



Douglas Factory
-1956

Transport Of Milk

Horse and cart was almost the sole means of getting milk to the factory in earlier days, and in the original creamery, cans were hoisted up to the stage with a chain.

The first trucks of sorts started to appear either side of 1930, though horse and waggons were still used in the 1950s. Among the last to become motorised were Lyall Stallard, with his horse and dray, Norah Bishop, a waggon, Ted Smith and Bill and Tom Saywell.

Another novel transportation method was the wheelbarrow used by Dick Latham and later Ashley Garlick for the few cows they milked on the railway paddocks near the brickworks entrance on Douglas Rd.

With the collection of trucks, tractors and horses at times converging on the crossroads, racing to make the queue for the stage was a common thing. Those running down the school hill had the advantage of gravity and a straight run in, whereas those coming from the opposite direction had to cope with a bad corner below Dick Lampitt's where several full cans were apt to topple off.

Jim Graham had problems in the early 1950s when his new Bedford truck got wedged under the stage after the milk was unloaded - a roundup of all nearby heavyweights replaced the ballast.

Suppliers

Over the years the number of suppliers stayed at around twenty, averaging about 70-80 cows in the 1950s. Frank Chapman with his Holsteins was the largest supplier of milk in earlier years, replaced by Alf Rumball towards the end - his cans came in two trips, night and morning milk.

As well a few small herds were milked, some sending cream. Needham's while in the boarding house, Jack and Louie Bonner at the county cottage on the horseshoe bend, Flora Mason, and the railwaymen.

'Early birds' to the factory in the years before it closed in 1958 were Ron Smith, Arthur Walter and Brian Wilmshurst, with Ted Rodgers and Cliff Selby at the other end of the scale before the closing time of 9 a.m.

Each ten days there was the usual peer around the corner to the test ticket stuck to the window with soap. As well there were the glances at the milk weight board to see how neighbours were faring, and grizzles over unfair treatment from grading or sediment tests.

Many suppliers collected whey for pigs up to about 1950, but a change to casein in 1955 and other reasons saw this change. Wilmshursts, Bredows and Coles were some of the last with significant numbers of pigs.

Managers And Staff

Mr E. Harding was the last manager in the saleyards creamery, but names of earlier ones are not known.

Mr Schwieters managed the new factory in 1919-23, Mr White 1923-26, Mr Edgar Wills 1926-51, Mr Jim Sexton 1951-55, Mr Digger MacKay 1955-56 and last manager was Mr Mike Slape, 1957-58.

Mr E. Wills and the staff were awarded the Moller Trophy in 1950-51 from the inspector of Dairy Produce in London for the highest average grade of cheese from Taranaki.

The Douglas Boarding House was purchased by the dairy company in 1941 and converted to three flats for married staff. As well workers lived at times in huts between the factory and the river, and in army huts at the rear of the boarding house section.

Among those to work in the factory in the twenty years before closure were Charlie Hatcher, Roy Smith, Frank and Ken Latham, Errol Aitken, Bob Mason, Tom Mason, Doug Baker, Duncan Coull, Jim Hickford, Jack Shelford, Cadman, Bob Rowe, Jim Lowe, Franklin, Clem Kovaleski and Mal Gooch.

Around 1950 the staff of three or four worked a seven-day week, using four and sometimes all of the five 900 gal. vats - peak milk was just over 4000 gallons daily. Work started at 6 a.m. to produce up to 40 80lb cheeses daily.

The change to casein in 1955 meant a reduction in staff numbers.

Factory Closure

A meeting of suppliers in the Douglas Hall in 1958 approved the change to tanker collection, provided there was to be no differential payment for cartage costs. Farmers were generally convinced of the merit of higher payouts promised, no washing of cans, and no loss of time or truck maintenance delivering milk. Probably they did not fully realise the implications the move had for the village centre in the longer term.

The factory was sold to the Douglas Transport Company along with the manager's residence, while Mr Harry Lampitt bought the boarding house for the Douglas Brick and Field Tile Ltd.

Payout in the final year was three shillings and fourpence farthing per lb butterfat.

The district marked the closure with a social and dinner in the hall, at which the local poet laureate, Mick Paton, presented the following rhymes.

Douglas Factory

Born by brain, created by man,
The Douglas factory, came to hand.
Rural progress on the march,
Prosperity possible from the marsh.

Bush and swamp were beaten by toil,
Lush grass gained from the soil.
Soon cows and stock were on the scene,
Rural progress where nature had been.

With the years the factory grew,
Early suppliers welcomed the new.
Walters, Chapmans, Bredows and others,
Helping the others just like brothers.

Waggons and drays gave way to trucks,
Though starting them up was purely luck.
Waiting farmers would air their woes,
As those new-fangled trucks refused to go.

Douglas families kept getting larger,
Dad was drinking too much lager.
Daisy's milk was the farmers' wealth.
Prosperity in Douglas and abundant health.

Factory managers came and went, Usually broke,
crippled and bent.
Staff were here and gone tomorrow,
Pay was poor they had to borrow.

So to fifty-eight, and the tanker truck,
Dear old cockies have all the luck.
Poor old factory proven by test,
Is no longer wanted and laid to rest.

The Douglas Factory Derby

Twenty-one Cockies face the starter's gun,
From 6.30 to 9 they make their run.
First to the stage is Ron Smith with ease,
He milks at night and trains on cheese.

Jack Collier comes next at reckless speed,
His shirt tail out and sows to feed.
Jim Graham is next to appear on the scene,
He can tell by the mud Jack Collier has been.

Western Carryer then coasts to a stop,
His spotless truck going like a top.
Next comes David Walter fair and tall,
His mind wrapped up in basketball.

Phil Rooney then goes into the ruck.
And drives Don's tractor into a truck.
Lyal Stallard rolls down from above the hall,
He's a physical wreck from last night's ball.

Then comes the field all doing their best,
While waiting, they talk of Alf Rumball's test.
Bill Saywell sits quietly his truck in gear,
Jimmy Mason fidgets, the result of beer.

Graham Chapman as usual abandons his truck,
Ray Saywell sneaks into his place by luck.
Jack Bishop alights and polishes his truck,
While Richard Coles just sits without fuss.

Bradley and Breezy discuss all and sundry,
This Breezy Walter, is always hungry.
Mal Gooch and Mike just work and think,
If they spoke their minds you cockies would Blink.

Then along comes a wheelbarrow, cans complete.
Ashley Garlick himself with No. 11 fleet.
Cliff Selby turns up well in the rear,
The Factory staff all give a cheer.

So the Douglas Derby is over and won,
Hope you like it - it's all in fun.

Lyal Stallard's Tractor

Dashing on our roadway, oft in early morn,
Is a dreadful monster, red, yet so forlorn,
When we see it coming we duck into the grass,
And shiver in our terror, till the monster's past.
Now fear is gone, the factory's closed,
And free we are upon that road,
The tanker calls, Lyall stays at home,
We sleep in peace and safely roam.

Douglas Boarding House



Boarding House. Needham homestead in background

Destined to be the community centre of the area for a number of years, Douglas House was built in 1906 by Mr Arthur Walter, a local farmer. It became a halfway house, and later stopping place for travellers from as far east as Whangamomona who journeyed by horseback to catch the train from Douglas to Stratford. They were able to house their horses and gigs in the stables adjoining the boarding house until they returned.

A billiard hall containing two tables was later built on the school side of the boarding house, and proved a popular social centre for the young men of the area, who visited the boarding house during the weekends.

In 1917, Alfred and Mary Needham took over the boarding house from the Watson family, who had been there since 1912. Their four daughters and two sons helped Mary run the business while Alf Needham worked as a road contractor. It is recorded that the Needhams paid two pounds a week to lease the building.

Mary Needham, it is said, ruled the boarding house 'like a queen'. The meals she served gained a wide reputation - as well as the 1/- per meal it cost the many casuals who turned up, she supplied hundreds of large 2/6 meals on the busy sale days, and catered for local tennis tournaments and matches against visiting clubs by providing a lavish lunch at the boarding house, and afternoon tea on the courts - all for the sum of two pounds five shillings.

In 1927, a week's board (excluding washing and ironing) cost the local school-teacher 25/-. She remembers carrying her lunch up to school each day on a tray. One bath, rarely sufficient hot water, a rain water supply, and outside toilets served the residents. These included drovers, railway workers, factory workers, the minister and casual passers-by.

Despite the popularity of smoking with the young men of the day, fire only once seriously threatened the building. This was when one of the Needham girls fell asleep while reading by candlelight.

The boarding house served as a community centre with many an impromptu gathering ending with a sing-song around the piano (purchased from the mart in Stratford for five pounds); a lively political discussion led by Mrs Needham, an active supporter of Ted Walter; or a game of cards with a bottle or two of beer in the 'commercial room' - the only room in the house where Alf Needham permitted alcohol.

The story was often repeated of the time old Bill Newman broke the rule. He was an odd-job man who lived in a bach at the back of the boarding house and is reputed to have had an endless repertoire of lurid tales from the past.

This particular time he had returned from a trip to the Toko pub, with a dozen of beer which he hid under his bed. When Mrs Needham found him 'out-to-it' on the bed, and discovered the secret supply of beer, without a word she took two bottles of beer at a time outside and smashed them together until there was none left. Bill Newman watched helplessly, tears pouring down his face.

During the influenza epidemic of 1918, the dining room of the boarding house was used as a hospital. Beds were brought in, and careful nursing by Mary Needham and her daughters during the six-week outbreak ensured all the patients in the boarding house survived the epidemic. Mrs Needham herself was said to have collapsed from exhaustion afterwards. Her sixteen year old daughter Leila is reputed to have 'turned grey overnight', a result of intensive nursing and the effort of keeping the boarding house going at the same time.

In 1941, the previous identity of Douglas House disappeared when it was purchased by the Stratford Farmer's Co-operative (later the Stratford Dairy Company) to provide accommodation for the factory staff, who were working to produce as much cheese as possible to help provide valuable funds during W.W. II. The building was divided into three self-contained flats, and sewerage and water laid-on.



Douglas Boarding House - 1981

With the closing of the factory in 1958, the building once more changed hands - to the Douglas Brick and Field Tiles Company, for use also as accommodation for their staff. When it became possible to commute daily from Stratford during the sixties, the boarding house was left vacant and derelict.

It remained thus for a period of ten years until it was purchased by silversmith, Mick Poulton and Cynthia Ward in 1974 to use for the manufacture of jewellery. Eighteen months later, Iris and Geoffrey Watts, wooden toy and puzzle-makers from the South Island, bought the building from the Poultons.

In 1979, Geraldine Homes and Malcolm MacArthur took the building over. Geraldine, now married to Peter Johnson, studies naturopathy and herbal medicine. They are painstakingly attempting to renovate the old building in an effort to restore it to its original appearance.

In a gesture very much appreciated by both the locals and visitors to the district, the couple opened their historical homestead to the public during the weekend of the jubilee. Many a memory was revived of the former glory of the old Douglas Boarding House.

Douglas Store

The first recorder storekeeper at Douglas was Horace Charles Albin King in 1905, who was described as storekeeper of Oruru in the transfer of the title from J. J. Moore, previously a farmer from Canterbury. Moore owned the larger block of 198 acres which included the village, schoolgrounds, railway land, Graeme Walter's farm and part of Alan Smith's and part of the domain as well as the brick-work's land.

Horace King was also at one time associated with the 'Dewdrop Inn', a small refreshment house on the eastern side of the Douglas saddle during the first years of the century, and also owned the stables.

Prior to a store opening in Douglas, earlier settlers of the 1890s had to walk through the bush to Toko to hump provisions back.

For the following 67 years the store provided a focal point for the village until it closed on June 30, 1972, with Mick and Mattie Paton the last to serve in it.

Over the years it was a Post Office, meeting place, notice board, petrol station and general store in the widest sense, delivering goods to outlying areas.

By 1908 the store was managed by Mr Dan Bain as a branch of J. Bain's Toko store; Mr Bain travelled backward and forward each day. Next storekeeper was Mr Tom Young, who was the first to deliver goods with a spring cart, to as far as Puniwhakau.

Around 1915 he sold to Mr Copeland from Wellington, who delivered goods with a two-horse waggon. Then came Mr Teddie Cain, who later exchanged the business for a fruit farm in the Hawkes Bay.

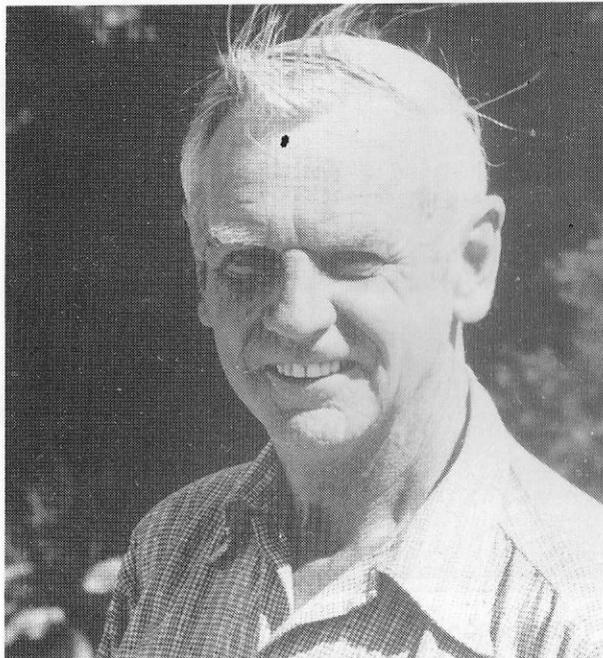
In 1919 Mr Ernie Cole came by the store, and with Mr Fred Reader as manager put the first lorry on the run - a one-tonner.

In 1920 Mr W. Marshall took over, followed in 1923 by Mr G. Baxter until the original building was destroyed by fire in 1924.

Mr C. Bredow bought the section and built a new store in 1925, while meantime the Needham's ran a small store in front of the old billiard room uphill of the boarding house.

Mr C. Bredow opened the new store in 1926, with Mr McCracken as manager, and sold it to Mr Ron Ward in 1943.

Mr Ward installed petrol bowsers and further modernised the store, having a name during the war and post war years of being able to locate sought-after goods to satisfy his customers.

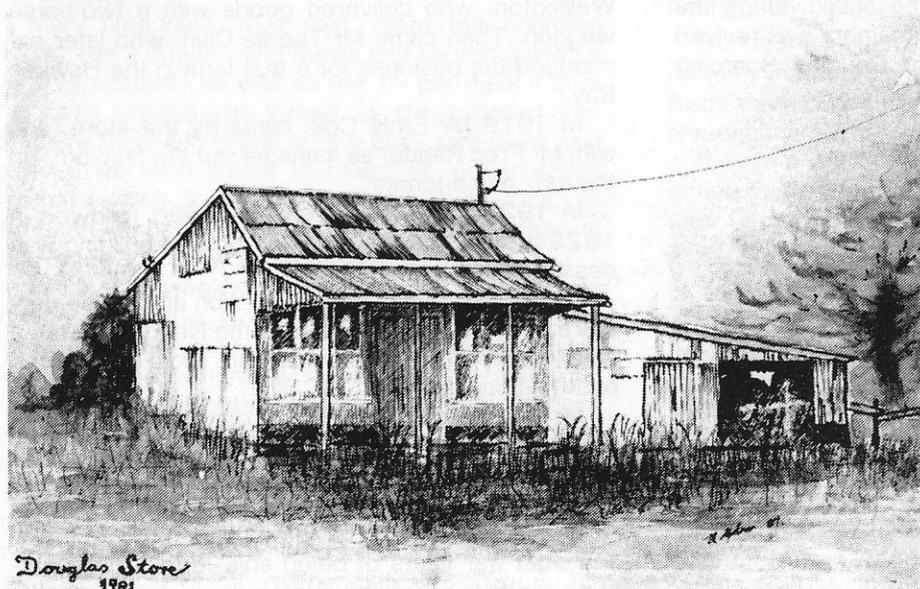


A. N. Paton - Douglas storekeeper, 1949-1972

In 1949 Mr A. N. Paton took over a thriving business, which by then featured opening up on the alternate Friday and Saturday evenings when Scanlon's showed pictures at the hall. Mr Ward had opened these nights to service customers, and Mr Paton went one step further by setting up shop outside the hall, so he wouldn't miss the films.

In his Morris truck, and later a van, Mr Paton delivered goods of all sorts to settlers in the Tututawa-Puniwhakau-Taurakawa-Makahu area, and also had a run through Huiroa-Te Wera-Strathmore.

Before the Douglas telephone service was widened, he had local contacts to forward orders from each district's exchanges - Dolly Coulton, Strathmore; Maude Ford, Makahu; Mrs Southam, Tututawa; Jock Fergusson, Taurakawa; and Miss Stanford, Huiroa.



Douglas Store -
painted - 1980

Right through the years the store was well-patronised by passing traffic, with its strategic siting on the crossroads. The locals looked forward to the regular 'Auckland Weekly News', 'Free Lance' and 'Truth', delivered by rail for the store, while schoolchildren over the decades filled their stomachs with a range of enticements.

The closing of the factory in 1958 was a blow to the store, which had tailored its hours for the dairy farmers. Then in the sixties came the supermarkets, delivery from Stratford and settlers travelling to town more often for their goods.

Despite this, the reasons for closing were more the costly requirements to upgrade or rebuild the aging buildings to cater for building and hygiene requirements, then the declining patronage.

Another threat to the store were the floodwaters that in early 1971 swirled to within two inches of the floorboards as they inundated the nearby garage where Doug Farquhar worked.

During the droving days in the 1950s a cow shot in the front door while Dawn Hickford was serving in the shop. The cow came to a stop behind the counter facing the road as if in a bail. Gay Macartney eased in front of her to coax her out, leaving the store in a soiled condition.

Those to work in the store while Mr Paton was owner included Len Hill, Gloria Walter, Noeline Diffe, Milton Smith, J. Thompson, Ruth Ford, Shirley Chapman, Eva Selby, Dawn Hickford, Pat Gilbert, Rae Gilbert, Kathy Gilbert, Jocelyn Chapman, Nyla Frank, Jenny Garvin and Teresa Burkitt.

