



Grammar Link

Boys from Bayswater - A True Story

My name is Harold Hamon Blampied, and I was born at home, No. 12 Beresford Street, Bayswater on 12 September 1920. The Western World was becoming gripped in a severe economic depression. I can remember Dad carefully counting out his reduced wages on the breakfast table and trying to explain basic economics to Mum. After seeing her meager housekeeping, Nona and I broke down in tears as we realised just how real the depression was and the effects it would have on our young lives and the community we knew so well.

The Bayswater community pulled together. Dad founded the Bayswater Beautification Society - professional men who couldn't find work joined him, exchanging pens for picks and shovels; good pay for survival rates under the Government's 'No. 5 Scheme.' 'Bays Mud' as it was then called, was slowly but surely beautifully transformed. Along with other women in Bayswater, Mum offered practical and moral support to other families less fortunate. Mum had a great sense of humour. She was born in Sydney and often called herself 'The Great Australian Bite.' She owned a Joke Book, so laughter would often be prescribed as the best medicine!

I, and my best friends, Ian Reid and John (Jock) Waddell called ourselves the 'Three Musketeers'. Three White families lived in the neighbourhood. Mrs. Reid named them the Mac Whites, (Scots,) the Back Whites (who lived at the back of us,) and the Monkey Whites - (they had a monkey who lived in their hedge). The Three Musketeers helped lay a chip tennis court at the back of our place using old naval boiler tubes and wire netting, along with a mini golf course - holes made and sunk with empty baked bean tins. Mr. (Mac) White had the only wireless in the neighbourhood so we all crammed around it to listen to the wrestling. Mr. Reid (who introduced rugby to Belmont Primary,) and Mr. Waddell were leaders and helped to run our community and sporting activities. We held fairs, learnt to sail, raced, had swimming/diving competitions in the salt water pool at the Takapuna Boating Club and went to dances there, where we got to know many pretty local girls. We kept

Leghorn fowls for eggs and chicken meat, ate rabbit and grew our own vegetables. We were all self-sufficient and life was very, very good.

We all attended Takapuna Grammar School and all played sports, formed jazz bands and appeared in musicals. Sadly, the school lost 83 of their ex pupils in World War 2.

At the age of 17, I worked as a proofreader for the NZ Herald, and Ian, for the Auckland Star. I fell in love, but war broke out on 4 September 1939. Life was never to be the same again, and all our families and friends in Bayswater were broken up.

Both Mum and Dad had served in WW1. Mum as Nurse with the Voluntary Aid Division in Walton-on-Thames, England, and Dad as a Lieutenant in the trenches of France. After the war he was awarded the Military Cross, with the rank of Major. Miraculously Mum was able to nurse her wounded husband back to health. Dad and I were both called up, which was most unusual. Dad was 47, and I, just 18. Dad's experience with Lewis guns in WW1 was needed once again, this time to help defend the Ports of Auckland. Jock and I were mobilised with the rank of Gunners to Motutapu Island in the Hauraki Gulf with the 9th Coast Regiment. Nona left home to become a nurse. Mum, along with most of the Bayswater women were left at home alone to support the war effort, and each other.

Ian joined the RNZAF 75 Squadron, RAF and flew Wellington bombers in the European theatre. He was killed in action on 3 July 1941, aged 23 years. His bones still lie somewhere in the North Sea. Mr. & Mrs. Reid lost all their three sons. However, they had two daughters, Betty and Margaret. Jock transferred to the RNZAF 50 Squadron, RAF, and flew Hampden bombers. On 12 October 1941, he was killed in action, aged 22 years. The plane crashed into a building in Dusseldorf, the force of the crash stopping the town clock precisely at midnight. Monsignor Marquesa, a Frenchman and expert bomb disposal expert, was on duty. On investigation, he noticed a bronze cross lifesaving medallion earned by Jock at



Takapuna Grammar, lying next to him. He covertly slipped it down his boot just before the Germans arrived.

