

Celebrating



30 Years!

OUR OWN STORIES 3

for future generations



This ebook celebrates the
Older Women's Network
inspired by a group of women
led by *Barbara Stanley* in 1991.
With thanks to

Chris Griffiths, Lennie Crawford, Patricia Russell,
and all our contributing writers.



© 2021 **Our Women's Network**
(North Shore Older Women's Network Inc.)
PO Box 34-383, Birkenhead, Auckland 0746
info@own.org.nz • www.own.org.nz

The stories in this book belong to the individual authors and are used here with permission. The stories may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in whole or in part or by any means (electronic, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise) without prior written permission of the author.

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
The Beginnings of the Older Women's Network (1991)	7
Cloaking Experience	11
Bernard Stanley's Keynote Speech	12
A Prayer for the World	14
The Gift – A Special Birthday Remembered	16
My War Experience	19
ABC Minors	21
Reclaiming My Name	24
Kate Sheppard – An Inspiration	26
Earthquake Fears	29
My Samoan Sister-in-law	32
Eating in the 1960s	36
My Life	38
A Denial	40
Writing Home	42
My Camping Experience	44
Tauranga Bay	46
The Great Truths ...	49
My Santa	51
Rwanda Marks 25 Years	55
A Senior Moment	56
The School Inspector's Visit	58
How to Recognise a Rotten Day	61

The 1986 Census	63
Big Mama & La Nieta	66
Coffin-making Day	68
Inventions Created by Women	71
The Wonderful Word 'NO'	74
The Investiture	76
The Dangers of Ironing	79
Tivaevae	82
Whirinaki Forest Walk	85
We Have Not Come to Take Prisoners	88



Introduction

Throughout the years, so many women have contributed to the organisation. *OWN* has continued to empower and enrich women's lives with activities, groups, trips and festivals.

The *Writing for Future Generation Groups* are very popular and we have selected a series of memorable stories collected over the years to share with families and friends.

We have unofficially changed from *Older Women's Network* to *Our Women's Network* to recognise and encompass a camaraderie within all our members.

We welcome new members.

Email: info@own.org.nz

Website: www.own.org.nz





Barbara Stanley

1929 – 2004

The Beginnings of the Older Women's Network (1991)

Adapted from *OWN Older & Bolder*
and an article by *Fran Henry*

A Community Workshop for women over 50 began the *Network*. *Helen McCracken* held a brainstorming session organised by a team at *Raeburn House*. This team, led by *Barbara Stanley*, dealt with issues of isolation, loneliness, unresolved grief and failing health. Helen's whiteboard at her workshop acknowledged these issues, but went further – Celebrate, Honour, Enjoy, Empower, Unite, Friendship, Wisdom, Validate – all words from those present.

Coming together as a group was great. Many women were re-enthused about life again and wanted to celebrate being older. In 1991, the women got together and hosted a shared lunch at *Raeburn House* to discuss the future of a festival for older women on the North Shore.

A Mission Statement was established:

- ❖ *OWN* seeks to enrich women's lives through giving them opportunities to make friends, share stories and ideas and learn new skills.

- ❖ OWN members take an interest in the society in which we live and seek to contribute to it. Members plan and take part in events throughout the year.
- ❖ OWN acknowledges the relevance of the *Treaty of Waitangi*.

The first *OWN Festival* was held in 1992, which was *Women's Suffrage Year*. Over 120 women from all over Auckland and the North Island attended the two-day *Festival*.

Back in 1987 *Juliet Batten*, an Auckland artist and author, held a *Cloaking Ceremony* as a Rite of Passage ending a series of menopause workshops. *Fran Marino*, a fabric artist, designed and made the cloak for *Juliet's Cloaking Ceremony*. *Fran* created this cloak symbolising women's lives.

Several women who participated in the ceremony found it inspiring and wanted other older women to have the same opportunity. It was decided to introduce this to the first *Festival*. *Fran Marino* lent the cloak and later bequeathed it to OWN in 2001. Our thanks to *Fran* for her generosity.

The cloak was used to mark moving on to the third stage of a woman's life – the wise woman or 'crone' stage. The black side symbolises our depths. The black contains blue, yellow, ochre and red. It is the colour of wisdom symbolising the attitude of society to older women and may represent the woman's own attitude to this stage of her life. The beautiful colours and patterns of the reverse side remind us of our heights and of all there is to celebrate in a woman's life. It also represents the richness, variety and possibilities that can lie ahead for older women. These two aspects make us whole.

Another major feature of the *Festival* was the playback theatre group, which offered women the chance to tell a story from their life, and have it re-enacted by others. That was pretty special for many, because they didn't often get the chance to tell their story.

Throughout the years, many women have contributed to the organisation (who are far too many to name). All have been empowered to recognise their strengths and talents which could have lain dormant for years. They have found that sharing these memories has been very liberating.





Cloaking Experience

By Anne Hollier Ruddy

I did not know the significance of the cloaking ceremony as this was my first attendance at an *Older Women's Festival*.

I had been invited to be cloaked, and felt I must accept gracefully. The Cloak had a black side. I guessed this would represent the grief in one's life, so I thought it wise to have a handkerchief in my pocket. However, when the Cloak was placed on me with its dark side showing, I felt within myself an acknowledgement of the sadness in life. Yes, to the hurts, but it was not oppressive. It was an experience and when the Cloak was reversed to its gleaming multicoloured side, I felt affirmed. Crossing the threshold had added to the richness of my life. I felt warmth from the cloak and from the women assembled. There was hope in the years yet to come.

Barbara Stanley passed away in 2004. She wrote that the *Cloaking Ceremony* had been an important part of the *North Shore Older Women's Festival*. Her work goes on and has been taken up by other women, equally keen and dedicated.

Bernard Stanley's Keynote Speech

On 12 April 2014, at the *Older Women's Network AGM*, *Barbara Stanley's* husband *Bernard* was a keynote speaker. Here are some of his reflections:

“My family have been exhorting me for some years to write my memoirs, so I have taken this opportunity to pen a somewhat abridged chapter on my dear wife and splendid mother of our large family.



In *Barbara's* view and terminology, adult females of the human species were and are, women – the title ‘ladies’ being an affectation with no place in New Zealand’s egalitarian society. Even more heinous was the use of ‘girls’ in the adult sphere, which she

considered a male chauvinist put-down. Both would have evoked a sharp correction or at least a sour look. Sounds formidable, but not really – just part of her comprehensive, strongly feminist philosophy. So, in her politically correct terms, greetings to you women, members of *OWN*, and perhaps a crone or two among you.

In our numerically male dominated household she would contend, I'm not quite sure how seriously, that in older times the crones were the repository of the collective wisdom of family, village and tribal communities.

With the arrival of the patriarchal church, this status was wrested from them by dint of persecution, witch-hunt, and burnings at the stake. The rest, she would say, is 'his-story', and men have made such a mess of things, that they should move aside and let women take control and so create 'her-story'. With the rise of feminism in the last hundred years or so, we are perhaps seeing this happening, with certainly a more balanced gender approach in the halls of power, in which *Barbara* played a part through *OWN* and other activities."

Bernard Stanley's full AGM speech was printed in two parts in the *OWN Older & Bolder* newsletter (May and August 2014).

A Prayer for the World

By Rabbi S. Kushner



Let the rain come and wash away the
ancient grudges, the bitter hatreds held
and nurtured over generations.
Let the rain wash away the memory of
the hurt, the neglect.
Then let the sun come out and
fill the sky with rainbows.

Let the warmth of the sun heal us
wherever we are broken.
Let it burn away the fog so that
we can see each other clearly.
So that we can see beyond the labels,
beyond accents, gender or skin colour.

Let the warmth and brightness of the
sun melt our selfishness,

So that we can share the joys and feel
the sorrows of our neighbours.
And let the light of the sun,

be so strong that we will see all people
as our neighbours.

Let the earth, nourished by rain,
bring forth flowers to surround us with
beauty.

And let the mountains teach our hearts

To reach upward to heaven.

Amen

This poem was written by *Rabbi S. Kushner*, the American author of the book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. He was asked to compose a prayer that could be said by anyone of any faith.

The Gift – A Special Birthday Remembered

By Anne Wood-Briggs

We arrived in Germany in January 1948 to join my father in *Hamm*, Westphalia. He was stationed there as part of the British occupational forces of the Rhineland.

Spring came and with it my birthday on 1 May. *Elizabeth* lived with us to help my mother with my baby sister and help in the house. The day before my birthday she said that her mother had a surprise for me. *Elizabeth*'s mother lived in a refugee camp not far from us. The old lady was old and frail, but always smiling, she would hug me and call me 'Leibchen'.

