo. The cover date mistakenly said "Spring 2019" instead of "Spring 2020". Apologies for any confusion this may have caused.



“Life’s journey is not
to arrive at
the grave safely,
in a well-preserved body
... but rather
to skid sideways,
totally worn out, shouting,
'Holy cow! What a ride!'”

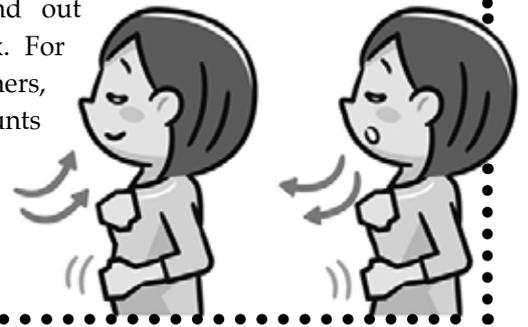
Mavis Leyrer (83 years young)



Just Breathe

With statistics showing that stress and anxiety continue to be the biggest factors affecting our wellbeing at the moment, we could all benefit from taking a few deep breaths. Here are some tips for breathing easy, courtesy of the UK's *BeSopbro Clinic*:

- Place one hand on your chest, the other on your stomach.
- Imagine you have a balloon where your stomach is. As you inhale, the balloon starts to inflate; as you exhale, it deflates.
- Exhale to double the length of your inhales, so in through your nose for three counts, and out through the mouth for six. For experienced deep breathers, you can increase those counts proportionally, i.e. in for five, out for ten.
- Repeat mindfully for two to three minutes.



OWN Groups

Writing for Future Generations

Please inform the appropriate Group Convenor prior to attending.



Browns Bay Group meets on the second Saturday of each month at the *Bays Community Centre*, Browns Bay. For details, contact *Patricia Russell*, ph: 479-7519 or ph: 021-064-9522.

Beach Haven Group meets on the fourth Saturday of each month at the *Cedar Centre*, Beach Haven. For details, contact *Anne Mutu*, ph: 483-7704.

OWNs Alone Lunch

Meets on Sundays, twice monthly, at the *Fairview Retirement Village*, Albany. For details, contact *Judith Sumich*, ph: 478-6618.

OWN Theatre Group

Exploring more theatre visits and other activities. For further details, contact *Joan Lardner-Riolin*, ph: 483-9671.



OWN Browns Bay Coffee Group

Come and join us for a cuppa, or maybe lunch. Meets at 11:30am on the last Tuesday of each month at *White Flower Café*, Browns Bay. For details, contact *Val Bird*, ph: 475-6601 or email: valbird51@hotmail.com



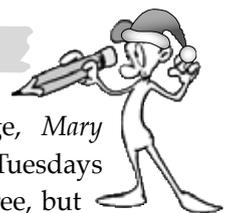
OWN Discussion Group

Meets at 10:00am on every second Tuesday of the month. We are looking for more people to join us. A range of subjects is discussed and it is a very interesting morning. Held in Room 3 (1st floor) of the *Bays Community Centre*, Browns Bay. For details, contact *Jeanne Ford*, ph: 410-4803.

Heloisa's Art Classes

New members welcome.

Held in the Channel View Lounge, *Mary Thomas Centre*, Takapuna on Tuesdays (2:00pm – 4:00pm). The classes are free, but a gold coin donation to cover material costs is appreciated. To register, contact *Roanna*, ph: 021-416-778 or email: roanna@takapunatrust.org.nz



Remember to check out www.own.org.nz for news, pictures, events, etc.



Count Your Blessings



I am a great believer in stressing the positive. And to this end, counting your blessings with gratitude on a regular basis for well-being. I have had the good fortune of many blessings in my life.

Firstly – it has been a great experience to have had a life. I had an absolutely idyllic childhood in a beautiful place.

