

# **‘Things I can remember’**

**by**

**Bernard Stafford O’Neill**

**Alexandra**

**2016**

Edited and illustrated by Patrick N. O’Neill, Canberra, November 2020.  
The first half of this document contains Bernard’s edited and annotated memoirs;  
the second half contains his manuscript version.

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**Bernard and Ann O'Neill at their Golden Wedding celebration, 19 January 2014**





Bernard and Ann O'Neill Golden Wedding, Alexandra, 19 January 2014 - The Whole Gathering

back: Peter O'Neill, Trevor Carline, Bruce McKay, Blair Hoets, Thomas O'Neill, Ross Hoets, Mitch Moran, Zac Carline, Wattie O'Neill, Paddy Moran, Matt Hoets, Fred Hoets.

middle: Virginia O'Neill beside Johanna, Jack, Bridget and Brendon; Pam and Tamsin Hughes, Maria McKay, Samuel O'Neill, Jamie Moran, Mac Carline, Sarah O'Neill, Carmen Moran, Steph Carline, Sandra O'Neill, Amelia in the arms of Jo Hoets, Richard O'Neill, Billy Moran, Alison O'Neill, Grace Hoets, Aily Carline, Eve Hoets, Ryan Finlinson, Stacey and Jonny Hoets, Isla in the arms of Anna Jeffries, Harry and Luke Jeffries, Ian Davis, Ron Dodds, Billie Tohill.

front: Stan and Nancy McAuslan, Una Graham, Wendy and Brian Kearney, Lorna and Leo O'Neill, Bernard and Ann O'Neill, Robin Norton, Sally and Mike Galvin, Carmel and Ray Kerr, Nicky Davis, Jenny Paterson, Peg Dodds, Rae Stewart, Jack Holdom.



# Things I can remember

## My grandparents

George Stafford O'Neill, known always as "Stafford", arrived in New Zealand on the ship S.S. *Bombay* at the George Street Pier, Port Chalmers on Thursday 24 January 1884.<sup>1</sup> George Stafford was a steerage passenger. He stayed his first night in Dunedin at the Gridiron Hotel. It is now the site of the Lone Star Cafe.<sup>2</sup>

Before Stafford arrived in New Zealand, he had been to the USA, namely New York City. Had worked at a brick yard on Manhattan Island. I don't know how long he spent there. But later returned to Ireland to say good-bye to his family before coming to New Zealand. The steamship *Bombay* left Plymouth, England at midnight on 28 November 1883. There was only one stop on this journey to Port Chalmers NZ—at St Vincent, Cape Verde Islands. These are off the west coast of Africa adjacent to Mauritania. Stafford was a "steerage passenger" who paid his way himself. Many (maybe most) people were assisted passengers—he was not.

George Stafford married Bridget Herlihy at Naseby on 21 January 1895. Bridget Herlihy is the second-eldest baby registered on the birth records for Hamiltons, Otago Central (9 November 1865).<sup>3</sup> Bridget Herlihy's mother was Mary Moran, born in Galway, Ireland, and her father was James Herlihy, born about 1835 in Kerry. Records show that James Herlihy was in Victoria, Australia before coming to Otago. As near as I can guess, he arrived in Otago in 1863. Mary Moran (later Herlihy) arrived on one of two ships: the *Ben Lomond* at Otago Harbour on 19 January 1863 or the *Silistria* at Otago Harbour on 19 April 1863. There was a Mary Moran passenger on each of these boats. A small point: Bridget Sullivan, whose eventual husband was James Spedderi of Garibaldi/Gimmerburn, was a shipmate of Mary Moran.

About three of Stafford's brothers:

- Joseph went to U.S.A. (New York City). Evidently there was some trouble at the water front where he worked. His body was never found. People thought that it had been thrown in the Hudson River. When Ann and I visited John and Agnes O'Neill of Newburgh NY, John told me that his father had made various visits to the morgue in New York City about his brother Joseph. We stayed with John and Agnes in July 1990 (son of Sinney O'Neill).
- Sinney also went to U.S.A. and settled at Newburgh NY. He married Sarah Convery, who came from Ireland, at St Patrick's Church, Newburgh NY on 10 June 1896. Sinney was killed in an accident at Hopewell Junction on 23 December 1907.
- Hugh also went to U.S.A. and settled at Newburgh NY. He married Johanna Dillon at St Patrick's Cathedral, New York City on 11 June 1905. We met all of Hugh's family

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<sup>1</sup> The *Bombay* had a steel hull and was steam- and sail-propelled. Gross 3133 Tons, 511 Passengers, 70 crew, three stowaways. Dalgetys were the agents.

<sup>2</sup> The Lone Star Cafe site is now O'Neill Devereux Lawyers on Princes Street. My reason for mentioning this site is that it was originally the site of the Gridiron Hotel. Stafford O'Neill's first night in New Zealand was spent at this establishment. Forever after, if in Dunedin, he liked to stay there.

<sup>3</sup> Edward George Schrick (born on 4 September 1865) was registered second, preceded by Amy Broad (born on 24 January 1866), the first child whose birth was registered at Hamiltons.

in 1990 while at Newburgh. I believe we have photos of all these living first cousins of Dad's. I hope to list them separately.<sup>4</sup>

More information about George Stafford O'Neill. He was my Grandad. He died before I was born. But I knew his widow, Bridget, well. She was good with history of family, though fairly deaf. After Stafford arrived in 1884, he went to Tasmania. He lost his saved money in a Bank crash and came back to New Zealand. His quote: "I have travelled enough" and so he stayed at Patearoa. He is buried in Ranfurly cemetery.



**George Stafford O'Neill and Bridget Herlihy wedding, Naseby, 21 January 1895,  
with witnesses Kate Herlihy and Pat Cassidy Jnr**

An interesting story that I have been told and also have in writing.<sup>5</sup> When Grandad Stafford was a boy of about five years, he could well remember having to move home from Eden to Ballymacpeake. The law (British law) decreed that they, the O'Neill family, had too much land and so the farmland at Eden was taken from them and given to a family named Stewart. Many years later, while James O'Neill, the eldest son, was working as a policeman in another part of

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<sup>4</sup> For the separate listing, see pp. 17 ff.

<sup>5</sup> The source of this story is Mary McErlean, Moneystaghan, Portglenone, Co Derry - letter to Bernard O'Neill about family history 12 June 1977.pdf.

Ireland, information got around that the Stewarts had financial trouble.<sup>6</sup> The Stewarts put the property on the market at auction. James O'Neill had a person blind-bid on his behalf at the auction and so bought the lost land back again for the O'Neill family.

About the time Stafford and Bridget Herlihy married in January 1895, land in the Maniototo County was being cut up for settlement by farmers. In common with many other people, Stafford and Bridget put their names into these ballots. The land Bridget drew they settled on and raised their family on. This land would have been cut from Patearoa Station.

Another little bit of history: Dad's father bought the Ranfurly saleyards when they came up at auction in 1930. I am looking at the sale now. Addressed to Mr G.S. O'Neill in a/c with J.I. Fraser, Solicitor, Ranfurly. Sale of Otago Central Saleyards Coy. to John Joseph O'Neill, my Dad, paid for by Grandad Stafford. The site is now Stafford Street in Ranfurly. Cost of purchase to Stafford O'Neill £510. Plus other costs, total £521/13/00.<sup>7</sup>

O'Neills called the farm "Loretto" after Our Lady's title "Our Lady of Loretto". The old home farm is now part of a large dairy farm owned by Harvard University of U.S.A.

		Mr. G. S. O'Neill, Patearoa,	
		in account with	
		J. I. Fraser, Solicitor, Ranfurly.	
		<u>Otago Central Saleyards Coy. to</u>	
		<u>John Joseph O'Neill.</u>	
1930		To purchase money for Secs 14 & 17 Blk	
Mch	10	XVI, Town of Ranfurly.	
		510	0 0
	"	Stamp duty on agreement.	5 10 0
	"	Scale costs of transfer.	5 5 0
	"	Stamp duty, registration fee on trans-	
		fer, form etc.	18 0
	By deposit.		51 0 0
	"	Stamp duty paid.	5 10 0
	"	Balance.	465 3 0
		521 13 6	521 13 0
	E. & O. E.	To balance.	£465 3 0
Ranfurly, 6th March 1930.			

George Stafford O'Neill, purchase of Ranfurly saleyards for son Jack, March 1930

<sup>6</sup> James O'Neill (1855–1936) was a sergeant in the Royal Irish Constabulary at Buncrana, Co. Donegal, when he married in October 1898, but all his children were born at Ballymacpeake.

<sup>7</sup> For the sale document, see illustration on following page. On 19 May 1930, Stafford consequently made a codicil excluding his son Jack from the proceeds of his will.



## My parents

Today is Wednesday 12 October 2016.

I am the eldest of five children born to John Joseph and Emily O'Neill. John, known as "Jack", and Emily, youngest of Charlie and Sarah Dougherty's family. Jack was the youngest of seven children born to the George Stafford O'Neill family. Five grew up and married, each having children born to them. Two others died as teenagers. Josephine at age 12. Dad said that Josephine and he had measles; she had a relapse and died; she is buried in Ranfurly. May died at, I think, 15 years of age of Brights Disease. Kidney trouble, I think; she is buried in Ranfurly. I have wedding photos of each O'Neill couple. Plus a good wedding photo of Stafford and Bridget's wedding on 21 January 1895. They married in Naseby. Bridget's sister, Catherine, and her future husband Pat Cassidy were bridesmaid and best man.<sup>8</sup>

Some things my Dad told me. He worked for his uncle, Jim Herlihy, at Patearoa farm after he left school. He was the only one of his family to have a high school education. Firstly at Patearoa school, then at Christian Brothers School, Rattray Street, Dunedin (now Kavanagh College); he spent one year there. Then his parents sent him to Holy Cross College, Mosgiel—his parents thought he might make a priest. I'm not sure how long he spent there, maybe a year or so. He told his parents "No way", and so came home to Patearoa. He was at Uncle Jim Herlihy's property for a while, then obtained a carpenter's apprenticeship with Owen Cambridge. Owen ran a building business out of Patearoa. Dad said Owen was a good tradesman, however one item he mentioned a few times to me was: when you wanted paid wages—just go and ask for them. Not like today.



**Wedding party at McNamaras Hotel, Ranfurly, 18 July 1933: Jack O'Neill (left), Jimmy Kearney (boy), Emmy O'Neill**

Emily Dougherty and Dad married on 18 July 1933 at Ranfurly. Dad's birthday; he would be 29 years of age that day. I have a photo of some of the wedding celebrations. The wedding

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<sup>8</sup> Catherine Herlihy and Pat Cassidy Junior married at Naseby on 13 June 1899.

photos were not good or did not come out, so when I was a baby they went to Dunedin and had studio photos done.



**Jack O'Neill and Emily Dougherty wedding, Ranfurly, 1933;  
a studio photo reposed six months after the actual event**

On the old sale yards, which I mentioned elsewhere, Dad surveyed a street now known as Stafford Street. Then he built a home for Mother and himself about half way along Stafford Street. The section backs onto St John's School grounds. The house was built during 1932. Then Dad mentioned to me that his Uncle Jim Herlihy was looking around for a farm for Dad and Mother to buy. Nice of Jim to help.

However my parents acquired a property on the Millers Flat–Onslow road. There was no home on the property—a fire had burned it down—so Dad built a new home there in late 1933 as well. This home had electric light in all rooms and an automatic-pressure water supply. Why?—Because Dad had installed for them a “Wind Charger”.<sup>9</sup> It stood up from the dog kennels; large tractor batteries held the charge. We did not have an electric range or electric washing machine etc., just electric light. None of our neighbours had electricity. The Teviot power scheme did not come up the Onslow Road.<sup>10</sup> Also a “Ram” was purchased and installed on the side of the creek away down in the gully. I believe “rams” can be purchased even today. As little boys we would be asked to go switch the “Ram” on or off. There was a balance which allowed the water to pass into the pipeline. All that we boys needed to do was to set this balance in motion, and water could be pumped up hill almost anywhere. If the tanks on the hill behind our home overflowed too much, then our task was: talk a walk down the hill and back again. From my memory of things, I would say the ram lifted the water about 40 metres or so.

Dad also built a sheep dip down by this creek further downstream. It was a one-person operation. Dad could load the sheep in (20 or so), and then stand in front of this dip. A rod was attached to the sheep pen at the back of the dip. He would depress this rod and the 20 or so sheep fell into the dip water. Every sheep had to have its head dipped into the dip water, and then the animals swam on out. For his time, he was very forward thinking. They did very well economically, and also they were liked in the Millers Flat community. Dad was president of the Millers Flat Dog Trial Club. Also I found out lately that he left a challenge cup for competition. In the Millers Flat Collie Dog Club booklet, Dad’s name is down as Jim O’Neill. They soon found out that Mother could play the piano well for dances, servicemen’s send-offs to the Second World War, etc.

Our neighbour, Charlie Batchelor, was killed at the Second World War. Cecil, Mrs Batchelor, sold the farm and went back to the Timaru area where she came from originally. She was an Elworthy.

Earliest incident I can remember was being put on a horse, bare-back and told to it ride home. No good, I fell off. Since then, a horse has only a head and a tail to me. Another occasion, Claire Duff was a landgirl and home help in our household. She smoked. Enterprisingly, I borrowed her tailor-mades and the four of us headed round behind the garage for a light-up. After much coughing and spluttering, we gave up on this idea. However, the adults must have had a smile that night. We had put the half-smoked cigarettes back in their packets and returned the lot to Claire’s room.

Evidently among my presents for Xmas I was given a boy’s-sized hammer. Very useful. I proceeded to break all the glass at a 4-year-old’s level. Even did the tail lights on our nice new car, a Ford V8.

Another present for Xmas another year included a toy drum. That disappeared, I am told, because of the noise. Also John and I were old enough to ride a tricycle at about 4 and 2 years of age. So, there was some competition over usage. In those days we had a long-drop toilet up from our home—about 20 metres outside the garden. Well, whoever had ownership at the time

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<sup>9</sup> The first mention of a windcharger in the *Otago Daily Times* was on 13 May 1938.

<sup>10</sup> The Teviot Power Board commissioned its first power station at Roxburgh on 27 March 1924.



and needed to make a visit, guess what. He rode the trike to the dunny and also had it inside with him.

Likewise, John was playing with the push lawnmower. Arrived in to us with a piece of his big toe missing. It was sitting by the lawnmower, the piece. He, of course, does not have much of the nail on his big toe now.

At this preschool age, I also had a penchant for playing in the fowl run. Good fun; put the hens off the nest, break eggs etc. Dad put a hen-hole in the gate into the chook yard—to keep me out. Soon after this was done, I had failed to come into lunch. The search was on. A farm has lots of places little boys can be off to. At last success—I had been found—had my head stuck in the hen-hole in the gate into the chook house. That was a oncer for me.

I began school at Millers Flat on 4 February 1940, the day Leo was born. Boarded with Sheehys in the village. For the second half of 1940, I had a governess to teach me, Claire Trainor. The problem Mother and Dad had was that there was no school bus, and we were 4–5 miles from the nearest school at Millers Flat; petrol restrictions: 4 gallons a week for a Ford V8 that went about 15–16 miles to the gallon; too young to ride a horse; and a steep winding narrow gravel road. In those days, few people had tractors on farms, and some still rode horses. Gordon Barron, who lived at George Rae's property up the road from us, always moved round on his horse. Whoever went to Millers Flat picked up the mail from the shop in Millers Flat for all the neighbours up our way. The reason for the petrol restrictions was World War 2 which lasted from 1939–1945.

Something that always took place in our home. Dad and Mother each night knelt by the sofa and said three decades of the Rosary. I can remember “nagging” to stay up with them while they said these prayers. All our lives, the full rosary was said as our family grew. I can remember Colleen, at maybe 30 years of age, saying to me that it felt so safe and secure at the Bute Street home in Ranfurly with the saying of these prayers.

Dad and Mother did very well economically at Millers Flat. But there was one problem—schooling. As I have already said. A governess and boarding Monday–Friday in Millers Flat. My second year of schooling, as a 6-year-old, I spent boarding with Auntie Cecily and Uncle Jim McErlane at 128 Maitland Street, Dunedin. I attended St Dominic's School. It was by St Joseph's Cathedral up Rattray Street. I sure did find out how to get around Dunedin. A penny ride on the cable car up High Street from the Exchange. Out to Normanby on the tramcar to visit Uncle Jack and Auntie Kate O'Neill. Then out to Council Street to see Jack and Sophia Mahoney. Called them Uncle Jack and Sophia; in reality she was my mother's first cousin. Originally a Neil Dougherty daughter from Dunedin. I knew how to go to the “Chum Club” for the pictures on Saturday morning. Also used to go to the children's radio session at 5pm at the old Chief Post Office by the Exchange. It was about 4–5 levels up in the elevator.

When John hit five years old, Mother and Dad sent us to St Thomas's Academy in Oamaru. I was aged seven years and John five years. Journey was New Zealand Railways bus from Millers Flat to Dunedin bus depot (now Toitu Early Settlers Museum); carry our luggage along to the railway station; board the express train to Oamaru; and walk from there to St Thomas's. Quite a journey for little boys. Whoever is reading this must realise that the World War was on, and there were all sorts of restrictions (petrol and food etc). And also as I had had a year previously in Dunedin, I was quite confident about the city.

We spent three years at school at St Thomas's. Of course we travelled to and from Millers Flat at school holidays. Years 1942, 1943 and 1944. Our parents said we were like strangers when we came home. As well, Colleen had begun school at Millers Flat. She boarded with Charlie and Edna O'Malley, Monday to Friday. And in 1945 Leo was due for school. Very hard on our mother.

So ... what to do. Decision time. Sold the "run" to neighbour Jim and Gwen Craighead. Went back to Ranfurly where they had come from. Dad and Mother moved to Ranfurly in August 1944. John and I finished at St Thomas's in December 1944. A new Catholic school opened February 4th 1945 in Ranfurly. We were first-day pupils. Our parents bought into Jean and Elizabeth Pottinger's farm on 2 April 1946.

I was there at Sacred Heart School until the end of 1948. Then to St Kevin's for three years: 1949, 1950 and 1951. Dad and Mother found me a position on the staff of the BNZ bank in Ranfurly. I spent three years there. Enjoyed the time. After that I came home to the farm. While at the BNZ, I rode a bicycle to work each day. Winter and Summer. About 2½ miles (4 km) each way. On a windy day coming home, it was a wonder I did not break the bike chain. Why?—Riding into a nor-wester. No gears on bikes in those days. And in the middle of winter, I wore a balaclava pulled down right over my head and down to my neck. Even then, round my eyes and nose I would have ice on the eyebrows etc.



**O'Neill family, Ranfurly, about 1951: back: John, Leo, Bernard; front: Jack, Colleen, Sally, Emily**

The bank staff were: manager, Stan Bell and later Ron Blundell. Also Jack Mann, John Walsh, Dawn McLauchlan, Vena Wilson and yours truly. For most of the time I was there, I was ledger keeper: that is, all cheques, lodgements or other movements on accounts were written up by me by hand. So I really did know the business affairs of about 800–850 clients of our bank. I also know that these ledgers are present in the upstairs floor of the BNZ Alexandra. I saw one on display one day in the Alexandra branch. It was quickly put away when I saw my handwriting and could tell Kay Gale, of BNZ, about the accounts.

In those days, the banks opened from 10am–3pm. Big deal. Although I had to be at work at 8.30am each day, Monday to Friday. Every Wednesday, at the end of the day I had to balance the 800–850 accounts to the last penny (cent today). No mean task. I did not go home that day until this task was completed. On the next day, the Manager went through the three ledgers that held the accounts to check that I had the figures correct. No calculators in my possession—all additions etc. were by hand. I did get good at this work.

When I announced to Mr Blundell and to my Mother that I was coming home to the farm, they both “hit the roof”. (However I did go farming). Not long before I terminated my employment at BNZ, the auditor had been in at our branch. This was normal practice. Mr Blundell had suggested to me that he would help me get a year in London, UK at BNZ Branch. Mr Blundell himself had had a year and so knew about this position. It was considered quite a “perk”.

About a year earlier Dad and Mother had bought another 500 acres (200 hectares) of land. I had noticed that he seemed a bit weary with the extra work.

At that time the Government had Compulsory Military Training. I was rounded up in this. At 19 years of age, I spent 18 weeks of basic training at Burnham military camp. It was a good experience. Met lots of new people. Got to be friendly with Hughie O'Donnell who was from Hokitika. He was third cook at Warners Hotel in Christchurch. This hotel was on one corner of the Square in Christchurch. Some years later, Hughie was killed in a large mine disaster near Greymouth/Runanga area. I think the mine was the Stockton one. 26 killed on that occasion. Two bodies were never found. Happened on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 1967.<sup>11</sup>

As well as working on the family farm, I learned to shear sheep and also did rousing work. Never full-time, but did get quite good at the work. I was a left-handed shearer. Clayton Jones and I did the Autumn run for a few years. Mainly crutching and shearing odds & sods sheep (stragglers of the back country). Sometimes what we called double fleecers.

On another tack. When I left school (St Kevin's), my mother took me by the ear and said “on stage” in the Ranfurly Music & Dramatic Society—last place a 17-year-old wished to be. However, when I look back over the many years since, I am now very thankful to her.

I spent until 34 years of age in the Musical Society. At 34 years, Ann and I bought a farm near Alexandra, and so moved on from Ranfurly. Over these 17 years, we had some very able performers and singers in the Maniototo. Examples: Jean Hefferman (good actor), Jim McCombie (ex-Mobil Song Quest), Pam Stewart (soprano), Dorothy O'Malley, Kevin Geddes, Mrs Speedy (pianist), Emily O'Neill (my Mother, pianist). Producers: Russell Pool, Lloyd Martin. Actors: David Green, Ron Wilshire, Clarrie Miller, Ailsa Roney, Noeline Rowlands, Ethel Wilson, Linda Knox.

We put on shows such as “Trial by Jury” (Gilbert & Sullivan operatic), “New Moon”, “Me and My Girl”, and many one-act plays and concerts. I also am a past President of this society.

Played rugby for Ranfurly. Was secretary for a few years. Was secretary at the time of the club's 50th anniversary. Was in the Under 21 country Sub-unions team for two years. Being a forward, I was too light and small for senior county teams. Played until I was 23 years of age.

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<sup>11</sup> 19 men were killed in the Strongman mine disaster at Runanga on the West Coast, including H.F. O'Donnell.

Had six teeth broken and a good-sized cut in my left cheek at a match in Gore one day. And so I wisely gave rugby up.

Was a small-bore rifle shooter for about 10 years. Rob Hanrahan helped me quite a lot. He was a member of the then Manchester Unity Oddfellows Lodge, which had a branch in Ranfurly. This society was registered under the Friendly Societies Act. In the days before social welfare—say, 1850–1940—members received 10 shillings a week or £1 if they were out of work. Big help to families in hard times. However, when Michael Joseph Savage’s government came to power around 1936, they brought taxpayer-funded social welfare. So gradually a society such as the Oddfellows went by the way. However, through this group I learned how to be a secretary and speak at public meetings.

I always kept my connection with my Catholic parish. I don’t know why I did, but am very thankful now. John surprised Mother and Dad when he came home from St Kevin’s during his second year there and said to us, “Please can I go to Strathfield, Sydney, Australia and join the Christian Brothers?” So about 1954 John went to Strathfield. Still with the Brothers, and he will be 80 years of age in about three weeks’ time.<sup>12</sup>

After completing her primary schooling at the Catholic school in Ranfurly, Colleen completed her education at Teschemakers College, which was near Oamaru. After that, Colleen trained as a nurse at Dunedin Hospital. At the time Colleen went overseas, she was second-in-command at the Maternity hospital in Dunedin.<sup>13</sup>

Leo had secondary education at both St Kevin’s College, Oamaru and Maniototo Area School. Then, after that, took up an apprenticeship with Ranfurly Tractor Services. Some years later, Leo and I began a partnership on the farm. Leo and Lorna went onto the home properties at Ranfurly, and Ann and I moved to Springvale, close to Alexandra. Ann and I moved from Gimmerburn to Springvale on 4 July 1970.

Leo, Lorna, Ann and I had run a partnership for a few years before 1970. When Leo and Lorna married about 1966, we set up together. Mother and Dad bought a home in Ranfurly. Ann and I lived at “Bellevue” along Alison Road out Gimmerburn way, and Leo and Lorna lived at “Wideford” close to Ranfurly.

A little bit of history. The name “Wideford” is from the Orkney Islands, north of Scotland. The owners of the farm at Ranfurly, Mr and Mrs Pottinger, came from the Orkneys. Ann’s uncle, David Banks, also came from the Orkney Isles. He confirmed that “Wideford Hill” is a property in that locality.

Also, “Bellevue”, the name of the 400-acre block at Gimmerburn, has a history. The two original Davis brothers who came to New Zealand from Tasmania had lived at a locality named “Bellevue”.

Leo and I had a good partnership. Went a bit like as follows: Dad could still work, and so did a lot on the farms. Until Ann and I moved to Springvale, there was not full employment on the Ranfurly properties. So Leo and I set up a separate bank account at the Otago Trust branch in Ranfurly, into which all our wages were paid. Mine, mostly from shearing sheep and shed work. Leo’s, mostly from mechanical work for Tractor Services, especially in the summer time.

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<sup>12</sup> Br John O’Neill turned 80 on 13 November 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Queen Mary Hospital.

Around April or so, we would discuss what to do with the gross earnings that had accrued. The beauty of this idea was that we went half-each in all of these earnings, and the one at home on the farm was always quite happy. After Ann and I moved to Springvale (5 June 1970), we continued the partnership of about 8–10 years. We all felt this necessary, as for a while there was relatively large debt. Also, from 1967 onwards, farming income was the pits. We even did our own shearing at Ranfurly/Gimmerburn. John McCloy and I would shear one day at McCloy's and then one day at O'Neill's. Leo and Dad did all the farm and shed work, such as feeding out hay and moving the sheep on turnips, etc. Most of the shearing was done in mid-to-late August and hoggets shorn in early October. Leo and I always did our haymaking together. Bale hay from 3am till we had about 1000 bales made, then breakfast and stack the 1000. Used to wait for the lucerne to dry right out, and then bale with the night dew. Always then had excellent hay.

After about 1980, Leo and Lorna continued on their own, and Ann and I did the same at Springvale. When Ann and I bought at Springvale, we had this property in our names, and Leo and Lorna also had their property in their names. We shared ownership of the stock, plant and income. We also asked our accountant, Robert Cooper, to keep the shared ownership of the stock, plant and income as even as possible. In that way, once all of us agreed to split this partnership, then no-one owed anyone any dollars. This worked well. I kept farm diaries from about 1962 until about 1989. These are available.



**Ann and Bernard O'Neill with Richard, Sandra, Jo-anna, Stephanie and Carmen, Springvale, Alexandra before Jo's wedding, 13 September 1986**

We left "Crag An Oir" farm at Springvale on 15 December 1995. Then rented for four months in Clyde until the purchase of a home on Kamaka Crescent in Alexandra. Lived there for around five years. Then bought a section at 6 Mayfair Grove in Alexandra. "David Reid Homes" built the home for us. Moved in on 30 August 2001.

As of this day, we still reside at this address. Ann always has had a lovely garden. It is often known as "Green Fingers". Also, I think she is the best dressmaker, sewer, patch-worker and quilt-maker that I have ever seen. She helped our four daughters make their wedding dresses.

She has made items for Omakau, Alexandra and Roxburgh Catholic parishes, such as albs, chasubles, etc. When Fr Aitchison was here,<sup>14</sup> she made him some albs. Later she made a set of stoles, double-sided ones, for Fr Wayne Healey. Hangings that are on the lectern (pulpit) are often hers on display. There is a very large hanging of Our Lady in the front right of our parish church. Ann did all the sewing and cutting of this deal.

We reared five children: Jo-anna, Stephanie, Carmen, Richard and Sandra. All told we are a very close-knit family group. At present we have four in-laws and the fifth of our family is a widow. Eighteen grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. More on the way.

Two items I have omitted to mention so far. Bought “Bellevue”, Gimmerburn in 1962. And while we were at Springvale, Ann and I also bought “Keddells” home block. Sold off the homestead to Rex and Jan Wells as not needed. Ran about 500 ewes on this area, about 70 hectares including river reserve.

There is some very valuable information about the original James Herlihy in a box file marked “Herlihy”. My estimate of James is that he was a very good businessman. On his marriage certificate it states “Trader” under occupation. Married Dunedin; went to Hamiltons; buried there in 1900. I have not traced accurately when he arrived in New Zealand from Victoria, Australia; it could have been during 1863. Why?—Well, the lady he married, Mary Moran, was in Dunedin for two years before their marriage. On the form “Intention to Marry”, he states that he has been in Dunedin for one week. So he must have been around the Otago area to get to know Mary Moran.

In the “Herlihy File Box”, there is evidence that James was a good progressive businessman.<sup>15</sup> He applied for land using various daughters as nominee owners. In those days, the government had a law forbidding too much aggregation of land. Also, if a person bought land to farm, then that new owner had to reside on the property.

With regard to my grandparents, Stafford and Bridget O’Neill. Well, Bridget drew their property, and so, when marriage took place, they moved to the land; likely her father’s doing.

He was also able to enjoy himself, as is also in the Box File, re an event in Dunedin.<sup>16</sup> When I asked Dad about James’s accident, he explained that some men had been riding horses home from Naseby—”A day out”—and at the time were racing their horses. James’s horse tripped and rolled on him. And so his health problems resulted from then on. A pity.

