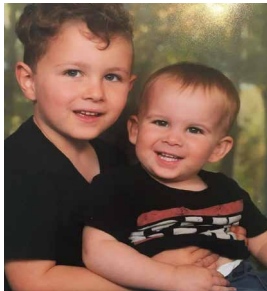


A Letter *to my* Grandchildren

Abridged Edition 2024

David N Bibby Ph.D



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Please write to: bibbys@xtra.co.nz
if you have any questions or comments.

This book is dedicated to my parents,
Athol and Mary Bibby; to my dear wife, Jan;
to my children Vance, Jacqui-Kim and Scott;
and to my grandchildren,
Connor, Zoe, Sage, Jack, Shiloh and Emelie.

Preface

In this text I have endeavoured to include relevant passages from a wide range of 'Bibby' books that I have accumulated over the years. I acknowledge that there is a significant amount of verbatim quoting and 'cutting and pasting'. I do not apologise for that as I cannot see any great merit in re-writing previous historians' work that has been written professionally, just for the sake of it being my original prose. I believe that there is plenty of 'original' writing in the text once I get to tell my personal story.

I have endeavoured to acknowledge all sources of my narrative as I go, where I can. From necessity I have relied on secondary research for historical data relating to my forebears. This has opened up the possibility of factual errors in my text and for alternative opinions concerning historical dates and places. I have fact-checked everything I have written to the best of my ability but cannot guarantee everything is the gospel truth. I welcome advice from readers who can supply superior evidence than I have been able to collect to correct these errors. History is, after all, open to different interpretations by different authors.

I have used Appendices to add items of interest to the narrative that falls outside of a chronological review of our family story.

I hope you enjoy the read.

David N Bibby Ph D
Katikati 2024

Contents

Chapter 1: The Origin of the Bibby Family Name.	7
Chapter 2: The Bibbys of Condor Mill, Lancashire, England.	14
Chapter 3: Edward Bibby (1829-1901) and Mary Ann Woodhouse (1831-1910).	18
Chapter 4: Edward Bibby (1864-1955) and Alice Mabel Fox (1885-1957).	23
Chapter 5: Athol Stuart Bibby (1918-2015) and Helen Mary Beattie (1918-1997).	35
Chapter 6: Waipawa 1951-1963: 105 Great North Road. The Farm.	48
Bibliography.	61
Appendices:	
Appendix 1: Transcript of Audio Recording of Mr James Bibby at 95 Years of Age.	64
Appendix 2: Dr. Charles Elliot Fox (1878-1977).	75
Appendix 3: Dr. Basil Glover Bibby (1904-1998).	79
Appendix 4: Geoffrey Wallace Bibby (1922-2023).	81

Chapter 1

The Origin of the Bibby Family Name

John Pye Bibby (1883-1981), in his family history: *The Bibbys of Conder Mill and Their Descendants* (1979), describes the origin of the Bibby name as follows:

‘In P. H. Reaney’s book on British Surnames the view is expressed that the English surname Bibby is a diminutive of ‘Bib’, a pet name of Isobel or Isabel.’ It simply means ‘son of Isabel’. Isabel itself is a form of the name Elizabeth which means ‘consecrated to God’ and Bibb and Bibby are, in fact, rare diminutives of the name Isabel. So Ibbby (Isabel) became the surname Bibby. A variant of this name is Bibbey. Other authorities agree with this view. It was a common custom when a child was born after the death of the father or when the name of the father was not disclosed for the child to be given the name or pet name of the mother as a surname.

As to the date when the name Bibby first came into use as a surname, the fact that it is not to be found in the Doomsday book, which was completed during the years 1085-1086, suggests that it first made its appearance at some date after the Conquest in 1066. The earliest occurrence of the name that I have found is in a pipe-roll relating to Shropshire dated 1196, in which the name William Bibbe appears. I have only found two other appearances of the name during the 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th centuries outside the County of Lancashire. The name William Bibbi appears in the Assize Court Roll of Staffordshire dated 1288, and the name Robert Bybby appears in a rent roll of the Manor of Wakefield, Yorks, dated 1284.

It is rather amazing that while the name Bibby or the like is found so infrequently in documents relating to counties other than Lancashire it occurs with considerable frequency in documents relating to Lancashire during the 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th centuries. My source of information relating to the Bibbys living in Lancashire during these four centuries is the Victoria History of Lancashire, 1906, and the following are a few notes taken from this source:

‘In the year 1292 Richard son of Bibby was non-suited in a claim against Robert son of Ellis de Ribchester’.

‘In 1313 John de Warre granted to John Bibby two plots of land on the heath at Manchester’.

‘In 1444 James Bibby complained that Thurston Robinson and Robert Chorlton of Chorlton cum Hardy had broken into his closes and houses at Reddish and taken away corn and grass to the value of £100’.

‘In 1596 William Dawson purchased land from Edward Bibby and Elizabeth, widow of Gilbert Bibby’.

‘In 1665 the South porch of Manchester Cathedral was rebuilt by a Manchester merchant named Bibby’.

The earliest evidence of any Bibby living in North Lancashire that I can find is an entry in the register of births at the Lancaster Parish Church of the baptism of John Bibby, son of James Bibby, on 1st January 1608.’

According to The Historical Research Centre it seems clear that the Lancashire and Yorkshire Bibby has no connection whatsoever with the Leicestershire Beeby which is local and means ‘of Beeby’ - the latter being a village in the county. However, in this area the surname Beeby has undergone orthographical corruption and it is often found today in the form of ‘Bibby’ (The Historical Research Centre, 1988).

A general note on how English names originated is contained in the 1989 publication, *Bibby Families Around the World*:

‘Until about 1100 A.D. most people in Europe had only one name (this is still true in some primitive countries today). As the population in-

creased it became awkward to live in a village wherein perhaps one third of the males were named John, another sizeable percentage named William, and so forth. So, to distinguish one John from another a second name was needed. There were four primary sources for these second names. They were: a man's occupation, his location, his father's name or some peculiar characteristic of his. Here are some examples:

Occupation: The local house builder, food preparer, grain grinder and suit maker would be named respectively: John Carpenter, John Cook, John Miller, and John Taylor. The person who made barrels was called Cooper. The blacksmith was called Smith. Every village had its share of Smiths, Carpenters and Millers and the Millers in one town weren't necessarily related to the Millers in the next.

Location: The John who lived over the hill became known as John Overhill; the one who dwelled near a stream might be dubbed John Brook or perhaps John Atbrook. Many historians believe that surnames derived from places (locational) were the first to become hereditary.

Patronymic (father's name): Many of these surnames can be recognised by the termination - son, such as Williamson, Jackson, etc. In Scotland and Ireland endings used to indicate son are Mac or Fitz. The Irish 'O' incidentally denotes grandfather. Even though patronymic names have been in use a long time, they could change with every generation: William's son John would be known as John Williamson, while his son William would be William Johnson.

Characteristics: An unusually small person might be labelled Small, Short, Little or Lytle. A large man might be named Longfellow, Large, Lang, or Long. One with red hair might be called Redd while a person with a white complexion or white hair might be designated White. Many persons having characteristics of a certain animal would be given the animal's name. Examples: a sly person might be named Fox; a good swimmer, Fish; a quiet man, Dove; etc.

Many surnames can have more than one origin. For example, Bibby may be locational in origin; 'one who came from Beeby', or it may indicate a descendant of 'Bel', from the old French word 'bel' which means beauti-

ful. It could also indicate a pet form of Isabel - 'Bib' (please refer to P. H. Reaney's comments above).

When we begin to do more extensive research on the Bibby name we may have difficulty finding it with the exact spelling which is used today. It, in fact, may very well have been spelt differently hundreds of years ago, or we may even know of someone in our family's past who actually changed their name. The more research we do, the more likely we will find several different spellings. Language changes, carelessness and a high degree of illiteracy (sometimes the man himself did not know how to spell his own name) compounded the number of ways name might have been spelt. Often the town clerk spelt the names the way it sounded to him.

Knowing that different spellings of the same original surname are a common occurrence, it is not surprising that the dictionaries of surnames indicate probable spelling variations of the Bibby name to be Bibbey, Beeby and Bibbye. There may, therefore, be a large number of our direct relatives who are using one of the Bibby name variations.

Since the early 13th Century, Coats of Arms and Heraldry have been a source of great fascination as well as a subject of true historical importance. It is easy to understand why more than half a million Coats of Arms recorded by individuals with their respective family names are still being researched and studied after more than seven centuries.

How the term 'Coat of Arms' evolved makes an interesting story. Because wars were almost a continual occurrence during the Middle Ages, more and more armor was added to a knight's battle uniform until the medieval warrior was finally protected from head to toe. The metal suit of armor always included a helmet to protect the head, thus it was virtually impossible to tell one knight from another. In order to prevent any mishaps on the battlefield, such as one friend attacking another, a means of identification was necessary. Many knights accomplished this by painting colorful patterns on their battle shields. These patterns were eventually woven into cloth surcoats which were worn over a suit of armor. In fact, many horses were also seen in a fancy cloth surcoat with their master's Coat of Arms ablaze on the side.

As this practice grew more popular, it became more and more likely that two knights unknown to each other might be using the same insignia. To prevent this, records were kept that granted the right to a particular pattern to a particular knight. His family also shared his right to display these arms. In some instances, these records have been preserved and/or compiled into book form. The records list the family name and an exact description of the coat of arms granted to that family.'

According to the 1989 publication, *Bibby Families Around the World*: the Bibby coat of arms is officially documented in Johannes Rietstap's (1861) *Armorial General*. This work contains the blazons of almost 50,000 noble families in Europe, all organized alphabetically by surname.

The original description of the Bibby coat of arms by Rietstap is as follows:

Shield: Three gold eagles, wings expanded, on a blue (Azure) background. Azure denotes loyalty. The eagles signify speed and wisdom.

Helmet: Centred at the top of the shield. It reflects the origins of heraldry.

Crest: A symbolic gold, five-pointed star sitting atop of the helmet.

Motto: None.



Source: *Bibby Families Around the World* (1989).

However, in response to an enquiry I addressed to the British College of Arms in London, questioning the veracity the above claim made in the *Bibby Families Around the World* (1989) publication, I received the following response:

‘The possible inclusion of a Bibby coat of arms and crest within Rietstap is fascinating, but unlikely to mean much, I am afraid. Rietstap’s work is essentially the equivalent of Burke’s *General Armory* for Continental Europe - he included anything and everything he found, without questioning it and without properly noting his sources. The book therefore repeats mistakes from earlier dictionaries of arms, and includes a vast number of coats which were never properly granted by any country’s heraldic authority or even ever really existed. The assertion in the quote, that inclusion within Rietstap makes a coat of arms ‘officially documented’, is simply untrue. Only a country’s heraldic authority can officially document genuine arms.

It is theoretically possible that such a coat was born by a Bibby family, without the sanction of the College of Arms, and made its way in Rietstap as many unauthorised coats did. However, if that were the case then I would expect it to also turn up in Burke’s *General Armory*, which it did not. (Rietstap’s focus was on Continental Europe, and so his coverage of English heraldry is much smaller than Burke’s dedicated volume.) Curiously, I cannot see any entry for Bibby within my own copy of Rietstap, which is a reprint of the second edition, published in 1884. If one was included in an earlier edition, then I think it more likely that the family was not that of Lancashire, but one with the same name from somewhere in Europe. I see, for instance, that the 1884 edition includes a listing for a family named Bibbi from Pardoue (Padua?), though their arms are given differently and they have no crest.

The final observation I might make is that the arms and crest described are *extremely* simple, which is often a sign of false heraldry. All coats of arms and crests must be unique, and so it is very rare to find such plain designs in anything but the very oldest heraldry - in England, at least.'

Yours,
Adam Tuck

Rouge Dragon Pursuivant
The College of Arms
130 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4BT
020 7248 2762 | www.college-of-arms.gov.uk

Chapter 2

The Bibbys of Condor Mill, Lancashire, England

According to *The Bibby Family in New Zealand* by Geoff Bibby and Sue White, 2011:

Our family's roots are in England in Over-Wyresdale, the upper part of the valley of the Wyre, a stream that rises in the Forest of Bowland and crosses north Lancashire to empty into the Irish Sea at Fleetwood. How the first Bibbys came to establish themselves there is not known. Probably an enterprising Bibby, perhaps in search of land, migrated from the southern part of Lancashire, either by Garstang or the Trough of Bowland, early in the 17th century. There is a record at Lancaster Parish Church of the baptism of John Bibby, son of James, on 1st January 1608.

The earliest record of Bibbys living in Over-Wyresdale is of the marriage at Lancaster Parish Church of John Bibby I to Annas Slayter, both of Wyresdale, before the mayor, on 1st July 1654, during the period of the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. Their son, John Bibby II, born in 1656, is known to have lived at Marshaw, some three miles west of Abbeystead, at a point where the Wyre, as a mountain stream, emerges from the Trough of Bowland. There are several farmsteads at Marshaw, all deriving from the 17th century though with later additions, and it was at one of these that John Bibby II lived. He married twice and outlived both of his wives. We know little about him - what we do know is from his will which has been preserved.

Here it is:

In the name of god amen - the seventh day of August 1729 - I John Bibby of Marshaw in over Wyersdale In the Parish of Lancaster and County of Lancaster being in perfect memory and remembrance praised bee god Do make and ordain this my last Will and testament in the manner and form following = viz. ffirst I Bequeath my soul into the hands of Almighty god - hoping through the merrits of Jesus Christ my saviour to Receive free pardon and forgiveness of All my sins and as for my body to bee buried in Christion buriall at the Discreshion of my exerciter hereafter nominated = Item - I - I give to my son James Bibby the sum of five shillings as Also my Best sute of gray Cloths that is coat vest and breechis Item = All the Rest of my estate god Almighty hath been pleased to bless mee with I give to my son John Bibby upon Condition that hee shall pay all my Debts Legasees and funerall expencis and makes him sole exerciter of this my Last will and testament Revoking all other wills and testaments In Witness Whereof I have here unto set my hand and seal the Day and year first above

Written signed sealed and published in the presence of John Bibby

HIS MARK

William Jackson

Thomas Corles

John Townley

It is evident from the handwriting that William Jackson drew the will, probably on his friend's deathbed, for John died before the year was out, and his mark on the document suggests that he could neither read nor write. We can infer from the will that John Bibby II was survived by two sons, John III and James, and that John, the elder son, was the more fortunate. John Bibby III inherited the farm at Marshaw on the death of his father in 1729.