For some time the store was a focal social point for R.S.A. members each Anzac Day after the service and morning tea, and regularly during the afternoon on the final shopping day prior to Christmas.

The closing day of the store in 1972 was also celebrated in a manner that eventually saw Mr Paton roped to a bowser by Alan Jury and Brian Wilmshurst.

The store house and building were purchased by Mr Denis Harold in 1974.

Transport Companies

Horse Days

The 'Stables' were established in the early days of Douglas, and were a stopping point for travellers linking with the east. When the rail came in 1905, they provided a place to leave horses. As well they served as a point for changing coach teams.

Early owners of the stables were Horace King and Paddy Houlihan, and in about 1908 Fred (Punga) Webb based his carting business there, undertaking general carrying. He was known for his hard treatment of horses and colourful language.

Part of the original stables was pulled down as recently as five years ago from their position on the south wall of M. Old's engineering workshop.

The Stables were also the venue for impromptu social meetings, and occasionally boxing contests - these uses carried on through the years, on a sometimes informal basis.

First Truck

In 1918 Ern Howat bought Fred Webb out, and two years later Fred Reader set up the first motor transport service in opposition to him with one lorry based where R. Frank now lives.

Mr Howat soon followed with a truck, and both businesses expanded with the increasing production and improving roads.

Many farmers in the outlying areas milked dairy herds, and cream runs were contracted by the dairy company. At one stage Reader's had an eighty-mile run taking in the Taurakawa, Puniwhakau, Tututawa,

Crown Rd, Gordon Rd, Waiwiri Rd and Ahuroa Rd run, with a triple deck crate for the cans. Ern Howat took in the Makahu, Te Wera, Huiakama area, while Jack Cooper collected around Huiroa.

Some of the Needham family worked for Ern Howat, while the Reader business became very much a family affair, with Bessie capable of throwing wool bales and cream cans around as well as her six brothers.

Douglas Transport Formed

Howat and Readers continued through the thirties with two trucks each until around 1939 Bob Anderson bought Ern Howat out. He in turn sold to Ken Latham, who was later joined by his brother Frank and Jack Ewens. In 1947 they bought Reader's out, and the Douglas Transport was formed with the three as partners.

With the post-war farming boom, end of the droving days and introduction of aerial topdressing, the firm naturally expanded with the ideal base at Douglas, reaching a fleet of seven trucks, mainly Austin and employing around eight altogether.

As well as the cream runs, the requirements during war years for whole milk meant a daily run of up to 32 milk cans from the Crown Road area to the Toko factory.

Jack Ewens was a pig buyer, and the firm collected up to 200 pigs a day. The outback cream runs were combined into one of 90 miles, and in the late fifties the firm bought out the Huiroa carrier, John Withers, who came to work for them as a mechanic.



Douglas Transport - first fleet - about 1947

Cartage of stock to sales quickly caught on, and dairy cattle gradually transferred to Stratford for a better market. The first truck and trailer unit held 125 lambs on the truck and 45 behind on the trailer.

Upgrading of the Douglas saleyards in 1950 gave Ken Latham the job of shifting 300 yards of Tariki shingle from rail wagons up to the yards, all by shovel handling. Later when bulk manure came into use, a clamshell was purchased.

Regular clients locally were the factory and brick-works - coal in, and cheese and tiles out.

The upsurge in aerial topdressing meant long hours of shifting fertiliser to strips, beating the weather and demurrage costs. Occasionally the station sidings at Douglas, Huiroa, Kiore, Te Wera and Ngatimaru all had full wagons waiting, and in one weekend 250 tons were shifted from Te Wera to Jury's strip at Makahu.

The firm built an extension to the stables building around 1956, employing a mechanic who took on outside greasing and motor servicing. In 1957 petrol pumps were installed, and the closure of the factory meant the opportunity of buying the complex and house.

Those working for the business in early 1959 were - Ken and Frank Latham, Jack Ewens, John Withers and Bruce Campbell (mechanics), Bruce Reichardt, Les Price, Colin Saywell and Graeme Chapman.

Picking up and cartage of hay became another summer task for the firm in the 1960s, with a local pool of casual labour and gear for the job.

At this stage Frank Latham was living in a small bach up the Douglas Road, just past the stables, Ken Latham was up past the school where R. Frank now lives, and Jack Ewens lived in the old house over the river from the factory, demolished in 1974.



Floods through Douglas Transport garage - late 1950's. Left to right: Frank Latham, Phil Rooney, Dick Mason, Jim Graham Arthur Walter, Bruce Reichardt, Des Bonner

Change Of Owners

With Ken Latham already out of the partnership, Frank Latham and Jack Ewens sold to Russell Wood in 1964, who in turn handed over to Harold Mosen in 1966.

The firm suffered financial difficulties before being taken over by Aitken Bros. of Toko in 1971, with Rod Aitken moving to Douglas as branch manager.

Although the transport functions remained similar, rigs and gear became bigger and more sophisticated during the 1970s.

In 1977 Aitken Bros. rationalised their operations, selling the general cartage to Eric Darrah Ltd, with a base in Douglas and Ron Smith his first manager.

The new firm ceased to employ a local resident manager from early 1980.

Garage-workshop

The garage-workshop complex with the stables was taken over as such by Mr Ron Hendry in the mid-sixties. He then shifted to the Toko Garage and Doug Farquhar moved in from 1969 to 1971 - during which year a major flood saw the floor four feet under water and looking like the 'Olympic Pool'.

Ray Frank re-opened in 1972, doing an assortment of jobs until a robbery around 1975 forced him to close. Murray Old started up again in 1978 as an engineering workshop and serves the local districts as well as doing maintenance work for the N.Z.R. demolition yards at the Douglas station.

... Particular resident will be remembered for the time it took her to collect the daily newspaper, mail and bread - combined with social chit-chat it took her three hours to walk from the school to the store and back.

Douglas War Memorial Domain

The fine local domain with room for two hockey fields and featuring attractive trees and shrubs is an example of foresight and community spirit set a generation ago.

Moves to establish some form of War Memorial in the district finally came to a head when a well-attended public meeting voted for the domain project by secret ballot.

At this time, around the late 1940s, other proposals finding favour were upgrading the hall and formation of swimming baths.

Although some feelings ran high, the vote for the domain went to those who heeded the urgings of Jack Ewens and others in that the domain would be a perpetual functional memorial.

Such was the community mindedness of Douglas residents during this period that all three projects were completed by 1955.

Several alternative sites were explored, including the Farmers' Co-op holding paddock, the flat paddock now farmed by Graeme Walter north of the school as well as the railway leasehold section across the road from where Rex Downs farms. The present chosen site involved land donated by Arthur Walter and Jackson Brown.

A committee formed in 1951 was headed by Jackson Brown as president and Don Walter, secretary, as well as Jack Ewens, Ray Hill, Henry Rumball, Jim Reid, Dick Lampitt, Ken Latham and Arthur Walter, with Mrs Anita Walter as liason member with the local women's division.

Converting timbered swampland into playing fields took four years of time and money. Local subscriptions of almost 1400 pounds and voluntary labour were matched with government subsidy, and total cost was well in excess of three thousands pounds.

As well as local labour, contractors used included Alan Goble and Geoff Tonks for draindigging, Huston

Bros, stumping and bulldozing, Merv. Jensen, earthmoving and preparing the surface etc, Bob Reader with tractor work, and even the local primary schoolchildren picking up wood.

The cricket team were able to use the new ground for the 1954-55 summer, and hockey took over their new headquarters the following winter in 1955, during which year the pavilion was built.

Thousands of feet of local field tiles had been laid to drain the swamp, and local ladies set about planting many deciduous and exotic trees and shrubs.

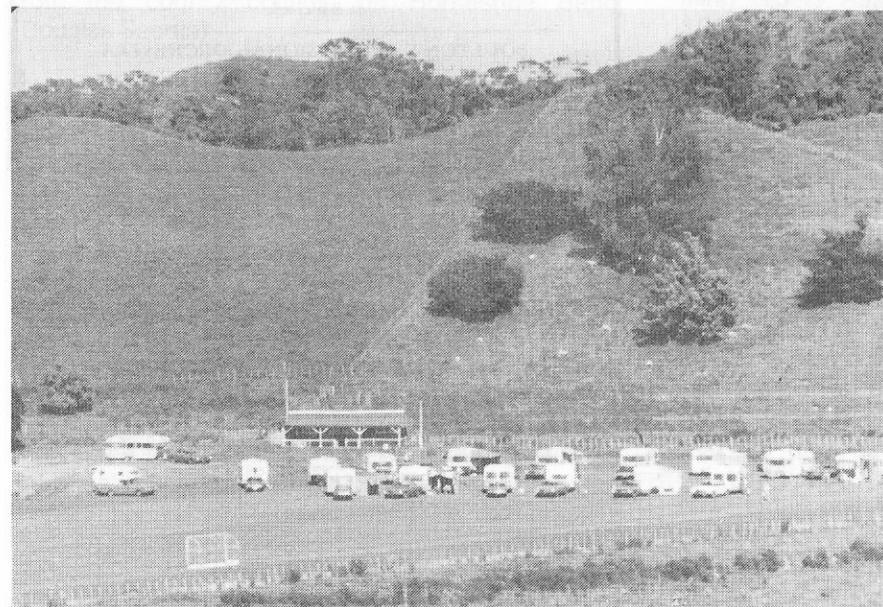
Official opening was carried out by local parliamentarian Mr T. T. Murray in May 1956 during the school's Golden Jubilee. Mrs F. Howse unveiled the memorial plaques, and Rev. A. B. Powell dedicated the gates.

Over the years, the grounds have been used for regular cricket and hockey, golf and cycling practice, athletics, marching and rugby - Strathmore used the ground as home for Dean Cup matches in 1966 and 1967, and goalposts for primary school rugby were erected in 1981, also the year a school soccer tournament was first held.

Local and surrounding schools have played softball on the grounds, various organisations have picnics and hangis, scouts and guides used the pavilion and grounds, and in 1978 the Walter family held a reunion based on the domain and school grounds.

In 1965 the domain was ratified a motor camp by the A.A. and several have pitched tents and parked caravans over the years, including a visit by around twenty caravans from the Taranaki Caravan Club in 1981.

The annual Anzac Service was initiated by local schoolmaster Mr K. Cathro in 1959, and then taken over by the Domain committee in conjunction with the R.S.A., who last paraded as a body at the 1974 service.



Taranaki Caravan Club at Douglas Domain, 1981

The Hall

Social Events

Social events in the hall have varied through the years. Dances have always been popular, and in the 1920's annual balls, such as the Military Ball, and Tennis Ball, were features. Prices for the opening dance of the 1922 social season were: Gents 2/6, Ladies 1/6, and a Nomination Fee of 2/- per couple was called for entries in the waltzing competition.

Dances (or euchre evenings) were held at least fortnightly in the winter months in the 1920s. The hall would be decorated with streamers, ferns and flowers. Dancing would begin promptly at eight, popular dances being the waltz, lancers and square dances. No drink was allowed in the hall. A spoon and fork supper was served, of fruit salad, jellies and ice-cream, sandwiches, home-made cream sponges and pastries.

Water for the supper was carried in from the outside rainwater tank, and boiled in large urns on an open fire. The men would supply kindling and firewood. Supper dishes were washed in a basin on top of the bench. Cleaning up the next day was accepted as part of the occasion.

Dances were replaced by the 'cabaret' NZ-style in the 1960's, and in 1977, due to infrequent use, maintenance on the hall piano lapsed. The piano has been superseded, in this electronic age of 'disco-dancing', by cassette-taped music and the electronic organ. In the early '50's square dancing was the 'in' thing, with Ivan Savage and Maurice Hansen as callers. Family barn dances were again an annual event in the late '70's, organised by the school teachers and pupils. Highlights must include the wartime revues under the talented direction of Mr and Mrs Ivan Pepperill, and other notable events were the travelling shows of the '30's which included Maori concert parties, a hypnotist and lantern-slides of the Oberammergau Passion Play.

The need to pay dues to the Australasian Performing Rights Association, was first questioned in 1926. It proved necessary in order to play music under copyright for entertainment, but has remained a subject of contention ever since.

Calcutta evenings of the 1960's, though not strictly legal, raised money for various worthy causes, such as the hall itself, and sports' clubs.

Life Members elected in 1948 were Dick Mason and Chris Wilmshurst. Long serving members of the Hall Society have been Mrs Anita Walter, auditor 1929-71, and Jack Walter, chairman 1927-57, who was presented with a watch on his retirement.

Members of the present hall committee are: Richie Coles (chairman), Bradley Walter (sec.), John Howse, Don Walter, Graeme Walter, Alan Smith, Les Williams, Trevor Signal, Graham Reid, Rex Downs.

The Douglas Hall, social centre of the district, built in 1905 was first enlarged after World War 1, further enlarged and modernised in 1954, and renovated in 1980.

The original trustees were Messrs F. Chapman, D. Bain, E. Walter and A.G. Moore. It was decided in 1938 to form a Douglas Hall Incorporated Society, with all residents eligible to be members.

Today, the hall continues as a community centre for the district. It is used regularly for meetings; by the badminton and indoor bowls clubs, the tennis club in summer, and by the school for gymnastics, folk-dancing and end-of-year concert.

School classes were held in the hall from September 17 1906 until the school was built in 1912. Classes were held in the hall again in 1953 when the school building was moved to its present site, and in 1968 while the school was being painted.

Utilisation of the hall was at its peak in the 1950's when it was booked regularly by indoor bowls, badminton, pictures (fortnightly), the Lodge and RSA (once-a-month), euchre evenings, and W.D.F.F.

Alterations

In 1954, alterations financed by a subscription list bringing in 815 pounds, and an overdraft of 750 pounds, included the addition of a supper room, men's and ladies' cloakrooms, a new stage replacing the drop-down stage at end of hall, septic tank, and connection to the water supply owned by Mr Arthur Walter.

In 1957 the floor and piles were replaced, and the roof repaired in 1961. In 1980 the wall facing the tennis courts was recladded, windows replaced, the interior relined and the front porch enlarged and modernised. A 'mystery' time capsule was embedded in this west wall, by the voluntary workers involved. The work amounting to \$5000, was partly financed by the proceeds from farming land leased from the county council, on Horseshoe Bend (Douglas Saddle).

Equipment

The 'electric light' replaced the kerosene-fuelled lamps in 1927. A Kent oil-burning heater was installed in a corner of the main hall in 1959. It was adjudged a fire hazard by the fire inspector in 1980, and removed accordingly. The Federated Farmers and WDFP donated an expellair ventilator and heaters, respectively, in the supper-room in 1961. Portable chairs and tables purchased in 1968 replaced the old forms and trestles.

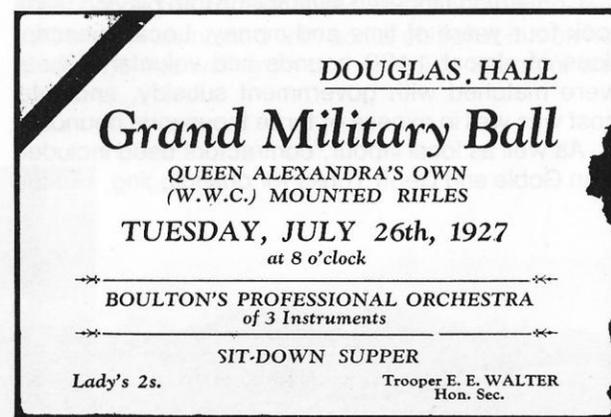
In an effort to overcome continual financial difficulties, discussions were held with the Domain committee in 1969 to consider pooling assets and liabilities. However, the Hall committee was given the opportunity to lease County land on the Douglas Saddle, and by farming this with a flock of 20 ewes, and the use of voluntary labour, the financial problems are greatly lessened.



Anzac Service Douglas Domain, April 25, 1980.

Over the years the domain has had a close liason with the Stratford County Council, and received much assistance in early days from county chairman and clerk, Messrs B. Hutchen and T. Jones.

Regular use from the hockey and cricket teams ceased in 1978 and 1980, but it seems sure that the ground will provide recreational facilities for those in Douglas and surrounding districts for the years to come.



Ticket for 1927 Grand Military Ball

... Certain newly-weds coming to live in rural Douglas will be remembered for arriving at the Douglas store with a cup - for a cup of flour to concoct a particular recipe . . . and for feeding shearers a mid-day meal of celery, gherkins, carrots and lettuce.

... A kiwi caught in an opossum trap on the wooded hill above the school about six years ago, was released up the Makuri valley.

Saleyards

Today the saleyards function as an outlet for stock from the surrounding hill-country. Annual fairs are held in spring for store cattle, lambs, 2-tooths and older ewes from December to February, and weaner and older cattle fairs in the autumn.

The hill country farmers breed much stock that is moved through the yards for fattening on easier land.

The last sale of dairy cattle was in 1979 for Cliff Selby's dairy herd. Today dairy cattle are sold through the Stratford yards.

The yards were built in 1908 by Mr Arthur Needham for Mr Newton King. They were upgraded in 1951 by Mike Churchill. At that time the yards were concreted, and in 1976 and 79 the cattle and sheep-loading facilities were altered to improve traffic flow.

Ken Latham remembers moving 300 yards of shingle from railway trucks to road trucks in 1951 by hand, for concreting the yards.

Today, most stock is moved to and from the yards by road transport, two and three-deck sheep crates and trailers, a far cry from the early droving days. In later days they were loaded onto railway waggons for works stock.

There are many memories of wild 'bush' cattle on the roads - children often had to detour through paddocks on their way to school on sale days. One wild beast ran amok in the store, another rebel was lured into the rail yards by Jeff Marsh, roped by its horns to a truck and dragged to the sale yards. Tony Anker, teacher at Tututawa, was once called on to shoot a rogue bull on the Douglas saddle. He tore home to collect his .303 rifle to perform the deed.

Tactics still play a large part in buying and selling to advantage, but prices have of course changed. In 1931 lambs despatched to Borthwicks were worth nine shillings and ninepence; in 1948 one pound, sixteen shillings and eightpence; and in 1981 \$15. Butterfat prices have been respectively one shilling per lb; two shillings and twopence per lb and 260c per kg, \$1 per lb.