We always took a basket with little things for *Elizabeth*'s mother. There would be tea, coffee, and sugar wrapped in brown paper, and something my mother had baked. *Elizabeth* and her mother would sit talking and I would walk around the hut.

Most of the people there were old and would greet me, always smiling, and I would respond with my few phrases of German. The hut had rows of beds and there was rope fixed up in the rafters with blankets over the ropes to partition off the areas where people lived. There was a long table in the middle with chairs around it and at the end of the hut a stove with a pipe which went up through the roof.

It seemed strange to me that these people all lived together like this, but *Elizabeth* explained they had nowhere else to live as they had lost their homes in the war. These people were the first refugees I had encountered. I would never forget the meaning of the word ‘refugee’.

The old lady gave me a hug and we gave her our little gifts. She gave me a small brown paper parcel and she wished me happy birthday ‘Herzlichen Glückwunsch zum Geburtstag’. Inside there were three small dolls, two little men dressed in shirts with puffy sleeves, trousers to look like lederhosen with braces and little hats. The little hats had a tiny feather in each. The third was a plump little lady in a crinoline with a bonnet. Toys at this time were very scarce. Taking them home very carefully I showed them to my mother who agreed that they were very special.



As the years went by happy birthdays came and went. The dolls always had pride of place in my room.

Many years later I realised the full significance of that magnificent gift. I had not realised as a child that the dolls had been lovingly and painstakingly made out of tiny remnants of material. The faces and hands were made out of stockings, the faces embroidered and the frames of the dolls were made of small

pieces of wire wrapped in brown paper twisted around them. Was the wire from springs on that old lady's bed? Where had the coarse woollen cloth of the little men's trousers come from? Where had she found the felt for their little hats and the feathers? The stuffing for the dolls had been made of tiny scraps of newspaper carefully shredded and packed into the limbs of the little people. How many hours in that gloomy hut had she spent sewing magic for a little girl?

I still have one of the dolls.

My War Experience

By Maryanne Baird

Although I was born during the Second World War, I was of course, too immature to appreciate the sacrifice the soldiers made for their countries.

Growing up in a small Northland town, no-one in our immediate family was killed or maimed. Three uncles served overseas, but, because of my father's ill health, he served only in New Zealand.

My only real memories were of rationing of food, blackouts, and the Victory Parade, which terrified me, as I had never seen people dressed in grotesque costumes previously. No television for us in those days.

When a fellow student and I were hitchhiking in the South Island during our long summer break from study, we were given a ride one day by two middle-aged men who each had only one leg.

They were returned servicemen and had lost their legs during the War – one his right, the other his left leg. They told us that when they were evacuated home to New Zealand by ship they met and, as they had only one pair of shoes between them, they shared these and became great friends on the long sea journey. Before they landed, they made a pact that one day they would meet up again and take a road trip, stopping at every water hole or stream for a swim and every pub for a beer.

These two were a source of much amusement and, sure enough, the stops were made. After the third pub, we decided to part company. I sometimes wonder how the remainder of their trip proceeded, hopefully with their remaining legs intact.



ABC Minors

By *Patricia Russell*

Oh, how I've waited for Saturday!
We're going to the pictures for the matinee.
It's off to the Lonsdale for *Joan* and me,
Sixpence each is the entrance fee.
I'm only eight, so can't go alone,
Joan next door, is my chaperone.
We leave our house holding hands,
My mum unaware she has other plans.

On the way in, we buy some sweets,
Then wait 'til the interval for further treats.
I'm sat near the front, all on my own,
While it's the seats at the back that interest *Joan*
Who's almost fifteen, and will soon be kissing,
The boy called *Billy* with the front tooth missing.
She ignores the screen – I think she's potty,
Her lad's hair is greasy – his face is spotty.

My mother says that *Joan's* so kind,
If only she knew what was on her mind.
She thinks that *Joan's* looking after me,
Sitting beside me attentively.
But I'd never tell on her back-row antics,
And jeopardise the Saturday flicks.

I'm sworn to secrecy and that's a fact,
I recall the day we made the pact.

She made me swear not to tell her dad,
Of her weekly tryst with this lad.
I know he'd clout her, should he discover,
The goings-on with her teenage lover.

First on the screen is the Queen, of course,
Side saddle and serious on her royal horse.
Now the anthem's all over and done,
It's time to sit back and have some fun.



The music quiets, the lights go dim,
Is that *Flash Gordon* – yes, it's him!
Then a cartoon and *Hopalong Cassidy*,
All this and more every Saturday.

Now for the interval, and what to eat,
A choc ice would be a welcome treat.
I might get a *Kia Ora* orange drink too,
Although, would it mean a trip to the loo?

Just as I finish my choc ice cream,
'*Old Mother Riley*' fills the screen.
After that, the serial will commence,
Last weeks' was full of suspense!

The time has come to rescue *Joan*,
From her back-seat frolics and then get the bus
home.

She's all dishevelled – her hair's a mess,
Not to mention her crumpled dress.
Her eyes are shining and her cheeks are pink,
"Remember our secret," she says with a wink.
Of course I will, I'm not that silly,
To tell on her and Back Row *Billy*!

Joan tidies herself up as she takes me home,
Mum once again says "Thank you, *Joan*."
"You're a good girl, and I hope *Patricia* was too,"
I smile to myself – if only she knew.



Reclaiming My Name

By *Te Rauroha Mokai Tamehana*

Being an only child in our family of 14 adults, I was most privileged to have the teaching of my elders. This has been my mainstay through my growing life to adulthood, married woman, mother, and grandmother. Little did I realise the dramatic change that would take place in a pakeha-fied world, to the extent that I had to put my culture, mana, iwi, and person aside to enable me to participate in things pakeha.

Because an unfortunate accident killed a very respected elder of *Ngai-Te-Rangi* in the Bay of Plenty, the whanau from *Te-Rere-a-Tu-Kahia Pa* wanted something of significance to remember him by. All the kaumatua and tribe agreed that a name should be placed on me, not so much as a reminder of the death of



‘A Wonderful Man’. Hence the name I bear today, the meaning of which is ‘Scattered Blooms of Love’.

This is the name I put aside in the 1950s. I adopted a pakeha name, to enable my employers and workmates to pronounce my name more easily, as they lacked concern for me and my culture. I started wandering in a world that had no compatibility with my being me.

In January this year while in hospital, after 40 odd years of this pakeha name, I came to my senses and reclaimed my name, my culture, my mana, and iwi, and now I am whole. I know who I am, where I came from and where I am going. I have reclaimed and retained my identity.

Kia Ora.

Kate Sheppard – An Inspiration

By Jenny Goldsbro

Catherine Malcolm (later *Sheppard*) was born in Liverpool England on 10 March, 1847. Everybody called her *Kate*. She was a clever girl, well-educated and interested in everything around her. During her childhood she lived in London, then in Scotland. She had an uncle in Scotland who was a Christian minister, so he helped her with her studies.

Her father died in 1862, and in 1868 her mother brought *Kate* and her two brothers to New Zealand, to Christchurch. *Kate*'s sister was already living here. On 21 July, 1871, *Kate*, now 24, married *Walter Sheppard*, a grocer who had a shop. Their son *Douglas* was born 8 October, 1880. Women in those days were not allowed to work for money, but they could do voluntary work, so *Kate* gave a lot of her time to her church in Christchurch, visiting the sick members and raising money. She was also secretary of the *Women's Association* there.

Then, in 1885, a woman called *Mary Leavitt* came from America to Christchurch to talk about the *Women's Christian Temperance Movement* of the USA. *Kate* became a very keen New Zealand founding member. The women could see that big changes had to be made in the law to protect women and children in both countries. Women had no rights at the time. They were 'owned' by their husbands, and depended completely on them. Any property they might have inherited was taken by the husbands at

marriage. The women were unable to speak out about the violence that many of them were receiving, because of the men drinking too much alcohol. *The Temperance Movement* was keen to ban alcohol, or make it more difficult to get. The only way to get the ban on alcohol was for women to get the vote so they could press to get the laws of New Zealand changed, and to get prohibition (ban on all alcohol). At that time, of course, Parliament was full of men.



Kate and the other suffragettes worked very hard to reach out to all the women in New Zealand and spread the word. She travelled all round the country speaking to groups of women, writing to the newspapers, and writing notices. When the women met they always wore a white camellia flower pinned on their dress. They knew that the New Zealand voting laws had recently been changed to allow men over 21 to vote, but the women were not

happy that they were grouped with the “juveniles, lunatics, and criminals”. They were determined to get things put right.

