

Entertainment

When the keepers and their families weren't working they had a variety of entertainment activities available to them – the major majority of which required no electricity. These activities included fishing, swimming, hunting, picnics, hobbies and swimming to name a few.

The following list of recreation activities was gathered from different sources (see bibliography).

- Fishing
- Swimming
- Picnics (often held at Pig Gully)
- Diving
- Shell Collecting
- Bird Watching
- Climbing (Goat Island was a favourite for most)
- Waterskiing
- Snorkelling
- Abseiling
- Reading
- Music and Instruments
- Photography
- Painting
- Drawing
- Sewing
- Knitting
- Writing
- Weaving
- Barbeques
- Communal afternoon teas
- Tramping
- Hunting
- Home Brewing
- Using the Radio (listening on the CB)
- Seaweed collecting
- Board Games
- Lighthouse sleepovers (for the teenage girls)
- Cards (with poker being a favourite amongst the Navy boys and three handed crib for the keepers and their children)

Swimming in the pool under the crane was an essential activity during summer and was the first activity for the children after school. Mabel's recollection of swimming includes having the teacher or another adult watching the children while keeping a lookout for sharks and sea snakes.³³³ Hugh Jamieson also rigged up a steel cable across the pool by concreting in a ringbolt on both the cliff above the block and on nearby Otuwanga Island (the island directly across from the landing).³³⁴ From the cable he hung a shorter length of cable that would be attached to the dinghy which in calm conditions was used as a diving board and resting point.³³⁵ Mabel also used to swim between the Hole in the Rock and the landing when she was a teenager.³³⁶ During the radar station's operation three or four of the Navy boys would head down to the landing most afternoons for some rec time to swim, sunbathe and chat to the children.³³⁷

Fishing was popular and another after school activity. The most famous fishing story occurred in January 1931, when the principal keeper was George Sinclair and the station at Deep Water Cove was run by Peter Williams.³³⁸ Williams had taken a Mr White Wickham fishing near the lighthouse in the *Avalon*, and Sinclair would signal to them when large fish were around. It just so happened that one of the fish was a Mako shark, which after being caught by Wickham, was found to be the largest Mako ever caught in the Bay, a record which still stands in 2008. The shark was measured 3.51 metres and weighed 362 kilograms.³³⁹

Home brewing was also a popular activity for many of the keepers when alcohol consumption was permitted by the Marine Department after World War 2. Noel Proebstel brewed his own lager and appropriately named it 'Lighthouse Lager.' It was mentioned in an article featured in the *Auckland Star* and was said to have been a 'beautiful brew, light, clear, with good fluffy head and no after effects.'³⁴⁰

The short wave radio also provided entertainment from as far away as Fiji and on Monday nights during the 1940s wrestling programmes were compulsory listening.³⁴¹ However, whenever there was a visitor to the station the 'crystal-set' radio had to be hidden because of the lack of licences and permissions.



Figure 167 – Swimming down at the landing.



Figure 168 – The Navy boys at the landing for a spot of swimming and sunbathing.



Figure 169 – Ann, Dave, Mabel and Win Jamieson with their catches of the day, late 1930s.