Another matter to do with Grandad, Stafford O’Neill. Before he left Ireland for New Zealand, he bought a pocket watch. Auntie Nellie Cuttance (née O’Neill) had this watch in her possession. Husband Jim and Nellie travelled overseas on various occasions. She told me that she had given this watch to Pat and Neal McErlane. These men and sister Mary live on a farm near Clady in eastern County Derry, Ireland. I mentioned to Nellie, “Could I get it back, as I

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<sup>14</sup> Fr Graeme Aitchison died in 1993, aged 54.

<sup>15</sup> James Herlihy’s estate was valued at £2760, or \$520,000 in 2020 value, more than half of which was held as savings.

<sup>16</sup> In October 1895, James Herlihy had £33 (\$6600 in 2020 value) stolen from him when he was “on a bender” at the European Hotel in Dunedin. The two thieves were sentenced in December 1895, one to twelve months’ probation, the other to one month’s imprisonment. See “City Police Court,” *Otago Daily Times*, 3 October 1895, p. 4, col. 6, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/ODT18951003.2.37>.



am the eldest O'Neill grandson of Stafford's?" When Ann and I visited the McErlanes, spelt McErlean by them, they happily handed it over to me.

There is a tale Nellie told me about this watch. Goes like this: Nellie, when she gave the watch to Pat and Neal, went to a shop in Ballymena to have this watch checked. Upon viewing said watch, the man said, "Mrs Cuttance, we sold this watch to your father in 1883." The hallmark indicates the age, and the shopkeeper's mark was on this watch. It's in working order and I gave it to our son Richard recently.

What other things did I do in my 82 years of life? Well, after three years boarding at St Kevin's College Oamaru: home to Ranfurly. Dad and Mother found a place for me at the BNZ Ranfurly. Spent three years at work there. About six months after I left school, Jack Mulholland asked me, would I learn to play the bass drum in the Maniototo Pipe Band. "Yes" was my reply. Jack Mulholland was Drum Major of this band. Also a cousin of ours. Two or three years later, I began to learn the bagpipes. Spent six years taking lessons, the last two with Fergus Mathieson, pipe major of the City of Dunedin Highland Band. Robin Scott, of Pendella farm, Gimmerburn, taught me for four years. Became pipe sergeant of the band. We used to practise marching out at Nisbet Scott's property, not realising that later on Ann and I would own the place.

After moving to Springvale, Alexandra, I stayed away from the Alexandra band for a couple of years. To see if our new farming business would survive. Then in 1972, I joined the Alexandra crowd. Played with them until about 1988. In 1988, I was made a Life Member. During this time, I was President for three years, Secretary for the Golden Jubilee committee in 1989. Keith Cameron was pipe major for much of the time when I was there. We saw to it that our band competed at the New Zealand Championships in 1983 in Invercargill and at Christchurch in 1985. We came fourth in D Grade at Invercargill and second in Christchurch. At Christchurch we won the quickstep and the street march but "duffed" it in the selection. Richard and Jo-Anna were playing members of our band.

I ceased playing around 1987–88 because of piercing headaches while playing. Only occurred while playing the bagpipes. At Mosgiel, while playing in the selection at Otago-Southland champs, I had to step out. However, the band still won that day. Ten–fifteen years ago, the Alexandra band asked me to become the patron, and so I still am today. I hope to go over to the Alexandra District Club tonight (2 December 2016) to hear our band play at the St Andrew's Night celebration.

When I went back to the home farm after three years at the Bank of New Zealand, I joined Otago Federated Farmers, and also continued with them at Alexandra. Of course, I spent much leisure time as a member of the Ranfurly Music & Dramatic Society. Thanks to my Mother's efforts in starting me there. I am a Past President of this society. During the 16–18 years I was a member, our group put on one-act plays, Gilbert & Sullivan shows and the likes of "Me and My Girl", New Moon etc, and also variety concerts. I have a good recording of a concert put on in 1959 at Ranfurly to make money for the Maniototo Hospital. Emily, my Mother, was solely responsible for this recording. She declared, against disbelieving family, that the concert could be recorded.

She engaged Ross McGrath to do his best on the night. Turned out a winner. Our only recording of this society's work, thanks to our Mother. Ross set up his gear near where Mother sat playing the piano and moved along the floor in front of the stage with his recording microphone. He

recorded the sound onto the old reel/tape machine. Three years or so ago, I had most of the concert recorded onto a CD. I consider this recording historically important.<sup>17</sup>

When we arrived at the Springvale farm—447 hectares (about 1200 acres)—Ann and I were busy with three little daughters and Richard, born a few months after we arrived. The farm was very run down. Could let sheep loose at one side of the property and then find some of them at the back boundary a week later. The first year on the farm was one of the driest recorded. A very wet July/August/September. Then no appreciable rain until early March. During early October of that season, I met Tom Kelliher, a neighbour.<sup>18</sup> His quiet comment was, “I suppose we have had our rain for the year.” How right he was.

Our home at “Crag-An-Oir”—for that was the farm’s name; means “Hills of Gold”—Springvale was comfortable, and Ann soon had a lovely garden and productive vegetable garden.

I had to take part in the Manuherikia Irrigation Committee. We had a large irrigation quota. In later years, say about 1983 or so, the then government sold all irrigation schemes in New Zealand to the irrigators. Our scheme was given to us with approximately \$170,000 cash as well. Shows what the Ministry of Works thought of the quality of our scheme.

The new management committee, which I was on, set about improving the race system and cutting staff from 5.5 persons down to two persons. I did voluntary race rostering for the Borough race for some years. Our irrigation scheme had to obtain all the easements for the water races belonging to our scheme. Up until then, all easements had been held under the Public Works Act. A special Irrigation Act was passed in Parliament so that our committee could ensure the right to obtain these easements. This Irrigation Act lasted in force for five years and then expired.<sup>19</sup>

On behalf of our committee, I had tenders called for surveys and lawyers to offer pricing for the work to be done. Over a period of about 18 months, I worked between John Williamson of Checketts McKay, George Elder, of McGeorge and Elder, Surveyors and the land holders, having the documents signed and witnessed by a Justice of the Peace. Over 300 titles to be set with easements on them. More than half of the documents had to be taken out to property owners along with a J.P. for signing. Sometimes meeting the owners had to take place after work hours. A big task.

At the end of all this work, the Management Committee very graciously handed a payment of \$5000. I did not expect this payment, but still was nice to receive it.

Another thing that happened in my life was Central Otago Budgeting Services (Budget Advice). Spent around 30 years as a volunteer for them. Am now a life member of our branch. It was work that I liked. Had a turn at most positions in the branch. Managed the office for either four or five years in the 1990s. Have been to quite a few national conferences over the years etc.

Began playing lawn bowls in 1968 at the Ranfurly club. Played for a couple of years at the Alexandra Bowling Club. Then withdrew and did not play again until around 1990. At that

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<sup>17</sup> See the folder Ranfurly Concert 1959 in the electronic Bernard O’Neill Archive.

<sup>18</sup> Bernard and Ann’s farm was on Kelliher Lane.

<sup>19</sup> *Irrigation Schemes Act 1990* (1990 No 52).



time, I joined the R.S.A. Bowling Club. Only play on Wednesday afternoon now, in retired men's competition. Just for enjoyment.

Ann has always had a busy life. With our five offspring, it could not be otherwise. She is perhaps the best person in our area with a sewing machine. Can draft a pattern by just looking at a garment in a shop window. In the past I have seen her do this. Actually Stephanie is also able to do this. Example: For each of our four daughters' weddings. The wedding gowns were made by Ann and our daughters.

I forgot to mention the RSA Bowling Club made me a life member earlier this year (2016).

Around 1983–84, the Vincent County Council set up a subcommittee to look at having a piped rural water supply set up for the area covering the Dunstan Flats, Springvale and Galloway areas. I chaired this committee. Mr John Watts (civil engineer, of Duffill, Watts and King) was on this committee to oversee the engineering practicalities. Most of the farmers from Springvale corner out to the Chatto Creek Tavern refused to join. The vast majority of all other land owners said "yes, would join". However, as the Government paid half of the cost of the "Rural Water Supply Schemes", the Agriculture Department had a say. *And* they said *no* to subsidy, because the percentage of household supplies was too high. So the idea "flopped".

Soon afterwards, Ann and I looked at the idea of a Rural Water Scheme based around a "spring" on our farm. Approached some neighbours. Set up a committee, Ian Rutherford went on the "Chair" and I went secretary. Soon had the scheme up and running. Since about 1995, this piped rural water supply known as "Long Gully Rural Water Supply" has been operating without any problems. We made sure that all of the easements were in place. So over 30 years, operation is good.

## The Cuttance family trek

A story that I must tell of the Cuttance family trek from Okuru, South Westland to South Otago. Jim Cuttance, born about 1903, was one of the youngest to make this journey.

He married Auntie Nellie, Dad's sister, and so became my uncle. I had numerous holidays at their farm near Dacre in Southland, and have very fond memories of Uncle Jim and Auntie Nellie.

The following article comes from the *Clutha Leader* dated 19th November 1907. Goes like this:

A Great Trek. *Clutha Leader*, 19 November 1907, page 5

OVERLAND FROM WEST TO EAST.

OKURU TO BLACKBURN. THROUGH THE HAAST PASS.

FAMILY, CATTLE, HORSES, AND BELONGINGS.

Amongst the new settlers at Blackburn is one whose story of travel with his wife, family, cattle, and such household goods as he could carry with him, remind one of the great Boer trek in South Africa a number of years ago when they travelled northward and founded a new colony across the Vaal river; or indeed it recalls to one the story of Moses and the Israelites in their quest for the promised land. Mr Harry J. Cuttance—

outside his own family no one else bears the same name in the Dominion,—his wife and family of nine—six sons and three daughters, the eldest being a girl of 24 years, the second a girl of 21, the third a boy of 19, and the youngest a baby boy of two years, all resided on the West Coast at a place called Okuru. It is about 175 miles south along the coast line from Hokitika, or by steamer 100 miles. Mr Cuttance was born at Ballarat, where his father was a miner in the early 50's. The family came across to New Zealand when Harry was eight years of age, and the father followed up all early gold rushes in Otago, being amongst the first at Gabriels.

#### FAMILY HOME AT OKURU.

They finally settled on the West Coast at Okuru, where the old man died. Mrs Cuttance is a native of the Coast. Their home comprised about 300 acres of freehold (clear land) and 1500 acres of Government leasehold, mostly bush, at a rental of £2 per hundred acres. The usual rental is £1 per hundred acres, but Mr Cuttance was run up to £2 for his. The land is in the valley of the Okura river, about a mile and a-half up from its junction with the ocean. The settlement there comprises in all eight families, almost cut off from the outer world. A steamer called every two months, and the mail came in every fortnight, being brought down by a man with a pack-horse along the coast from Hokitika. There were several other similar settlements along the coast. At Okura there was a small school, the teacher at present being a Mr Seville, who is known to some in this district. The land about is a bushy swamp, extensive marshes covered with scrub or light bush till you get back to the mountains. The rain-fall is prodigious, the average being 167 inches a year. Last February when bush fires were raging in other parts of the country, and the long continued drought was burning up everything, the rain-fall at Okura was 22½ inches. Mr Cuttance settled there in February of 1875. The chief means of living is cattle raising and dairying. Every year a mob of cattle was driven up the Coast to Hokitika and sold. The proceeds represented the year's income. Sometimes the cattle were sent by steamer, but this was usually very expensive. Pigs were also fattened and sent to market, but there was not much in them. Mr Cuttance also went in for dairying. He had a small butter factory, separator, etc., worked with an engine and it kept one of the family fully employed bringing in wood to keep the engine going ; and altogether the dairy proved a very laborious and risky undertaking. Two or three tons of butter would collect before the steamer would call, there was a risk in keeping it so long, and the market was very uncertain. Mr Cuttance had a fine house and a very large barn, the latter being used to store hay for winter feed, the hay being gathered as opportunity offered in the odd days when there was no rain. There was absolutely no grain grown.

#### DECIDES FOR THE OUTER WORLD.

Mr Cuttance was doing well enough at Okura, but his family were getting up in years, they had never seen a railway train or a township; the bush and swamp and heavy rain-fall made their surroundings dismal in the extreme, and Mr Cuttance felt that he was not doing justice by them in stopping there. He therefore decided to make a shift to the outer world. He heard of the Blackburn, and made a trip overland to see it, and finally decided to take up land there. He returned to the old home at Okura, and prepared for a great trek. The family held many consultations as to how best to move to the outer

world. It was at first decided to send the Women and children and the girls round by steamer and overland to Christchurch, the men coming over the passes with the stock. But the girls recoiled at the prospect of contact with the outer world: cities, trains, and even stage coaches were novelties to them. It was eventually decided that the whole family should Come together, and their course was made out through the Haast Pass in the Southern Alps, and on to Wanaka and Hawea. It was a bold undertaking. The next thing was preparation for the journey. There was no such thing as calling an auction sale, for there were no buyers there. There was no demand for fowls even, and as for eggs, "Why," says Mr Cuttance, "we had dozens of them, and used to cook them in every conceivable way for a change. There was absolutely no sale for them there, and it would not pay to send them away." The chairs and as much household furniture as possible were unscrewed and packed in small bulk and sent down to the steamer to come round to Dunedin. Side-saddles and pack-saddles, and tents (two) were got in order; supplies were gathered. "We prepared for a great picnic," says Mr Cuttance. "We had hams, cakes, bread, and provisions of all kinds." There was no such thing as selling the place. It was left in charge of a man to look after—to make what he could out of it and pay the rates.

#### THE STORY OF THE TREK.

Having got everything ready, Mr and Mrs Cuttance and family started off from the old home. They had twelve saddle and pack horses, all loaded in some way, 58 head of cattle, mostly cows, and three dogs. With the assistance of his brother and nephew they moved in a long procession down the Okuru to the seaside, the cattle giving a good deal of trouble. The first night they stopped at his brother's place,, ready for a four o'clock start the next morning, that being the hour the tide suited for crossing the Okuru. The second day they went eight miles up the coast to the valley of the Haast river. They stopped at Cron's accommodation house at Haast that night. The cattle had given a great deal of trouble that day breaking away into the bush. The third day they set off up the Haast, and camped that night at a place known as the Big Bluff—they have all got old landmarks on the coast—seven miles up the valley of the Haast. The party had had a very hard day with the cattle, and they were all dead beat when they got the camp pitched and everything rounded up for the night. On the evening of the fourth day they arrived at John Cunningham's Survey camp at Thomas' Bluff. Mr Cunningham is an old Dunedin man, and a brother of Mrs Sandilands, one of the victims of the Hasborough road fatality in March last. He treated the visitors very kindly. Wet weather set in, and they were compelled to put in two or three days here, keeping the cattle rounded up all the time. On the fifth day of the trek they had good luck and covered thirteen miles, pitching camp at Mission Flat at nightfall. Here they were right in the mountain gorges. Heavy rain set in again, and continued for eight days on end. The creeks were in Hood, and they were hemmed in. They ran out of provisions, and had to kill one of the young cattle to supply them with food. Everything ran out, even salt and pepper, and they had to subsist on boiled meat and soup, such as it was—tasteless stuff, but hunger is a good condiment. On the day they left here Mr Cuttance's brother made his way to a runholder's out-station and scored some provisions. They were now near the head of the Haast, and on the sixth day's march they crossed the Haast Pass, a narrow gulch in the mountains, connecting the East with the West. They camped that

night at the head of the Makarora river in Otago soil. This was the hardest day they had ever had. The track was a mere ledge in many places with the steep cliffs thousands of feet up on one side, while on the other side they could hear the gurgling of the mountain torrent a thousand feet or more sheer down the scrubby bush face. The cattle strung out in a long line, and two or three of them went headlong over the cliffs, but they were all got on the track again. The camp was struck at seven o'clock in the morning, and it was eight at night, before another suitable camping place was found. Between these hours none of the party had so much as even a drink of tea, and they had to walk most of the way as the track was too unsafe to ride. Mrs Cuttance had to carry the baby in her arms. Her usual custom was to carry it on the horse in front of her. The pass is 1750 feet above sea level, and the place where they camped for the night was about 1500 ft high, right at the head waters of the Makarora. The next day, the seventh in the actual march, they struck the Mule Valley. They struck a deer stalker's camp and bought out his stock of provisions. They had a lot of stuff of various kinds, and had a few days of their time to run, but finding the party short of food they kindly struck camp and sold our friends their supplies. "We had another picnic," says Mr Cuttance, "and stopped here for a day or two. The track they were following was the one through which the late Vincent Pyke and an exploring Party went from the East Coast to the West over 40 years ago. They found many evidences of the old pioneer trip. The Mule Valley is so called from the fact that Vincent Pyke left some mules there at that time. It is an open valley with a narrow pass at each end. Mr Cuttance had previously made up his mind to leave his cattle here for a month or two, so he spent two or three days in putting a fence across the pass at each end of the valley. It is a pretty place in the mountains, and the family spent a pleasant time there, and had a good rest. Their eighth day's travel brought them down to Mrs Pipson's accommodation house at Makarora, seven or eight miles from Lake Wanaka. The next day, the ninth, they struck Lake Wanaka, and pitched their tents at a place known as "The Neck." Here they found some old gardens, and had a good feed of fruit. The tenth day's travel brought them to Hansen's accommodation house at Hawea Flat. Mr T. Hansen, blacksmith, of this town, (Dunn and Redding), is a son of Mr and Mrs Hansen. At this place they were treated splendidly, and were shown every kindness, attention, and hospitality. They were now in touch with civilisation, and many of the family observed the first telegraph wires they had seen in their lives. Mr Cuttance here bought an express. He met a man on the road, and there and then bought the trap and harness he was driving. The pack and sidesaddle horses were glad to be relieved of their burdens, and two of the horses being yoked into the express, Mrs Cuttance and the children had a more, pleasant ride. By pleasant drives over good roads our party made their eleventh stage at the Queensbury Hotel, the twelveth at Cromwell, the thirteenth at Bald Hill Flat, the fourteenth at Roxburgh, the fifteenth at Evans Flat, the sixteenth at Waitahuna, and the seventeenth day's travel brought them to their new home at Blackburn. They only struck one place on the road where they were received with anything but the greatest kindness. At this place where there were two hotels, though they did not want any favors, but were prepared to pay full value for all they wanted, the proprietors were both rather "short" and appeared for some reason as if they would have preferred their room to their company. They arrived at Blackburn all safe and well, and in the best of spirits. They left Okura on April 13th and arrived at Blackburn on May 13th. The story of their travel needs no embellishment. It is an undertaking few

would care to undertake. The Cuttance family are of the stuff that good colonists are made of, and that things may turn out as well with them at Blackburn will be the sincere wish of all who will read this account of their travels, or “Trek from West to East,” as Mr Cuttance terms it. They are a bright happy family, and deserve well. They are at home in the saddle and in the open air, and their trip, to them, does not seem such a very wonderful thing after all. There is, of course, a bridle track all the way, and it may be mentioned that the late Mr Seddon, when he was Minister of Public Works, and Governor Onslow and party made the same trip in the summer of ‘91. But, of course, they were fully equipped and provisioned, and there were no children or other belongings. The occasion of that trip was Mr Seddon’s visit to Okuru. Mr Cuttance and his son returned to Mule Valley for the cattle in July last, and brought them over to Blackburn in August last. There was three and a-half feet of snow in the Valley, but the cattle were all right, except that three of them had died from eating tutu. Unfortunately eight or nine more have died from the same cause since they came to Blackburn. “What do you think of Blackburn,” was asked of Mr Cuttance. “Oh, it’s all right,” was his reply, “but I wish we had just a little of the rain we had on the Coast.”<sup>20</sup>

Mr Cuttance took up two sections at Blackburn: section 29 (660 acres) and section 30 (480 acres).

Something that I must add to this history Blackburn road in South Otago runs up North of Balclutha into the Hillend region. Uncle Jim Cuttance had said that his family soon moved to the Outram area of the Taieri Plains. As he said, Blackburn (Hillend) was too cold. Even though Jim’s father was born at “Ballarat” Victoria, Australia, the Cuttance family originated from Cornwall U.K.

## Siblings of my grandfather George Stafford O’Neill

Now what do I know or have heard about Dad’s uncles and Aunts on the O’Neill side? That is Grandad’s brothers and sisters.<sup>21</sup>

**James**, the eldest, stayed at home in Ireland. For a while he worked for the Irish constabulary in the south of Ireland.<sup>22</sup> Then later returned to run the O’Neill family farm. I have already stated how James managed to gain back the part of the farm taken from them some years earlier.<sup>23</sup>

I have already written about the three O’Neill brothers who went to the USA. In 1990, Ann and I spent some time with their families. Stayed with John and Agnes O’Neill in Newburgh NY.

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<sup>20</sup> The original article on the Cuttance family trek is online at <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/CL19071119.2.10>.

<sup>21</sup> From May 1977 to May 1986, Patrick and Bernard O’Neill cooperated on the O’Neill family tree, with Bernard researching most of his grandfather’s siblings (listed in the narrative here), while Patrick researched mostly his great-grandfather and siblings (Catherine Bourke, John O’Neill, Jane Mulholland, Margaret McErlane and others). The project resulted in publication of *The O’Neills of Greenlough from 1820 Onwards* in May 1986.

<sup>22</sup> James O’Neill was the Royal Irish Constabulary Sergeant at Buncrana, Co. Donegal, when he married local girl Mary O’Connor there on 13 October 1898. Technically, Donegal is one of the 26 counties of the Republic of Ireland, which makes it part of the “south of Ireland”, even though it is also part of Ulster, the northern province of Ireland.

<sup>23</sup> See page 2 above. For another source of this story, see [McErlane Mary, Moneystaghan, Portglenone, Co Derry - letter to Bernard O’Neill about family history 12 June 1977.pdf](#).

John was a first cousin of Dad's - his father being "Sinney" O'Neill. On his grave it says "Sinan".<sup>24</sup> We are not sure of his correct Christian name. It may even have been "St John" O'Neill or even "Sean". Of course Sinney was one of the three brothers that went to the USA.

The first of the brothers to come to New Zealand was **Patrick** O'Neill. Arrived in Dunedin around 1880. He had helped a man get away from the law in Ireland by hiding this person in a pig crate to get the person on board ship. The law found out and Pat also had to leave town. It is noteworthy that two daughters (twins) were born at Denniston in the Buller area north of Westport.<sup>25</sup>

Now **John** O'Neill also came to New Zealand. Originally settled down in North Otago. They owned the railway hotel at Kurow. Then had a try at farming near the Totara Estate just outside Oamaru. Members of his family told me that Jack O'Neill, as he was known, never made a farmer but did well as a hotel keeper. While out shooting, he had an accident off a buggy, was run over by a wheel. This left him in bad health. For a short time they had a hotel on Christchurch and then went on to own the Masonic Hotel in Wellington. Died 1907. Mrs O'Neill then went on to Inglewood, Taranaki, and owned one of the two hotels in that town for many years. For some years a son owned the other hotel in Inglewood. When Ann and I came through Inglewood in early 1964, we met Sheila and Vince Scanlon there. Sheila was the youngest of that family. Both Jack and Bridget O'Neill are buried in Oamaru. I have seen their graves.

Now **Mary-Jane** O'Neill. Married Ned Feeley. Born 1864, went to Australia with brother Neal and cousin Margaret O'Neill. Landed at Rockhampton.<sup>26</sup> Must have had an agreement to stay put for a period of time. Probably two years. The three of them did not like Rockhampton and decided to come to New Zealand. To help them on their way, the parish priest gave Margaret a half sovereign and Mary-Jane a bottle of whiskey which she hid in her "bustle" (back of her skirt). Don't know what aliases the others used in order to get on board, but Margaret used Mrs Jackson. Mrs Jackson was Margaret's employer and had helped hide their appearances whilst getting on board ship.<sup>27</sup>

They arrived in Otago harbour in 1890. John Mulholland, already living at Ranfurly, met them at the port with horse and wagon then brought the three of them to Maniototo. John Mulholland was already married to Jane O'Neill, who was a sister of Margaret O'Neill. Mary-Jane soon went to Oamaru. Married Ned Feeley on 5 February 1895, the first couple married in the Oamaru basilica.<sup>28</sup> I had holidayed as a 10–12-year-old at the home of Peggy McGillen (Temuka) and at Jean and Mick Sugrue's home in Timaru. Both were daughters of the Feeleys. Of course they were Dad's first cousins.

Now **Neal** O'Neill. He settled at Hastings. Married Margaret Donnelly on 2 July 1895. At the time he was killed, Neal was a foreman at the Whakatu Freezing Works. Was riding his bicycle home from work and was run down by a drunk driver. A little about the family. Hastings Earthquake 1932. Charlie ran a men's barber shop on the main street in Hastings. He was not

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<sup>24</sup> The grave actually uses the name Sinney: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/13923870/sinney-o'neill>.

<sup>25</sup> Christine and Margaret O'Neill, born 11 January 1892.

<sup>26</sup> Passenger records indicate that they arrived in Brisbane on 2 May 1890 on the ship *Jumna*.

<sup>27</sup> See O'Neill Bernard and Monie Dennehy nee McErlane - letters about family history 1983.pdf.

<sup>28</sup> St Patrick's Basilica, Oamaru was dedicated on 18 November 1894.

well that day and so Rose, his sister, was working in the shop. They had had an occasional small shock but when the big quake came, Rose ran out on to the street. A man coming out from the opposite side stopped Rose in the middle of the street. Her customer in the chair was killed and the whole street was a shambles. Charlie was in his bed and his old iron bedstead did a runner around his bedroom. Rose and Vera O'Neill came down to Stafford and Bridget O'Neill's home [in Patearoa] for the next year. Too upset to live in Hastings. Dad and Rose became friends and always kept contact. I stayed with Rose and husband Jack Warren one time in Timaru.

Again—about Mary-Jane and Neal and Margaret O'Neill. The information I have about these three people came from Monie Donnelly (née McErlane, Margaret's daughter). When Margaret O'Neill married Charlie McErlane, they took up land near Ranfurly, next to John and Jane Mulholland and also next to a Dougherty farm where my Mother was brought up. There is a Barneys Lane running out past these three farms. Barneys Lane is named after Barney Dougherty, who was an Uncle of my mother. Barney, Annie and Barbara lived on this property.<sup>29</sup> When they died, the Charlie Doughertys, Mother's parents, went on to this farm. Also there were two other brothers of these Doughertys who came to NZ—namely John, who lived at Gimmerburn, and Neil, who lived in Dunedin.

Now **Margaret** O'Neill who married Edward Downey. They lived out their lives in Ireland. I have met and stayed with two of Margaret's offspring. They now live in the USA. Margaret O'Keefe: we stayed with Margaret and many members of her family in 1990 in Philadelphia USA. Also there was a Violet Carson with whom we stayed in a town out from Baltimore in Maryland USA. Her mother-in-law was also a daughter of Margaret Downey (née O'Neill).

## Charlie Dougherty

Re Charles Dougherty, known to all as Charlie. In common with quite a few of his age group, Charlie could not read or write. The following is a very nice story told to me by Ben Drake, who came from Hawea. I think that he owned Hawea Station.

Goes like this: I was attending the AGM of Otago Federated Farmers in "Harvest Court", which is along Princes St in Dunedin. We went for lunch at the European Hotel. Ben and I happened to be sitting together, and conversation came to where I came from and what did I do etc. Ben could have been 60 years of age, I would be perhaps 25 years old.<sup>30</sup>

When he found out from me that Charlie Dougherty was my grandfather, he told me of an experience of his. In his young single days, he worked on the "mill". To explain: the "mill" meant a steam engine and threshing mill, used for milling grain from the straw. The "mill" moved from farm to farm, just as shearers do today while shearing sheep.

As Ben Drake said, not all homes made these gangs of men welcome. However, everyone in the area of the Dougherty homestead, including the "mill" gangs, seemed to congregate at this homestead on Sunday afternoons. I am speaking here of the young, mainly single, people. Ben

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<sup>29</sup> Barbara Dougherty, Barney Dougherty's heir, died in 1912, leaving one farm to her brother Charlie and another in trust for her nephew Ben, Charlie's son: the latter farm was Maniototo Survey District Section 5 Block Five, now 513 Barneys Lane, where Charles and Sarah resided, 45°08'45.2"S 170°04'58.6"E, or -45.145876, 170.082955.

<sup>30</sup> So this story occurs about 1959.



said to me that it was the “old chap” = Charlie Dougherty. He would sit out on the front porch area of his home and *he* made everyone welcome.



Charles and Sarah Dougherty, Ranfurly, 1920s

Soon after, at home, I related this story to Dad. You see I had never asked Dad what his father-in-law was like. Dad’s answer to me was that Ben Drake was quite correct. Charlie Daugherty was a gentleman who was well liked. Next question: was he slim like my Mother or sturdy built like some of my mother’s sisters? Dad’s reply: Charlie Dougherty was six foot tall and slim built like Emily, my Mother. A very nice story to have been told to me by a stranger.

## Family nicknames

Just a little matter I raise: it was difficult to distinguish between some of my relations. When asked recently by a Dunedin lady who was concluding her family tree which involved a Charlie Dougherty. I explained by phone that there were:

- Charlie Dougherty, my granddad;
- Thin Charlie Dougherty, my uncle;
- Fat Charlie Dougherty, my mother’s first cousin;
- and Wee Charlie Dougherty, mother’s nephew. *True*.