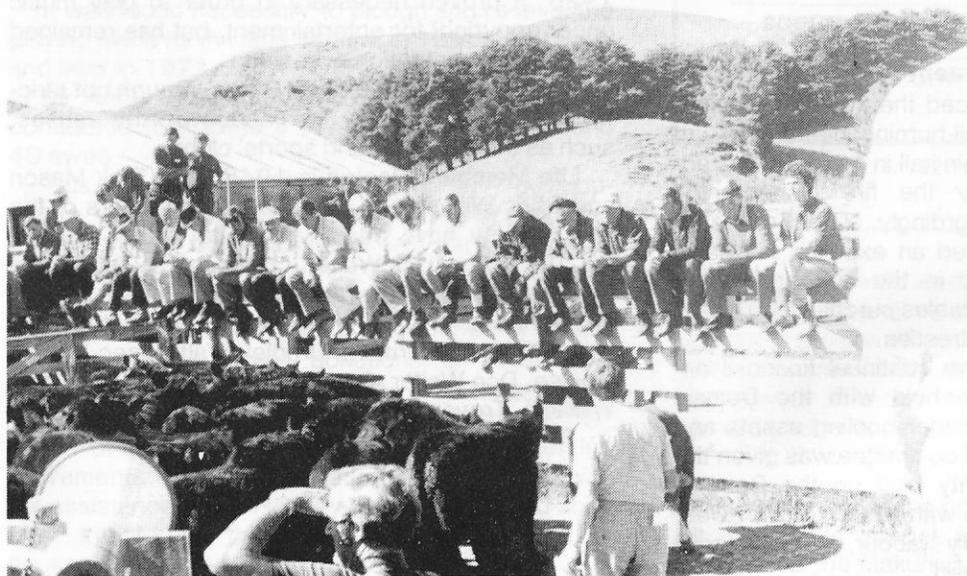
In recent years the Douglas annual fairs have seen yardings of up to 1500 cattle and 12,000 sheep.

The present catering building was erected in the 1940s, with Mrs Logan Jacobsen (Brown) one of the first to serve food and refreshments to the sale patrons.

Prior to that, in the early thirties, a Miss Dempster set up business in a small building on the other side of the road, and for about four years sold pies, sandwiches, cigarettes, sweets, etc - she boarded with Browns just down the road.

Others to serve refreshments were Mrs Rosalie Ford, sometimes helped by Mrs Trudy Stoddart, Mrs Joan Johnson and Mrs Shirley Reichardt (Bonner), from 1954 to 1981.

... When the saleyards were to be opened in 1908, a barrel of beer was railed from Stratford on the Saturday and stored in the stables for the weekend. But on Monday, when required for the celebrations it was found to have been mysteriously emptied and fit only to be railed sadly back again.



Douglas saleyards
-cattle fair March
1980

Airstrip

In 1952 farmers in Douglas and surrounding districts formed a company to build the local airstrip in a manner said to be a first for the country.

First sowing from the 650 yard runway formed on Messrs Alf Rumball and Dud Bell's properties was in September 1952, by a Beaver aircraft.

The move was a major step forward for hill country development, and spelt the end of the backbreaking job of hand sowing, though there had been use made of distributors, spinners, and Bob Reader's blower unit up to then.

The company had Mr Rob Cleland as chairman, fifty pounds of initial capital, and tally clerk Mr Bill Diffey reported the first spring sowing of 550 tons, spread over 18 properties.

Local labour was still important for the first few years, as bagged fertiliser had to be poured into the hoppers from the ramp of boards on 44-gal. drums. The bags were left in large covered dumps after cartage from the rail.

The younger generation were generally man-powered onto the ramps, and even slight spillages were regarded by their elders as minor disasters.

The Beaver carried around 15 cwt, and the Tiger Moths also used in earlier days took only 5 cwt - one was manned by a 6'6" pilot.

The record sowing was 1240 tons by 1954, but after the first few years tonnages from Douglas dropped as other areas built airstrips. Several Douglas farms are now served from the Chesswas and Bayly strips built in the 1960s.

During the busy years, the school, store and village paid some of the price of progress as the incessant noise of planes taking off raided the peace of the valley.

As well as aerial topdressing, the strip was also used for aerial drops of fencing material, crop and weed spraying, and passenger flights on occasions.

One such flight in spring of 1955 featured quite a turnout of locals to farewell and welcome Arthur Walter, Dick Latham and Dick Coles who attended a rugby match at Auckland.

A new concrete bin was built in 1959, by which time bulk loading of planes had taken over.

To date no major accidents have taken place from the strip, although two or three years ago a taxiing plan lost part of its propellor, which flew up the valley into the hill by the brick-kiln chimney.

Following the earlier Beavers and Tiger Moths, other topdressing planes using the strip included Piper Cubs and Pawnees, Cessnas and Fletchers.

Main firms sowing in 1981 are Airspread (Taranaki) Ltd, with pilots Brian Doyle and Mike Willis in Cessna Agwagons, Wanganui Aero-Work Ltd, Kevin Graham and Pat Lonergan flying Fletchers and Rural Air Services Ltd, pilot Ian Dingle in a Cessna Agwagon. Sowing prices are about \$20 per tonne.

Limited amounts of fertiliser have been applied by helicopter, by-passing airstrips, for about three years in the district, but as yet the cost differential precludes wider use.



Passengers to
Auckland in flight
from Douglas airstrip,
1955. Arthur Walter,
Dick Coles and Dick
Latham

Topdressing - Douglas
airstrip - 1979

Douglas Brick And Tile Works

The Douglas Brickworks closed in 1981 after over sixty years' production, during which time the industry provided employment for many residents over the years and the chimney wafted smoke over the village as it burnt the clay into firstly bricks and finally tiles for a wide market.

Production started in 1920 after Mr Alf Emeny was joined in partnership by his brother Mr Jack Emeny, Mr G. Gichard, Mr A. Rogerson and Mr H. Lampitt senior.

Mr A. Emeny, who had brickmaking experience from the Wanganui district, was said to have been travelling east to look at purchasing the Whangamomona Hotel when he noticed the blue papa seam opposite the school entrance. He took samples, and followed by setting up the complex. Apparently the papa was not as extensive as initially thought, and the raw material became the deeper seam of tangahoe mudstone, which was more abrasive on the machinery.

Production was solely bricks in the early days, burnt in a box clamp initially until a Hoffman patent continuous kiln was installed. This process required up to almost twenty men to operate it, a number of whom lived at the nearby boarding house.

The chimney of almost a hundred feet in height was built of around 55,000 bricks. Although rumoured that the crack in it was caused by the Napier earthquake, it is far more likely to have resulted from overheating at some time.

During the 1920s a steam engine ran the complex, later to be replaced by electricity when faced by re-tubing costs. The steam engine now lies in Tokomaru Stearn Museum.

First tiles were made in 1924, and gradually took over from bricks following the disastrous effects on the industry of the Napier earthquake and the depression.

The Douglas brickworks supplied bricks to various Government building projects in the province and further afield, but the tragic collapse of the Napier Nurses Home and other buildings in the 1931 earthquake overturned government policies on building materials - even though later evidence placed more blame on the method of brickbuilding than the bricks themselves.

After the first few years Mr Alf Emeny had bought out his partners, and remained owner until 1949 when Mr Harry Lampitt and later his brother Mr Dick Lampitt took over as Lampitt Bros.

The Hoffman continuous kiln was replaced during the 1930s by the down draft kiln which was used up to the closure, though for the last year a smaller chimney from the Toko Dairy factory was used instead of the much larger brick one.

The labour needs of the down draft kiln were far less, with between two and six being employed, including some casuals, at times dairy factory workers in the off-season.

Mr Alf Emeny was known for his knowledge of the industry and his strength, being able to pick up twelve bricks in one arm. During most of his time at Douglas he lived in a house, recently demolished, above the road opposite where Ray and Eva Frank now live.

First entrance to the brickworks was a track round the foot of the hill opposite the boarding house, but later the track over a bridge was linked to Douglas Road near the rail crossing.

During the period Lampitt Bros. ran the works from 1949 to 1978 very few bricks were made and demand in tiles fluctuated with economic conditions. Peak production was 300,000 feet per year, stretched over around 30 burns of a kiln, putting out three, four and six inch tiles, most popular eventually becoming four inch tiles, two feet long.

The down draft kiln burns up to 1000-1100 degrees centigrade, and required a certain expertise to ensure a sound product. The burning took two to three days, with about the same time needed for cooling before entering to take the tiles out.

As well as making bricks, the mudstone base became popular for several cricket wickets in the province in the latter years, following a successful trial with it on the Douglas Domain.

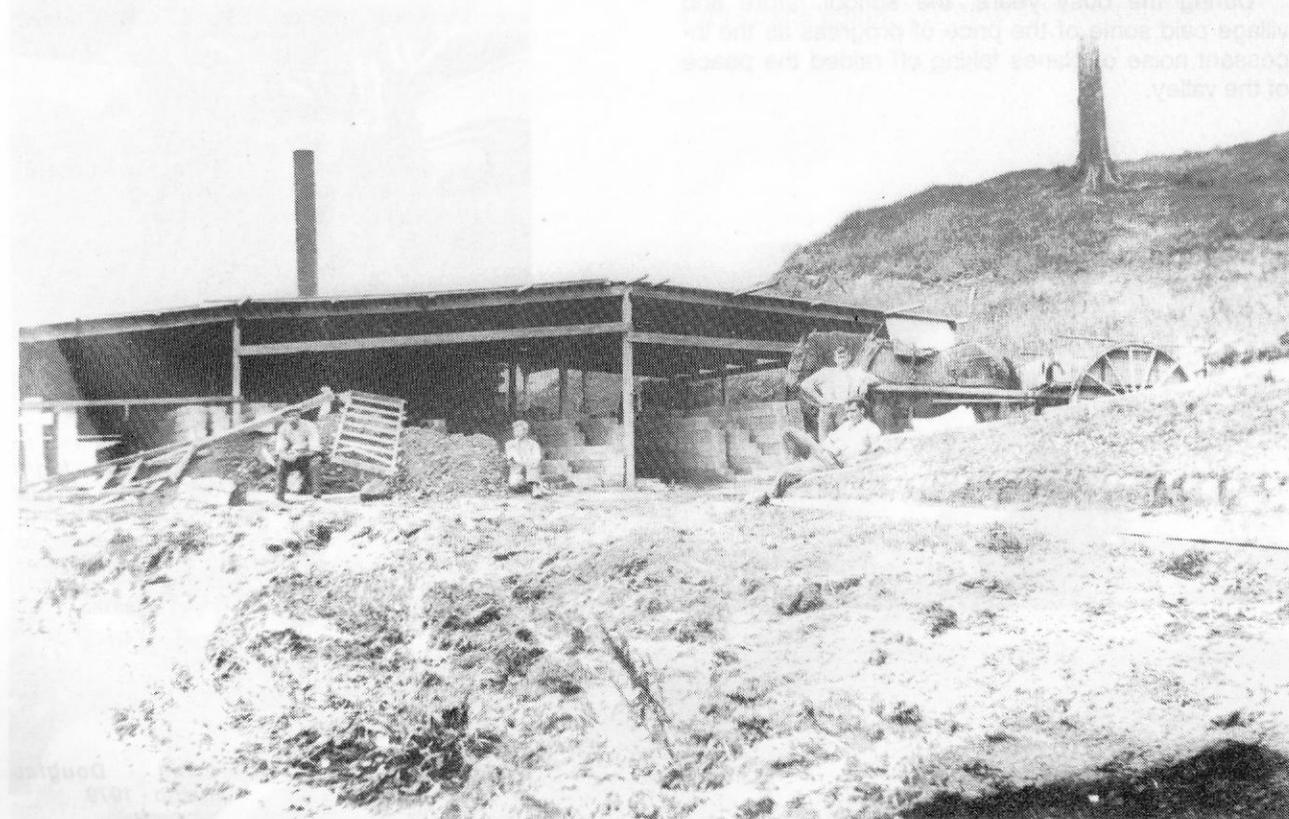
Messrs Lampitt Bros. sold to Len and Ron Ward in 1978, and the works were closed down in early 1981, Mr Ron Ward having taken over from his brother in 1979.

Over one thousand visitors passed through the works in March 1978 when the Toko Lions Club held a 'Brickarama' to raise funds for the Toko Playcentre. Visitors were able to press souvenir bricks on a hand press to be fired with the original 'Emeny & Co. Douglas' stamp on, buy clay for pottery and see the pipe making process.

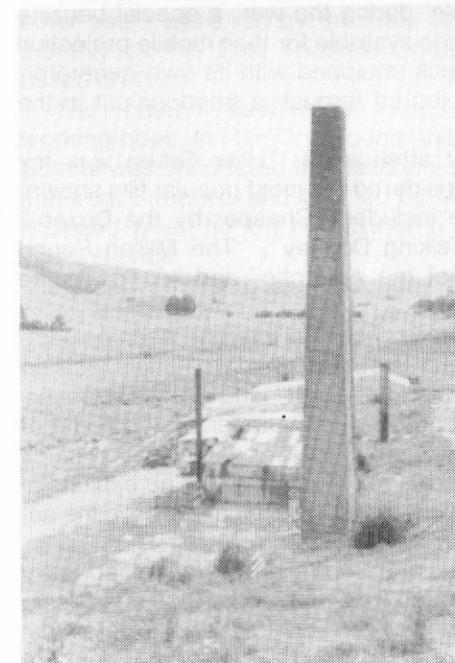
Though the Ward Brothers had plans to modernise and renovate the brickworks and possibly diversify into flower pots, ceramics and glazed quarry tiles the firm was beset with financial problems, going into receivership in 1980 and finally closing down in 1981.

Those working on the site at closure were Ron Smith, Tony Sommerville, Rusty Ritchie and Mark Bayley.

... A cow once wandered around the hill just after the fuse had been lit at the clay bank behind the brickworks. She chewed the gelignite, apparently liked the taste, and eventually spat out the detonator and fuse, untouched and unexploded.



Douglas brickworks - about 1922. From left: Alf Emeny, Bert Rogerson, George Gichard, Clarry Hay



Douglas
Brickworks
- 1981



Douglas brickworks - about 1925

Post Office

Postal services to Douglas started during the 1890s, as a trice-weekly service from Stratford to Toko in 1892, followed by a weekly link with Strathmore in 1894.

The original name of the Post Office was Douglas Road, which was opened in February 1905, with first postmaster being storekeeper, Horace Charles Albin King. The name was changed to Douglas in 1906.

Storekeepers were postmasters in the years to follow until the final closure in 1972.

Up to the twenties mail would come on the 7.30 p.m. train from Stratford, and people often gathered at the store to collect it, following which impromptu dances were sometimes arranged and all would move up to the hall.

A list of past postmasters and the date they took over supplied by the Post Office follows - 4.2.19 George Rashigh; 26.3.19 Frederick Reader; 1.9.20 William Marshall; 1.10.23 Gilbert B. Baxter; 1.3.24 William Marshall; 1.6.24 Edgar Douch; 1.10.24 Leo Needham; 1.4.25 Harold A. Needham; 1.9.26 Curtis Albert Bredow; 1.7.43 Ronald Allen Ward; 3.5.49 Albert Norman Paton; 30.6.72 Closure.

Rural Mail Contractors

The importance of the Post Office fell off with the introduction of the rural mail deliveries, the first contractor being Peter Aitken before the second war.

Others who followed included Collins, Bird, Bob Bell, Len Angus, Colin Jury, Horace Martin (1950s), Ron Powell (1960s), Ron Harford (1968) and present mailman Gordon Astwood (1975).

Over the years the services have increased, with delivery of bread and parcels followed by bottled milk in 1966, and a full grocery service introduced after the closure of the Douglas store in 1972.

One prompt delivery of bread for the store occurred when Bob Bell lost the back of his truck coming over the railway lines just west of the village, leaving loaves of bread scattered everywhere.

Contractors deliver the mail and 'Daily News' six days a week, and the 'Stratford Press' on Thursdays.

For a short time around 1960 Mrs E. Latham delivered the 'Taranaki Herald' to several subscribers in the district.

Telephone Services

First telephone office under the name of Douglas Road was opened on the Stratford manual exchange in 1900, but closed after six months, to be re-installed in 1905 when the Post Office opened.

The few subscribers, though still on party lines, benefitted from the change to an automatic exchange at Stratford in 1927.

Many local residents had to wait until June 1951 for their first connections, with up to ten on the party lines.

During the winter of 1953 Douglas farmers under a roster system of 6 each day helped speed the advent of an automatic exchange by helping P. & T. workmen erect poles and wires.

Then in 1956 the Douglas automatic exchange was opened, and further improvement followed in 1971 with the introduction of free dialling to Stratford, which followed petitions and representations from locals.

In 1974 the Douglas exchange was connected to the Stratford-Eltham-Kaponga free dialling area, and had a total of 106 subscribers in 1979.

Douglas Pictures

The first reference to picture shows in Douglas was in 1929 when Mr Hamilton was granted permission to show films. Mr Fred Reader was known to have played the piano to provide music for the silent movies.

In 1943 Mr and Mrs Vince Scanlan began showing films on a fortnightly country circuit that included Mokau, Awakino, Midhirst, Toko, Douglas, Strathmore and Whangamomona. Considered a 'boost to morale' during the war, a special benzine licence was made available for their mobile projection van, a 3-ton truck equipped with its own generator. Films were projected through a trapdoor cut in the hall wall.

By virtue of attendance, "How Green was my Valley" was considered the most popular film shown. Others of note included "Cheaper by the Dozen," "Francis the Talking Donkey", "The Million Pound Note", "Scott of the Antarctic" and "A Town Like Alice".

The serials were of special interest, each episode always having a dramatic climax. Two serials recalled were "The Mysterious Mr X" and "The Green Archer". Another boasted a character by the name of "Breezy" Baker, a name that for some reason stuck to one of the local lads, Owen Walter. The exploits of these screen cowboys were often mirrored in the antics of the young village lads.

