

Memories of Haumoana life in 1930s. My family moved to Haumoana in the <sup>late 1920s</sup> early 1930s, they had built and operated a general store opposite the Whakatu Freezing Works successfully, but from the time of my birth my mother developed asthma and it was thought advantageous to live by the sea, hence Haumoana. Research of the old house at Haumoana suggests that it was occupied previously by a Brownlee family, also the name Agnew has been mentioned. The property was overgrown with blackberry and the story is told that they discovered the concrete tennis court after the major clearance. I was too young to remember the shift to Haumoana, Bob was two years older and Ivan must have been a pupil at Napier Boys' High School

Many well known Hastings business people had baches in the village, but many of the locals where people hard hit by the depression.

Living in our immediate area in Springfield Road were the Gerrards, Dewsons, Keong Families. Over the road from us was the Langley Bach, Victor Langley was a well known Napier lawyer, Amy his wife and daughters Audrey and Nola whom we grew up with. Other families we got to know well were the Somervilles who had a small holding mostly apples, their daughters were Cathie & Betty! Chum<sup>N</sup> Somerville worked on Clifton Station and sometimes he would be given a dead tree good for firewood, my father would go and help him and generally there would be a family picnic during that work. Both Dad and Chum were soldiers of the 1st World War, seem to be great mates.

Another family who had a batch across the lagoon where the Armour family. Mr W.A. Armour, had been Headmaster of Napier Boys' High School in the 1920s, and was Headmaster of Wellington College in the 1930s. Haumoana was their holiday home area. There were six children Alex, Allan, Majorie, Alison, Frank & Jim. Alex and Allan both were captains in Army in WW2, and I think were both captured by the Germans in the Greece campaign. Majorie and Alison used to visit us during their Haumoana holidays to keep up their piano practise on our piano. I am not sure but Jim was old enough to go overseas in WW2 and was overseas. I think both Frank and Jim became dentists and possibly went to Canada to live. I was knee high to a grasshopper with all these big people. One strange episode I remember was that Alex and Allan and my brother Ivan decided to bike to Taupo when the that road was a real testy drive!!!

Because we had a tennis court that was our favourite game, and in the summer of course swimming at the beach was a big thing. Families would gang up, we generally swam with the Langley family, and you really had to get to know the beach, it was not easy at high tide with its dip, but boys often thought it was exciting. I have forgotten to mention that the Armours had a boat on the lagoon, when they went back to Wellington they left it with us, so we soon got pretty good a rowing. Retrieving tennis balls from the lagoon happened occasionally. It was a fabulous way for young people to grow up. Life was possibly simpler, I think there was a greater community spirit. Haumoana had its Beach Improvement Society, there were surfing canivals, regattas at the Tuki River mouth. The local hall was used a lot for dances and stage shows, the Frivs came regularly and every Friday night Bernard Gumbley drove his truck up to the back portal and provided a movie show, which included a serial like Flash Gordon, Tailspin Tommy and others including Dad & Dave down on the

farm. (Bernard Gumbley became an ace bomber pilot in WW2 with the Path Finder Group, he was killed flying over Germany, what a great guy.)



There were two stores in the Village, R.P. McCarthy who provided a weekly delivery locally, and the Post Office store for much of its life run by Mrs Bambry and later Vin Morris, there were probably others but their names escape me. There was a infrequent bus service to Hastings run by Jock ..... and going to town on Friday night was the common thing. Sunday was observed strictly in our family, that was God's day and we went to Sunday School and later Bible class, Mr R.H. Florance was the stalwart of that group, the church was shared between the Church of England and the Presbyterians.

The land adjacent to Haumoana in the 1940s was owned by Derek Van Ash, getting a job during school holidays was what ever boy wanted, I got a job sitting on the front of his self-propelled threshing mill, making sure the rye grass fed on to the pickup correctly. I got a great thrill when he showed me how to drive a brand new Allis-Chalmers model B tractor and left me to mow several paddocks of ripe grass seed. I was probably about 14 at the time. Alf Phillips was a contractor with a hay baler, tying the wire bound bales was another job boys chased at that time. Pilchers steam driven stationary mill for threshing rye grass was employed by farmers and that created quite a few jobs. Then in the late 30s the war came and that is another story. Haumoana paid a heavy price in that conflict.

Mentioned in THE DAM-BUSTERS<sup>N</sup>