In our O’Neill crowd, we had:

- Old John O’Neill, first cousin of Grandad Stafford O’Neill and father of Scully and Emmett O’Neill etc.
- Also his eldest son John Stafford O’Neill, known behind his back as “Streak Jack”. He was tall and married mother’s sister [Kate Dougherty].
- Also there was “Wee Jack”, my dad.



- And there was “Pony Jack” O’Neill, who lived in Ranfurly and no relation of ours. Pony Jack was a bachelor, died 1945. Had a single sister Rose and also another sister: Mrs Joe Geoffrey of Wedderburn.<sup>31</sup>

All of these people mentioned above lived much or all of their lives in Maniototo.

A little happening one day on our farm at Springvale. Ann always had a large, beautiful garden, plus an excellent vegetable garden. As well, we had six Golden Chassellis grape vines in a special house that kept the birds out. As usual the narrow door was half open.—This sets the scene.—Lovely hot day, and so away for a picnic at the Manuherikia River. And as the time of the year was around the 10th December, we had all the ewes and lambs in the yards for a lamb check, re “fly strike” safety. Total number of stock: around 3800 in these sheep yards. Unfortunately the double gates from the yards to the gardens were not correctly locked. You know the answer!! When we arrived home, guess what, 3800-odd sheep were looking at us in our garden area. The only plant left uneaten was a *cactus plant*. Even the grape house had been cleaned up.

Ann and I have been to Ireland and have visited the localities that our old people came from. Still keep contact with Willie Kearney. Willie and spouse, Vera, live in Letterkenny, Donegal. Willie spent most of a day and well into the evening showing us around the old haunts. Willie’s grandfather was my Grandmother’s brother. Willie and I are second cousins. Grandad was to marry Catherine Kearney (Carney). However, she died, and Catherine’s mother said to Sarah, a sister, you are to marry Charlie Dougherty. And so that is how the marriage came about. Sarah, not pleased, never contacted her mother again. (Married 30 July 1882 at Letterkenny, Donegal, Ireland).

Immediately after Charles and Sarah’s marriage, they left by boat for Maryborough, Queensland, Australia. Uncle Pat Dougherty was born in Maryborough on 5 June 1883, address Queen St, Maryborough.

We have at our home the sewing machine Grandma Dougherty bought while living in Maryborough. It is called a Wertheim, made in Frankfurt, Germany. And so it is around 130 years old. My mother, Emily, used this sewing machine until about 1948–49, when she updated by buying a second-hand treadle machine.

Charlie and Sarah left by ship from Maryborough, came to Oamaru where Annie and Mary were born. Annie on 27 August 1885 and Mary born on 25 July 1887. The rest of their children were born at Gimmerburn, Maniototo. I am guessing that they came to Oamaru because the Diver family had settled at Oamaru. Granddad Charlie Dougherty’s mother was a Diver.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Pony Jack and his family (parents John and Rose, and siblings) immigrated to New Zealand (in 1897) from Ballymacpeake, Co. Derry, just like most of the O’Neills in the Maniototo. Pony Jack’s grandparents were Daniel and Anne O’Neill, contemporaries of the brothers John and Stafford O’Neill whose descendants are discussed in the *O’Neills of Greenlough* 1986. And so the Pony Jack clan were in fact very likely related to us, but since there is no knowledge of the connection, one might surmise that Daniel was not a brother of John and Stafford, but possibly a first or more distant cousin.

<sup>32</sup> Charlie Dougherty’s mother, Annie née Diver, died at Corranagh, near Letterkenny, on 10 July 1880 aged 72. Richard Diver married Catherine Hegarty in Oamaru in 1878, and a brother James married Sarah O’Donnell from Ardaganny in Oamaru on 26 April 1885. Their sister Sarah married in New Zealand in 1881 and also lived in Oamaru.

The first residence at Gimmerburn was along Sharkey Road on the left. Uncle Ben (Bernard Dougherty)<sup>33</sup> owned this small block until he sold out about 1952–53. Bruce Paterson bought the land from Uncle Ben.<sup>34</sup> Bruce took me out and showed me where this piece of land is. Sarah’s brother also, for a while, had a block beside this land.<sup>35</sup> And the John Doughertys farmed on Devon Road beside these two properties. Patersons, who own Charlie and Sarah’s block, have the adjacent property. The home Bruce was brought up in is close by. Bruce took me there about two years ago. He said it was the only property he ever bought at auction. Avery McCloy was the underbidder. A short time later the Doughertys bought the “Coal Pit”. It is still in the Dougherty name.

A little more history. Barneys Lane, a road that crosses at right angle the main Ranfurly–Patearoa road is named because Barney Dougherty (Bernard) lived in the first homestead along this road on the left.<sup>36</sup> For years Aunt Barbara, Aunt Annie & Uncle Barney<sup>37</sup> lived in the homestead. Around about 1912 the brother Charlie & Sarah Dougherty moved from the “Coal Pit” at Gimmerburn to this site. Charlie and Sarah being my Grandparents. Of course they kept ownership of the “Coal Pit” property. “Thin Charlie”, Mother’s brother, stayed out at the “Coal Pit”.

## Bernard and Ann

Now about Ann’s and my life together. I kept a farm diary from the time of purchase of “Bellevue” from Nisbet and Terry Scott at Gimmerburn. Interesting that, as a Maniototo Pipe Band member, I was sometimes at marching practice on this property before it was bought. Interesting!!

Ann and I began going out together some time during 1962. Then we held our wedding on 18 January 1964 in Ranfurly. Judy Murphy and Robin Chapman and Leo O’Neill and Brian Kearney were also members of our official party.

The house on “Bellevue” was a house in a paddock. No fencing or garden around it when the property was bought. Total area of the property: 400 acres freehold. There is a cattle-stop near the house, but at the time, you drove around it. Dad and I set to work to tidy up the homestead. This was done during 1963. Originally this house had been rather beautiful when the Davis family owned it during the 1920s/1930s. Dad was a carpenter by trade and so he knew how to go about repairs and maintenance. The house itself was of timber and was still basically in solid condition. Also there was a substantial concrete four-roomed building close to the home. Included garage, man’s hut, dairy, etc. it was just that no upkeep had been carried out for years. My memories tell me that, after scraping the loose paint off the exterior, we then used pink primer and then white undercoat and then white topcoat. The local tradespeople were very good with suggestions about how to go about repairing and beautifying the interior of the house. Ray Hunter, Harry Lauder, Graham Edwards and Bill Graham, for example.

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<sup>33</sup> 1904–1982.

<sup>34</sup> In fact, Section 18, Block 4, Gimmerburn District was sold to *William Hall* on 13 October 1952, and then to the Patersons on 4 May 1961. Ned Kearney (1857–1926) had this land—Section 18, Block 4, Gimmerburn District—from 1885, and transferred it to Charlie Dougherty by October 1891.

<sup>35</sup> Andrew Kearney (d. 1939) had Section 19, Block 4, Gimmerburn District from at least 1897 until 1901.

<sup>36</sup> 45°08’46.2”S 170°04’57.0”E, or -45.146156, 170.082491.

<sup>37</sup> i.e. Bernard’s great-aunts and great-uncle.

The price I paid for “Bellevue” was £11500, equivalent to \$23000.<sup>38</sup> The price was £1000 below Government valuation. I have also kept a farm diary since June 1962, having bought “Bellevue” at the beginning of July 1962. I picked up the idea of keeping a farm diary from my Uncle Jim Cuttance. Continued with this idea until mid-June 1989. The diary continues through two books.<sup>39</sup>

Ann’s Mother was an excellent gardener and so Ann followed in her footsteps. She showed me where to put a permanent fence around the home, beginning at the cattle-stop. About one third of an acre was then enclosed to be lawn and garden. There was a well-set-up water supply from a 430-foot-deep bore at the garden (140–145 metres).

Nisbet Scott was engineering-minded and he had this supply excellently set up. Did not need to attend to it, all automatic and frost-free.



**Bernard and Ann’s wedding party, 18 January 1964: Brian Kearney, Judith Murphy, Bernard O’Neill, Ann Chapman, Robin Chapman, Leo O’Neill**

During 1964 I plastered the henhouse. It was constructed of sundried brick. Dad showed me how to put bird-netting around the walls. And then I put two coats of plaster on the walls. Plaster was made of a moist cement mix. Came up well. Also the concrete garage by our house needed plastering, which I did. Both buildings were then painted. By the diary, it looks as if the whole lot had been completed by mid-May 1964. Then I painted the two buildings.

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<sup>38</sup> Inflation-adjusted from 1962 to 2019, the equivalent of some NZ\$340 000 today (Reserve Bank of New Zealand inflation calculator).

<sup>39</sup> See [O’Neill Bernard Stafford b 1934 - Farm Diary 1 - 1962-75.pdf](#) and [O’Neill Bernard Stafford b 1934 - Farm Diary 2 - 1975-89.pdf](#).

Ann did the design work inside our home. Once the living-room (kitchen–dining area) had been finished by Ray Hunter (joiner) and Graeme Edwards (painter), Ann and I set to work decorating the other rooms ourselves. We had completed seven rooms by the time we sold out and moved to Springvale near Alexandra in July 1970. “Bellevue” homestead would have been at least 400 square metres in area.

We had three lovely little daughters born to us while at Gimmerburn. Jo-anna, Stephanie and Carmen. A little story about life with them: Ann, after about four years hard work, had a good lawn and garden. In late spring, perhaps up to 200 daffodils were in flower. Guess what. Stephanie and Jo-anna did what they thought was a very kind deed for Ann. They picked all the daffodil flower heads, then presented them to their Mother. Oh ho, the flower heads had no stems.

Also, in the cold winter Dad and I were renewing fencing along Alison Lane. Jo-anna and Stephanie had come out to play and watch us nearby. A couple of small pods of rainwater near us. Playtime in this water; clothes wet; and off come all their clothes. They didn’t seem to feel the cold. Very active children. Kept Ann and me busy.



**Sandra O’Neill, Carmen Moran, Richard O’Neill, Steph Carline and Jo-anna Hoets with parents  
Bernard and Ann O’Neill, 19 January 2014**

When we lived at “Bellevue” and had Jo-anna around 2–3 years of age and Stephanie a year younger, occasionally Ann and I would lie in late in bed in the morning. Ann would feed Carmen, and Stephanie and Jo-anna of course came into bed with us. Five persons in a bed would soon end up with a pair of little ones in at the bottom end of our family bed. Guess what, too many, and so Dad had to vacate the nest. But it was good fun.

On another occasion, Jo-anna and Stephanie found some old ladies' makeup in the dump outside our garden. They used the lipstick to paint each other's face. Their faces were bright red from ear to ear. Took Ann ages to get it off their faces.

We always carried a potty in the back of our car when we had our team of three with us. On one occasion we had a hilarious incident. We had been at Sunday Mass in Ranfurly and as usual later had parked by the Centennial Milk Bar in town. Quite a few others from church also did as we did—visited the Milk Bar. Well, when we came out with ice-creams etc to our car, the eldest one cheerily announced to us that “We used the potty, Dad and Mum. *And* we tipped it out the car window.” “Good girls.” The wet patch was on the outside of the car door. Created a few laughs among the onlookers.

I am now including the original copy of the “Sale Document” for the Ranfurly Sale Yards (Otago Central Saleyard Co.).<sup>40</sup> An important document. Grandad (Stafford) bought this property for Dad. The area is now called Stafford Street.

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<sup>40</sup> See the illustration at page 7 above.

## Tales about a little boy

(and sometimes about his brother John)

My Mother said that I was a pasty little boy, very active, and inclined to run away in the crowd at sports or race meetings. My parents became used to this, as I would always come back to their 1936 Ford V8 model car before the end of the day. In recent years I have been diagnosed with ‘Gilberts Disease’. Probably accounts for my lack of colour.

Mother and Dad had bought a ‘run’ block up the Lake Onslow road in 1933. No home, as it had been burned down, and so Dad, being a builder, had set to and built a new home to take Mother to. No electricity up that road, but Dad put in lights throughout the house. He had what he called a wind charger over by the dog kennels and large tractor batteries as power storage. Only home up that road with light. Electric. No other electric facilities, just lighting. Oh, by the way, Gordon Barron, a bachelor who lived up at George Rae’s property, told Dad that the woolshed was full of furniture after the house was burned. Guess what Gordon thought.

What did little boys do out on a hill country run?

Well, at one time I had a penchant for being in the fowl-run. Hens couldn’t lay eggs, because maybe I bothered them too much, and I suppose I also broke a few while bringing them down the hill from the fowl-run. So, Dad devised a way of putting a stop to this. Dad put a hole in the hen-run gate for the hens, and locked the gate to keep me out. Result of this was: Bernard was late in for the next meal because he had his head stuck in the hen hole that Dad had made in the gate. At least I tried!



**Bernard and John O'Neill on the back of the 1936 Ford V8, Millers Flat, 1939**

The following must have happened when I was in the 3–4 age group. One Xmas I was given a tin drum; Lord help the younger members of my family and Dad and Mother; I spent my time banging the drum and so it was confiscated. No more noise. Next Xmas, among my gifts was



a toy hammer. Well, the front and tail-lights on our relatively new Ford V8 were demolished, likewise any glass at my level was also in danger. Guess what? Hammer confiscated. My brother has reminded me that our parents said I was good with a paint brush at about the same age. Leo thinks that I was either at our car (painting) or at the walls of our home.

Corrinne Duff was employed by Mother and Dad to help with general duties both on the farm and around the home. She came from West Otago. Corrinne smoked tailor-made cigarettes. We could get into her room without adults knowledge, and so I, being the eldest, organised the smoking foray. I can still remember the escapade. Cigarettes easy to get, round the back of the garage, next move. Colleen, John and I lit up the smokes but, between coughing and spluttering etc, we had to give up. So, cigarettes partly-smoked went back in their rightful places in their packets. Then I sneaked them back into Corinne's room. I bet they had a laugh when the partly-smoked cigarettes were found.

Once I hit five years of age, my education began, with me boarding with Jack and Mrs Sheehy at Millers Flat, Monday to Friday. That lasted one term. Then Claire Trainor, from Southland, came to live with us and acted as a governess (teacher) for me. At age 6 years, I was sent off to live with Uncle Jim and Auntie Cecily McErlane at 128 Maitland St, Dunedin, for my second year's education. Of course I came home at the end of each Term. I was a pupil at St Dominic's College, situated in Rattray St, Dunedin. Moira Fitzpatrick walked me to school for the first two to three weeks, and after that I winged myself. Distance probably about 2 kms each way, through the city centre. As best as I can remember, I was a happy lad wherever I was at school. Then when John reached five years of age and I was then seven years of age, Mother and Dad sent us to St Thomas's Academy in Oamaru. We had three years there. We need to realise that 1942–1944 were Second World War years. Petrol 4 gallons a week. Many limitations. I had become quite used to being away from home and to travel. So getting on the 1.19pm Express Train at Oamaru at the end of each Term was no bother. Travel to Dunedin, and then carry our suitcase to the NZR bus station, present our tickets, then arrive at Millers Flat about 8pm that evening. No accompanying adults, just get up and go for two little boys! As time went by, I became very unhappy at St Thomas's because of one nun on the staff: Sister Lawrence. All the other nuns were good to us. When I look back from many years later, I think Sister Lawrence was a very unhappy lady.

At the end of 1944, when I hit 10 years of age, John and I arrived in Ranfurly, because our parents had sold at Miller Flat and returned to the Maniototo, where they had originated from. A new school, St John's, opened on 4 February 1945 in Ranfurly. And so, all four of us were at one school. Before that, Colleen had been boarding Monday to Friday at Charlie and Betty O'Malley's in Millers Flat for schooling. Leo was five years of age on 4 February 1945, the day St John's School opened. Also, the day I began school in Millers Flat, Leo was born in Roxburgh: 4 February 1940.

We lived for about 15 months in a cottage at Eweburn Station, until Mother and Dad obtained the farm from Jean and Elizabeth Pottinger. We moved into the property on 2 April 1946. There was a lot of gorse on the new farm. To this day, I can remember Jean Pottinger standing beside Dad saying: "If only Father had known, he would not have paid \$1.00 for a pound of gorse seed." The Pottingers came from the Orkney Islands, they called the farm 'Widford' after a location where they came from.

I spent four years at St John's School in Ranfurly. Aged 10–13 years. Spent two years in Form 1 at this school. Then Mother and Dad sent me to St Kevin's College in Oamaru. I had three years there. I got School Certificate in three years, although it was considered to be a four-year course. I quite enjoyed there. Although, at the end, I had had enough of boarding school and being away from home.

The Brothers were good teachers. When I looked back 30–35 years later, I just don't know how they managed to run the whole place. About 10–12 men controlling, teaching and encouraging sport was a mighty task.

At the time I left St Kevin's College Oamaru and came home, I had no idea what I would like to do. However, Jim Lynch, a good friend of Mother and Dad's, suggested a position as a 'junior' at the BNZ Branch in Ranfurly for me. A good move. I enjoyed working there for approximately three years. Then I opted to go back to the farm. Dad and Mother had bought another 500 acres of ground. When I announced to Mr Blundell, bank manager, he was most unhappy. AND my Mother was very annoyed with me for leaving the Bank. When on the farm, I learned to shear sheep. Got to be quite good at it, and I did a lot of wool work in the sheds. My method of getting to work at the Bank was on a bicycle. No gears on the bike, just push the pedal. Sometimes the 'Nor wester' blew me to Ranfurly, and sometimes it was a wonder I didn't break the chain, trying to ride into the 'Nor wester' on the way home.

What did I do in the local community? Well, we lived about 4 kms from Ranfurly, if we took the length of our drive in from the main road. It took me until about 25 years of age before I can look back and say I had reached proper adulthood. Boys often take longer than girls to mature, and I was one of this group.

On arrival home from St Kevin's College, my Mother said "Ranfurly Musical and Dramatic Society for you, Bernard". She did the same as the younger ones came home from school. Last place I wished to be. I was self-conscious and shy. But it turned out for the best. Colleen and Leo also were on the stage. I ended up as President of the Society at one time. Took my turn, two years I think. I still love singing.

I joined the Ranfurly small-bore rifle club, enjoyed that as well. Played rugby for Ranfurly club. Was secretary for three years. Was secretary at the time of the 50th Jubilee celebration. Played for the country Under 21 years age-group when 18 and 20 years of age. The other year—19—I was doing C.M.T (Compulsory Military Training). Played in the forwards, I was too light to get anywhere in the senior competition. Murray Simpson and I had the same problem: plenty of 'know-how' and speed but no height and weight. I stopped playing rugby when I was 23 years of age. I had six teeth damaged and a cut face playing in a 'friendly' match at Gore one Sunday. So I called it a day there and then.

I was a member of Young Farmers and later joined Otago Federated Farmers, Maniototo Branch, and later still, after 1970, I joined Alexandra's branch of Federated Farmers. I can remember being at district meetings in Dunedin.

A story I must tell. While at one of the Federated Farmers District meetings, conversation came around with a Mr Drake from Hawea Flat Station. Went like this:

"You're from the Maniototo, young man?"

"Yes".



“Well, I worked on the mill in that area as a young man. So, O’Neill is your name; any other ties with Maniototo families?”

“Yes, my Mother was a daughter of Sarah and Charlie Dougherty.”

“Yes”, he said, “did they live below Ranfurly?”

“Yes”, I said.

Well, Mr Drake then related how he worked on the mill, similar people to the shearing gangs of the time. As he said, we were not always welcome at family homes. However, this Dougherty home, near Ranfurly, on Barney’s Lane, always seemed to be welcoming to all and sundry. The locals and the mill people were all welcome. His reason why: the old man, Charlie Dougherty, used to sit out on the front veranda enjoying proceedings.

When I arrived home, I asked Dad about this story. Yes, he said, Charlie Dougherty was one of a kind, and just as Mr Drake had said.

When I look back all these years, it seems to me that I was shy and self-conscious. Didn’t really mature until I was about 25 years of age. I now think some young men are like me. I liked dancing; I would usually attend the Saturday night dance. I alternated between Patearoa, Ranfurly, Gimmerburn, Waipiata and sometimes Naseby Public Halls. Colin Carr’s band did the music playing. They used to have a ‘Charity Ball’ in Dunedin each year. Leonie Dougherty, my cousin, asked me to partner her for her coming-out appearance. Leonie, a very nice cousin, and I enjoyed going to the ‘Town Hall’ Dunedin.

Within a week or two, Nancy Mawhinney also asked me to partner her at the Waitaki Old Girls Ball. Similar to the Charity Ball. The young ladies are presented to a senior citizen of the town. Her brother, Bill Mawhinney, was to present Nancy, but he broke his collarbone at rugby, and so I was asked. Nancy was also a very nice partner for me. For a while I was engaged to Anne Heffernan from Moonlight, Macraes, but that was not a goer, and I broke it off. So, I was on the loose again. Anne was a good person but not a match, she was 3–4 years my senior and looked it. Not long after, Ann (Chapman) and I began to go out with each other, and the rest is history.

Around 13 July 1962, I bought ‘Bellevue’ from Terri and Nisbet Scott, out Alison Lane. Then Ann and I could really plan ahead.

From the time I left the bank until 1970, I did quite a bit of part-time shearing. Often with Clayton Jones in the Autumn. We did all our own shearing, Leo and Dad did all the sheep work. Could shear about 160 a day. Always knocked off 10 minutes early so as not to be beating the clock. Also, John McCloy and I did quite a bit together. John would come shear at our properties for no charge and I did the same at McCloy’s.

When I look back all these years, it seems to me that our family never had any disagreements of note about business affairs. A nice thought.

A nice little story about mistakes I could make. Goes like this: Ann had established a large garden; vegetable and flower garden. The sheep yards and woolshed were just behind the garden area. We went for a picnic and had all the sheep on our farm in the yards. The gates into and between the home and the yards were not closed properly. So, when we arrived back from a nice day out, guess who were looking at us at the cattle stop: 3500 or more sheep and lambs.

They had eaten everything above ground except a cactus plant as Ann said. I was not popular!! But on the plus side, Ann's roses the following season were the best she'd ever had! This all happened at the Springvale homestead.

I really think that the farm diary started July 1962 covers most aspects from then until 1989.

I thought I had completed my words. However, I was reminded of an occasion at home at Springvale by Ann. Goes like this: Russell Hughes, a small-time contractor, came to do border dyking of land out on Bruce's Hill, part of our farm. Russell brought his grader, caravan and vehicles etc. Parked his caravan under the weeping willow in our backyard. Had his meals etc with us. January that year was very hot. Ann enjoyed Russell's company because she got all the news from the Maniototo. Russell and his wife Jan and little baby were living in the Maniototo, where we had come from. Story goes, Russell was too hot in the grader cab, so he took the cab off, next day he was cooking from the direct sun. Guess what, he had a large beach-style sun hat on; that was not a success, so he had a *large* beach umbrella attached to the body of his grader. I saw all of these stages for myself. So my story is correct. He looked a weird outfit going around a paddock with that particular set-up!

There is another story about a low-loader and the front of the Hyde Hotel. Goes like this: Russell Hughes, of the previous story, asked his employee Eric Sheib to go to Middlemarch area and pick up the low-loader (carries a bulldozer etc) and bring it back to the Ranfurly area. Eric, a heavy drinker, felt the need for a beer by the time he got to Hyde, and so drove the low-loader up behind the garden, which is still in front of this hotel. Not any room for parking, this being about 9.30 to 10.00 am. Eric ended up with the front of the loader (engine area) in the bar of the hotel. Front wheels hanging in the bar cellar. Ann's Mother told us this story and Ann and I thought - "Oh is this possible!!" Well, we deliberately drove home from Dunedin through Middlemarch to have a look. Sure enough, the hole in the hotel frontage was all boarded up. So, Edie Chapman's story was true. You see Edie (Ann's mother) had a sister, Tini Bruhns, who lived a couple of doors up the road from the Hyde Hotel.

## **Bernard in trouble again, by Ann O'Neill**

Bernard (has been known as Bun, Bugger Lugs or the Late Mr O'Neill—never on time) is not going to be let off the hook as easily as he thinks. He has a problem with putting his foot into and then trying to cover up by putting his foot in a bigger hole.

Three stories he will never be allowed to forget by his family.

### **The Topaz Pendant**

He wanted to buy a matching bracelet for the little woman's birthday and could not get one in Alexandra. At the time, he was helping Jo-anna and Fred in Oamaru, and thought he would come home via Dunedin and buy one there. Without wife's knowledge, helps himself to pendant and ear-ring set and throws them in the lawnmower catcher which was in the truck seat, and heads off to Oamaru. Arrives there in the dark and Fred puts catcher on lawn mower. Kept busy with farm work and helping Jo in garden, mowing lawns for next few days. On going home, he arrives in Dunedin but can't find pendant (forgot he put it in the catcher), goes up side street, strips the truck without luck. He goes ahead and buys bracelet with the hope it would match. Decides to go back to Oamaru (now dark) but as he was expected home thinks it would be wise to ring Alexandra which he did from a garage in Waitati. Was told "NOT" to come home without jewellery. Assistant in garage laughed her head off and spouse came away from the phone splitting sides but he was a worried boy. During the night, he worked out what happened and in light of day, starts at one end of lawn clippings (thrown out where cows were feeding) and worked to the other end. One very relieved guy found the little case badly grass stained in the last pile. A case of "all's well that ends well". He won "Chicken of the week" radio competition with this story. The person who won the turkey went to the wrong wedding.

### **The Chocolate Gravy**

Shortly after we were married, Bernard came home late from work and helped himself to his prepared meal. A lovely roast meal with rich gravy followed by homemade chocolate sauce and ice cream. The roast and sauce was appreciated but when the dessert was eaten, I was told in no uncertain terms, the chocolate sauce was terrible. You guessed it. Bernard poured chocolate sauce on his roast, but as he has a very sweet tooth, didn't notice. Gravy on ice cream was a different story and chocolate sauce has never been the same.

### **The Radiogram**

Nana Chapman gave us a lovely old valve radiogram when she moved to 12 Bute Street, Ranfurly. It had been a present from Dad, so was of great value for her. Bernard put it on top of a mattress on the truck and did not tie it. He was promptly told to secure it or put it back in the house. It was secured and brought back to Alexandra where we enjoyed the use for a few years. However, the valve gave out and it was decided to take it to town for repairs. Another discussion re securing it properly but "Bugger Lugs" knew best. The radiogram grew legs and jumped off the truck and ended in splinters. One very worried lad thought he would be smart and dump this beautiful piece of furniture around the farm (spouse thought it was at the repair shop). Things were fine until a few days later, little woman goes on her daily run and for some reason changed route and tripped over a bit of the radiogram hidden in a gully. One very sheepish lad had to tell the truth this time, and worse still Nana Chapman had to be told and it wasn't the one who caused the problem that exploded that bomb.



**The remains of the radiogram in the back of the truck**

This also happened to a suite of bedroom furniture being taken to town to be repainted in crackle paint. They also developed legs and jumped over the side of the truck. It took many years to tie things securely on back of truck.

## **Brief biography: Bernard Stafford O'Neill**

Born Roxburgh 21 December 1934. My Mother [Emily] told me more than once that she waited in labour for over two days for my arrival. However Jack and Emily were both pleased with me. They took me home to their farm at Millers Flat, eight kilometres up the "Timburn" road towards Lake Onslow.

Naming: Mother's next elder brother was Bernard Dougherty, and Stafford was an O'Neill family name. So you have it. The Stafford name goes back to the then governor of Ulster in Ireland a few hundred years ago. Mother and Dad always found me to be a skinny, very active child [ran most places] and inclined to be a little bit frail physically. Had pneumonia when three years old; no penicillin in those days. Also had a habit of disappearing into crowds of people, but my parents soon found that I would always find their 1936 Ford V8 car again. Went with Dad to the photographs at the 1937 Patearoa School Jubilee. As usual, I disappeared, and so the school teacher has me on his knee in one of the large pictures. This kept me from wandering in and out of the way. At my fourth birthday, I was given a hammer for a present. Broke every light on our car in double quick time. Lost the hammer.

I can still remember pinching Corinne Duff's cigarettes, taking John and Colleen to our hiding place at the back of the woolshed. There we proceeded to light up. After much coughing and spluttering, we took the darned things back and put them in Corinne's room. Created some laughs among the adults. I can also remember nagging my parents for permission to stay up with them so that I could say the three mysteries of the rosary with them. I finally won on that one. The big thing, I suppose, was that I could then feel just a bit more important than the others in our family.

Had a happy childhood until reaching five years of age and school began on 4 February 1940 at Millers Flat. Because 1940 was in the second year of World War 2, rationing had begun. This period from 1940 to 1945 had a big bearing on mine and my parents' life. Petrol was not available for Dad to drive me the 8 kms to school along a single track mountain road. To get to Millers Flat School, I boarded with Mr and Mrs Jack Sheehy for the first term. For the second and third terms, I had a governess to teach me [Claire Trainor]. Then in 1941 at 6 years of age, I boarded with Aunt Cecily and Uncle Jim McErlane in Dunedin [128 Maitland St]. Went as a day pupil to St. Dominic's College. I still have a photo of my class in our possession. Home each holiday by bus from Dunedin. In that year I learned to ride all the trams, the cable cars, and generally get myself around Dunedin city as good as any adult. Had a playmate Brian Fay whose parents owned the Criterion Hotel, played with him a few times after school. Much to Aunt Cecily's terror. She did not know where I had gone to until I arrived home again.