John Bibby III married Margaret Townley in 1717. He died intestate in 1739 at the age of about 55, having survived his father by only ten years, leaving a widow and six children, the youngest of whom was only four years old.

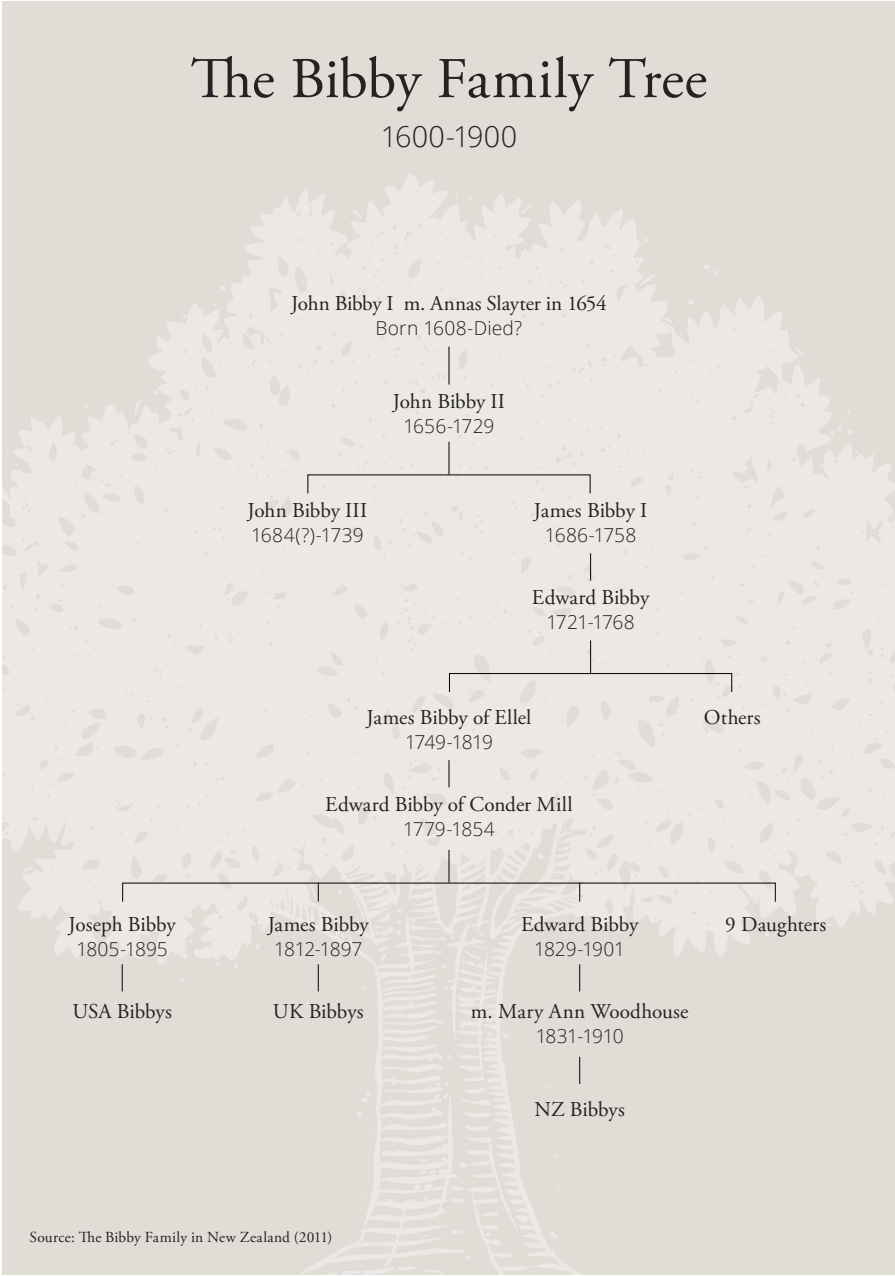
Less is known of his younger brother James Bibby I, though he is described in the records as a husbandman and he was probably employed by one of the larger farmers in the lower and more fertile part of the valley. He had four children by his first wife Ellen Kitchen, who died in 1721, and at least ten more by his second wife Elizabeth Brewer, whom he married in 1722. His signature appears on the administration bond consequent upon his elder brother's death, showing that he was able to write. The record of the death of a James Bibby in 1758 probably relates to him.

The sons and grandsons of the two brothers, John Bibby III and James Bibby I were sturdy and fertile. Most of them married and raised large families, and by the beginning of the 19th century there were a dozen or more families of Bibbys, a veritable tribe, living in the parish, all descendants of the two brothers. The parish records are incomplete and it is impossible to trace all the branches with certainty, but it is probable that our branch of the family is descended from James, the younger brother, rather than John.

During the second half of the 19th century the Bibbys began to migrate westward and northward to Ellel, Tewitfield, Cockerham, Lancaster, Kendal and of course Quernmore, and by the end of the century there were none left at Over-Wyresdale. The last Bibby marriage recorded there was in 1856, but some of the old folk chose the churchyard as their last resting place; the last recorded burial was in 1940.

However, it is extremely difficult with very incomplete records and large families to contend with to trace any ancestry with certainty. It is known though that our Edward Bibby's grandfather was a James Bibby of Ellel but whether this James Bibby was a son of the Edward Bibby who died in 1768 is not known for sure though evidence points that way.

If this Edward Bibby was the son of the James Bibby who died in 1758 we have our ancestry traced back to John Bibby I who was born in 1608. The English family tree would then be:



Chapter 3:

Edward Bibby (1829-1901) and Mary Ann Woodhouse (1831-1910)

According to *The Bibby Family in New Zealand* by Geoff Bibby and Sue White (2011):

‘Edward Bibby, born in 1829, was the youngest of three sons in a family of twelve. His father was a miller who owned Conder Mill in the village of Quernmore in Lancashire. This mill was situated on a small stream which had been harnessed for power to drive the mill.

Edward left school at the age of 13 and was apprenticed to a cabinet maker for seven years. This indenture, still in the hands of a great grandson, is interesting to us today. The terms were:

‘The apprentice’s father had to provide his son with all sorts of wearing apparel both linen and woollen together with meat, drink, washing, lodging, mending and medical advice etc, for the term of seven years. The wage commencing of four shillings’.

Family records tell us that shortly after the completion of his apprenticeship he was best man for a friend who was to leave for New Zealand. This may have influenced him as he too in 1852 did likewise, travelling first to Melbourne where he sought to make his fortune in the gold-fields - without success (Bibby, 1979). From there there is a long period of time of which little is known of him. Eventually he came to Napier, and owned two houses which no doubt he built by himself.

In all probability, the sale of these houses gave him capital to return to England in 1859 (Bibby & Bibby, 1990). His ship was held up at Melbourne as its crew had gone to the goldfields. In the meantime he obtained employment by assembling chairs at 20 shillings a day, three times the normal rates. He eventually got back to England and soon after, in May 1861, married Mary Ann Woodhouse, the daughter of another miller whose families had known each other for generations.

Once again Edward, with his wife Mary Ann, set sail for New Zealand, this time in the sailing ship *Albemarle* taking 100 days to reach their destination, Wellington, on 5th January 1862. It is understood that he had originally intended to settle in Poverty Bay, but due to unrest amongst the Maori there he went to Waipawa instead (Bibby & White, 2011).’

Waipawa, or Abbotsford as it was first known, can lay claim to being one of the oldest inland towns in New Zealand. By reason of its geographical position on the banks of the Waipawa river and at the junction of Middle and Te Aute roads, it had access by tracks from the south through Forty Mile Bush, to the coast, the mountains and by river to the port of Ahuriri (Napier). The river around the 1850’s was much narrower and deeper, its banks adorned with kowhai, and other native shrubs. In fact, many pioneering families arrived to the area by boat, from Ahuriri up the river (Gray, 1989).

Edward and Mary Ann’s first home was a whare somewhere on the north side of Abbotsford Road. It is presumed that their first son James was born there on 30th October 1862; the second immigrant child to be born in Waipawa. However it was not long before they built a general store with an attached dwelling (a lean-to at the back, which served for living quarters) on the bank of the Waipawa river. The site was well chosen, as Te Tapairu Maori pa was just across the river and Hampden Road served the settlers on the plains. The store opened for business on 24th July 1862 (Bibby & Bibby, 1977).

John P. Bibby (1979) writes that Mary Ann was a woman of considerable initiative and enterprise, and it was she who saw that there was a good opening for a drapery and general store in Waipawa to serve the needs of the local farmers and pioneers, and while her husband was considering what to do, searching for farm land to settle on, she promptly opened a little shop. She was able to import goods through her brother Arthur who was in a Liverpool retailing business (Bibby & Bibby, 1990).

The shop proved a great success, and Edward, who a little later took charge of it, developed it into a prosperous business with a mail order department. The business was carried on for some 60 years, until 1922, by the Bibby family (Bibby, 1979; Orange, 1993).

While the business was growing, eight children were born to Edward and Mary Ann, namely:

James Woodhouse (1862-1959)

Edward (1864-1955) (My Grandfather)

Thomas Joseph (1865-1945)

Ellen (1866-1951)

Annie Elizabeth (1868-1953)

Constance Ruth (1870-1946)

Minnie (1873-1946)

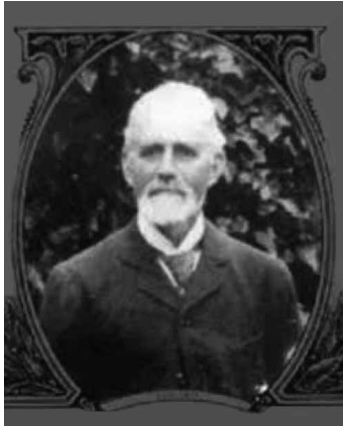
John (Jack) (1876-1962)

Notwithstanding his responsibilities for his large family and the calls of his business, Edward found time to take a keen interest in the affairs of his township, County and church. At various times he was Chairman of the first Town Board, of the School Committee and of the County Council (Bibby, 1979). He was on the committee of formation of St Peter's Sunday School. He was on the roster of those in the settlement guarding against surprise attacks by Maori rebels (Bibby & Bibby, 1977).

As the business continued to prosper, from 1872 he bought tracts of land, some 4000 acres in all, near Onga Onga, about 15 miles to the west of Waipawa in the foothills of the Ruahine mountains. He felled and burned the thick bush which covered the territory; he cleared the land and made a fine farm of it, planting there English oaks, willows, poplars, eucalyptus and Californian redwood's, many of which stand to this day as a memorial to him (Bibby, 1979).

The place came to be known as 'Lunesdale' - named after the River Lune and surrounding farmland in Lancashire where he was born and raised (Bibby & Bibby, 1990). He never farmed the land himself but in due course it was farmed by his two younger sons, first by Tom and later by John (Bibby, 1979).

On 8th December 1901, my Great Grandfather Edward Bibby died at the age of 72. His wife, Mary Ann, survived him by just over 8 years. She died on 13th January 1910. Both were buried in the cemetery of St Peter's Anglican Church in Waipawa (Bibby, 1979).



Edward Bibby
(1829-1901)



Mary Ann Bibby - Born Woodhouse
(1831-1910)



Family of Edward Bibby (1829-1901) and Mary Ann Woodhouse (1831-1910).
(Photo: circa 1895)

L - R: *Edward (1864-1955), John (1876-1962), James Woodhouse (1862-1959),
Ellen (1866-1954), Constance Ruth (1869-1946), Edward Snr, Mary Ann,
Minnie (1871-1946), Annie Elizabeth (1868-1953), Thomas Joseph (1865-1945).*



St Peter's Anglican Church, Waipawa. (Photo: circa 1940)

Chapter 4

Edward Bibby (1864-1955) and Alice Mabel Fox (1885-1957)

My Grandfather, Edward Bibby, was born in Waipawa in 1864. He was the second child, after James Woodhouse Bibby (1862-1959), born to Edward Bibby (1829-1901) and Mary Ann Bibby (1831-1910). Eventually the family included eight children (refer to Chapter 3 above) - four sons and four daughters.

Macgregor (1973) reports that in 1865 a school was opened for Waipawa children. Edward Bibby was Secretary and Treasurer, and afterwards Chairman of the School Committee, a post which he held for the next 26 years. His local body activities seem to have kept him fully occupied, for it was acknowledged by all that his wife was the real head of the family business - the Bibby General Store in Waipawa.

The store developed into a tremendous business. Apart from the local settlers, Maori from Te Tapairu pa across the river found Mary Ann most helpful in advising them on the outfitting of their children for school. The paramount chief Te Hapuku was among her customers. While his wives squatted on the floor he would eye the pile of blankets for sale. 'That one for this wife - that one for that wife' he would decide, taking them from the pile and handing them to the fortunate women. Mail orders came in from as far afield as Ormondville, Kopua, Havelock North, and the outskirts of the district (Macgregor, 1973).

By the 1880s the house and shop had become too small and as they wished to rebuild on the same site, they bought a section across the road and bodily shifted the old house and shop over to it. This was done without their having to move out of the house, and as it was a slow process it meant that they slept in the middle of Ruataniwha Road! (Gray, 1989). The task was achieved by slowly jacking the two-storeyed building and its adjoining cottage on to skids and gradually transferring the whole across to the new section (Macgregor, 1973).

When rebuilding began on the old site a fine two-storeyed wooden building with living quarters at the side and six bedrooms upstairs was erected. The hall was the length of a cricket pitch (Macgregor, 1973).



The Original Bibby Store and Residence. Built 1862.



The Second Bibby Store and Residence. Built 1882.

James and Edward (the two oldest boys) completed their education at the first Napier boarding school, known as Napier Grammar School for young gentlemen (the fore-runner to Napier Boys' High School). In fact, it was a very primitive school with very rough conditions. James was a very good scholar but left school at 14 and entered the family business and worked there until his retirement and the sale of the shop in 1922.



Edward Bibby, Mary Ann Bibby and James Bibby. (Photo: circa 1876)

Edward also entered the family business upon leaving school and the two brothers eventually ran it together. James managed the day to day running of the store and Edward took care of all accounting matters and office affairs.

