

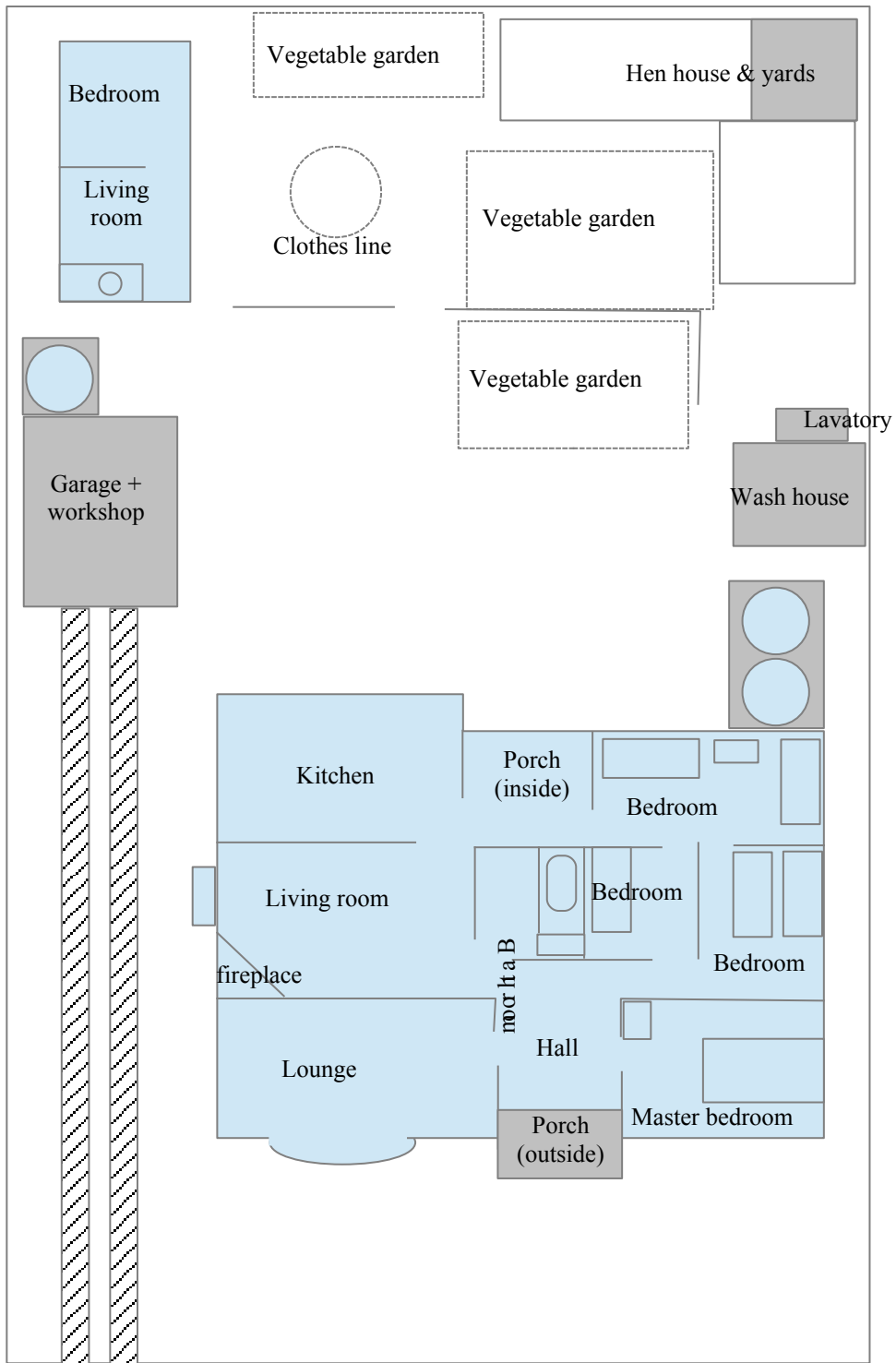
THE GISBORNE YEARS: Part 2

The Secondary Years (1950 - 1957)

This period of my life covers life in our second home and my secondary school years in Gisborne until the beginning of 1958 when I went to university in Wellington.

Second home

- **We move:** About 1950, we moved from the little house to my grandparent's house, which was much larger, and was about 400 metres down the same road at 536 (now 278) Ormond Road. The house had been built by my grandfather himself! The only help he got was in the lifting of the wooden wall frames which were assembled flat then lifted into place. Everything else, he did by himself. I am not sure when it was built - maybe about 1930 - but until then they had been renting a house. Again, the section had an area of ½-acre. My grandfather also built the house on the neighbouring section using almost the same plan.
- **The 'new' house:** The house had four bedrooms, one of which was formed later by an addition to the back of the house. There was a lounge and living room connected by large wooden doors, with an open fireplace in the living room. Then there were a largish kitchen, a bathroom (still without a shower) as well as front and back porches. The wash house and outside toilet were separate from the house. Again, there was only a rain/tank water supply. And still no refrigerator. The tank stand was made into a store room, where we kept bicycles (for a while) and food, as it was a very cool place. About the mid-50s we got a fridge. But still no television!
- **Granny flat:** Before we moved in, it was necessary to build a place for my grandparents to live. This consisted of a two-room structure at the back of the main house. It had a small kitchen area but no bathroom; they shared the bathroom in the 'big' house. I remember we boys helping to build this place. I also remember an accident that happened to Keith. He was up on the roof frame and fell, landing *between* the (parallel) floor beams (i.e. before the floor itself was put in place). That saved him; had he landed cross-ways, his back would probably have been broken and he would probably have died!
- **Death of grandfather:** But about the time the structure was finished, my grandfather died at only about 70 years of age. So, I only remember my grandmother living in this house.
- **Plan of house:** The diagram below shows the plan of the section and the buildings on it (about 95% accurate). The photos show the side of the house and driveway (left), the front of the house (centre) and the small 'granny' flat (right). My first bedroom was the small single bed room on the inside of the house. (These pictures were only taken recently by Bruce when he was visiting Gisborne.)



Road



- **Vegetables and chickens:** As with the first house, there were large vegetable gardens and a hen house and 'free-range' (limited) yards. My work before going to school each day was to prepare food, clean the hen's water bucket and replace water, clean the coop and collect eggs

- **Fruit:** Three fruit trees grew at the front of the house - grapefruit, orange and lemon. Again there were a number of small fruit bushes, including feijoas pictured left), kiwifruit, tamarillos (then called 'tree tomatoes' (pictured right)



and grape vines. Vegetables would include green vegetables such as peas, beans, lettuce, cabbage and cauliflower. We also grew pumpkins and tomatoes.

- **The washhouse changes:** After some time, the washhouse was not needed as we got a washing machine. Then after I had left Gisborne to go to university, the washhouse was converted into a room for my mother's mother (Grandma Vallance) who came to live there, and so Mum then had two mothers to take care of! When the house was sold and everybody moved to Christchurch in 1963, Grandma Vallance went to live with one (or more) of her other daughters; I am not sure as I lost track of her.

Life there

Guns and hunting

- **Hand-gun ban:** At about the time we moved in, the government banned all hand guns. My grandfather had a beautiful large-calibre silvery revolver which had to be handed in.
- **Rifles:** There was no ban on rifles as long as they were registered. We had several, including a 0.22” calibre rifle and one or two Lee-Enfield 0.303” calibre rifles (pictured). After the war, there were millions of these available along with billions of round of ammunition for them.



- **Opossum hunting:** One use for the rifles was for hunting animals. My father and a group of others from the church would go out in evenings onto back-country roads and farms hunting opossums, which were a major pest throughout the country. As a result, for a number of years there was a bounty of 'half-a-crown' (two shillings and sixpence or 2/6) for each opossum skin. I would often go out with them. After killing the opossums, we would cut off the head and part of the back then nail them to boards to dry. The opossums were usually found living/hiding in trees and their eyes could easily be picked up with a

spotlight, which was usually mounted on top of the trucks we travelled in. Shooting was done directly from the trucks, or, when necessary, when chasing them.

On one occasion, when I was still a bit naïve at opossum hunting, they played a trick on me by telling me to stand directly underneath a tree in which there was an opossum. When frightened or injured, they would often pee, and the one I was standing under did just that on me, much to their amusement!