Then at seven years of age with John aged five years, we began school boarding at St Thomas's Academy in Oamaru. A difficult three years for our whole family. With so much time away from home during those five years, I became very independent of so many people in my ways. My parents could get enough petrol to drive us to Oamaru for our first term at St Thomas's. But after that, we always travelled by express train Oamaru to Dunedin. It left at 1.19 p.m. and arrived about 4.30 pm. John and I walked from the railway station in Dunedin along the street to the N.Z.R. bus station. There we handed in our luggage and tickets, and boarded the bus for Millers Flat. The bus arrived in Millers Flat at 9 p.m. There we were met by our parents. Just imagine letting a 5- and 7-year-old loose on their own today to travel these distances. We had to be able to buy our food, care for our luggage and be in the right place at the right time. I sure

knew my way around, because John, being only five years, could only follow me. In those days, most people travelled by public transport. Express train could have 10 carriages well filled with people, especially at school holiday time.

In late 1944, Dad and Mother sold the farm at Millers Flat and returned to farming near Ranfurly. From then on, we could operate as a real family again.

In high school, I attended St. Kevin's College Oamaru. Leaving at the end of 1951. Began work at the B.N.Z. Ranfurly: three years in all. Then home to the farm with my parents. Gradually we bought more property and expanded our farming interests.

Socially, my Mother was instrumental in getting me started in the Ranfurly Music & Dramatic Society, of which I am now a past president. Was secretary of the Ranfurly Football club for 3–4 years. Represented the Otago Sub-Union Under 21 years team for two years. I joined the Maniototo Pipe Band at 18 years of age. Have always continued this interest, am now a life member of the Alexandra Pipe Band and also its present Patron. My parents helped greatly during my teenage years and also Rob Hanrahan was a great help to me. I learned singing from Vera Gilbert of Dunedin for a year, and had bagpipe lessons for six years. Did some solo piping. Learned to be quite a good shearer. Took part in Federated Farmers and in irrigation affairs.

Bought 400 acres in Gimmerburn in 1962. Dad and I began preparing the homestead for Ann and me to live in when we married in January 1964.

# ***‘Things I can Remember’***

Bernard Stafford O’Neill



Dear Bernard,

I have typed up all your stories. There are probably a few spelling mistakes etc and I have highlighted some words where I couldn't make out the word so have a read through and make any changes. I can alter them on the computer if you send them back. Also if you have any more stories feel free to post them up. Some stories about how you met Anne or of the kids growing up would be nice! Hope this finds you both well & that Anne's hips aren't too sore.

I started back at work this week  
which has been busy. A bit to  
catch up on after our holiday.

We got back from Hamilton on Sunday  
after the wedding in Raglan which  
was lovely. We visited the Hamilton  
Gardens which were really pretty.

Lots of love

Jonny + Stacey

xoxo.

Jonny and Stacey Hoets
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# **Memoirs of Bernard Stafford O'Neill**

## **6 Mayfair Grove, Alexandra, New Zealand**

### **c. 2018**

George Stafford O'Neill known always as "Stafford" arrived in NZ on the ship "S.S. Bombay" at the George St Pier, Port Chalmers on Thursday 21/01/1884. The Bombay was a "steel hull and steam and sail" propelled. Gross 3133 Tons, 511 Passengers, 70 crew, 3 stowaways. Dalgety were the agents. He stayed his first night in Dunedin at the "Gridiron" Hotel. It is now the site of the Lone Star Café.

Before Stafford arrived in NZ he had been to USA, namely New York City. He had worked at a brick yard on Manhattan Island. I don't know how long he spent there but later returned to Ireland to say goodbye to his family before coming to NZ. The steamship "Bombay" left Plymouth, England midnight 28/11/1883. There was only one stop on this journey to Port Chalmers NZ – at St Vincent, Cape Verde Islands. These are off the west coast of Africa adjacent to Mauritania. Stafford was a "Steerage Passenger" who paid his way himself. Many (maybe most) people were assisted passengers – he wasn't.

Geo. Stafford later married Bridget Herlihy at Naseby 21/01/1895. Bridget Herlihy is the 2<sup>nd</sup> eldest baby registered on the births records for Hamilton's Otago Central (9/11/1865). Edward George Schrick was the eldest registered child.

Bridget Herlihy's mother was Mary Moran born Ireland (Co. Galway) and her father James Herlihy born 1835 (about) (Co. Kerry). Records show that James Herlihy was in Victoria Australia before coming to Otago. As near as I can guess he arrived in Otago in 1863. Mary Moran – later Herlihy arrived on 1 of 2 ships – the "Benlomond" at Otago harbour 19/01/1863 or the "Silistria" at Otago Harbour 19/04/1863. There was a Mary Moran passenger on each of these boats. A small point – Bridget Sullivan later – husband was James Spedderi of Garibaldi/Gimmerburn, was a shipmate of Mary Moran.

The Lone star Café site is now "O'Neill Devereux" lawyers on Princess St. My reason for mentioning this site is that was originally the site of the Gridiron hotel. Stafford O'Neill's first night in NZ was spent at this establishment. Forever after if in Dunedin he liked to stay there.

About 3 of Stafford's brothers:

- Joseph = he went to USA (New York City). Evidently there was some trouble at the water front where he worked. His body was never found. People thought it had been thrown in the Hudson River. When Ann and I visited John and Agnes O'Neill of Newburgh New York John told me that his father had made various visits to the morgue in New York City about his brother Joseph. We stayed with John and Agnes in July 1990 (son of ~~Sinmey~~ <sup>SINMEY</sup> O'Neill).
- Sinmey = also went to the USA and settled in Newburgh NY. He married Sarah Convery, who came from Ireland, at St Patricks Church Newburgh 10/06/1896. Sinmey was killed in an accident at Hopewell Junction on 23/12/190?
- Hugh = as well went to USA and settled at Newburgh NY. Married Johanna Dillon at St Patricks cathedral NY City 11/06/1905. We met all of Hugh's family in 1990 while at Newburgh. I believe we have photos of all these living first cousins on Dads. Hope to list them separately.

More information about Geo. Stafford O'Neill:

He was my Grandad. He died before I was born but I knew his widow, Bridget, well. She was good with history of family, though fairly deaf. After Stafford arrived in 1884 he went to Tasmania. He lost

his saved Money in a bank crash and came back to NZ. His quote "I have travelled enough" and so he stayed at Patearoa. Buried Ranfurly cemetery.

An interesting story that I have been told and also have in writing – when Grandad Stafford was a boy of about 5 years he could well remember having to move home from Eden to Bally Macpeake. The law (British law) decreed that there, the O'Neill family had too much land and so the farmland at Eden was taken from them and given to a family named "Stewart". Many years later while James O'Neill, eldest son, was working as a policeman in another part of Ireland information got around the Stewarts had financial trouble. The Stewarts put the property on the market at auction, James O'Neill had a person 'Blind' bid on his behalf at the auction and so bought the lost land back again for the O'Neill family.

About the time Stafford and Bridget Herlihy married in January 1895 land in the Maniototo county was being cut up for settlement by famers. In common with many other people Stafford and Bridget put their name in to the ballots. The land Bridget drew they settled on and raised their family. This land would have been cut off "Patearoa Station".

Another little bit of history – Dad's father bought the Ranfurly sale yards when they came up at auction in 1930. I am looking at the sale now. Addressed to Mr G.S. O'Neill in a/c with J.I. Fraser, Solicitor, Ranfurly. Sale of Otago Central Sale yards Coy to John Joseph O'Neill, my dad, paid for by Grandad Stafford. The site is now Stafford St in Ranfurly. Cost of purchase to Stafford O'Neill \$510. Plus other costs total \$521.13.

O'Neill's called the farm "Loretto" after Our lady's title. "Our lady of Loretto". The old home farm is now part of a large dairy farm owned by Harvard university of USA.

"Things I can remember" – By Bernard O'Neill (Wednesday 12/10/2016)

I am the eldest of 5 children born to John Joseph and Emily O'Neill. John, known as "Jack" and Emily, Youngest of Charlie and Sarah Dougherty's family. Jack was the youngest of 7 children born to the Geo. Stafford O'Neill family. 5 grew up and married each having children born to them. 2 others died as teenagers. Josephine at age 12. Dad said that Josephine and he had measles; she had a relapse and died (buried Ranfurly). May died at I think 15 years of age of Brights disease. Kidney trouble I think (buried Ranfurly). I have wedding photos of each 'Neill couple. Plus a good wedding photo of Stafford and Bridget's wedding – 21/01/1895. Married Naseby. Bridget's sister Kathleen and her husband Pat Cassidy are bridesmaid and best man.

Some things my Dad told me. He worked for his uncle – Jim Herlihy at Patearoa farm after he left school. Only one of his family to have a high school education. Firstly at Patearoa school then at Christian Brothers School – Rattray St Dunedin, now Kavanagh College (1 year there). Then parents sent him to Holy Cross College Mosgiel – parents thought he might make a priest. Not sure how long there, maybe a year or so. Told his parents "no way" and so came home to Patearoa. Was at uncle Jim Herlihy's property for a while then obtained a carpenter's apprenticeship with Owen Cambridge. Owen ran a building business out of Patearoa. Dad said Owen was a good tradesman however one item he mentioned a few times to me was when you wanted paid wages – just go and ask for them – not like today.



Emily Dougherty and Dad married 18/07/1932 Ranfurly. Dad's birthday – he would be 29 years of age that day. I have a photo of some of the wedding celebrations. The wedding photos were not good or didn't come out so when I was a baby they went to Dunedin and had studio ones done.

On the old sale yards which I mentioned elsewhere Dad surveyed a street now known as Stafford St. Then he built a home for Mother and him about half way along Stafford St. The section backs onto St John's school grounds. House built during 1932. Then Dad mentioned to me that his Uncle Jim Herlihy was looking around for a farm for Dad and Mother to buy. Nice of Jim to help.

However my parents acquired a property on the Millers Flat/Onslow road. No home on the property. A fire had burned it down so dad built a new home there in late 1933 as well. This home had electric lights in all rooms and an automatic pressure water supply – why, because Dad had installed for them a "Wind Charger". It stood up from the dog kennels large tractor batteries held the charge. We did not have electric range or electric washing machine etc., just electric light. None of our neighbours had electricity. The Teviot power scheme did come up the Onslow Road. Also a "Ram" Was purchased and installed on the side of the creek away down in the gully. I believe "rams" can be purchased even today. As little boys we would be asked to go switch the "Ram" on or off. There was a balance which allowed the water to pass into the pipeline. All us boys needed to do was set this balance in motion and water could be pumped up hill almost anywhere. If the tanks on the hill behind our home over flowed too much then our task was – talk a walk down the hill and back again. From my memory of things I would say the ram lifted the water about 40 meters or so.

Dad also built a sheep dip down by this creek further downstream. It was a one person operation. Dad could load the sheep in, 20 or so, and then stand in front of this dip and a rod was attached. The sheep pen at the back of the dip. He would press this rod and the 20 or so sheep fell into the dip water and then the animals swam out. For his time he was very forward thinking. They did very well economically and also they like in the Millers Flat community. Dad was president of the Millers Flat Dog trial club. Also I found out lately that he left a challenge cup for competition. In the Millers Flat collie club booklet Dad's name is down as Jim O'Neill. They soon found out that mother could play the piano well for dances, servicemen's send offs to the second world war etc.

Our neighbour Charlie Batchelor was killed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war. Cecil, Mrs Batchelor, sold the farm and went back to the Timaru area where she came from originally. She was an Elworthy.

Earliest incident I can remember was being put on a horse, bare back and told to ride home. No good, I fell off. Since then a horse has only a head and a tail to me. Another occasion, Claire Duff was a landgirl and home help in our household. She smoked – surpassingly I borrowed her tailor made and the 4 of us headed round behind the garage for a light up. After much coughing and spluttering we gave up on this idea. However the adults must have had a smile that night. We had put the half smoked cigarettes back in their packets and returned the lot to Claire's room.

Evidently among my presents for Xmas I was given a boys sized hammer. Very useful, I proceed to break all the glass at a 4 year olds level. Even did the tail lights on our nice new car – a Ford V8.

Another present for Xmas another year included a toy drum. That disappeared I am told because of the noise. Also John and I were old enough to ride a tricycle at about 4 and 2 years of age. So there was some competition over usage. In those days we had a long drop toilet up from our home –



about 20 meters outside the garden. Well. Whoever had ownership at the time and needed to make a visit, guess what. He rode the trike to the dunny and also had it inside with him. Likewise – John was playing with the push lawnmower. Arrived in to us with a piece of his big toe missing. It was sitting by the lawnmower – the piece. He of course does not have much of the nail on his big toe now.

At this preschool age I also had a pen chain for playing in the fowl run. Good fun – put the hens off the nest, break eggs etc. Dad put a hen hole in the gate into the chook yard to keep me out. Soon after this was done I had failed to come into lunch. The search was on. A farm has lots of places little boys can be off to. At last – success, I had been found. Had my head stuck in the hen hole in the gate into the chook house. That was a once of for me.

I began school at Millers Flat on 4/02/1940. The day Ted was born. Bearded with Sheehys in the village. For the second half of 1940 I had a governess to teach me – Claire Trainer. Problem mother and dad had was my school bus – 4-5 miles from the nearest school at Millers Flat. Petrol restriction – 4 gallons a week for a Ford V8 that went about 15-16 miles to the gallon. Too young to ride a horse and a steep winding narrow gravel road. In those days few people had tractors on farms and some still rode horses. Gordon Barron who lived and George Rae's property up the road from us always moved round on his horse. Whoever went to Millers Flat picked up the mail from the shop in Millers Flat for all the neighbours up our way. The reason for the petrol restrictions was World War 2 which lasted from 1939-1945.

Something that always took place in our home. Dad and mother each night knelt by the sofa and said 3 decades of the rosary. I can remember "nagging" to stay up with them while they said these prayers. All our lives the full rosary was said as our family grew. I can remember Colleen at maybe 30 years of age saying to me that it felt so safe and secure at the Bute St home in Ranfurly with the saying of these prayers.

Dad and mother did very well economically at Millers Flat but there was one problem – Schooling. As I have already said. A governess and boarding. Monday – Friday in Millers Flat.

My second year as a 6 year old I spent boarding with Aunty Cecily and Uncle Jim McErlane and 128 Waitland St Dunedin. Attended St Dominic's school. It was by St Joseph's cathedral up Rattray St. I sure did find out how to get around Dunedin. A penny ride on the cable car up High St from the Exchange. Out to Normanby on the tramcar to visit Uncle Jack and Auntie Kate O'Neill. Then out to Council St to see Jack and Sophia Mahoney. Called them Uncle Jack and Sophia – in reality she was my mother's first cousin. Originally a Ned Dougherty daughter from Dunedin. I knew how to go to the "Chum club" for the pictures on Saturday morning. Also used to go to the children's radio session at 5pm at the old chief post office by the exchange. It was about 4-5 levels up in the elevator.

When John hit 5 years old Mother and dad sent us to St Thomas's academy in Oamaru. I was aged 7 and John 5 years. Journey was NZR bus from Millers Flat to Dunedin bus depot (now Early settler's museum). Carry our luggage along to the railway station. Board the express train to Oamaru and walk from there to St Thomas's. Quite a journey for little boys. Whoever is reading this must realise that world war was on and there were all sorts of restrictions – petrol and food etc. And also as I had had a year previously in Dunedin I was quite confident about the city.



We spent three years at school at St Thomas's. Of course we travelled to and from Millers Flat at school holidays. Years 1942, 1943 and 1944. Our parents said we were like strangers when we came home. As well Colleen had begun school at Millers Flat. She boarded with Charlie and Edna O'Malley Monday to Friday. And in 1945 Leo was due for school. Very hard on our mother.

So what to do. Decision time – sold the "run" to neighbour Jim and Gwen Craighead. Went back to Ranfurly. Where they had come from. Dad and mother moved to Ranfurly in August 1944. John and I finished at St Thomas's December 1944. A new Catholic school opened February 4<sup>th</sup> 1945 in Ranfurly. We were first day pupils. Our parents bought into Jean and Elizabeth Pottinger's farm 02/04/1946.

I was there at Sacred Heart School until end of 1948. Then to St Kevins for 3 years 1949, 50 and 51. Dad and mother found me a position on the staff of the BNZ bank in Ranfurly. Spent 3 years there. Enjoyed the time. After that I came home to the farm. While at the BNZ I rode a bicycle to work each day. Winter and Summer. About 2 ½ miles (4km) each way. On a windy day coming home, it was a wonder I did not break the bike chain. Why – riding into a nor-wester, no gears on bikes in those days. And in the middle of winter I wore a balaclava pulled down right over my head and down to my neck. Even then round my eyes and nose would have ice.

The bank staff were manager Stan Bell and later Ron Blundell. Also Jack Mann, John Walsh, Dawn McLauchlan, Vera Wilson and yours truly. For most of the time I was there I was ledger keeper – that is all cheques, lodgements or other movements on accounts were hand written up by me. So I really did know the business affairs of about 800-850 clients of our bank. I also know that these ledgers are present in the upstairs floor of the BNZ Alexandra. I saw one on display one day in the Alexandra branch. It was quickly put away when I saw my handwriting and could tell Kay Gale of BNZ about the a/co.

In those days the banks opened from 10am – 3pm. Big deal although I had to be at work at 8.30am each day. Monday to Friday. Every Wednesday at the end of the day I had to balance the 800-850 accounts to the last penny (cent today). No mean task. I did not go home that day until this task was completed. On the next day the manager went through the 3 ledgers that held the accounts to check I had the figures correct. No calculators in my possession – all additions etc. were by hand. I did get good at this work.

When I announced to Mr Blundell and to my mother that I was coming home to the farm they both "hit the roof". (however I did go farming). Not long before I terminated my employment at BNZ the auditor had been in at our branch. This was normal practice. Mr Blundell had suggested to me that he would help me get a year in London UK at BNZ branch. Mr Blundell himself had had a year and so knew about this position. It was considered quite a perk.

About a year earlier dad and mother had bought another 500 acres (200 hectares) of land. I had noticed that he seemed a bit weary with the extra work. At that time the government had compulsory military training. I was rounded up in this. At 19 years of age I spent 18 weeks basic training at Burnham military camp. It was a good experience. Met lots of new people. Got to be friendly with Hughie O'Donnell who was from Hokitika. He was 3<sup>rd</sup> cook at Warners Hotel in Christchurch. This hotel was on the corner of the square in Christchurch. Some years later Hughie was killed in a large mine disaster near Greymouth/Runanga area. I think the mine was the Stockton one. ~~He~~<sup>19</sup> killed on that occasion, I think. *3 bodies were never found. Happened on the 19th January 1967.*



As well as working on the family farm I learned to shear sheep and also did rousing work. Never full time but did get quite good at the work. Was a left handed shearer. Clayton Jones and I did the Autumn run for a few years. Mainly crutching and shearing odds and sods sheep (stragglers of the back country). Sometimes what we called double fleeces.

On another tack. When I left school at St Kevins my mother took me by the ear and said on stage in the Ranfurly music and dramatic society – last place any 17 year old wanted to be. However when I look back over the many years since – I am now very thankful to her.

I spent until 34 years of age in the Musical Society. At 34 years Ann and I bought a farm near Alexandra and so moved on from Ranfurly. Over these 17 years we had some very able performers and singers in the Maniototo. Examples = Jean Hefferman (Good actor), Jim McCombie (ex Mobil song quest), Pam Stewart (Soprano), Dorothy O'Malley, Kevin Geddes, Mrs Speedy (pianist), Emily O'Neill (my mother, pianist). Producers – Russell Pool, Lloyd Martin. Actors – David Green, Ron Wilshire, Clarrie Miller, Alisa Rooney, Noeline Rowlands, Ethel Wilson, Linda Knox.

We put on shows such as "Trial by fury" (Gilbert and Sullivan operatic), "New moon", "Me and my girl" and many one act plays and concerts. I also am a past president of this society.

Played rugby for Ranfurly. Was secretary for a few years. Was secretary at the time of the clubs 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Was in the under 21 years country sub unions team for 2 years. Being a forward I was too light and small for senior county teams. Played until I was 23 years of age. Had 6 teeth broken and a good sized cut in my left cheek at a match in Gore one day. And so I wisely gave rugby up.

Was a small bore rifle shooter for about 10 years. Rob Hanrahan helped me quite a bit. He was a member of the Manchester **Unity** Oddfellows lodge – which has a branch in Ranfurly. This society was registered under the friendly societies act. In the days before social welfare say 1850-1940 members received 10 Shillings a week or 1 pound if they were out of work. Big help to families in hard times. However when Michael Joseph Savage's government came to power around 1936 they brought taxpayer funded social welfare. So gradually a society such as the Oddfellows went by the way. However through this group I learned how to be a secretary and speak at public meetings.

I always kept my connection with my catholic parish. I don't know why I did but am very thankful now. John surprised mother and dad when he came home from St Kevins during his second year there and said to us – "please can i go to Strathfield, Sydney, Australia and joint he Christian brothers?". So about 1954 John went to Strathfield. Still with the brothers and he will be 80 years of age in about 3 weeks' time.

After completing her primary schooling at the catholic school in Ranfurly, Colleen completed her education at **teschmakers** college which was near Oamaru. After that Colleen trained as a nurse at Dunedin hospital. At the time Colleen went overseas she was 2IC at the maternity hospital in Dunedin.

Leo had secondary education at both St Kevins College Oamaru and Maniototo area school. Then after that took up an apprenticeship with Ranfurly tractor services. Some years later Leo and I began a partnership on the farm. Leo and Lorna went onto the home properties at Ranfurly and Ann and I moved to Springvale close to Alexandra. Ann and I moved from Gimmerburn to Springvale on the 4/7/1970.



Leo, Lorna, Ann and I had a partnership for a few years before 1970. When Leo and Lorna married about 1966 we set up together. Mother and Dad bought a home in Ranfurly. Ann and I hired and "Bellevue" along Alison Rd out Gimmerburn way and Leo and Lorna lived at "Wideford" close to Ranfurly.

A little bit of history – the name "Wideford" is from the Oakney Islands north of Scotland. The owners of the farm at Ranfurly Mr and Mrs Pottinger came from the Oakneys. Ann's uncle David banks also came from the Oakney Isles. He confirmed that "Wideford Hill" is a property in that locality.

Aldo "Bellevue" the name of the 400 acre block at Gimmerburn has a history. The 2 original Davis brothers who came to NZ from Tasmania had lived at a locality named "Bellevue".

Leo and I had a good partnership. Went a bit like as follows: Dad could still work and so did a lot on the farms. Until Ann and I moved to Springvale there was not full employments on the Ranfurly properties. So Leo and I set up a separate bank account at the Otago trust branch in Ranfurly. Into which all our wages were paid. Mine mostly from shearing sheep and shed work. Leo's mostly from mechanical work for tractor services especially in the summer time. Around April or so we would discuss what to do with the gross earnings that had accrued. The beauty of this idea was that we went half each in all of these earnings and the one at home on the farm was always quite happy. After Ann and I moved to Springvale we continued the partnership of about 8-10 years. We all left this necessary as for a while there was relatively large debt. Also from 1967 onwards farming income was the pits. We even did our own shearing at Ranfurly/Gimmerburn. John McCloy and I would shear one day at McCloy's and then one day at O'Neill's. Leo and Dad did all the farm and shed work – such as feeding out hay and moving the sheep on turnips etc. Most of the shearing was done in mid to late August and hoggets shorn in early October.

Leo and I always did our haymaking together. Bale hay from 3am till we had about 1000 bales made, then breakfast and stack the 1000. Used to wait for the Lucerne to dry right out and then bale with the night dew. Always then had excellent hay.

After about 1980 Leo and Lorna continued on, on their own and Ann and I did the same at Springvale. When Ann and I brought at Springvale we had this property in our names and Leo and Lorna also had their property in their names. We shared ownership of the stock, plant and income. We also asked our accountant Robert Cooper to keep the shared ownership of the stock, plant and income as even as possible. In that way once all of us agreed to split this partnership then no one owed anyone any dollars. This worked well. I kept farm diaries from about 1962 until about 1989. These are available.

*Crag An Dir*  
We left "Crag A Dir" farm at Springvale 15/12/1995. Then rented for 4 months in Clyde until the purchase of a home on Kamaka Crescent in Alexandra. Lived there for around 5 years. Then bought a section at 6 Mayfair Grove in Alexandra. "David Reid Homes" built the home for us. Moved in on 30/08/2001. As of this day we still reside at this address. Ann always has had a lovely garden. It is often known as "Green Fingers". Also I think she is the best dressmaker, sewer, patch worker, quilt maker I have ever seen. Helped our 4 daughters make their wedding dresses. Made items for Omakau, Alexandra and Roxburgh catholic parishes. Such as albs, chasubles etc. When B Aitcheson was here she made him some Albs. Later she made a set of stoles, double sided ones for B Wayne Fr

Healey. Hangings that are on the lectern pulpit) are often hers on display. There is a very large hanging front right in our parish church of our lady. Ann did all the sewing and cutting of this deal.

We reared 5 children: Joanna, Stephanie, Carmen, Richard and Sandra. All told we are a very close knit family group. At present we have 4 in laws and the 5<sup>th</sup> of our family is a widow. Eighteen grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren. More on the way.

Two items I have omitted to mention so far. Bought Bellevue Gimmerburn 1962. And while we were at Springvale Ann and I also bought "Kendell's" home block. Sold off the homestead to Rex and Jan Wells as not needed. Ran about 500 ewes on this area – about 70 hectares including River reserve.

There is some very valuable information about the original James Herlihy in a box file marked "Herlihy". My estimate of James is that he was a very good businessman. On his marriage certificate it states "Trader" under occupation. Married Dunedin went to Hamilton's – buried there in 1900. I have not traced accurately when he arrived in NZ from Victoria Australia. Could have been during 1863. Why – well the lady he married, Mary Moran, was in Dunedin for 2 years before their marriage. On the form "Intention to marry" he states in Dunedin for one week. So he must have been around the Otago area to get to know Mary Moran.

In the "Herlihy File box" there is evidence that James was a good progressive businessman. Applied for land using various daughters and nominee owners. In those days the government had a law forbidding too much aggregation of land. Also if a person bought land to farm then that new owner had to reside on the property.

With regard to my grandparents – Stafford and Bridget O'Neill; well Bridget drew their property and so when marriage took place they moved to the land; likely her father's doing.

He was also able to enjoy himself as is also in the file box. RE an event in Dunedin when I asked Dad about James accident he explained that some men had been riding horses home from Naseby – "A day out" and at the time were racing their horses. James horse tripped and rolled on him. And so his health problems resulted from then on. A pity.

Another matter to do with Grandad Stafford O'Neill. Before he left Ireland for NZ he brought a pocket watch. Auntie Nellie Cuttance (nee O'Neill) had this watch in her possession. Husband Jim and Nellie travelled overseas on various occasions. She told me that she had given this watch to Pat and Neal McErlane. These men and sister Mary live on a farm near "Clady" in eastern country Derry, Ireland. I mentioned to Nellie could I get it back as I am the eldest O'Neill grandson on Stafford's. When Ann and I visited the McErlanes, spelt McErlean by them, they happily handed it over to me.

There is a tale Nellie told me about this watch. Goes like this: Nellie when she gave the watch to Pat and Neal went to a shop in Ballymena to have this watch checked. Upon viewing said watch the man said "Mrs Cuttance we sold this watch to your father in 1883". The hallmark indicates the age and the shopkeepers mark was on this watch. It's in working order and I gave it to our son Richard recently.

What other things did I do in my 82 years of life? Well after boarding at St Kevins College Oamaru, home to Ranfurly. Dad and mother found a place for me at the BNZ Ranfurly. Spent 3 years there.



About 6 months after I left school Jack Mulholland asked me would I learn to play the Bass drum in the Maniototo pipe band. "Yes" was my reply. Jack Mulholland was drum major of this band. Also a cousin of ours. 2 or 3 years later I began to learn the bagpipes. Spent 6 years taking lessons. Last 2 with Fergus Mathison, pipe major of City of Dunedin Highland band. Robin Scott of "Pandella farm" Gimmerburn taught me for 4 years. Became pipe sergeant of the band. We used to practice marching out at Nisbet Scott's property, not realising that later on Ann and I would own the place.

After moving to Springvale, Alexandra I stayed away from the Alexandra band for a couple of years. To see if our new farming business would survive. Then in 1972 I joined the Alexandra crowd. Played with them until about 1988. In 1988 was made a life member. During this time I was president for 3 years, secretary for the golden jubilee committee in 1989.

Keith Cameron was pipe major for much of the time when I was there. We saw to it that our band competed at the NZ championships in 1983 at Invercargill and at Christchurch in 1985. Came 4<sup>th</sup> in D grade at Invercargill and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Christchurch. At Christchurch we won the quickstep and the street march but "duffed" it in the selection. Richard and Joanna were playing members of our band.

I ceased playing around 1987-88 because of piercing headaches while playing. Only occurred while playing the bagpipes. At Mosgiel while playing in the selection at Otago/Southland championships I had to step out however the band still won that day. 10-15 years ago the Alex band asked me to become the patron and so still am today. I hope to go over to the Alexandra district club tonight (02/12/16) to hear our band play at the St Andrews night celebration.

