

TABLED AT HEARING

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Personal Statement from Maryanne Clark

I remember the excitement of going up to boat harbour. It felt like we were going on holiday!

We often went on summer evenings, the ones when the wind drops the sky is clear and the air is warm. Long Southern Summer evenings where the atmosphere is so clear that the mountains take on a larger than life purple hue.

We'd drive up the road marvelling at the good summer we were having or how dry the country looked. *Marvelling at how lucky we were to live in such a spot. The drive from the farm up to the lake is east to west and so the rainfall and altitude changes a bit. That always amazed me as a child how it could be calm at the house down on the flats and could be really windy up at the lake.*

Past Mary's corner where the dog chain was embedded in a rock you travel gently climbing up to the lagoons. Then turning onto the 'Old Ohau Road' and around 'dangerous corner' where a mail bus had rolled a long time ago and we were there.

Parked by the fence this is where the arguments with my sister would start! Who would get to lead the way down the sheep track to Boat Harbour? First we walked over flat terrain pointing out the remains of old maori oven pits as we go. Over to the old willow tree where Maori creek dropped from the flats down the terrace to the lake We have picked up all sorts of things on that walk, interesting looking rocks that looked like black melted glass, an antique alpine axe and moa gizzard stones.

Carrying baskets or boxes with our food and thermette we wandered down the sheep tracks through matagouri and briar bushes to the bay below.

Boat Harbour always has a hidden, private feel to it. Sheltered from the south by the lake terraces it is always a great spot to picnic or camp. There is a grandness about Boat Harbour with Ruataniwha dominating in its presence and the snowy alps of the main divide also to be seen at the head of the lake. The lake has that deep dark blue colour that tells you its clean and clear.

Mum and Dad took our special guests to picnic at Boat Harbour like Uncle Phil' and Aunt Daphne when they came over from the U.K. or cousin Dora from Singapore. It was our time to recreate as a family I suppose. Time for us to relax in our surroundings and enjoy what we had and where we were. Time out if you like from farming and still having your family around you.

My eldest sister caught her first fish at boat harbour it was around the time her fiancé was being introduced to the family at a picnic at boat harbour. We did have barbeques as well but the omnipresent threat of fire if a spark went unnoticed and a nor west gale built up could be devastating. Lake Ohau trout have a fine delicate fresh water flavour. I think boat harbour is where Grandpa taught Aunt Daphne to fly fish for trout.

I remember Dad taking my cousins and I up to Boat Harbour to go eeling. Where Maori creek flows into the harbour there is a bit of swamp and the creek flow slows. We had a great time especially after we caught one, studying its slimy lifeless body up close on the grassy bank. I hated crossing that creek it scared me witless thinking about those eels. When the lake level is very high the creek accumulates alot of drift wood so when you crossed it all those sticks lay in there kidding you that they might just jump to life and sink their teeth into your bare feet! Landing in the cutty grass on the other side of that creek always felt good.

I also remember going with Dad to boat harbour to 'check a gate' and we took the twenty two rifle with us for shooting practise. We saw a black rabbit. I knew that for every black rabbit there were a hundred grey rabbits out there.

When I was at high school I biked up there one evening during the Christmas Holidays, to camp out. I hadn't chosen my night well it was blowing a gale at the lake! I ended up camping out around in Kettle Cove..coming home very early the next morning.

Once when I was young we camped at Boat Harbour as a family. I heard movement on the beach stones during the night and woke Mum and probably Dad to inform them that the Twizel people were coming. It turned out to be a rabbit.

Boat Harbour is a very special spot with the kowhais growing right down on the lake shore like whiskery old men from another era and the stand of mountain beech out on the point towards Kettle Cove looking like dinosaurs from another time. It is a pocket of secrecy that has missed progress and evaded time. Created by glacial forces, polished by the howling Nor' Wester *and nurtured by the grace of life itself.*

Boat Harbour was part of the kingdom of my childhood it is a very special place.

Written by Maryanne Clark nee Blue 27th Sept.2009 Maraetai Auckland