Denys Latham and Barry Pepperell decided to try their lassoing skills on their steeds Bess and Flicka, using Georgie Jennings' young cattle as targets. Just as they were getting into their stride a shot rang out over their heads, and suddenly it was real life . . . As they pounded through the swamp in the opposite direction one trembled to the other, "he wouldn't shoot a guy in the back, would he?"

Memories also include the newsreels, usually outdated, the playing of the National Anthem, the theme music, "Stars & Stripes Forever", Mrs Scanlan's tell-tale torch that would pinpoint the rowdies, and children sitting on the forbidden soft seats, and the store being opened after the show, by Ron Ward.

Scanlan's 'Talkies' continued until 1960 as a feature of country life when the advent of T.V. and a more mobile community phased out this once looked-forward to event. Will the introduction of video films bring back this former greatly-anticipated form of community entertainment?

Church

Nestled near the roadside halfway up the hill opposite the school, the Douglas church served the community for over sixty-five years until the final service was held in October 1980.

Services were held in the Douglas hall prior to the church and manse being built on land donated by Mr Rea around 1914.

The buildings took place largely through community effort spearheaded by Mr Arthur Needham, local contractor, butcher, and lay reader who farmed where John Howse now lives.

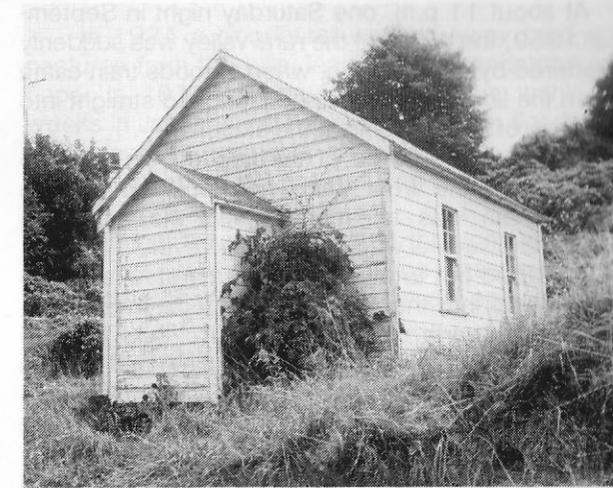
Only two resident ministers lived in the manse on top of the hill, the Revs. Aker and Witherfurd. During the later '20s to after the war, the services were conducted by travelling parsons, some from Whangamomona.

These included Rev. Alexander, who travelled East Taranaki on horseback while based at Whanga., Revs. Raine, Tidswell, Osborne and various others who were often billeted locally.

Though vested in the Methodist Trust, services in latter years were run by the Holy Trinity and finally monthly by the East Taranaki Co-operating Parish based on Toko.

The church was extensively renovated by working-bees in 1950. Around this time Sunday School was conducted by Mesdames Bilkie and Pinson from Stratford, and later led by Mr Cliff Cox until it closed when he left the district in 1974 after 12 years service.

Among others to teach Sunday School in latter years were Mrs Gwen Reid, Mrs Shirley Greenhill, Mrs Audrey Mason, Mrs Margaret Garlick, Miss Raewyn Latham and Mrs Jean Cox.



Douglas Church - 1981

The decision to close the church was made because of impending maintenance costs and the close proximity to Toko.

The fate of the building is still uncertain. Moves to have it shifted across the road and converted to a school library received little local support, and ideas for a tennis club pavilion were dropped. Venue for the building may be the Taranaki Pioneer Village.

- Pat Ewens once found a dead black cat under the altar when cleaning the Douglas church. Apparently Mason's pet had got locked in and couldn't escape.



Group at opening of manse - about 1915

The Douglas Railway Crash

At about 11 p.m. one Saturday night in September 1959, the peace of the rural valley was suddenly shattered by a great bang, when a goods train came down the line from Huiroa and ploughed straight into the back of one standing at the station.

Such was the force of the impact, eight of the waggons in the front train were buckled up, the guard's van was telescoped, and the oncoming engine and several waggons toppled over.

"I rushed out to my door and saw steel and iron buckling up into the air - I thought for a minute that the whole earth had heaved up," said a local resident. Local railway worker, Ashley Garlick was said to have almost created a new world high-jump record when he saw the second train coming down the line.

Earlier in the afternoon, the 3 o'clock train had had some ashes thrown from it which set fire to the grass. The fire spread and the 9 o'clock train stayed

on in an effort to put it out. Meanwhile the old toilet had been burnt to the ground.

The second didn't see the stop signal and the guard of the standing one was fortunate to run for safety as he saw the crash coming. Only minor injury was a cut to the forehead of the other guard, Mr Jack Kennedy.

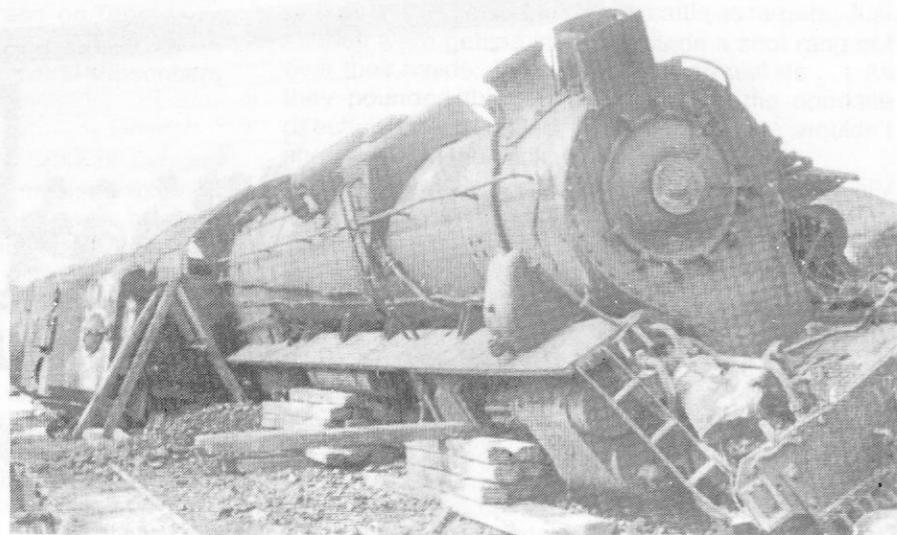
The impact also brought down power lines, smashed the wooden water tank to pieces, blocked both lines and created a fire hazard with oil leaking from derailed tankers.

The station yard and nearby paddock were littered by a great variety of goods - straw hats, corn, battens, crockery and china, toilet seats, coal, sweets and biscuits.

Total cost of the smash was estimated at a quarter of a million pounds, and Douglas was a sightseers' stopping point for a day or two.



Douglas train crash - 1959



Did You Know?

- Douglas is the only railway stop between Stratford and the main trunk line at Okahakura without a Maori placename.

- At one stage in the early 1970s Harold Gibson was the only male in the senior room of over twenty pupils.

- Around the 1930 period a moonlight ramble club met in Douglas, tramping hills and roads on moonlit nights.

- Within less than four years in the 1960s three former pupils of Douglas school were awarded American Field Scholarships for secondary schooling in the States - Helen Walter, Mavis Walter and Colleen Rodgers.

- All the original houses on the Crown Road farms as well as those farmed by Graeme Reid and Jim Thompson were built from pit-sawn matai along similar lines. They were among the eleven farms subdivided from a block the Crown Dairy Co. bought off Baylys around the turn of the century.

- There used to be both a dairy factory and limeworks at Gordon Road, as well as a post office called Mangatotara. Judy Wylie still lives in the old factory manager's house.

- Teacher, Anita Frethey (1928-1934) later Mrs Ernie Walter, taught three future sisters-in-law, two future brothers-in-law and several nieces and nephews as well as her own children.

- Douglas Airstrip Company was the first of its type in New Zealand.

- First herd tester to serve Douglas was Lance Knowles, around 1930, with his white horse and dray. Others in the forties and fifties included Jock Logan, Sylvia Cadman, Les Chainey, Bob Jagger, Maurice Parker, Harley Wisniewski, Bill Coupe and David Langdon. Present herd tester is Diane Roberts.

- Two spectacular daytime fires destroyed old family homesteads within four years of each other - the Walter homestead in 1953, and Bredow homestead on the main road in 1957.

- Last hillside ploughing done in Douglas with horses was about 1959 on Alan Smith's present place.

- In 1959 Mrs Arthur Miers won the Taranaki section of the Apple Pie Cooking Contest.

- Trudie Bredow was one of the earlier piano teachers in the district, travelling to neighbouring villages to teach on horseback. May Savage taught several pupils in the back room of the hall either side of 1950.

- The Taranaki 'Herald' was delivered in Douglas each evening around 1960 by Mrs Ernestine Latham.

- The school colours were registered in 1926 - navy blue and gold, with a badge in the form of a triangle enclosing the letters DS.

- The Douglas cricketers mowed the playing field on the domain with handmowers in 45 minutes shortly before the permanent tractor mower was purchased; this was for a match against Patea in 1960.

- In 1924 a cloudburst washed away hard-won pastures from the hills, leaving bare sandstone and papa. In 1971 two severe downpours within six weeks in January and February left slips, floods and stock losses. Estimates were for falls of six and eleven inches respectively during the two 24-hour periods.

- The last steam train puffed through Douglas in Easter 1972 when an excursion passenger train raced through, followed by many rail enthusiasts in cars.

- Snow fell in Douglas in 1954, 1965, 1969 and 1976.

- January 1975 saw several thunderstorms, including one deluge of four inches in an hour.

- Two golden weddings were celebrated in Douglas in 1977 - Walter and Billie Bredow, and Jack and Louie Bonner.

- Had the Japanese landed in Taranaki during the second world war it was planned that the women and children of the district would be evacuated out to the Taurakawa bush area.

- There used to be two NZR houses in Douglas near the entrance to the brickworks off Douglas Road. One was transferred to Toko, while Ashley and Margaret Garlick were last to live in the other until around 1969 - the house was demolished by Bredows for farm building.

- Poplars planted around the western side of the Douglas saddle by Mrs Mary Walter came from cuttings off the farm of Mr Simon Dons, then opposite Bob Thomson's place at Tututawa. In turn he had started with sprigs of the cottonwood-type lombardy from Denmark, his native land.

- First regular dog dosing for hydatids started in 1958 by the Douglas Saleyards paddock.

- Mr Walter Bredow well-remembered shooting pukekos when he was a youth in the raupo swamp that used to flank the railway south of the village.

- Three very dry summers in 1970, 1973, and 1978 affected farm production in the district as pastures wilted, springs dried up and hay was fed to stock. In 1978 many dairy herds were dried off in early March, while in 1970 the district was part of a drought relief area.

- In 1951 a homer beacon used as a navigational aid for N.A.C. aircraft flying between Wanganui and Bell Block was installed near the top of the Douglas saddle.

- A whirlwind hit Douglas in 1946, demolishing an implement shed, a stack of hay and snapping off a telephone pole on Dud Bell's farm.

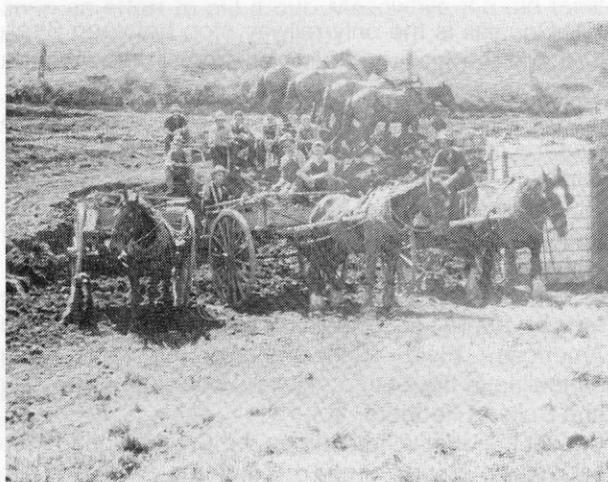
- First roadman in the county cottage at the Horseshoe Bend on the Douglas saddle was Mr Rogers. Longest term in the cottage was between 1927 and 1952, by Mr and Mrs Jack Bonner. Last to live in it before demolition by Mr Richard Coles for a woolshed were Mr and Mrs Frank Schrider, who left in 1970.

Douglas Tennis Club

A series of three public meetings in August 1920, formed the working committee that established the Douglas Tennis Club. The committee comprised Messrs Schwieters, Marshall, Gibbons, A. Walter and Miss Woulfe.

The original motion to construct the court in the school grounds was rescinded the following week, and a court on the hall grounds was proposed. Offers of land for the courts from local farmers were eventually turned down in favour of the hall site.

Local tennis enthusiasts using picks, shovels and wheelbarrows, dug out an area of papa bank adjacent to the church, and running parallel to the road. Estimates for surfacing the court were 80 pounds asphalt on concrete; 30 pounds tarsealing. The cost of a net was under 2 pounds. Money was raised by the running of an 'art union'.



Excavating for second tennis court near hall - 1934

Arthur Walter opening the new tennis season, early 1920s.

A two-court complex had been constructed in 1934, replacing the original court. The blasting operations to cut back the clay bank caused 'certain disruptions to school life', it was reported in the school committee minutes. The courts were positioned as they are today, adjacent to the hall.

Renovations carried out by volunteer labour in 1964 resulted in resurfacing, and the addition of a volley-board and umpires' stand. In 1966 Murray Old assisted members to erect a high netting fence.

Throughout the years a number of cups have been presented to the club, including the Bonner, Latham and Ward cups, and these are all still contested today.

The Colin Walter Memorial Tennis Tournament has become an annual fixture, and is now played in conjunction with the Dolly Walter Memorial Plate, each Anniversary Weekend, in the form of a mixed doubles handicap tournament.

After a lapse in activity during the late 60s to early 70s, the club was revived when players interested merely in social tennis travelled from Stratford to play Sunday social games. At the instigation of Marie Walter, coaching for school children was introduced, and interest in tennis revived sufficiently to enter teams once more in Taranaki competition. Playing members are drawn from the surrounding districts of Huiroa, Toko, Makahu, Matau and even Stratford.

The present patron of the club is 1922 member, Chris Wilmshurst. The present committee consists of Les Williams (President), Murray Reid (Secretary), Marie Walter (Club Captain), Karen Downs, Liz Hughes, Peter McEwan, Bradley Walter, Graeme Walter. Life Members elected over the years are Mrs Dolly Walter, Mrs Lou Rumball, and Ron Ford.



Opening day in December 1921, was followed by a dance, but it wasn't until April 1922 that the tar-seal was laid by Mr Archer. The completed court was officially opened in October 1922.

Matches arranged with other clubs - Whangamomona, Toko and Stratford Methodists were popular. One of the highlights was when Douglas beat a highly-rated New Plymouth team. Mrs Needham supplied lunch at the boarding house, and afternoon tea on the court for 2 pounds 5 shillings. Games played against the Huinga club were usually arranged to be played on Thursdays, between milkings.

A team was first entered in the Taranaki competition in 1938, and won the Riverhead Gold Cup. Teams in 1966 and again 1980 regained the cup for Douglas.

The team in 1938 consisted of Ernie Walter, Jack Walter, Herbie Wilmshurst, Christ Wilmshurst, N. Hunter, Joyce Hunter, Lou Rumball, Ida Reid, Amy Walter.

The 1966 team was Jim Coulton, Rex Coulton, John Rodgers, Hugh Wright, Bev Old, Edna Coulton, Kath Wilmshurst, Margaret Garlick.

And in 1980 the team was Evan Swale, Murray Reid, Gordon Astwood, Lance Wheeler, Michael Antrobus, Marie Walter, Anna Coupe, Leigh Stanford, Kathy MacEwan.



Mr Chris Wilmshurst presents the Dolly Walter Plate to Mr and Mrs Don Simmons at the 30th Anniversary of Colin Walter Tournament, March 1979

Douglas Tennis Group - About 1938



Back Row: E. Wills, J. Walter, E. Walter, E. Smith, H. Rumball, W. Walter.
Middle Row: C. Chapman, N. Walter, H. Wilmshurst, M. Walter, C. Wilmshurst, P. Rodgers, M. Jones.
Front Row: A. Walter, M. Rodgers, V. Skousgaard, I. Reid, N. Wilmshurst, L. Rumball.
In Front: Nancy Walter.

Cricket Club

Douglas cricket reached its highest point during the 1969-70 season when the strong senior team won the Taranaki provincial club championship, beating both New Plymouth Old Boys and Hawera Old Boys convincingly and drawing with Okato in a rain-interrupted match; the four teams were the divisional winners contesting a round robin series for the provincial championship.

The team entered senior cricket in the North Country division in 1959, playing the first match against Waiongana on the Toko Domain, as the local domain was being used for a school gala.

The switch to senior competition cricket partly came about from a shortage of women available for the senior tennis team - they had decided to concentrate on rearing families.

For the following twenty-one seasons Douglas fielded a senior team, variously in the North Country, Taranaki-wide, Northern, South-Western and Southern divisions until lack of numbers forced a reversion to social matches in the 1980-81 season.

Home matches on the Douglas Domain were well-attended by local supporters, none more enthusiastic than bike-riding Don Close from Crown Road, scoreboard attendant and barracker of the seventies.

The local grass wicket laid on a brickworks clay base was one of the most reliable in the province. In 1972 the Douglas side featured on the front page of a national Sunday newspaper for scoring 429 runs in a short day against Huatoki.

Douglas won the North Country titles in 1964-65, 1969-70 and 1971-72, the provincial one-day competition in 1972-73 and the South Taranaki title in the 1976-77 season.

Although not dedicated to practices, the team in earlier years met after milkings at the domain, then used a double haybarn under lights at Colin Jones' Toko farm, and finally at the Toko school when teacher Eddie Betts was in the team.

Neighbouring schoolmasters over the seasons provided much playing strength. Ross Agnew from Makahu was captain in the first competition season, aided by the wily Ray Hughan, Kiore, and Keith Cathro, Douglas.

Later teachers to play from the side included Geoff Rodley, Stratford; Eddie Betts, Toko; Phil Edwards, Huinga; Vaughan Leach and Graham Miller of Huiroa.