I have always been surrounded by love. Loving parents, three lovely sisters. Most important – a loving husband and two loving daughters, 12 grandchildren, and soon to be 11 great-grandchildren, plus all the in-laws. How lucky can you be!!

I have had many, many good friends, some lifelong, enriching my life immeasurably. What a blessing they have been.

I have had the privilege of marrying into a Maori family, and learning their history and different ways of looking at life, bringing a broadening of my own horizons.

I have the security of having my own home, and thanks to the superannuation, enough money to live comfortably.

I have had good health all my life, until now, when frailties of old age are beginning to be felt. What a really good blessing good health has been.

I have had the privilege of living in this lovely country for 68 years, 60 as

a citizen. This is truly a wonderful place to live.

Then there are all the smaller blessings in life – a lovely warm bed to sleep in, a garden to work in and enjoy, the pleasure of a pet dog or cat, and all our fellow creatures, mammals, birds and sea-life that we share this planet with, the absolute joy that grandchildren bring, and then the guiding Spirit of God above to help you do all the right things in life.

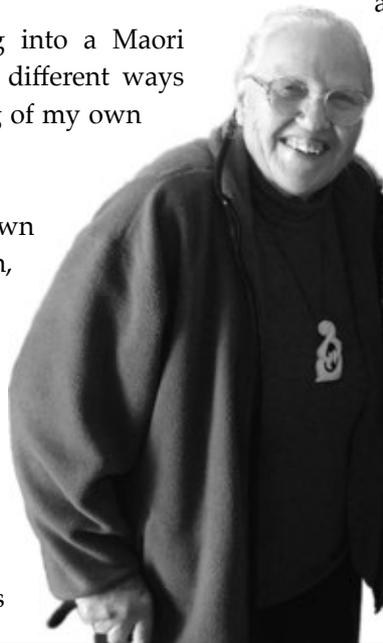
But of course, it has not been a life with only good things. Life has sent me troubles and sorrows as it does to us all.

Along the way I have lost loved ones. A family with the BRAC gene has wreaked havoc with the females in our family; a handicapped child born into the family; the untimely death of a 20-year-old nephew; a grandson, depressed and on suicide watch; a bout of depression as a young wife; some hard times financially. In short, the normal troubles that many of us encounter.

But I am a great believer in counting my blessings every day. There are many things you can't change in life, but one thing you do have power over – your own attitude.

And I must say that I have been very fortunate in this life and I have had the most amazing time here on this earth.

Anne Mutu



Live Your Life With Purpose

Focus on your blessings, not your misfortunes.

Focus on your strengths, not your weaknesses.

Be yourself and don't wait for the approval of others.

But most importantly, have a positive and humble mindset no matter what situation you are in.

Count your blessings, not your problems, and you will realise how beautiful your life truly is.

Troy Amdahl





Russian Fudge

Sweet, caramel-coloured, creamy smooth fudge.

Ingredients

- 2 cups Sugar
- 1 tablespoon Golden Syrup
- 2 tablespoons Condensed Milk
- 125g Butter
- ½ teaspoon Cream of Tarter
- ½ cup Milk
- Pinch of Salt

Method

1. Mix ingredients over a gentle heat to dissolve the sugar.
2. Bring to the boil and cook for 20 – 30 minutes (stir regularly) until the mixture is a dark caramel colour.
3. Remove from the heat and beat until thick.
4. Pour into a buttered dish and allow to cool.
5. Cut into squares.



Good Ideas

- Small bags of fudge can make a great Christmas gift, especially for unexpected guests.
- Use small cookie cutters and decorations for stars, circles, bears, or gingerbread men.



Helen Welsh was born on 25 February, 1930 in Sherburn, Country Durham, England. She was the middle of three girls and says she had a happy childhood considering she grew up during the war years.

After qualifying as a nurse in 1951, *Helen* worked in hospitals in England, New Zealand, and Fiji. It was in Fiji she met and married her beloved *George*. He was a forestry worker.