The women organised a petition. Women who agreed with the suffragette movement wrote their names on a long piece of paper. There were 9,000 names on the first petition which was taken to Parliament in 1891, but it made no difference to the men in Parliament. Many of them laughed. The next petition had 19,000 names on it. Still no action!

Then, in June 1891, a magazine was published by the suffragettes and it went all round the country. Everybody knew what was happening and why. The third petition with signatures from all over New Zealand was presented in Parliament in 1893 and it had 32,000 signatures. The 600 women who had worked so hard to get this done now received what they wanted – the *Electoral Act of 1893* was passed, which gave women in New Zealand the right to vote. This was the first country in the world to do it. The first election was held only 10 weeks after the law was passed and 65% of all the women of New Zealand voted in it.

Kate was now quite famous and she started the very important *New Zealand National Council of Women* which Parliament listens to. She did a lot of work to help women’s affairs in New Zealand, and in Britain too.

She died in Christchurch on 15 August, 1925, aged 78. The *Christchurch Times* wrote:

“A great woman has gone, whose name will remain an inspiration to the daughters of New Zealand while our history endures.”

Earthquake Fears

By Judith Fleming

All her adult life, my mother had a fear of earthquakes after being in the Napier earthquake of 3 February, 1931.



At the time mother was working in an office in Emerson Street – the main street of the town. She was just about to leave the building and go further up the street to a sports shop to collect her tennis racquet, which was being restrung. It was never collected as it was burnt in the fires that very soon broke out in the town and smouldered for days. Broken gas mains were the cause. These fires impeded rescue of the injured and the fatally injured.

Eventually sailors from the Naval training ship *HMS Veronica* that was anchored in Hawke's Bay, were able to get ashore with manpower and equipment, to help in many, many ways. Also, the communication systems aboard the ship were able to notify the rest of New Zealand and the world of the disaster. The ship's bell now hangs on a prominent structure on Marine Parade and is rung every New Year's Eve.

My mother's first thought was to get home to my grandmother who lived on Napier Hill. The area was known as Hospital Hill, just below the botanical gardens which was where I walked my firstborn in a pram 33 years later. Apparently, my grandmother was placing her washing board against the back garden fence to dry in the sun when the quake struck. She hung on to the fence and watched the *Nurses' Home* go down like a pack of cards killing all seven nurses.



Finally, mother found her way up the hill to her home, meeting her younger brother who was walking home from *Napier Boys High School*. The rest of the day was spent gathering essentials

together and making their way down to *Nelson Park*. They were in the open air until enough tents were found for shelter. Badly injured people received attention first. The temporary accommodation lasted about a fortnight while the aftershocks occurred. Most people were too nervous to go back to their damaged homes as a lot of brick chimneys were down and brick houses were in ruins.

My mother met my father several months later. He was a builder with construction workers who came from all over New Zealand, pleased to get the work. My parents were married in 1935 and my sister and I were born in Napier and schooled in Hawkes Bay. As we were growing up we were always aware of mother's fear of quakes so we were naturally frightened as well.

It wasn't until I was 19 years old and doing my nursing training at *Hastings Memorial Hospital* that I lost this fear. One evening during the nurses' tea break, another nurse and I were on duty in the children's ward when a very noisy quake occurred. We immediately had to calm, cuddle and tuck down our small charges, forgetting our own fears. Since that day my fear of quakes has diminished.

My Samoan Sister-in-law

By *Betty Vaotogo*

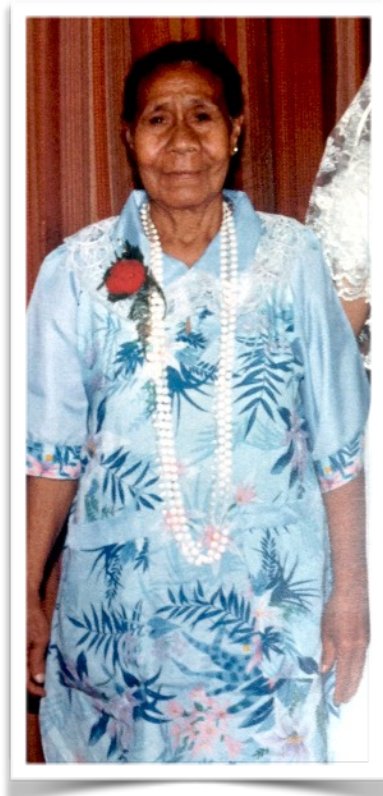
I first met my sister-in-law *Palavale* in 1958, when my husband and I arrived in Apia with our baby son *Hans*.

Quite a crowd of family members were on the shore waiting to meet us. There were the *Vaotogo* family and the *Sumeo* family! The *Sumeo* family had adopted *George*, when he was a teenager and he had lived with them in Apia, where he could go to school.

We went off with the *Vaotogo* family in two taxi cabs all the way to the village of *Samusu*, which was 43 miles away. We arrived close to midnight and entered our house, built for us by the family. *George* had sent money from New Zealand and probably instructions too.

The first thing we saw was his mum, *Lina*, getting up from the floor, where she had been asleep inside a mosquito net together with some grandchildren. Half of the room was prepared for us. *Palavale* had hung some big curtains, which divided the room and gave us privacy. There was a big new mattress and pillows filled with kapok from their own trees.

Palavale had one son and three daughters. The girls were all named after flowers: *Fuaselela*, *Fuarosa*, and *Fua pepe*. The son, *Logo*, had come to New Zealand the year before and had stayed with us.



Palavale's husband was a retired Methodist Minister, and worked the land to help feed the family. *Palavale* was a self-taught midwife and had delivered many babies in the village and beyond. I forget whether she said she had delivered as many as 200 children. It was a lot anyway and she was proud to say, she had never lost any!

Her eldest daughter and husband lived at home in the village with the family. They had moved back recently. Firstly, because the daughter was a teacher and could speak English, which was a great help to me. Secondly, because she was pregnant and would need her mother in a few months.

I was very interested in the approaching delivery, which happened on 2 July, 1958. I couldn't see the baby very well, because he was born at night and there were only kerosene lamps in the house. *Palavale* had asked me for a razor blade to cut the cord with. She first put it in a bowl and poured boiling water over it before using. I asked her, what was done with the afterbirth. *Palavale* said it had been taken down to the shore and put into the sea to carry it away.



The following year *Palavale* offered her help when I was due to have my second child. However, I decided to go to the local hospital for that, and *Palavale* came too. We left the village on the first bus before daylight. We took the bedding and everything for the baby. The little hospital only provided the medical attention. The family brought cooked food for us every day. We left the hospital after two weeks. That night the house was full of people who had come to celebrate the arrival of the new baby. There were prayers, and singing, and speeches. Then they were all given a meal and they stayed for ages to talk and enjoy each other's company.

Every evening we had prayers, mostly led by *Palavale's* husband. The family always sang a couple of hymns. We could hear the Catholic neighbours praying next door, as all the houses were open-style. The village only had Methodist and Roman Catholic churches. You could tell who the Methodists were on Sundays because they always wore white for church.

Palavale was very hospitable. When we were having a meal at home, she always looked out for anybody walking past on the

road. She would run out and greet them and invite them to stop and eat with us. Her mother was the same. However, people seldom accepted the invitation. They all knew that most families didn't have a lot to go around.

Palavale came to New Zealand and stayed with us and other family. She was 79 years old when she passed away. We had her body in our house for some days. It was a big funeral. There were lots of visitors bringing gifts. The family cooked all the time for several days. They were very busy days.

I could have written a book about *Palavale*, but that has not happened. I and many others treasure our wonderful memories of *Palavale*.

Eating in the 1960s

Author unknown

- ❖ Pasta had not been invented. It was macaroni or spaghetti.
- ❖ Curry was a surname.
- ❖ A take-away was a mathematical problem.
- ❖ Pizza? Sounds like a leaning tower somewhere.
- ❖ Bananas and oranges only appeared at Christmas time.
- ❖ All chips were plain.
- ❖ Oil was for lubricating, fat was for cooking.
- ❖ Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and never green.
- ❖ Cubed sugar was regarded as posh.
- ❖ Chickens didn't have fingers in those days.
- ❖ None of us had ever heard of yoghurt.
- ❖ Healthy food consisted of anything edible.
- ❖ Cooking outside was called camping.
- ❖ Seaweed was not a recognised food.
- ❖ 'Kebab' was not even a word, never mind a food.
- ❖ Sugar enjoyed good press in those days, and was regarded as white gold.
- ❖ Prunes were medicinal.
- ❖ Surprisingly muesli was readily available. It was called cattle feed.