- **Pig, deer hunting:** Sometimes, there would be pig or deer hunting. When in Form 6, a classmate and I went for a trip round the East Cape in his car for a few days during a holiday break. Coming back through the Waioeka Gorge, we spent some time trying to shoot deer (using the 0.303" rifles). However, we did not get any. There was one some distance away I had lined up in my sights and was a perfect target, but I missed. I could not understand why, until I saw that my rear sights had been pulled higher, probably having been caught on grass or branches when we were ploughing through undergrowth. That gorge area was also notorious for sink holes, many of which were covered by undergrowth and could not easily be seen. A number of people had fallen down some and were never seen again, or so we were told. As I was tracking a deer, I fell into one and landed on a ledge some feet below. I eventually managed to get out.

My mother and grandma

- My mother cooked for us and my grandmother. There was friction between Mum and Grandma Heyworth. In the evenings, we boys would be given the food to take over to Grandma's flat. Thinking about it now, this was because Mum did not want to take it over, though at the time we were completely unaware of this.

Talks with my grandma

- I used to go over to my grandmother's flat and talk a lot with her. She would usually give me the comfortable arm chair to sit on while she sat on the sofa. Invariably the radio would be on as she liked to listen to the live broadcasts from the parliament. She was a staunch Labour supporter and would make relevant comments for or against whoever happened to be speaking at the time. Her radio was similar to the one in the picture. It was very old but very powerful as it had quite a number of valves (vacuum tubes) and could pick up short-wave broadcasts from many places around the world with ease. (You might have seen it because your Granddad used it in his garage/workshop in Christchurch). She was also going blind and had to use a very large magnifying glass to read. She later had an operation for cataracts which improved her vision. After the rest of the family moved to Christchurch in 1963, she went into an 'old people's home' (as they were usually called then) and died there in 1970 (when I was on



holiday in England; I stayed with her younger sister at Bury, near Bolton, and it was she who informed me that Grandma had passed away).

Car

- The 'garage' was not used for that purpose until about 1955 (I would then have been in Form 5) when we got our first car - a Humber 80 (similar to that shown in the picture). We had decided on an almost identical car (a Hillman Minx, both made by the same UK company). After school, usually on my way to town to collect the papers for my paper-run, I would detour past the Hillman garage to look



at the cars. One day, I looked at the garage opposite which sold Humbers and there was a blue Humber 80 that turned out to be the one we were to buy. The house garage was built on wooden piles so was slightly above ground level so the car had to be driven up two small ramps. For some reason, my father would, most of the time, pull the car out backwards rather than drive it out, or usually get us boys to do it. Once it started rolling down the ramp, we had to make a quick leap sideways to avoid being run over.

Workshop

- The 'garage' was also used as a woodwork shop. My grandfather used it of course, including to make many wooden toys for us. He had a bench that went down most of one side and there were many tools (hand tools only). I used these to make quite a number of things out of wood. One I remember was a wooden frame to bind together magazines into books. I learnt how to do this at primary school and used it to bind together some school magazines as well as all the 180 weekly "Lion" comics we got every week for a number of years (I think you have seen the latter; they are stored in Keith's attic.)

Fires and firewood

- **Firewood:** My father would also send home wood and old large wooden packing boxes from where he worked, and store them in the garage. Most of the boxes would eventually be broken up for firewood but until that happened, we boys would use the boxes - piled on top of each other - for playing in.
- **Burnt cat:** Every cold winter evening we would have an open fire in the living room. The boxes provided only light firewood so we would buy cut-up logs that burnt for longer. Because the air rising up the chimney sucks air into the room, there would always be cold draughts under doors



as the air entered. Dreyfus the cat, who was allowed inside for a while, was a fan on the fire and would lie down and snooze on the rug in front of it, oblivious to how hot he was becoming or to sparks that would jump out of the fire and onto his fur. When we went to bed, Drefus would have to sleep on the back porch. (The photo shows me with Dreyfus in 1953; note also a vegetable garden and the flat and compare this picture with the layout of the property.) In summer. Dreyfus would usually have to remain outside.

Guy Fawkes evenings

- **Fireworks:** November 5th is Guy Fawkes day, when in 1601, the catholic Guy Fawkes tried to blow up the House of Parliament in London to kill the protestant king. He failed, was captured and executed (hung, drawn and quartered!). To commemorate this event (though why I don't know), bonfires are lit, fireworks are let off and effigies of Guy Fawkes are burnt on this evening. Sometimes we would go to a nearby park and sometimes to the beach. On one occasion at the beach, somebody threw a 'sparkler' which fell down Bruce's shirt and gave him a bad burn, the scar of which he still has.
- **Guy Fawkes and English exam:** On Guy Fawkes night in 1955, the captain of a local fishing boat ('Popeye' Dudley) took a group of us from the church on his boat out into the bay to watch the fireworks display on the beach. I remember it was a very dark but fine night. Because of the darkness, we collided with a yacht that did not have navigation lights showing. I don't think the yacht sank and nobody was injured. I used this incident for the essay question in the NZ School Certificate English exam (which was soon after the incident) as one of the options for the essay involved some incident that had happened to us.
- For picture of a bonfire at our local park plus a 'guy' effigy, go to the 'Photo News' at: http://photonews.org.nz/gisborne/issue/GPN65_19591113/t1-body-d7.html

Cat fights

- From time to time a dog would get into the property, especially one from a house directly opposite. Dreyfus never took kindly to them and would always win fights with the dogs.

Kitchen reminiscences

- **Kitchen duty:** Having three children was very convenient for cleaning duties after dinner which involved washing, drying and put the dishes into drawers and cupboards. Washing was usually the most popular even though it was the dirtiest of the three tasks, the reason being that the work was finished first! Putting them away, though the easiest, meant finishing last!
- **Favourite snack:** What I used to like was to get biscuits from the biscuit tins. My mother would make lots of biscuits/cookies for us to eat (look at the recipe



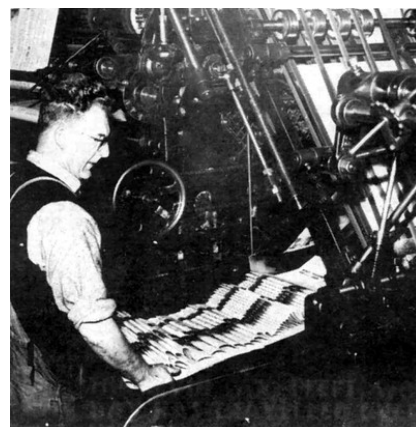
book Nadine). Also, she would often cut up tomatoes and place them onto crackers; I liked those (and still do). The common brand of crackers was called “Snax”.

Paper boy

- **Paper run:** For several years, beginning when I was 14, I was a paper boy for the local newspaper “The Gisborne Herald” (yes, they were all boys in those days). This was quite a sought-after job in those days. My 'run', as it was called, conveniently started at the house next to ours and consisted of delivering the evening newspaper to about 72 homes, six days a week. The newspaper office was in the centre of town and I would go there after school to collect them. They were placed in a bag (made out of an old sack) and placed over the main bar of the bicycle (very similar to that in the picture). While riding home, I would spend a lot of the time rolling up the newspapers and bending them into a boomerang shape. As this took two hands, most of the time I would be cycling without holding onto the handle bars (which, I think, was illegal). This was because the papers were usually just tossed over the fence and a folded paper could be tossed over fences more easily and from further away.
- **Near accident:** I remember an accident I nearly had because of riding 'no-hands'. The front mudguard on my bicycle would sometimes move and rub on the wheel. It could be fixed by kicking it. On one occasion when it happened, I forgot I was cycling 'no-hands', and also going quite fast when I kicked the mudguard. The bicycle veered badly out of control and nearly fell over on the road. But I somehow managed to regain control.
- **Papers in mail boxes:** With the folded newspapers, I would often try to throw them to land in designated places, usually porches. Newspapers were only placed in mail boxes on wet days, which was a pain as it took much longer to complete the delivery. However, some people would give me a tip when I collected the money for the papers; they always got their papers placed in the mail box.
- **Money collection:** It was necessary to collect money from subscribers once a week. The papers then cost 3d (threepence) or 1/6 (one shilling and sixpence) a week. Technically, this was to be collected on Saturday mornings, though I tried to do most of it on Friday afternoons while delivering the papers, which meant finishing quite late. For people who were not at home, I had to re-visit the houses on Saturday mornings. I would then count the money at home and take the necessary amount to the office .