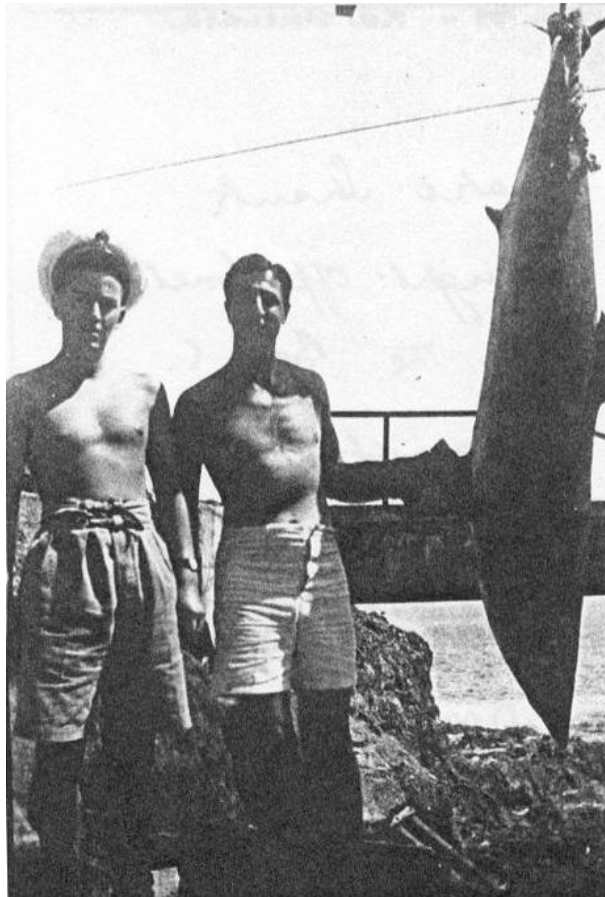


Figure 170 – Navy boys Thomas & Finklestein with the Mako shark they caught off the Brett, World War 2.



Figure 171 – The Webleys on their way out for the day with a couple of the station visitors.



Figure 172 – Reading the paper while being towed in the station dinghy.



Figure 173 - The Proebstels socialising in the BBQ area.



Figure 174 - The Webleys and Teacher Spittal picnicking in Pig Gully.



Figure 175 – Dad Ken Webley gives Barbara a swing at the second house.

Holidays

Holidays at Cape Brett were typically traditional. Christmas was the classic New Zealand experience with presents and the big family roast.³⁴² Sometimes one of the keepers would even dress up as Father Christmas for the children. At Easter the children received their chocolate Easter eggs with a fluffy yellow toy chicken, and there would also be hard boiled eggs to paint and eggs cups featuring bunnies or chicks. Guy Fawkes Day at the beginning of November was always a big night on the station with fireworks (most of which would now be banned in New Zealand) and a bonfire with the Guy Fawkes dummy made by the children. ANZAC Day was observed when keeper Jamieson was on the station, with everyone gathering round the wireless radio to listen to the dawn service broadcast live from the Auckland Cenotaph (batteries for the radio were charged the day before).

The biggest day for the children on the station though was *Matai* Day when the department ship arrived, bearing fresh supplies (and the gossip and news for the adults).³⁴³

Annual leave would generally be spent off the station, at a variety of different locations around New Zealand. Most the keepers stationed at Cape Brett did not travel far from the Bay of Islands — Deep Water Cove, Urupukapuka Island and other islands proved popular.



Figure 176 –The children greeting the stores boat, from *Letter to Teacher* footage.

Voting ³⁴⁴

To vote in New Zealand's general elections the lighthouse keepers and their wives had to register as special voters. Their remote location meant votes were cast by mail. The required ballots were sent by the returning officer, filled in and witnessed by either the principal keeper or another official and posted back. Many times the ballots were all filled out on the landing at the Brett so they could be returned immediately. There were 21 general elections during the lighthouse's operational history³⁴⁵



Figure 177 – Voting on the landing in the 1969 general election.

The Animals and the Pets

The Cape Brett station had a plethora of animals throughout its 68 years. Originally the most essential would have been the whim horse but there were also the farm animals, the local wild animals and the keepers' family pets.

The horse came to the station in about 1910 to operate the whim so the trolley could move up and down the tramway. This horse's most telling characteristic was that whenever it heard the supply ship coming it would take off and try to hide. The horse worked until it died on the job in 1922. Other horses on the station usually belonged to the local relieving keepers, such as the Clendons, who would ride over from Rawhiti.

Milking cows were an almost constant feature at the lighthouse as they handled the terrain and grasses very well. There were no sheep because the grass did not suit them. The cows often caused havoc around the station with one even managing to fall through the back wall of the stores shed on the tramway, while another had a trip to the vet via the *Taimui* after hurting itself on one of the fences.³⁴⁶

Very early on goats provided fresh milk but wild goats became quite a problem out on the peninsula. The monthly reports from as early as 1960 detail the number of goats

shot per month by the keepers. Goat hunting seems to have provided the keepers with good sport and a huge challenge, especially as several of the other local hunters had been outwitted by the wild goats.

Chickens were a big feature on the station with each house having its own fowl house. Chickens would often be lost off the cliffs – as were some cows – so most were kept in coops. Ducks were also kept.

Kiwis provided entertainment with many caught and released for the purpose of a photo, or in at least one case because a keeper had not seen one before (also see Figure 107).³⁴⁷

A wide variety of pets kept the residents company, the most popular being dogs. Others included the Tennent family's cat, a little boy's pet rat (as seen in the correspondence school film) and the numerous pets kept by the Proebstel family: goats, a kiwi, ducks and dogs. Vicki Probestal, Noel's youngest daughter, used to be followed around the station by her dog and a very curious kiwi, both of whom joined her in the row boat to visit the Fullers Cream Trip boat.³⁴⁸



Figure 178 - One of the Clendons with Barbara sitting on his horse and Spark sitting by patiently.