- ❖ Pineapples came in chunks in a tin - we had only ever seen a picture of a real one.
- ❖ Water came out of a tap. If someone had suggested bottling it and charging more than gasoline for it, they would have become a laughing stock.
- ❖ The one thing that we never ever had on / at our table in the 1960s – was elbows, hats, and cell phones.



My Life

By *Pat Burgess*

I was born at *St. Helens Hospital* in Auckland on 1 February. 1924. My father was 'a street angel and a home devil'.

A handsome plausible Irishman, he could charm and deceive in the one breath. My earliest memories contain an element of fear and uncertainty as to where I would be living the next week, father having neglected to pay the rent, or where the next meal could come from, as whisky had priority over wherewithal.

The youngest of four daughters I was well loved and protected by my mother and sisters, so you could say I was the lucky one. Not for me the agony of enrolling in 15 different schools before the age of 14. However, I experienced enduring humiliation when it came to such necessities as money for books, pencils and gym frocks.

My earliest memories, when we lived for a time beside a Northcote fruit farmer and his family are relatively happy, but before long my father had us on the move again. After that memory takes on a bleakness which seemed to continue until he left home when I was about 10 years old. My sisters, being older, received an upbringing which left lasting scars on their childhood, but provided hilarious amusement in the retelling in later years.

Retrospect can be a good thing in a family headed by a sainted mother with a penchant for fits of giggles at the wrong time. How

she retained such an enduring trait after years of poverty and mental and physical abuse must surely have been made possible by her strong faith in God.

She firmly believed in miracles, evidence of which I witnessed once when I was about five and came on my mother tearfully bowed over the kitchen table with an empty open purse before her. She was praying for help to feed her family. Before our eyes, the front of the gas meter fell open and out poured a torrent of one-shilling pieces previously fed to the gas stove. This was indeed an answered prayer.

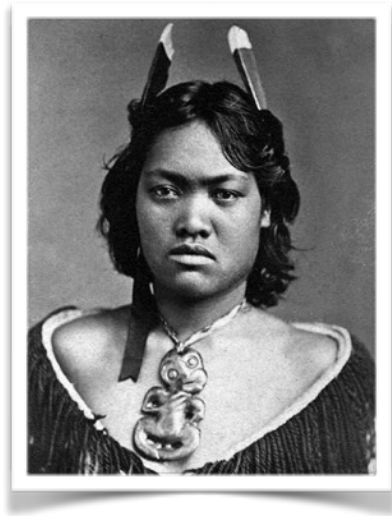
Such was my mother's inherent honesty, I hasten to add, that every one of those shillings was replaced as money came to hand through the home dressmaking she did to augment my father's inconsistent supply.



A Denial

By Shirley Williams

I was about eight years old when one day my mother came back into the house from the garage where she and my father had been sorting out, tidying up, getting rid of rubbish, etc. and said in a rather shaky voice, “Your fathers just burnt a portrait of his great-grandmother.”



I asked why he would do that and she replied that it was because she was Maori, probably a princess, and he did not want her likeness around. It had been stored behind boxes and piles of goodness knows what, which I had always been forbidden to touch and so I had never seen or known of this portrait.

Years later, I learned that this would have been *Ruawahine Puihi*, the high-born daughter of the *Ngai te Rangi* people in

Tauranga and she had been encouraged by her parents to marry *John Lees Faulkner*, an English trader, to the economic benefit of both. One of their children, *Jane*, married *Daniel Sellars* from the Isle of Arran in Scotland who went into partnership with *John Lees*. One of *Jane* and *Daniel*'s children was *Edward*, my father's father.

Edward seems to have disappeared from his home and family until 1939 when he was dying in *Auckland Hospital*. I don't know the facts and can only surmise that after *Edward* left his family, it was likely that many would have remarked, "Oh, that will be the Maori in him ... unreliable, etc., etc." and this could have been the reason my father was so bitter about his Maori ancestry. He refused adamantly to discuss this, or the portrait he had destroyed.

I recall that when I was in my early teenage years, my father, while filling out the Census form, paused and looked across at me silently for a moment, then said in a very serious voice, "You know *Shirley*, you are very fortunate. You will never have to acknowledge, as I am legally required to do, that you are part-Maori. I am one-eighth Maori and that is where it officially stops. You are only one-sixteenth and so you will never have to state that."

I was shocked that a part of me was denied and it fascinated and frightened me. My father would not discuss it. I did not know how to make a connection – there were very few Maori then in Auckland, nor were there any surviving members of my father's family to approach, and I felt pulled in all ways because an important part of my heritage had been denied.

I wanted to be able to claim it, but until quite recently it remained unknown.

Writing Home

By *Hazel Roff*

As a young married woman living abroad for the first time I wrote very rarely to my mother. On looking back through an accumulation of her letters to me I saw a continual reference to this fact in each opening paragraph! Reading on I felt a slight irritation that she had constantly chastised me when she had little to write to me.

Now that I am older, still overseas, but with no mother to write to, I feel an embarrassment for all the things I didn't tell her, for not realising how lonely she must have been. She had told me, when I did return after five years absence, how she wished I had written regular, short letters rather than the intermittent lengthy ones I specialised in. Again the irritation. With youthful arrogance I felt she should not dictate to me how to write and if she wanted news why complain about how it was given.

But now I know – of course it wasn't the news she cared about. She had wanted a little letter every week to show that I had sat down at least once during that period and thought of her. She couldn't know that I went through each day collecting odd items mentally 'to tell mother about when I write'. She will never know how the sound of her voice – that warm Kentish lilt – and her 'Irish' expressions which were so much a part of her remain with me as part of my remembered life. So many things left unsaid, so much more I could have written, so much misunderstood.



It is only now when I hold a letter from a friend overseas, in those few seconds before I open it, that I realise what a letter would have meant to her. In those moments there is not only the thrill of anticipation of news but always the warm feeling of contact, that someone has been thinking of me, that someone cares.

I have been alone now for several years. I know when I write a letter my thoughts are of the recipient; loving memories crowd my mind and my fingers ache to convey the message. I hope it gets through.

I close the window on another day ... I wish my daughter overseas would write.

*“Do small things with great love
and not even the smallest
act of kindness will be wasted.”*

Mother Teresa



My Camping Experience

By *Betty Faeson*

We had just moved to a new area and my daughter had become friendly with the little girl next door. When holiday time came she was invited to go camping to *Martins Bay* with them. This she loved so much, that she begged us to take her camping the next year, and so Jim and I eventually agreed.

We purchased a huge tent which had three rooms in it. There were two bedrooms partitioned off and the rest was the living area.

The time came for the holiday. Remember, I had never been camping before. As we owned a furniture shop, we loaded what we needed in the furniture truck and set off for the camp.

We commenced to unload - first a set of bunks, a set of trundler beds, a formica dining table and four chairs, a chest of drawers, a hanging mirror and a nice piece of carpet. By the time we were half way through unloading we had half the camp watching us set up house. It seemed to be the entertainment of the day.

“Where do you think you are going to put all that stuff,” was one remark.

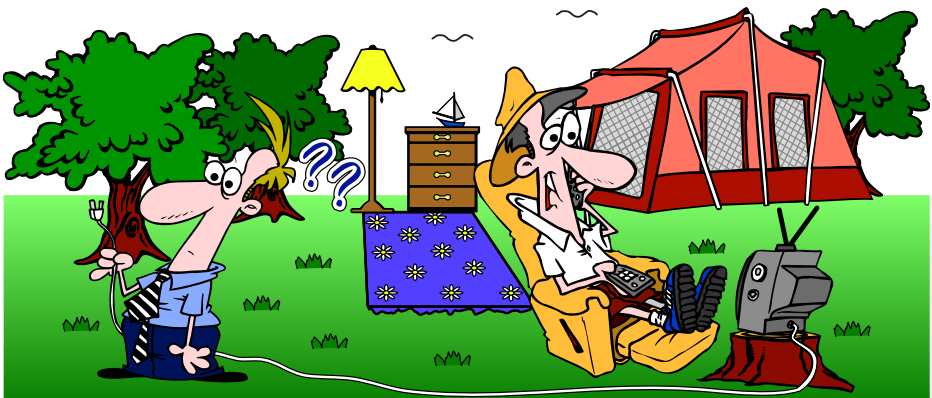
“You are supposed to be roughing it,” was another.

I will leave it to your imagination what else was said. By now I was so embarrassed that I did not want to venture out, but after

walking around the camp sites, I soon realised what camping was all about.