James Bibby (1862-1959) married Mary Glover Todd (1867-1937) in 1893. Mary had early ambitions to become a missionary but her health did not allow her to take this up. After her marriage to James Mary became one of the best known church workers in the Waipawa district, as a Sunday School teacher and as a Bible-Class leader. She was a multi-talented woman who, amongst her many talents, sketched and painted with competence (Macgregor, 1973). She has become famous today through the publication of paintings that she used to teach her Sunday School classes in the 1920s being incorporated as illustrations into Joy Cowley's 2009 booklet *Tarore and Her Book*, published by the Bible Society New Zealand - and also into a later, enlarged, publication by the Bible Society entitled *Tarore's Story. Remembering Tarore* (2016). *Tarore and Her Book* is a tragic but beautiful story of the events surrounding the murder of a young Maori girl called Tarore. It is a story of violence, forgiveness, redemption and grace - and the power of the good news of the Gospel of Christ to bring enduring peace between warring Maori tribes.

Edward, who had many interests outside the family business, ceased his connection with the store in 1908, at the age of 44. As none of James' sons were interested in joining the business he sold the store in 1922 at the age of 60 to Bryant and Co. and retired (Bibby, 1979). Bryant and Co. continued to operate the store until the mid-1950s when it was closed and demolished to make way for a new traffic bridge (Gray, 1989).

Edward was a dedicated Christian. He was instrumental in establishing an Anglican Sunday School in Waipawa and was its Superintendent for 42 years. He also conducted a Sunday School at Te Tapairu pa for some 50 years. He had a flair for organizing picnics and outings, and was an impulsive traveller, both in New Zealand and overseas, visiting Japan and China in connection with his interest in the China Inland Mission. His list of other religious endeavors was considerable. He served on St. Peter's Anglican Church Vestry for some 50 years, was a church warden for 25 years, was secretary of the Waipawa branch of the Bible Society and was a trustee for the France Trust - which administered the Hawkes Bay Childrens' Homes (Gray, 1989; McCoskery & Ross, 2000).

Edward was the business head of both the store and the farm after his father's death in 1901, although his outside interests did not lie comfortably alongside that of his business commitments.



The Third Bibby Building: 'The Lounge'. Built 1908. (Photo: circa 1932)

He purchased four acres of property in the 'Bush' area and extensively planted orchards. He was responsible for building several houses in Waipawa. In 1908 he built the 'Bibby Building' - better known as 'The Lounge' - still standing today, on the corner of Kenilworth and Ruataniwha Streets. The building was gifted by Edward to the France Trust in 1950, and was promptly sold by them (Gray, 1989).

In 1910 Edward was instrumental in having a church built on the Blackburn Ridge as a memorial to his parents. The 'Bibby Family Memorial Church', 110 years later, has become the focal point for Bibby Family reunions and contains memorial windows and plaques to family members who have died.



The Bibby Family Memorial Church at Blackburn Ridge. Built 1910.
The Bibby Family Reunion Celebrating the 90 Year Anniversary of the Dedication of the Church. (Photo: circa 2001)

Edward married Alice Mabel Fox in 1913. He was 49 years old; she was 28 - an age difference of 21 years. Alice was the daughter of Canon John Elliot Fox and Emma Phillips. The Reverend Fox and his family moved to New Zealand in 1884 to become Vicar of Gisborne. Edward first met Alice when she was governess to the children of the Waipawa Vicar.

Alice Fox's older brother, Dr. Charles Elliot Fox (1878-1977) - 'Uncle Charles' to us - became a celebrated missionary who served with the Anglican Melanesian Mission in Oceania for 71 years (1902-1973). He still holds the record as the longest-serving expatriate missionary in the Solomon Islands, regardless of denominational affiliation. As a child he was physically frail so home-schooling was initially necessary. Later he studied at Napier Boys' High School, then at the University of New Zealand, Auckland, gaining a B.A. with First Class Honors in Geology and then an M.A. in Theology. He joined the Melanesian Brotherhood at Norfolk Island in 1902 and was ordained in the Anglican Church a year later.

In 1922 he earned a D.Litt. from the University of New Zealand for an ethnographic study of the Arosi region of Makira Island (formerly San Cristobel) in the Solomons. During his life he authored a dozen books on the Solomon Islands including three dictionaries of local languages. According to his nephew, Geoffrey Wallace Bibby, at one stage he spoke 48 languages and dialects (Knowledge Bank, 2014). During World War II he served as a Coast Watcher, venturing deep behind the Japanese lines, being protected by the local people (Fox, 1962). When living with our family, on the farm in Waipawa for a time in the 1950s, he told us that at one time he counted hundreds of Japanese warships anchored in Guadalcanal (You can read more about this illustrious member of our family in Appendix 2).

At the time of Edward Snr's death in 1901 his eldest son, James, then 39 years of age, was in charge of the store, along with second son Edward. The two younger sons, Thomas and John were at that time running the farm, 'Lunesdale' (Bibby, 1979).

After the death of Edward Snr, in accordance with his will, his estate was divided as follows: James and Edward got the store, Thomas got the farm, John received a legacy. However, soon after Edward Snr died John was able to purchase an excellent 700 acre fertile bush farm called 'Totaranui'. This land was farmed quite independently of Lunesdale until the two properties were incorporated in 1923 (Bibby & Bibby, 1990).

James and Edward, on behalf of the Bibby family 'Firm', next purchased 1100 acres named 'Whenuaroa' in Onga Onga. It included 100 acres of bush. A house was built there and Constance (1870-1946) and her husband Duncan McLean lived there and managed the property (Bibby & Bibby, 1990).

In 1903 a new Lunesdale house was built for Thomas Bibby. It was a big quality building with 12 rooms. It was one of the finest houses in Central Hawkes Bay (Bibby & Bibby, 1990).

In 1906 Tom went to England and John (Jack) became Manager of both Totaranui and Lunesdale. When Tom returned from overseas, he brought a four-seater Humber car back with him. Tom had never driven a car and never did learn. One of the farm laborers, Jack Hardy, in his early twenties, was very clever and became Tom's self-taught motor mechanic and chauffer. He got the speed up to 40 miles per hour! Cars and taxis came in use for farm services in about 1912 (Bibby & Bibby, 1990).

Mary Ann Bibby died in 1910. She was the head of the family in business matters, and when Edward Snr died the sons were guided not only by his Will, but by Mary Ann's interpretation of it. Up until Mary Ann's death, the property, store and farm had been run as one entity. When she died the estate was divided between the family. Each of the three older brothers - James, Edward and Tom - inherited approximately 1000 acres of Lunesdale. Edward and Tom also each inherited 500 acres of Whenuaroa. The Bibbys then owned land from the Tuki Tuki river, right through to the Waipawa river. James got the Bibby store, his Rose Street house and several other sections. Edward got the Lounge and a large block of land between Ruataniwha and Kenilworth Street. He also owned four acres of sections in town. Tom owned three sections in town. The girls - Ellen, Annie, Connie and Minnie - were to get a 25 pound annuity as long as they lived. They were not happy with this, and put pressure on their brothers for more, and it was made a 50 pound annuity. They also wanted some form of security, so 300 acres of Lunesdale was retained as security. They then wanted a share of Whenuaroa, so Edward gave them 500 acres, to be divided between them (Bibby & Bibby, 1990).

In 1911 Tom leased his Lunesdale land to Jack. He sold his share of Whenuaroa and decided to go to Japan. Edward and James formed a farm partnership to work their 2,200 acres. At around this same time (1910) Edward formed another farming partnership with his friend, Prentice, on Maori lease land at Elsthorpe. Later, selling some of the Blackburn property, he was able to purchase 880 acres of additional freehold land adjoining the Maori leasehold land at Elsthorpe (Gray, 1989).

The following year (1911) he built what he said was to be a holiday cottage, on Blackburn Ridge. It was a most attractive four-roomed house with a wide verandah on three sides. It had magnificent views. During the following 12 years there were many alterations and additions. The Lunesdale church was built along from the house in 1910 as a memorial to his parents. He received no support financially, and very little encouragement from the family. In 1913 he married Miss Alice Fox and they made their home in the cottage on Blackburn Ridge (Bibby & Bibby, 1990).



Edward and Alice Bibby (Born Fox). (Photo: circa 1953)

Edward and Alice had six children, as follows:

Eric John Marsden (1914-1995)

Kenneth Charles (1916-1959)

Athol Stuart (1918-2015) (My Father)

Geoffrey Wallace (1922-2023)

Helen Constance (1924-2011)

Alice Margaret (1924-2023)

Geoffrey Wallace Bibby (my Uncle Geoff) describes the events surrounding his birth as follows:

'Because of this union between my mother and father, in next to no time the family grew and I was the fourth successive boy. Why I wasn't shot at birth I just do not know. One more go and Dad fathered twin girls, so to a certain extent I was forgiven, but the girls got away with murder! And of course I was the recipient of all sorts of brotherly condemnation because I was the fourth boy. I was born on 25th of January 1922. I was actually born in Waipukurau because at that stage Waipawa did not have any maternity facilities whatsoever. But on 25th of January 1922 I appeared on this planet and grew up in Waipawa because although my father and mother had been living at Lunesdale, 20 miles away, my mother, when she found she was pregnant for the fourth time, said "I am not going to be way out here again" so my father had to build a house in Waipawa, purely to move the family in because I was on the way' (Knowledge Bank, 2014). That house was at 2 Matthews Street, Waipawa.

The Bibby Family in New Zealand (2011) by Geoff Bibby and Sue White is a treasure trove of Bibby family facts up until 2011 and contains brief descriptors of Edward and Alice's children:

Eric (1914-1995) went on to manage the family farm at Elsthorpe and eventually purchased it from his siblings. He farmed there until his retirement. He married Jane Dillon Collett on 13 December 1937 and they produced two sons and three daughters: John (1938), Peter (1941), Pamela (1947) Judith (1952) and Susan (1954). He retired to Havelock North.

Ken (1916-1959) had a very successful career as a copywriter in advertising, working at the J. Inglis Wright advertising agency in Wellington until his untimely death in 1959. He married Frances Olive Dempster on 16 September 1939 and they produced one son, Alan (1942).

Athol (1918-2015) taught at many schools throughout the North Island and was Headmaster of Te Hapara School, Gisborne and Waterloo school, Wellington. He married Helen Mary Beattie on 14 May 1941 and they were parents to our family including Geoff (1942), Clive (1944), David (1946) and Marion (1949). He retired to Havelock North (Refer to Chapter 5).

Geoff (1922-2023) joined the RNZAF in WW2 and later became a Squadron Leader in the RAF between 1950-1972. He subsequently taught in Havelock North, Hawkes Bay between 1972-1985. He married Beryl Joyce Roberts (1923-1981) on 14th December 1946 and they produced three children; Graham (1947), Joan (1951) and Carole (1958). He retired to Havelock North (Refer to Appendix 4).

Helen (1924-2011) a Registered Nurse who married electrician John Alexander Ross on 16 April 1949. They produced four children; Jenny (1950), Vivienne (1953), Beverley (1955) and Colin (1956). She retired to Kairakau Beach.

Margaret (1924-2023) a Karitane Nurse who married farmer Derek James McCoskery on 6 April 1953. They produced four children; Brian (1954), David (1955), Pam (1956) and Janet (1963). She retired to Kairakau Beach.



The Edward and Alice Bibby Children. (Photo: circa 1929)
L - R: Eric, Helen, Geoff, Ken, Margaret, Athol.

In 1932 Edward built his last and perhaps best house up on the hill at 29 Abbotsford Road, Waipawa (Bibby, 1990). It afforded a magnificent panoramic view over the town and it was here that Edward passed away in 1955 at the age of 91. At his funeral, in St. Peter's Anglican Church, his casket was draped with a kiwi feather cloak, a rare honour reserved for few Pakehas. His Maori friends conducted a portion of his funeral service (Gray, 1989).

I was only nine when Granddad died. Dad took me to view his casket in St Peters - just the two of us - the evening before his funeral. I did not attend the funeral. I remember him as a rather grand old man walking down Kenilworth Street one day after school. He was immaculately dressed in a formal 3-piece suit, a white starched collar and tie, with a bowler hat, swinging a walking stick at his side. When we met I am not sure that he recognised me but when I introduced myself he stopped, gave me a warm and friendly smile, reached into his coat pocket and pulled out a white paper bag full of coffee mint boiled lollies with a soft chocolate centre. I loved them - and he made my day!

My memories of the stately 29 Abbotsford Road home include a large dining room with high wood-panelled walls and ceilings, grand furniture, Goldie paintings of Maori chiefs, Maori artefacts, silver service, much formality, window light but mainly dim Victorian era lighting. We were always primed to be on our best behaviour so as to not upset Granny. I do not remember much about Granny. A formal, aloof, small woman. She moved to Auckland after Granddad died to be with her daughter Helen Ross in Papatoetoe. She died in 1957 at the age of 72.



The Edward and Alice Bibby Family. (Photo: circa 1953)
L - R: *Eric, Margaret, Ken, Edward, Athol, Alice, Geoff, Helen.*



The Edward and Alice Bibby Extended Family. (Photo: circa 1953)

Chapter 5

Athol Stuart Bibby (1918-2015) and Helen Mary Beattie (1918-1997)

My father, Athol Stuart Bibby (1918-2015), married my mother, Helen Mary Beattie (1918-1997) on the 14th of May 1941, in Lower Hutt.

Athol Stuart Bibby (1918-2015)

Dad was born in Waipawa on the 27th December 1918. He was the third son born to Edward Bibby (1864-1955) and Alice Mabel Bibby (1885-1957). At the time of his birth the family were living at Lunesdale on Blackburn Ridge, Onga Onga, in a cottage built by Edward in 1911. However, by 1922 they had moved to a new home at 2 Matthew Street in Waipawa. The family moved again in 1932 to the final house that Edward built; at 29 Abbotsford Road, Waipawa - a large, quality, hillside home with impressive panoramic views over the town and river.

Athol enjoyed a creative and active childhood with his brothers and good friends Jack Fox and Clive Masters, while growing up in Waipawa. For example, the three friends had an ongoing competition to determine who was the best marksman with a .22 caliber rifle. Many years later Dad showed us the small trophy that they competed for, complete with a written record of who had won on each occasion, contained in a specially crafted wooden presentation box.