When I went back to the home farm after 3 years at the bank of NZ I joined the Otago Federated farmers and also continued with them at Alexandra. Of course I spent much leisure time as a member of Ranfurly Music and Dramatic Society "Thanks to my mother's efforts in starting me there". Am a past president of this society. During the 16-18 years I was a member our group put on one acct plays, Gilbert and Sullivan shows and the likes of "Me and My girl", "New moon" etc and also variety concerts. I have a good recording of a concert put on in 1959 at Ranfurly to make money for the Maniototo hospital. Emily, my mother was solely responsible for this recording. She declared, against disbelieving family, that the concert could be recorded.

She engaged Ross McGrath to do his best on the night. Turned out a winner. Our only recording of this society's work thanks to our mother. Ross set up his gear near the floor in front of the stage with his recording microphone. He recorded the sound onto the old reel/tape machine. 3 years or so ago I had most of the concert recorded onto a CD. I consider this recording historically important.

When we arrived at the Springvale farm 447 hectare (about 1200 acres) Ann and I were busy with 3 little daughters and Richard born a few months after we arrived. The farm was very run down. Could let sheep loose at one side of the property and then find some of the at the back boundary a week later. The first year on the farm was one of the driest recorded. A very wet July/August/September then no appreciable rain until early March. During early October of that season I met Tom Kelliher, a neighbour. His quiet comment was "I Suppose we have had our rain for the year". How right he was.

Our home at "Crag-Am-Our" for that was the farms name, means "Hills of gold". Springvale was comfortable and Ann soon had a lovely garden and productive vegetable garden.



I had to take part in the Manuwherikia Irrigation committee. We had large irrigation quota. In later years say about 1983 or so the then government sold all irrigation schemes in NZ. To the irrigators our scheme was given to us with approx. \$170000 cash as well. Shows what the ministry of works thought of the quality of our scheme.

The new management committee which I was on set about improving the race system and cutting staff from 5.5 persons down 2 persons. I did voluntary race rostering for the Borough race for some years. Our irrigation scheme had to obtain all the easements for the water races belonging to our scheme. Up until then all easements had been held under the public works Act. A special irrigation act was passed in parliament so that our committee could ensure the right to obtain these easements. This irrigation act lasted in force for 5 years and then expired.

On behalf of our committee I had tenders called for surveys and lawyers to offer pricing for the work to be done. Over a period of about 18 months I worked between John Williamson and Charlotte McKay, George Elder, of McGeorge and Ebler, Surveyors and the land holders, having the documents signed and witnessed by a justice of the peace. Over 300 titles to be set with easements on them. More than half of the documents had to be taken out to property owners along with a JP for signing. Sometimes meeting the owners had to take place after work hours. A big task.

At the end of all this work the Management Committee very graciously handed a payment of \$5000. I did not expect this payment but still was nice to receive it.

Another thing that happened in my life was Central Otago Budgeting services (budget advice). Spent around 3 years as a volunteer for them. Am now a life member of our branch. It was work that I liked. Had a turn at most positions in the branch. Managed the office for either 4 or 5 years in the 1990's. Have been to quite a few national conferences over the years etc.

Began playing lawn bowls in 1968 at the Ranfurly club. Played for a couple of years at the Alexandra Bowling club. Then withdrew and did not play again until around 1990. At that time I joined the RSA Bowling club. Only play on Wednesday afternoon in retired men's competition. Just for enjoyment.

Ann has always had a busy life. With our 5 offspring it could not be otherwise. She is perhaps the best person in our area with a sewing machine. Can draft a pattern by just looking at a garment in a shop window. In the past I have seen her do this. Actually Stephanie is also able to do this. Example. For each of our 4 daughters weddings. The wedding gowns were made by Ann and our daughters.

I forget to mention the RSA bowling club made me a life member earlier this year (2016).

Around 1983-84 the Vincent county Council set up a subcommittee to look at having a piped rural water supply set up for the area covering the Dunstan Flats, Springvale and Galloway areas. I chaired this committee. Mr John Watts, civil engineer of Duffill Watts and Kmg was on this committee to oversee the engineering practicalities. Most of the farmers from Springvale corner out to the Chatto Creek Tavern refused to join. The vast majority of all other land owners said yes they would join. However as the government paid half of the cost of the rural water supply schemes the agricultural department had a say. They said no to subsidy because the percentage of household supplies was too high. So idea flopped.



Soon afterwards Ann and I looked at the idea of a rural water scheme based around a "spring" on our farm. Approached some neighbours. Set up a committee, Ian Rutherford went on the chair and I went secretary. Soon had the scheme up and running since about 195 this piped rural water supply known as "long gully rural water supply" has been operating without and problems. We made sure that all the easements were in place. So over 30 years operation is good.

A story that I must tell of the Cuttance family trek from Okuru, South Westland to South Otago. Jim Cuttance born about 1905 was one of the youngest to make this journey.

He married Auntie Nellie, dad's sister, and so became my uncle. I had numerous holidays at their farm near Dacre in Southland and have very fond memories of Uncle Jim and auntie Nellie.

The following article comes from the Clutha leader dated 19<sup>th</sup> November 1907. Goes like this:

Overland from West to East. Kuru to Blackburn through the Haast pass: - Family, Cattle and horses and belongings.

Amongst the new settlers at Blackburn is one whose story of travel with his wife, family, cattle and such household goods as he could carry with him, remind us on the "Great Boer Trek" in South Africa a number of years ago when they travelled northward and founded a new colony across the Vaal river or indeed it recalls to one the story of Moses and the Israelites in their quest for the promised land. Mr Harry Cuttance outside his own family no one else bears the same name in the Dominion - his wife and family of 9 - 6 sons and 3 daughters, the eldest being a girl of 24 years, the second a girl of 21, the 3<sup>rd</sup> a boy of 19 and the youngest a boy of 2 years all reside at the West Coast at a place call Okuru. It is about 175 miles south along the coastline from Hokitika or by steamer a 100 miles. Mr Cuttance was born at Ballarat where his father was a miner in the early 1850's. the family came across to NZ when Harry was 8 years of age and the father followed up all the early rushes in Otago being among the first at Gabriel's Gully.

#### Family life at Okuru

They finally settled on the West Coast at Okuru where the old man died. Mrs Cuttance is a native of the coast. Their home comprises 300 acres of freehold clear land and 1500 acres of government leasehold mostly bush at a rental of 2 pounds per 100 acres. The usual rent is 1 pound per 100 acres but Mr Cuttance was run up to 2 pound for his. The land is in the valley of the Turnbull river about a mile and a half up from its junction with the ocean. The settlement there comprises in all eight families almost cut off from the outer world. A steamer called every 2 months and the mail came in every fortnight, being brought down by a man with a packhorse along the coast. At Okuru there was a small school, the teacher being a Mr Seville, who is known to some in this district.

The land about is a bushy swamp, extensively marsh covered with scrub or light bush till you get to the mountains. The rain fall is prodigious, the average being 167 inches a year. Last February when bush fires were raging in other parts of the country and the long continued drought was burning everything, the rain at Okuru was 22 ½ inches. Mr Cuttance settled there in 1875. The chief means of living is cattle raising and dairying. Every year a mob of cattle was driven up the coast to Hokitika and sold. Sometimes the cattle were sent by steamer, but this was usual very expensive. Pigs were also fattened and sent to market but there was no much in them.



Mr Cuttance also went in for farming. He has a small butter factory, separator etc, worked with and engine and it kept one of the family fully employed bringing in wood to keep the engine going and altogether the dairy proved a very laborious and risky undertaking. Two or three tonnes of butter would collect before the steamer would call. There was risk in keeping it so long and the market was very uncertain. Mr Cuttance had a very fine horse and a very large barn the father being used to store hay for winter feed. The hay being gathered as opportunity offered in the odd days when there was no rain. There was absolutely no grain grown.

#### Decided for the other world

Mr Cuttance was doing well enough at Okuru but his family were getting up in years. They had never seen a railway train or a township, the bush and swamp and heavy rain fall made their surroundings dismal in the extreme and Mr Cuttance felt that he was not doing justice to them in stopping there. He therefore decided to make a shift to the outer world. He heard of Blackburn and made a trip overland to see it and finally decided to take up land there. He returned to the old home at Okuru and prepared for a great trek. The family held many consultations as to how best to move to the outer world. It was at first decided to send the women and children and the girls round by steamer and overland to Christchurch. The men coming over the passes with the stock but the girls recoiled at the prospect of contact with the outer world, city, trains and even coaches were novelties to them.

It was eventually decided that the whole family should come together and their course was made out through the Haast pass in the southern Alps and to Wanaka and Hawea. It was a bold undertaking. The next thing was preparation for the journey.

There was no such thing as calling an auction sale for there were no buyers there. There was no demand for fowls even and as for eggs "Why" says Mr Cuttance "we had dozens of them and used to cook them in every conceivable way for a change". There was absolutely no sale for them there and it would not pay to send them all away. The chairs and as much household furniture as possible were unscrewed and packed in small bulk and sent down to the steamer to come round to Dunedin. Side saddle and pack saddles and tents (two) were got in order, supplies were gathered. We had ham cakes, bread and provisions of all kinds. There was no such thing as selling the place. It was left in charge of a man to look after. They made what he could out of it and pay the rates.

#### Story of the trek

Having got everything ready Mr and Mrs Cuttance and family started off from the old home. They had 12 saddle and pack horses all loaded in some way. 58 head of cattle, mostly cows and 3 dogs. With the assistance of his brother and nephew, they moved in long procession down the Okuru to the seaside, the cattle a good deal of trouble. The first night they stopped at his brother's place ready for a 4am start in the morning, that being the hour the tide suited for crossing the Okuru.

The second day they went 8 miles up the coast to the valley of the Haast river. They stopped at Cron's accommodation house at Haast that night. The cattle had given a great deal of trouble that day, breaking away into the bush. The third day they set off the Haast and camped that night at the place known as the "Big Bluff". They have all got landmarks on the coast – 7 miles up the valley of



the Haast. The party had, had a very hard day with the cattle and they were all dead beat when they got the camp pitched and everything rounded up for the night.

On the evening of the 4<sup>th</sup> day they arrived at John Cunningham's survey camp at Thomas's bluff. Mr Cunningham was an old Dunedin man and a brother of Mrs Sandilands and one of the victims of the Hasborough road fatality in March last. He treated the visitors very kindly, wet weather set in and they were compelled to put in 2 or 3 days here keeping the cattle rounded up all the time. On the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the trek they had good luck and covered 13 miles, pitching camp on Nisson flat at nightfall. Here they were right in the mountain gorges. Heavy rain set in again and continued for 8 days on end. The creeks were in flood and they were hemmed in. they ran out of provisions and had to kill on young cattle to supply them with food. Everything ran out, even salt and pepper and they had to subsist on boiled meat and soup, such as it was – tasteless stuff but hunger is a good condiment. On the day they left there, Mr Cuttance's brother made his way to a run holders out station and scored some promises. They were now near the head of the Haast and on the sixth day ~~near~~ *March*

*They* They crossed the Haast river, a narrow gulch in the mountains connecting the east with the west. They camped that night at the head of the Makarora River in Otago soil.

This was the hardest day they had ever had. The track was a mere ledge in many places with the steep cliffs thousands of feet up on one side, while on the other side they could hear the gurgling of the mountain torrents a thousand feet or more down sheer scrubby bush faces. The cattle strung out on a long line and two or three of them went down head long over the cliffs but we were able to save all of them. The camp was struck at 7 o'clock in the morning and it was 8 at night before another suitable camping place was found. Between these hours none of party had so much as even a drink of tea. They had to walk most of the way as the track was too unsafe to ride. Mrs Cuttance had to carry the baby in her arms, her usual custom had been to carry the baby on the horse in front of her. The pass is 1750 feet above sea level, and the place they camped for the night was about 1500 feet high, right at the head waters of the Makarora. The next day the 7<sup>th</sup> in the actual march they struck camp at the Mule Valley. They struck a deer stalkers camp and bought out his stock of provisions. They had a lot of stuff of various kinds and had a few days of their time to run but finding the party short of food they kindly struck camp and sold our friends their supplies. "We had another picnic" says Mr Cuttance "and stopped here for a day or two". The track they were following was the one through which the late Vincent Pyke and an exploring party went to the coast over 40 years ago. They found many evidences of the old pioneers trip. The Mule Valley so called from the fact that Vincent Pyke left some mules there at the time. It is an open valley with a narrow pass at each end. Mr Cuttance had previously made up his mind to leave his cattle there for a month or two, so he spent two or three days in putting a fence across the pass at each end of the valley. It is a pretty place in the mountains and the family spent a pleasant time there and had a good rest. Their 8 days travel brought them down to Mrs Pipsons accommodation house at Makarora 7 or 8 miles from lake Wanaka. The next day the 9<sup>th</sup> they struck lake Wanaka and pitched their tents at a place known as the neck. Here they found some old gardens and had a good feed of fruit. The 10<sup>th</sup> day's travel brought them to Hansens accommodation house at Hawea Flat. Mr T Hansen, Hacksmith of this town (Dunn and Redding) is a son of Mr and Mrs Hansen. At this place they were treated splendidly and were shown every kindness, attention and hospitality. They were not in touch with civilization and many of the family observed the first telegraph wires they had seen in their lives. Mr Cuttance here bought an express. He met a man on the road and there and then bought the trap and harness he was driving. The pack and saddle horses were glad to be relieved of their burden and 2 of



the horses being yoked into the express. Mrs Cuttance and the children had a more pleasant ride. By pleasant drives over good roads our party made their 11<sup>th</sup> stage at the Queensbury Hotel, the 12<sup>th</sup> at Cromwell the 13<sup>th</sup> at Bald Hill Flat and the 14<sup>th</sup> at Roxburgh, the 15<sup>th</sup> at Evans Flat, the 16<sup>th</sup> at Waitahuna and the 17<sup>th</sup> days travel brought them to their new home at Blackburn. They only struck one place on the road where they were received with anything but the greatest kindness. At this place where there were two hotels, thought they did not want any favours, but were prepared to pay full value for all they wanted, the proprietors were both rather short and appeared for some reason as if they would have preferred their rooms to their company. They arrived at Blackburn all safe and well and in the best of spirits.

The story of their travel needs no embellishment. It is an undertaking few would care to undertake. The Cuttance family are the stuff that good colonials are made of and that things may turn out as well with them at Blackburn will be the sincere wish of all who read this account of their travels or trek from West to East as Mr Cuttance terms it. They are at home in the saddle and in the open air and their trip, to them, does not seem such a wonderful thing after all. There is of course a bridal track all the way and it may be mentioned that the late Mr Seddon; late Prime Minister and west coaster; when he was Minister of public works, and Governor On slow and party made the same trip in the Summer of 1891 and there were no children or other belongings. The occasion of that trip was Mr Seddon's visit to Okuru.

Mr Cuttance and his sons returned to Mule Valley for the cattle in the July last and brought them over to Blackburn in August last. There was 3 ½ feet of snows in the valley, but the cattle was alright, except that 3 of them had died eating "Tutu". Unfortunately 8 or 9 more had died from the same cause since they came to Blackburn.

"What do you think of "Blackburn"? was asked of Mr Cuttance. "Oh it's alright" was his reply, "but I wish we had a little of the rain we had on the Coast", was his reply. Mr Cuttance took up two sections at Blackburn – section 29 – 660 acres and section 30 -480 acres.

Something that I must add to this history Blackburn road in South Otago runs up North of Balclutha into the Holland region. Uncle Jim Cuttance had said that his family soon moved to the Outram area of the Taieri plains. As he said Blackburn (Hillend) was too cold. Even though Jims father was born at "Ballarat" Victoria, Australia. The Cuttance family originated from Cornwall U.K.

Now what do I know or have heard about Dad's uncles and Aunts on the O'Neill side. That is grandads brothers and sisters.

James the eldest stayed at home in Ireland, For a while he worked for the Irish constabulary in the South of Ireland. Then later returned to run the O'Neill family farm. I have already stated how James managed to gain back the part of the farm taken from them some years earlier.

I have already written about the 3 O'Neill brothers who went to the USA. In 1990 Ann and I spent some time with their families. Stayed with John and Agnes O'Neill in Newburgh NY.

John was a first cousin of Dad's – his father being Sinmey O'Neill. On his grave it says Simon. We are not sure of his correct Christian name. it may even have been St John O'Neill or even Sean. Of course Sinmey was one of the 3 brothers that went to the USA.



The first of the brothers to come to NZ was Patrick O'Neill. Arrived in Dunedin around 1880. He had helped a man get away from the law in Ireland by hiding this person in a pig crate to get the person on board ship. The law found out and Pat also had to leave town. It is noteworthy that 2 daughters (twins) were born at Denniston in the Buller are north of Westport.

Now John O'Neill also came to NZ. Originally settled down in North Otago. They owned the railway hotel at Kurow. Then had a try at farming near the Totara Estate just outside Oamaru. Members of his family told me that Jack O'Neill as he was known never made a farmer but did well as a hotel keeper. While out shooting had an accident off a buggy was run over by a wheel. This left him in bad health. For a short time they had a hotel on Christchurch and then went on to own the Masonic hotel in Wellington. Died 1907. Mrs O'Neill then went on to Inglewood Taranaki and owned one of the 2 hotels in that town for many years. For some years a son owned the other hotel in Inglewood. When Ann and I came through Inglewood early 1964 we met Sheila and Vince Scanlan there. Sheila was the youngest of that family. Both Jack and Bridget O'Neill are buried in Oamaru. I have seen their graves.

Now Mary-Jane O'Neill – married Ned Feeley. Born 1864 went to Australia with brother Neal and cousin Margaret O'Neill. Landed at Rockhampton. Must have had an agreement to stay put for a period of time. Probably 2 years. The 3 of them did not like Rockhampton and decided to come to NZ. To help them on their way the parish priest gave Margaret a half sovereign and Mary Jane a bottle of whiskey which she hid in her bustle (back of her skirt). Don't know what alias's the others used to get on board but Margaret used Mrs Jackson. Mrs Jackson was Margaret's employer and had helped hide their appearances whilst getting on board ship.

They arrived in Otago harbour in 1890. John Mulholland, already living at Ranfurly met them at the port with horse and wagon then brought the 3 of them to Maniototo. John Mulholland was already married to Jane O'Neill who was a sister of Margaret O'Neill. Mary Jane soon went to Oamaru. Married Ned Feeley 5/2/1895 and being the first couple married in the Oamaru basilica. I had holidayed as a 10-12 year old at the home of Peggy McGillen (Temuka) and at Jean and Mick Sugrues home in Timaru. Both daughters of the Feeley's. Of course they were dad's first cousins.

Now Neal O'Neill – he settled at Hastings. Married Margaret Donnelly 2/07/1895. At the time he was killed Neal was a foreman at the Whakatu freezing works. Was riding his bicycle home from work and was run down by a drunk driver. A little about the family.

Hastings Earthquake 1932. Charlie ran a men's barber shop on the main street in Hastings. He was not well that day and so Rose his sister was working in the shop. They had an occasional small shock but when the big quake came Rose ran out on to the street. A man coming out from the opposite side stopped Rose in the middle of the street. Her customer in the chair was killed and the whole street was a shambles. Charlie was in his bed and his old iron bedstead did a runner around his bedroom. Rose and Vera O'Neill came down to Stafford and Bridget O'Neill's home for the next year. Too upset to live in Hastings Dad and Rose became friends and always kept contact. I stayed with Rose and husband Jack Warren one time in Timaru.

Again about Mary Jane and Neal and Margaret O'Neill. The information I have about these 3 people came from Monie Donnelly (nee McErlane, Margaret's daughter). When Margaret O'Neill married Charlie McErlane they took up land near Ranfurly next to Johns and Jane Mulholland and also next to



a Dougherty farm where my mother was brought up. There is a Barney's lane running out past these 3 farms. Barneys lane is name after Barney Dougherty who was an uncle of my mother. Barnie, Annie and Barbara lived on this property. When they died the Charlie Dougherty's mother parents went on to this farm. Also there were 2 other brother of these Dougherty's who came to NZ – namely John who lived at Gimmerburn and Neil who lived in Dunedin.

Now Margaret O'Neill who married Edward Downey lived out their lives in Ireland. I have met and stayed with 2 of Margaret's off spring. They now live in the USA. Margaret O'Keefe – we stayed with Margaret and many members of her family in 1990 in Philadelphia USA. Also there was a Violet Carson with whom we stayed a town out from Baltimore in Maryland USA. Her mother in law was also a daughter of Margaret Downey (nee O'Neill).

RE Charles Dougherty, known to all as Charlie. In common with quite a few of his age group Charlie could not read or write. The following is a very nice story told to me by Ben Drake who came from Hawea. I think that he owned Hawea Station.

Goes like this: I was attending the AGM of Otago Federated farmers in "harvest court" which is along Princes St in Dunedin. We went for lunch at the European Hotel. Ben and I happened to be sitting together and conversation came to where I came from and what did I do etc. ben could have been 60 years of age, I would be perhaps 25 years of age.

When he found out from me that Charlie Dougherty was my grandfather he told me of an experience of his. In his young single days he worked on the "mill" to explain – the "mill" meant a steam engine and threshing mill, used for milling grain from the straw. The "mill" moved from farm to farm, just as shearers do today while shearing sheep.

As Ben Drake said, not all homes made these gangs of men welcome. However everyone in the area of the Dougherty homestead including the "mill" gangs seemed to congregate at this homestead on Sunday afternoons. I am speaking here if the young, mainly single people. Ben said to me that it was the "old chap" = Charlie Dougherty. He would sit out on the front porch area of his home and he made every welcome.

Soon after, at home, I related this story to Dad. You see I had never asked dad what was his father in law like? Dad's answer to me was that Ben Drake was quite correct. Charlie Daugherty was a gentleman who was well liked. Next question – was he slim like my mother or sturdy built like some of my mother's sisters. Dad's reply – Charlie Dougherty was six foot tall and slim built like Emily my mother.

A very nice story to have been told to me by a stranger.

Just a little matter I raise, it was difficult to distinguish between some of my relations. When asked recently by a Dunedin lady who was concluding her family tree which involved a Charlie Dougherty. I explained by phone that there were Charlie Dougherty my granddad, thin Charlie Dougherty, my uncle, fat Charlie Dougherty, my mother's first cousin and wee Charlie Dougherty, mothers nephew. True. In our O'Neill crowd we had old John O'Neill first cousin of Grandad Stafford O'Neill and father of Scully and Emmett O'Neill etc. Also his eldest son John Stafford O'Neill, known behind his back as "Streak Jack" – he was tall and married mothers sister. Also there was "wee jack" my dad. And there was "Pony Jack O'Neill" who lived in Ranfurly and no relation of ours. Pony Jack was a bachelor died

1945. Had a single sister Rose and also another sister – Mrs Joe Geoffrey of Wedderburn. All of these people mentioned above loved much or all of their lives in Maniototo.

A little happening on day on our farm at Springvale – Ann always had a large, beautiful garden, plus an excellent vegetable garden. As well we had 6 golden Chassellis grape vines in a special house that kept the birds out. As usual the narrow door was half open – this sets the scene – lovely hot day and so away for a picnic at eh Manuherikia River. And as the time of the year was around the 10<sup>th</sup> December we had all ewes and lambs in the yards for a lamb check and fly strike safety. Total number of stock around 3800 in these sheep yards. Unfortunately the double gates from the yards to the gardens were not correctly locked. You know the answer!! When we arrived home, guess what, 3800 odd sheep were looking at us in our garden area. The only plant left uneaten was a cactus plant. Even the grape house had been cleaned up.



Page 2

George Stafford & Neill known always as  
"Stafford" Please look on back of this page

arrived in N.Z. on the ship "S.S. Bombay" at  
the "George St." Pier, Port Chalmers on Thursday  
24/1/1884. He stayed his 1st night in Dunedin  
at the "Grid Iron" hotel. It is now the site of  
the "One Star" cafe.

Before Stafford arrived in N.Z. he had been  
to U.S.A. namely New York city. Had worked at  
a brick yard on Manhattan Island. I don't  
know how long he spent there. But later re-  
turned to Ireland to say good-bye to his  
family before coming to N.Z. The Steam ship  
"Bombay" left Plymouth, England midnight  
28/11/1883. Only one stop on this journey to  
Port Chalmers N.Z. - at St Vincent, Cape Verde  
Islands. They are off the west coast of Africa  
adjacent to Mauritania. Stafford was a  
"Steerage Passenger" who paid his way himself.  
Many (maybe most) people were assisted  
passengers - he was not.

About 3 of Stafford's brothers: -  
Joseph = he went to U.S.A. (New York city) ~~It is~~  
~~even possible that Stafford & Joseph worked~~  
≠ Evidently there was some trouble at the  
water front where he worked. His body was  
never found. People thought that it had



The "Bombay" was a steel hull + steam + sail propelled. Gross 3133 Tons. 511 Passengers.

70 Crew. 3 Stowaways Dalgetys were the agents

Geo. Stafford was a steerage passenger.

The "Bombay" sailed from Plymouth, England on 28/11/1883.

Geo. Stafford later married Bridget Herlihy at Naseby 21/1/1895. Bridget Herlihy is the 2nd eldest baby registered on the Births records for Hamilton Otago Central. (9/11/1865). ~~Geo~~ Edward George Schrick was the eldest reg'd child.

Bridget Herlihy's mother was Mary Moran born Ireland (Co. Galway) + her father James Herlihy born 1835 (about) (Co. Kerry) Records show that James Herlihy was in Victoria Australia before coming to Otago. As near as I can guess he arrived in Otago in 1863. Mary Moran - later Herlihy arrived on 1 of 3 ships - the "Benlomond" at Otago harbour 19/1/1863 or the "Siliotria" at Otago harbour 19/4/1863. There was a Mary Moran passenger on each of these boats. A small point - Bridget Sullivan later - husband was James Spedderi of Garibaldi/Gimmerburn, was a ship mate of Mary Moran.

The "Lone Star Cafe" site is now "O'Neill Devereux" lawyers on ~~the~~ Princes St. My reason for mentioning this site, is that was originally the site of the "Gridiron Hotel". Stafford O'Neill's 1st night in N.Z. was spent at this establishment. Forever after if in Dunedin - he liked to stay there.



been thrown in the Hudson River. When Ann + I visited John + Agnes O'Neill of Newburgh N.York. John told me that his father had made various visits to the morgue in New York City about his brother Joseph. We stayed with John + Agnes in July 1990. (son of <sup>Sinney</sup> ~~O'Neill~~)

Sinney = also went to U.S.A. and settled at Newburgh N.Y. He married Sarah Convery, who came from Ireland, at St Patrick's Church Newburgh 10/6/1896. Sinney was killed in an accident at Hopewell Junction on 23/12/1907.

Hugh = as well went to U.S.A. settled at Newburgh N.Y. Married Johanna Dillon at St Patrick's Cathedral N.York City 11/6/1905. We met all of Hugh's family in 1990 while at Newburgh. I believe we have photos of all <sup>these</sup> the living 1st cousins of Dads. Hope to list them separately.

More information about Geo. Stafford O'Neill. He was my G/dad. He died before I was born. But I knew his ~~old~~ widow, Bridget well. She was good with history of family, though fairly deaf. After Stafford arrived in 1884 he went to Tasmania. lost his saved money in a Bank crash + came



back To N.Z. His quote. "I have Travelled enough" + so he stayed at Patea. Buried Ranfurly cemetery.

An interesting story that I have been Told + I also have in writing. - when G/dad Stafford was a boy of about 5 yrs. he could well remember having to move home from Eden To Ballymacpeak. The law. (British law) decreed that they, the O'Neill family, had too much land + so the farmland at Eden was taken from them + given To a family named "Stewart." Many years later while James O'Neill, eldest son, was working as a police man in another part of Ireland information got around that "Stewarts" had financial trouble. The Stewarts put the property on the market at auction. James O'Neill had a person "blind" bid on his behalf at the auction, and so bought the lost land back again for the O'Neill family.

About the Time Stafford + Bridget Hedlby married in January 1895 land in the Maniototo County was being cut up for settled settlement by farmers. In common with many other people Stafford + Bridget put their names in To these ballots. The land Bridget drew they settled on and raised their family. This land would have been cut off 'Patea Station'.



Another little bit of history. Dad's father bought the Ranfurly saleyards when they came up at auction in 1930. I am looking at the sale a/c now. Addressed To Mr G. S. O'Neill in a/c with J. I. Fraser, Solicitor, Ranfurly. Sale of Otago Central Saleyards Coy To John Joseph O'Neill, my Dad, paid for by G/dad Stafford. The site is now Stafford St. in Ranfurly. Cost of purchase to Stafford O'Neill \$510-00. Plus other costs - Total \$521-13-00.

O'Neills called the farm "loretto" after Our lady's title. "Our lady of loretto". The old home farm is now part of a large dairy farm owned by "Harvard" university of U.S.A.



By Bernard Stafford O'Neill.  
"Things I can remember."

Page 1

Today is Wednesday 12/10/2016.

I am the eldest of 5 children born to John Joseph + Emily O'Neill. John, known as "Jack", + Emily, youngest of Charlie + Sarah Dougherty's family. Jack was the youngest of 7 children born to the Gen. Stafford O'Neill family. 5 grew up + married. Each having children born to them. 2 others died as Teenagers. Josephine at aged 12 yrs. Dad said that Josephine + he had measles, she had a relapse + died. (Buried Ranfurly). May died at, I think 15 yrs of age of "Bright's disease". Kidney Trouble I think. (Buried Ranfurly) I have wedding photos of each O'Neill couple. Plus a good wedding photo of Stafford + Bridget's wedding. - 21/1/1895. Married Naseby. Bridget's sister Kathleen + her husband Pat Cassidy are bridesmaid + Bestman.