Douglas Cricket Club Winners Taranaki Senior Championship 1969 - 70



Back Row, (left to right): B. Walter, M. Paki Paki, G. Walter, A. Walter (Patron), J. Sextus, I. Latham, T. Smith.
Front Row (left to right): G. Paki Paki, O. Walter, D. Walter (Captain), C. Jones (Vice-Captain), G. Rodley, J. Cameron.
Inset: A. Smith.

As well there was a strong link between the Douglas cricket team and Stratford Senior Rugby team, with several town members joining the country club during the summer.

Notable also was the appearance of Heather Rodley filling in during the late seventies - one of the very few females to have played senior cricket in the province.

Douglas provided several provincial representative players, including brothers Alan and Trevor Smith, David Walter, Trevor O'Byrne and Ian Latham.

In the 1963-64 season Alan Smith and former Douglas player Denys Latham won the best bowling and batting trophies at the Central Districts' Colts Tourney, while around this period Alan was awarded the Central Districts' Rothmans Trophy, and also had the distinction of taking 16 wickets in a match for Taranaki against King Country.

Early Days

Cricket was played at Douglas as far back as the mid-1930s. Schoolteachers Mr H. Donnelly, 1931, father of Martin Donnelly, and Mr H. Maingay 1934, both encouraged the sport inside and outside the school.

Mr Ernie Cole, local farmer and storekeeper, though getting on in years, was a well-performed and experienced representative cricketer. Later in the 1940s he shaped bats for the schoolchildren from willow, presented on the proviso that 'tippenny' runs weren't played.

Before the war the team played on Cruickshank's paddock flanking the Crown Road corner with the main road, while afterwards variously used Jackson Brown's flat by the school, the Toko Domain, the school bottom flat, the airstrip, Jack Walter's front paddock, and eventually the domain when it was ready in 1954-55.

Several social and friendly matches were played each season, trips going to as far as Ohura.

When the team hosted a New Plymouth side in 1939, the secretary was instructed to procure - 10 doz. cakes, one loaf bread cut into ham sandwiches, 12 shillings worth of pies, one small bottle worcestershire sauce, mustard, and five gallons of light refreshments!

During the mid-1950s the team played in a regular Sunday competition for the Whittle Cup against Midhirst, Celtic, East Road and Pukengahu, and later the trophy was played between Douglas, Huiroa and Strathmore-Makahu.

Another annual highlight during the fifties was the annual Walters' V. the Rest clash, keenly contested to the extent that neutral umpires were even suggested!

Douglas also played against the touring Victoria University team in the early sixties and again in the seventies - highlight of one of these matches was a whirlwind 56 from the unorthodox bat of Brian Wilmshurst, including 8 sixes and 2 fours.

Pony Club

A Douglas branch of the Stratford Pony Club was active between 1948-1958. Mr Gay MacCartney was the first president, and chief instructor until 1957. Club rallies were held at the school and on various farms in the district, including Wilmshurst's, Jack Walter's, Coles', Gilbert's and MacCartney's.

Membership reached a peak in 1952, with 31 riding members. A gradual decline in riders resulted in the branch disbanding and its assets being handed to the Stratford Club.

Club highlights included 12 members participating in a trek to Tongaporutu in 1952, another trek around the mountain in 1954, and 16 members riding to Mangamingi in 1957.

The Douglas branch was proud to win the inter-branch competition Rosebowl in 1957. Members at that time included Peter and Shirley Coles, John and Michael Howse, John, Helen and Mavis Walter, Selwyn and Colleen Rodgers, and the Henry's, Butler's, Newson's and Jones'.

A set of polo-cross sticks was once purchased, and a ground marked out on the Wilmshurst property.

The last time children rode ponies to school was in the early 1960s. Prior to that, it was confessed by one pupil, the only thing she looked forward to during school was the thought of catching the pony after school and riding home.

Badminton Club

A badminton club has existed sporadically since 1958. It boasted 23 members that first year, with a team entered in the Central Taranaki C Grade competition.

Unfortunately the club went into recess after the following season in 1959. It was revived in 1963 in combination with table-tennis, and was again active during the years '67-73. Ken Taylor from Stratford, of national badminton selector/coach reputation, gave valuable coaching sessions during this time. A competition team was entered, and social games played against other country clubs, including Strathmore and Skinner Road.

The Douglas Hall has never been particularly suitable for badminton - the low ceiling, lights and steel bar supports have always been considered of 'local advantage' by visiting players.

The club was reformed in 1980 'on a family basis' offering badminton, table tennis in the supper and storage rooms, cards on the stage and darts in the men's cloakroom. This approach contrasts with the original club, which restricted players to 'over 12 years of age'.

1981 committee consists of Les Williams, Bev Old, David Cleeton, Colin Christie.

Hockey Club

Although hockey was a part of the school sporting scene right back to the earliest days, it wasn't until 1949 that the hockey club was formed.

Prime instigators were newly-arrived storekeeper Mick Paton and his assistant Len Hill who helped bring together enough to eventually form four teams - two each of men and women, as well as a primary school team some years later.

First ground for the club was on Mr C. Wilmshurst's farm up the Douglas Road, which was regarded adequate for a year or two, until a rumoured altercation between local players and a visiting coach on the state of the playing surface resulted in the coach ending up in the road drain.

The headquarters then shifted to Mr J. Reid's Crown Road farm, where a paddock was specially sown and set out, even with separate toilets at each end. One match in wet conditions was transferred to an adjacent paddock at half time, when the goals were picked up and dumped in another patch with less puddles and mud.

The Domain became available in 1955 and with what became one of the best cared for playing surfaces in Taranaki, was the venue of at least one representative match and gave the club fine match and practice facilities.

During the earlier years, the women's team won the provincial championship at least twice. Over the years until the last effort to form a women's team in 1980 failed, the club supplied many representative players, including Kath Coulton, Edna Mason, Dorothy Mason, Gloria Walter, Norah Bishop, Peg Anker, Tui Collier, Margaret Wilmshurst, Laureen

Cooper, Shirley Paynter, Wendy Green, Marcia Fisher, Shirley Hosking, Elizabeth Cross, Pam Willan, Brenda Mayo, Marie O'Brien, Karen Greenhill, Alan Bayly, Peter Greenhill, Brian Woodhouse and Les Chainey.

Socially the club was most active, promoting annual dinners, cabarets, picnics, concerts, barbecues and dances.

Annual five a-side tournaments were held during the early 50s, and also matches on the domain against local rugby players in a variety of sports, all keenly contested - rugby, soccer and hockey.

The men's team lasted little longer than a decade, with a short-lived revival in senior reserve in 1968. The primary school team in the early seventies performed well on the field, and also had the experience of performing an item of entertainment for a touring Welsh team - a song with words aimed at Taranaki coaches, umpires, administrators and players.

Over the years, the club was fortunate to have dedicated coaches and administrators, including A. N. Paton, P. Greenhill, B. Baker, J. Reid, K. Kelly, Mrs K. Wilmshurst, Mrs E. Coulton, Mrs W. Bredow, Mrs N. Gilbert and Mrs T. Collier. During the latter years of the women's team, players were drawn from the Stratford area as numbers in the country districts declined.

One highlight of the fund-raising activities was a sponsored walk from the domain to the Toko Hotel and return in 1969. Held in shocking weather conditions, sixty-five walkers of all ages and attires braved the wet to raise \$250 for club funds.

Douglas Ladies Hockey Team

"A" Team, 1953 — Winners Taranaki Championship



Back Row: K. Coulton, T. Collier (Coach), B. Diffey, S. Chapman, M. Diffey, M. Wilmshurst.
Front Row: N. Marshall, M. Hopkirk, M. Smith, D. Mason (Captain), E. Mason, R. Bonner.

Douglas Hockey Club Combined Members, 1950



Back Row: J. Mason, M. Diffey, R. Reader, M. Read, N. Graham, E. Mason, C. Graham, B. Diffey, J. Hickford.
Middle Row: M. Smith, C. Hannah, J. Williams, G. Walter, D. Florence, S. Bonner, G. Stanford, S. Chapman, M. Paton.
Front Row: R. Ford, A. Bayly, M. Mason, D. Mayo, Mrs W. Bredow (Umpire), L. Tippett (Captain), D. Mason (Captain), W. Primmer, N. Bishop.
Absent: N. McLellan, V. Hannah, R. Stanford.

Bowling Club

Rumour has it that the idea of forming an indoor bowling club originated on the front porch of Mick Paton's house. The club was formed officially in March 1954, and has functioned ever since, apart from a short period in recess about 1971.

Funds to purchase equipment came from a 2 pounds loan per member, a bottle drive and euchre evenings. A weekly club night was held, and often a Sunday afternoon get-together. Mr Odlum and his team from Stratford were invited out to 'demonstrate the art of good bowling'.

For many years a team was entered in the Moss Shield competition, one succeeding in reaching the final. Teams have since played for the Moss Shield in 1980 and 81.

Other local clubs in existence in 1955 were Toko, Huiroa, Huinga and Makahu. A highlight of the early years was the annual fund-raising 'open' tournament, when teams from other clubs were invited to enter. As well as raising money for the club, funds were donated to the hall (ninety-seven pounds), school (twenty pounds), cricket club (thirty-two pounds), and tennis club (sixteen pounds), and "a good time was had by all".

In 1978 past players were invited to play in a tournament to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the club, followed by a dinner at the Toko Hotel.

Today the club owns 4 mats, and has 30 members. Schoolchildren are encouraged to play on club

nights during the school holidays. A team played in the Taranaki fours in 1979.

Mrs Jean Rodgers, secretary/treasurer from 1954-68 is now president of the Taranaki Women's Bowling Centre. She is a life member of the Douglas Indoor Bowling Club, as was the late Mrs Dolly Walter.

The 1981 committee is Les Williams (chairman), Graeme Walter (secretary), Ron Smith, Graham Chapman, Gwen Reid, Ross Drummond.

Table Tennis Club

A membership of 43 plus 6 juniors formed the first table tennis club in 1947. At the time there were other clubs at Tututawa, Huinga, Huiroa, Matau, Strathmore, Kiore and Whangamomona, where no doubt social inter-club activity took place.

Reference in the sketchy records of the club to the McCoard Shield leads one to believe teams from the Douglas club participated in an inter-club competition.

In 1952, M. Hill and D. Latham were made exempt from paying subs on the condition they put up and cleared away forms and tables each club night. Subs at the time were five shillings juniors, and fifteen shillings seniors.

A drop in attendances resulted in the club going into recess in 1953. Table tennis has since then been combined with the badminton club.

Netball Club

Enthusiasm to form a senior netball team originated from a group of keep supporters, mainly mothers, who turned up at the school during the winter of 1980 to give the primary school team practice for the weekly competition game.

As a result, a team from Douglas was entered the following year in the 4th grade division of the 1981 central Taranaki competition.

With many at the age when more sensible experienced players consider retirement from the sport, and wearing the school colours of navy blue and gold, the team members have enjoyed the active participation, team spirit and social aspect of netball.

The team was placed fourth in its section of the competition, a creditable performance for a first-year team.

The foundation squad was, Dawn Avery, Karen Bonner, Judy Chapman, Pauline Christie, Wendy Cleeton, Karen Downs, Sharon Downs, Val Jones, Linda Reichardt, Christine Smith, Isabel Walter, Marie Walter, Kristin Wilmshurst.

Douglas Netball Team - Late 1950's (Basketball)



Carolyn Smith, Raewyn Latham, Colleen Rodgers, Judith Paton, Mavis Walter, Jocelyn Chapman, Sheryl Bellamy, Helen Walter, Shirley Coles.

Athletics Club

An interested group of parents formed the Eastern Districts' Athletics Club based on the Douglas Domain in 1975, and almost 100 children registered on the opening night in November.

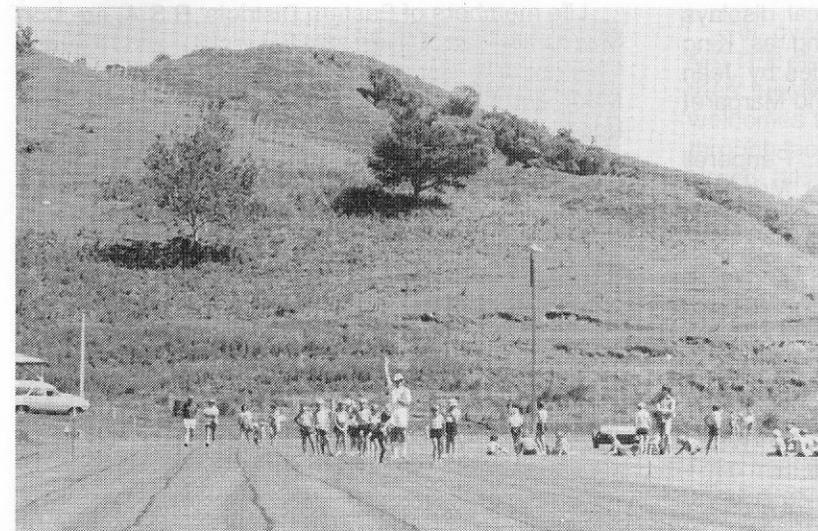
Taking advantage of the recently introduced hour of daylight saving, club met weekly in the evening during the summer months.

The club dropped the term 'children's' after the first year to cater for younger adults, and with a strong backup of equipment and coaching have featured with success at provincial and centre level.

Membership peaked at 164 in 1978-79, with children coming from a wide area of surrounding districts. The impact of the carless day scheme and higher petrol prices was felt the following season with a drop to around 120 which has stabilised since.

A surveyed track and jumping pit are now features of the domain, and in 1978 the disused canteen shed on the airstrip was procured for storage of gear.

Inaugural president and secretary, Ken Matthews and Isabel Walter still hold those positions, and the first committee comprised Jim Harrison, Bill Kumeroa, Glyn Evans, Barry Wills, Bradley Walter, Peter Greenhill, Trevor O'Byrne, Graham Chapman and Peter Johnstone.



Athletics at Douglas Domain 1977.
Ken Matthews starter.

Federated Farmers

A branch of the Farmers' Union was formed at Douglas in 1936. First president was Mr W. Bredow, with Mr A. Walter, vice-president, W. Howat secretary, and a committee comprising Messrs E. Cole, J. Wallace, C. Selby and P. Skousguard.

Through the years to the present day the local branch has met with varying regularity to act on matters affecting the district and farming.

The branch was involved in organising the patriotic fund appeals during the 1939-45 war as well as assisting returned servicemen taking up rehab. farms.

1946 saw the name changed to Federated Farmers, and in the following few active years the branch promoted moves for a local war memorial in 1948 which eventually resulted in formation of the domain.

As in later years, pressure was put on stock firms to upgrade the local saleyards facilities, the railways services at Douglas were criticised and a close eye was kept on the state of roads.

A further period of activity during the late 1960s and early 1970s with Mr T. Bredow chairman, and Mr D. E. Walter secretary, resulted in introduction of free telephone dialling to Stratford in 1971 and the installation of warning bells at the railway crossing near the domain in 1975.

Meetings in 1969 with county council members on weed and general matters and one with post office officials over free dialling were attended by up to 90 people from Douglas and surrounding areas.

Office bearers during the years include presidents Messrs W. Bredow (1936-52), B. MacKay (1954-61), T. Bredow (1967-75), and G. Walter (1976-81). Among the secretaries were Messrs W. Howat (1936-44), J. Brown (1944-52), B. Wilmshurst (1960-68), D. E. Walter (1968-75), A. Smith (1975-78) and present secretary G. Reid.

Mr W. Bredow was elected chairman of the Central Taranaki sub-province in 1949, and in 1952 represented N.Z. Federated Farmers in the I.F.A.P. conference at Rome.

Other minutes of interest included moves in 1950 to have a state house built in Douglas for a farm worker - unsuccessful - and in 1945 concern of the growing damage done in the district by opossums eating swede crops, pigmeal and damaging domestic fruit trees, fruit and gardens.

W.D.F.F.

For almost thirty years the Douglas branch of Women's Division of Federated Farmers met monthly in the hall to provide a social, educational and entertainment outlet for women of the district.

Inaugural members in 1943 were Mesdames Lillian Pepperell (President), Mary Walter (Secretary), Doris Phillips, Alvis, Flora Mason, Tottie Cox, Jean Rodgers, Nina Wilmshurst, Jean Chapman, Amy Smith, Brough, Anita Walter, Louie Bonner, McCracken, Dolly Walter, Hazel Selby, Rosalie Ford, Jean Baker, Bella Walter, May Smith and Miss Rodgers.

Monthly meetings held mid-afternoon, often livened by accompanying young children, featured regular competitions for shrubs and blooms, the 'wandering shilling', guests, speakers, entertainment and music.

From 1943 to 1949 members sewed and cooked to fill parcels for dispatch overseas to soldiers and needy families in Britain.

Birthday parties with differing themes became a highlight for the branch in the 1950s, with members from neighbouring branches also enjoying 'Fifty Years On' in 1951, 'Flying High' in 1952, 'Coronation' in 1953, 'T.V. 1954 in Douglas' in 1954, 'Japanese Evening' in 1955, 'Pyjama Game' in 1958 and 'Nigger Minstrels' in 1959.

At the 21st Birthday Party in 1964, a Shakespearean theme was taken to commemorate the bicentenary of the bard.

Most memorable of the local theatrical displays were those of Ernestine Latham posing as King Farouk, and a lively take-off of the Beatles by Jean Attley, Dulcie Stallard, Leonie MacKay and Margaret Garlick in 1964.

Presidents over the years were: Mrs L. Pepperell (1943-47), Mrs N. Wilmshurst (1947-51), Mrs Anita Walter (1951-57 and 1961-65), Mrs L. Bredow (1957-59), Mrs L. Graham (1959-61), Mrs Allison Walter (1965-68 and 1970-71), Mrs I. Walter (1968-69) and Mrs M. Miers (1971-72).

The branch finally went into recess in 1972 as the attractions of other organisations, changing transport trends and lower numbers in the districts all had their impact.

Eastern Districts R.S.A.

A sub-branch of the Stratford and Districts R.S.A. to cover Douglas and the surrounding districts was formed in June 1946.