A highly significant event that shaped my father's life for the remainder of his days was an accident that occurred when he was just 8 years of age. His brother Geoff was with him when the accident occurred at their Matthew Street home. Dad had discovered that you could bend a piece of Number 8 wire up and down until it broke. He was demonstrating this feat to his younger brother when the wire suddenly snapped

and struck him in his left eye, piercing the eye, causing it to become blind. (Personal Communication; G. W. Bibby, 2020). Years later the injured eye was removed and replaced with a glass eye. I was told by Mum that Dad spent months in a darkened room before he recovered from the injury - a traumatic experience for a sensitive young man. However, he never let this disability define him or stop him from living a life that many fully-sighted people would envy - and he never complained. Rather, when we were children, removing his glass eye occasionally became a 'trick' that Dad would perform - at our request - to surprise and unsettle our young and impressionable friends or relatives. All for a laugh! In the last 10 years of his life, with his 'good' eye reduced to 'pin-hole' vision and living alone at home, Dad showed remarkable courage to live as 'normal' a life as possible in spite of his disability.

Athol attended Waipawa Primary School and then the Waipawa District High School for two years before completing his secondary education as a 'border' at Kings College in Auckland in 1936 and 1937. He played fullback for the College 2nd XV and was a reserve for the 1st XV. His younger brother Geoff also started at Kings in 1936 and completed his secondary education there 4 years later, in 1939 (Personal Communication; G. W. Bibby, 2020).

After secondary school Athol decided to become a Primary School Teacher and moved to Wellington in 1938 to attend Teacher's Training College there - and it was at Teacher's College that he met the young woman who would become the love of his life; my mother, Mary Beattie.



Athol Bibby and Mary Beattie. (Photo: circa 1940)

Athol spent two years at Wellington Teachers College in 1938 and 1939 with Mary. In 1940 he undertook his first year as a probationary teacher at both Waipawa and Takapau Primary Schools. He then took charge of the small Tawata School in the upper reaches of the Whanganui River in February 1941. Mary taught her probationary year at Hutt Central Primary School in 1940 and then taught at Waterloo Primary School between February and May in 1941. They were married on the 14th May 1941.

Helen Mary Beattie (1918-1997)

Mum was born in Wellington on the 28th December 1918. She was the oldest daughter of Donald and Annie Beattie. She had two older brothers (Hugh and Doug), a younger sister (Jean) and a younger brother (Ian). They lived in Hill Road, Belmont, in Wellington.

Mum recalls “a very happy childhood, despite... being considered poor by today’s standards”.

Source: I have transcribed the following comments and observations by Mum, recording her memories of growing up in Belmont in the 1920s and 1930s, from notes written by her, perhaps in the 1990s:

Her first days at school were at Days Bay in Wellington in 1923. She later attended Eastbourne Primary School by ferry, taking about 15 minutes to get there. Mum recalls travelling to the dental clinic in Wellington City on occasions, sailing by ferry across the harbour and back, taking about one hour each way. There would be no school on that day!

The trip would include a prepared lunch, a trip on the cable car to Kelburn followed by lunch in the Botanical Gardens. This would be followed by a visit to the Museum, the Art Gallery or to the Zoo - a great day out! When there was a strong southerly wind blowing the ferry would be unable to berth so she would have to travel by horse-bus to the city - two large horses pulling a covered wagon with long seats on it.

The family moved from Days Bay to Belmont around 1926. They would travel by train from Belmont to the city centre and back. Mum describes their Hill Road home as having three bedrooms, a wood range for cooking, a large free-standing copper boiler for washing clothes and bedding and a hand ringer screwed onto the tub. There was no refrigerator and often no electricity or phone. They used a hand egg-beater, a hand-mincer and a carpet sweeper for cleaning floors. There was no vacuum cleaner or washing machine. There was an outdoor toilet with a bucket that needed emptying when full. Toys and games included dolls, Meccano, spinning tops, marbles, building blocks, skipping ropes and stilts - as well as sledges for riding down hills, small canoes made from sheets of iron, and bicycles.

The family would go hiking and camping frequently and occasionally they would attend a movie or a concert. Holidays would mostly be with relatives, some of whom had holiday homes at the beach. The family would travel on foot, by bicycle, bus, trams or trains. There were not a lot of cars at that time.

Mum recalls that classes at school were much larger than classes today with up to 50 students in a class. However children had greater respect for teachers then and class discipline was very strict compared to today's class rooms. Subjects were presented formally and exams were very tough. Children often failed their exams and would have to spend a second year in the class. Some children could be 15 years of age in Form 2 (Standard 6 - or Year 8 today).

In Form 2 every student had to pass a proficiency exam in order to graduate to Secondary School for the next two years. There was a further exam in the 4th Form called the Senior Free Place - for students who wanted to extend their High School years. Students sat Matriculation (later University Entrance) in their third or fourth year of high school (Year 11 or 12), and most stayed on for a fourth year to gain a Higher Leaving Certificate, which covered university fees, and also to try for a university scholarship.

Typical meals in the Beattie household included roast mutton, hot or cold fritters, cold meat stew, rabbit stew (a rabbit cost nine pence), roast chicken or lamb chops. Beef steak was rather expensive for normal meals. There was also fish pie or fritters in white parsley sauce and there was always pudding to follow: steam pudding, baked or boiled rice, tapioca, macaroni, semolina, stewed fruit and baked or boiled custard. For breakfast there was porridge, toast and a glass of milk or cocoa. A school lunch would include sandwiches and an apple to eat afterwards to clean their teeth. When apples weren't available they would have a piece of carrot. Lunch at home would include scrambled or boiled eggs, home-made spaghetti, cold meat, salad and home-made peanut butter.

Mum recalls that until students left school there was little emphasis on having the 'in-thing' in clothing. Most children had clothes handed down to them within the family, or from cousins, as one grew out of them and another grew into them. Boys dressed very conservatively with grey or white shirts and grey or navy shorts, a plain jersey, sox, shoes or sandals. Girls wore pretty dresses, white sox and shoes or sandals. In the winter they would wear a skirt, a blouse and a jersey. Secondary School uniforms usually included a panama hat, a gym dress with three box pleats, a white blouse, a tie and black woolen stockings all the year round. Boys would wear a grey shirt, navy shorts and a cap.

Most children went to Sunday School even if their parents didn't go to church. For mum's family it was Sunday School at 10 am then church at 11 am. They sometimes went to evening service as well. Church was a warm social centre for the family and Bible Class groups went picnicking together, had tennis teams, debating teams, and would put on concerts occasionally. Annie and Don Beattie were committed Christians who fostered a very happy home life. For mum Sunday was a happy day - going to the local Knox Presbyterian church, going for walks, and playing tennis or swimming.



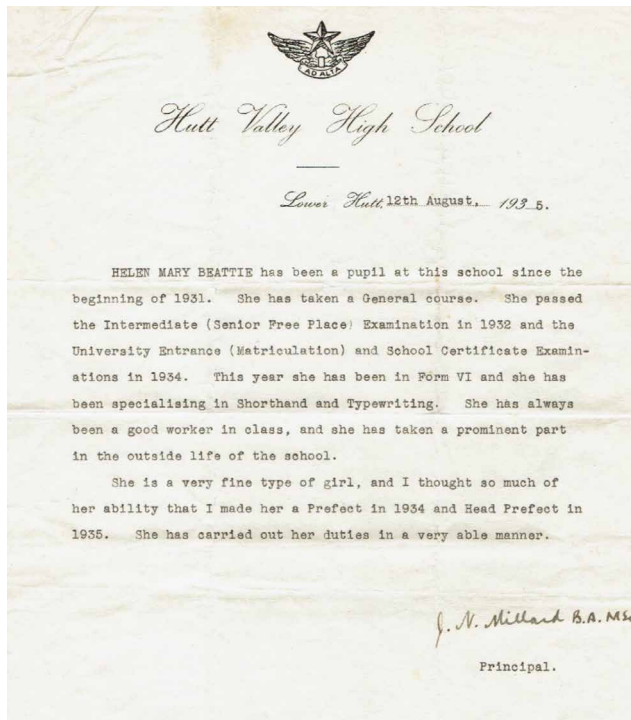
"Knoxies": Knox Presbyterian Bible Class members out for a tramp.
(Photo: circa 1933). Mary Beattie (Mum) in Front Row, 3rd from the left.

The family had a wide variety of pets at various times: a parrot, a kid-goat, a baby possum, white mice, kittens, pups, guinea pigs, a pony, a canary and a magpie that had broken its wing and could not fly. It was looked after until the wing healed and it flew away. School pet shows produced some quite unique pets such as a worm in a match box and frogs!

The grocer and butcher usually took an order once a week and then delivered it on another day. Orders were sometimes taken by phone but many people didn't have a phone so an errand boy would come on his bike to take the order. The Beattie family lived three miles away from the shops and most vegetables were grown in the home garden - but sometimes a vegie-man would come around with a cart. Otherwise, fruit and vegetables were bought at the local shops. There were no Supermarkets.

Mum was an able and conscientious student. She passed her Intermediate Examination for a Senior Free Place at Hutt Valley High School in 1932 at the age of 13. She went on to pass her University Entrance (Matriculation) and School Certificate Examination in 6 subjects in 1934 at the age of 15 (English, Arithmetic, Music, History, Algebra and Geometry and French). Her best subjects were music and mathematics. In 1934 she was made a Prefect and was then appointed Head Prefect in 1935. This was no small achievement as she was the only Head Prefect in a school that included both male and female students. (Her leaving reference from the School Principal at the time, J. N. Millard, is featured on the next page).

After leaving school in 1935 Mum took a job at a firm of Wellington Barristers and Solicitors, Haldane & Taylor, in Lower Hutt. In 1935 New Zealand was in the grip of the devastating 'Great Depression' and obtaining any employment at this time was extremely difficult. Mum was employed as a typist and general clerk for 2½ years with Haldane & Taylor. She passed two papers towards a Bachelor of Commerce University degree during that time. She also passed the Training College Entrance Examination in 1937, qualifying to enter Teachers Training College in 1938. Subsequently, she obtained her Trained Teacher's Certificate from the Wellington Training College for Teachers on the 1st February 1941. Mum taught for just a couple of months at Waterloo Primary School in 1941 before she and Dad were married on the 14th May 1941.



Hutt Valley High School reference. (1935)

The Athol and Mary Bibby Family

My father, Athol Stuart Bibby (1918-2015), married my mother, Helen Mary Beattie (1918-1997) on the 14th of May 1941, in Lower Hutt. They immediately moved to Tawata, a small settlement beside the Whanganui River, where Dad was the sole-charge teacher at his first school.



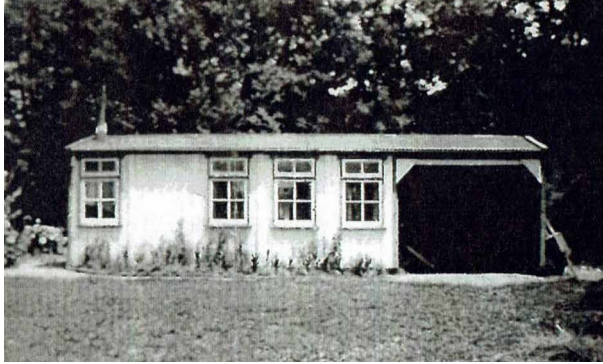
Wedding Day: Athol and Mary Bibby. (Photo: 14th May 1941)
L-R: Geoff Bibby, Athol Bibby, Mary Bibby, Jean Beattie.



L-R: Jack Fox, Athol Bibby, Clive Masters and Maurice Tilley.
(Photo: 14th May 1941)

Tawata School (1941-1943)

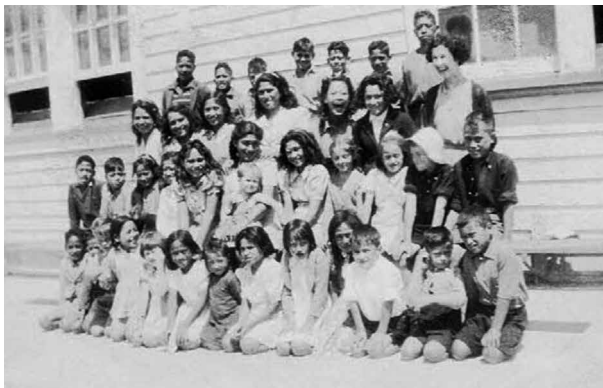
Mum and Dad's first home was the school house attached to the small Tawata School; Dad's first school. Tawata was a small river settlement, surrounded by bush, on the banks of the Whanganui River, near the Ohura Falls - where the Ohura River joins the Whanganui - west of Taumaranui. My oldest brother Geoff was born in Lower Hutt on the 15th August 1942 but spent the first year of his life at Tawata.



The old Tawata School facing north. Play-shed on the right. (Photo: circa 1941)

Hauturu School (1943-1944)

In May 1943 the family moved to Hauturu School, a small 2-teacher rural school located about 20 kilometres from the west coast settlement of Kawhia in the Waikato, where both Dad and Mum were the teachers. Dad was the Head Teacher and Mum was the Assistant Mistress.



Mum with Hauturu School students. (Photo: circa 1943)

Puhipuhi School (1945)

In February 1945 the family moved again, this time to Puhipuhi - north of Whangarei and south of Kawakawa - in Northland. Dad was the sole-teacher at the small Puhipuhi School for a year. By this stage Geoff was a 2 ½ year-old and he had a new 3-month-old baby brother called Clive. The family stayed at Puhipuhi for a year before returning to Waipawa in January 1946.

2 Matthew Street, Waipawa (January 1946-August 1951)

My earliest memories relate to growing up in Waipawa at our home at 2 Matthews Street. I was born on the 14th of April 1946 in Waipawa, shortly after our family had moved there in January 1946.



2 Matthews Street, Waipawa. (Photo: circa 1946)



2 Matthews Street, Waipawa. (Photo: circa 1950)

According to my father (in a letter to me dated Saturday 8th April 2000) I was very much an active 'climber' as a pre-schooler:

'Dear David,

It seems a long time ago since you gave Mum and me the wonderful pleasure of knowing that you had joined our family on the 14th April 1946.

Your pre-school days. The present high-tech invention of putting a transmitter on your leg to know where you were would have been helpful.