In 1958, *George* accepted a post to work in Malawi, so with a young daughter in tow off they went. While living there for 23 years they had two more children. The family were able to travel extensively, so had many wonderful and varied experiences while seeing quite a bit of the world. The areas where *Helen* and *George* lived were very remote. *Helen* home-schooled the young children and as they grew older they were sent to England to boarding school.

When *George* retired, he and *Helen* returned to live in England. She emigrated to New Zealand 15 years ago where younger daughter *Gina* and husband *Nigel* live with their three children.



Helen has been a member of OWN for several years. Her interests over the years have included botany and photography. She is a very accomplished artist, writer, and poet. *Helen* is a much-loved member of the Browns Bay OWN **Writing for Future Generations Group**, keeping us enthralled with her stories and poems on life in Malawi. She is interested in current affairs and regularly attends the local monthly discussion groups.



To celebrate her 90th birthday, *Helen* wanted to see a starlit sky in the darkness of the country with no city lights or buildings. *Gina*, *Nigel*, and *Helen's* son *Martin* (who had come from England for the celebration) took her up to Waipu. Here she was able to lie on the grass and look up and marvel at the starlit night sky. This was heaven to *Helen* and has since been much talked about.

We wish *Helen* all the best, and long may she continue to enjoy life to the fullest.

Judy Brocherie





Wartime in Denmark



When I was eight years old, German soldiers came in the middle of the night knocking on the windows, calling "Aufstehen!" (get up) loudly. Our parents got up and let them in. They were accompanied by a Danish man, who could speak German and was willing to interpret for them. They asked about our Jewish girl, *Ruth*, who had lived with us for some time. She had been helping our Mum in the house. I was awake and heard them talking. I was afraid they might shoot us. I could see their guns through the gap in the partly open door, and was quiet as a mouse.



People celebrating the liberation of Denmark in Copenhagen (1945)

My heart was racing. Our Dad told them that *Ruth* had left our family and found work in another household in the next village. He told them the name and how to find them. Then they left. He hadn't mentioned that *Ruth* had since moved on from there.

We heard later that *Ruth* had been warned of their coming. She had dyed her black hair red and was walking down the road with her suitcase, hoping to escape. At the same time, the Germans were driving up the same road to try and catch her. They most likely passed each other, but *Ruth* managed to escape to Sweden, which was neutral. We didn't know that

until after the war, when we received a Christmas card from *Ruth*, posted around Christmas 1943. She was on the way to Palestine. The post office had kept that card a long time. Maybe they thought we would get into trouble if discovered by the Germans.



Our parents had a Polish girl living with us at the time when the Jews were being sought. She had heard them coming in the night and was afraid they had come to take our food. Also, they might suspect she was Jewish and ill-treat her.



Our village had a Jewish school teacher in those days. His wife, also Jewish, was an excellent dressmaker, who had made some dresses for our Mum. I remember one dress, which had been so beautifully decorated with hundreds of small shiny pearls. We heard that this lovely couple had been taken to a concentration camp in Germany, and that the wife had been pregnant and had lost the baby. We didn't ever find out if they had survived after that.



There were many stories about those times. Afterwards, books were written, and I read them with great interest. Stirring times indeed.

Betty Vaototo

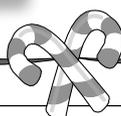
The Clock of Life

The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop
At late or early hour.

To lose one's wealth is sad indeed,
To lose one's health is more,
To lose one's soul is such a loss
That no man can restore.

The present only is our own,
So live, love, toil with a will,
Place no faith in "Tomorrow",
For the clock may then be still.

Robert H. Smith



Soup



A small flat, no car or telephone (there was a long waiting list for phones in 1959), no TV, and I was alone all week with a baby and a toddler. I was lonely; the neighbours were all out to work and family were all on the other side of the city – a bus, ferry, and another bus trip away. I longed for the weekend when *John* would be home.