- **Tips:** It was always nice to receive tips, which usually added up to a few shillings a week. This would supplement the 10 shillings a week pay I received (later increased a little). However, the company would subtract one shilling (1/-) for any complaint received. I think this only happened a couple of times and it would make me mad (each complaint meant losing 10% of your pay), especially if it was not justified. I remember one house that made a complaint; however, I never met the people as they had chosen to pay the newspaper office directly instead of paying me. At Christmas there would always be more tips, I guess a reward as I think I was a very responsible paper boy.
- **Misadventure:** Once, before we had a car, we borrowed the neighbour's car one Saturday, to visit my uncle and his family who lived on a farm some distance out of Gisborne. On the way back, the car slid into a ditch at the side of the road and took a long time to get it out. This meant I did not arrive back until the newspaper office had closed. The company knew something must have happened as I was very reliable; they had taken the papers and had begun delivering them when I arrived and took over.
- **Picking up papers:** When collecting the papers each evening, it would be a pain if you were at the back of the queue of boys waiting to receive the papers as they came off the press. So some boys, including me, would cycle down to the press room in the early mornings and place our folded paper bag behind a pipe of a heater. Then I would cycle home and have breakfast before going to school. In the afternoons, we could take that position in the queue whenever we arrived. If we arrived late, because our bag was there, we could jump the queue. This was a kind of honour code and it was always honoured.
- **Printing press job:** When I was in Form 6, I had two jobs. As well as having the paper run, I worked in the printing room (similar to that shown in the picture, though we stood on the *side* to pick up the papers), which was a prestigious job. There were three of us. One picked up the papers as they came off the press and passed them to the other two who then gave the correct number to the boys queueing up for their papers. We knew how many papers to take from the press as every 24th paper would jump out a little further than the others so we counted in 24s and topped up from a pile at the window to hand to the paper boys. (Of course today, such jobs are not needed as the printing presses count and bundle the papers together.) The printing press in this room was very noisy and we never had any ear protectors.
- **Maoris:** On my paper route, there were one or two Maori families. This was one of the few times I had contact with Maoris. There were only ever a few in my school classes. They often lived in poorer dirtier conditions than others; this included these families.



- In Form 7. I gave up these jobs as I had to focus more on study and examinations.

Painting the house

- Because the house was made of wood with a corrugated file roof, it was necessary for these to be painted from time to time. I was always conscripted to help with the painting. The roof was always a bit scary as there was the possibility of sliding down and falling off. I never liked having to do these painting jobs.

Visits to the dentist

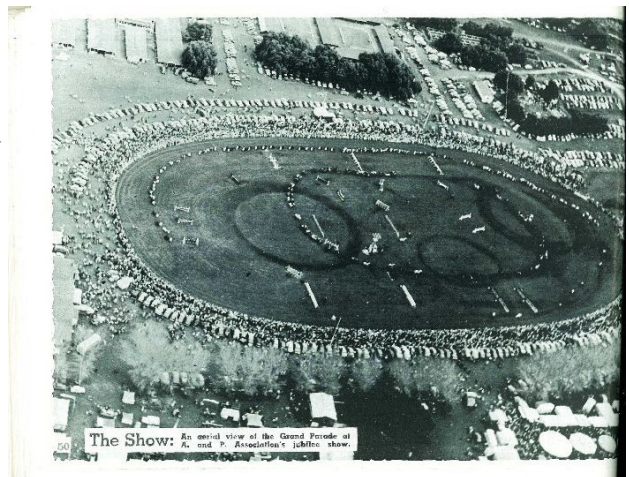
- We had a family dentist in town whom we had to visit occasionally. I did not like these visits as the drills, while electrically-operated now, were still not high speed so you could feel almost everything. I would bike to town, lock my bike by the footpath (in earlier years locking bikes was not needed as thefts were rare), and climb the cold concrete stairs to the first floor surgery, which I can remember vividly. The only distraction was that the chair faced the window so it was possible to watch life pass by on the road below. Even when at university, I would still visit the same dentist when in Gisborne. This continued until the family moved to Christchurch.
- In my time, dentists were just about able to look after teeth sufficiently well enough to avoid the need to have dentures (which I do not have). My mother suffered at the hands of dentists until she decided to have them all out and get dentures.

A & P Shows

- Every year, there would be an A & P (Agricultural and Pastoral) Spring Show at the Showgrounds (where our church would have Easter camps and where speedway races would be held - see below). This was primarily for farmers to display prime stock. There would always be sheepdog



trials (to guide sheep into a pen).



The picture above shows the main ground during the 1955 Show. There were, of course, also the sideshows which is what the public often went for. The picture on the left shows one of the rides at the 1956 show; I would most likely have been there.

The "Photo News" contains a number of pictures of events at various shows. One of them is at the website: http://photonews.org.nz/gisborne/issue/GPN65_19591113/t1-body-d21.html

Visits by naval ships

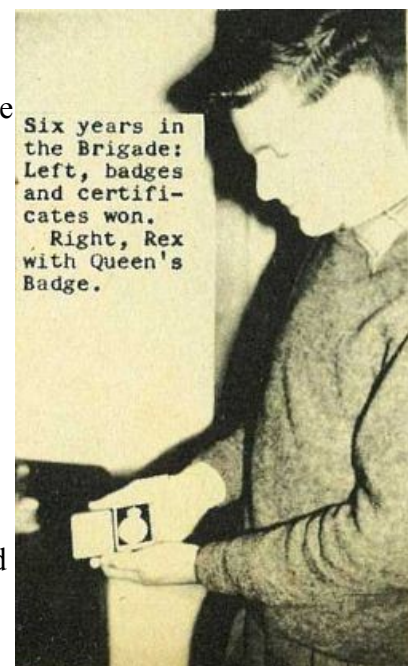
- Occasionally, naval ships would visit Gisborne. Because the port was very small, only frigates or similar-sized vessels could use it. On such visits, the ships were usually open to the public on Sunday afternoons. We boys liked to inspect the ships. We were allowed almost everywhere - the engine room, the gun turrets (where we could play with the guns) and the bridge (where we liked to speak through the voice pipes with one of us on the bridge and another in the engine room). See the "Photo News" for pictures of such a visit in 1960:



http://photonews.org.nz/gisborne/issue/GPN71_19600519/t1-body-d23.html

Boys' Brigade

- The church we went to had a Boys' Brigade company. I started going at about 12 years of age which was the youngest age for joining. I remained there for six years, eventually becoming a sergeant. (The picture, above, is not of our company but ours would have looked very similar.)
- Sessions were held one evening a week. There were many classes we could attend to earn certificates and/or badges. The picture above right shows most of these that I earned.
- Queen's badge:** In 1957, my final year, I eventually got the Queen's Badge, the highest award possible in the Boys' Brigade. See the picture of me with the badge; this picture was in the "Photo News" is at:
http://photonews.org.nz/gisborne/issue/GPN61_19590723/t1-body-d6.html
- Marching competitions:** Because the Boys' Brigade is organised along military lines (in order to instil discipline in street urchins and roughs of late 19th Century England), marching was an important feature. Every year there would be competitions with other companies in various towns -



Gisborne, Wairoa, Napier and Hastings. Our company used to do rather well and won these competitions occasionally. Travel to other towns was by train, which was always exciting. In other towns, we would be billeted with local families.

- **Near-fatal outing:** There were always outings, such as hikes up local hills I remember particularly one evening in summer, we went to the local beach for swimming. Several of us were nearly drowned. We would swim out to try to catch the waves for body-surfing, when we realised that we were caught in an undertow and could not get back to the shore. As the night was dark, we could not be seen from shore. We would get closer to the shore and could feel the sand beneath us but then would be swept out again. Eventually we all made it back, and I can still remember when I was able to touch the bottom again and remain there.

One summer holiday

- One summer holiday (I think it was in 1956), we were to go on a holiday with the Whites (our relatives in Wairoa - Mum's sister) around the East Cape. The morning we were to leave, I was chasing Bruce (I think it was) around the house (outside). On one turn there was a pile of old rusty corrugated iron sheets and I ran straight into them and received a gash about two inches wide just above my left knee that really opened up my leg. Instead of taking me to the hospital, my father treated the wound himself (I guess his medic training helped) by pouring iodine into the wound (extremely painful!) then binding up the wound very tightly with bandages. We still left on the holiday though I was out of action for a while. When the bandages were removed there was a big scar there, which is still there today - have you ever noticed it? (I guess if I had had stitches, there would be no scar.)

Church: Roebuck Rd

- **Our church:** We grew up with the Church of Christ (though my mother grew up as a Presbyterian). We would have to go almost every Sunday, though I did not like going. The picture shows the church as it appeared in 1950, though this building was gradually modified and has since been replaced. (It looks like the building is in open space but that is only an illusion as the whole area is built-up.)