Covering the verandah with wire netting to try and stop your yearning to explore Waipawa at three.

To climb up a half-fallen huge macrocarpa tree to the top so Mum, pregnant with Marion, had to get you down.

Sleeping for 24 hours after your first day at school.

The fun you had with your brothers...'



David (Photo: circa 1947)



David (Photo: circa 1948)



"What's going on?" Geoff, Clive and David. (Photo: circa 1948)

Other memories of those early years come to mind. Mum tells the story that while happily playing in the yard one morning I disappeared - apparently to take a stroll into town! When, to her horror, she discovered my absence she immediately got into the car to search the neighbourhood for my whereabouts. She eventually found me, nonchalantly walking home along Ruataniwha Street, butt-naked - with my clothes on my arm - complaining upon our reunion how “extremely hot” it was!

On another occasion the three Bibby boys were ‘at war’ with the MacPherson Gang. The ‘theatre of war’ surrounded the afore mentioned fallen Macrocarpa tree in our back paddock. Geoff, Clive and I were pinned down behind the tree trying to dodge an onslaught of pine cones launched on our position by the Gang. Things were looking pretty grim and an act of pure heroism and genius was required to repel the enemy. In an unforgettable moment of impulse and stupidity I grabbed the small red Post Office money box that I happened to have with me for some unaccountable reason and raced out from behind the Macrocarpa tree to confront our foes face-to-face! Screaming at the top of my voice and threatening to unleash the money box at close range, the whole Gang (about three combatants from memory) immediately turned their backs in terror and ran for their lives! Of course my two older brothers were stunned by my actions and by this remarkable turn of events and burst into cheers. I think that was the single event that won me their respect and marked my acceptance into the ‘Bibby Brothers’ Gang’ as a fully-fledged, paid-up member in good standing. That membership has never been rescinded!

There are numerous photos of the three of us at Matthew Street. Below is a photo taken in 1949 with or new baby sister Marion.





Geoff and Clive Bibby. (Photos: circa 1947)



David Bibby (Photo circa 1947)



Marion Bibby (Photo circa 1950)

Chapter 6

Waipawa 1951-1963 : 105 Great North Road. The Farm

Without doubt, the most formative years of my life were growing up on the farm at 105 Great North Road, Waipawa.

The farm was 110 acres of rolling hill country about a mile north of the small Waipawa township, with the homestead situated to the right at the end of the long, straight main road travelling north. Our home would be described today as a villa. It was already old and tired when we arrived in August 1951.

My earliest memory of the farm is arriving, seated in the cab of a big, red Waipawa Farmers Transport Ltd Commer truck, with all our household goods packed on the back. We parked in front of the woolshed, with the homestead on our right. I believe I was 5 years old at the time. I was to spend the next 11 years of my life there.

Dad and Mum had purchased the farm from a man called Chambers. It was a dairy farm at the time, running approximately 60 Friesian and Jersey cows, producing cream that would be on-sold to be made into butter (Clive recalls our earliest encounters with Chambers in Appendix 1.10). It was to be a new start for our family. Dad had had serious health issues and needed a change from teaching. The farm was able to provide a new lifestyle for him and an income that would provide for the needs of his young, growing family.

At the heart of the enterprise, up the hill at the rear of the homestead and overlooking the main highway to the west, was what we called the 'cow bales' or cowshed.



The Farm Woolshed. (Photo: 2020)



The discarded and dilapidated original Farm Cowshed. (Photo: 2020)



Looking West from the Cowshed. (Photo: 2020)

From memory there were about 6 stands in our shed where the cows were tethered and milked. They were chained-in, leg-roped and milking cups were applied, one cow at a time. Each cow was milked at its own speed, and discharged when finished. There were performance indicators on each stand that showed when the milking process was completed.

The milk was sucked into pipes that led to a large vat in a nearby room. The milk then passed through a separator that separated the cream from the milk and the cream was fed into large aluminium cans ready for dispatch to the nearest dairy factory, in Hastings. The cream cans were collected every second day when there would be a reasonable consignment to make it worthwhile for the truck to stop at our pick-up point. The filled and partly-filled cans would be stored in a refrigerated room at the cow shed between pick-ups. We were not a Town Supply dairy farm but rather one that supplied cream to a Dairy Factory.

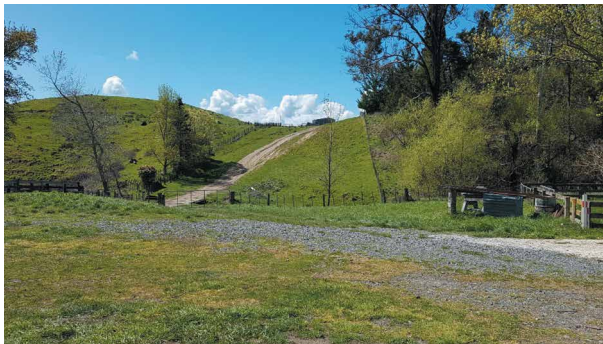
Dad built a very innovative 'flying fox' system that allowed the cans, one at a time, to be guided down the hill to a landing station near the main road where Dairy Company lorries would pick them up. The 'skim dick' milk that remained after the cream had been extracted would be fed to our pigs and heifer calves who were kept while they grew until they entered the herd as 2-year-old replacements. We did this to ensure the bloodlines from the highest producing cows identified at herd testing were retained through the selection of their progeny as replacements - genetically superior animals bred on the property, that would ensure the productive capacity of the whole herd was improved by each generation.

Surplus 'bobby' calves were sent to the works at only a few days old. They were picked up by the 'bobby calf' truck (as distinct from the cream truck) at the roadside as well, every few days during calving.

Needless to say, each day would start early with the cows being mustered into the cow bales by about 6 am each morning, ready for milking. The process would be repeated at 3 pm each day while the cows continued to produce milk - for some 9 months of the year, from September to the following June (calves were born in the Spring). We had a herd of mainly Friesian cows that were naturally mated with a resident Jersey bull; tough characters, akin to the bulls used in the bullrings of Spain. As we grew older each brother was assigned tasks in the milking process relative to their age and skill level. I remember that one of my tasks was to herd the cows into the bales each morning. My children do not believe me when I tell them that I used to be woken at an early hour each morning by Dad (along with my two brothers) to accomplish this important task in the family business! Of course, cleaning up the cow dung scattered throughout the shed after milking each day - with a high-pressure water hose and a shovel - was one of the more unpleasant tasks that fell to the younger members of the team! Along with milking went calving, weaning, and the dispatch of 'Bobby' calves to the 'Works'.



Looking East from the Cowshed. (Photo: 2020)



Looking up the hill, towards the North-East, to the Cowshed. (Photo: 2020)



Stock yards by the Main North Road, looking West. (Photo: 2020)

I believe we were dairy farmers for over two years before Dad returned to teaching and the farm converted to fat-lamb production with around 500 Romney ewes and a few Southdown rams - later replaced by South Suffolk rams - along with about 50 cattle.



The creek behind our house, looking to the South. (Photo: 2020)



The creek behind our house, looking to the North. (Photo: 2020)

Dad was quite successful in the fat-lamb business. He was able to get premium prices for his early season lambs that were exported as part of the first shipment of New Zealand lamb carcasses to the UK each year, supplying the British Christmas market. That meant that we would always be amongst the first farms in our district to have newborn lambs, to dock those lambs in August and to call in the Tomoana Freezing Works fat stock buyer, Murray McCauley, to get our lambs off to the works in Hastings.

There is always work to be done on a farm. Ours was no exception! Even by running sheep and cattle rather than milking a herd of dairy cows the daily chores were many and seasonal work kept us fully occupied. Dad's return to teaching full-time meant that he was reliant on his three sons to do much of the daily mundane tasks. These included feeding the animals: chooks, dogs and pigs - and during the lambing season, bottles of heated milk for orphan lambs rescued from the mud, having been abandoned by their mothers at birth.

Other mundane tasks included weeding Dad's huge vegetable garden, on public display next to the main road. Rows of carrots, parsnips, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, cucumber, beans, lettuces, cabbages and kumara. We received a constant commentary on our gardening prowess (or lack thereof!) from our mates on the school bus that passed our property each weekday, on the way to College!

And then there was the never-ending task of hoeing thistles that seemed to have grown everywhere over the farm. Geoff, Clive and I would spend countless weekends, when not involved in sport, hoeing large paddocks covered with thistles (mainly Scotch and Variegated thistles). Many hours on a Sunday afternoon were commonly spent in this manner. Geoff recalls each of us boys being given a gift-wrapped thistle hoe by Dad for Christmas! (He has a better memory than me!).

Along with the mundane work was the maintenance work. Mowing lawns, maintaining and mending fences, trimming hedges, clearing gorse, plucking and burying dead sheep, painting roofs and repairing buildings, stacking haybales and digging trenches for irrigation projects.



Chopping thistles. David with cousin Graham Bibby. (Photo: circa 1955)



Docking. L-R: Athol, Clive and David Bibby. (Photo: circa 1958)

Then there was stock work. Going around the sheep each day, shearing, crutching, dipping, docking and drenching the sheep; looking for sheep cast while pregnant, lambing ewes that had the lamb's head protruding from their pelvis, assisting with a breech birth or fixing bearings with spatulas. Moving sheep and cattle from paddock to paddock for fresh pasture; preparing fields for crops, harvesting crops and transporting hay to hay-barns.

But life on the farm was not all work! We made our own fun - and we had a lot of it! There was no television in those days; just one non-commercial and one commercial radio station to listen to, and the Hawkes Bay Herald Tribune to read. It was the 50s and 60s. So, we made our own fun.

Sports were a huge part of our lives; rugby in winter, cricket and tennis in the summer. All three brothers had good eye-hand coordination skills. We spent hours kicking a rugby ball to each other, practiced goal-kicking with our home-made goalpost, and ran everywhere bare feet for most of the year - so we were exceptionally fit. In the summer it was throwing a cricket ball to each other or batting or bowling on the front lawn, using the large silver birch tree-trunk in place of wickets. At school we enjoyed and were relatively successful at athletics - but none of us were better than average at swimming. Any ball-sport attracted our interest but sports that were expensive to engage in like skiing or yachting were not on our agenda. We enjoyed recreational kayaking and boating at the beach but these items were borrowed from our farming cousins, John and Peter Bibby of the Eric and Janey Bibby family.



L-R: Clive, Athol, David, Mary, Marion and Geoff Bibby. (Photo: circa 1955)

Along with sports, Clive and I spent a huge amount of our leisure time building things; tree-huts everywhere, underground huts, a raft to sail on our dam, and carts to race down hills. There was a dolls' house and a two-story tree-hut with its own wood-fired stove down by the creek, for Marion. There were wooden toy-guns, bows and arrows, ex-Army WW2 gasmasks and steel helmets - and swords to enhance our imaginations when engaging in mock warfare. Later there were real guns as we hunted rabbits and possums and the occasional seagull, Hawke or Magpie.

And then there were horses. Clive was the main protagonist here. Clive recalls events as follows:

“With mates like Brian Chittick and Alan Squires, I was at a loss when those blokes were riding horses.

I kept pestering Dad to allow me to gain access to a pony so I could ride too.

After an aborted attempt (at my instigation) to do a deal with our neighbour, Harry Rathbone that would have involved me offering the Waipawa Mayor 6 pence per week - half of my 1 shilling pocket money in exchange for one of his ageing purebred racehorses. I was desperate to join the others on a horse of my own.

My initial idea had been a bold attempt but one that understandably didn't pass the “pub test” of the normal equine sales process so was doomed to failure before it even reached the negotiation stage.

However, being the compassionate gentleman that he undoubtedly was, Harry took pity on this young lad showing signs of entrepre-

neurial ability and generously offered to supply his farm truck, horse float and any riding gear as back up if I could find someone who would be willing to lend me a pony in exchange for free grazing of the animal.

It wasn't long before we were able to find a horse that we picked up from an elderly couple living in Haumoana (Paul Holmes territory).

I used that horse on treks with my mates for about a year but it soon became obvious to them that I needed something that was in keeping with the standard set by the ones they were riding .

I returned the black pony when Brian Chittick kindly offered me '*Turon*' - an ex showjumper owned and ridden by Brian's elder brother Alan.

The rest as they say is history.

We certainly had fun riding that nag!"

'Turon' provided us with a huge amount of fun and pleasure. Clive would jump him over the farm gates and then he would construct a show-jump-style jump near the house, showing off his burgeoning equestrian skills to a bemused family. On more than one occasion *'Turon'* would stick his front feet into the ground, balking at the jump, while Clive would continue over the jump, in mid-air, minus his horse. All very hilarious for onlookers but he could have killed himself!

I remember my first bareback ride on *'Turon'* out the back of the farm. I was okay galloping (I could hold onto his mane) but when it came to trotting I would end up bouncing up *'Turon's'* neck, holding on with my legs as I went, until I reached the region approaching his ears - and falling off! All to the great amusement of my brother!

The other favourite pastime, on a boring Sunday afternoon - for my two older brothers in particular - would be a competition to see who could draw the best cartoons. We had many references to draw upon: Walt Disney comics featuring Donald Duck and his extended family, Mickey Mouse and his extended family, Goofy, 'The Phantom' comics, 'Eagle' comics featuring Dan Dare and the Mekon, dozens of 'Classic' comics and 'Archie', 'Superman', 'Batman' and Alfred E. Newman in the 'Mad' comics. I know that Geoff spent weeks perfecting his renditions of Disney characters; Clive was more spontaneous and free-style by nature. Both were superb cartoonists!

I spent my Primary School years at the Waipawa Primary School. Dad was the First Assistant there at the time, teaching both Clive and myself in the same class in 1957. Clive was in Standard 6 (Form 2) and I was part of a small accelerant group of Standard 5 (Form 1) students. I have no idea why that happened. Nevertheless, Dad had no favourites in his classes and Clive and I both received 'six of the best' straps on our hands on several occasions during the year, along with the other offenders - in spite of being Athol's kids!

In fact, we were used to Dad's 'old school' discipline at home. On one occasion he caught us smoking. Clive got 12 strikes on his bare bum with a calf collar and I (being younger) got just 10 on my bare bum for our waywardness! We were much more circumspect after that. I always tell people that "I gave up smoking when I was 7 years old!"



Standard 2, Waipawa Primary School: 1954.