Saturday was taken up with chores – lawn-mowing of a large section, gardening, and the boil-up of a copper for the weekly wash which I was unable to do during the week as the laundry was in a separate building some distance from the house and I could not leave the children. An exhausting

day ... but Sunday ... ah, Sunday. That would be the day we could go out as a family together. There were of course no retail outlets open on Sunday then, no entertainment offerings either, no car meant we had to stay in the neighbourhood, but that would be fine. We could walk to the local dairy to buy ice-creams and then on to the near-by park to eat them. *Julie* could play on the swings (with our help) and *Peter* could sleep peacefully in his pram. And I would have another adult to have for company and to talk to and make future plans with.

Oh, how eagerly I waited for that magical Sunday – the anticipation gave me the encouragement to manage the preceding week.



I remember that I made soup for an early lunch on that Sunday. It was thick with lots of vegetables and barley. Then we would go out ... I thought! I also thought I had talked over my plans for that day, but maybe the

discussion was only in my head, because when I mentioned it would soon be time to go, *John* said, "Oh, sorry. I have a meeting I have to attend this afternoon." With that he stood up from the table and fetched his jacket.

This took my breath away. I couldn't believe it. All week the anticipation had built up and suddenly my plans came crashing down. I stood stunned as he walked towards the door with a cheery goodbye, and then I exploded.

I held a cup of that thick soup in my hand and as he stepped through the door, I threw it as hard as I could at his retreating back. But my timing was faulty, because the door closed – with him on the other side. The cup (wedding present china) smashed and the soup went everywhere.

I spent a great part of that eagerly-awaited Sunday afternoon cleaning up. That was the first and last time I ever threw something in a rage – I'd learned a hard lesson. I also learned the value of talking about my plans aloud and not keeping them in my head, assuming they would work out.

As for *John*, he was totally unaware of my mini-drama and arrived home several hours later in a happy mood, ready to do whatever I wanted. Such a shame that it was early winter, the daylight almost gone, and much too cold to take the children out. Oh well.

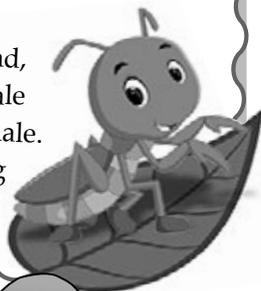
Shirley Williams



Out of the mouths of babes ...

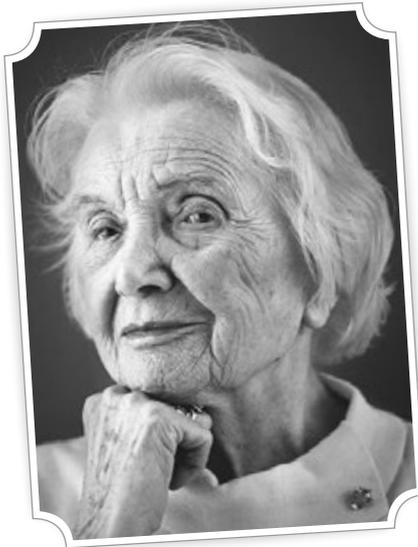
I spotted five year old budding-zoologist *Ryan* bothering a praying mantis on the deck, poking at it with a leaf, its front legs were raised in defence. "Can you see it has a swollen abdomen *Ryan*?" I asked. "It looks like it is about to become a mum, so be careful not to hurt it."

Later that evening he was telling a family friend, "I found a praying mantis today. It was of the female species." She asked how he knew it was female. "Well it had a very large bottom and was showing signs of aggression," he said.





Five Simple Rules



This 92-year-old, petite, well-poised, and proud lady, who is fully dressed each morning by 8:00am, with her hair fashionably coiffed and makeup perfectly applied, even though she is legally blind, moved to a nursing home yesterday. Her husband of 70 years recently died, making the move necessary.

After many hours of waiting patiently in the lobby of the nursing home, she smiled sweetly when told her room was ready.

