

2 MINUTES WITH ALISON BAYLY



I was born in Feilding and spent my first years on a sheep farm out of Hunterville in the Rangitikei.

I went to Hunterville Consolidated Primary School which had a roll of 400 pupils, primer one to standard 6. After boarding at secondary school in New Plymouth I trained as a primary teacher at Palmerston North Teachers' College. My first teaching positions were at Maoribank in Upper Hutt, then Ebbett Park in Hastings.

Travel took me to Chiredzi in Zimbabwe (formerly called Rhodesia) where I taught English-speaking children in the local primary school. The school curriculum was the same as in New Zealand but the children started formal education when they were 6.

The pupils' parents were keen to meet the foreign teachers so we had many meals out. School hours were from 7am to midday; too hot after that. Extra walls were built outside the classrooms but they collected only scorpions, not bullets. Strange that then I needed the husband's signature to open a bank account but the women ran the farms and businesses as the men were fighting in the bush. That was a long time ago.

Back in New Zealand with a toddler and a baby we settled in Palmerston North. I went to Manawatu Polytechnic to study horticulture and garden design. I used these skills for many years for my business Oasis Garden Design. I thoroughly enjoyed this work of advising clients and drawing landscape plans. The tricky aspects were not the soil nor the weather but understanding the clients.

I have lived in Tawa for twenty years in a flat with windows that show the wind and rain from the north and the south. My daughters and grandchildren live close; they are the most important part of my life.

I belong to U3A Tawa and I participate in various activities such as botany, art, indoor bowls and ancestry. U3A is an international organisation which offers friendship and education to the retired members of the community. We use our knowledge and skills to teach those who wish to learn. Registration is on-line and the subscription is minimal. For me, U3A is my *Friendship Bench* and my contact with the world during ordinary times and lockdown.

SCHOOL PHOTOS

– by Alison Bayly, 15th February 2021

Remember the days of the old school photographs?

This happened once a year, maybe? The parents were given some warning so that the pupils arrived at school with shoes and a comb.

I remember the same photographer through my primary school years: L C Scott stamped on the back of the photo. The business still operates and has expanded.

From the website: "L C Scott was established in 1954 by Lewis Clive Scott who worked out of his darkroom in Pharazyn Street, Lower Hutt." He retired in the early 1980s. I wonder if he did the whole country in those days, the whole island or just the provinces close to Lower Hutt.

I remember that the class was lined up, perhaps one of girls and one of boys, tallest to shortest with the teacher shifting the order as we fumbled about. I clearly remember being one of the shortest near the back of the line. The children in the front of the photo, all girls, sat on a long bench with a line of boys and girls standing behind. We were instructed to sit with our feet together and hands crossed in our laps. The photos indicate that the second and third lines have taller children at the centre. The third line stood on a bench. The standing children had their hands behind their backs and shoulders pulled back. One photo shows a fourth line of kids; were they on double benches? I wonder how many fell off.

The whole event was slick and we obeyed as shown in the photos that I still have of 1956 primer 3 & 4, 1957 standard one, 1959 standard 3 & 4, 1960 standard 4. I have put the names of the 1960 class on the back. How fortunate is that!

I recognise most of the names including my brother Graeme. He was 11 months and 5 days older than me and I have forgotten why we ended up in the same class from 1959 onwards. The 1960 photo has 3 boys sitting cross legged on the grass at the front. Perhaps that blighted their self image from that day onwards.

I remember being told to tuck in at the end of a line; although in these four photos I am at the end of a line only once!

How did this photographer manage to capture us all smiling and looking lovely, not wearing uniforms?

The other outstanding fact is the high class numbers: 1956 27; 1957 28, 1959 39!!; 1960 33 pupils. How did the teachers manage? Teachers were allowed to strap in those days; also we were used to obeying what we were told.

Hunterville Consolidated Primary School had 400 students in the 1950s and 1960s owing to the Rangitikei being developed for sheep farming and well populated with baby boomer families. Six buses brought children from the farming areas into the town. Now there are eight classes listed on their website, perhaps 160 pupils. I noticed that the home and school committee meeting followed by the AGM was being held at the Station Hotel – the hotel that previously was not the one to go to unless you wanted a fight!



(Compiled March 2020)