- **Cooking Sunday dinners:** There would be Sunday School first, in a building behind the church building, followed by the 11 am church service. I remember being allowed out of the service at what I called “half-time” and go home on my bicycle. But the condition for

this was to begin cooking the Sunday dinner, which meant turning on the oven to cook the roast meat and cooking the vegetables. My mother had prepared everything beforehand so I just had to manage the cooking which would be finished about the time everyone else got home.

- **Long prayers:** In church, at least when I was a teenager, I would not sit with my parents, I and another boy would sit right at the back. I can remember that there were sometimes very long extemporaneous prayers by some the elderly men, praying for just about everything and everyone in the whole world, it seemed! Very boring.
- **Pay to go to church?:** When I was very small (this should actually be in the previous file) and the plate was being passed around for the offering, I asked my mother “Do we have to pay for these seats?” Of course I do not remember this; my mother told me later in life.
- **Sunday school anniversary:** Every year, the Sunday School would put on a musical performance in the church. They would install temporary tiered seating along one side of the church for the Sunday School children. Our performances would be mostly singing, including songs with actions.
- **Annual picnic:** Every year, there would be an annual church picnic. Before car ownership was common, many churches, companies and other organisations, would hire fleets of buses to take their members on a daily outing. Many of these were at a recreation ground called “Waihirere” about 10 km from Gisborne. On the weekends, fleets of buses would could be seen passing our place. From the lounge/ ront room, I would often count the number of buses in the fleets. One of the largest of these group was the “Wharfies” (waterside/harbour/freezing works) who would have seven or eight buses. Our church would usually have three buses. As the buses had to pass our place, one would stop to pick up up. The picnic ground had three swimming facilities, fed directly from a stream and so the water was untreated but safe. The water would flow from the first pool, which was a swimming pool, to two other pools which were much smaller and mainly for small children. There were also slides, one of which was very long indeed. Families would take their own lunches, which would be mainly sandwiches, cakes and cordial drinks and would be spread out on blankets. For the children, there would always be races such as running and sack races. I would invariably win the sprint races for my age group. And also, there would be a group walk up through the bush to a waterfall. Along the way, there were the remains of an old Maori village, and to me it was always a bit spooky! The “Photo News” contains some pictures of Waihirere and the kinds of activities there. Here are two of them:
http://photonews.org.nz/gisborne/issue/GPN18_19551215/t1-body-d8.html
http://photonews.org.nz/gisborne/issue/GPN56_19590305/t1-body-d25.html
- **Easter camps:** At Easter, the church would hold a camp in the main building at the local Agriculture and Pastoral show grounds. This was always a problem for me because of

asthma as the large rooms, where we slept on mattresses, often in sleeping bags would be very dusty, which I was allergic to. Before the age of about 10, our family would be given a separate room to sleep in because of my asthma problem. But I was still able to participate in the running races on the Saturday afternoon.

- **Perverse Christmas carolling:** On the Sunday evening before each Christmas, after the evening service, people would travel around town on trucks to sing carols outside church members' houses. This was good fun, but I don't think it would be allowed to day, as standing on the backs of trucks is probably considered too dangerous. But not then! I remember one year, Roger White, my cousin from Wairoa and I, who were both in one truck, getting into big trouble for singing very loudly our alternative words for a carol. The correct words were:

“While shepherds watched their flocks by night
all seated on the ground,
an angel of the Lord came down
and glory shone around.”

Our modified version, to the same tune, went:

“While shepherds washed their socks by night
all seated round a tub,
a bar of Sunlight soap came down
and they began to scrub.”

Sunlight soap was a very common kind of washing soap. Our rendition was not appreciated and we were threatened to be sent home in disgrace!

Visits to relatives

- **Mother's sisters:** There were several of my mother's sisters and their families who lived in the vicinity of Gisborne and Wairoa and we would visit them occasionally. Ken Gliddon (wife Hilda, my mother's sister) was a shepherd who worked on two different farms in the vicinity. I mentioned a visit to their place when talking about being a paper boy earlier. When we got a car (1955) we would make more frequent visits to the second farm they worked on.
- **Mischief at the Whites:** The Whites - Uncle Ron and Auntie Alice (my mother's second sister) lived in Wairoa, about 60 miles south of Gisborne, where they had an orchard. Roger, my cousin closest in age to me, and I would sometimes get into mischief at his place. Uncle Ron often employed Chinese workers. On one visit, Roger and I taunted one of these workers with a not-too-polite ditty about Chinese people. It began “Ching Chong Chinamen,” ; I cannot remember the rest (though the Internet does give some possibilities). The guy must have become very annoyed - and who can blame him - as he chased us waving a large chopper that he was using to prune trees. On another occasion,

Roger and I sneaked away from the house to a remote corner of the orchard to puff away on cigarettes. Although our clothes must have smelled of smoke, it was not detected when we returned. (When Roger and his wife stayed with me in Hong Kong in 2011, we reminisced on these incidents; his wife, who knew nothing of them, seemed rather shocked!)

Musical instruments

- **Piano:** In the 'new' house there was a piano which had belonged to my grandparents (I think); the same piano is the one you would have seen in the Grahams Road house. For several years, I had to learn to play the piano. I did so, though I was not very keen. I got to the stage where I could play a few pieces reasonably well. These included “Invitation to a dance” (Weber) and “Etude in E-flat major” (I think this is correct) (Chopin).
- **Violin:** My father at one time was also studying the violin. He used to get lessons but I don't think he was very good at it.
- **Learning the flute:** For a while, when I was in Form 3 or Form 4, I was learning the flute. A senior boy was my tutor. But I got nowhere. Before learning the flute proper, he got me to practice on the fife. But I never mastered it and eventually gave up.



Radio

- **Stations:** Following the move into the second house in about 1950, I would listen to the radio a lot, mainly the local station. Gisborne had two radio stations, 2XG which was a government semi-commercial station, and 2XM which was a private station and only on the air at limited times.
- **2XM:** This was on air on Sunday evenings and my father used to listen to it then. I can remember, while lying in bed, there would be a session given over to announcing who had died during the past week. The music for this was Chopin's funeral march!
- **2XG:** Here are some of the programmes I listened to on 2XG:
 - The '*East Coast Hit Parade*', half an hour of the then top hits. In those days they were always songs with words that made sense and which you could actually understand. (One singer who made it to the top several times was Rosemary Clooney, the auntie of George Clooney.)
 - '*Dad and Dave*', a 15-minute soap opera about a family in 'Snake Gully' in the Australian outback. This show aired for many, many years.
 - Then there were the 30-minute British comedies, a major one that I loved being '*The Goon Show*'. The three goons were Peter Sellers (in his pre-movie days),



Harold Secombe (who was also an opera singer) and Spike Lilligan. It was hilarious though I don't think my parents liked it much. (It is still popular today!)

- *Request sessions*, playing music that people had requested. To request, one had to write a letter. I did this once (the only time in my life) and requested Elgar's 'Pomp and Circumstance March Number 1 (Land of Hope and Glory)' and it was duly played for me.
- *Advertisements*: Unlike television, which can use images to get a message across, radio advertisements depend on sound. Hence, there was wide use of jingles to promote products. There were many of these and I would pick them up, some of which I can still remember exactly. Here are two of them:

1. An ad for 'Europa' a brand of petrol. (Of historical note, this was the first *singing* radio commercial.) It went:

“Clean burning Europa,
The petrol with pep.
Keeps your engine sweeter,
Makes your engine step*
All along the way,
Wise motorists say,
‘It’s clean-burning Europa for me’!”

*as in 'stepping on the gas'

2. Colgate toothpaste:

“Brush your teeth with Colgate, Colgate Dental Cream.
It cleans your breath—what a toothpaste!
While it cleans your teeth.”



Speedway

- This was a very popular kind of motor-bike racing in those days (and still in in a few - mainly European - countries). The bikes would race short distances round a track about the size of a 400-metre running track. The bikes has thinner, lighter front wheels and thicker rear wheels where all the power was applied.



But they did *not* have brakes! One feature of this kind of riding was 'drifting/sliding' when the riders would place their inside legs on the track (see picture). In Gisborne, speedway racing was held in the Showgrounds (mentioned above) on a grass surface (in contrast to a cinder track on professional tracks). It was very exciting racing and our neighbour would often go and would take me with him. The picture here is taken from the Gisborne “Photo

News". Gisborne never produced any outstanding riders; those in the picture are from Hastings and rode professionally in the UK, though New Zealand has produced world champions, one six times and another four times.

Fruit and vegetable vendors

- The Lee brothers (I never did figure out if they were Chinese or not) had a fruit and vegetable shop in town which we would visit occasionally. They also had a truck loaded with fruits and vegetables which would travel around parts of the town. Once a week they came to our area and we would often go out to the truck to buy supplies.