Some things my Dad told me. He worked for his uncle - Jim Herlihy at Patea road farm after he left school. Only one of his family to have high school education. Istly Patea road school, then at Christian Bros school - Rattray St Dunedin. - New Kavanagh College. - 1 yr there. Then parents sent him to Holy Cross College Mosgiel. - Parents thought he might make a priest. Not sure how long there, maybe a year or so. Told his parents "no way" + so came home to Patea road. Was at Uncle Jim Herlihy's property for a while, then obtained a carpenter's apprenticeship with Owen Cambridge. Owen ran a building business out of Patea road.



Dad said Owen was a good Tradesman, however, one item he mentioned a few Times to me was - when you wanted paid wages - just go & ask for some pay. - Not like Today.

Emily Dougherty & Dad married 18/7/1933  
 Thankfully. Dad's birthday - he would be 29 yrs of age that day. I have a photo of some of the wedding celebrations. The wedding photos were not good or did not come out. So when I was a baby they went to Dunedin & had studio ones done.

On the old saleyards, which I mentioned elsewhere, Dad surveyed a street, now known as Stafford St. Then he built a home for Mother & he about halfway along Stafford St. The section backs on to St. John's school grounds. House built during 1932. Then Dad mentioned to me that his Uncle Jim Herlihy was looking around for a farm for Dad & Mother to buy. Nice of Jim to help.

However my parents acquired a Property on the Willers Flat/Onslow road. The home on the property. A fire had burned it down. So Dad built a new home there in late 1933 as well. This home had electric light in all rooms and an automatic pressure water supply. - Why, because Dad had installed for them a "Wind charger." It stood up from the dog kennels large tractor batteries held the charge. We did not have, electric range or electric washing machine etc, just electric light. \* Also a "Ram" was purchased and installed on the  
 \* (None of our neighbours had electricity. The Teviot Power scheme did not come up the Onslow Road.)



side of the creek away down in the Gully. I believe "Rams" can be purchased even today. As little boys we would be asked to go switch the "Ram" on or off. There was a balance which allowed the water to pass into the pipeline. All us boys needed to do was set this balance in motion & water could be pumped uphill almost anywhere. If the Tanks on the hill behind our home over-flowed too much. Then our task was - Take a walk down the hill & back again. From my memory of things - I would say the "Ram" lifted the water about 40 metres. or so.

Dad also built a sheep dip down by this creek further down stream. It was a ~~so~~ one person operation. Dad could load the sheep in, 20 or so, & then stand in front of this dip & a rod was attached the sheep pen at the back of dip. He would depress this rod & the 20 or so sheep fell into the dip water. Every sheep had to have its head dipped in the dip water & then the animals swam on out. For his time he was very forward thinking. They did very well economically & also they liked in the Millers Flat community. Dad was President of the Millers Flat Dog Trial Club. Also I found out lately that he left a challenge cup for competition. In the Millers Flat Collie Dog club booklet Dad's name is down as Jim Dhill. They soon found out that Mother could play the piano well for dances, servicemen's send-offs to the 2nd world war etc.



Our neighbour, Charlie Batchelor was killed at the 2nd World war. Cecil, Mrs Batchelor, sold the farm and went back to the Tinnian area where she came from originally. She was an Elworthy.

Earliest incident I can remember, was being put on a horse, bare back, and told to ride it home. No good, I fell off. Since then a horse has only a head and a tail to me. Another occasion, Claire Duff was a landgirl & home help in our household. She smoked. - Interestingly - I borrowed her ~~Tailors~~ Tailor-made & the 4 of us headed round behind the garage for a light up. After much coughing & spluttering, we gave up on this idea. However, the adults must have had a smile that night. We had put the half smoked cigarettes back in their packets & returned the lot to Claire's room.

Evidently among my presents for Xmas I was given a boy's sized hammer. Very useful, I proceeded to break & all the glass at a 4 yr olds level. Even did the tail lights on our nice new car, - a Ford V8.

Another present for Xmas another year included a Toy drum. That disappeared, I am told, because of the noise. Also John & I were old enough to ride a Froggy Tricycle at about 4 + 2 yrs



of age. So - There was some competition over usage. In those days we had a "long drop" Toilet up from our home - about 20 metres outside the garden. Well, whoever had ownership at the Time + needed to make a visit, guess what. He rode the trike To the dunny + also had it inside with him.

likewise - John was playing with the Push lawn mower. Arrived in To us with a piece of his big Toe missing. It was sitting by the lawn mower - the piece -. He, of course, does not have much of the nail on his big Toe now.

At this pre-school age I also had a penchant for playing in the fowl run. Good fun - put the hen off the nest, break eggs etc. Dad put a hen hole in the gate into the chook yard. - To keep me out. Soon after this was done, I had failed To come in for lunch. The search was on, a farm has lots of places little boys can be off To. At last success - I had been found - had my head stuck in the hen-hole in the gate into the chook house. That was a once for me.

I began school at Millers Flat on 4/2/1940, the day Ted was born. Bearded with sheep in the village. For the second half of 1940 I had a governess To Teach me - Claire



Trainer. Problem Mother + Dad had was no school bus. - 4-5 miles from the nearest school at Millers Flat. Petrol restrictions - 4 gallons a week for a Ford V 8 that went about 15-16 miles to the gallon. Too young to ride a horse and a steep winding narrow gravel road. In those days few people had Tractors on farms and some still rode horses. Gordon Barron, who lived at George Rae's property up the road from us always moved round on his horse who ever went to Millers Flat picked up the mail from the shop in Millers Flat for all the neighbours up our way. The reason for the petrol restrictions was World War II which lasted from 1939-1945.

Something that always took place in our home. Dad + Mother, each night knelt by the sofa and said 3 decades of The Rosary. I can remember "nagging" to stay up with them while they said these prayers. All our lives the full rosary was said as our family grew. I can remember Colleen, at maybe 30 yrs of age, saying to me that it felt so safe + secure at the Bute St home in Kentucky, with the saying of these prayers.



Dad & Mother did very well economically at Miller's Flat. - But there was one problem. - Schooling. - As I have ~~etc~~ already said. Governess & boarding Monday - Friday in Miller's Flat.

My 2nd yr, as a 6 yr old, I spent boarding with Auntie Cecily & Uncle Jim McErlane at 128 Maitland St. Dunedin. Attended St Dominic's school. It was by St Joseph's Cathedral up Rattray St. I sure did find out how to get around Dunedin. A penny a ride on the Cable Car up high St from The Exchange. Out to Normandy on the ~~Tram~~ Tramcar to visit Uncle Jack & Auntie Kate O'Neill. Then out to Council St to see Jack & Sophia Mahoney. Called them Uncle Jack & Sophia - in reality she was my Mother's 1st cousin. Originally a Neil Dougherty daughter from Dunedin. I knew how to go to the "Chumas Club" for the pictures on Saturday morning. Also used to go to the children's Radio session at 5pm at the old Chief Post Office by the Exchange. It was about 4-5 levels up in the elevator.

When John hit 5 yr old, Mother & Dad sent us to St Thomas's academy in Oamaru. I was aged 7 yrs & John 5 yrs. Journey was N.Z.R. bus from Miller's Flat to Dunedin bus depot. (Now Teitoe Early settlers museum). Carry our baggage along to the Railway Station. Board Board the express Train to Oamaru & walk from there to St Thomas's. Quite a journey



for little boys. Whoever is reading this must realize that World War was on & there were all sorts of restrictions, Petrol & food restrictions etc. And also, as I had, had a year previously in Dunedin, I was quite confident about the city.

We spent 3 yrs at school at St Thomas's. Of course we Travelled To & from Millers Flat at school holidays. Years 1942, 1943 + 1944. Our Parents said we were like strangers when we came home. As well Colleen had begun school at Millers Flat. She boarded with Charlie and Edna O'Malley - Monday To Friday. And in 1945 Leo was due for school. Very hard <sup>on</sup> our Mother.

So - what To do. Decision Time - Sold the "run" To neighbour Jim + Gwen Craighead. Went back To Ranfurly where they had come from. Dad & Mother moved To Ranfurly in August 1944. John & I finished at St Thomas's December 1944. A new Catholic school opened Feb. 4th 1945 in Ranfurly. We were 1st day pupils. Our parents bought into Jean + Elizabeth Pottinger's farm 2/4/1946.

I was there at Sacred Heart school until end of <sup>1948</sup> ~~1949~~ <sup>1949</sup> ~~1951~~. Then To St Kevin's for 3 yrs. - <sup>1949</sup> ~~1950~~ <sup>1950</sup> & 1951. Dad & Mother found me a position on the staff of The BNZ bank in Ranfurly. Spent 3 yrs There. Enjoyed The Time. After That I came



home to the farm. While at The BNZ I rode a bicycle to work each day. Winter & Summer. About  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles (4 Kilometres) each way. On a windy day coming home, it was wonder I did not break the bike chain. Why. - riding into a West-wester. No gears on bikes in those days. And in mid-Winter I wore a Balaclava pulled down right over my forehead & down to my neck. Even then round my eyes & nose I would have ice on the eyebrows etc.

The Bank staff were Manager. Stan Bell & later Ron Blundell. Also Jack Mann, John Walsh Dawn McLauchlan, Vena Wilson & yours Truly. For most of Time I was there I was ledger keeper. - That is all cheques, lodgements or other movements on accounts were hand written up by me. So I really did not know the business affairs of about 800-850 clients of our Bank. I also know that these ledgers are at present in the upstairs floor of The BNZ Alexandra. I saw one on display one day in The Alexandra branch. It was quickly put away when I saw my handwriting & could tell Ray Gale, of BNZ, about the a/c's.



In those days The Banks opened from 10am - 3pm. Big deal. Although I had to be at work a 8.30am each day, Monday To Friday. Every Wednesday at end of the day I had to balance the 800-850 a/c's To the last penny (cent Today) No mean Task. I did not go home that day until this Task was completed. On the next day The Manager went through The 3 ledgers that held the a/c's To check I had the figures correct. No calculators in my possession all additions etc. by hand. I did get good at this work.

When I announced To Mr Blundell + To my Mother that I was coming home To the farm they both "hit the Roof." (However I did go farming) Not long before I Terminated my employment at BNZ., The auditor had been in at our branch. This was normal practice. Mr. Blundell had suggested To me that he would help me get a year in London U.K. at BNZ Branch. Mr Blundell himself had, had a year. and so knew about this position. It was considered quite a "perk."

About a year earlier Dad + Mother had bought another 500 acres (200ha) of land. I had noticed that he seemed a bit weary with the extra work.



At That Time The Government had "Compulsory Military Training." I was rounded up in this. At 19 yrs of age I spent 18 weeks basic Training at Burnham military camp. It was a good experience. Met lots of new People. Got To be friendly with "Hughie O'Donnell" who was from Hokitika. He was 3rd cook at "Warners Hotel" in Christchurch. This hotel was on one corner of The square in Christchurch. Some years later Hughie was killed in a large mine disaster near Greymouth/Kunanga area. I think The mine was the "Stockton" one. 26 Killed on that occasion I think.

As well as working on the family farm, I learned to shear sheep + also did "rousing" work. Never full Time but did get quite good at the work. Was a left handed shearer. Clayton Jones + I did The Autumn run for a few years. Mainly crutching + shearing odds + sods sheep (stragglers of the back country). Sometimes what we called double fleecers.

On another "Tack". When I left school (St Kevins) My Mother took me by the "Ear" and said "on stage" in the Ranfurly Music + Dramatic Society. - last place and a 17yr old wished to be. However, when I look back over the many years since. - I am now very thankful to her.



I spent until 34 yrs of age in The "Musical Society". At 34 yrs, Ann + I bought a farm near Alexandra and so moved on from Ranfurly. Over these 17 yrs we had some very able performers and singers in the Maniototo. Examples = Jean Hetherman (Good actor) Jim McCombie (ex Mobil song quart.) Pam Stuart, Soprano, Dorothy O'Malley, Kevin Geddes, Mrs Speedy (pianist) Emily O'Neill, my Mother. (pianist) Producers, - Russell Poole, Lloyd Martin. Actors - David Green, Ron Wilshire, Clarrie Miller, Ailsa Honey, Neelie Rowlands, Ethel Wilson. Linda Knox.

We put on shows such as "Trial By Jury" (Gilbert + Sullivan operatic) "New Moon", "Me + My Girl" + many one act plays + concerts. I also am a past President of this society.

Played rugby for Ranfurly. Was secretary for a few years. Was secretary at the time of the club's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Was in the under 21 yrs county sub-unions team for 2 yrs. Being a forward, I was too light + small for senior county teams. Played until I was 23 yrs of age. Had 6 teeth broken + a good sized cut in my left cheek at a ~~for~~ match in Gore one day. And so I wisely gave rugby up.

Was a small bore rifle shooter for about 10 yrs. Rob. Hansahan helped me quite a lot. He was a member of the then Manchester



Unity Oddfellows lodge - which had a branch in Raurkuly. - This society was registered under the Friendly Societies Act. In the days before social welfare, say 1850-1940, Members received 10 shillings a week or £1 pound if they were out of work. Big help to families in hard Times. However, when Michael Joseph Savage's government came to Power around 1936, they brought Taxpayer funded social welfare. So gradually a society, such as the Oddfellows went by the way. However through this group I learned how to be a secretary + speak at public meetings.

I always kept my connection with my Catholic parish. I don't know why I did, but am very thankful now. John surprised Mother + Dad when he came home from St Kevin's during his 2nd yr there, and said to us - Please can I go to Strathfield, Sydney Australia + join the Christian Brothers? So about 1954 John went to Strathfield. Still with the Brothers + he will be 80 yrs of age in about 3 weeks time.

After completing her primary schooling at the Catholic school in Raurkuly, Colleen completed her education at Jeschmakers College, which was near Oamaru. After that Colleen trained as a nurse at Dunedin hospital. At the time Colleen went overseas she was two & a half at the Maternity hospital in Dunedin.



leo had 2nd secondary education at both St. Kevins College Damaru + Maniototo Area school. Then, after that Took up an apprenticeship with Ranfurly Tractor services. Some years later leo + I began a partnership on the farm. leo + Lorna went onto the home properties at Ranfurly + Ann + I moved to Springvale, close to Alexandra. Ann + I moved from Gimmeburn to Springvale on the 4/7/1970.

leo, Lorna, Ann + I had a partnership for a few years before 1970. When leo + Lorna married about 1966 we set up together. Mother + Dad bought a home in Ranfurly. Ann + I lived a "Bellevue" along Alison Rd out Gimmeburn way and leo + Lorna lived at "Widford" close to Ranfurly.

A little bit of history. — The name "Widford" is from the Orkney Islands north of Scotland. The owners of the farm at Ranfurly, Mr + Mrs Pottinger came from the Orkneys. Ann's Uncle David Banks also came from the Orkney Isles. He confirmed that "Widford Hill" is a property in that locality.

Also, — "Bellevue", the name of the 400 acre block at Gimmeburn has a history. The 2 original Davis brothers who came to N.Z. from Tasmania



had lived at a locality named "Bellevue"  
leo & I had a good partnership. Went a bit  
like as follows. Dad could still work, and so  
did a lot on the farms. Until Ann & I moved to  
Springvale there was not full employment on  
the Ranfurly properties. So, leo & I set up a  
separate Bank a/c at the Otago Trust Branch in  
Ranfurly. Into which all our wages were paid.  
Mine, mostly from shearing sheep & shed work.  
leo's mostly from mechanical work for Tractor  
Services, especially in the Summer time. Around  
April or so. we would discuss what to do with  
the gross earnings that had accrued. The beauty of  
this idea was that we went half each in all of  
these earnings, & the one at home on the farm was  
always quite happy. After Ann & I moved to (5/6/1970)  
Springvale, we continued the partnership of about  
8-10 yrs. We all felt this necessary as for a while  
there was relatively large debt. Also, from 1967  
onwards farming income was the 'Pit'.  
We even did our own shearing at Ranfurly/  
Gimnaburn. John McCloy & I would shear  
one day at McCloy's & then one day at Heill's  
leo & Dad did all the farm & shed work. - Such  
as feeding out Hay & moving sheep on Turnips  
etc. Most of the shearing was done in mid- to  
late August & hoggets shorn in early October.



Leo & I always did our haymaking Together. Bale hay from 3am till we had about 1000 bales made & then breakfast & stack the 1000. Used to wait for the lucerne to dry right out & then bale with the night <sup>dew</sup> ~~dew~~. Always then had excellent hay.

After about 1980 Leo & Lorna continued on, on their own & Ann & I did the same at Springvale. When Ann & I bought at Springvale we had this property in our names & Leo & Lorna also had their property in their names. We shared ownership of the stock, Plant & income. We also asked our accountant, Robert Cooper, to keep the shared ownership of the stock, Plant & income as even as possible. In that way, once all of us agreed to split this partnership, then ~~no~~ one owed anyone any dollars. This worked well. I kept farm diaries from about 1962 until about

<sup>1989</sup>  
~~1992-94~~. These are available. We left "Crag & Air" farm at Springvale 15/12/1995. Then rented for 4 months in Clyde, until the purchase of a home on Kamaka Crescent in Alexandra, lived there for around 5 years. Then bought a section at 6 Mayfair Grove in Alexandra. "David Reid Homes" built the home for us. Moved in on 30/8/2001.



As of this day, we still reside at this address. Ann always has had a lovely garden. It is often known as "Green Fingers". Also, I think she is the <sup>best</sup> dressmaker, sewer, Patchworker, Quilt-maker I have ever seen. Helped our 4 daughters make their wedding dresses. Made items for Ormakau, Alexandra & Rosburgh Catholic parishes. Such as Alt Albs, Chasubles etc. When Fr Fitcheson was here she ~~made~~ <sup>made</sup> him some Albs. later she made a set of stoles, double sided ones, for Fr Wayne Healey. Hangings that go on the lectern (Pulpit) are often hers on display. There is a very large hanging front, right ~~of~~ in our parish church of Our lady. Ann did all the sewing & cutting of this deal.

We reared 5 children, Jo.anna, Stephanie, Carmen, Richard & Sandra. All told, we are a very close knit family group. At present we have 4 in-laws & the 5th of our family is a widow, eighteen grand children, & 6 Great-Grand children. More on the way.

Two items I have omitted to mention so far. Bought "Bellevue" from Norburn 1962. And while we were at Springvale Ann & I also bought "Keddell's" home block. Sold off the home-stead to Ron & Joan Wells, as not needed. Ran about 500 ewes on this area - about 70 hectares including river reserve.



There is some very valuable information about the original James Herlihy in a box file marked "Herlihy." My estimate of James is that he was a very good business man. In his marriage certificate it states = "Trader" under occupation. Married Dunedin went to Hamiltons - buried there in 1900. I have not traced accurately when he arrived in N.Z. from Victoria Australia. Could have been during 1863. Why - well the lady he married - Mary Moran was in Dunedin for 2 yrs before their marriage. In the form "Intention To Marry" he states in Dunedin for one week. So he must have been around the Otago area to get to know Mary Moran.

In the "Herlihy File Box" there is evidence that James was a good progressive business man. Applied for land using various daughters as nominee owners. In those days the government had a law forbidding too much aggregation of land. Also, if a person bought land to farm, then that new owner had to reside on the property.

With regard to my Grand parents - Stafford & Bridget O'Neill; well; Bridget drew their property & so when marriage took place they moved to the land; likely her father's doing.

He was also able to enjoy himself as is also in the "Box file", re an event in Dunedin. When I asked Dad about James's accident, he explained that some men had been riding horses home from



Naseby. - "A day out." - and at the time were racing their horses. James horse Tripped + rolled on him. - And so his health problems resulted from then on. A pity.

Another matter to do with G/Dad Stafford O'Neill. Before he left Ireland for N.Z. He bought a pocket watch. Auntie ~~Mr~~ Nellie Cuttance, nee O'Neill, had this watch in her possession. Husband, Jim + Nellie Travelled overseas on various occasions. She Told me that she had given this watch to Pat + Neal Mc Erlane, These men + sister Mary live on a farm near "Clady" in eastern County Derry, Ireland. I mentioned to Nellie, could I get it back, as I am the eldest O'Neill G/son of Staffords. When Ann + I visited The McErlane's, spelt McErlane by them, they happily handed it over to me.

There is a tale Nellie Told me about this watch. Goes like this: - Nellie; when she gave the watch to Pat + Neal; went to a shop in "Ballymena" to have this watch checked. Upon viewing said watch, the man said, Wrs Cuttance, we sold this watch to your father in 1883. The "Hall mark" indicates the age + the shopkeeper's mark was on this watch. It is in working order, and I gave it to our son Richard recently.



What other things did I do in my 82 yrs of life. Well after 3 yrs boarding at St. Kevins College Oamaru, home to Ranfurly. Dad + Mother found a place for me at the B.N.Z. Ranfurly. Spent 3 yrs at work there. About 6 months after I left school, Jack Mulholland asked me, would I learn to play the Bass drum in the Maniototo Pipe Band. "Yes" was my reply. Jack Mulholland was Drum Major of this band. Also a cousin of ours. 2 or 3 years later I began to learn the bagpipes. Spent 6 yrs taking lessons. Last 2 with Fergus Mathieson, pipe major of City of Dunedin Highland Band. Robin Scott of "Pendella" farm Gim-mesbury taught me for 4 yrs. Became pipe ~~ser~~ sergeant of the band. We used to practise marching out at Nisbet Scotts property, not realising that later on Ann + I would own the place.

After moving to Springvale, Alexandra, I stayed away from the Alexandra band for a couple of years. To see if our new farming business would survive. Then in 1972 I joined the Alexandra crowd. Played with them until about 1988. In 1988 was made a "life member". During this time I was President for 3 yrs, Secretary for the Golden Jubilee cothie in 1989,



Keith Cameron was pipe major for ~~most~~ <sup>much</sup> of the time when I was there. We saw to it that our band competed at the N.Z. championships in 1983 at Invercargill & at Christchurch in 1985. Came 4th in D Grade at Invercargill & 2nd in Christchurch. At Christchurch we won the Quickstep & the Street-march, but "duffed" it in the selection. Richard & Jo-anna were playing members of our band.

I ceased playing around 1987-88 because of piercing headaches while playing. Only occurred while playing the bagpipes. At Mosgiel, while playing in the selection at Otago/Sthland champ's. I had to step out. However, the band still won that day. 10-15 yrs ago the Alex. band asked me to become the patron. & so ~~am~~ still am today. I hope to go over to the Alexandra district club Tonight (2/12/16) to hear our band play at the St Andrews night celebration.

When I went back to the home farm after 3 yrs at the Bank of N.Z. I joined Otago Federated Farmers, & also continued with them at Alexandra. Of course I spent much leisure time as a member of Ranfurly Music & Dramatic Society. "Thanks to my Mother's efforts in starting me there". Am a Past President of this society. During ~~in~~ the 16-18 yrs I was a member our group put on



One act plays, Gilbert + Sullivan shows + the likes of "We + My Girl", New Moon etc + also variety concerts. I have a good recording of a concert put on in 1959 at Kanburly to make money for the Manistota hospital. Graily, my Mother was solely responsible for this recording. She declared; against disbelieving family; that the concert could be recorded.

She engaged Ross McGrath To do his best on the night. Turned out a winner. Our only recording of this society's work, thanks To our Mother. Ross set up his gear near where Mother sat playing the piano + moved along the floor in front of the stage with his recording microphone. He recorded the sound onto the old reel / Tape machine. ~~10 yrs~~ 3 yrs or so ago I had the most of the concert recorded onto a C.D. I consider this recording historically important.

When we arrived at the Springvale farm. - 447 hectares (about 1200 acres) Ann + I were busy with 3 little daughters + Richard born a few months after we arrived. The farm was very run down. Could let sheep loose at one side of the property + then find some of them at the back boundary a week later. The 1st year on the farm was one of the driest



recorded. A very wet July/Aug/September. Then no appreciable rain until early March. During early October of that season - I met Tom Kelliker, a neighbour, His quiet comment was, "I suppose we have had our rain for the year." How right he was.

Our ~~new~~ home at; "Crag-Aon-Dia" for that was the farm's name. Means "Hills of Gold"; Springvale was comp comfortable, & Ann soon had a lovely garden & productive vegetable garden.

I had to take part in the Manukheikia Irrigation Cottee. We had large irrigation quota. In later years, say about 1983 or so, the then Govt sold all irrigation schemes in N.Z. To the irrigators. Our scheme ~~sch~~ was given to us with approx. \$170,000 cash as well. Shows what the Ministry of Works thought of the quality of our scheme.

The new management cottee, which I was on set about improving the race system & cutting staff from 5.5 persons down 2 persons. I did voluntary race restoring for the Borough race for some years. Our Irrigation scheme had to obtain all the easements for the water races belonging to our scheme. Up ~~not~~ until then all



easements had been held under The Public Works Act. A special Irrigation Act was passed in Parliament so that our cōttee could ensure the right to obtain these easements. This irrigation act lasted in force for 5 yrs, & then expired.

On behalf of our cōttee I had Tenders called for surveys & lawyers to offer pricing for the work to be done. Over a period of about 18 months I worked between John Williamson, of Checketts McKay, George Elder, of McGeorge & Elder, Surveyors, & the land holders, having the documents signed & witnessed by a Justice of the Peace. Over 300 Titles to be set with easements on them. More than half of the documents had to be taken out to property owners along with a J. P. for signing. Sometimes meeting the owners had to take place after work hours. A big task.

At the end of all this work The Wgmt Cōttee very graciously handed a payment of \$5,000. I did not expect this payment, but still was nice to receive it.

Another thing that happened in my life. Was Central Otago Budgeting Services (Budget Advice) spent around 30 years as a volunteer for them. Am now a life member of our branch. It was work that I liked. Had a turn at most positions



in the branch. Managed the office for either 4 or 5 years in the 1990's. Have been to quite a few national conferences over the years etc.

Began playing lawn bowls in 1968 at the Ranfurly club. Played for a couple of years at the Alexandra Bowling Club. Then withdrew & did not play again until around 1990. At that time I joined the R.S.A. Bowling club. Only play on Wednesday afternoon now in retired men's competition. Just for enjoyment.

Ann has always had a busy life. With our 5 offspring it could not be otherwise. She is perhaps the best person in our area with a sewing machine. Can draft a pattern by just looking at a garment in a shop window. In the past I have seen her do this. Actually Stephanie is also able to do this. Example. For each of our 4 daughters weddings. The wedding gowns were made by Ann & our daughters.

I forget to mention, the R.S.A. Bowling Club made me a "life member" earlier this year. Around 1983-84 the Vincent County Council set up a ~~com~~ sub-committee to look at having a piped rural water supply set up for the area covering the Dunstan Flats, Springvale & Galloway areas.



I chaired this cottee. Mr John Watts, ~~advising~~ civil engineer; of Duffill Watts + Knig; was on this cottee to oversee the engineering practicalities. Most of the farmers from Springvale corner out to the Chatto Creek Texas Tavern refused to join. The vast majority of all other land owners said "yes" would join. However as the ~~Government~~ Government paid  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the cost of "Rural water supply schemes", the Agricultural department had a say. And They said no to subsidy because the percentage of household supplies was too high. So idea flopped.

Soon afterwards Ann + I looked at the idea of a Rural Water scheme based around a "spring" on our farm. Approached some neighbours. Set up a committee, Ian Ruthford went on the "Chair" + I went secretary. Soon had the scheme up + running since about 1985 - This piped rural water supply known as "Long Gully Rural Water Supply" has been operating without any problems. We made sure that all of the easements were in place. So over 30 yrs, operation is good.



A story that I must Tell. of The Cuttance family Trek from Okuru, South Westland To South Otago. Jim Cuttance, born about 1903 was one of the youngest To make this journey.

He married Auntie Nellie, dad's sister, & so became my uncle. I had numerous holidays at their farm near Dacre in Southland, & have very fond memories of Uncle Jim & Auntie Nellie.

The following article comes from the Clutha leader dated 19th November 1907.

Goes like This:-

Overland from West To East. Okuru To Blackburn through The Haast Pass:- Family, cattle & horses & belongings.

Amongst the new settlers at Blackburn is one whose story of Travel with his wife, family, cattle & such household goods as he could carry with him, remind us of the "Great Boer Trek" in South Africa a number of years ago, when they Travelled northward & founded a new colony across the Vaal River, or indeed it recalls To one the story of Moses & the Israelites in their quest for the promised land. Mr Harry J. Cuttance:- outside his own family no-one else bears the same name in The Dominion. - his wife and family of 9 - 6 sons & 3 daughters, the eldest being a girl of 24 yrs, The second a girl of 21 & the 3rd a boy of 19 yrs & the youngest a boy of



2 yrs. all reside at the West Coast at a place called Okuru. It is about 175 miles south along the coastline from Hokitika or by steamer a 100 miles. Mr Cuttance was born at Ballarat where his father was a miner in the early 1850's. The family came across to N.Z. when Harry was 8 yrs of age, & the father followed up all the early gold rushes in Otago, being among the 1st at Gabriel's Gully.

