

Some Cockle Bay History

(These Speaking Notes were kindly provided by Alan La Roche. They summarize some of the points presented in his address to the Cockle Bay Residents and Ratepayers Association AGM on 18 July 2020)

We are so very lucky to live in such a wonderful part of New Zealand

What is the name of the bay between Cockle Bay and Beachlands on official maps? **Te Kariki**= the father of seabirds

Jules Sebastian Cesar Dumont D'Urville who came from an aristocratic family grew up during the French Revolution sailed through the Hauraki Gulf in 1827 and named Beachlands to Cockle Bay as "**Baie Cruise**" as **Major Cruise was present on the French** frigate "Astrolabe".

1842= Cockle bay was surveyed for farm allotments. **The first settlers called it** Cockle Bay although they were **Tuangi**, that looked like Cockles.

1853 Rev. V. Lush bought 413 acres at Cockle Bay from missionary Rev John Wilson for £1 an acre. Lush burned shell on Cockle Bay Beach "**turning a heap of shell into a heap of money**". Burned shell was mixed with water to make mortar for erecting brick chimneys. He also bought 500 acres, now Whitford Country Club also for £1 an acre only to sell it to Alexander Kennedy Mgr. of Union Bank of Australia [later sold to BNZ] in June 1854 £1000=doubling his investment. **December 1923.** John Gill, from Avoca, Co. Wicklow, Ireland who moved an abandoned Fencibles Cottage lived at "**Four Winds**" Cockle Bay Road, owned Cockle Bay Estate and subdivided his farm with sections from £100 to £275. **But in 1924** as there were hundreds of sections also available at Beachlands, Maraetai, Eastern Beach John Gill reduced his prices to £50 to £200.

1928 Crawford's buses which operated from Howick to Auckland could only stop at top of Granger Road as Cockle Bay Road too steep and dangerous on clay road. Cook St- Paparoa Rd-Litten Road to Granger Rd. Their depot was at the top of Picton St.

1929 The Howick Residents and Ratepayers Association was formed with Rev Scott as first Chairman, 2/6 sub per year but must be on the Howick Town Board electoral roll, Dec. 31 to Dec. 31st and if not paid by 1st March it is assumed you have resigned. The President, Secretary and executive member must attend every Howick Town Board meeting every month. Howick population 545.

Howick Horticulture and Beautifying Society formed in 1923 planted **pohutukawa trees** at Cockle Bay and Howick Beaches. It included Miss Nixon, Mrs Gilmour, William Green.

1930 The Cockle Bay Ratepayers and Improvement Association wrote to Manukau County Council wanting bathing sheds, 2 streetlights and improved roading. **Cockles and tuatua were commercially harvested** at Cockle Bay for Auckland hotels. By old Tottenham.

In March 1931 a group of Cockle Bay men in a 10-foot boat put out a line to catch schnapper but only caught 7 sharks one 10 feet long, one 15-footer swam nearby. They

caught no schnapper. **About this time Arthur White caught an octopus at Howick beach 2 m across**

Cockle Bay electoral boundary changed, transferred from Manukau County Council to Howick Town Board.

1932 more shell and some metal put on Cockle Bay Road.

Electric power is extended from Howick to include Cockle Bay. It arrived in Howick in **1927**. Cockle bay to get 2 streetlights.

Also, in 1932 Tenders called for erection of “sanitary conveniences” by Manawaterere’s pohutukawa at the eastern end of Cockle Bay Beach. It had an Iron roof, wooden weatherboards, and a can emptied by a night-cartman. NO septic tank, NO LONG drop, No sewage out to sea, but smells.

1934 Wire baskets for waste were overfilled and the Cockle Bay Domain Board was told to empty them and burn the rubbish on the beach. NO plastic then.

In 1934 The Howick Golf Club started with 9 holes where John Gill Rd. is today. Low fences kept sheep off the greens. **1946 they leased 300** acres of Archie Somerville and **moved to Musick Pt in 1954**

1936 Grazing rights advertised on the Cockle Bay Domain, behind today's Playcentre

1937 Cockle Bay Residents and Ratepayers object to a proposal for a large motor camp for Cockle Bay on private property.

1939 Mr Lampshire who has a grocer's store, milk bar and boarding house asks for a petrol pump for Cockle Bay near the Beach. Approved. Petrol pumps **removed in WWII**.

1939 Cockle Bay Progressive Association meet with Howick Town Board for first time.

Shelly Park Ratepayers Association request metal for pohutukawa Avenue to cover clay.