The first night we were there it rained and when I say it rained, it rained. It was a real Xmas holiday storm. At about midnight we were awoken by strange noises outside and, on investigation, realised people were out digging trenches around the tents to keep the water out. We were also told that nothing was to touch the walls of the tent or the water would come through. So, we had to start shifting furniture. By this time, I was just about ready to go home, but in the morning when I awoke, the sun was shining, the water looked so inviting and I was talked into staying.

We became friendly with many other campers and I must say we ended up having a most wonderful holiday, so much so, that we were regulars for many years. However, we soon learned to go camping New Zealand style.



Tauranga Bay

By Lennie Crawford

One year when my children were still quite small, three families, ourselves, husband's brother and cousin and their wives and children decided we would spend our Xmas holiday at *Tauranga Bay* which is situated at Whangaroa. My husband and his brother had trucks at the time so we piled all our things onto both trucks – which included the kitchen sink – and off we went.

It is a long way in a truck and by the time we got there all the children were tired and cranky. Imagine seven children under the age of five.

The three men went to work pitching tents and getting our campsite organised. In those days the camp only had the basic ablutions and nothing else. So, kerosene lamps, barbeque, gas



stove, and what we three women had decided was absolutely necessary to survive two weeks.

It was great for the children as there was plenty of room for them to play and the beach was very safe so consequently most of our time was down there.

The men had also managed to tow a boat so they were off every day fishing and leaving us women with the children to entertain. The only consolation to this was that we had plenty of fresh fish to eat which was a bonus.

On the last day the men of course went off fishing and us women as usual with the children were down on the beach. We could not believe our eyes as a plane landed in the water right beside us. The children were beside themselves with what had happened.

The pilot then came on to the beach and offered to take us all on a ride around the bay and surrounding area. What could we do? We pooled the last of our money and then climbed aboard. The two littlest ones had to sit on knees, but that was no hardship.

Off we took on the water and what an incredible experience. We saw our husbands fishing, but the pilot was really good and took us all over the bay and surrounding countryside. We landed far too soon for us, but it must have been at least an hour. We said our goodbye to the pilot and found out later that *Captain Fred Ladd* was well known in his seaplane and I feel privileged that he gave us the opportunity to have at least a little part of his history.

When they men got back from fishing they were not sure whether to believe us or not, but when we told them where we saw them



fishing and that we had spent all the money that we had, they had to believe us. That was a wonderful way to finish our holiday and also to be the envy of our husbands and friends.

The most talked about episode that *Fred Ladd* did in his later years was to fly his plane under the *Auckland Harbour Bridge*.

The Great Truths ...

Author unknown

That Children Have Learned:

1. No matter how hard you try, you cannot baptise cats.
2. When your Mum is mad at your Dad, don't let her brush your hair.
3. If your sister hits you, then don't hit her back – they always catch the second person.
4. You can't trust dogs to watch your food.
5. Never ask your three year old brother to hold a tomato.
6. Never hold a Dust-Buster and a cat at the same time.
7. You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.
8. The best place to be when you're sad is on your Grandma's lap.



That Adults Have Learned:

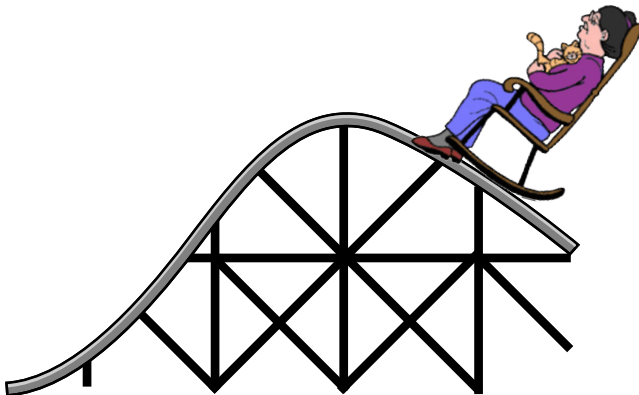
1. Raising teenagers is like nailing jelly to a tree.
2. Wrinkles don't hurt.
3. Families are like fudge ... mostly sweet, with a few nuts.

4. Today's mighty oak is just yesterday's nut that held its ground.
5. Laughing is good exercise. It's like jogging on the inside.
6. Middle age is when you choose your cereal for the fibre, not the toy.



About Growing Old:

1. Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.
2. Forget the health food. I need all the preservatives I can get.
3. When you fall down, you wonder what else you can do while you're down there.
4. Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician.
5. Wisdom comes with age, but sometimes age comes alone.
6. You're getting old when you get the same sensation from a rocking chair that you once got from a roller coaster.



My Santa

Author unknown

I was eight years old. In the mind of a veritable innocent was the belief that a man with a long white curly beard who kept laughing with a jolly “Ho! Ho! Ho!” must be *Santa Claus*. Perhaps his red suit was being kept for best!

In reality he was just the same man from the *Welfare* – hearty and official – who had taken me to and from about three or four houses as far back as I could remember. I never knew who my parents were or why I was abandoned at birth.

Naturally, on this occasion, the arrival of *Mr Riley* did nothing to dispel anxious thoughts. I was well aware of the process of not belonging anywhere and with his arrival it was apparent, the use by date of my foster parents care had reached its limit. I was to be moved on.

All my worldly possessions fitted into a shabby brown suitcase with a label on it advising I was ‘*Sheila Query, c/o Mr Riley, Webbington Orphanage*’.

Mr Riley treated me kindly with a big smile and his friendly, peculiar laugh. On the different times I saw him he always had a little gift, like a doll or a toy which I could call my own. He was my *Santa*!

“Do you want the good news or the bad news?” he asked me as I climbed on to the leathery black back seat of his car.

I wondered if it made any difference to me whatever kind of news it was, but I answered with a meek, “Good news, please, first.”

“Well, the good news is that *Mr* and *Mrs Pearson* want you for their ‘forever’ child. They live on a farm and have two girls your age. They are twins called *Chrissy* and *Jane* and are so looking forward to meeting you. What do you think of that?”

Of course, news like that was exciting in a way, but I felt a bit anxious too. “Perhaps they won’t like me, so what happens then”.

Mr Riley pulled the car to the side of the road, turned around, and said with a wink that he would give me his number and if I was worried at all I could ask to use the telephone. He went on to say that the family had watched videos of me at school and at play, and decided with lots of talking with *Mr Riley* that I should be adopted by them.

We drove on and passed factories and houses until the buildings were replaced with trees and the smells coming through the half-open car window were fresh and different somehow. As we drew near the farmhouse I was nervously slipping and sliding on the edge of my seat. Someone wanted me! I was to go to a ‘forever’ home.

I remember walking slowly up the path to the front door, past beds of beautiful coloured flowers, in a dream of what was likely to happen next.

I didn’t have much time to think because the door was flung open and I was burst upon by two black and white dogs, and two girls who I saw at once must be twins. “Come in, come in! Oh, we’ve

been watching and waiting for you for hours. Mum, Dad, look who's here. Don't mind the dogs, they'll lick you to pieces."

I just had time to notice a man and a woman smiling, with arms linked as they ushered *Mr Riley* into the kitchen before I was rushed upstairs to check out the room *Chrissy* and *Jane* had got ready for me. All pink, with a flowery bedspread. A little desk in the corner and shelves overflowing with books.

Racing down the stairs with me in tow I said "Hello" to my new Mum and Dad, who were smiling and held out their hands as I went over to meet them. "Now, girls, you've got a lifetime to get to know *Sheila*, so don't exhaust her now. But, you did say you had a secret in the barn you wanted to share so go on, don't be long, and I'll put the kettle on."

The girls looked very much the same as each other, but I noticed *Jane* had more freckles than *Chrissy* and I soon began to tell them apart. By the time we reached the barn we were all as excited as each other. The girls burrowed into the hay, me apprehensively standing back a little (things were going so well, but what if this was a joke being played on me, 'the new girl').

A few whimpers were heard and out of the warmth the girls brought a tiny kitten and gently put it in my outstretched hands.

"This is for you, our welcome present," said Jane.



That all happened 15 years ago – my first day at *Sunnyside Farm*. I was at last awarded the affection for which I had craved for so

long. It was a rare gift of unbridled love the *Pearsons* and their daughters gave to me, a stranger.

So you see, every year when I see a white curly beard and hear that special “Ho! Ho! Ho!”, I instinctively know that I really did have a Santa all to myself. Of course, he would have been *Mr Riley* to you.



Rwanda Marks 25 Years

Twenty-five years ago, on 7 April, 1994, the dominant Hutus of Rwanda turned with well-planned violence on the Tutsi minority whom they held to be traitors. One hundred days later, when the killing finally stopped, the death toll stood at as many as one million, mostly Tutsis, but also some moderate Hutus who had opposed the violence.