The broken bed

- When I was 10 or 11 years old, I was playing on my parents bed early one Saturday morning using it as a trampoline when a beam in the frame broke. Instead of confessing, I asked my mother if I (we?) could go to the Saturday morning movies and have money for admission and for the bus fares. (In those pre-TV days, one cinema had special Saturday morning movies for children; they would usually consist of a short comedy, a short cowboy item, e.g. Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, before the main movie.) After the movie, I did not go home on the bus but walked very, very slowly home, guessing that the broken bed would have been discovered and that I would be in trouble. Eventually, several hours later, I arrived home, but didn't get into serious trouble (I guess they were worried about what had happened to me and were relieved when I arrived home.)

Gisborne Intermediate School: Forms 1 and 2

- **Opening:** The school opened in 1940 so was not too old when I attended it in 1951 and 1952. I went there after being at Mangapapa School. It was a two-year 'intermediate' between primary and secondary schools, though technically it was a primary school, even though the two years are called *forms*. Pupils from primary



- schools all over Gisborne attended this school, so my horizons were beginning to broaden.
- **Facilities:** The school had flush toilets (and inside, not some distance away as the toilets were at Mangapapa School). There were also very large play/sports fields as well as a large concrete area for netball (girls' basketball as it was then called) and outside assemblies. There was also a large hall, which was used for a variety of activities including assemblies,

physical education, stage performances and school dances. Dancing was held in the winter months during the second half of lunch hours (I am not sure if that also included dance lessons). There was also a large area in front of the school (see photo) but we were not allowed there. There was no swimming pool.

- **Bike to school:** It was some distance from home so I had to bike to and from the school. The school had large bike stands for the hundreds of pupils who biked to school. We were each allocated a bike rack.

Form 1A

- I must have done quite well in Standard 4 as I ended up in Form 1A. Classes were streamed and ranged from 1A to 1F. The teacher, whom I did not at all like, was Miss Fisher and I did not do very well that year so was 'promoted' to Form 2B. During Form 1, I got the nickname 'Skunk' for reasons you can probably guess. I did not like the name! The class photo for Form 1A is shown below. Notice that now, we had a school uniform, which included shoes and socks (that had to be pulled up). I note that there are 47 pupils in the photo - a very large class. I can still remember the names of most of my classmates.



- **Subjects:** There was also a wider variety of subjects (refer to the list in the school reports). These included woodwork and metalwork for boys (one in each year) and sewing and cookery for girls (again one each year). Miss Fisher took us for a number of subjects, though we had another teacher in another room for Nature Study (Science) as well as the

technical subjects. There was also a science laboratory and a library, but we did not use these very often.

- **Religious instruction:** Once a week, for 30 or 40 minutes, we also had religious instruction, taken by outsiders. Catholics were not allowed to attend these lessons (refer to earlier file) so one pupil used to leave the room at this time (photo second row from rear, extreme left).
- **Office duties:** Once or twice a year, all pupils helped in the general office by answering the telephone. At that time, we still had no phone at home so it was actually a strange experience for me hearing voices that way.
- **Musical:** During my Form 1 year, the school put on a performance of a musical - I think it was "South Pacific" which we performed in front of the school and probably for the public (though I do not remember the latter). The photo (below) shows the cast. I was one of the 'natives' on the island.

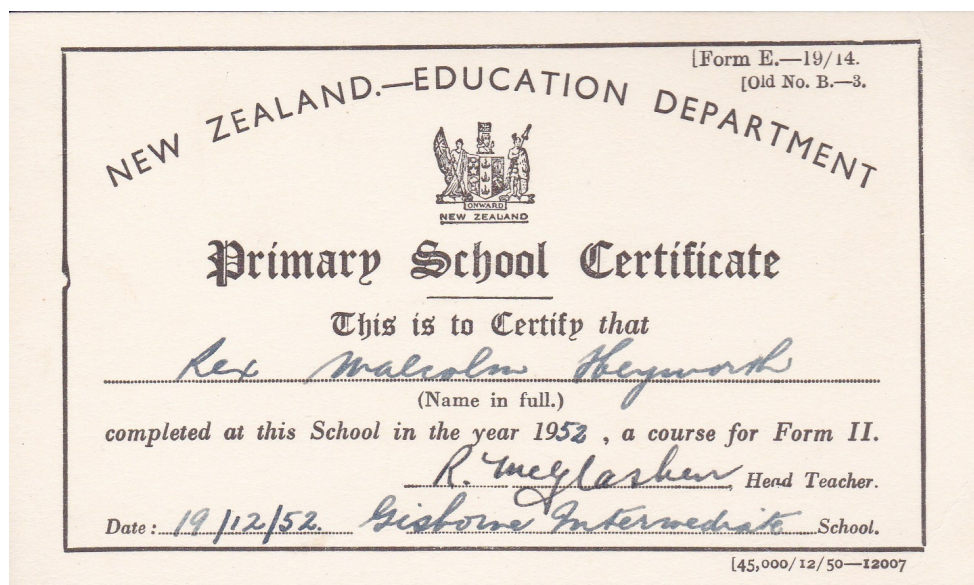


Form 2B

- **Demotion:** Because I did badly in Form 1A, I was demoted to Form 2B, though I don't remember being worried about this. Our teacher in Form 2B was another lady, Miss Emerson. Again we had a different teacher for Nature Study (Science). I liked Science and still have my science notebook (see separate file for a copy). However, the science we learnt then was nowhere as sophisticated as is taught in schools today. The class photo for 2B is shown on the next page. In this photo, and also that for Form 1A, I cannot help but think that the girls look very mature for 11- and 12-year-olds. They do not look like little kids!



- **My right hand:** One strange thing I remember is, when in Form 2, I was accidentally kicked on my right hand while playing. I looked at my hand and noticed that it was slightly larger than my left hand. I thought this was due to the kick but later realised it was more likely just due to normal development through using the right hand much more than the left, and I had never actually noticed the difference before.
- **Overall:** Although I enjoyed these two years at the Intermediate School, they were disastrous academically. On going to secondary school, I was placed in Form 3C. The image below shows the certificate we got on leaving Form 2. that is, the end of primary school. The certificate served no useful purpose.



- **Bicycle mischief:**

1. When cycling home after school, we had to pass the botanical gardens. Between the gardens and the road was a small stretch of grass which, when wet, was good for skidding on with our bikes. To do this we would ride fast along the footpath (it was illegal to ride on footpaths!) and onto the grass then slam on the brakes and skid to see how big a piece of turf we could cut up. Oh the things we boys would get up to! (I am not sure when we would do this; it must have been before my paper boy days as I would have gone to the newspaper office after school and not directly home.)
2. In those days, many roads were not completely formed and did not have proper curb-side drainage. Instead, there were ditches to collect water. One house owner, on our cycling route, had made his ditch into a nice grassy U-shape. We used to ride through this ditch much like a roller coaster. That was, until we discovered that he had placed barbed wire under the grass to deter such pranks. We certainly did not want to get punctured tyres.

Gisborne High School (and later Gisborne Boys High School)

- **Founding:** The school opened in 1909. It had its centenary in 2009. I was thinking of going but the programme was so poor that it was not worth it for what would have been essentially one day. I got the distinct impression that the teachers were not interested in organising it. They did not even produce a book dealing with the history of the school (as did Christ's College and Burnside High School). The picture here shows the school emblem (or logo as it might be called now).



- **Form 6A:** I was at the school from 1953 to 1957, from Form 3 to Form 6A (now called Form 7). The reason for '6A' was that in earlier days, there were only four years of secondary schooling, and students who wanted to attend university went then. But as standards rose in the universities, an additional year of study was found to be necessary at secondary schools so the extra year was called '6A'. However, even today, students still get a University Entrance certificate at the end of Form 6 and so are allowed to go to university then, if the university accepts them, which is unlikely nowadays.
- **School splits:** The school was originally a co-educational school. But, because of the increase in population, a new school was needed so in 1956, Gisborne Girls High School opened and all girls moved across. The original school then became Gisborne Boys High School. However, in 1957 (my Form 6A year), the girls' school did not have a teacher to teach mathematics so the girls came to our school for that subject.
- **The original school building:** (below, left) This was made of unreinforced brick and concrete in the English tradition and later had climbing plants growing over the front of the

building (below, right). A later wing was built of wood. Because of the building material, these buildings were an earthquake disaster waiting to happen. Therefore, we had regular earthquake drills, which involved leaving the classrooms and assembling in designated areas, including a grass quadrangle between the buildings. However, while I was there, I don't think there was any earthquake that necessitated an actual evacuation.