Standard 6, Waipawa Primary School: 1958.

But Dad was a brilliant teacher who kept in touch with countless ex-pupils throughout his lifetime. And they kept in touch with him. I remember being introduced by my 95-year-old father to an 85-year-old ex-pupil who was visiting him in Havelock North.

In those days many of my classroom colleagues had 'nick-names'. In the photos above I can recognize a number of them: 'Slug' Webby, 'Wart' Parker, 'Ozzie' Osbourne, 'Gray-balls' Gray and 'Fatty' Johnstone, amongst others.

The remnant of the 1958 class continue to hold a reunion every 5 years - to this day.



The old 1932 Ford farm truck: L-R: Geoff, David and Clive Bibby.
(Photo: circa 1955)

Footnote:

Dad and Mum and Marion moved to Gisborne in January 1964 in order for Dad to take up an appointment as the Principal of Te Hapara Primary School, a decile 3 contributing school of some 300 students, catering for students Years 1-6. He fulfilled that role until 1969 when health issues forced him to resign. He and Mum moved back to Waipawa for two years - renting the Bibby Family Trust house in Matthew Street - between 1970 and 1971, from which residence Dad took up temporary positions at Waipukurau Primary School for a year in 1970 and then as the Head Teacher at Pukehou School for 3 months between February and April 1971. In May 1971, with his health fully restored, Dad was appointed as the Principal of Waterloo School in Lower Hutt, Wellington - a large decile 8 contributing school, catering for students Years 1-6. He retired in May 1977. Meanwhile Mum was the Infant Mistress at Muritai Primary School at Eastbourne for 4 years, between September 1971 and December 1975, followed by nine months teaching at Waterloo School, between February and October 1976. She retired in October 1976.

Mum and Dad lived on the waterfront at Days Bay in Wellington between May 1971 and December 1978 before moving to 5 Glenpark Place, Havelock North, in Hawkes Bay, in December of 1978. They both lived there until Mum died on the 5th of December 1998, in her 80th year, and Dad lived on there alone for another 17 years until his death on the 11th of March 2015, in his 97th year.



Mary and Athol Bibby. (Photo: circa 1990)

Comment by Ewan McGregor:

My association with the Bibby family began when I joined standard one at Waipawa School at the start of 1953. This was in the stand-alone ‘pre-fab’ class room at the end of the main building. Our teacher was the kindly Mrs. Steadman. There I immediately formed a close friendship with class-mate David, which has lasted to this day. Often, over the following six years at the School, we would stay with each other. No family, outside of my own, have I had a closer and longer-lasting involvement.

I left Napier Boys High School at the end of 1963, after being a boarder at the hostel for five years. This was a period of which I have the fondest memories. At that time Athol had accepted a headmastership of a school in Gisborne. As has been explained in David’s narrative, Athol and Mary owned a small farm on the northern outskirts of Waipawa of 110 acres (44 hectares).

Athol was unsure of the farm’s future and so he asked me to manage it. (The house was let to the Applegate family - Mrs. Applegate generously providing me with ‘smokos’.) Given that I had just left school, this was

an act of confidence in me by Athol which I greatly appreciated. I had of course, been brought up on the home farm at Hautope, 15 kms east of Waipawa, and had been enthusiastically active in its running. I had also done the agricultural course at high school for the whole time there. Further, I had learnt to shear on the school farm, and, after being accredited with U E at the end of 1962, had done a two-weeks Wool Board shearing course in the Manawatu, under the tutorage of the great shearer, Godfrey Bowen. So, I was a reasonably accomplished shearer. Athol paid me £3/10 a week, with extra for shearing. Every month I would turn up to his accountant, John Sloan of McCullough, Butler and Spence, to collect my pay cheque. This was welcome spending money.



Ewan McGregor (Photo: circa 2010)

The plan was to run just dry sheep with no cattle. Athol's brother-in-law, Derek McCoskery, did the buying and selling. 1964 was a very testing year in Hawke's Bay with a severe autumn drought, but we got through okay, not having cattle, being conservatively stocked, and a good stock water supply, sourced from the Waipawa town system. (Not so on the home farm. We took a big hit that year, and sometimes I went without pay, hence the appreciation of that £3/10 from Athol!)

At the end of 1964 the farm was sold, so the opportunity that was given to me by Athol, in my first year out of school, is something that I have always appreciated.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Transcript Audio Recording Made of Mr James Bibby at 95 Years of Age

Appendix 2: Dr. Charles Elliot Fox (1878-1977)

Appendix 3: Dr. Basil Glover Bibby (1904-1998)

Appendix 4: Geoffrey Wallace Bibby (1922-2023)

Appendix 1

Transcript of Audio Recording of Mr James Bibby at 95 Years of Age

Introductions by Mr A.S. Bibby (July, 1957)

Boys and girls, I would like to introduce you to Mr James Bibby of Waipawa. Mr Bibby was born in 1862, which means that he is nearly 95 years old, and one of the oldest people living in Waipawa just now.

We have asked Mr Bibby if he will answer some of the questions which are of interest to you, and here they are:

Mr Bibby, would you mind telling the boys and girls something of the first school.

The first school was in the old church of England which was originally started by a lady from home getting in touch with my father suggesting a school be made here. There were a number of collections and finally the school was built. In the first place before we built the old school, the Church of England was used for a school. The first master was called Drover and the second one Godwin. They had only a few scholars, about eight in all, and I suppose they had the school in the church for about four years, probably, before the government school got built.

Where was the first government school built?

On the site - almost on the site - of the old primary school now, just a little back. At that time the ground was very different and there was a small creek running through the ground, and the first teacher there would come in about 1867 - his name being Arrow.

There was he and his wife. Often when left in sole charge she was tired of school and the boys were not quiet; she could not carry on; she used to faint and get help that way.

Can you give us a description of what Waipawa was like in the early 60s?

We will first of all break that up like this:

Can you tell us why that part of Waipawa is called the Bush?

Yes, perhaps in the first place how did we get the name? This place in the first settlement was Abbotsford, not Waipawa, and then you call this Waipawa, but you do not spell it according to the Maori as it should be spelt. Our first Bishop used to write it in the Maori - WAIPAOA - not as we write it now. Well you could understand why it was spelt Paoa, because that would be 'smoky river', and, of course, if you get up early on a frosty morning there you would have seen apparent smoke rising from the river, and that, of course, justifies the spelling PAOA.

What of the Bush area?

The Bush was more extensive than now. It had a very fine bit of bush extending from about the gas works at the present time right down to the end of the present Borough. It was a very very nice bit of bush, and we as boys used to spend a lot of time wondering about. The birds were numerous. We had plenty of pigeons, kakas, parakeets and tuis there - a lot of birds, and as boys we had a delightful time wandering about this bush and seeing the birds.

Can you tell us something of the river of early Waipawa?

Yes, the early Waipawa river was very much narrower. In the first place, when white people first came to Hawkes Bay, the Maori had a Pa about half way across the river where the present bridge is. The Pa was about halfway across the river, then gradually moved back to the present Reserve, then the settlement moved further back still, and finally moved up to the hill. The river was very much narrower, and rather deeper. The Maoris had canoes on it. The first time I crossed the river was in a canoe. When they wanted to take wool to the port they took it down in canoes, and some of the early settlers' wives came up in canoes from the sea. The Maoris had to push the canoes up most of the way, and it took a long time coming up. Several of our old settlers' wives came up that way.

What of the land apart from the Bush area? I mean the land about the hills?

That, of course, was in its native state. There were no English grasses showing. There was fern all over the hills; both north and south, and, well, so thick, that one of my schoolfellows - a young boy - lost his life in the fern in a fire down there. That gradually went away. The fern was growing where the Waipawa Mail office is now. My mother used to hang my clothes out on the fern.

Now can you tell us anything about what they sold the land for near the traffic bridge?

The land where the present cemetery is was cut up into town sections, and, to help sell this, he showed it was available for river traffic by a sketch with a steamer on the river.

Can you tell us anything about the early Maoris? I know that is a pretty wide question. Well, first of all, how were they dressed?

Of course they had not so many good European clothes. They still used a good many mats, but they normally would have some European clothes. They lived nearer their original Maori state.

Cooking was mostly done in the Maori hangis or ovens, and getting up in the early morning the first thing I would see would be bodies of steam rising up from the ovens they were uncovering.

Of course, we lived on good terms with the Maoris. Our great chief in the early days was Hapuku. He kept friendly with us. We were always in doubt as to whether he might not turn us over to the Maori - the Hauhaus.

Did you see Te Kooti here himself?

No, he kept under cover. He passed through in a buggy, but he was not visible to the Pakeha. The Maori massacre at Poverty Bay was not long before and one or two of the people had lost relatives through the massacre. Some might have shot him so he did not show himself.

Did Hauhaus ever come as far south as Waipawa?

No, The Hauhaus movement was perhaps more on the West Coast, and they had sent men here to try and influence our natives. In Napier it came to a fight - at Maraenui. The Europeans turned out and defeated the movement. Here in Waipawa we had no

fighting. They had a stockade about 3 miles from Waipawa near the Waipawa Mati. They had a number there - soldiers. Some of them were buried where the Church of England is now.

They were regular English soldiers - were they?

No, they were New Zealanders. Here in Waipawa they had a band of men with arms, and they were on duty several times a week, and there was a list of those who had to turn at each night.

Can you tell us anything of early road transport?

Nothing special. First of all bullock drays, then horse drays gradually came in, then we began to get coaches. The coach used to run in the 70s every day.

Where did the coach go to?

Waipukurau to Napier. I'm not quite sure whether Waipawa had a run to Napier; we got the benefit and I went to school on the coach.

What were the roads like?

The roads were quite different from what they are now - very rough. Bullock drays and horse wagons. Even on the good roads when you were getting down towards Otane, there were holes in the road - so rough that it would break down. However, some of the old coaches were not like the present, on springs. They were on leather rollers. They rolled from side to side.

When did the first railway come through Waipawa? Can you tell us anything interesting that happened about that?

I do not think so in connection with the railway.

When did the first telephone come through here?

I have a lot of correspondence now as to where the Post Office or Telegraph Office should be - whether it should have the office at Waipawa or Waipukurau. It took a good long time to decide which place. Finally, both places.

Can you tell us anything about the history of the saleyards in Waipawa?

They started in Waipawa in the first place. They were here for several years and carried on very well, but the trouble was that they wanted more room for cattle yards, and they could not get any additional room here and they had to go to Waipukurau, otherwise they would not have left here as they had put their money into the yards.

Have you ever seen Mr George Grey?

Yes, I have seen him. Not very much of him, but he was travelling through to see somebody in the back country here and came in a coach when we were going to school. I do not remember that he had anything to say to us, but he was an elderly gentleman and we did not know who he was at the time.

Did you ever see Mr Colenso?

Oh, yes, I saw Mr Colenso. Mr Colenso was our first Maori missionary in Hawke's Bay. He had a very big district - his district went down to Wellington, and he had to visit different parishes - he used to walk from his mission station to Wellington twice in the year. He walked down the beach - down the sea coast and then inland. He had to walk all that way twice a year. Not only there, occasionally his district went over the mountains. He visited the people over the mountains as well as here. He was a very keen collector of botany. The first time he went up the mountains there were so many things he could not carry them - so many specimens - so he took off his shirt and carried them in his shirt.

You mentioned to me a while ago that Mr Colenso was an Inspector of Schools - can you tell us anything of that?

Well, we did not see very much of him. The only thing I know much about was that he offered a prize for arithmetic, and I happened to be the lucky one, and I still have that book that old Mr Colenso gave me. We saw a good deal of him. He was a friendly old man. He used to tell us about things that had happened.

On the front of our pound note there is an oval where we see the shape of Tawhio, the Maori chief, and on the other side is a picture of Captain Cook. Now I understand that Tawhio used to come to Waipawa in the early days?

Tawhio only passed through once. That was the only time he came to Waipawa. I do not know whether he looked such a great Maori chief as some of the others - such as our Hapuku - our big Maori chief in Hawke's Bay.

Maori chiefs in those days were very finely tattooed on the whole of the face - lines of tattoo across his forehead; across his chin and all down his nose; very fine old Maori; enough to frighten a child who was not good. Got on pretty well with them. We thought Hapuku's brother was more terrifying.

What did you do when you were first in Waipawa? You had a store here did you? Can you tell us anything of the comparison of prices between then and now?

In the early days some things were considered to be dearer, but most things were not as dear as they are now. In the very early days one could buy sugar for about sixpence per pound. Bread was cheaper. For many years they delivered bread from about two

and a half pence per loaf up on the hill here, and meat, of course, was very much cheaper. We got a pound of steak for sixpence and bought the best mutton for about four pence per pound. Potatoes, later on, were plentiful, and compared with what you have been paying - 30 shillings per sugar bag - at that time you could buy a big corn sack holding 180 pounds, and the first potatoes I remember buying were 180 pounds for five and sixpence, and in addition I got a discount.

Can you tell us anything about the price of clothing? For instance, the price of a suit, dresses, or things like that all?

They had not quite such fine dresses nor such fine clothes. Ladies' stockings which cost 10 shillings now - one could buy a pair of ladies' stockings for one shilling. Ladies' dresses were not so fine - one could buy wincyette; was very much worn for about one and sixpence per yard at the outside; men's suits - they were cheaper - two pounds - two pounds and 10 shillings for a new man's suit. Some, of course, cheaper. I have known men's suits sold in Waipawa - three garments for one pound and one shilling. Now, of course, you pay a lot more money.

Can you tell us us anything of wages that would be paid?

Wages used to be not very large. The man working on the roads got six shillings at the outside. I knew more about the cost of putting up a fence. Men put up a chain of fencing for not more than six shillings for the whole chain. Now a great deal more, and then if you wanted firewood cut, cut a cord for 1 pound - now, of course, a great deal more.

At the present time a lot of people are concerned with building homes - you have had a lot to do with building - can you tell us anything of timber or the price of houses then compared with now?

Well, I can hardly compare their houses - two-roomed house had no wallpaper or anything like that - plain timber. They had nothing - but simple chimneys and no electric lights, no heaters of any kind. I cannot say how much cheaper the cost of building was - very much cheaper.

The Waipawa river has had several really big floods. Now can you remember at any time anything that happened, particularly with those floods?