As she manoeuvred her walker to the elevator, I provided a visual description of her tiny room, including the eyelet sheets that had been hung on her window. "I love it," she stated with the enthusiasm of an eight-year-old having just been presented with a new puppy.

"Mrs. Jones, you haven't seen the room ... just wait," I said.

"That doesn't have anything to do with it," she replied. "Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time. Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how the furniture is arranged, it's how I arrange my mind. I already decided to love it. It's a decision I make every morning when I wake up. I have a choice. I can spend the day in bed recounting the difficulty I have with the parts of my body that no longer work or get out of bed and be thankful for the ones that do. Each day is a gift, and as long as my eyes open I'll focus on the new day and all the happy memories I've stored away, just for this time in my life."

She went on to explain, "Old age is like a bank account, you withdraw from what you've put in. So, my advice to you would be to deposit a lot of happiness in the bank account of memories. Thank you for your part in filling my memory bank. I am still depositing."

And with a smile, she said, "Remember the five simple rules to be happy ..."

1 Free your heart from hatred.

2 Free your mind from worries.

3 Live simply.

4 Give more.

5 Expect less and enjoy every moment!



Photograph by Karsten Thormaehlen.



OWN's Kitchen



Strawberry Meringue Delight

A simple and delicious summer strawberry dessert.

Ingredients

- 2 large punnets of Strawberries (cut into quarters)
- ¼ cup Castor Sugar
- 1 cup Whipped Cream
- 1 cup Greek Yoghurt with Honey
- 1 packet of small Meringues.
- Grated Chocolate

Method

1. Sprinkle sugar over the strawberries and set aside.
2. Gently combine the whipped cream and yoghurt.
3. Crumble the meringues into chunks.
4. Add meringues and ¾ of the strawberries (reserving the remainder for decoration) to the yoghurt cream mixture.
5. Arrange in serving glasses or on plates.
6. Decorate with remaining strawberries then top with grated chocolate.
7. Put in the fridge until serving.





This “hobby” started early in life. On Sunday afternoons my father spent his time with the children. In summertime he took us for long walks through the countryside and told us all the names of the flowers which were blooming in the grass.

In wintertime he played games with us at the dining room table. One wintry Sunday afternoon he put a box at the table and showed us a jigsaw puzzle. The table cloth came off and he put all the pieces of the puzzle on the wooden surface.

The first thing we had to do, was to turn over all the pieces, so that we could see what was on them. The lid of the box showed us several different dogs who were playing cards around a round table, some were smoking. One of the dogs, a white bulldog, was cheating. You could see him passing an Ace in his paw under the table to the dog next to him. A lamp was shining on the players and I recalled that there was lots of smoke around them.

I remember that puzzle very well because we made it several times.



I don't know what happened to the puzzle, it simply disappeared and I never saw it again.

Many years later, *John* and I went to a small pub in Amsterdam. To my astonishment, on the wall of the pub was this picture of those dogs playing cards, my favourite puzzle picture. I had the feeling I met an old friend, it was such a realistic memory!



Making jigsaw puzzles is something I have done my whole life. I was so lucky that my darling *John* had the same interests. When

our children came along, we bought them, already at a very young age, jigsaw puzzles. I think that we must have made hundreds of puzzles together, many on those wintry afternoons.

Now, it is COVID-19 time, and we should keep ourselves away from others. So there is lots of time to do many more puzzles. We also exchange our puzzles with friends with the same hobby.

I have to stop my story ... because there is a puzzle on the table, waiting to be finished!!

Sanny Leur



Fun Christmas Facts

- 1 In the 1800s, artificial Christmas trees were developed in Germany made from dyed goose feathers or raffia.
- 2 *Jingle Bells* was originally written for Thanksgiving in America in 1857 by *James Lord Pierpont* and titled *One Horse Open Sleigh*.
- 3 Due to lack of fir and pine trees in India, people use banana or mango trees instead as a Christmas tree.
- 4 In Japan, many people go to *Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC)* for their Christmas dinner, thanks to a successful advert campaign run in the 1970s.