- **Boys and girls areas:** The school had large grassy areas at the front and back. The front was boys only while the back was girls only. Unfortunately, there was a school canteen (which I think was a former house before it was absorbed into the school grounds and was named 'Dalgetty's' after the name of the residents) right in the middle of girl's area. To get to the canteen, there was a neutral but unmarked path through the girls' ground for boys to get to Dalgetty's. There was also a 'tuck shop' just outside the school.

During breaks, Rugby footballs would be brought out to the boys' area for us to kick; this usually meant dividing into two groups, one at each end of the field, kicking the balls back and forth. I have no idea what they girls did, but I am sure they had no Rugby balls.

- **Swimming pool & incidents:** There was no gymnasium but there was a swimming pool (33 yards length, so three lengths was 100 yards). We used it for PE lessons in the summer. It was not suitable for school competitions which were held in the (one) public swimming pool which had a larger seating capacity. I remember a couple of amusing incidents at the swimming pool:
 - In Form 4 (I think), our swimming lesson was after the morning break so many of us would cycle over to the pool and spend the break there fooling around. On one occasion, we were teasing one boy and the (strange) bike he had. Then one guy gave the bike a push; it ran along by itself for a while then hit the fence and broke into two pieces. For us that was hilarious.
 - When growing up, one does not always know the meaning of words that one uses. This happened to me, again when in Form 4 I think. The teacher had given us some free time in the pool and when a friend of mine did something to annoy me I called out to him in a loud voice "You great big greasy turd!" I had learnt the expression but did not know what a 'turd' was. Anyway, the teacher, who had heard this, called out "Heyworth, come here!"

(boys were always addressed by their surnames in those days, though it started to change by about the time I reached Form 6A). He asked me if I knew what I had said, so I repeated it!! He did not punish me but told me to go and find the meaning of the word (at least I think this is what he said).

- **Boarding houses:** Many students who needed to attend secondary school lived out in the country/rural areas (where primary but not secondary education was provided). To cater for these students, there were two boarding houses, one for boys and one for girls. (The photo on the right shows the girls' hostel.)



- **Houses:** All students were divided into 'houses' in the British tradition. There were four houses, with 'Waikanae House' being my house.
- **Quadrangle:** As mentioned above, the school had a large grass quadrangle. This was almost 'sacred' and we were not normally allowed to walk on it. However, the four corners always seemed to be worn out indicating that students, including myself, took short cuts. In 1955, my Form 5 year, there was one boy in my class who was repeating the School Certificate examination for the third time - there was no promotion to Form 6 in those days if you failed this examination (see below). He was also old enough to have a driver's license and one night, very late, he drove his family car onto the grass quadrangle and tore up the grass with large skid marks. The quad was a mess. He was never caught, though we all knew who had done it. (He was quite a nice guy actually; I remember helping him a lot with mathematics which he struggled with.)
- **Streaming:** Students at our secondary school were streamed in two ways: according to the type of course one wanted (professional for boys and girls, technical and agriculture for boys, and commercial for girls), as well as by classes in each of these course streams.

- **Jets:** In those days, jet aircraft had only recently been introduced into the RNZAF so



they were a novelty. The first jet fighter the RNZAF had was the Vampire (see photo above left). Occasionally, they would fly over Gisborne on training flights, and the sound of the jets would always cause us to jump up and run to the windows to try to see them, with teachers being unable to stop us. In 1955, three RAF V-

bombers came to New Zealand and flew around the country (one 'Valiant', one 'Victor' and one delta-winged 'Vulcan' which all had V-shape wings as in the picture, above right. From top to bottom - Victor, Valiant, Vulcan). The whole school was taken out to the front of the school to watch them fly past.

- **School assemblies:** These were held every day. When held inside, the hall was just large enough to hold everybody provided Form 3 students stood at the back. Gradually, we worked our way forwards, with Form 6A being seated at the front. At other times, usually after lunch, we would line up outside as classes, then proceed class by class to our classrooms.
- **Music:** For Forms 3 and 4, music was part of the curriculum. But it was just one (two?) periods a week and not an examinable subject. Therefore it was largely a joke. A lot of the time was spent learning songs that could be sung at school assemblies or other occasions. To learn a song, the music teacher would write the words on large flip charts, initially complete, then with words or lines omitted until we had learnt the song. On one occasion, maybe more, as a class, the boys in my class decided we would sing just the words on the chart and remain silent for words that were omitted. That made the teacher mad!
- **Fights:** Quite often, fights between boys would break out between boys at break times. Almost immediately a ring of boys would encircle the combatants, egging them on. This was always noisy and would attract the attention of the (male) teachers, whose staffroom overlooked the boys' area (front left in the above pictures of the school). A teacher would then come out to break up a fight, usually with a lot of heckling from us.
- **Caning:** The boys fighting would probably be punished by caning. This was often carried out in the staffroom in front of all the teachers. I was only caned once and this was in Form 5. The teacher had left the room for a while and during this time, a number of us began to fire paper pellets from rubber bands at one other boy. We did not know it, but the teacher had been observing us from the office he had gone to. When he came back, he said nothing but walked slowly around the room picking up paper pellets then asked who was guilty. There were about six of us. So, after school, we all had to report to the staff room where we were caned. I think we got four whacks. To try to soften the blows, I had folded up my (thick) shirt into a roll inside my (short) trousers. But perhaps the teacher could see this when I bent over because all the whacks landed just below it! Painful! But there was a positive side to it as caning could be viewed as a 'badge' of honour. Boys would cut nicks into their



trouser leather belts, one nick for each whack. So all could see how many strokes a boy had received. Some boys seem to have nicks all the way around their belts!

- **School 'cadets'**: Each year, school began (usually in late January) with one week full time of military training. As it was still summer, it was usually very hot. These activities continued half an afternoon a week throughout the year. We had to wear army uniforms, which were very rough, uncomfortable and in summer very hot. By Form 6A, I had become a staff sergeant attached to a Form 3 company. But Form 3 cadets were abolished during that year, so I had no role but along with others out of a job, managed to avoid being assigned elsewhere and were never detected doing nothing but walking around the school grounds at 'cadets' times.

Form 3

As mentioned earlier, I was heading 'south' academically during Intermediate school and ended up in Form 3C (only one class below this!) (class photo below). I cannot remember my reaction to this demotion. Anyway, I must have worked reasonably well in the first term and came second in the class and was promoted to Form 3B. There was some incentive to do well as my parents had promised me a wrist watch if I did well. Many of us did not have watches in those days so this was quite an incentive. Well, I got my watch but was rather embarrassed to wear it and it was large with large numbers and got the nick-name "Little Ben" (after 'Big' Ben). Remember that watches in those days were mechanical and spring operated and the spring had to be wound up every day. Anyway, it must have been a cheap watch as it did not last long. (I did not get another watch until I was in Form 5; I had to save up and but this



watch myself! I still have this watch though it is no longer in working order; it is similar to that shown on the right.)



- **Promotion:** I also did well in Form 3B and came top of the class in the end of year examinations, so was promoted to Form 4A. Back in the 'A' stream again! (Refer to the Form 3C and 3B school reports in this folder.)
- **Boat trip:** In Form 3 (cannot remember which term) as part of Social Studies, we went on a boat trip around the Gisborne bay area. I remember enjoying Social Studies.
- **School uniform:** Note our school uniforms in the photograph above. In summer, boys were allowed to wear sandals instead of shoes and socks, which I invariably did. In winter, we wore much thicker shirts. But all year round, boys wore short trousers.
- **Initiation:** On the first day of school, the ducking on first year students was a common prank. If caught, one was held under a flowing tap. I think I managed to keep out of trouble.

Form 4

The class photograph for Form 4A is shown below. I was now back with many of the pupils whom I had been with in Form 1A at Intermediate School.



- **History:** I don't remember any specific highlights for this year. I do remember that I disliked intensely the History part of Social Studies because of the way it was taught which involved the memorisation of many dates and events for historical episodes in British

history too, not New Zealand history! And this is reflected in my examination marks for Social Studies (refer to the school report).