I remember my father told me that at one time where the school is now, water was right across the bush area there and the floods had washed away the old Waipawa bridge.

Can you tell us anything about the results of any of those floods?

The river was about the same as it is now. Except for an exceptionally high flood in 1893. We had heavy rain for a couple of days. The river was the highest it had been since Europeans came here. The whole of the Bush excepting one or two high spots

was all under water. The houses there now would have been flooded out badly. Another big flood like that and it would be very wet down there. When the new bridge is built, it may be some protection for the lower. It is going to be bad down there.

Can you tell us anything about the first motor-car that came to Waipawa?

I cannot say much about that. I remember seeing the first. I saw it at a distance. It reminded me of a beetle. My brother had one of the first around here, but that was not a very smart one compared with these days. He did not travel much in it.

Can you tell us anything of the first bicycle?

Penny-farthing was the first we had here. I remember seeing a man trying to get on one and then diving over the machine. We had one of the first bicycles. A man worked in an office and he used to go somewhere where the present school is and have a run down the road, and then some of the boys put a few stones across the road for him to hop over. We had no bicycles like you have now.

Did you have any horse races?

No - well I do not know. The first horse race in Hawke's Bay was at Waipukurau. It was in the early days, before the white people had taken over the land. The time was when Mr Colenso had been over the mountains and he was coming home. He had an engagement to marry some Maoris at Waipukurau; when he got down to Waipukurau, the Maori church there - it was being occupied as a stand for the races. Some of the Pakehas had got two or three horses and were running races and that was the first race in Hawke's Bay. There is no doubt about that!

We have a number of boys and girls from our school here, Mr Bibby. The first one is Sue Meha - she is the Senior Prefect at Waipawa School and she would like to ask you a question.

Mr Bibby, can you please tell us about the first hotels? How many were there?

The first hotel was at the foot of Rose Street. Rose Street was named after the man who had the hotel - Rose. There was also another hotel about the centre of town where the present Commercial Hotel is. We had another one down past the railway station, and it got burnt; and then there was another one down further. The first owner was a man named Rose. We did not know whether the old chap was a convict serving his time. Perhaps he came over here. He drove the first spring cart to Napier twice a week. If there was any mail to bring he would bring it up. He also had a great temper and I remember my mother telling me about the horse when it was not pleasing the old chap he would reach up and get his ear and bite it.

Another girl we have here is Glen Dallas.

Were there any ice cream or sweet shops?

No ice creams in those days. Nothing like ice creams - they hadn't been born. We did not get any fun and games like that, although I remember my mother when I was quite a youngster having a dance in the school. They used the school for dancing which is about the only place where they could have a dance, and she made a cake and she did not have an electric oven. She made it in a camp oven and it was a very fine fruitcake covered all over with little sweets.

The next girl is called Shelley Iggulden.

Where was the first house built?

The first house was a small whare owned by Mr Abbott before the land was cut up. Mr Abbott had a very simple whare down about where - near the present bookshop owned by Mr Mundell. Simple one - just iron stand for bed. That was the first real house in Waipawa. Then later on one of the earliest houses was Dr Todd's. It was at the bottom of Rose Street. Now that is the oldest house remaining in Waipawa, and the next oldest to that remaining is the motor place down there. The first school teacher in the public school, Arrow, lived there in 1867, but before that there were one or two people I knew who lived in that house before '67. That is the house next to Waipawa Motors where Mr Brandon recently lived. One of the boys was killed there in a thunder-storm. There was also a dancing class held there.

Can you give us the date when Mr Abbott came to Waipawa or when Waipawa really started, in your opinion?

1862. Passed through to the Government in 1861, and Mr Abbott was one of the people who witnessed the signature, also another man we had in Waipawa witnessed the transfer. He took possession of the land in 1862. How soon he actually came up to Waipawa - it would not be long after.

Were there any people in Waipawa before 1860?

Oh! No. No Pakeha. Abbott and old Tommy Smith and his wife who managed the farm were the only ones who were in Waipawa before 1860.

When did they come?

I cannot tell you exactly - Abbott about 1862, and Smith about 1865; perhaps something like that, but Mr Smith and Mr Abbott were in Waipawa before 1860. No relation to Smith here.

I think you may have made a mistake just now about when Mr Abbott came here - when did Mr Abbott come to Waipawa? If you can, try and get that pretty clearly.

He came up after taking the land from the Government in 1852. He took the land from the Government and came up not long after because he brought his sheep and had sheep in the 50's on his farm - station - after he came here in 1852.

How soon after that could you say that Waipawa started as a town? When were the shops and houses built here sufficient to call it a town?

The first store was built on Dr Todd's section and built by the Provincial Governor, and a Frenchman had charge of it. (Du Nois).

Can you give us the date? Was it before 1860?

Might be 1859 - probably 1858-59, that was about the first.

The next pupil is Bob Allan - he is a son of Dr Allan and attends the Waipawa School too.

Can you tell us about the first Entertainment?

The first entertainments were in the old Courthouse. Well there was no Courthouse. All sorts of entertainments, play-readings, and, in particular, travellers up from Napier, who came here - all sorts. Also children's recitations took place there.

Can you tell us anything about the early churches? Which was the first church to be built here?

The first church was the Church of England, and that was used by both Presbyterian and English churches alternately. The churches had a service once a month - Presbyterian and then the other. Then later on the Methodists came - that was about 1884 - five years after the others. Of course, the Catholics came in too. I could not give you the date. I remember the places.

Mr Bibby - can you tell us something about any funny things that happened?

Denise Arcus is another pupil in Form 2 and who wants to know if you can tell us about any funny things that happened in Waipawa.

I am afraid that I am not built for comics. I do not remember much about that. Talk about what the boys did in those days; all sorts of things that they do now, and I remember there was a Frenchman and his wife - we used to have a lot of fun with the Frenchman. The son lived opposite the police station down the road, and the boy - he used to have a good deal of liberty, and he would get hold of his father's revolver, then he would induce the French boy to throw up his cap while the boy was having shots with the revolver. The mother didn't approve.

Can you tell us any other things like this?

In Waipawa for a number of years we had a lot of trouble about surveying the place. They could not come to an agreement. They could not make two surveys fit in. I remember the first surveyor - he had his theodolite about where the lounge is now. This was something new to me so I wondered what he was going to do with it. He had a look through, he got up and threw down his hat, then he got up again and had another look, and that seemed to be worse. Next he got up and kicked his hat all around the place because it would not agree.

The next boy who would like to say something to you is Terence Matthews - he is in Form 1 and would like to ask you a question.

Were there any doctors in Waipawa?

Of course there were doctors - even in the early days. The first doctor was called Dr English. He was a very fine old chap, but he used to chew sweets. I did not see much of him as a patient. The old chap used to come around on a big horse that he called 'Pills'. He would sit on his horse and chew sweets. The next doctor was Dr Yenn. Then after that - Dr Todd. Dr Todd did not give any help much if you were getting toothache. Nothing to stop the pain. If in pain he pulled them out. He got someone to hold your head. You did not go to the dentist. Dr Todd lived here for a good long time in the old house at the foot of Rose Street.

Can you tell us about the first milk supply in Waipawa?

No milk supply hardly. If one wanted milk for a baby, they had to get goat's milk. Then afterwards a man used to come in with two cans carrying it on his shoulder on a yoke - that was the only milk supply that we had.

What did they do for vegetables? Did they grow their own?

We had not many vegetables. I remember as a child very few vegetables. There was a small garden at the bottom end of the place that used to be the bush. A man used to grow a few. That was the first. Then afterwards, for some years, a Mrs Wilkes, who had a farm on Rathbone's run used to come in about three times a week on a little pony with a bag on each side with two cabbages or something. That was our supply for a long time.

Early in the century they held an exhibition in Waipawa. Can you tell us anything about that or where it was held, and from where the exhibits came?

There was a surprising number of exhibits including some from Auckland and Christchurch, I think, and other places. Of course, they did not have much here, but it was very good. It was the first, I think, of the kind. Probably the first in New Zealand.

What was the date of it?

I cannot remember the date. Mr Bibby has the date. (Note: 7 December 1888).

Can you tell us anything of wild pigs near or in Waipawa?

They were all over the place - everywhere. The man who first came up to see about the house across the road just up a few yards of Rose Street - his dog put up a wild pig up there. Coming from Otane in the coach one day a horse had fallen down the gully. When we came back from there there were over 20 wild pigs feeding on that horse. They used to go out on horse over to Hardings across the river to get pigs for food. They were plentiful.

Appendix 2

Dr. Charles Elliot Fox (1878-1977)

The following obituary was written by Dr. David L. Hilliard PhD

Charles Elliot Fox

CHARLES ELLIOT FOX, C.B.E., ANGLICAN MISSIONARY, HISTORIAN AND ANTHROPOLOGIST, died at Waipukurau, New Zealand, on 28 October 1977. Fox was born at Stalbridge, Dorset, on 1 October 1878, the second son of an Anglican clergyman who migrated to New Zealand in 1884 to become Vicar of Gisborne. From Napier High School, Fox went to Auckland University College, where he graduated in 1901 with First Class Honours in Geology.

His interest in the Melanesian Mission was awakened by a deputation of missionaries and their Melanesian pupils, who in 1895 had visited the New Zealand coastal ports on the mission ship Southern Cross, and in 1902 he joined the teaching staff of St. Barnabas' College at Norfolk Island. Bishop Cecil Wilson, who ordained Fox in 1903, recognized the unusual qualities of his new recruit: 'A very clear-headed able little man' who 'will do great things for M.M. if he keeps his health', he noted in his diary. In 1911 Fox went to the Solomon Islands to begin a boys' school at Pamua, San Cristobal.

He was to live in the Solomons, with only short breaks, until 1973 when he returned permanently to New Zealand. During his missionary career he was at different times a school headmaster, a district missionary, a plantation laborer, a coast-watcher during the Japanese occupation, and, for 11 years, the only European member of an indigenous religious order, the Melanesian Brotherhood. (He rejoined the Brotherhood in 1975.)

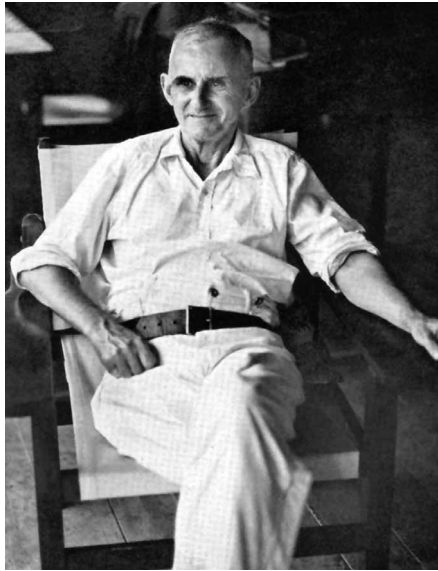
In 1932, after the resignation of Bishop F. M. Molyneux, Fox was asked by the Anglican bishops of New Zealand to accept appointment as Bishop of Melanesia. He declined, for 'I did not think I had some of the gifts a Bishop needs'. The dominant themes in Fox's life were his wish to understand Melanesian social processes and ways of thought from the inside and his support for any movement or organization through which Melanesians could control their own affairs. He was already an accomplished scholar of Oceanic languages when in 1908 he met W. H. R. Rivers, who was travelling to the Solomon Islands on the Southern Cross. Until then, Fox recalled, he had 'looked on ethnology as a vague, picturesque, and highly imaginative subject, and not at all as an exact or scientific study', but by the end of the voyage he was 'committed to ethnological work'.

The result of his early investigations was an important pioneer study of the people and cultures of San Cristobal, *The Threshold of the Pacific* (1924). The manuscript was also submitted to the University of New Zealand, which in 1922 awarded Fox the degree of Doctor of Literature. During the next 30 years he compiled dictionaries of the languages of Arosi, Lau (Malaita) and Nggela. He wrote three books: a history of the Melanesian Mission, *Lord of the Southern Isles* (1958); a book of reminiscences, *Kakamora* (1962); and a history of the Solomon Islands for young Melanesians, *The Story of the Solomons* (1967). The latter was noteworthy for its author's remarkable sense of identification with the people of the Solomons, for by the 1960s Fox regarded himself no longer as a New Zealander but as a Solomon Islander by adoption. Shortly before his death he had requested Solomon Islands' citizenship when independence was achieved in 1978.

In the post-war years Fox became a Solomon Islands' institution. At Taroaniara he was visited by a succession of colonial administrators, church leaders, academics and research students, eager to glean information for their doctoral theses. His own intellectual curiosity was unimpaired by age. He read almost everything that came his way and maintained a vast regular correspondence. Successive bishops of Melanesia found it easy to patronize him as the 'grand old man' of the Melanesian Mission, but were inclined to dismiss his unconventional views as idiosyncratic and impractical. For his part, beneath his orthodox Anglican faith, Fox maintained a healthy impatience with ecclesiastical administrators and religious exclusiveness.

It would be impossible for an outsider to estimate the extent of Fox's personal influence in the Solomon Islands. His great mana was universally recognized. During the 1950s, for example, there was a story in circulation that Fox had sat with a Roman Catholic priest under a coconut tree. The priest prayed and a branch fell down; Fox prayed and the whole tree fell down.

In the history of Christian missions in the South Pacific, Fox exemplified a rare tradition of scholarship and tolerance. He believed that Christianity should be the fulfilment, and not the destroyer, of indigenous traditions and religious concepts, and he showed that it was possible to be a missionary for a lifetime without seeking power or succumbing to paternalism.



Dr. Charles Elliot Fox (1878 - 1977)
(Photo: circa 1958)

Schweitzer of South Pacific

THE new teacher was somewhat shocked when rival gangs of pupils attempted a fight to the death with axes and knives in the school playground. But the headmaster soon restored order by wading into the fray with a stockwhip.

That may sound like a pedagogue's nightmare equally, the stockwhip bit may sound like a pedagogue's dream. But it was all part of the reality of a missionary-teachers' life in the South Pacific 70 years ago.

At 93, Dr Charles Fox has scores of similar stories — as well as much bloodier tales — of his days with the Church of England Melanesian Mission.

Dr Fox's blackboard jungle was a jungle in a horrifyingly literal sense. Many of his pupils were Solomon Islanders only recently woeed away by the Churen from cannibalism, head-hunting and human sacrifice.