In 1942, I was promoted to the rank of Second Lieutenant where I was 2nd in command of a small battery at Motoroa Island in the Bay of Islands, comprising 44 men. Whilst waiting for an invasion, (which never happened,) our favourite pass time was rugby. We knocked down some trees and a telephone wire to make a rugby pitch - (which I got a rocket for) .We played against other army units and a memorable occasion was to play against a Maori unit, which included the All Black great, Johnny Smith. We actually won this game, with the rugby being better than how we appeared, wearing assorted club jerseys and underwear.

I wanted action, and after flying training at Wigram in Christchurch and in Canada, I transferred to the RNZAF 489 Squadron, part of the Coastal Command Strike Wings. The Squadron was based in Dallachy, North East Scotland, on the Moray Firth. On route from Canada to UK, I was lucky enough to visit New York. I was a keen pianist and got to see Lionel Hampton perform at the Savoy Theatre in Harlem – a once in a life time experience. I was operational with 489 Squadron from October 1944 until the end of the war. I became a Pilot Officer, and piloted Beaufighters – we flew day and ‘All Black’ night missions by instruments. Our Strike Wings division hunted and attacked German supply ships in and around the Norwegian coastline and

fjords which were running iron ore from Sweden to Denmark to fuel the German war effort. After experiencing many ‘dicey dos’ as we called them, I survived the war.

I knew the fate of my good friend, Ian but followed a lead to identify Jock. Just after the war ended, I managed to arrange a flight in a DC3 from London to Lille, France, where I met Monsignor M. Marquesa who showed me Jock’s bronze cross lifesaving medallion. At that moment, we both hugged one another, and broke down in tears.

Before I was repatriated I managed to wrangle a trip to Berlin – the destruction was mind boggling. On returning from Berlin I happened to meet Sir Harley Shawcross, the lead prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials who thought I was his pilot.

We were sent home on the good ship ‘Mooltan’ and arrived home on Christmas Eve 1945 to an emotional meeting with my family. I met with the Reid and Waddell families. It was especially hard for Mr. Waddell, who by now was an old man. For years, he tuned in regularly, by courtesy of the German authorities, to the Vatican Radio which broadcast names and information about Allied airmen who survived as prisoners of war. As hard as it was, I was able to provide some comfort and closure for them. We all slowly started to re-build our shattered lives, by striving to create a brighter future for our community in Bayswater.





Artist Rob Tucker

A rising star of the New Zealand art scene is our ex pupil Rob Tucker. Rob has been showing work consistently since he was 18. Now 26, his compelling images of ships and kitchen scenes have already won international acclaim. He has been exhibited with great success in the U.S., Asia, Australia and the UK and was recently featured at Art Melbourne on the New Generation platform, a showcase for emerging artists of note. He also was awarded the Royal Overseas League of Visual Arts Travel Scholarship, and has twice been a Travelling Show Finalist at the Wallace Art Awards of New Zealand.

"I like to celebrate and glorify the subject of living in my naive, organic style of painting. My work is heavily layered. I almost sculpt an impression of paint and mixed media."

Rob presently has his first solo show in The Rebecca Hossack Gallery in New York. Rob found out from the gallery that one of his big 180cm by 140cm still lifes was selected to go on show at The Summer Exhibition held at the Royal Academy Of Arts, London.

<http://www.rebeccahossack.com/exhibitions/50/overview/>

Speed updating

The TGS Mathematics and Business departments provided students with the opportunity to discuss thoughts about the future with ex-pupils towards the end of last term. The 12 coaches ranged in age from 30-80, all working in various industries; including lecturers and designers.

This event provided students with the opportunity to have a realistic view on society. As Alice Song recalls, "It was an eye opener getting to talk with previous pupils. I took away a lot." Other comments included; "I now know about a lot more occupations that I didn't know existed. Maths creeps into a job in so many ways" and "I only wanted to talk to someone who did engineering but it had me interested in other jobs."

From the coaches there was high praise. Linda McKay says "... it was fun....count me in for the next one", while Junior Chan-Tung said, "I think the whole concept is fantastic and would love to assist where I can, especially using past pupils."

On the day, students in groups of 2-3 had the chance to spend five minutes with a coach, and each session was half an hour. This meant that each student saw at least 4-5 coaches.



Too many mango salads consumed daily is just too healthy" 2014 Oil and resin on board



Speed updating meeting in the hall