1944 a Poultry farm behind the bus stop was approved. Later closed and converted into a house. Many smells. Demolished by order of Hck Borough Council in 1950

1946 after the War the **Howick Residents and Ratepayers Association** restart and changes its name to **Howick Progressive Association**, open to all residents.

1950 Cockle Bay gets a coin operated telephone booth at corner Pah Rd - Shelly Bch Pde. The Cockle Bay Yacht club started

1950 Cockle Bay Progressive Association wanted reticulated water as they were all on tank supply. Howick had reticulated water since 1931 from Pigeon Mt. bore. When it was connected to Auckland water under the Tamaki River bridge. A special rate was suggested but declined.

For many years Cockle Bay residents had Little Blue Penguins nesting under their baches, needing dog-boards to keep them out.

January 1952 the Howick Progressive Association holds a public meeting in a packed Howick Town Hall, Picton St. re-siting of the new toilets at Mellons Bay, Howick Beach and **much debated Cockle Bay Beach** without obstructing the views. It must be on the beach

side at Cockle Bay to avoid accidents with children crossing the road. Heated arguments until after 11 pm **much weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth**. To include men's and women's toilets and changing rooms, in the centre, western end or eastern end?? NOT outside my house. Some wanted sewage drained out to sea - blocked by Health Dept.

3 groups.

1 Cockle Bay Progressive Association

2 The Cockle Bay Beach Preservation Society residents at eastern end.

3 The Cockle Bay Spoilation Prevention Society with Mr F.C.Jordan solicitor, and Mrs McCarthy residents at the western end.

Mrs Jessie Thom member of Howick Town Board and later Howick Borough Council had her, weekend only, "Bay Views Tearooms" near the middle looking at the toilets!! But she could still smell them.

The full referendum organised by Howick Progressive Association in March 1952 resulted in the **centre being voted best site**. Using septic tank.

1953 there were 200 gathering cockles on the beach and many were concerned about the raw sewage from Orakei Wharf outfall, released on an outgoing tide was washed up all over the Cockle Bay cockle beds. Thoughts of typhoid fever.

Sir Dove-Meyer Robinson's son contracted meningitis swimming at Glendowie forced a change in policy about Browns Island sewage. The Polio epidemic of December 1948 when schools closed for 3 months, 8 died and 113 were hospitalised, possibly from swimming changed attitudes. Browns Island discharge was not favoured. Instead **Mangere treatment plant was chosen. Mangere Treatment opened in 1960**. This was when all of Cockle Bay sewage went through to Howick Beach and the spoil became the grassed reserve at the eastern end of the beach. 30% increase in rates but no more smelly septic tanks.

1953 Lyn Gurney of "Windy Ridge" in Cockle Bay Road painted a set of horse themed coasters presented to the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh who were visiting NZ. Now called "Magpie Cottage".

In 1953 the Howick Post newspaper used to print births, deaths and swaps in the newspaper. The picture bus from Cockle Bay to the Monterey Theatre service stopped.

1956 The Mangemangeroa rubbish tip by the bridge closed

1956 Cockle Bay School opens in March. Mr Tonks is headteacher. Kevin Petersen was head from 1967 to 1984. He is now 93 years old.

1957 Cockle Bay Playcentre opens

1960 An oil refinery is proposed for Beachlands. R&R object.

1964 water-ski lanes approved for Cockle Bay Beach using a quarter of the beach.

In 1964 Cockle Bay Beach had a butchery, 2 grocers stores, 2 milk bars and a Post Office.

Lauchlan Drinkrow wanted to build a causeway from Cockle Bay to Beachlands then reclaim all the estuary inland from the causeway. It did not proceed.

1978 another plan from Howick Borough Council wanted a small caravan park, a skateboard bowl, a flying-fox and a tidal play deck moored off the beach for high tide use.

The Howick Borough Council bought 2 more sections and houses were removed to enlarge the reserve and in **October 1979** Owhanga-Windross Restaurant was moved to Cockle Bay from Cook Street making room for further developments and new Howick Borough Council headquarters in Moore Street.

1984, December. Howick Ratepayers Protection Association formed. Against rate increases. Waikitea= long water views.

A tsunami in 1980's from a Chilean earthquake demolished the Shelly Park sandspit or extra high springtides.

2-gun emplacements. **WECS** (Whitford Estuary Conservation Society) have challenged the developer of **Whitford Manor Estate** who plan to discharge 'treated' wastewater into Turanga River that will flow over Cockle Bay cockles.

Alan La Roche MBE
Howick Historian

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