That bloody battle in the playground occurred in 1902 on Norfolk Island where the mission ran a school for New Hebrideans and Solomon Islanders. Once in a while a New Hebridean would stab a Solomon schoolmate (or vice versa) and the adversaries' tribal supporters would fling off their mission clothing, grab axes, clubs and spears and do their best to turn the playing-fields into a Roman arena. Then along would come the headmaster, a muscular English Christian of the old school, with his trusty stockwhip.

Later, when the young Charles Fox moved out to the Solomon Islands, he learned to decline offers of half-cooked human flesh as urbanely as a curate refusing a second cup of tea at a vicarage fête.

Cricketers

Today, Dr Fox, a wiry, diminutive man, chuckles reminiscently about his cannibalistic charges but says that he would rather talk about the splendid cricketers he made out of hefty young heathens.

Cricket seems to have as great a claim on his enthusiasm as do his academic disciplines of geology, anthropology and linguistics. "I suppose you young fellows wouldn't remember Victor Trumper (1877-1915)?"

playing in the Auckland Domain?" he asks.

When talking to Dr Fox one is constantly reminded of the range of history spanned by his long life. One minute he is speaking of his young days when he met old missionaries who had known Bishop Selwyn, founder of the Melanesian Mission in 1849. In the next breath the doctor is describing his experience of the Japanese occupation of the Solomons during the Second World War.

Author

His published history of the Melanesian Mission (one of several books he has written) is filled with references to hefty missionary bishops who captained the Eton cricket XI and rowed or boxed for Oxford or Cambridge. Some of it is rather evocative of Anthony Trollope transferred to the South Seas.

This literary echo of bells in English cathedral cloises is not surprising since Charles Fox was born in that Trollopean world. His father was an Anglican canon who came from rural Dorset to New Zealand in 1883 to take up a living in Hawkes Bay. The doctor's grandfather, another churchman-scholar, had been headmaster of Cheltenham College, a leading English boys' school.

The five-year-old Charles Fox arrived in New Zealand just in time to begin his education. Twelve years later he was both dux and captain of games of Napier Boys' High School.

"I loved Rugby as well as cricket," he says. "I never had much size or weight but I was a useful halfback." He was also something of an ace trumper. As a 14-year-old schoolboy he walked the 273 miles from Napier to Auckland and 202 miles from Napier to Wellington.

"I took about a week for each journey," he says. "I made no prior arrangements about accommodation. People just took me in for the night when I told them who I was and what I was

doing. New Zealand was a very hospitable place in those days — especially in the country."

After graduating MA in 1899 from the then infant Auckland University College, Charles Fox entered the Church and missionary work. Some years later his alma mater granted him a doctorate of literature for his work on Melanesian anthropology and linguistics. One of his books on these subjects is still used as a standard work in universities throughout the world.

From 1902 until he arrived back in New Zealand earlier this month Dr Fox devoted his life to the Melanesian Mission, mostly in the Solomon Islands. For many of these 70 years he was headmaster of mission schools for native boys.

His reminiscences of missionary work in the Solomons during the early years of this century are a curious blend of English public school ethos and the stuff of horror comics.

While headmaster Fox and his mission schoolboys were playing cricket on some carefully cultivated greensward, a war canoe would glide into the bay, filled with fearsome warriors in full battle regalia.

The schoolboys would then flee to safety in the hills and the little headmaster would stride down to the beach to confront the cannibalistic intruders. Certainly not, he would tell them, on no account were they to kill and eat his pupils. Eating chaps was simply *not done*.

Village raids

He must surely have come close to sudden and gory death on such occasions? "Oh, those savages would make all sorts of threatening gestures," he says. "But it was mostly bluff."

There was, however, no question of bluff when cannibal war parties swooped on nearby villages, killing everyone in them and carrying off the bodies for ceremonial feasts.

But that sort of thing, says Dr Fox, is now happily a thing of the past. "The



Dr Charles Fox

Solomon Islanders today are the most loyal and lovable people you could wish to meet."

When the Japanese invaded the Solomons in 1942 Dr Fox, as did many of his fellow missionaries, stayed at his post until almost overrun. For some time afterwards he hid in the hills and jungle, watching Japanese troop movements and reporting these to American agents. Such vital information was often sent by native drums, relayed from village to village. "It took only 20 minutes to send a message 50 miles by drums," he says.

He has a particularly grim memory of the final conquest by the advancing Americans of the Japanese garrison on the island of Mala.

The Japanese troops were caught in a surprise attack and mown down in heaps. And right behind the American machine-gunners

were 500 savage Islanders who hacked the dead and dying Japanese to pieces and collected their blood for ritual sacrifices.

"It should be remembered that by that time the Islanders hated the Japanese and had also had ample demonstration of the savagery with which modern men waged war," says Dr Fox.

For his services to the Solomon Islanders in peace and war Charles Fox was awarded the MBE. But he prizes much more highly than his award his memories of "my people" in the islands.

Such memories he is now carrying with him into a well-earned retirement at his boyhood home in Hawkes Bay.

He takes with him also an unofficial title given him some years ago by British administrators in the Solomons — "the Schweitzer of the South Pacific."

New Zealand Herald or Auckland Star Article: Saturday 24th March 1972

Dr Charles Fox: "The Schweitzer of the South Pacific"

Appendix 3

Dr. Basil Glover Bibby (1904-1998)

Dr. Basil G. Bibby, DDS (1904-1998) was Director of the Eastman Dental Center (EDC) from 1947 to 1970. Originally known as the Rochester Dental Dispensary, EDC was established to provide dental care for children and the underserved in the Rochester, New York community. Under Dr. Bibby's guidance, EDC became world-renowned for its dental research and education.

He is best known for his work on fluorides and their use in municipal water supplies as well as tooth pastes and mouth washes. He was the first to apply a fluoride compound directly to the teeth, a procedure now well established in paediatric dentistry.

Bibby was a pioneer in dental research. His studies of dental caries gave the global dental profession valuable insight into the relationship between bacteria and dental caries, the effect of fluorides on dental caries, and the influence of food upon dental caries. During Bibby's tenure, EDC developed graduate programs in periodontics, pediatric dentistry, orthodontics, prosthodontics and general dentistry.

Bibby was also a champion for libraries, and at both Tufts and Eastman he worked to help establish libraries for dental research. When EDC relocated to Elmwood Avenue in 1978, an anonymous donation funded a new library - upon condition that it be named after Dr. Bibby. Dr. Bibby was involved with libraries at the national level as well. In 1957, at the inception of the National Library of Medicine (NLM), President Eisenhower appointed him a member of NLM's Board of Regents.

Biographical Data

Basil Bibby was born in 1904 in Waipawa, New Zealand to parents James Woodhouse Bibby and Mary Glover Bibby. In 1927, Bibby graduated with a dental degree from the University of Otago, New Zealand. He came to Rochester, NY in 1930 as a Rockefeller Dental Fellow at the University of Rochester (UR), and in 1933, he married Beatrice Boardman. In 1936, after earning his PhD in Bacteriology, he became an assistant professor of dentistry at the University. Bibby left the University in 1938 to earn his D.M.D. at Tufts College Dental School. After receiving his degree he was appointed Dean of the Dental School, a role he filled for the next seven years. In 1947, Bibby returned to Rochester and assumed the role of Director of the Eastman Dental Center.

Over his lifetime, Basil Bibby published over 225 scientific articles. He was also the author of a book, *Food and the Teeth*, published in 1990. His contemporaries and associates at the University of Rochester included Drs. Frank Smith and Michael Buonocore. Bibby was well known for mentoring new researchers, and as director he was instrumental in establishing a graduate research program at EDC, a program which continues to this day.

Eastman Dental Center celebrated Bibby's 90th birthday with a tribute dinner and conference. , published in 1990. When Bibby died on February 4, 1998, he was 93 years old. Upon his death, the Bibby family, together with EDC, established a dental research fellowship in Bibby's name.

Many awards were bestowed on Bibby for his contributions to dental research, including:

- 1969: Doctor of Science (Hon), University of Otago, New Zealand
- 1978: Dental Caries Research Award from the International Association for Dental Research.
- 1979: Doctor of Science (Hon), University of Rochester
- 1979: Fauchard Medal, Pierre Fauchard Academy
- 1988: Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Dental Research, American Dental Association

Source: University of Rochester Medical Centre, 2020. <https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/libraries/bibby/history/basil-bibby.aspx>

Appendix 4

Geoffrey Wallace Bibby (1922-2023)

Geoffrey Wallace Bibby (Uncle Geoff) was born in Waipukurau on 25th of January 1922. He was the fourth son of six children born to Edward Bibby (1864-1955) and Alice Bibby (1885-1957). He grew up at 2 Matthew Street, Waipawa and went to Waipawa Primary School and then on to the 3rd form in the Wapawa District High School. In 1935 he won a scholarship to Kings College in Auckland and studied there for 4 years. In 1939 he commenced study at Canterbury University but due to the declaration of the 2nd World War he returned to Hawkes Bay, waiting to be called up, he joined the staff at Hereworth School.

In 1941 he was called up into the army. He was mobilized into the 12th Battery of the 12th Field NZ Artillery. Then, to his surprise, he was selected to go to Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU) and graduated as a 2nd Lieutenant. He was subsequently posted to the 14th Battery.

By 1943 the threat to New Zealand by the Japanese had declined and he and his fellow trainees were given a choice to either go back into civilian life or reduce rank and go overseas as a gunner, or alternatively, keep their commission and transfer to the Airforce. Geoff chose to retrain with the Airforce and was given the rank of Flying Officer. After initial training in Rotorua he won a ballot to train in Canada and was stationed near Winnipeg at a place called Portage, La Prairie. There he trained on twin-engined Anson aircraft as a Navigator. After converting to Lancaster bomber aircraft in England he and his Kiwi crew were posted to Royal New Zealand Air Force, 101 Squadron, Bomber Command, RAF at Ludford Magna airbase in Lincolnshire. They got to the squadron after D-Day but even at that late stage of the war Geoff carried out 15 missions over Europe aboard an RAF Lancaster heavy bomber.

Geoff's last mission involved being part of an armada of 359 RAF Bomber Command Avro Lancaster heavy bombers, 16 de Havilland Mosquito light bombers, 13 RAF fighter squadrons and 98 North American P-51 Mustang fighter aircraft from the United States Eighth Air Force, whose objective, on the 25th of April 1945, was to wipe out Hitler's 'Eagles Nest' alpine fortress and mountain retreat at Obersalzberg in Southern Bavaria, Germany. All of the bombers missed the target! However, a detachment of Waffen-SS troop units in barracks at the base of the retreat was completely wiped out! Soldiers from the US Army XV Corp - including 'Easy Company' of the 101st Airborne Division (of the famous 2001 'Band of Brothers' Television miniseries) - later captured the area on the 4th May and on the 9th May took the former Reichmarschall Hermann Goering prisoner; the only highly-ranked member of the German Government who had been at Obersalzberg at the time and who had survived the air raid.

Personal Note: I visited the 'Eagles Nest' on a tour of Germany with Jan in 2010.

Source: Personal Communication: Geoff Bibby; and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombing_of_Obersalzberg; and <https://rarehistoricalphotos.com/easy-company-hitler-eagle-nest-1945/>

The very high casualties suffered by Bomber Command is testimony to the dedication and courage of Bomber Command aircrew in carrying out their orders. Statistically there was little prospect of surviving a tour of 30 operations and by 1943, one in six expected to survive their first tour and one in forty would survive their second tour. Bomber Command crews suffered an extremely high casualty rate: 55,573 killed out of a total of 125,000 aircrew (a 44.4 percent death rate), a further 8,403 were wounded in action and 9,838 became prisoners of war. Taking an example of 100 airmen:

- 55 killed on operations or died as a result of wounds
- three injured (in varying levels of severity) on operations or active service
- 12 taken prisoner of war (some wounded)
- two shot down and evaded capture
- 27 survived a tour of operations (30 operational flights)

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAF_Bomber_Command (2020)



Flying Officer Geoffrey Wallace Bibby.
(Photo: circa 1945)



Uncle Geoff and Dad: Anzac Day 2008.

1851 Kiwi aircraft crew lost their lives while serving with Bomber Command. After the war Geoff returned to Christchurch to train as a teacher and study at Canterbury University but he had met and fallen in love with Beryl Roberts while in England and at the end of 1946 she came out to New Zealand and they were married. Unfortunately, Beryl became very ill in 1952 requiring her to return to England for special treatment. While there she saw an advertisement for the RAF which she encouraged Geoff to apply for. He did, and was successful, receiving the rank of Flight Lieutenant and on re-enlistment was posted to Air Defence as a radar specialist. From there he undertook tours of duty to Hong Kong, Singapore and Germany, and then back to England as a Squadron Leader.

By this stage he decided to leave the RAF and returned to New Zealand where he completed his working career teaching at Hereworth School, Havelock North; Scots College, Wellington and Woodford House Girls High School, Havelock North. He retired to Havelock North.

Source: Knowledge Bank, 2014.

A Letter to my Grandchildren got its impetus from a most unlikely source; the March 2020 Covid-19 lockdown in New Zealand.

My children had for years encouraged me to commit to writing the ‘Yarns from the Farm’ that I used to tell them as bedtime stories when they were young, to get them off to sleep at night. They found them funny and entertaining and can recount many of them accurately to this day. “Dad, you must write a book! Your stories of life on the farm, growing up with your brothers and sister in the 1950s and 60s, are unique and interesting and reflect an age that does not exist anymore.”

So, I enlisted the support of my two brothers and sister to contribute to this shared history of ours - and you have the result in your hands!

“To tell your story is one of the most precious gifts you can leave your children. For if we don’t, how will they know about their family, how will they appreciate their history and heritage, and how will they be inspired to tell their story to their children?”

To my grandchildren I say, this is my story - but it is also your story. This is the story of how our ancestors chose to make New Zealand their home. They were all immigrants, who decided to emigrate to Aotearoa from England, Scotland and Germany in the mid-19th Century.

We are all recipients and beneficiaries of their courage, faith and sacrifice; of their dreams, aspirations and hopes. We are their legacy. We are extremely privileged to have such a rich inheritance. Truly, ‘we are standing on the shoulders of giants’.

Enjoy the read!

David.

Dr. David N. Bibby PhD.
Katikati. 2024.