- **Science:** I liked science; our teacher was given the nickname of 'Conc' as I think he would use this abbreviation for the word 'concentrated'. The nickname stuck throughout the rest of my time at the school. ('Conc' is shown in the class photo above as he was also our form teacher.)
- **French:** I remember a amusing incident. As homework, the teacher had asked us to learn the French names for various things. We were orally tested the next day. One term was 'canne à pêche' (fishing rod). The boy next to me had not done his homework and happened to be asked for the English term. His answer was 'can of peaches' instead of 'fishing rod'. (This chap later majored in French at university and worked in NZ embassies in Paris and Rome. I stayed with him for a week in Rome when on holiday in Europe in 1972.)
- **Notes on students in the class photo:**
 1. The boy on the extreme right, standing next to the girls, is the boy whose bicycle we had fun with at the swimming pool.
 2. The 'canne à pêche' boy, whose name is Peter Bennett, is two on my left.
 3. The blonde girl (second row, second girl from right) had asthma very badly (worse than me) and was to die from an attack in 1972: I learnt about this when visiting Peter Bennett in Rome.

Form 5

- **Changing subjects:** This is the year we had to specialise - in Arts or Science. I chose Science and was in Form 5AM (5A Mathematics/Science). (For some unknown reason, I have no photo for this class.) This was the School Certificate examination year. Although a pass in the exam was needed to progress to Form 6, I did not start serious revision for the examinations until just a few weeks before they actually began. Being a semi-rural town, the attitude towards study for most of us was somewhat more casual.
- **Dancing classes:** In winter on Saturday evenings, school dances plus dancing lessons were held (for just 5th and 6th formers I think). I quite liked these. Through these, I picked up a sort-of girlfriend who was also in Form 5 though not my class. I remember her name was Janice Carnie. I am sorry to disappoint you, but it was not terribly romantic. The most it came to was riding to her place afterwards on our bikes, then me biking home. I can't even remember if there were any kisses! In Form 6, when the girls moved to the new school, this fizzled out.
- **Other dances:** The church of a friend of mine also held dances occasionally on Saturday evenings, which the same girl would go to. So of course I wanted to go too. Instead of asking my parents for permission to go to a dance (I was afraid they might say 'No'), I

would ask if I could go to my friend's place (which conveniently happened to be immediately opposite the church) and they would agree. But after the dance, it was just as unromantic as for for the school dances.

- **Auckland trip:** During one of the two term holidays in this year (August I think as it was cold), we travelled to Auckland for a brief holiday, not long after we had bought the car. On the way, we visited Uncle Dick and his family in Hamilton. In Auckland we stayed in a cabin at a camping ground. I had bad asthma while in Auckland, which we put down to the humidity as well as the cold. One night at the camp, Keith and I (I was the instigator) played a trick on Bruce (who was about 13 years old). At that time there had been a murder in Auckland and the murderer was on the loose. This night was very dark and windy and a bit spooky. Bruce was returning to the cabin from a visit to the camp library when Keith and I jumped out from behind a tree making murderous-sounding sounds and with an arm raised as if holding a knife. This scared the daylight out of Bruce who took off faster than I have ever seen him run. For Keith and me, hilarious! I cannot remember if we got into trouble but we probably got an earful when we returned to the cabin.
- **The Form 5 School Certificate examinations:** As mentioned, I started serious revision for these examinations about three weeks beforehand. For mathematics, the teacher offered extra revision lessons in the early morning before school started. I sat the maximum (then) of five subjects - English, French, Mathematics, Chemistry and General Science. To pass the whole examination, it was necessary to pass English (40%) and score a total of 200 marks (no grades then) in English and the best three of the other four subjects otherwise Form 5 had to be repeated. (So even if you got 100% in the three subjects but only 39% in English, you failed!) I remember my English teacher telling me I had no hope of passing - great for encouragement. But I managed to get a mark of 54 (remember the topic for my essay that I discussed earlier?) in English and a total of 236 (?234), so I passed comfortably.

Surprisingly, my mark for General Science was high (71 I think), whereas that for Chemistry was low (51). I figured out that this was because Chemistry was studied by only a few schools in the country and most of the students would have been very bright, so I was competing against them and due to the method of marking (I think the average for each subject had to be about 50%), even a reasonable performance would give a low score. On the other hand, most students in the country (bright or not) sat General Science, so even a reasonable performance would result in a good score.

Form 6B

- **Boys' school now:** This was the first year of an all-boys school. Because there was now an extra Form 6 year (what we now call Form 7), this year was called Form 6B and I was in Form 6B1. I don't remember much about this year except that I began to take study more



seriously. I do know I hated English; it was a compulsory subject. We had a teacher who was also a poet (the one in the class photo above) and he spent a lot of time on boring (to me) modern poetry. (But he must have left sometime during the year as the teacher whose signature appears in my class reports for the year is a different one.) Maybe that is why I scored badly in English for the first half year but not as bad at the end of the year. I did very well in the three science subjects (refer to the reports). As a result of my overall performance, I was second in the class (science division) and was accredited University Entrance Certificate, meaning I did not have to sit the end-of-year University Entrance examinations.

- **Incident in a play:** There was one incident in English when a group of us was acting a play in front of the class (“Pygmalion” by George Bernard Shaw if I remember correctly) when one of students drank real whisky instead of just water (the guy sitting on my left in the photo)! And the teacher did not know.
- **Prizes:** For coming second in Form 6B, I received prizes which were awarded at the end of year prize-giving ceremony. I chose to get three novels, which I still have today (two of which are with me in Hong Kong): “Stories” by Oscar Wilde, “Esmond” by W.M. Thackeray, and “Ivanhoe” by Sir Walter Scott.

Form 6A (or “Upper Sixth”)

- There was only one class this year and this was small (see photo below) so Science and Arts students were in the same class. I guess this was because many students had left and only those who wanted to go to university remained. As the Girls' High School was still relatively new, they could not cater for all the classes in 6A so the girls would come across

to our school for Mathematics and maybe some Science classes (I cannot remember the latter).

- **Form teacher:** Our form teacher, who was also our Biology teacher (the one in the class photo below), was also my form teacher in Form 5 and was the one who caned me! I note that the end-of-year report is signed by a different form teacher he must have left during the year. I do know that he, like many other male teachers, had been in the military during the war and became teachers on their return. This particular teacher had never been able to complete his degree, so when I went to university in Wellington at the beginning of 1958, he was there too to complete his degree. Our English teacher of that year had been a fighter pilot during the war, and on occasions he would relate to us things that he experienced. Academically I did not do quite as well this year as I had done in the previous year and only came third in the form, so missed out on prizes!

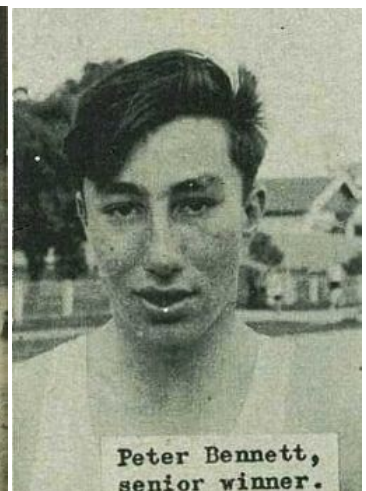


- Also, I never became a prefect. Of the boys in the photo, four were prefects (the other prefects came from Form 6B).
- **Scholarship exams:** At the end of this year, there were what were called “Scholarship examinations”. These were national examinations and the top 500(?) qualified for a scholarship to attend university. Very few from our school ever got a scholarship; most were from the big city schools where there was greater academic pressure. I think the boy with the glasses in the class photo got a scholarship (he was also the dux of the school that year) and went on to become a medical doctor. Those, such as me, who did not get a scholarship, still received a university entrance pass, but as we already had that from Form 6B, it was rather pointless. I still have the examination papers I sat for this examination.

- **Shooting team:** During this last year, I was also part of the school shooting term, though only as a reserve! But it was good fun. Again, the rifles we had were the Lee-Enfield 0.303s. We had a small shooting range at school where we practised with the smaller 0.22” calibre rifles. On Saturday mornings, in the winter only I think, we would go to an army range where we could shoot from very long distances and with the 0.303s. Peter Bennett (in this class photo third from right, back row) would pick me up in his Dad's car and take me to the range.

Other Secondary School happenings

- **Steeplechase:** Every year, there was a compulsory cross-country run of increasing distance as you progressed up to Form 6A, when it was 5¼ miles. I hated these, as I was not into running in those days, and I remember spending a lot of time walking. I remember that in the Form 6B year (1956), that guy Peter Bennett



won the senior race. I was quite surprised as I did not think he was a runner; however it was a handicap race and he must have started in an earlier group. (Photos courtesy of “Photo News”.)