First President was R. Thompson from Huiakama, and Secretary D. Bell, Douglas. The eighteen original members of the Eastern District Branch were T. Sangster, R. Bird, T. Gooch, R. Thompson, J. Reith, E. Smith, S. Ericksen, D. Corkhill, S. Corkhill, W. Walter, R. Mason, Bob Mason, H. Pitt, D. Bell, L. Stanford, M. O'Neill, H. Mayo and D. Mayo.

Membership grew to over forty at one stage, with most being young returned soldiers from W.W. II as well as a sprinkling from the first war and later the Korean War.

The branch met monthly, mainly at the Douglas Hall, the meetings featuring various speakers, entertainment, war reminiscences, bowls, housie and darts, as well as time spent on formal business and welfare matters.

As well the branch held regular reunions, ladies' nights, children's Christmas parties, smokos and cabarets, providing a significant impact in the Douglas and district scene for over twenty years until it finally went into recess early in the 1970s.

Cricket matches were held against other districts, at one time competing for the 'Ashes' - cigarette ashes in a matchbox, which were last reported on a top shelf of the Whangamomona Hotel bar.

Another cricket match featured the 'raffle of the blue duck'. Harry Lampitt had donated a duck for a raffle in a sugar sack, but the winner found the prize had mysteriously changed into a pukeko.

The Eastern Districts' branch took a full part in welfare work and other matters affecting members, and several were awarded life memberships of both the Eastern Districts and Stratford Association.

Long-serving Presidents were Mr E. C. Smith (1947-54), Mr D. G. Mayo (1957-61), and Mr M. Chainey (1962-68). Among the Secretaries were Mr D. Bell (1946-48 and 1951-53), Mr G. Brooke (1958-60), Mr R. Lampitt (1953-55 and 1961-67) and Mr A. N. Paton (1968-70 approx.).

Life members of Eastern Districts' R.S.A. are Don Mayo, Morgan O'Neill, Dick Lampitt and Maurice Chainey both also Stratford and Dominion Award of Merit, and Flo Chainey Honorary Stratford Life Member.

The parade of members at the Douglas Anzac services that started in the late 1950's was a feature, though dwindling numbers have seen the 1981 RSA contingent down to two.

Other Clubs And Organisations

Over the years a variety of clubs and organisations have flourished in the district - some for longer than others - and locals have played a significant role in many outside sports and bodies.

A Douglas RIFLE CLUB met in the 1920s, shooting with long-barrelled .303s with the rifles being raffled when it wound up. In a form of C.M.T. many of the younger men were involved in the two Douglas TERRITORIAL troops at this time. They met once a month, with headquarters at the Douglas Hall, rifle shoots on the Rumball farm, and an annual camp at Waverley and Hawera racecourses. The annual MILITARY BALL was a social highlight of the district for several years.

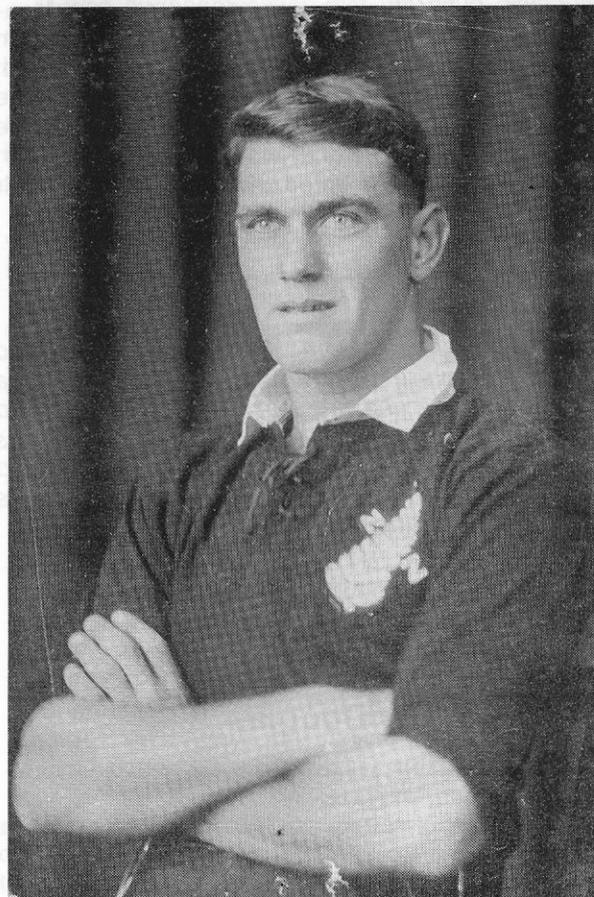
BOXING lessons were held in the old blacksmith's building near the boarding house around 1920, with Mr Winmill the coach. Some fights, both organised and impromptu, were held in the stables. After the second war a contest featuring Jack Boyd was held in front of a good crowd in Bredow's woolshed.

Well before the school baths were completed in 1956, the local streams were used for SWIMMING. The Makuri had suitable pools, some downstream of the bridge over the main road, as did the village (Toko) stream, upstream of the road bridge near Wilmshurst's, and down past the corner on the lane. For some years the stream was dammed for swimming near the brickworks and by Wilmshursts. Local parties earlier on used to also go to the Waitara River at Autawa (Douglas North Road), or the Patea towards Huinga.

CARD evenings have had their runs of popularity in the hall. In earlier days crib, bridge and poker were played as well as Flag 500 and Euchre. Euchre evenings, often in series of three or four would draw up to 40 or 50 players before the advent of T.V. and in later years a few rounds of housie would follow the cards.

Douglas players have reached high honours on the RUGBY field, as well as supplied the Stratford and Toko teams with a breadth of players. Jack Walter (1925) and Alan Smith (1967, 1969 and 1970), were selected for the All Blacks, Jack touring Australia and Alan both the U.K. and South Africa. Richard Coles had a run of over 60 successive games for the province, and came on from reserve to play for the North Island in 1964.

Several other old pupils made representative status, and the Douglas district has supplied many players for the Stratford senior teams throughout the years.



J. Walter — All Black 1925

Though the ATHLETIC Club was formed only recently, sportsmen from Douglas in earlier days featured prominently in local sports meetings in surrounding districts and further afield. Arthur Chapman in particular was the provincial mile champion, and showed out in middle distance events in outside venues.

During the second world war the Douglas HOME GUARD section met regularly under the Toko unit. Initially they had wooden weapons, but practised manoeuvres designed to thwart the effects of an invasion by the Japanese. Gum trees from the Rumball farm were felled to act as tank traps, there were lessons for making 'bombs' from jam tins, route marches, shooting, first aid and so on.

SCOUTS, CUBS, GUIDES and BROWNIES have been active in Douglas and surrounding areas since before the war, giving recreation, opportunity and challenges to many children. Murray Urquhart from Gordon Road who fought in the Boer, and first and second world wars, was one of the first scoutmasters. In the 1960s, a camp for venturers attracted around 120 boys from throughout the North Island to the farm of scoutmaster Jim Reid. Scouts at one stage met at the Douglas School, while the old boarding house and Douglas Domain were used by the groups at various times.

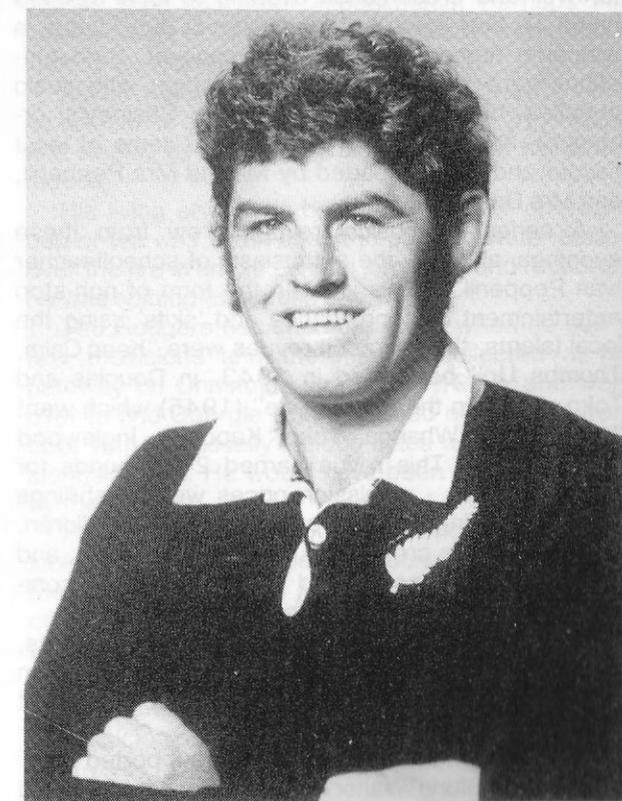
For over a decade until 1972 a SOCIAL COMMITTEE elected at the annual meeting of hall committees functioned to arrange farewells, kitchen teas, welcomes to newly-weds etc. until it was wound up through lack of interest in 1972; its functions were largely taken over by local clubs or individuals. Last to serve on the committee were Peter Greenhill, Richard Coles, Alan Smith and David and Bradley Walter.

The BUFFALO LODGE ran for a few years from the late 1950s in the Douglas Hall to give entertainment and recreation to a number from Douglas and surrounding districts.

Another sports team from Douglas was the IN-DOOR BASKETBALL combination from Douglas and Toko men that played in the Stratford competition for about 6 years from 1956, twice winning the B Grade Cup and upsetting opponents with their unusual style.

The COUNTRY LIBRARY SERVICE collection was housed in the school for some years up to the 1960s, providing a selection of reading for locals that was changed regularly before the trend and encouragement towards the Stratford Library in latter years. Mrs Florrie Howse acted as librarian for some time.

Douglas residents have been active in the Toko Y.F.C. and in days before the merger, the COUNTRY GIRLS' CLUB, providing many office-holders and successful debaters, while in 1959 David Walter represented the N.Z. Young Farmers' Club in Sydney in the Inter-Tasman Radio Leadership Contest.



A. E. Smith — All Black 1967-69-70

The Bredow family have been active in the Stratford Mountain Club, with Walter having been one of the early members, Tom a president, and children Susan, Claire, Sally and Andrew all featuring in SKIING championships up to national levels.

Douglas players have also been to the fore in playing and administration of the STRATHMORE GOLF CLUB at San Rosa, while several have taken advantage of the SQUASH facilities in Stratford since they opened in 1970.

The TANGAMAHO MARCHING CLUB centred on the Douglas Domain, was formed in 1978, catering for around a dozen junior girls, also using the Toko Schoolgrounds before going into recess after about eighteen months.

As well, the HALL over the years has been used for a variety of functions - defensive driving classes, school gymnastics, political meetings, gardening courses, ministerial visits, informal skating (1981), electric fencing promotion (1980), children's Christmas parties, and so on, all part of community life.

Over the years a number of Douglas people have been prominent in DOG TRIAL circles, both within the Stratford-Mangaehu club at Tututawa, and further afield.

Jack Bonner, Gay Macartney and Bill Reader have featured well at higher than local levels, and Mrs W. Bishop was one of the earlier women involved in dog trialling.

The War Years 1939-45

In 1939 a committee was appointed to arrange a farewell and presentation evening to local soldiers home on final leave before overseas duty. Later, a welcome home evening was organised. Both functions were usually in the form of a dance, with music supplied by Mr and Mrs Maurice Chainey's orchestra, euchre for non-dancers and items of local flavour and talent, headed by Mr and Mrs Pepperill, and Mrs Dolly Walter.

A series of musical revues grew from these evenings, aided by the enthusiasm of schoolteacher Ivan Pepperill and his wife. In the form of non-stop entertainment of song, dance and 'skits' using the local talents, the two adult revues were "Keep Calm, Thumbs Up" performed in 1943, in Douglas and Toko, and "On the Sunny Side" (1945) which went "on tour" to Whanga, Toko, Kaponga, Inglewood and Stratford. This revue earned 240 pounds for Patriotic Funds - admission prices were 4 shillings men, 3 shillings ladies and 2 shillings children. Costumes were created by local seamstresses, and Stratford musicians formed the orchestral accompaniment for the performances in the bigger halls.

The schoolchildren also performed two concerts, "Sparkles" and "Make Believe" with all the children taking part. "Make Believe" was invited to perform at the Toko Hall.

In 1946 the eastern districts supported their "Princess" Gloria Walter to victory in the Stratford R.S.A. Queen Carnival Appeal.

At the end of the war, in 1946, an engraved tea-set and cheque were presented to all servicemen and women, or their next-of-kin. And in August 1946, an Honours Board was unveiled in the Douglas Hall, commemorating all those from the district who served in the two world wars. Concert items were again presented under the direction of Mr and Mrs Pepperell.

... The Douglas 'Home Guard' in the second world war were to 'fight' the Toko unit in a manoeuvre. Transport for the day was Ted Rodgers' truck. As they slowed down towards the stopping point near Gordon Road. Ted engaged the tray tip, dumping the Douglas team on the roadside.

Recollections Of The War Years In Douglas

(By Ivan Pepperell)

I was appointed to the old original school at Douglas to start on February 1, 1942. The school was situated then on a hill, terraced on one side, with a sloping path lined with sycamores leading down to the schoolhouse, below which was an extensive flat playing field.

Our school grounds became the centre for calf judging day, pony club and other activities. There was one corner which was taboo to the children, where a slit trench had been dug.

The school-roll increased rapidly and we were entitled to an assistant, but the Education Board kept putting off advertising. After we protested, Miss Hedgeman was eventually appointed, followed over the years by Miss D. Willetts and Mrs Lampitt.

We decided to stage a concert with the children which ran as a non-stop revue. We made and dyed our front and Tab curtains. Members of the committee and others put up a stage and assisted with the props and lighting. The costumes were devised and made mainly by Mrs Pepperell. This proved to be a great success - capture children's imaginations and they will never let you down.

By this time many functions were being held for patriotic purposes - raising funds for soldiers' parcels, functions to farewell and later welcome them home. To raise funds we had some novelty evenings, one in the form of a race meeting when the 'horses' had to cut streamers the length of the hall with nail scissors. Another event was a paddle steamer race using cheese crates for the jockeys, supported on either side by two others. Tickets were sold for each race - the tote had an alarm clock starter. The dance music for these functions was usually supplied by the Chainey's of Toko.

It was suggested later that we have an adults' revue. Performers of all ages were organised and after some weeks of practice was put on at Douglas. It was later built up more and performed at Toko hall. Costumes for these shows were designed and made by Mrs Pepperell helped by Mrs W. Bredow and others.

We decided to raise further funds by travelling with "On the Sunny Side", our final revue. It was performed at Douglas, Toko and as far as Whangamomona. We were taken there by a special railway carriage which was shunted off on arrival. It was the heaviest frost there that night for 50 years and after the show we had to run round to keep warm while we waited for the train. When it arrived the windows on our carriage had iced up inside and out, and back at Douglas we found the frost had played havoc with some of the cars.

We were later invited to perform in Inglewood, and at the old Stratford Town Hall. For these centres orchestral parts had to be done, and Evelyn Moon (now Mrs Howes) and Snow Vinsen of Stratford kindly consented to collect orchestra members. They rehearsed with us and played for the performances.

Soon after I arrived in Douglas I was roped in to join not "Dad's Army", but Jackson Brown's - a most capable leader. My job was First Aid, and I had to attend a weekly class in Stratford and later take classes myself locally. On exercise nights I had to wander around with the Home Guards, with my bag of bandages etc, hoping someone would give me the opportunity to use my skills. They must have had some doubts about my surgical ability, and were particularly careful.

We also had instruction in the making of a sort of jam-tin bomb.

As a further aid to the war effort some of us were requested to help the local farmers in our spare(?) time. After my one and only effort in a cowshed wrestling with the snake-like machine cups, I opted out, preferring to spray ragwort.

All the efforts came to an end on VE Day, May 8, 1945, and VJ Day, August, 15, 1945. Both the events were celebrated at the late Walter Bredow's and life once more gradually became normal.

'Georgie' Jennings

One of the first settlers to take up land in Douglas, George Jennings took on a lease of Education reserve in 1892 comprising most of the land farmed today by Alan and Christine Smith.

He remained there until found dead on his doorstep on Christmas Day of 1951, having lived a solitary life in the district for around sixty years.

'Georgie' as he was known, had come to Taranaki from working in the bush in Northland. His withered arm was the result of being crushed between logs up North; as well part of his face was seriously disfigured by stark red growths, probably from a type of birthmark. He was shortish, but well-built, and said to have wrestled in his youth.

Through his years in Douglas he was suspicious of authority, at various times having disagreements with the law, the county council, the valuers and some neighbours. His threats were on occasions backed up by vows to use one of his several guns.

In reality he was most likely a lonely man, introverted through his grotesque physical affliction, and many in the district realised this in their efforts to treat him affably.

Early in the century he was facing court proceedings from a parent whose daughter had apparently goaded him into giving her a peck on the cheek, but Mr Ted Walter took around a petition verifying Georgie's character, which received full support.

Each week he used to catch the train to town, usually on saledays, humping his sugar sack for provisions - he also used the local store, frightening most young children who saw him at close range.

In earlier days he milked a few cows, but the run-down farm later carried a few cattle and some lively sheep, almost hermits themselves. Occasionally Georgie would seek help to round up some stock to sell, or to do some farmwork he couldn't manage.

He harboured a phobia about visitors or strangers, and the walk to the house from the road was something of an obstacle course, with long grass, barbed wire and other impediments. Perhaps this was because he put his money into a tin trunk with a lock, once found by police during a visit.

Almost naturally, Georgie talked to himself, as well as his faithful dogs, and could be heard partly talking and singing as he trudged along in one of his better moods.

His living style was basic. One visitor offered a cup of tea was taken aback to see the water boiling over the fire in an old enamel jerry-pot, and reckoned he was spitting for weeks after.

Ted Rodgers became suspicious when he saw a few provisions and the meat uncollected at his gateway on Christmas morning in 1951, and went over to find Georgie slumped dead outside his front door with the usually vicious black dog Jessie lying alongside him. He would have been into his eighties by then.

Among other things found in the house, was a fine looking photo of Georgie as a young man, taken from the unaffected side of his face. As well, hidden in a compartment in his toilet, was a range of gadgets for torture - thumbscrews, brands, electric finger shocks and so on.

An inquest was held, but there was no evidence or suspicion of foul play, and the land changed hands next year.

