NorWest Heritage Society Inc.

Kumeu, Huapai, Waimauku, Riverhead, Taupaki Districts

Regd. Charity No. CC55278

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"The Good Ole Days" Painting by Shirley Beveridge 1982

In this Issue: *Memories Past* Huapai School

"A Day in the Life of a Pupil about 1950"

And ***Pupils of 1945 – 1950 Photo taken 1994***

"Memories Past"

"Ever for what is Right!" *(Well, perhaps not always.)*

One pupil recollecting a day in about 1950 at Huapai School

If you had another shot at something you had just botched up, you would probably have a bit of a think before you made your move. I was a bit disappointed with today's effort. The teacher had been assessing each student's work, moving from desk to desk, commenting out loud, approving, disapproving, etc. Quite nerving wracking actually, seeing that the teacher was only ten students removed from me. I wish I could think of something brilliant to add to my work before he got there.

I dipped my pen in the inkwell and paused at the ready over my workbook, thinking positively, just as my fellow "inmate" bumped my elbow and a great explosion of ink splattered all over my best effort!
"Yes" said the teacher to the star pupil. "This work is remarkable. Marvellous illustrations of butterflies and flowers to enhance this very neatly presented work."

On he moved ….. nearer …. and nearer … at a seemingly increasing pace ….. heading for me where I was frantically trying to mop up my mess with bits of over-used blotting paper. Suddenly the teacher just about burst a blood vessel as he announced, **"BLOTTY BILL" !!! "Now this is what I do not want to see more of!"** After a cooling period he eventually went back to his desk.

It was good to get out into the playground after that and watch as Graham Atwood skidded over on his knees for a try, only to find that one knee had been cut open by an unidentified object. The ambulance was called and Graham was bundled in and whisked away. The ambulance was a Super Snipe, I think.
I wondered if it would reach 100 miles an hour on its way to save poor Graham's life.

1949 Humber Super Snipe

Things at playtime became a bit tame after this, as the footy fields had to be reassessed to make sure they were safe. However, it also meant that, apart from "Emu" parades, we could sneak off to the Nobilo end of the football field, past the dead ball line, down the bank and we could dig for "Maori potatoes." According to some, who had knowledge of such matters, they were good for you, and that was the reason Maoris are so good at sports. I thought they might also be described as onions or garlic, but maybe they really were Maori potatoes.

The point is, I was well equipped to carry these "potatoes" with my new Northern Roller Mills flour bag pocket. I had complained to my mother about how other boys had pockets in their shorts and I could see that I was at a disadvantage, as I had nowhere to store anything interesting while on the move. Although, I only had one pocket, installed by my mother, it was quite useful for storing things like kauri gum, moa stones and other unidentifiable items that were too "valuable" to walk past. There was only one fault I could find with the pocket – it was that the flour bag material was quite stretchy – and the bag of goodies would often hang way below the shorts, emblazoned with NRM in red, swinging to and fro. So, we all had a good tuck into the Maori potatoes. I reckon they had an effect on my stomach as it growled and burped a bit.

One of my mates, who was a big eater of these potatoes, seemed to have circles around his eyes and within them. They just did not look right. I never did learn anymore about him or these "potatoes?"

However, I still had plenty of potatoes left in my pocket when we all went to watch Miss Mary Short with Miss Wilson, as her passenger, go to start her Morris Minor car parked on the concrete, just outside the old classroom by the flagpole.

The girls were excited to watch, as I suspect they loved these teachers, as they were young modern women of the day. After spotting the small sized exhaust on Mary's car, I thought to myself: "My God, one of those potatoes would just block that off nicely." I stuffed one into the exhaust and rammed it tight. I reckoned no one saw me, so I stood back to watch the fun. Mary pressed the start switch and for the first time in its life, the motor failed to fire. Being a "bug-shaped" car, it seemed to get bigger while Mary wound the start motor. Just then the motor fired and the potato shot out in the direction of Nobilo's house! All the boys cheered!

1948 Morris Minor

Unexpectedly, Mary then got out of the car and said to the girls, "What's wrong? What's going on?" The most observant of the girls (there was always one!) said, "Bill Reber put a Maori potato up the exhaust pipe." Mary turned to me and said, "You silly boy – you could have ruined the exhaust system!"
That was not what I was hoping for, but I knew I had been silly, so I sneaked off the scene and got rid of the extra potatoes, much to the relief of the NRM flour bag pocket.

I don't think any of my friends bothered with the Maori potatoes after that. I wonder what they actually were? I have not seen any since that time.

And Graham Atwood's life and knee were saved! He was soon back at school, seemingly none the worse, and proudly sporting a new scar.

*Have you got a memory or a story from early years in these districts?
*Or a photo with some description? Would you like to share and learn about some history?
*Are you in the photo below? Can you provide names of other pupils?
*We would love to hear from you. Please email or telephone the Secretary.

Huapai School Pupils from 1945 – 1950
(Photo from Huapai District School Centennial Facebook page)