OWN member *Mathilde Mujawamariya* is originally from Rwanda. Here she is with *Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern*.

A Senior Moment

Author Unknown

Story reputedly from the police files in Florida, USA
published in a local church magazine.

An elderly lady did her shopping and, upon returning to her car, found four males in the act of leaving with her vehicle. She dropped her shopping bags and drew her handgun, proceeding to scream at the top of her lungs, "I have a gun, and I know how to use it. Get out of that car!"

The four men didn't wait for a second threat. They got out and ran like mad.

The lady, somewhat shaken, then proceeded to load her shopping bags into the back of the car and got into the driver's seat. She was so shaken that she could not get her key into the ignition. She tried and tried then she realised why.

It was for the same reason that she had wondered why there was a football, a frisbee and two 12 packs of beer in the front seat. A few minutes later she found her own car parked four or five spaces further down. She loaded her bags into the car and drove to the nearest Police Station to report her mistake.

The Sergeant to whom she told the story couldn't stop laughing. He pointed to the other end of the counter, where four pale faced men were reporting a car-jacking by a mad, elderly woman, described as white, less than five feet tall, glasses, curly white hair, and carrying a large hand gun.

No charges were filed.

The moral of the story is: If you are going to have a senior moment then make it a memorable one.



The School Inspector's Visit

By *Judy Brocherie*

In 1957 we lived in *Hatuma*, nine kilometres from Waipukurau in Central Hawkes Bay. My father was the Head Master and sole teacher of the country school. The 35 pupils were aged from five to thirteen years of age. We were all in the one classroom. This must have been rather difficult for my Father to teach several age groups at once, but we never heard a complaint.

Being a country school, the children came from far and wide. To enable them to attend school, the *Education Department* supplied a bus. Dad was also the bus driver before and after school. As the teacher, Dad was harder on his own five children than other pupils, probably to prove there was no favouritism.

Being the child of Headmaster had its disadvantages. In Form 2 (year 8) I gained Dux of the School. The *School Committee* were not happy that the Headmaster's daughter took the top prize. They held a secret meeting (without my father's attendance). The decision was made that the Dux of the School should go to the pupil with the next highest mark, and it did. As a 13-year-old girl that was a hard pill for me to swallow.



Adjoining the school property was a large old villa where our family of seven lived. It was on one acre of land. We had a horse, a cow, several sheep, some chickens, and a cat.

The Headmaster's wife had her duties as well. Regardless of how much of an expert she was with a needle and thread, she was expected to teach the girls sewing. My mother became the sewing teacher purely based on her experience as a housewife and mother. No degree or diploma was required.

Every couple of years the School Inspector would make an unannounced visit to each school. Because of the bush telegraph once the Inspector had been to the first school, the Headmaster of that school would notify the other schools of the impending visit.

The Headmaster's wife was expected to supply morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea for the visitor. The day of the Inspector's visit duly arrived.

Mum went to great trouble. She decided to serve hot scones for morning tea, fresh homemade bread, hot tomato soup for lunch, and cream sponge for afternoon tea.

As Dad and the inspector were eating their lunch the visitor commented on what a tasty soup it was. Mum could see perspiration pouring off their faces. Later Mum looked at the label on the soup tin only to find she had served them tomato sauce!

Mum had made a light-as-air sponge for afternoon tea, liberally piling fresh cream on top. Putting it aside on the long kitchen bench she went to the sideboard and picked out the best afternoon tea set. Returning to the kitchen she saw the tell-tale signs of cat's paws on the cream sponge. Horror!

What to do ... no more cream. The nearest shop was nine kilometres away and Mum did not drive. She gently scraped a

thin layer of cream off and decoratively arranged slices of preserved peaches on top. When afternoon tea was served the School Inspector was none the wiser!



How to Recognise a Rotten Day

Author unknown ... but troubled!

- ❖ Your birthday cake collapses from the weight of the candles.
- ❖ You go to put on the clothes you wore home from the party last night and there aren't any.
- ❖ Your twin sister forgot your birthday.
- ❖ You turn on the radio and they're telling you the emergency routes out of the city.
- ❖ You put your bra on backwards and it fits better.
- ❖ Your boss tells you not to take off your coat.
- ❖ You wake up face down on the pavement.
- ❖ You walk to the shops and find your dress is stuck in the back of your pantihose.
- ❖ You call your answering service and they tell you it's none of your business.
- ❖ You wake up feeling amorous and your husband has a headache.

- ❖ Your husband says, “Good morning Linda”, and your name is Shirley.
- ❖ You wake up and discover your water bed is broken ... and then realise that you don’t own a waterbed.
- ❖ Your car horn goes off and accidentally remains stuck as you follow a group of Hells Angels on the motorway.



The 1986 Census

By *Cherrie Keane*

The *Heaphy Track* is beautiful and varied, and its location in a remote area at the top of the South Island makes it one of New Zealand's 'Great Walks'.

In March 1986, I joined eleven of my friends to walk the *Heaphy Track*. We were all at once excited and anxious to begin this great walk, and so did not take any notice of the population census that was to be held during that week. We were well prepared for the challenge ahead, and filled out our intentions in the *Department of Conservation* log book at the *Brown Hut*, before setting off on our first day – a testing uphill walk.

On the second day we crossed the *Gouland Downs* – a natural woven carpet of mosses and tussock grass – and then further on, into the bush clad hills.



Early morning drizzle turned to heavy rain. The rain teemed down relentlessly, and the hard-worn track became a muddy stream. In some places, where there was a bend in the track, torrents of water spilled over the edges, forming new tracks and detours.

With visibility impaired by the heavy rain, and our eyes ever focused on each footstep, we could be easily fooled by a newly formed rain track and soon realised how simple it would be to lose our way. Rivers rose quickly and we made our final crossing that day, up to our knees in fast flowing water, and linking arms in what would have been a small stream a few hours before.

By late afternoon we finally arrived at *James Mackay Hut*, very wet and tired. It was a great relief to shed our wet weather gear and strip off the woollen clothing beneath. Thanks to the provision of dry firewood, we soon had a roaring fire. We lined our boots up along the hearth and draped our wet gear over any clothes line, hook or shelf we could find in order to have dry clothes for the next day.

We prepared some food and with darkness almost upon us, we settled down by the fire to eat. Even amongst the smell of wood smoke, tramping boots and wet woollies the dehydrated concoction tasted good. The perils of the day faded as our bodies thawed and we began to relax, regaling ourselves with stories of how we survived the day.

Then suddenly the door of the hut burst open and there stood a very wet and bedraggled man. He stepped inside and proceeded to hand out our census forms. After such a wet and exhausting day none of us had remembered this was census night. Our visitor had come on horseback to this remote location (from

where we did not know) and he asked us to hand in the completed forms at the pub in Karamea when we reached there in a few days' time.

His duty done, he rode off again – perhaps to another hut or perhaps to a shelter in the bush. We forgot to ask, as we were all so stunned to see him appear on this very dreadful evening.



Big Mama & La Nieta

By Rosemarie Carr

Rod and I had not spent time together in Hawaii since the 1970s, but in April 2014 we accepted a long-standing invitation to visit my cousin and his wife in Maui.

After three nights in Waikiki, we flew to Maui, where they have their condo situated on a beautiful beach. Paradise: fabulous climate, continuous sunshine, yet not too hot. Better still – the sea was so warm. I swam for hours without feeling cold. Early every morning, armed with mask, snorkel, and flippers, I headed for the water's edge to explore the underwater wonderland. Swimming over the beautiful coral and flora, amongst the spectacularly coloured tropical fish of every conceivable shape was magic.

BUT, what intrigued me the most were the prehistoric looking turtles that swam so gracefully. For nine glorious days, I was up early and in the water. Never once was I disappointed, always seeing something new in the crystal-clear and always finding one or two of my primal friends of various sizes to watch and to swim with. It was amazing! After an hour or two, I reluctantly dragged myself out of the water to join the other three on the lanai for breakfast.

On my last morning before flying home I encountered five turtles. But then whilst heading for shore I spotted her – the 'big mama' – some two or three meters below me with her head tucked beneath an outcrop of rock. Occasionally she turned her head and

seemed to look up at me. I was mesmerised! She looked to be about three meters long and would have weighed at least 250 kilos.

Suddenly I was aware of another sensation. Swimming beside me was one of her babies, or grandchildren (Nietas). It was maybe two feet (60cm?) long with the most delicate, featherlike design on its back in different shades of green, yellow and orange. I just had to stroke it! It felt like velvet to touch: not hard as an adult shell.