### Family life at Okuru.

They finally settled on the West Coast at Okuru where the old man died. Mrs Cuttance is a native of the Coast. Their home comprises 300 acres of freehold clear land and 1500 acres of Government ~~freehold~~ leasehold, mostly bush at a rental of 2 pound per 100 acres. The usual rent is 1 pound per 100 acres, but Mr Cuttance was run up to 2 pound for his. The land is in the valley of the Turnbull River about a mile and a half up from its junction with the ocean. The settlement there comprises in all eight families almost cut off from the outer world. A steamer called every 2 months and the mail came in every fortnight, being brought down by a man with a pack horse along the coast. At Okuru there was a small school, the Teacher being a Mr Seville, who is known to some in this district.



The land about is a bushy swamp, extensively marsh covered with scrub or light bush till you get to the mountains. The rainfall is prodigious, the average being 167 inches a year. last February when bush fires were raging in other parts of the country and the long continued drought was burning everything, the rain at Okuru was  $22\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Mr Cuttance settled there in 1875. The chief means of living is cattle raising and dairying. Every year a mob of cattle was driven up the coast to Hokitika & sold. Sometimes the cattle were sent by steamer, but this was usually very expensive. Pigs were also fattened and sent to market but there was not much in them.

Mr Cuttance also went in for farming. He had a small butter factory separator, etc, worked with an engine and it kept one of the family fully employed bringing in wood to keep the engine going and altogether the dairy proved a very laborious and risky undertaking. Two or three tonnes of butter would collect before the steamer would call, there was a risk in keeping it so long and the market was very uncertain. Mr Cuttance had a very fine horse & a very large barn, the latter being used to store hay for winter feed, the hay being gathered as opportunity offered in the odd days when there was no rain.



There was absolutely no grain grown.

### Decided for The Outer World

Mr Cuttance was doing well enough at Okuru, but his family were getting up in years. They had never seen a railway Train, or a Township, the bush and swamp and heavy rainfall made their surroundings dismal in the extreme, and Mr Cuttance felt that he was not doing justice to them in stopping there. He therefore decided to make a shift to the outer world. He heard of Blackburn, and made a trip overland to see it and finally decided to take up land there. He returned to the old home at Okuru and prepared for a great trek. The family held many consultations as to how best to move to the outer world. It was at first decided to send the women and children and the girls round by steamer and overland to Christchurch, the men coming over the passes with the stock, but the girls recoiled at the prospect of contact with the outer world, city, trains and even coaches were novelties to them.

It was eventually decided that the whole family should come together and their course was made out through the Haast Pass in the Southern Alps and to Wanaka and Hawea. It was a bold undertaking. The next thing was preparation for the journey.



There was no such thing as calling an auction sale for there were no buyers there. There was no demand for fowls even, and as for eggs, "Why" says Mr Cuttance, "we had dozens of them and used to cook them in every conceivable way for a change. There was absolutely no sale for them there, and it would not pay to send them all away. The chairs and as much household furniture as possible were unscrewed and packed in small bulk and sent down to the steamer to come round to Dunedin. Side saddles & pack saddles & Tents (Two) were got in order, supplies were gathered. We had ham cakes, bread and provisions of all kinds. There was no such thing as selling the place. It was left in charge of a man to look after - to make what he could out of it and pay the rates.

### Story of the Trek.

Having got everything ready, Mr. & Mrs. Cuttance & family started off from the old home. They had 12 saddle & pack horses all loaded in some way, 58 head of cattle, mostly cows, and 3 dogs. With the assistance of his brother & nephew, they moved in long procession down the Okuru to the seaside, the cattle giving a good deal of trouble. The 1st night they stopped at his brother's place ready for a 4am start in the next morning, that being the hour the tide suited for crossing the Okuru.



The second day they went 8 miles up the coast to the valley of the Haast River. They stopped at Croon's accommodation house at Haast that night. The cattle had given a great deal of trouble that day, breaking away into the bush. The third day they set off the Haast and camped that night at the place known as the "Big Bluff". They have all got land marks on the coast. - 7 miles up the valley of the Haast. The party had, had a very hard day with the cattle and they were all dead beat when they got the camp pitched and everything rounded up for the night.

On the evening of the 4th day they arrived at John Cunningham's survey camp at Thomas's bluff. Mr Cunningham was an old Dunedin man and a brother of Mrs Sandilands's, and one of the victims of the Hasbrough road fatality in March last. He treated the visitors very kindly, wet weather set in and they were compelled to put in 2 or 3 days here, keeping the cattle rounded up all the time. On the 5th day of the Trek they had good luck & covered 13 miles, pitching camp at Nisson flat at nightfall. Here, they were right in the mountain gorges. Heavy rain set in again and continued for 8 days on end. The creeks were in flood and they were hemmed in. They ran out of provisions and had to kill one young & cattle to supply them with food. Everything ran out, even salt & pepper, and they had to



subsist on boiled meat + soup, such as it was - tasteless stuff, but hunger is a good condiment. On the day they left there, Mr Cuttance's brother made his way to a runholder's outstation and secured some provisions. They were now near the head of the Haast and on the sixth day's march they crossed the Haast Pass, a narrow gulch in the mountains connecting the east with the west. They camped that night at the head of the Makarora River in Otago soil.

This was the hardest day they had ever had. The track was a mere ledge in many places, with the steep cliffs thousand of feet up on one side, while on the other side they could hear the gurgling of the mountain torrents a thousand feet or more down a sheer scrubby bush faces. The cattle strung out on a long line + two or three of them went down head long over the cliffs, but we were able to save all of them. The camp was struck at 7 o'clock in the morning and it was 8 at night before another suitable camping place was found. Between these hours none of party had so much as even a drink of tea. They had to walk most of the way as the track was too unsafe to ride. Mrs Cuttance had to carry the baby in her arms, her usual custom had been to carry the baby on the horse in front of her. The pass is 1750 ft above sea level,



and the place they camped for the night was about 1500 ft high, right at the head waters of the Makarora. The next day the 7th in the actual march they struck <sup>camp at</sup> the Mule Valley. ~~On slow~~ + ~~Party~~ They struck a deer stalker's camp + bought out his stock of provisions. They had a lot of stuff of various kinds, + had a few days of their time to run, but finding the party short of food they kindly struck camp + sold our friends their supplies. "We had another picnic" says Mr Cuttance "and stopped here for a day or two. The track they were following was the one through which the late Vincent Pyke and an exploring party went to the West Coast over 40 yrs ago. They found many evidences of the old pioneer's trip. The Mule Valley is so called from the fact that Vincent Pyke left some mules there at the time. It is an open valley with a narrow pass at each end. Mr. Cuttance had previously made up his mind to leave his cattle there for a month or two, so he spent two or three days in putting a fence across the pass at each end of the valley. It is a pretty place in the mountains, and the family spent a pleasant time there and had a good rest. Their 8 days travel brought them down to Mrs Pison's accommodation house at Makarora, 7 or 8 miles from lake Wanaka. The next day the 9th they struck lake Wanaka and pitched



Their Tents at a place known as the neck.  
 Here they found some old gardens & had a good  
 feed of fruit. The 10<sup>th</sup> day's Travel brought them to  
 Hansen's accommodation house at Hawea Flat.  
 Mr T. Hansen, blacksmith of this Town (Dunedin +  
 Redding) is a son of Mr + Mrs Hansen. At this place  
 they were treated splendidly & were shown every  
 kindness, attention & hospitality. They were not in  
 touch with civilization and many of the family  
 observed the first Telegraph ~~and~~ wires they had  
 seen in their lives. Mr Cuttance here bought an  
 express. He met a man on the road & there +  
 then bought the Trap & harness he was driving.  
 The pack & saddle horses were glad to be relieved  
 of their burden & 2 of the horses being yoked  
 into the express. Mrs Cuttance & the children  
 had a more pleasant ride. By pleasant drives  
 over good roads our party made their 11<sup>th</sup> stage  
 at the Queensbury Hotel, the 12<sup>th</sup> at Cromwell,  
 the 13<sup>th</sup> at Bald Hill Flat, and the 14<sup>th</sup> at Roxburgh,  
 the 15<sup>th</sup> at Evans Flat, the 16<sup>th</sup> at Waitakuna and  
 the 17<sup>th</sup> day's Travel brought them to their new  
 home at Blackburn. They only struck one place  
 on the road where they were received with anything  
 but the greatest kindness. At this place where  
 there were two hotels, thought they did not want  
 any favours, but were prepared to pay full  
 value for all they wanted, the proprietors were  
 both rather short and appeared for some reason  
 as if they would have preferred their rooms to  
 their company. They arrived at Blackburn all



safe & well and in the best of spirits.

The story of their Travel needs no embellishment. It is an undertaking few would care to undertake. The Cuttance family are the stuff that good colonials are made of, and that things may turn out as well with them at Blackburn will be the sincere wish of all who read this account of their Travels or Trek from West to East as Mr. Cuttance terms it. They are at home in the saddle and in the open air and their Trip, to them, does not seem such a wonderful thing after all. There is, of course, a bridal Track all the way and it may be mentioned that the late Mr. Seddon; late Prime Minister & West coaster; when he was Minister of Public Works, and Governor Inslow and party made the same Trip in the summer of 1891 & there were no children or other belongings. The occasion of that Trip was Mr. Seddon's visit to Okere.

Mr. Cuttance & his sons returned to Mule Valley for the cattle in July last & brought them over to Blackburn in August last. There was  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet of snow in the valley, but the cattle were alright, except that 3 of them had died eating "Tutu". Unfortunately 8 or 9 more had died from the same cause since they came to Blackburn.

"What do you think of 'Blackburn'?" was asked of Mr. Cuttance. "Oh it's alright" was his reply, "but I wish we had a little of the rain we had on the coast", was his reply.



Mr Cuttance Took up two sections at Blackburn - section 29 - 660 acres and section 30 - 480 acres.

Something that I must add to this history. Blackburn Road in South Otago runs up North of Balclutha into the Hillend region. Uncle Jim Cuttance had said that his family soon moved to the Outram area of the Taieri Plains. As he said Blackburn (Hillend) was too cold. Even though Jim's father was born at "Ballarat" Victoria Aust. the Cuttance family originated from Cornwall U.K.

Now what do I know or have heard about Dad's uncles & Aunts on the O'Neill side. That is Granddad's brothers & sisters.

James the eldest stayed at home in Ireland. For a while he worked for the Irish Constabulary in the south of Ireland. Then later returned to run the O'Neill family farm. I have already stated how James managed to gain back the part of the farm taken from them some years earlier.

I have already written about the 3 O'Neill brothers who went to U.S.A. In 1990 Ann & I spent some time with their families. Stayed with John & Agnes O'Neill in Newburgh N.York.



John was a 1st Cousin of Dads. - His father being "Sinney" O'Neill. In his grave it says "Sinan". We are not sure of his correct Christian name. It may even have been "St John" O'Neill, or even "Sean". Of course "Sinney" was one of the 3 brothers that went to U.S.A.

The 1st of the brothers to come to N.Z. was Patrick O'Neill. Arrived in Dunedin around 1880. He had helped a man get away from the law in Ireland by hiding this person in a pig crate to get the person on board ship, the law found out & Pat also had to leave town. It is noteworthy that 2 daughters (Twins) were born at Dennistown in the Buller area north of Westport.

Now John O'Neill also came to N.Z. Originally settled down in North Otago. They owned the Railway Hotel at Kuroo. Then had Trigat farming near the "Totara Estate" just outside Oamaru. Members of his family told me that "Jack O'Neill" as he was known, never made a farmer, but did well as a hotel keeper. While out shooting, had an accident off a buggy, was run over by a wheel. This left him in bad health. For a short time they had a hotel in Christchurch & then went on to own the Masonic Hotel in Wellington. Died 1907 Mrs O'Neill then went on to Inglewood Taranaki & owned one of the 2 hotels in that town for many years. For some years a son owned the other hotel in Inglewood. When ~~an~~ Ann & I came



Through Inglewood early 1964 we met Sheila + Vince Scanlan there. Sheila was the youngest of that family. Both Jack + Bridget O'Neill are buried in Oamaru. I have seen their graves.

Now Mary-Jane O'Neill - married Ned Feeley. Born 1864 went to Australia with brother Neal + cousin Margaret O'Neill. landed at Rockhampton must have had an agreement to stay put for a period of time. Probably 2 yrs. The 3 of them did not like Rockhampton + decided to come to N.Z. To help them on their way the Parish priest gave Margaret a half sovereign. And Mary Jane a bottle of whisky which she hid in her "bustle"; back of her skirt; Don't know what alias's the others used to get on board, but Margaret used Mrs Jackson, Mrs Jackson was Margaret's employer + had helped hide their appearances whilst getting on board ship.

They arrived in Otago harbour in 1890 John Mulholland, already living at Ranfurly met them at the port with horse + wagon, then brought the 3 of them to Maniototo. John Mulholland was already married Jane O'Neill, who was a sister of Margaret O'Neill. Mary Jane soon went to Oamaru. Married Ned Feeley 5/2/1895, + being the 1st couple married in the Oamaru basilica. I had holidayed as



a 10-12 yrs old at the home of Peggy McGillen (Temuka) + at Jean + Mick Sugrues home in Timaru. Both daughters of the Feeley's. Of course they were Dad's 1st cousins.

Now Neal O'Neill - he settled at Hastings married Margaret Donnelly. 2/7/1895. At the time he was killed Neal was a foreman at the Whakatu Freezing works. Was riding his bicycle home from work + was run down by a drunk driver. A little about the family. Hastings earthquake 1932. <sup>Charlie</sup> ~~Rose~~ ran a men's barber shop on the main street in Hastings. He was not well that day + so Rose, his sister, was working in the shop. They had had an occasional small shock, but when the big 'quake came Rose ran out on to the street. A man coming out from the opposite side stopped Rose in the middle of the street. Her customer in the chair was killed + the whole street was a shambles. Charlie was in bed + his old iron bedstead bedstead did a runner around his bedroom. Rose + Vera O'Neill came down to Stafford + Bridget O'Neill's home for the next year. Too upset to live in Hastings. Dad + Rose became friends + always kept contact. I stayed with Rose + husband Jack Warren one time in Timaru.

Again - about Mary Jane + Neal + Margaret O'Neill. The information I have about these 3



People came from Monie Donnelly (nee McElane - Margaret's daughter. When Margaret O'Neill married Charlie McElane, they took up land near Raurfury, next to John & Jane Mulholland, and also next to a Dougherty farm where my Mother was brought up. There is a "Barneys Lane" running out past these 3 farms. Barneys lane is named after Barney Dougherty who was an Uncle of my mother. Barney, Annie & Barbara lived on this property. When they died the Charlie Dougherty's, Mother's parents, went on to this farm. Also there were 2 other brothers of these Dougherty's who came to N.Z. - Namely John, who lived at Gimmerburn & Neil, who lived in Dunedin.

Now, Margaret O'Neill who married Edward Downey. lived out their lives in Ireland. I have met & stayed with 2 of Margaret's daughter off-spring, They now live in the U.S.A. Margaret O'Keefe - we stayed with Margaret & many members of her family in 1990 in Philadelphia U.S.A. Also. There was a Violet Carson with whom we stayed a Town out from Baltimore in Maryland U.S.A. Her Mother-in-law was also a daughter of Margaret Downey (nee O'Neill).



He Charles Dougherty, known to all as "Charlie". In common with quite a few of his age group, Charlie could not read or write. The following is a very nice story told to me by Ben Drake, who came from Hawea. I think that ~~he~~ he owned Hawea Station.

Goes like this; I was attending the A.G.M. of Otago Federated Farmers in "Harvest Court", which is along Princes St. in Dunedin. We went for lunch at The "European Hotel." Ben & I happened to be sitting together & conversation came to "where I came from, what did I do." etc. Ben could have been 60 yrs of age, I would be perhaps 25 yrs old.

When he found out from me that Charlie Dougherty was my grandfather he told me of an experience of his. In his young single days he worked on the "Mill." To explain - the "Mill" meant a steam engine & threshing mill, used for milling grain from the straw. The "mill" moved from farm to farm, just as shearers do today while shearing sheep.

As ~~Geo~~ Ben Drake said, not all homes made these gangs of men welcome. However, everyone in the area of the Dougherty homestead including the "mill" gangs



seemed to congregate at this homestead on Sunday afternoons. I am speaking here of the young, mainly single people. Ben said to me that it was the "old chap" = Charlie Dougherty. He would sit out on the front porch area of his home & he made everyone welcome.

Soon after, at home, I related this story to Dad. You see, I had never asked Dad, what was his father-in-law like? Dad's answer to me was that Ben Drake was quite correct. Charlie Dougherty was a gentleman who was well liked. Next question - ~~not~~ was he slim like my Mother or sturdy built like some of my Mother's sisters. Dad's reply - Charlie Dougherty was six foot tall + slim built like Emily, my mother.

A very nice story to have <sup>been</sup> told to me by a stranger.

Just a little matter I raise, it was difficult to distinguish between some of my relations. When asked recently by a Dunedin lady who was concluding her family tree which involved a Charlie Dougherty. I explained by phone that there were Charlie Dougherty, my G/Dad, then Charlie Dougherty, my uncle, & a Charlie Dougherty, my mother's 1st cousin & well Charlie Dougherty, mother's nephew. True



In our O'Neill crowd we had Old John O'Neill 1st cousin of G/Dad Stafford O'Neill's, and father of Scully & Emmett O'Neill etc. Also, his eldest son John Stafford O'Neill, known behind his back as "Streak Jack," - he was Tall & married mother's sister. Also there was "Ivee Jack" my Dad. And there was "Pony Jack" O'Neill, who lived in Ranfurly & no relation of ours. Pony Jack was a bachelor died 1945. Had a single sister "Rose" & ~~was~~ also another sister - Mrs Joe Geoffrey of Wedderburn. "Pony Jack" ~~was a~~. All of these people mentioned above lived much or all of their lives in the Maniototo.

A little happening one day on our farm at Springvale. - Ann always had a large beautiful garden, plus an excellent vegetable garden. As well, we had 6 Golden Chassell's grape vines in a special house that kept the birds <sup>out</sup>. As usual the narrow door was half open. This sets the scene - lovely hot day & so away for a picnic at the Manuherikia River. And as the time of year was around the 10th December, we had all the ewes & lambs in the yards for a lamb check, re "fly strike" safety. Total



number of stock around 3800. in these sheep yards. Unfortunately the double gates from the yards to the gardens were not correctly locked. You know the answer!! When we arrived home, guess what, 3800 odd sheep were looking at us in our garden area. The only plant left uneaten was a cactus plant. Even the grape house had been cleaned up.

Ann & I have been to Ireland & have visited the localities from which our old people came from. Still keep contact with Willie Kearney. Willie & spouse, Vera, live in Letterkenny, Donegal. Willie spent most of a day & well into the evening showing us around the old haunts. Willie's grandfather was my ~~mother's brother~~. Grand mother's brother. Willie & I are 2nd cousins. Granddad was to marry Catherine Kearney (Carney). However, she died, & Catherine's mother said to Sarah, a sister, you are to marry Charlie Dougherty. And so. That is how the marriage came about. Sarah, not pleased, never contacted her mother again. (I married 30/7/1882 at Letterkenny, Donegal Ireland.) Immediately after Charlie & Sarah's marriage, they left by boat for Maryborough Queensland Australia. Uncle Pat Dougherty, was born in Maryborough. 5/6/1883. Address Queen St Maryborough.



We have at our home the sewing machine Grandma Dougherty bought while living in Maryborough. It is called a "Wesheim" made in Frankfurt Germany. And so it is around 130 yrs old. My mother, Emily, used this sewing machine until about 1948-49. When she updated by buying a 2nd hand Treadle machine.

Charlie + Sarah left by ship from Maryborough, <sup>came</sup> ~~landed~~ <sup>to</sup> Oamaru where Annie, + Mary were born. Annie in the 27/8/1885 + Mary born on 25/7/1887. The rest of their children born at Gimmerburn Maniototo. I am guessing that they came to Oamaru because the "Diver" family had settled at Oamaru. Granddad Charlie Dougherty's mother was a Diver.

The first residence at Gimmerburn was along Sharkey Road on the left. Uncle Ben (Bernard) Dougherty owned this small block until he sold out about 1952-53. Bruce Paterson bought the land from Uncle Ben. Bruce took me out + showed me where this piece of land is. Sarah's brother also, for a while, had a block beside this land. And the John Doughertys farmed on Devon



Road beside these 2 properties. Patersons who own Charlie & Sarah's block have the adjacent property. The home Bruce was brought up in is close by. Bruce took me there about 2 years ago. He said it was the only property he ever bought at auction. Avery McCloy was the underbidder. A short time later the Doughertys bought the "Coal Pit". It is still in the Dougherty name.

A little more history. "Barney's lane" a road that crosses at right angle the main Ranfurly-Patea road is named because Barney Dougherty (Bernard) lived in the first homestead along this road on the left. For years Aunt Barbara, Aunt Annie & Uncle Barney lived in the homestead. Around about 1912 the brother Charlie & Sarah Dougherty moved from the "Coal Pit" at Gimmerburn to this site. Charlie & Sarah being my Grand parents. Of course they kept ownership of the "Coal Pit" property. Their "Charlie", Mother's brother stayed out at the "Coal Pit".



Now about Ann's & my life together.

I kept a farm diary from the time of purchase of "Bellevue" from Nisbet & Jerry Scott at Gimmerburn. Interesting that as a Maniototo Pipe Band member, I was sometimes at marching practice on this property before it was bought. Interesting!!

Ann & I began going out together some time during 1962. Then we held our wedding 18/1/1964 in Ranfurly. Judy Murphy & Robin Chapman & Leo O'Neill & Brian Kearney were also members of our official party.

The house on "Bellevue" was a house in a paddock. No fencing or garden around it when the property was bought. Total area of the property 400 acres freehold. There is a cattle stop near the house, but at the time you drove around it. Dad & I set to work to tidy up the ~~pr~~ homestead. This was done during 1963. Originally this house had been rather beautiful when the Davis family owned it during the 1920/1930's. Dad was a carpenter by trade & so he knew how to go about repairs & maintenance. The house itself was of timber & was still basically in solid condition. Also there was a substantial concrete 4-roomed building close to the home. Included garage,



man's hut, dairy etc. It was just that no upkeep had been carried out for years. My memories tell me that after scraping the loose paint off the exterior, we then used pink primer & then white undercoat & then white top coat. The local Tradespeople were very good with suggestions about how to go about repairing & beautifying the interior of the house. Ray Hunter, Harry lauder, Graham Edwards & Bill Graham, for example.

The price I paid for "Bellevue" was \$4500. £11500 = To \$23,000 in dollars. The price was \$£1,000 below Gov't valuation. I have also kept a farm diary since June 1962, having bought "Bellevue" at the beginning of July 1962. I picked up the idea of keeping a farm diary from my Uncle Jim Pittance. Continued with this idea until mid 1989. The diary continues through 2 books.

Ann's Mother was an excellent gardener & so Ann followed in her footsteps. She showed me where to put a permanent fence around the home, beginning at the cattle stop. About  $\frac{1}{3}$  of acre was then enclosed to be lawn & garden. There was a well set up water supply from a 430 ft deep bore at the garden (140-145 metres)



Nisbet Scott was engineering minded & he had this supply excellently set up. Did not need to attend to it, all automatic & frost free.

During 1964 I plastered the henhouse. It was constructed of sundried brick. Dad showed me how to put bird netting around the walls. And then I put 2 coats of plaster on the walls. Plaster was made of a moist cement mix. Came up well. Also the concrete garage by our house needed plastering, which I did. Both buildings were then painted. By the diary it looks as if the whole ~~lot~~ <sup>lot</sup> had been completed by mid-May 1964. Then I painted the two buildings.

Ann did the design work inside our home. Once the living room (Kitchen dining area) had been finished by Ray Hunter (Joiner) & G. Greene Edwards (Painter), Ann & I set to work decorating the other rooms ourselves. We had completed 7 rooms by the time we sold out & moved to Springvale near Alexandra in July 1970. "Bellerue" homestead would have been at least 400 square metres in area.

We had 3 lovely little daughters born to us while at Gimmerburn. Jo-anna, Stephanie & Carmen. A little story about life with them. Ann, after about 4 yrs hard work had a good



lawn & garden. In late spring perhaps up to 200 Daffodils were in flower. Guess what Stephanie & Jo-anna did what they thought was a very kind deed for Ann. They picked all the daffodil flower heads, then presented them to their Mother. Oh, HO, the flower heads had no stems.

Also, in the cold winter Dad & I were renewing fencing along "Alison Lane". Jo-anna & Stephanie had come out to play & watch us nearby. A couple of small pools of rainwater near us. Playtime in this water; clothes wet; & off come all their clothes. They didn't seem to feel the cold. Very active children. Kept Ann & I busy.

When we lived at "Bellevue" and had Jo-anna at around 2-3 yrs of age & Stephanie a year younger, occasionally Ann & I would lie in late in bed in the morning. Ann would feed Carmen, & Stephanie & Jo-anna of course came into bed with us. 5 persons in a bed, would soon end up with a pair of little ones in at the bottom end of our family bed. Guess what, Too many, & so Dad had to vacate the nest. But it was good fun.

On another occasion Jo-anna & Stephanie found some old ladies' make-up in the dump outside our garden. They used it to paint each other's face.

Their faces were bright red from ear to ear. Took Ann ages to get it off their faces.

We always carried a "pottie" in the back of our car when we had our Team of three with us. On one occasion we had a ~~little~~ hilarious incident. - We had been at Sunday Mass in Randolph & as usual, later had parked by the Centennial Milk Bar in Town. Quite a few others from church also did as we did. - visit the Milk Bar. Well, - when we came out with ice-creams etc. To our car, the eldest one cheerily announced to us that - "We used the pottie. Dad & Mom. And we Tipped it out the ~~warm~~ car window. "Good girls". The wet patch was on the outside of the car door. Created a few laughs among the onlookers.



**Invoice for purchase of Ranfurly sale yards  
by George Stafford O'Neill, 1930**

Mr. G. S. O'Neill, Patearoa,  
in account with  
J. I. Fraser, Solicitor, Ranfurly.

Otago Central Saleyards Coy. to  
John Joseph O'Neill.

1930

Mch 10

To purchase money for Secs 14 & 17 Blk

XVI, Town of Ranfurly.

510 0 0

" Stamp duty on agreement.

5 10 0

" Scale costs of transfer.

5 5 0

" Stamp duty, registration fee on trans-  
fer, form etc.

18 0

By deposit.

51 0 0

" Stamp duty paid.

5 10 0

" Balance.

465 3 0

521 13 6

521 13 0

E. & O. E.

To balance.

£465 3 0

Ranfurly, 6th March 1930.

# **Tales about a Little Boy**

(and sometimes about his brother John)

My Mother said that I was a pasty little boy, very active, and inclined to run away in the crowd at sports or race meetings. My parents became used to this as I would always come back to their 1936 Ford V8 model car before the end of the day. In recent years I have been diagnosed with 'Gilberts Disease'. This perhaps accounts for my lack of colour.

Mother and Dad had bought a 'run' block up the Lake Onslow road in 1933. No home as it had been burned down and so Dad, being a builder had set to and built a new home to take Mother to. No electricity up that road, but Dad put in lights throughout the house. He had what he called a wind charger over by the dog kennels and large tractor batteries as power storage. Only home up that road with light electric. No other electric facilities, just lighting. Oh, by the way, Gordon Barron, a bachelor, who lived up at George Rae's property told Dad that the woolshed was full of furniture after the house was burned, guess what Gordon thought?

What did little boys do out on a hill country run? Well, at one time I had a penchant for being in the fowl-run. Hens couldn't lay eggs, because maybe I bothered them too much, and I suppose I also broke a few while bringing them down the hill from the fowl-run. So, Dad devised a way of putting a stop to this. Dad put a hole in the hen run gate for the hens and locked the gate to keep me out. Result of this was Bernard was late in for the next meal because he had his head stuck in the hen hole that Dad had made in the gate. At least I tried!



The following must have happened when I was in the 3-4 age group. One Xmas I was given a tin drum; lord help the younger members of my family and Dad and Mother; I spent my time banging the drum and so it was confiscated. No more noise. Next Xmas among my gifts was a toy hammer. Well the front and taillights on our relatively new Ford V8 were demolished, likewise any glass at my level was also in danger. Guess what! Hammer confiscated. John has reminded me that our parents said I was good with a paint brush at about the same age. Leo thinks that I was either at our car (painting) or at the walls of our home.

Corrinne Duff was employed by Mother and Dad to help with general duties both on the farm and around the home. She came from West Otago. Corrinne smoked tailor made cigarettes. We could get into her room without adults knowing, as so I being the eldest organised the smoking foray. I can still remember the escapade. Cigarettes easy to get, round the back of the garage, next move. Colleen, John and I lit up the smokes but, between coughing and spluttering we had to give up. So, the partly smoked cigarettes went back to their rightful place in their packets and I sneaked them back into Corinne's room. I bet they had a laugh when the partly smoked cigarettes were found.

