

Personal statement from Marylou Blue

My first knowledge of Boat harbour was when Lex McKinnon, who was our neighbour from Shelton Downs, Lake Ohau, called on us soon after we, Don and I, arrived home from our 'Honeymoon' January 1956 to tell us of a fire which had swept from Boat Harbour up the hill and across the flats to the old Ohau road near what we call 'The Dangerous Corner'. A group of picnickers had lit a fire on the shore and the fire had burnt down to the driftwood. The grass fire started from that and strong NW wind had done the rest.

I fell in love with the Boat Harbour at first sight and over the years it has been a wonderful area to picnic, camp, eel and swim in. often there were others picnicking, fishing and water ski-ing in the bay.

Sometimes Don took the children eeling, in the evening, to Maori creek where the creek runs into the lake.

Many many times we picnicked, cooking sausages over an open fire and sometimes, when the weather was good we camped under the stars as in those days we had no tents. I remember one Night when Maryanne, our youngest child, sat bolt up-right when she thought she heard people from Twizel coming! Although the lake water was 'fresh' the children always swam. One of our daughters caught her first fish there, much to every-ones surprise. We had wonderful walks around the shores of Boat Harbour and collecting drift wood each year for our winter fires was always a day for a picnic

Mustering. Don always enjoyed the magnificent views in all the moods and weather conditions which he had when mustering. It can blow in that area in fact I think Ohau means wind in Maori.

After a deep snow one winter Don had to shift the wethers off the flat and drive them up to Lake Ohau, I remember going up in the dark, with the children in the car, to make sure Don was all right

and here he was pushing the mob of sheep through a track in the snow toward Boat Harbour where the west facing slopes would clear sooner than the flat.

Tourists. In 1969 we started taking over-seas visitors. If we had time and we weren't too busy with farm work we took our guests up to Boat Harbour for sausages cooked on a heavy metal plate on an open fire. This adventure for the tourist was often the highlight of their trip to New Zealand. The peace and quiet, the grandeur of the views were highly enjoyed while sitting on the stone beach having a picnic at Lake Ohau. Many many photos of Boat Harbour were taken home, to be treasured.

Winds. Boat Harbour is a very sheltered bay from most winds. There is always a sheltered side. In fact it could be one of the few sheltered bays on the whole of the lakes shoreline.

Weeds. Over the years broom, gorse and nodding thistle seeds have floated on the surface of the water from the area at the head of Lake Ohau and been blown onto our edge of the lake. Don and John took seriously and regularly checked for weeds and grubbed or sprayed any that grew.

At this stage I feel I must indicate to you all just how we felt about the ground of Ohau Downs Station and the Boat Harbour area. To show we cared I would like to quote a passage from a book I read. The book is called 'Impossible Journey' by Michael Asher. Michael and his French wife walked from the West coast of Africa across the dessert to the Nile River. It took them over a year. When they arrived in Chad they met vehicles and the author wrote

“But vehicles cut one off from that sense of unity with the earth, that was almost a religious Sacrament for me”

What a wonderful way to express our feelings for the area around Boat Harbour.

Christmas Dinner 2008. All the tables and chairs, to seat 21 immediate family, canopies, wood-burning thermettes and barbecues were all ready for our family meal. Food and all the other necessities for a meal in the open were completely ready. Sadly due to rough weather the Christmas celebrations on the shore of Lake Ohau at Boat Harbour had to be postponed for another season.

Development of self. In New Zealand we often ignore our beautiful landscape as a factor in development of self and in the forming of our character. The influence of landscape on our personality and refreshing of our beings is an important reason why people want to spend time with nature. This is why families and friends camp, tramp, walk and stay in batches, and long to be in satisfying mountain scapes, seascapes, rivers and lakes. It is so important to keep pristine areas free from development.

The Future. I am really sad I haven't got photos of all the boaters, fisherman, swimmers, kayakers, water-skiers, biscuit-riders and family picnics all around the bay of Boat Harbour during the summer period.

It is also important that we keep this area a safe, beautiful and suitable bay for our future generations. Why should we have to put up with noise from machinery or electrical moving parts when all we want to hear is the lapping of the water and the whispering of the wind. Why should we put up with power poles and wires in the middle of our grand views? We must keep this area for the future, safe and pristine. Also we must remember that Twizel is a growing holiday destination and Lake Ohau has easy access for the boating and water sport population.

This submission may be a small part in the MacKenzie Irrigation scheme but Lake Ohau is where we have lived and loved.

This journey has been a long and arduous one for us to try to prevent our Western fence line and the absolute gem Boat Harbour, being used for mechanical development. The bay Boat Harbour, is all New Zealanders Heritage and it is very important to remember that Lake Ohau is one of the last untouched, natural and pristine Lakes in the area.