It was an absolutely amazing experience and one that I will forever cherish.



Coffin-making Day

By *Anne Mutu*

A lot of people don't like to talk about death, and are uncomfortable discussing their own demise and the practicalities associated with it. They say that someone else will take things in hand when the time comes.

I guess I have a more pragmatic approach to my own demise, arising from having had to deal with those matters quite a few times over the years. Also, I have been touched by the Maori people's matter-of-fact acceptance of death.

I remember years ago, when my husband's cousin's son died unexpectedly, the funeral director would not release his body to the family until his account had been paid, and how everyone had to give money so that the funeral director could be paid. No doubt he had been stung by Maori families who hadn't paid the funeral costs, most probably because they were poor. I have also known how some families have incurred a large cost for a funeral, simply because they were too emotionally distressed at the time to tell the funeral director of their financial situation.

When my husband died 11 years ago, that same funeral director asked for a deposit. My pakeha brother-in-law remarked that he had probably only asked for the deposit, rather than the whole amount, because there were a few pakeha faces around. Now, it wasn't a problem for me since I had the money as well as a small life insurance just for that purpose, but some poorer families wouldn't have the \$1,000 deposit. When the book was brought

out with the photos and costs of coffins, the first one that was shown was the 'budget' casket. "That will do fine," said my brother-in-law, "he was a simple man in his life."

About two years ago, when my sister was terminally ill, my brother-in-law *David* had to arrange a simple funeral for his aunt, and was horrified at the cost. So, when my sister was near death, he and his son made her coffin. When she died, he saw to the necessary paperwork and arranged with the crematorium for her cremation, thus bypassing the funeral directors altogether. The total cost for the funeral was about \$650.

Now, I don't think that funeral directors are parasites, or anything like that. They do, of course, have their costs and can also take a load off a family in shock and grief. Most people have made provision for just such an expense. Also, the funeral director will be as helpful as he can, if informed of the family's circumstances. I also know that not all of them ask for a deposit, or for the full cash amount to be paid before burial.

My sister *Betty* and I – as well as *David* – were discussing these matters one night, and I said to *Betty*, "Why don't you and I go and buy the materials for our coffins, so they are there when we pass on?"

David replied, "Why not make it and use it as a bookcase until needed?"

So, we decided that we would do just that. We set a date for making the coffins under *Betty's* carport. The materials were purchased from Mitre 10. *David* came, along with my grandson and *Betty's* son, who is a builder. They brought saws, and set to making the coffins while *Betty* and I watched. It took one and a

half hours. The coffin lid was screwed to the back and shelves were inserted. The total cost for each coffin was \$92.20.

It now sits proudly in my office. When we had our last card game, I showed it to my friends, who had various reactions. I said that I might have to lose a bit of weight to fit into it better, whereupon my friend said, “Well, that’s the first time I’ve heard being able to fit into your coffin as a reason for going on a diet!”



Inventions Created by Women

Necessity proved to be the mother of invention for the creators of these (among many others) ...

Computer Programming

Ada Lovelace was essentially the first computer programmer due to her work with *Charles Babbage* at the *University of London* in 1842. In fact, her notes were an essential key in helping *Alan Turing*'s work on the first modern computers in the 1940s

Ice Cream Maker

Nancy Johnson invented the ice cream maker in 1843 and her patented design is still used today!

The Modern Paper Bag

Margaret Knight invented a machine that makes square bottomed paper bags in 1871. She almost didn't get credit when *Charles Anan* tried to steal her work claiming that it wasn't possible for a woman to create this brilliant invention. *Margaret* also invented a safety device for cotton mills when she was 12 years old which is still being used today.

Life Raft

The lifesaving life raft was invented by *Maria Beasely* in 1882. She also invented a machine to make barrels.

Fire Escape

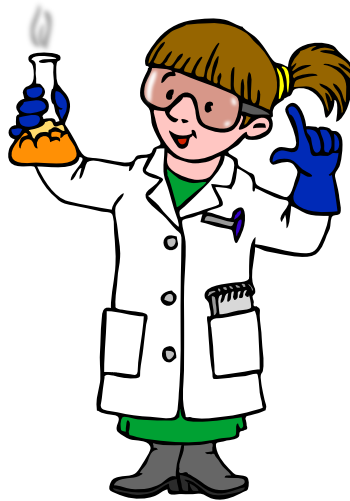
The fire escape was invented by *Anna Connelly* in 1887.

Dishwasher

The dishwasher was invented by *Josephine Cochrane* in 1887. Born before her time, she even marketed her machine to hotel owners and even opened her own factory without the help of a man!

The Car Heater

We all owe our thanks to *Margaret Wilcox* who invented the car heater in 1893. She also invented a combined clothes and dishwasher.



Medical Syringe

A medical syringe which could be operated with only one hand was invented by *Letitia Geer* in 1899.

Electric Refrigerator

The electric refrigerator was invented by *Florence Parpartin* 1914. She also invented an improved street cleaning machine.

Central Heating

Although *Alice Parker*'s invention in 1919 of a gas-powered central heater was never manufactured, her idea was the first that allowed for using natural gas to heat a home, inspiring the central heating systems used today.

Wireless Transmission Technology

Hedy Lamarr, a world-famous film star, invented a secret communications system during World War II for radio-controlling torpedoes. This technology also paved the way for many things used today, including wi-fi and GPS.

Residential Solar Heating

Solar heating for residential housing was invented in 1947 by *Dr Maria Telkes* – a psychiatrist in addition to being a solar-power pioneer.

Kevlar

This life-saving material that is five times stronger than steel and used to make bulletproof vests was invented in 1965 by *Stephanie Kwolek*.

Closed-circuit Television Security (CCTV)

Marie van Brittan Brown invented CCTV to help people ensure their own security because of the slow response of police officers in 1969. This invention influenced modern CCTV systems used for home security and police work today.

Telecommunications Technology

Some of the communication technology developed by *Dr Shirley Jackson* include the portable fax, touch tone telephone, solar cells, fibre optic cables, and the technology behind Caller ID and Call Waiting.

The Wonderful Word 'NO'

By Anita Knape

I was thinking about babies!

Well, you couldn't help thinking about them, the news was full of one in particular, *Prince Louis*.

It made me a bit sentimental thinking of my own babies and the wonder of their first words. Of course, in my experience of three babies, the first word is usually 'Dada', the second word is 'Mum Mum' ... we mothers are always second. But the third one, and the most used in my opinion, is 'NO'. They seem to say 'NO' to everything. Of course, they usually don't know what it means, they just hear it all the time, often from Mum.

They generally grow out of it when they get a few more words to play with and instead of saying 'NO' they tend to just ignore you.

As we get older, and maybe not exactly wiser, we tend to say 'Yes' and then we are caught up in the trap of saying 'Yes' to everything in case we offend. This lasts for a very, very long time. I'm speaking only for myself.

Of course, by any standard I am considered 'Elderly', 'Aged', 'Pensioner', and a bit kinder 'Mature'. So, it has taken me quite a long time to think about the wonderful word 'NO'.

I have found out I am entitled to use this great word. And it has taken a few years, to say the least, for me to discover this. So, I

have started using it quite a bit now. And I am very pleased with myself.

One of the things you have to learn is not to feel guilty for using 'NO'. It takes a bit of practice, but it comes.

So, my advice, ladies, is to practise this wonderful word more often. The result is, life becomes a lot easier and you have more time to do your own thing.



The Investiture

of our *OWN President Joan Lardner-Rivlin*
at *Government House*

By *Anne Mutu*

Joan Lardner-Rivlin invited *Beate Matthies* and myself to come and see her receive her award as Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) from the *Governor General Dame Patricia (Patsy) Reddy* at *Government House Epsom*.

We duly arrived at the gate where we presented our official invitation to the army personnel stationed there. Inside the gate were several policemen, probably present because of the events in Christchurch. We proceeded along the drive to the house past the lovely garden with the biggest pohutukawa I have ever seen with the tui serenading us from above.

We were shown to our seats in the large reception room and when we were all seated an official came to explain the procedures to us. We rose as the eleven award recipients filed into the room and then *Dame Patricia* entered along with her retinue. She was resplendent in her cream suit with all her medals.

The M.C. introduced each recipient, reciting the work they had done. Award winners came forward and had their award pinned on their chest by *Dame Patricia*. She spoke a few words to each recipient and as they returned to their seats, they were loudly applauded by everyone. *Joan* was the only one to laugh.