Once Upon A Time

... During a visit to Grandad's farm, the younger members of the family were allowed to help the men 'sow manure' - each were given sowing bags or bowls to fit, and gleefully chucked their ration of 'super' over the hills. . . . A few days later, Mother came back from the milking shed to find the same treatment had been given her precious bag of sugar saved for preserving. . . . Each room had been liberally sprinkled or ladled with sugar by the young helpers, who soon discovered the error of their ways.

... A Douglas farmer, sick and tired of salesmen interrupting his work, told workmates while draining one day, "We'll fix this one," as a particularly persistent one came into view. As the salesman came nearer, the workers leapt out of the drain and started running towards him. "Go for your life", yelled the farmer, "We've just let a shot go". The bloke took off down the paddock. Everytime he looked around the farmer burst into another frantic burst. The salesman never returned.

... In one of the few rugby matches Douglas district played as a team the opponents were Tututawa on the Tutie Domain. One of the goalposts was a poplar tree. At one stage a high 'up-and-under' came down to lodge in the branches off the tree. Tallest man on the paddock was Robb Corry, of Tututawa, who galloped up, shook the branch to dislodge the ball, and fell on it for a try.

... Two Douglas Transport trucks met on the top of the Matau Saddle - one had been delivering refreshments for some 'do' at the local hall. "Listen to the echo in this valley", exclaimed Ken Latham to his fellow driver. . . . "Ah hoo ha, hoo ha, hoo ha, hoo ha. . . . Can you hear me, hear me, hear me, hear me. . . .", went the call. Almost immediately a reply came from somewhere below - "Course I can hear you, you stupid - D'you think I'm deaf?" . . . A fencer was working a few chains below!

... The Douglas store ran a good beer delivery business out back, until the morning a phone call came to say a complaint had been made, and the police were on their way. A quick distress call went to the factory, and the workers had the truck loaded with crates in about five minutes. "Head for Tutie and hide the thing", they were told. The police duly arrived to find no evidence, and even returned on later days with the same result. Apparently the factory boys had quite a party somewhere out at Tututawa!

... A keen young schoolboy took on cutting thistles for a local farmer on contract - the price one penny per hundred. He made 90 by lunchtime, assessed the situation, and threw it in!

... Bob Reader was well-known in Douglas and surrounding districts for his agricultural contracting during the decade or so after the second war. His tractor and blower unit topdressed many acres before the advent of aerial topdressing. But one of the lesser known jobs taken on with the blower was trying to dry out sheep for shearing from under the gratings in a shearing shed!

... The Douglas Domain Committee had gathered on the ground in about 1968 to view a gang mower in action. Storekeeper Mick Paton took the tractor wheel to put it through its paces, and after a couple of laps the salesman stepped in front of the moving tractor to explain some finer details. His expression soon changed to terror when he realised Mick either couldn't or wasn't going to stop. He missed being bowled by a whisker, and left a shaken man. The domain didn't purchase the mower.

... Douglas hall has seen some entertaining and unusual sights over the years. None more so than the infamous 'flame dance' of the late 50s, when well after midnight, for a bet, the performer disrobed down to the altogether, furling a newspaper between his thighs, lit both ends, and had to make it to the far end and back in the dimmed lights to claim the 'fee'.

... A novel sport in the twenties was quail flushing. Some of the more enterprising teenagers would fill a length of old pipe with blasting powder, put a fuse in, light it, and throw it in a lawyer bush where they thought there were quails. Then followed a big boom, and lawyer leaves everywhere.

... A lively youngster had just been deservedly roughed up by his father. He poured out his troubles to a neighbouring farmer - "I never liked that man", he said of his father. "Not from the first day I saw him".

... Douglas cricketers were well known for their hospitality - never more than when they entertained a visiting Victoria University team in the early 1970s. Morning 'drinks' for the fielding and hungover 'varsity team came from a burgundy bottle, appreciated by some and not by others.

... The two organisers of an early R.S.A. smoko were given permission for the function from the police as long as there were no accidents. Mindful of this, they conscientiously ushered all from the Douglas hall and off in their vehicles in the right frame of mind. Unfortunately their concentration lapsed with the pressure off, as Bill's Morris 8 toppled over a bank driving Dud back to his place.

... During one of the many working-bees at the Douglas Domain to lay tiles, school teacher Ray Hill took off his jersey while in the drain, and as a shower threatened, stuffed it up a tile. Predictably a chain or two further on, no jersey and no tile. As luck would have it, the first one dug up housed the jersey.

... Around 1920 the Douglas schoolchildren found a real bonanza in the escalonia hedge then outside the hall - a full bottle of whiskey. Temptation was great, and several of the bolder pupils sampled the find. Later in the afternoon the effects became obvious to the teacher, Miss Westrup, during a rehearsal of the school breakup fancy dress dance. Dancing performances were severely affected, and the upshot was a lot of parental consternation, inquisitions and some whackings.

... Douglas social cricket team opening batsmen of the forties Arthur Walter was holding out staunchly in a match out at Ohura while wickets toppled around him. His ruse of using pads and body as well as bat to keep his stumps protected suddenly came to a halt as he leapt into the air with a bellow - a ball had hit the box of wax matches in his pocket, and set the lot alight.

... Six o'clock closing of hotels went in 1968, and with it numerous brushes with the legal fraternity Douglas residents had through 'after hours' drinking at the nearest hostelry, the Toko Hotel. One unexpected Sunday raid from the law saw Douglas guests scatter three ways - to the mill, the factory and towards the church. Police were interested to note an elderly Douglas resident shovelling coal at the factory, another 'checking on the church timetable', and the third, also in advancing years, had almost set some record for the hurdle and sprint over a high fence and up to the refuge of the sawmill.

... A 'donneybrook' took place between Douglas and Strathmore residents in the early 1920s at a ball celebrating opening a new part to the Douglas Hall. There had been some feeling over what a group in Strathmore considered to be a 'wowserish' attitude by certain people in Douglas, and it came to a head over moves to ban smoking in the Douglas Hall. A truckload of about twenty chaps came from Strathmore determined to disrupt the ball, and minor skirmishes took place inside the hall. Ernie Cole was guarded as he went to the store to ring the police, who arrived when things had simmered down. Court proceedings followed, but apparently the M.C., local carrier 'Punga' Webb didn't press too hard as he had several clients in the Strathmore team!

... A test of courage for local children at about the same time was to crouch into a cattle stop flanking the railway crossing, staying there while the steam trains passed over above.

... When the railway was built from Douglas to Huiroa around 1905-1908 the tent village of workers was just past the second crossing up Douglas Road, near the start of Wilmshurst's property. Local butcher A. Ferguson used to regularly take up meat for the camp, killed in his slaughter-house across the road from where the old factory manager's house is today.

... The large implement shed on Ted Rodger's farm came from the Tangarakau railway town after the line had gone through. It used to be the old powerhouse until dismantled by Ted and his father and transported to its present site.

A few things had gone missing up the Douglas Road, including mail from letterboxes. A local farmer tackled the children suspected, threatening to take the stockwhip to them if it carried on. Next week his stockwhip was missing.

... Oruru, the original name of the railway station, is Maori for 'bog', 'to shake, or quiver' or 'place of the owl'.

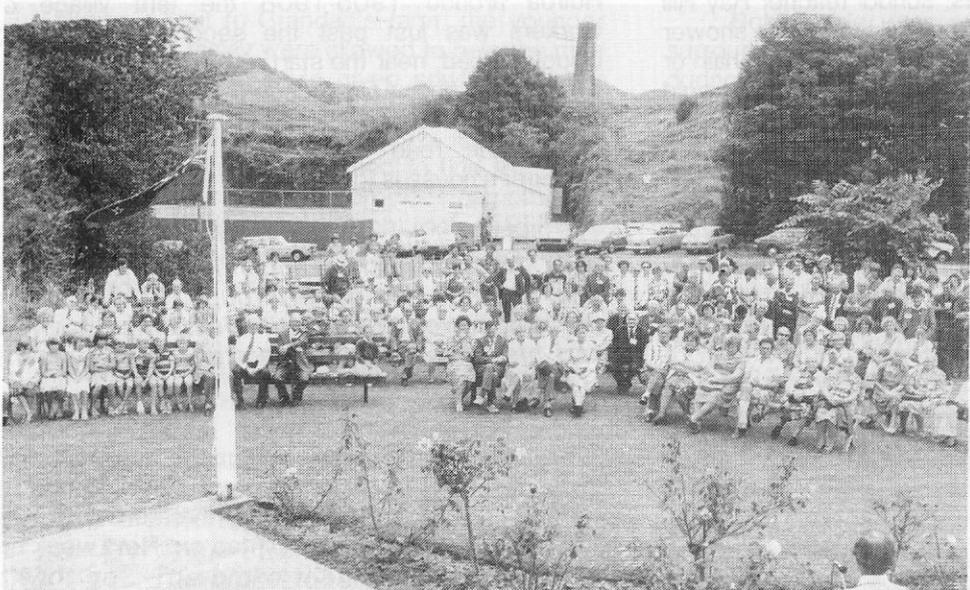
... The first butcher's shop was in the old store house, on the left of the driveway to John Howse's place, while the bakery was on the opposite side, alongside the stream bank.

... A twelve-year-old relation from Australia was helping the hay-making gang up the Makuri valley after dark around 1970. Suddenly a volley of blood-curdling yells came from up a hollow. "It's the Maoris - run for your life!", someone bellowed out, as the tractor and truck lights were cut. The general stampede was more than enough to convince the Aussie not to hang around.

... One of the livelier senior pupils of the late forties had taken quite a strapping from the headmaster for misbehaviour. Not to be outdone, he formally bowed to the teacher, and said thank you, sir. The next dose wasn't followed by any formalities.

... The drinkers at early Douglas Hall 'dos' cunningly placed their demi-johns of beer in fern, shrubs and banks outside for quick retrieval to quenched thirst between dances. Not cunning enough for some of the local youngsters, who methodically followed up to take a small amount of each, pour it into a bucket, and retire to sample the composite brew. For some time the Toko publican was unfairly blamed for pouring short measures into the demi-johns.

75th Jubilee



Scene at official opening of 75th Jubilee

First year pupils cut Jubilee cake at 75th Jubilee. Mrs Hilda Howard (Needham), Mrs Madge Dowdle (Smith) and Mrs Flora Mason (Smith)



when she recalled amusing incidents from her early schooldays.

To commemorate the occasion, Mrs Anita Walter who taught at the school during the years 1928-34, and until recently resided in Douglas planted a kauri tree in the school grounds.

Official photos of pupils through the years were taken in the school grounds, in eight groups covering the decades; and of teachers and committees.

Throughout the weekend the well-cared for grounds and the setting itself drew complimentary comments, a credit to the parents, children, teachers and groundsman.



Planting commemorative Kauri tree at 75th Jubilee. From left: David Walter (Jubilee Committee Secretary), Rex Downs (School Committee Chairman), Mrs Anita Walter, (past teacher 1928-1934), Hon. Jim Bolger (Minister of Labour, M.P. for King Country), Tom Bredow (Chairman Jubilee Committee)

Many a reminiscence led to another as guests focussed their attention on an excellent display of early photographs, articles and exhibits (many loaned by the Pioneer Village in Stratford), depicting Douglas past and present.

One schoolboy of the fifties recalled chopping up the teacher's strap and handing out the pieces to his friends as souvenirs. He was overheard recounting the incident by his mother, who suddenly realised what the heap of tiny leather pieces were that she'd found in a box of his belongings while moving house just that week.

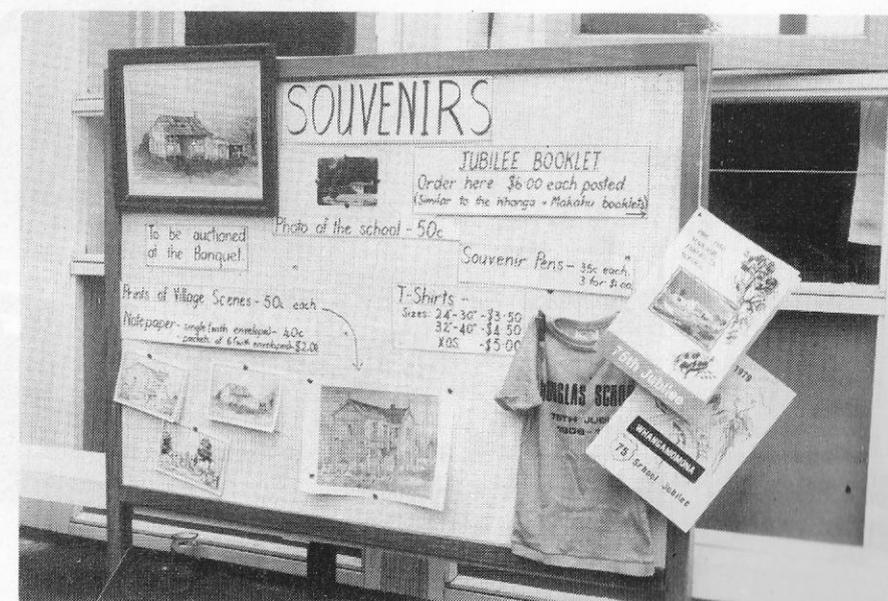
Visitors to the district, and locals were delighted to be given the chance to see through the old boarding house, which the present owners, Geraldine and Peter Johnson opened for the weekend.

Souvenirs on sale for the occasion proved extremely popular, and a brisk trade ensued throughout the weekend of ball-point pens and T-shirts printed in the school colours of navy and gold; prints of, and notepaper featuring sketches of the district; and colour photos of the school.

Prior to the banquet and ball in the hall which catered for 180 guests (\$50 double) and despite moments earlier in the week when members of the jubilee committee considered what could possibly be done with 200 guests should it rain, a cocktail hour was held in the school grounds in the balmy air of a late summer's evening.

During the night, a framed water-colour painted by Mavis Gibson (Stratford) of the old Douglas store last owned by Mr A. N. Paton, was auctioned and fetched \$80. In lighter vein, a fashion parade featuring local male models caused amusement.

One local sharemilker will be ever-thankful such events occur only every 25 years - he went straight from the ball to bring in the cows for milking, and was found by his wife sometime later, asleep in the paddock, his trusty farmbike at his side.



Souvenir Board at 75th Jubilee



Thanksgiving Service at 75th Jubilee conducted by Rev. Bernard Faull, Toko

A Thanksgiving Service on Sunday morning in the school grounds, conducted by Rev. Bernard Faull, was delivered to a congregation shading under sun-umbrellas. This was followed by luncheon in the hall.

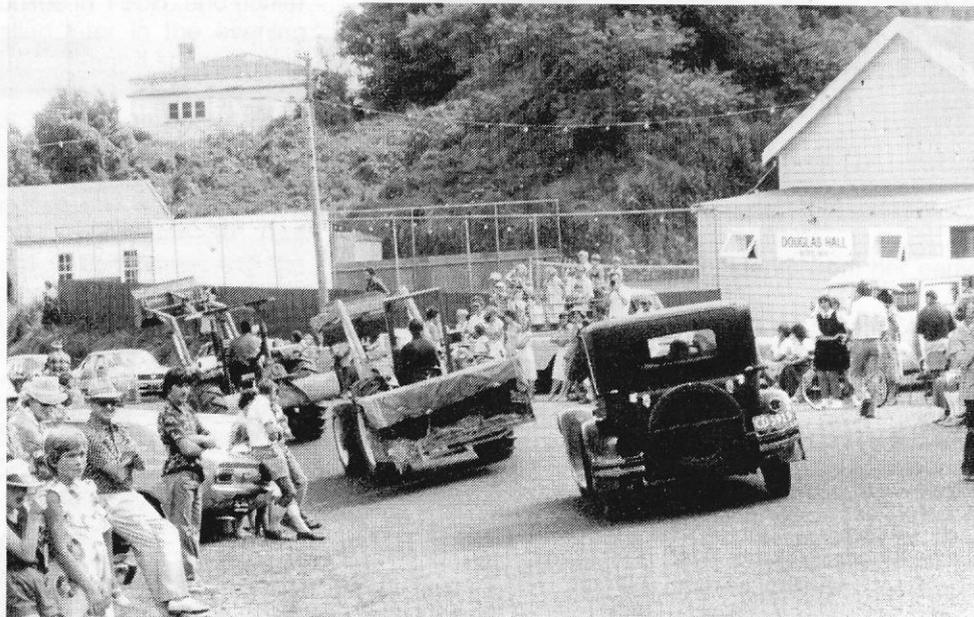
And even if opinion existed before Sunday afternoon's grand parade that "it's all been seen before" - there's nothing quite like a parade of one's own. And certainly there'd never been anything seen like it in Douglas before.

Watched by a huge crowd, including Sunday-drivers out from town, the colourful and highly organised parade, led by the Eltham Highland Pipe Band, progressed at a slow pace from the school to the domain. It included a bullock-wagon, pack-horse (which didn't quite make it to the domain), horse-drawn carriages, vintage cars and old-time trucks and tractors that contrasted with the large present-day models, and family groups dressed for the occasion.