A Survivor's Story



The other day I came across a photo of my god-daughter and me on her wedding day. She looked radiant. I looked better than I had several months earlier; my hair had started to regrow.

In May 2002, a girl-friend mentioned that she was going for a mammogram. I decided to go as well, as I had felt some hardening of the tissue in my left breast; not exactly a lump. A core biopsy confirmed infiltrating ductal carcinoma. Cancer. After discussing it with the oncologist and the surgeon, I decided to have a mastectomy and removal of the affected lymph nodes.

The surgery took place on 25 June. Post-op, I felt no pain whatsoever, and I could go home after two days.

Chemotherapy started three weeks later. The treatment is over three months and is given every third week with each procedure lasting 2½ to 3 hours. I knew that one of the side effects was losing one's hair and that no amount of willpower for it not to happen could be avoided. It did happen and it was absolutely ghastly. Clumps of hair on the pillow in the morning. Yuck. I finally took the vacuum cleaner to my head and sucked it all out. I was then given a voucher to select a hairpiece in a well-stocked wig shop. This is where I missed my chance. When I could have chosen to be a super blonde, I instead selected a wig that looked like the hair I had lost. I hated the feeling of it on my scalp.

The last part of the treatment was radiotherapy, which I found scary. The patient is put into a machine emitting powerful rays. Staff leave the room and you are alone. The machine is switched on. I can't remember how many times this was repeated.

I gave this story to my eldest daughter to read and she was surprised that all these years later, I have no recollection of the fact that I was told my cancer was extremely aggressive and I was given a 35% chance

of survival. I can't remember having been part of a clinical trial for the treatment I received. My daughter tells me that when presented with the percentage, I told her that it doesn't matter what the odds are: statistics in this type of instance were meaningless. What matters is the group you are in ... those who survive, or those who don't.

What I do remember is that I felt safe, once I received my pert false. I told myself, "You are lucky. Get on with your life."

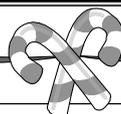
I am grateful to the kind health professionals who cared for me back then and who have continued to do so after some of the breast cancer cells made it into my lung in 2018. But that's another story.

Irene Knowles



 **“Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says 'I'll try again tomorrow'.”**

Mary Anne Radmacher (US writer and artist, and breast cancer survivor)



Fun Puns

- A** You are stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.
- B** A calendar's days are numbered.
- C** When you've seen one shopping centre you've seen a mall.
- D** No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
- E** A small boy swallowed some coins and was taken to hospital. When his grandmother later telephoned to ask how he was, the nurse said, "No change yet."
- F** The batteries were being given away free of charge.
- G** Police were summoned to a daycare centre where a three-year-old was resisting a rest.
- H** The butcher backed into the meat grinder and got a little behind in his work.
- I** Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.
- J** She was only a whisky maker, but he loved her still.



Precious Water

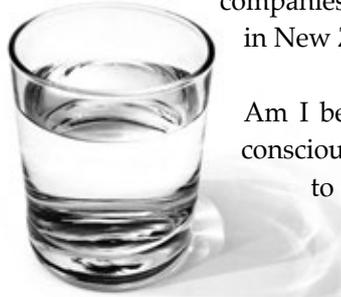


Living on a small island with only tanks to collect rain water for our water supply, I learned to appreciate piped water from a main reservoir, because with tank water supply one could never just turn on the tap and 'Hey Presto!', a never ending supply, without being conscious of waste.

During a summer drought every drop was conserved, usually showering with buckets in the shower with you. You then used the water from the buckets to either flush the toilet or, if your vegetables were still alive, to try to keep them flourishing and edible. Even water from the washing machine was saved and taken in buckets down the hill to the vegetable plot.

On returning to life in the city, I again became extravagant in my water use. Then we began to be charged for each drop, not just as part of our Council rates. Once again, I became a conservationist.

