

"Back Then" vol 3 Birkenhead Public Library  
Colleen Christie - compiler & editor 1989  
Dorothy Robinson (nee McPhail)

there in their lunchhour. Just kicking the ball around I suppose. When you walked down there to catch the ferry, they'd all stop, while you walked across. Oh, it was fun down there.

It was a lovely place to live. I can always remember when I had to walk to the shops. I'd love to come over and buy the meat or something for Mum. I'd have to walk from Chelsea to Stott's shop. It used to be on the corner of Rugby Road. It was a long way. It was a bit lonely. You used to have to walk around the dams, at the bottom there used to be a little, two plank bridge there. What have they got there now. I haven't been down there for years. It was just a two plank bridge. I suppose we had basket for the meat - never lost it anyway.

Yes, my mother did most of her shopping there. We used to have a lovely lot of shops down here you know in (Hinemoa Street) awhile back. Now its not the same. Well there's different shops. But we had the, hairdresser, Mr Turvey. Then there was Mr Bamber, he was the bootmaker and then there was Stotts shop or Hellaby's. Then there was Mr Boles' grocer shop, and he also ran a taxi service. I don't know what was in those other ones where the dairy is and then you got right up to the corner and there was Wallis, the drapers, and Mr White, the chemist, and then the fruit shop, grocer shop and Stotts shop. And then that little shop that's the embroidery shop. That was a little cake shop for awhile, Headlands Bakery, a home cookery. So you see we had a lot of shops.

From Maritime Terrace we went to Chelsea. Yes, we were still using the same shopping area. Although we had a car but Mum didn't drive. I suppose it would have been one of the first cars in Birkenhead. Not many people had cars in those days. It was an Overland. Oh, yes, I remember Dad buying it. Oh, yes, a great thrill. I can remember Dad putting it through one end of the garage one night, down Chelsea. Came in - put his foot on the accelerator and went through the end.

I can remember Dad bought it to go round to the bowls and croquet at Northcote. He and Mum played at the clubs there. Mum played croquet. And then when Mum built the house round here - from Chelsea, we came round here to Bridgeview Road. Mum had the house built in Bridgeview Road and she had croquet lawns at the back. And she had the Birkenhead Croquet Club there which I don't suppose anybody knows about. Barbara Stott (Lewis) has her house built on what used to be Mum's croquet lawn now.

Oh yes, they had quite a nice little club I think. I never used to take any notice of it then though because I was working in town then. They used to play a lot of croquet there but who played I couldn't tell you.

At Chelsea we lived in about three different houses when we lived down there. When we first went down we lived in just about the bottom one. Then we shifted up to the top one. And then into a middle one. The last one we lived in was much bigger than the others. It had a lovely big sewing room on the back. Mum used to sew a lot, she loved sewing. It had quite a nice big kitchen. It had a dining room and a little lounge. Then upstairs there was a great big bedroom - it was like a ballroom. You could put three beds in it. And there were three bedrooms upstairs and that one. I think the chief engineer had lived in the last one we shifted



Vera Wilkins (nee McPhail)

b 1900

When the 5 o'clock whistle used to go Mum used to say "Oh, put the cloth on, go, now, Dad will be coming up". Coming up home, that's when we lived in one of those houses. The brick houses. But when he was on night shift, mostly it was me used to take his tea down. But my sisters did too, right through the Sugar Refinery.

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After my mother and father left Mokoia Road they bought a place down in what's Maritime Avenue now. Opposite Eric Chambers they built a big house there and the sugar company bought it after a few years. They bought it from us and my parents built another place in what used to be Harbour View Road. My mother bought a section and they built a home there. She had a croquet lawn at the back for awhile. It was the Birkenhead croquet lawn. My mother played croquet down on the Gasworks Beach, and my father played bowls there for years. Then he joined up at the Auckland Bowling Club. But he was a what you call life member. He played with the Auckland Bowling Club till he died.

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We lived down Chelsea for awhile in the brick houses. - I was grown up then, while my mother and father were building a place in Birkenhead. So we were renting one of those houses there. But oh, my goodness, I can remember coming home on the 12 o'clock boat at night and walking from Birkenhead. Right down Rawene Road. Right down, right across the dams and up.

I used to go down that long walk right across to Chelsea, down there. Go down that long walk and wait on the ferry boat coming in. And we used to see all the men coming off the boats and go into the sugar refinery. My brother-in-law, Stan Cross, worked there you know. He used to go over to get the pay for the refinery. Him and another man used to take the bag over and bring the pay back in the bag and another man used to go down and help them receive it. Just for safety sake. They used to come across around the back. But its all different down there now.

A friend of mine, Sybil Fountain's family, lived up a bit on the hill, up near the manager's house. I used to go up there a lot. Go up a lot to her place.

Yes, Millers'. They lived in the manager's house at the refinery. That's all empty now isn't it? Actually they did some picture up there, didn't they? Yes, I read in the paper where they were acting up there for some picture. I didn't know the Millers very well. They were grown up. I just knew the Fountains and the Speedy's. They were all younger.

My husband and I, before we were married, used to walk up to the dams. It was lovely up there.

Oh, I used to like going over in the ferry boats. I used to rush home from work on the five boat and have tea and go back on the 5 to 7 or I think it was 5 past. We would go back to Auckland to the pictures and we had Dixieland. That was out at Point Chevalier. Oh, Dixieland. You



5.1.2017 Advised by elderly member of Birkenhead B.C. the croquet club was associated with Birkenhead Women's Bowling Club off Mahara Ave. Interclub results for Birkenhead CC first appear 1942.

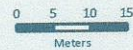
Birkenhead War Memorial Park

MAHARA AVENUE

JOHN COURT STREET

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**Birkenhead WBC 1959**



Scale @ A4 = 1:1,000

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Birkenhead War Memorial Park

JOHN COURT STREET

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# Birkenhead 2010

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Meters  
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