- **Crusaders:** This was a non-denominational Christian organisation in schools. Meetings were held once a week during lunch hour by a teacher. But one of the main reasons I attended was because of the very good camps they organised (for boys; I don't know if they had camps for girls). Camps I attended were:

- **The first camp:** This was at the end of the first term (May) in 1954 when I was in Form 4. This, in fact, was the first camp I have ever been to without my parents because of asthma. And yes, asthma hit me. The camp was held on a back-country farm and our accommodation was a large wool-shearers shed. Because it was very dusty, the dust caused breathing problems. But I still managed to join in activities. Many of these were physically tough and demanding. One example was a 'war' between two teams. Each team began with a flag on the top of different hills and the aim was simple - get both flags onto the top of your hill. Almost no rules. You could take an opponent's 'life', this being a piece of wool fibre tied around your wrist. When this was broken, you lost your 'life' and had to return to a central point to get another life. Not a competition for the faint-hearted. I also remember being tossed into a (cold) pond naked.

- **Summer camp:** These were better suited to my asthma. The first was again on a farm at Anaura Bay up the coast from Gisborne in the summer at the end of the same year (1954) (see photo; our camp was at the near end below the tree area). These summer camps also included a hike and overnight sleep in the open. In the photo, the hike was across the hills in the distance. We had to carry out own



supplies. These were shared amongst us and rolled up like a sausage in our sleeping bags which were then slung across our backs. I remember that I had a can of liquid flapjack/pancake mixture in my sleeping bag and the top came off and the liquid spread through my bag, which I just washed and carried on again. I remember when sleeping in the open on a dark moonless night, it was possible to see just billions of stars in the sky and, of course, quite a number of meteors ('shooting stars'). Meals were cooked on open fires with wood collected from the native bush.

- **Second summer camp:** The summer camp at the end of Form 5 was at a farm at Kaihua Bay not far from the previous summer camp (See photo: Our camp site would be the green grassy area in the distance). This time, I was in the advance party, which meant going a few days before the main contingent came in order to erect tents and set up the camp site. It was actually more fun being in an



advance team than at the camp proper. At the camp, as well as the activity mentioned above, another was a toboggan race. Each team was given some wood and tools and had to make a toboggan. Then it was a race up to the top of a hill and back again, with one team member on the toboggan and the others pulling (the hill is not shown in the photo but is to the left). If your toboggan broke (a common occurrence) you could (try to) fix it and continue. A tough race! While at this camp, the School Certificate results came out. In those days, as well as getting an individual card with your marks, a list of those who

had passed was published in the local newspaper. So, it was a relief to find out I had passed. (At university, the same thing happened; each local student was listed in the local newspaper together with the subjects he or she passed included.

- **Third summer camp:** At the end of my Form 6 year (1956), the camp was at Lake Waikaremoana, a lake quite some way from Gisborne, situated in the middle of a very dense forest area. Again, I was in the advance party. The camp site was in a little bay not accessible by motor vehicles. So, we had to build



rafts using dead logs and ferry all the stuff from the vehicles around to the camp site. The overnight hike this year, was a long hike along a mountain trail to a Maori village that was an important area about 100 years earlier. When the camp finished, the 'advance' party had to stay and use the rafts again to move stuff out. I also remember that myself and some others had to row

boats across the lake to a township (I guess we had borrowed them). Hard work doing all that rowing! (I am almost certain our camp site was in the area shown in the recent photo of the lake area (see photo, right), though clearly the site is fully accessible nowadays. We had to raft in our supplies from the bay just beyond this.)



- **Teaching bursary:** When it came time to think of going to university, the question of cost arose. My parents had no money to support me (or so they said) and I did not get a scholarship. So I applied for and got, a teaching bursary, which covered all fees plus a living allowance. The condition was that you had to teach (at any level - primary, secondary or university) for the same number of years you received the bursary, which in my case was four years. I remember at one stage my father getting stropky and saying he

would not let me go to university; I told him I *was* going as I already a teaching bursary and things could not be changed.

- **Holiday work:** I did not attend any camp when I finished school at the end of 1957. Instead, I went to work to get some money for university to supplement the teaching bursary. I, together with the guy with the glasses in the Form 6A photo above, worked together at the Waikanae Beach camping site in Gisborne for about seven weeks to help the two regular guys. It was also quite lucrative as it was the peak holiday season, and so we had to work seven days a week and received 1½ times the pay for day and Saturday overtime and double the pay on Sundays. It was also good fun. Every morning, we had to clean the camp site toilets. I got so good at this that the toilet



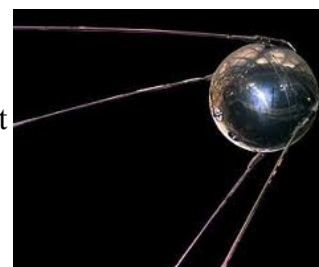
seats were so clean you could eat your dinner on them! When campers arrived and checked in, we would ride our bikes with the car or van following to their designated site. At other times, we had to go around the camp site picking up paper and other rubbish. To pick up paper, we had a length of thick wire sharpened at one end and inserted into an old wooden handle at the other end. Some of the time, when we were not otherwise busy, we would slink off to the far end of the camping ground and have 'javelin' competitions using our paper pickers. (It was a bit of an art throwing these as the heavy end - the handle - was the rear part of the 'javelin'). The two regular guys were inveterate horse gamblers, and would bet on horses in the races that were held most weekends in the summer. Although I was not a gambler, I remember studying the racing page in the local newspaper (without my parents knowing) trying to pick winners. It annoyed the guys a lot when for one day, I picked the winners for seven of the eight races. It also peeved them when I picked the winners on two of the three major races in the whole country - Auckland Cup, Wellington Cup and New Zealand Cup (in Christchurch). For some more pictures of the beach area and the camping grounds behind it, go to:

http://photonews.org.nz/gisborne/issue/GPN18_19551215/t1-body-d1.html

http://photonews.org.nz/gisborne/issue/GPN31_19570207/t1-body-d20.html

I also worked for three more summers while at university - once more at this camp site and twice at a wool store. For details, refer to the file dealing with my university years.

- **Careers day:** One day every year, for those in Forms 4, 6B and 6A (not Form 5 as it clashed with School Certificate examinations) the school held Careers days. They offered a variety of possible careers with someone to talk about each and often a visit to a place involved with that career. In Form 4, I was interested in law, so chose this; it included a visit to the local courthouse though no trials were being held at the time. In Form 6B, as I was doing well in Biology (cf school report results), I became interested in bacteriology, which included a visit to the main hospital (the one on the hill behind our house) to see the work done in the bacteriology laboratory. In Form 6A, I was interested in (civil) engineering; this included a visit to see a bridge under construction across a major and very flood-prone river a few miles out of Gisborne. But none of these careers eventuated, of course; I was 'trapped' by the need for the teaching bursary, though I have often wondered if I could have made it through university without the bursary.
- **Sputnik:** In October 1957, the Russians launched the first artificial satellite, Sputnik 1. This caused a sensation at the time, as the Russians had clearly trumped the United States at that point in the space 'race'. Evenings were arranged for us to go to school to see the satellite moving across the sky. I can still remember vividly this small dot of light, distinguishable from the stars only by its slow and sometimes haphazard motion across the sky.
- **A second trip to Auckland:** In 1957 (or was it 1956?) we made a second trip to Auckland, this time for the wedding of my mother's youngest sister, Patricia (Auntie Pat).



An alternative to university

In my final year of school, I wanted to go to university, but my father still had other ideas, for whatever reasons. One possibility considered was to work with the 'Public Trust' which is a state-run estate/property/financial organisation (which my father used to manage the house and his will when he died). A cousin of my mother (on the Vallance side, I think) worked at the Gisborne branch so we went and had a chat with him. From this, he realised that my heart was set on university, so he recommended I take that path.

Welcoming in the new year

- In Gisborne on New Year's eve, the main road would be closed to traffic and given over to pedestrians to walk up and down in a festive mood. (We might have been wearing party hats and blowing whistles, I am not sure.). I and a few of my friends would join the fun. At midnight we would gather around the town clock (in the middle of the main road) to

welcome in the new year. Whether or not we sang Auld Lang Syne I do not remember. (Yes we did - I see it in the "Photo News".) Bus services would run late so that we were able to get home. The picture below on the left shows the scene for welcoming in 1957; it is possible I am in the picture. For more, visit the "Photo News" site:

http://photonews.org.nz/gisborne/issue/GPN31_19570207/t1-body-d4.html

The picture on the right was taken one year later and shows "Adairs" the department store where my father was manager. The shop is just a few metres from the clock tower. The picture also shows street decorations and how ladies used to dress in those days. Note that it is still daytime; as it is the peak of summer, the sun set very late. For this and related pictures, go to:

http://photonews.org.nz/gisborne/issue/GPN43_19580206/t1-body-d22.html