There is controversy now about allowing our water to be given freely to companies who are bottling and selling it, not just here in New Zealand, but exporting it overseas also.

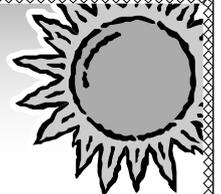


Am I becoming a 'Greenie' in my old age, or am I just conscious of New Zealand's 'she'll be right' attitude to our precious resources?

Mary Anne Baird



Planting Day

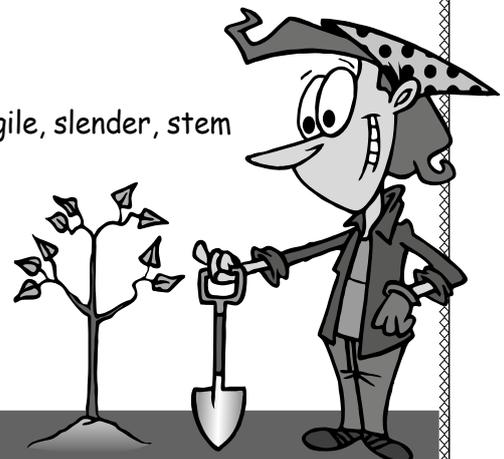


Kahikatea
 You play with wind
 Dance feathered branches
 High
 In winter's breaking sky
 Two hundred years and more

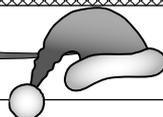


You've given
 Today I planted
 One of your kind
 Eased tangled roots from fragile, slender, stem
 Fingered the soil
 Patted it down, so carefully
 To hold you firm

To give another
 Two hundred years and more
 When I am gone.



Jos Coburn





The Pohutukawa

The pohutukawa tree (*Metrosideros Excelsa*) with its crimson flower has become an established part of the New Zealand Christmas tradition. This iconic Kiwi Christmas tree, which often features on greeting cards and in poems and songs, has become an important symbol for New Zealanders at home and abroad.

In 1833 the missionary *Henry Williams* described holding service under a “wide spreading pohutukawa”. The first recorded reference to the pohutukawa as a Christmas tree came in 1857 when ‘flowers of the scarlet pohutukawa, or “Christmas tree”’ formed part of table decorations at a feast put on by Ngāpuhi leader *Eruera Patuone*. Several years later Austrian geologist *Ferdinand von Hochstetter* noted that settlers referred to it as such. The pohutukawa, he observed, “about Christmas ... are full of charming ... blossoms”, “the settler decorates his church and dwellings with its lovely branches”. Other 19th century references described the pohutukawa tree as the “Settlers Christmas tree” and “Antipodean holly”.

In 1941, army chaplain *Ted Forsman* composed a pohutukawa carol in which he referred to “your red tufts, our snow”. *Forsman* was serving in the Libyan Desert at the time, hardly the surroundings normally associated with the image of a fiery red pohutukawa tree. Many of his fellow New Zealanders, though, would have instantly identified with the image.

Today many school children sing about how “the native Christmas tree of Aotearoa fills their hearts with aroha”.



Pohutukawa, and its cousin rata, also hold a prominent place in Maori tradition. Legends tell of *Tawhaki*, a young Maori warrior, who attempted to find heaven to seek help in avenging the death of his father. He fell to earth and the crimson flowers are said to represent his blood.

A gnarled, twisted pohutukawa on windswept cliff top at Cape Reinga, the northern tip of New Zealand, has become of great significance to many New Zealanders. For Maori this small, venerated pohutukawa is known as “the place of leaping”. It is from here that the spirits of the dead begin their journey to their traditional homeland of Hawaiki. From this point the spirits leap off the headland and climb down the roots of the 800-year-old tree, descending into the underworld on their return journey.

Source: *New Zealand History*, www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/pohutukawa-flowers

**The OWN Committee and the Editors of News&Views
wish you all a wonderful and safe festive season!**