Figure 179 – A cow arriving at the station in 1958 and being offloaded with the crane.

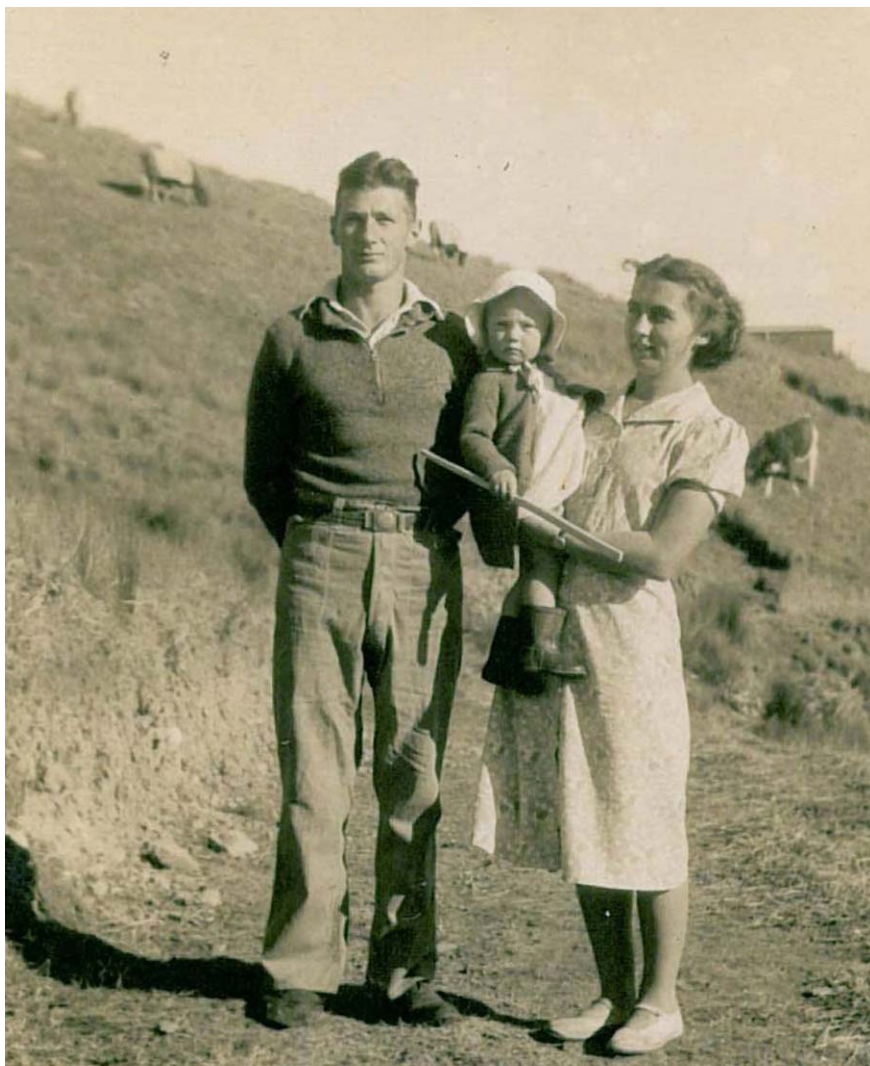


Figure 180 – The Webley family with the station cows grazing behind them.



Figure 181 – Ken and Barbara Webley ‘riding’ one of the cows with the calf following.



Figure 182 - Win Jamieson with one of the Cape Brett Kiwis.



Figure 183 - The third house fowl house as it was during the Webleys' time on the station.



Figure 184 – Another of the keepers' dogs can be seen on the far right of the photo.



Figure 185 – The Webleys’ Border Collie, Spark.



Figure 186 - Keeper Joshua Roberts and his dog.



Figure 187 – Two of the keeper’s dogs, c1950s.



Figure 188 – Some of the Proebstel family with their two dogs and ‘Cuddles’ one of their pet goats.



Figure 189 – The Tennents' cat Biddy joins in the group photo.



Figure 190 – One of the children with his pet rat in the 1960s.



Figure 191 – Cliff Proebstel feeding the pet ducks.