Afterwards we went across to the big marquee for refreshments and were able to mix and mingle. *Joan* was resplendent in her new outfit, supported by her daughter *Judith*. She had been warned to wear a reasonable sturdy top as the medal is heavy and a thin top would not have supported it.

Each recipient was escorted back to the lounge to have a personal chat with *Dame Patricia* and be introduced to her family and friends. *Joan* was telling her that she had been present at the *Queen's* coronation. *Dame Patricia* replied that *Joan* was the first person she had met who had been at the coronation.



We, family and friends, followed on into the lounge and were also able to have a few words with *Dame Patricia*. I remarked to her on the nice medals she was wearing and she replied that they were actually heavy and she would be glad to take them off. She

was an easy person to speak to and after a few more minutes of chit chat, we stood alongside *Joan* and *Dame Patricia* for the official photograph.

While we waited for *Joan* to collect her things, *Beate* and I took the opportunity to speak to some of the staff and ask questions about the house and the work they do. They were extremely nice and told us about the running of the house and we heard some interesting things. We then proceeded with *Joan* to the gate to await our transport and had the time to say thank you to the policemen stationed there.

Our transport arrived and we left with memories of an interesting day, basking in the reflected glory of *Joan*.

P.S. We asked Joan, why the laugh? *Dame Patricia* had said it was such a change to pin a medal on someone smaller than herself. (*Dame Patricia* is small.)

The Dangers of Ironing

By *Helen Welsh*

I expect I had been having a good old moan about the ironing, a chore I disliked and still dislike intensely. The ironing was executed using a cumbersome charcoal iron. A bed of hot ash was put into the iron and topped up with charcoal. We had no charcoal so the embers were used on their own.

I never did get the hang of this monster of an iron. There was a certain knack required in keeping the embers hot; the iron periodically had to be swung around in circles to keep it going. Almost everything the family owned was peppered with pinhole burns from flying cinders.

It was common practice to iron all the linen, even nappies and towels because of a nasty little insect, the putsi fly. This insect laid eggs on the damp linen. These could be destroyed by the heat from the iron. Failure to do this resulted in the eggs being transferred onto the skin where they became embedded under the skin causing horrible boils. Rather disgustingly when the boil burst a large maggot popped out.

Well, I moaned on about the iron which gave *George* the wonderful idea of giving me a Tilly iron as a Christmas present!

The square, quite nicely wrapped box appeared on the breakfast table, I sat guessing what it could possibly be, various ideas flitted through my mind, none of which were anywhere remotely near the truth. I hope I put on a happy pleased face!

I soon quite warmed to the idea of my modern new pressure iron before I tried using it! The principle of the iron was exactly the same as for a pressure lamp. Methylated spirit has to be dribbled into the well provided, the spirit is ignited, you wait, and after a minute or two pumping commences, slowly at first and then more vigorously, soon, hey presto the liquid kerosene turns to vapour and you are ready to iron. Stage one I completed without disaster, I was used to pressure lamps this was no different.

I was ready to start ironing, having put up my wobbly homemade ironing board, the mountainous basket of clothes beside me, and spray bottle to hand to help get the creases out of the cotton shirts. The new iron was good, instead of the swinging, it needed the occasional pump, but did not leave holes in the garments.



It gave a much better finish, but, and there is always a but, the snag was that when the damp fabric cooled the iron, due to my overzealous use of the spray no doubt, the vapour would become liquid again.

Suddenly there was a whoosh and a sheet of flame shot ceilingwards taking some of my eyebrows and a lump of my fringe with it. I panicked, almost dropped the iron, screamed for George, who was away, and then had the presence of mind to release the pressure knob, my moment of terror was over. I never did manage to cure the iron of this nasty habit; I just got better at managing it. Just as well because it was several more years before we moved to a house with electricity.

Tivaevae

By Irene Knowles

On Monday I went to change my king-size bed for summer comfort. As I rummaged for lighter blankets, IT popped up again.

What you wonder?

All had started many years ago when I saw an exhibition of Cook Island quilts at the *Auckland Art Gallery*. I was fascinated by their vibrant colours, the beautiful needlework and I wanted to make one too. But how to go about it? Best go to Rarotonga and see how it's done. What a dream! But dreams sometimes come true.

After my mastectomy, my daughter was about to return back to New Zealand after her stay overseas. She suggested we do something together. Would I like some days in Rotorua or somewhere else? For me this somewhere else had to be Rarotonga. We arranged she would stop over on her way back and I would meet her there. Great! Accommodation was arranged.

We arrived more or less at the same time. Our landlady met us at the airport and drove us to a small fale (house) on her huge lush property, within walking distance from the beach, also near a wee bar that opened for happy hour. It was perfect! By bus we could rattle into town where, naturally, I was on the lookout for these quilts. But not one shop had any for sale.

At the information office they gave me a phone number of someone who might be able to help. I made the call and a very friendly lady invited us to her home. From a cupboard in her lounge she took out several of the most exquisite examples to show us. She explained that the quilting was usually done by the women of a church group for weddings, christenings, funerals, etc. Cook Island women are very protective and don't want foreigners to produce machine made copies of their work.



Once back home I was determined to make one of these tivaevaes as well. I commenced working on a design, being mindful that it was only me making it, not a group, and that it should not take a lifetime to complete. I first bought the fabric and embroidery yarn, then got cracking cutting the cloth and tacking the pieces, before I began to embroider my creation Day Lillies. *Milou*, our Siamese cat usually kept me company while I worked.

After many weeks I completed the task, happy with the result. For many years my tivaevae was spread over our bed until I

found it had faded too much. It was put into storage, replaced by an ordinary duvet until Monday, when IT was, as you guessed, put back into service. *Milou* is long gone, but *Tama* our dog just loves snoozing on it. I still enjoy it too.

All these years later I am still impressed at what I achieved.

Whirinaki Forest Walk

By Chris Griffiths

Michael and I set out on a five-day walk in the *Whirinaki te Pua-a-Tane Conservation Park* on the East Coast of Aotearoa. This is a magnificent ‘dinosaur forest’ with towering kahikatea, totara, matai, rimu, miro, and tawa trees. The tramping track meanders down the forested river terraces with giant podocarps. The river cuts through an ancient lava flow with spectacular results.

Day One, it was raining, the river was raging and there was heavy windfall. A young American woman with a heavy pack ran past. She appeared to be as high as a kite.



Hours later, we arrived at the *Central Hut* and we were surprised to find a group of hiking friends who told us the track was now closed due to storm damage. It was unsafe to go any further and they were on their way home. The young woman had called in and she had a mystery package of white powder. Despite their advice, she insisted that she would carry on to the top of the mountain.

We decided to stay for a few days until the weather improved. We slept like logs and next day set out to explore nearby. We found a huge cave and the beautiful *Whirinaki Waterfall*. When we returned to the hut, we built a roaring fire and cooked dinner.



At dusk two men arrived and sat outside. They were pig hunters and they looked fearsome. Eventually they fed and settled their three dogs and then politely introduced themselves whilst cooking their dinner.

We shared stories. They told us about their families and how to catch wild boars. When I said I worked in the alcohol and drug field, the youngest man said he was beginning to wonder if he had an alcohol problem. By the end of the evening he had decided to go to *Alcoholics Anonymous* in Rotorua.

The morals were: ‘Don’t judge a book by its cover’ and ‘Nothing is ever as it seems’.

Next day, the hunters set out to catch food for their families. The weather was still stormy so we decided to walk out. We met a ranger and there had not been any sighting of the young American woman.

The ranger told us that an American couple had been walking out after four days tramping. The woman had bent down to navigate her way under a fallen tree. As she stood up with a heavy pack, she lost her balance and fell into the river. Her husband could not find her. He was utterly distraught. Her body was found downstream later that day.

We were bereft to hear of this terrible accident. We could only imagine how devastating this would be for the husband and their families.

This was a memorable trip.

We Have Not Come to Take Prisoners

Hafiz (Persian poet in the 1300s)

We have not come to take prisoners,
But to surrender ever more deeply
To freedom and joy.

We have not come into this exquisite world
To hold ourselves hostage from love.

Run my dear,
From anything
That may not strengthen
Your precious budding wings.

Run like hell my dear,
From anyone likely
To put a sharp knife
Into the sacred, tender vision
Of your beautiful heart.

We have a duty to befriend
Those aspects of obedience
That stand outside of our house
And shout to our reason
“O please, O please,
Come out and play.”

For we have not come here to take prisoners
Or to confine our wondrous spirits,
But to experience ever and ever more deeply
Our divine courage, freedom and Light!





Our Women's Network

Email: info@own.org.nz

Website: www.own.org.nz