Once I hit 5 years of age my education began with me boarding with Jack and Mrs Sheehy at Millars Flat, Monday to Friday. That lasted 1 Term. Then Claire Trainor, from Southland, came to live with us and acted as a governess (teacher) for me. At age 6 years I was sent off to live with Uncle Jim and Auntie Cecily McErlane at 128 Maitland St, Dunedin, for my 2<sup>nd</sup> year's education. Of course I came home at the end of each Term. I was a pupil at St Dominic's College, situated in Rattray St, Dunedin. Moira Fitzpatrick walked me to school for the 1<sup>st</sup> 2-3 weeks, and after that I winged myself. Distance probably about 2

kms each way, through the city centre. I was a happy lad wherever I was at school. Then when John reached 5yrs of age and I was then 7yrs of age, Mother and Dad sent us to St Thomas's Academy in Oamaru. We had 3 years there. We need to realise that 1942-1944 were 2<sup>nd</sup> World War years, petrol was limited to 4 gallons a week. I had become quite used to being away from home and to travel. So getting on the 1.19pm Express Train at Oamaru at the end of each Term was no bother. Travel to Dunedin and then carry our suitcase to the NZR bus station, present our tickets, then arrive at Millers Flat about 8pm that evening. No accompanying adults, just get up and go for 2 little boys! As time went by, I became very unhappy at St Thomas's because of one nun on the staff: Sister Lawrence. All the other nuns were good to us. When I look back from many years later, I think Sister Lawrence was a very unhappy lady.

At the end of 1944, when I hit 10yrs of age, John and I arrived in Ranfurly, because our parents had sold at Miller Flat and returned to the Maniototo, where they had originated from. A new school, St Johns, opened 4/2/1945 in Ranfurly. And so, all 4 of us were at one school. Before that Colleen had been boarding Monday to Friday at Charlie and Betty O'Malley's in Millers Flat for schooling. Leo was 5yrs of age on 4/2/1945 the day St John's school opened. Also, the day I began school in Millers Flat Leo was born in Roxburgh 4/2/1940.

We lived for about 15mths in a cottage at Eweburn Station until Mother and Dad obtained the farm from Jean and Elizabeth Pottinger. We moved into the property on 2/4/1946. There was a lot of gorse on the new farm. To this day I can remember Jean Pottinger standing beside dad saying; 'If only Father had known, he would not have paid \$1-00 for a pound of gorse seed'. The Pottingers came from the



Orkney Islands, they called the farm 'Wideford' after a location where they came from.

I spent 4yrs at St John's school in Ranfurly. Aged 10-13yrs. Spent 2 years in Form 1 at this school. Then Mother and Dad sent me to St Kevin's College in Oamaru. I had 3yrs there. I got School Certificate in 3yrs, although it was considered to be a 4yr course. I quite enjoyed there. Although at the end I had had enough of boarding school and being away from home. The Brothers were good teachers. When I look back now, I just don't know how they managed to run the whole place. About 10-12 men controlling, teaching and encouraging sport was a mighty task.

At the time I left S.K.C Oamaru and came home, I had no idea what I would like to do. However, Jim Lynch, a good friend of Mother and Dad's suggested a position as a 'junior' at the BNZ Branch in Ranfurly for me. A good move. I enjoyed working there for approximately 3 yrs. Then I opted to go back to the farm. Dad and Mother had bought another 500 acres of ground. When I announced to Mr Blundell, bank manager, he was most unhappy. AND my Mother was very annoyed with me for leaving the Bank. When on the farm I learned to shear sheep. Got quite good at it, and, I did a lot of wool work in the sheds. My method of getting to work at the Bank was on a bicycle. No gears on the bike, just push the pedal. Sometimes the 'Nor wester' blew me to Ranfurly, and sometimes it was a wonder I didn't break the chain trying to ride into the 'Nor wester' on the way home.

What I did in the local community?

Well, we lived about 4kms from Ranfurly, if we took the length of our drive in from the main road. It took me until about 25 yrs of age before

I can look back and say I had reached proper adulthood. Boys often take longer than girls to mature, I was one of this group.

On arrival home from St Kevin's College, my Mother said 'Ranfurly Musical and Dramatic Society' for you Bernard. She did the same as the younger ones came home from school. Last place I wished to be. I was self-conscious and shy. But it turned out for the best. Colleen and Leo also were on the stage. I ended up as President for the Society at one time. Took my turn, 2yrs I think. I still love singing.

I joined the Ranfurly small bore rifle club, enjoyed that as well. Played rugby for Ranfurly club. Was secretary for 3yrs. Was secretary at the time of the 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee celebration. Played for the country under 21yrs age group when 18 and 20yrs of age. The other year -19- I was doing C.M.T (compulsory military training). Played in the forwards, I was too light to get anywhere in the senior competition. Murray Simpson and I had the same problem, - plenty of 'know-how' and speed but no height and weight. I stopped playing rugby when I was 23yrs of age. I had 6 teeth damaged and a cut face playing in a 'friendly' match at Gore one Sunday. So, I called it a day there and then.

I was a member of Young Farmers and later joined Otago Federated Farmers Maniototo Branch and later still after 1970 I joined the Alexandra's branch of Fed. Farmers. I can remember being at district meetings in Dunedin.

A story I must tell - While at one of the Fed. Farmers District meetings, conversation came around with a Mr Drake from Hawea Flat station. Went like this:



"You're from the Maniototo young man?"

"Yes".

"Well I worked on the mill in that area as a young man. So, O'Neill is your name; any other ties with Maniototo families?"

"Yes, my Mother was a daughter of Sarah and Charlie Dougherty."

"Yes", he said, "did they live below Ranfurly?"

"Yes", I said.

Well, Mr Drake then related how he worked on the mill - similar people to the shearing gangs of the time. As he said, we were not always welcome at family homes. However, this Dougherty home, near Ranfurly, on Barney's Lane, always seemed to be welcoming to all and sundry. The locals and the mill people were all welcome. His reason why, the old man, Charlie Dougherty, used to sit out on the front veranda enjoying proceedings.

When I arrived home, I asked Dad about this story, yes he said, Charlie Dougherty was one of a kind, and just as Mr Drake had said.

I liked dancing; I would usually attend the Saturday night dance. I alternated between Patearoa, Ranfurly, Gimmerburn, Waipiata and sometimes the Nasby Public Hall. Colin Carr's band did the music playing. They used to have a 'Charity Ball' in Dunedin each year. Leonie Dougherty, my cousin, asked me to partner her for her coming out appearance. Leonie, a very nice cousin, and I enjoyed going to the 'Town Hall' Dunedin. Within a week or two Nancy Mawhinney also asked me to partner her at the Waitaki Old Girls Ball. Similar to the Charity Ball. The young ladies are presented to a senior citizen of the Town. Her brother, Bill Mawhinney, was to present Nancy, but he broke his collarbone at rugby and so I was asked. Nancy was also a very nice partner for me. For a while I was engaged to Anne Heffernan

from Moonlight, Macrae's, but that was not a goer, and I broke it off. So, I was on the loose again. Anne was a good person but not a match, she was 3-4 years my senior and looked it. Not long after, Ann (Chapman) and I began to go out with each other, and the rest is history.

Around 13/7/1962 I bought 'Bellevue' from Terri and Nisbet Scott, out Alison's Lane. Then Ann and I could really plan ahead.

From the time I left the Bank until 1970 I did quite a bit of part time shearing. Often with Clayton Jones in the Autumn. We did all our own shearing, Leo and Dad did all the sheep work. Could shear about 160 a day. Always knocked off 10 minutes early so as not to be beating the clock. Also, John McCloy and I did quite a bit together. John would come shear at our properties for no charge and I did the same at the McCloy's.

When I look back on these years, it seems to me that our family never had any disagreements of note about business affairs.

A nice little story about mistakes I did make; goes like this-

Ann had established a large garden, vegetable and flower garden. The sheep yards and woolshed were just behind the garden area. We went for a picnic and had all the sheep on our farm in the yards. The gates into and between the home and the yards were not closed properly. So, when we arrived back from a nice day out, guess who were looking at us at the cattle stop - 3500 or more sheep and lambs. They had eaten everything above ground except a cactus plant as Ann



said. I was not popular!! But on the plus side, Ann's roses the following season were the best she'd ever had!

This happened at the Springvale homestead.

I really think that the farm diary started July 1962, covers most aspects from then until 1989.

I thought I had completed my words. However, I was reminded of an occasion at home at Springvale by Ann. Goes like this:

Russell Hughes, a small-time contractor, came to do border dyking of land out on Bruce's Hill, part of our farm. Russell brought his grader, caravan and vehicles etc, parked his caravan under the weeping willow in our backyard, had his meals etc with us. January that year was very hot. Ann enjoyed Russell's company because she got all the news from the Maniototo. Russell and his wife Jan and little baby were living in the Maniototo, where we had come from. Story goes, Russell was too hot in the grader cab, so he took the cab off, next day he was cooking from the direct sun. Guess what, he had a large beach style sun hat on, that was not a success, so he had a large beach umbrella attached to the body of his grader. I saw all if these stages for myself. So, my story is correct. He looked a weird outfit going around a paddock with that set-up!

There is another story about a low-loader and the front of the Hyde Hotel. Goes like this; Russell Hughes, of the previous story, asked his employee Eric Sheib to go to Middlemarch area and pick up the low-loader (carries a bulldozer etc) and bring it back to the Ranfurly area. Eric, a heavy drinker, felt the need for a beer by the time he got to Hyde, and so drove the low-loader up behind the garden, which is still in front of this hotel. Not any room for parking, this being about 9.30 to 10.00 am. Eric ended up with the front of the loader (engine area)

in the bar of the Hotel. Front wheels hanging in the bar cellar. Ann's mother told us this story and Ann and I thought - "Oh is this possible!!" Well, we deliberately drove home from Dunedin through Middlemarch to have a look. Sure enough the hole in the Hotel frontage was all boarded up. So, Edie Chapman's story was true. You see Edie (Ann's mother) had a sister, Tini Bruhns, who lived a couple of doors up the road from the Hyde Hotel.



## Tales about a little Boy

+ sometimes about his brother John. My Mother said that I was a pasty little boy, very active, + inclined to run away in the crowd at sports or race meetings. Parents became used to this as I would always come back to their Ford V8 1936 model car before the end of the day. In recent years I have been diagnosed with "Gilbert's Disease". Probably accounts for my lack of colour.

Mother + Dad had bought a "run" block up The Lake Orslew road in 1933. No home, it had been burned down + so Dad, being a builder had set to + built a new home to take Mother to. No electricity up that road, but Dad put in lights throughout the house. He had what he called a wind charger over by the dog kennels + large tractor batteries as power storage. Only home up that road with light-electric. no other electric facilities, just lighting.

What did little boys do out on a hill country run? Oh by the way, Gordon Barron, a batchelor who

lived up at George Raes property told Dad that the woodshed was full of furniture after the house was burned. I guess what Gordon thought.

Well, at one time I had a penchant for being in the fowl-run. Hens couldn't lay eggs + I suppose I also broke a few while bringing them down the hill from the fowl-run. So - what they devise to put a stop. Well Dad put a hole in the hen-run gate for the hens + locked the gate to keep me out. Result - Bernard was late in for next meal. Why - because he had



his head stuck in the hen hole that  
Dad had made in the gate. At least  
I tried.

The following must have happened  
when I was in the 3-4 age group. One  
Xmas I was given a tin drum; lord help the  
younger members and Dad & Mother;

I spent my time banging the drum, & so  
it was confiscated. No more noise.

Next Xmas, among my gifts was a  
Toy hammer. Well the front & tail lights  
on our relatively new Ford V8 were

demolished. likewise, any glass at my  
level was also in danger. Guess what?

Brother has reminded me that our parents said  
was good with a paint brush at about the same -

Hammer confiscated.

Corrinne Duff. was employed  
by Mr & D. To help with general duties, she came  
from West Stago. Both on the farm & around  
our home. Corrinne smoked Tailor-  
made cigarettes. We could get into her  
room without adults knowledge & so  
I being the eldest organised the smoking  
foray. I can still remember the  
escapade. Cigarettes easy to get, round  
the back of the garage, next move.

Colleen, John & I lit up the smokes  
but, - between coughing & spluttering

etc we had to give up. So cigarettes  
age. Leo thinks that I was either at our car  
or at the walls of our home)



partly smoked went back in their right-  
ful places in their pockets. ~~I bet~~ Then  
I sneaked them back into Corrienne's  
room. I bet they had laugh when the  
partly smoked cigarettes were found.

Once I hit 5 yrs of age my education  
began with me boarding with Jack +  
Mrs Sheehy at Millers Flat, Monday  
To Friday. That lasted 1 Term.

Then Claire Trainer, from Southland,  
came To live with us + acted as  
a governess (Teacher) for me. At  
age 6 yrs I was sent off To live

with Uncle Jim + Auntie Cecily McSolan  
at 128 Waitland St Dunedin for  
my 2nd yrs education. Of course I  
came home at the end of each Term.  
I was a pupil at St Dominics  
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Meira Fitzpatrick walked me To  
school for the 1st 2-3 weeks, + after  
that I winged myself. Distance  
probably about 2 kms each way,  
Through the city centre. As best I can  
remember, I was a happy lad  
wherever I was at school.



+ Then when John reached 5 yrs of  
 age + I was then 7 yrs of age. Mother  
 + Dad sent us To St Thomas's Academy  
 in Oamaru. We had 3 years there.  
 We need To realize That 1942-1944  
 were 2nd World War years. Petrol  
 4 gallons a week. Many limitations.  
 I had become quite used To being  
 away from home + To Travel. So  
 getting on The 1.19pm Express Train at  
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NZIR bus station. Present our Ticket.  
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At the end of 1944, when I  
 hit 10 yrs of age, John + I arrived



in Ranfurly, because our parents had sold at Millers Flat & returned to Maniototo, where they had originated from. A new school, "St John's" opened 4/2/1945 in Ranfurly. And so all 4 of us were at one school. before that Colleen had been boarding Monday-To Friday at Charlie & Betty O'Malleys in Millers Flat for schooling. Leo attained 5 yrs of age on 4/2/1945 the day "St John's" school opened. Also, <sup>days</sup> ~~the~~ I began school in Millers Flat. Leo was born in Roxburgh = 4/2/1940.

We lived for about 15 months in a cottage at Greburn station until Mother & Dad obtained the farm from Jean & Elizabeth Pottinger. Moved in the property on 2/4/1946. There was a lot of gorse on the new farm. To this day I can remember Jean Pottinger standing beside <sup>dad</sup> ~~day~~ saying: "If only Father had ~~ta~~-known, he would not have paid \$1-00 for a pound of gorse seed". The Pottingers came from The Orkney Islands - called the farm "Wideford" after a location where they



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College Damaree. Had 3 yrs there. Got School Certificate in 3 yrs. although it was considered to be a 4 year course.

Quite enjoyed there. Although, at the end I had, had enough of boarding school & away from home.

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To run the whole place. About 10-12 men controlling, Teaching, & encouraging sport was mighty Task.

At the time I left S.K.C Damaree & came home, I had no idea what I would like to do. However, Jim Lynch a good friend of Mother & Dad's suggested a position as a "junior" at the BNZ.

Branch in Randurly for me. A good move. I enjoyed working there for approximately 3 yrs. Then I opted to go back to the farm. Dad & Mother had bought another 500 acres of ground. When I announced to Mr Blundell,



bank manager, he was most unhappy. And my Mother was very annoyed with me for leaving the bank. When on the farm I learned to shear sheep. Got to be quite good at it. And also did a lot of wool work in the sheds. My method of getting to ~~work~~ work in the bank was on a bicycle. No gear on the "bike", just push the pedal. Sometimes the "Norwester" blew me to Ranfurly, & sometimes it was a wonder I didn't break the chain, trying to ride into the "Norwester" on the way home.

What I do in the community? Well, we lived about 4 Ks. from Ranfurly, if we took the length of our drive in from the main road. It took me until about 25 years of age before I can look back & say I had reached proper adulthood. Boys often take longer than girls to mature. I was one of this group.

On arrival home from St Kerins College, my Mother said "Ranfurly Musical & Dramatic Society" for you Bernard. She did the same as the younger ones came home from school. Last place I



wished to be. "I was self-conscious + shy."  
But it turned out for the best. Colleen + Leo  
also were on stage as well. I ended up as  
President of the society at one time. Took  
my turn; 2 yrs I think;

I joined the Ranfurly small bore  
rifle club, enjoyed that as well. Played rugby  
for Ranfurly club. Was secretary for 3 yrs.  
Was secretary at the time of the 50th  
Jubilee celebration. Played for the country  
under 21 yrs age group when 18 + 20 yrs of age.  
The other year - 19 - I was doing C. M. I. (Compulsory  
military Training) Played in the forwards.

I was too light to get anywhere in the senior  
competition. Murray Simpson + I had the same  
problem, - Plenty of "no-how" + speed but no  
height + weight. I stopped playing rugby when  
I was 23 yrs of age. Had 6 teeth + a cut face  
playing in a "friendly" match at Gore one  
Sunday. So I called it a day there and then.

I was a member of young farmers  
+ later on joined Otago Federated Farmers  
Maniototo Branch + later still after 1970. I  
joined Alexandra's branch of Fed. Farmers.  
Can remember being at district meeting  
in Dunedin.

A story I must tell. - While at one



of The Fed. Farmers District mtgs. conversation came around with a Mr Drake from Hawea flat station. Went like this. - you from the Maniototo young man - yes. - well, I worked on the mill in that area as a young man. So O'Neill is your name; any other ties with Maniototo families; yes, my Mother was a daughter of Sarah + Charlie Dougherty. Yes he said did they live below Ranfurly? Yes, I said. Well Mr Drake then related how he worked on the mill - similar people to the shearing gangs of the time. As he said, we were not always

welcome at family homes. However, this Dougherty home, near Ranfurly, "Barneys lane" always seemed to be welcoming to all + sundry. The locals + the mill people were all welcome. His reason why. = The old man, Charlie Dougherty, used to sit out on the front verandah enjoying proceedings. When I arrived home, I asked Dad about this story - yes he said, Charlie Dougherty was one of a kind, + just as Mr Drake said.

When I look back all these



89 years. It seems to me that I was  
 a shy & self conscious. Didn't really  
 firmature until I was about 25 yrs  
 of age. I now think some young  
 or men are like me. I liked dancing  
 so would usually attend the Saturday  
 night dance. I alternated between  
 de Patea-rea, Ranfurly, Gimmesburn  
 & Waipiaata & sometimes Naseby Public  
 Halls. Colin Carrs band did the  
 music playing. They used to have  
 a "Charity Ball" in Dunedin each  
 year. Leonie Dougherty, my cousin

asked me to partner her for her  
 coming out appearance. Leonie, a  
 very nice cousin & I enjoyed going to  
 the "Town Hall" Dunedin.

Within a week or two Nancy  
 Mawhinney also asked me to partner  
 her at the Waitaki Old Girls Ball.  
 Similar to the Charity Ball. The  
 young ladies are presented to a senior  
 citizen of the town. Her brother Bill  
 Mawhinney was to present Nancy,  
 but he broke his collar bone at  
 rugby & so I was asked. Nancy



& was also a very nice partner for  
 a me. For a while I was engaged  
 to Anne Heffernan from No. Moon-  
 light (Macraes) but that was  
 not a goer, & I broke it off. So I  
 was on the loose again. Ann was a  
 good person, but not a match, she  
 was 3-4 yrs my senior & looked it.

Not long after Ann & I began to  
 go out together & the rest is history.  
 Around 13/7/1962, I bought "Bellevue"  
 from Terri & Nichol Scott. Out  
 Alison's lane. Then Ann & I could

really plan ahead.

From the time I left the  
 bank until 1970 I did quite a  
 bit of part time shearing, often  
 with Clayton Jones in the Autumn.  
 We did all our shearing. Leo & Dad  
 did all the sheep work. Could shear  
 about 160 a day. Always knocked off  
 10 minutes early so as not to be beating  
 the clock. Also John McCloy & I did  
 quite a bit together. John would  
 come shear at our properties for no  
 charge & I did the same at McCloy's.

When I look back all these



years, it seems to me that our family never had any disagreements of note about business affairs. A nice thought. A nice little story about mistakes I could make. - Goes like this - Ann had established a large garden; vegetable & flower; The sheep yards & woolshed ~~are~~ <sup>were</sup> just behind the garden area. We went for a picnic & had all the sheep on our farm in the yards. The gates into & between the home & the yards were not closed properly. - So when we arrived back from a nice day out.

guess who were looking at us at the cattle stop. - 3500 or more sheep & lambs. They had eaten everything above ground except a cactus plant as Ann said. I was noted popular!! This all happened at the Springvale homestead. I really think that the farm diary started July 1962 covers most aspects from then until 1989.

I thought I had completed my words. However I was reminded of an occasion at home at Springvale by Ann. Goes like this - Russell



Hughes, a small Time contractor came to do boarder dyking of land out on Bruce's Hill part of our farm. He brought his grader + caravan + vehicles etc. Parked the caravan under the weeping willow in our backyard. Had his meals etc with <sup>us</sup> January that year was very hot. Ann enjoyed ~~to~~ Russell because she got all of news. Russell + his wife Jan + little baby were living in the Maniatoto, where <sup>we</sup> had come from. Goes like this. Russell too hot in the grader cab, so he took the cab off, next

day he was cooking from the direct sun. Guess what, he had a large beach style Sun Lat on. That was not a success so he had a large beach umbrella attached to the body of his grader. I saw all of these stages for myself. So my story is correct. He looked a weird outfit going around a paddock with that particular set-up.

There is another story about a low loader + the front of the Hyde Hotel. Goes like this - Russell Hughes; of the previous story; asked his employee Eric Sheib to go to Widdemarch area



and pick up the low-loader (carries a bulldozer etc) + bring it back to the Ranfurly area. Eric; heavy drinker; felt the need for a beer by the time he came to Hyde, + so drove the low loader up behind the garden, which is still in front of this hotel. Not any room for parking, this being about 9.30-10.00 am.

Eric ended up with the front of the loader (engine area) in the bar of the hotel. Front wheels hanging in the bar cellar. Ann's Mother told us this story + Ann + I

thought - Oh is this possible!! - Well, we deliberately drove home from Dunedin thru' Middlemarch to have a look. Well sure enough the ~~whole~~ whole in the hotel frontage was all boarded up. So Edie Chapman's story was true. You see Edie (Ann's Mother) had a sister, Jane Bruhns, who lived a couple of doors up the road from the Hyde Hotel.



## **Bernard in Trouble again**

Bernard (has been known as Bun, Bugger Lugs or the Late Mr O'Neill - never on time) is not going to be let off the hook as easily as he thinks. He has a problem with putting his foot in to and then trying to cover up by putting his foot in a bigger hole.

Three stories he will never be allowed to forget by his family.

### **The Topaz Pendant**

He wanted to buy a matching bracelet for the little woman's birthday and could not get one in Alexandra. At the time, he was helping Jo-anna & Fred in Oamaru and thought he would come home via Dunedin and buy one there. Without wife's knowledge, helps himself to pendant and earring set and throws them in the lawnmower catcher which was in the truck seat and heads off to Oamaru. Arrives there in the dark and Fred puts catcher on lawn mower. Kept busy with farm work and helping Jo in garden, mowing lawns for next few days. On going home, he arrives in Dunedin but can't find pendant (forgot he put it in the catcher), goes up side street, strips the truck without luck. He goes ahead and buys bracelet with the hope it would match. Decides to go back to Oamaru (now dark) but as he was expected home thinks it would be wise to ring Alexandra which he did from a garage in Waitati. Was told "NOT" to come home without jewelery. Assistant in garage laughed her head off and spouse came away from the phone splitting sides but he was a worried boy. During the night, he worked out what happened and in light of day, starts at one end of lawn clippings (thrown out where cows were feeding) and worked to the other end. One very relieved guy found the little case badly grass stained in the last pile. A case of all's well, that ends well. He won "Chicken of the week" radio competition with this story. The person who won the Turkey, went to the wrong wedding.

### **The Chocolate Gravy**

Shortly after we were married Bernard came home late from work and helped himself to his prepared meal. A lovely roast meal with rich gravy followed by homemade chocolate sauce and Ice Cream. The roast and sauce was appreciated but when the dessert was eaten I was told in no uncertain terms, the chocolate sauce was terrible. You guessed it. Bernard poured Chocolate sauce on his roast but as he has a very sweet tooth, didn't notice. Gravy on Ice Cream was a different story and chocolate sauce has never been the same.

## The Radiogram

Nana Chapman gave us a lovely old valve radiogram when she moved to 12 Bute Street, Ranfurly. It had been a present from Dad so was of great value for her. Bernard put it on top of a mattress on the truck and did not tie it. He was promptly told to secure it or put it back in the house. It was secured and brought back to Alexandra where we enjoyed the use for a few years. However, the valve gave out and was decided to take it to town for repairs. Another discussion re securing it properly but "Bugger Lugs" knew best. The radiogram grew legs and jumped off the truck and ended in splinters. One very worried lad thought he would be smart and dump this beautiful piece of furniture around the farm, (spouse thought it was at the repair shop). Things were fine until a few days later, little woman goes on her daily run and for some reason changed route and tripped over a bit of the radiogram hidden in a gully. One very sheepish lad had to tell the truth this time and worse still Nana Chapman had to be told and it wasn't the one who caused the problem that exploded that bomb.

This also happened to a suite of bedroom furniture being taken to town to be repainted in crackle paint. They also developed legs and jumped over the side of the truck. It took many years to tie things securely on back of truck.





Bernard Stafford O'Neill

Born Roxburgh 21 12 34 . My Mother [Emily] told me more than once that she waited in labour for over two days for my arrival. However Jack & Emily were both pleased with me . They took me home to their farm at Millers Flat 8 kilometres up the "Timburn " road towards Lake Onslow.

Naming--- Mother's next elder brother was Bernard Dougherty & Stafford an O'Neill family name. So you have it. The Stafford name goes back to the then governor of Ulster in Ireland a few hundred years ago. Mother & Dad always found me to be a skinny , very active child [ ran most places] & inclined to be a little bit frail physically. Had pneumonia when 3 years old – no penicillin in those days. Also had a habit of disappearing into crowds of people but my parents soon found that I would always find their 1936 ford v8 car again. Went with Dad to the photographs at the 1937 Patearoa school jubilee. As usual I disappeared & so the school teacher has me on his knee in one of the large pictures. This kept me from wandering in & out of the way. At my 4<sup>th</sup> birthday I was given a hammer for a present. Broke every light on our car in double quick time. – lost the hammer .

I can still remember pinching Corinne Duff's cigarettes , taking John & Colleen to our hiding place at the back of the woolshed There we proceeded to light up. After much coughing & spluttering, we took the darned things back & put them in Corinne's room. Created some laughs among the adults. I can also remember nagging my parents for permission to stay up with so that I could say the three mysteries of the rosary with them . I finally won on that one. The big thing I suppose was that I could then feel just a bit more important than the others in our family.

Had a happy until reaching 5 years of age & school began on the 4<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1940 at Millers Flat. Because 1940 was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of world war 2 rationing had begun. This period from 1940 to 1945 had a big bearing on mine & my parents life. Petrol was not available for Dad to drive me the 8ks. To school along a single track mountain road. To get to Millers Flat school I boarded with Mr & Mrs Jack Sheehy for the 1<sup>st</sup>. term. 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> terms , I had a governess to teach me [Claire Trainor] . Then in 1941 at 6 years of age I boarded with Aunt Cecily & Uncle Jim McErlane in Dunedin.[128 Maitland St] Went as a day pupil to St. Dominic's College. I still have a photo of my class in our possession. Home each holiday by bus from Dunedin. In that year I learned to ride all the trams , The cable cars, & generally get myself around Dunedin city as good as any adult. Had a playmate Brian <sup>Faney</sup> whose parents owned the Criterion Hotel, played with him a few times after school. Much to Aunt Cecily's terror. She did not know where I had gone to until I arrived home again.

Then at 7 years of age & John aged 5 years, we began school boarding at St Thomas's Acedemy in Oamaru. Adifficult 3 years for our whole family. With so much time away from home during those 5 years , I became very independent of so many people in my ways . My parents could get enough petrol to drive us to Oamaru for our first term at St Thomas's. But after that we always travelled by express train Oamaru to Dunedin . It left at 1.19 p.m. & arrived in about 4.30.p.m. John & I walked from the railway station along the street to the N.Z.R. bus station . There we handed in our luggage & tickets & boarded the bus for Millers Flat. The bus arrived in Millers Flat at 9 pm. There we were met by our parents. Just imagine letting a 5&7 year old loose on their own today to travel these distances. We had to be able to buy our food , care for our luggage & be in the right place at the right time. I sure knew my way around , because John , being only 5 years , could only follow me. In those days most people travelled by public transport. Express train could have 10 carriages well filled with people . especially at school holiday time.

In late 1944 Dad & Mother sold the farm at Millers Flat & returned to farming near Ranfurly. From then on we could operate as a real family again.

In high school I attended St. Kevins College Oamaru. Leaving at the end of 1951. Began work at the B.N.Z. Ranfurly. == 3 years in all. Then home to the farm with my parents. Gradually we bought more property & expanded our farming interests./

Socially , my Mother was instrumental in getting me started in the Ranfurly Music & Dramatic Society, of which I am now a past president. Was secretary of the Ranfurly Football club for 3-4 years. Represented the Otago Sub-Union under 21 years team for two years. I joined the Maniototo Pipe Band at 18 years of age. Have always continued this interest, am now a life member of the Alexandra Pipe band. & also its present Patri=on. My parents helped greatly during my teenage years & also Rob. Hanrahan it can be was a great help to me. I learned singing from Vera Gilbert of Dunedin for a year & had bagpipe lessons for 6 years. Did some solo piping. Learned to be quite a good shearer. Took part in Federated Farmers & in Irrigation affairs.

Bought 400 acres in Gimmerburn in <sup>1962</sup>~~1963~~. Dad & I began preparing the homestead for Ann & I to live in when we married in January 1964.