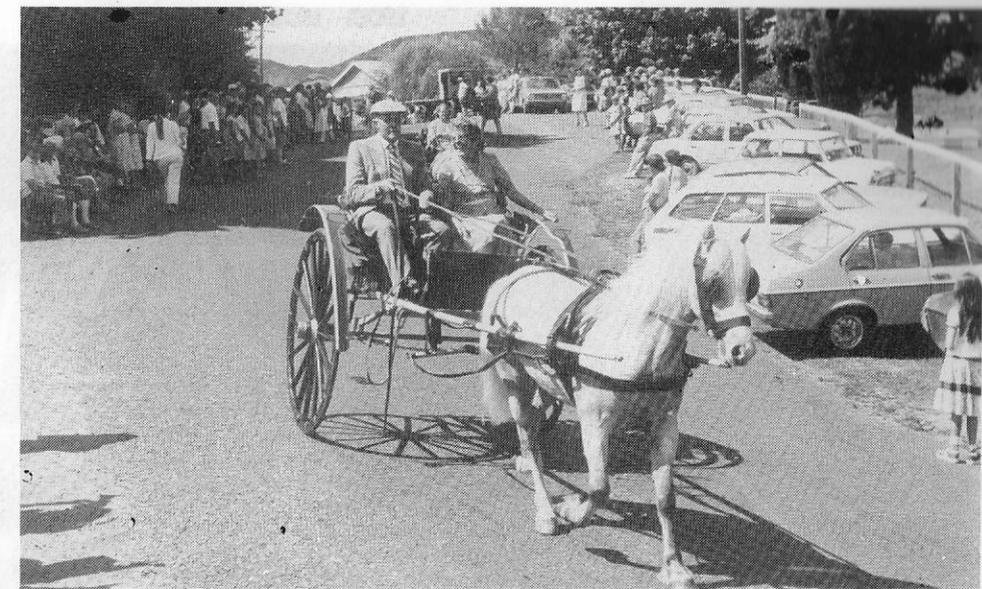
All the present day pupils of the Douglas school featured in a pageant presentation of "School Transport Through the Years". By foot, horseback, cycle and schoolbus they came, wearing appropriate costumes, and well-controlled by teachers Pam and Trevor Signal. Headmaster, complete with top-hat, tails and pince-nez was seen apprehending, in fact whipping two female adult miscreants on a tandem-bike, for stopping to "chat-up" male spectators on the roadside.

"Miss Piggy", a live porker donated by a local farmer was auctioned at the domain for the princely sum of \$140.

Somewhat loathe to end the festivities, an impromptu pot-luck tea drew the weekend to a conclusion, but not before previously unrecognised talent was unearthed in four-year-old Bruce Howse. To the chant of "we want Bruce", and the delight of an appreciative audience of local kids, he performed original song and dance acts on stage. A young lad with a bright future!



Douglas 75th Jubilee Parade



Mrs Billie Bredow being driven in 75th Jubilee parade by Dick Mitchell, Huiroa

Is there any need to mention that the whole weekend was relived, the next day during the working-bee to clean-up and finish-up.

And while the secretary of the school committee was able at last to fulfil a secret ambition and pedal off downhill on the tandem-bike, (with someone else's wife up-front), will the question ever be answered as to why and how the school bus managed to get out of control of its driver next day back at school? It was found somewhat askew in the bike-shed, a fence post impaled through its windscreen.

It was also reported, on good authority, that just as Ray Hill was first to arrive at each function, one

Graeme Walter was about the last to leave each "morning". A creditable performance. And one committee man returned home after the final function to discover his wife asleep on the lounge floor where she'd dropped off to sleep after a hot bath, and in the throes of exercising her worn-out legs.

Perhaps the success of the whole weekend can best be summed up in the words of one old-timer who had recently been told by his doctor, he "had a good 20 years of life in him yet!" He was determined to stretch that to 25 years - so he'll be sure of making it to the Centennial Jubilee in 2006.



Douglas school children parading in "School Transport Through the Years" pageant.

1906 - 1915



Back Row: Jack Thomas, Ada Cawsey (Chapman), Burt Wilmshurst, Chris Wilmshurst, Doris Boyd (Watson), Tom Smith, Jim McLellan, Arthur Smith.
Front Row: Doris Phillips (Smith), Flora Mason (Smith), Hilda Howard (Needham), Claude Rogers, Archie Rogers, Trudie Stoddart (Bredow), Rita Caldwell (Jacobs), Madge Dowdle (Smith), Jean Parkes (Needham), Snow Needham.

1916 - 1925



Back Row: Frank Latham, Albert Gichard, Jackson Brown, Hazel Warrender (Wilmshurst), Pat Ewens needham, Eileen Clarke (Rodgers), Ted Smith, Ted Rodgers.
Front Row: Edith Potroz (Jacobs), Frances Milner (Jacobs), Joe Jacobs, Doug Bunning, Ken Latham, Edna Jacobsen (Phillips), Teresa Potts (Gooch), Ellen Tobeck (Gooch), Maud Ford (Rodgers), Maidie Johnstone (Bunning).

1926 - 1935



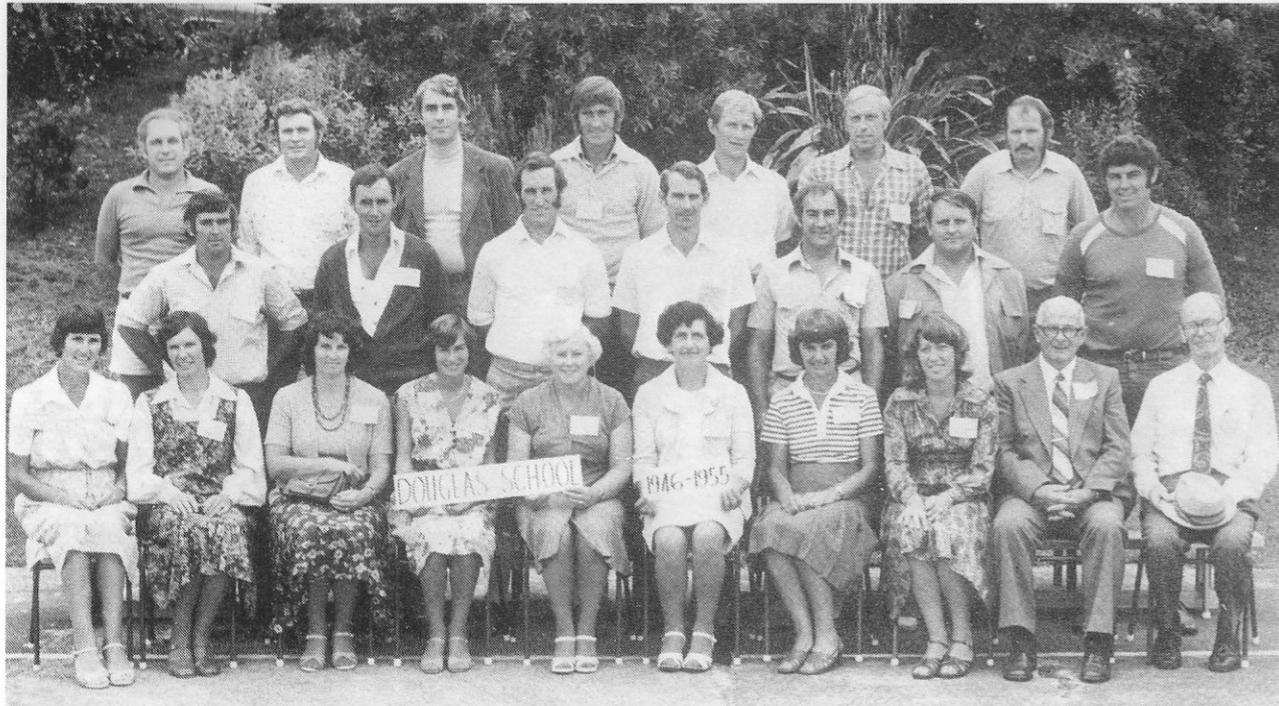
Back Row: Hugh Ancell, Tom Mason, Don Walter, Jim Thompson, Ernie Reader.
Front Row: Gloria Tanswell (Walter), Bessie Williams (Reader), Margaret Garlick (Mason), Audrey Bell (Bonner), Margaret Wackrow (Walter), Olive Bassett (Rumball), Bill Reader, Bob Reader, Bob Mason.

1936 - 1945



Back Row: Barry Pepperell, Murray Rodgers, Graham Chapman, Jim Mason, Denys Latham, Milton Smith, Bruce Ancell, David Walter.
Second Row: Mr Ivan Pepperell (teacher), Bradley Walter, Joan Keate (Walter), Ngaire Smith (Smith), John Bovey, Raymond Newport, Tom Bredow, Murray Walter.
Third Row: Joyce Bond (Cawsey), Shirley Greenhill (Chapman), Edna Coulton (Mason), Dorothy O'Neill (Mason), Shirley Reichardt (Bonner), Eva Frank (Selby), Dulcie Chainey (Saywell), Doreen Harwood (Bishop), Shirley Hanover (Smith).
Front Row: Ruth Bonner (Ford), Margaret Christie (Wilmshurst), Norma Greenway (Reid), Margaret Marx (Hill), Eileen Kemp (Saywell), Mr Ray Hill (teacher), Alison Baker (Selby), Freda Taylor (Hook), Stella Adlam (Newport), Peggy Wilson (Bellamy).

1946 - 1955



Back Row: Denys Latham, Selwyn Rodgers, Michael Howse, John Howse, Tony Rumball, Ian Latham, Jim Ham.
Middle Row: John Rodgers, Graeme Walter, John Walter, Peter Coles, Ashley Pepperell, Michael Paton, Alan Smith.
Front Row: Helen Clarke (Walter), Mavis O'Brien (Walter), Gail Wright (Pepperell), Shirley Sutcliffe (Coles), Eleanor O'Byrne (Sexton), Colleen Collier, Elizabeth Kilmister (Walter), Justine Cranfield (Walter), Mr Ray Hill (teacher), Mr Ron Munro (teacher).

1956 - 1965



Back Row: Murray Reid, Graeme Garlick, Mr Hugh Wright (teacher), Kevin Graham, David Bell.
Middle Row: Gillian Kerr (Wright), Colin Curry, Wayne Garlick, David Stallard, Graeme Cox, Graeme Reid, Wayne Curry, Alan Curry.
Front Row: Robyn Smaller (Paton), Jeannie Augur (Harwood), Bronwyn Garlick, Connagh Andrews (Ewens), Sheryl Dettling (Garlick), Valma Ogle (Cox), Lynne Harkness (Cox), Anne Walter, Carolyn Drummond (Browne), Jennie Cameron (Gordon)

1966 - 1975



Back Row: Phillippa Walter, Robyn Walter, Pauline Baker, Sally Bredow, Sonia Coupe, Susan Taylor, Janine Cox.
Second Row: Jeffery Taylor, Graham Hughes, Andrew Molloy, Steven Avery, Mark Walter, Dawson Coupe, Gavin Taylor, Alan Baker, Julie Bell, Kim Molloy.
Third Row: Mrs Marilyn Bellamy (teacher), Judy Williams, Sharon Aitken, Nicola Walter, Sharon Downs, Linda Reichardt, Jennifer Stallard, Kay Walter, Karen Bonner, Helen Thomson, Mrs Elizabeth Hughes (teacher).
Front Row: Anna Coupe, Wendy Avery, Catherine Stallard, Margaret Browne, Megan Molloy, Mr Walter Molloy (teacher), Gayleen Aitken, Mandy Coupe, Shona Frank, Lynette Baker.

1981 Pupils



Back Row: Alan Williams, Sheree Chapman, Carri-Anne Reid, Stuart Signal, Cindy Gray, Julie-Ann Ward, Paul Howse, Cheryl Smith, Brook Tyrell, Mr Trevor Signal (teacher), Mrs Pam Signal (teacher).
Middle Row: Andrew Howse, Stephanie Thomson, Josephine Coles, Matthew Walter, David Downs, Gerald Smith, Gavin Williams, Roderick Walter, Anthony Smith, Grant Signal, Nikki Gray.
Front Row: Andrina Browne, Michelle Ward, Vanessa Thomson, Leanne Downs, Bernice Williams, Derilee Chapman, Tracey O'Byrne, Jennifer Signal, Andrea Walter, Maree Chapman, Anthea Williams.

TEACHERS



Back Row: Mrs Elizabeth Hughes, Mrs Marilyn Bellamy, Mr Walter Molloy, Mr Hugh Wright, Mr Trevor Signal, Mrs Cheryl Howse (Spiers), Mrs Alison Walter.
Front Row: Mrs Dorothy Anderson, Mr Ivan Pepperell, Mrs Anita Walter (Frethey), Mr Ray Hill, Mr Ron Munro, Mrs Pam Signal.

School Committees



Back Row: Tom Mason, Ted Smith, Ron Ford, Jim Sexton, Jack Collier, Lyall Stallard, Jim Reid, Cliff Cox, Rob Curry, Peter Taylor.
Front Row: Lesley Graham, Jackson Brown, Bill Diffey, Alison Walter, Judy Chapman, Rex Downs, Bob Thomson, Richard Coles, Tom Bredow, Frank Bell.

As It Happened

... Towards the end of the 1939-45 war two Douglas brothers spent an evening in the company of a local girl and her visiting friend. The younger brother had left his bike near the roadside gate of the home down the lane, and when the inside lights went off at midnight - as they were blackout days - he thought it time to head for home, past the village. What he didn't know as he crept stealthily away was that the latch of the gate had been tied to the trigger of a shotgun by some other brothers. The great boom and flash of fire when he opened the latch shattered the still moonlit night. He tore off up the road with fright, dozens of pukekos squarking and all the valley's farm dogs yowling. His bike parked nearby didn't rate a thought and stayed leaning on the fence by the gate for at least the night.

... A visiting Hawera cricketer thought he'd leapt into Dante's inferno at the end of the drought summer of 1978. A peat fire on the domain boundary had been smouldering for some time, lit from neighbouring farmer Alan Smith's timber fire. Fieldsman Frank Norgate sank almost to his knees in the hot cinders when recovering the ball. He smartly backtracked, while it took some minutes to recover the charcoaled ball with a rake.

- First Chairman of the school committee, Mr Ted Walter M.P., has had 46 of his descendants go through the Douglas school - five Rumballs, four Smiths and 37 Walters. First to attend was Arthur Walter in 1907, while there was a gap for about four years in the early 1960s between Mavis and Anne Walter.

... An agent called one day to see J. C. Smith Snr., then aged 88. "You won't get him today", he was told. "He left early this morning with his lunch to go draining for the day".

... Ponies were used as lawnmowers on some sections a few years back when they were more common for school transport and the pony club flourished. One such white steed, named Billy, ended up in a most unusual situation when he somehow toppled from the top lawn on Mr Jack Walter's homestead, then near the Douglas saddle. Directly below the lawn was the 'outhouse' - prior to the days of septic tanks - and backwards into the building through the open door Billy had toppled.

... Only the courageous actions of 11-year-old Michael Paton and 15-year-old Teresa Burkitt averted what could have been a triple drowning accident in the swollen stream near the factory in 1957. Michael had been playing with 8-year-old Antony Slape in the flooded paddocks, when Antony walked too close to the stream and was whisked away. Michael went to his rescue, but the two were taken some distance downstream before Mr Paton caught, them, dived in fully clothed with his black store smock on. He soon got into difficulties himself holding the children, and Miss Burkitt dived in to somehow scramble the children onto the bank and push Mr Paton to the side to enable him to clamber up exhausted.

... A well-known Douglas identity offered a lift further east to another drinker at the Toko Hotel in his truck. After a couple of miles the passenger, an off-duty policeman, announced that he didn't like the way the truck was being driven. The statement was repeated after a couple more corners, and with no further response, the driver was told he was under arrest. The threat was withdrawn on the condition the passenger took the wheel. The problem was solved even quicker, as the driver slammed the truck into gear and roared off into the night as the passenger was walking around the back to change places.

... Mr Edmondson, visiting music teacher to the school in the twenties was an extremely patriotic Englishman. He always began his lessons with 'God Save the King', rising even to play his piano in a standing position.

... A contractor heading back east after a weekend in town in the 30s had forgotten to get more meat for his workforce on the site. The problem was solved by pilfering a couple of bobby calves from a pen near Douglas - apparently those in the gang were impressed by the length of rib of the 'mutton' chops that made up the evening stew. The same farmer suffered another time when pig hunters were returning to the Toko Hotel empty-handed after promising to provide a 'porker' for a raffle. The offenders crept into his pigsty, made sure the pig was pretty 'wild' before they caught it, and therefore didn't 'fall out' with those back in the pub.

Remember This?

... Collecting school milk from the railway station each morning - using a two-wheeled cart.

... *Playing lunchtime games among the school terraces - they were periodically out of bounds.*

... The teacher's embarrassment during a school concert as the lights were turned out for Father Christmas to arrive while the children sang "Silent Night". With no music to follow he struck the wrong notes, the children quickly followed his discordant sounds and chaos prevailed.

... *The long plume of black smoke as a steam train made its way through the valley.*

... Collecting empty bottles from under hedges to be cashed-in at the store for tuppence worth of sweets. One enterprising group ran a "recycling" racket before being caught-out by the storekeeper.

... *The fashion of the late 1950's to wear Sox and ties of luminous colours - burnt orange, shocking pink, lime green, ming blue - and how well they showed up in twilight tennis matches!*

... The teacher who had to jump into the swimming pool, fully clothed, to rescue a certain pupil he'd thrown in the pool for "snapping" him with a water-pistol camera.

... *The cricket bats hand-made from willow by Mr Ernie Cole for use at the school.*

... The school picnics of the 1930's in the form of an excursion train trip to Ngamotu beach, with a separate carriage for each school group, and fruit and sweets all-round.

... *The local mum who "left" one of her offspring behind at a school picnic.*

... Selling Mr Paton his own empty soft drink bottles back, and getting lined up for the offence after he'd marked some of them.

... *Trips to town on Joe France's bus from out back around 1950.*

... Playing in the puddles on the way to school that had turned to ice and suffering cold, wet feet for the rest of the morning.

... *Monday morning, trooping out to "raise the flag", saluting and singing (or speaking) God Defend New Zealand, and saying a prayer.*

... All milk cocoa made over an open fire, the "big" girls taking turns to mix it.

... *Apple issue - lovely Granny Smiths.*

... Quiet Friday afternoons when the boys went out to do the gardening, and the girls went to Miss Willett's room for sewing lessons, all hand-sewing, and another pot-mit for Mum the result.

... *Tearing across to the tennis courts at playtimes and lunchtimes.*

... The weed collection for Nature Study.

... *The good days when a new box of books arrived from the National Library Service and were unpacked.*

... School sports' days and some schools actually having a whole team, even two teams.

... *Mr Pepperell announcing, "the war is over", shouting and cheering on the way home early from school that day, and Mr Ward coming out of the store and telling everyone to be quiet and go home.*

... Trips to Stratford for dental treatment, going in by Joe Francis' "bus", returning by train.

... *Ritchie Coles' "Carrying Company" transporting the tennis team to and fro competition games in his old Ford truck... and the herd-tester's (Bill Coupe's) van used for the same purpose.*

