

#### North Shore writers include:

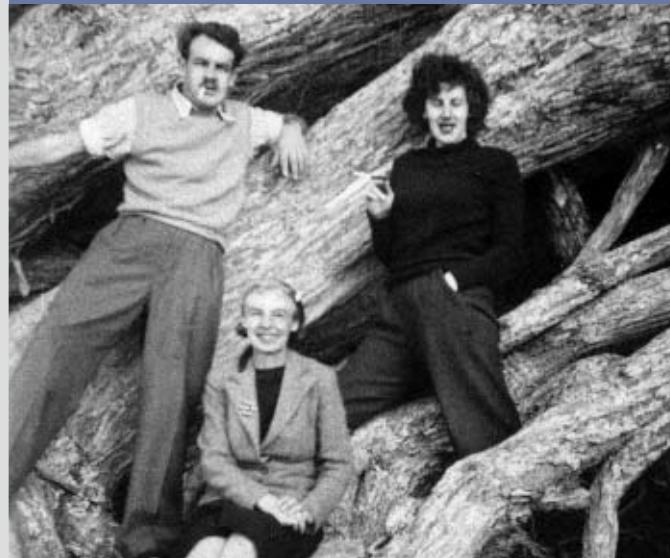
Antony Alpers\*, Barbara Anderson\*, Jean Bartlett, James Bertram\*, Harry Bioletti, Hector Bolitho\*, Dorothy Butler\*, Sarah Campion\*, John Reece Cole\*, D'Arcy Cresswell\*, Barry Crump\*, Allen Curnow\*, Lee Dowrick, Tessa Duder, Maurice Duggan\*, Margaret Escott\*, ARD Fairburn\*, Janet Frame\*, Maurice Gee, G.R.Gilbert, John Graham\*, Sam Hunt\*, Robin Hyde\*, Kevin Ireland\*, Anna Kavan, Sheridan Keith, Shonagh Koea\*, Jack Lasenby\*, Graeme Lay\*, Michele Leggott\*, Susie Mactier\*, Bruce Mason\*, RAK Mason\*, Phoebe Meikle\*, Rosemary Menzies, Ian Middleton, Isabel Peacocke, Joan Rosier-Jones, Anne Salmond\*, William Satchell, Tina Shaw\*, Keith Sinclair\*, Frank Sargeson\*, Kendrick Smithyman, CK Stead, Greville Texidor\*, Paul Titchener, Arthur Saunders Thomson, Hone Tuwhare, Noel Virtue\*, Virginia Were, Jess Whitworth, Wensley Willcox, Phillip Wilson, Karl Wolfskehl\*

\*Writers featured in this booklet.

*Cover photo: Maurice Duggan, Greville Texidor (seated) and Barbara Duggan. Courtesy of Barbara Duggan.*

# NORTH SHORE LITERARY WALKS

North Shore City heritage trails





*View of Devonport from Parnell,  
watercolour by Alfred Sharpe, 1877.*

## INTRODUCTION

Some of New Zealand's most enduring short stories, plays, poems and novels were written on, and at least to some extent inspired by, the North Shore. Today North Shore City continues to be home to many of the country's leading writers.

Before the harbour bridge opened in 1959, Takapuna was 'quiet, lovely and not over-populated, a beach suburb close to town, but removed from it', in the words of poet and novelist C.K.Stead. Yet long after the bridge brought traffic, suburbia and shopping malls to the Shore, the area maintained its appeal for writers. The nearby sea, walks on the beach, strong sense of community, relaxed, informal way of life and travelling to 'town' by ferry are the qualities of life which North Shore writers still relish.



Early real estate poster.  
Takapuna library collection.

There is also the feeling that writers are appreciated here. As former Shore resident and children's author Tessa Duder puts it, 'The North Shore, through Frank Sargeson, Rex Fairburn, Kevin Ireland and others, values writers as eminent additions to the cultural identity of the Shore, and is proud of them.' Not all places take such pride.

Long attracted to the area by its beaches, easy-going way of life and proximity to, but physical separation from, the central city, the writers who have lived or still live here have responded by making the area one of unique literary significance in New Zealand.

In the early twentieth century the North Shore was a backwater, a series of sleepy seaside settlements clustered about beautiful bays and beaches overhung with pohutukawa trees. There were large tracts of bush, scrub and open farmland, and expansive sea views. On Takapuna's most spectacular headland there were a few grand houses, but mostly the



Housing in Westlake area, 1953.  
Takapuna library collection.

Shore's dwellings were rudimentary baches, close to the beach, and owned or rented by families who lived in Auckland or towns further south.

From the late 1920s onward the Shore's tranquillity, slow pace of life and cheap bach accommodation began to attract writers. Writing is a poorly rewarded profession, and those who write have to live frugally, so the Shore's many cheap baches were an added attraction.

*Castor Bay, 1927.  
Takapuna library collection.*



These were the years of the Great Depression, and such accommodation must have been gratefully received by the impoverished writers, who sometimes used the land around the baches for growing vegetables.

On the writers' network, the word spread: the Shore was the place to live and write. Yet even in the 1930s population pressures had begun to build. More and more of the baches were being replaced by permanently occupied bungalows, their breadwinners commuting by bus, tram and ferry to Auckland City. Takapuna was changing from a seasonal holiday resort to an affluent middle-class community.

After the opening of the harbour bridge in 1959 growth became exponential, converting the formerly detached North Shore into a series of sprawling suburbs and inflating its land values. Over the post-war period the price of land next to the sea soared, causing the beachside baches to be replaced by town houses, apartments and grandiose, two-storeyed dwellings. Further inland, roads were widened, the motorway was extended, subdivisions, shopping centres and commercial and industrial buildings proliferated.

One consequence of this development is that many homes of the first writers who lived and worked on the Shore have gone, victims of the area's rapid urban

growth and rising land values. Many of the baches and older houses have been demolished.

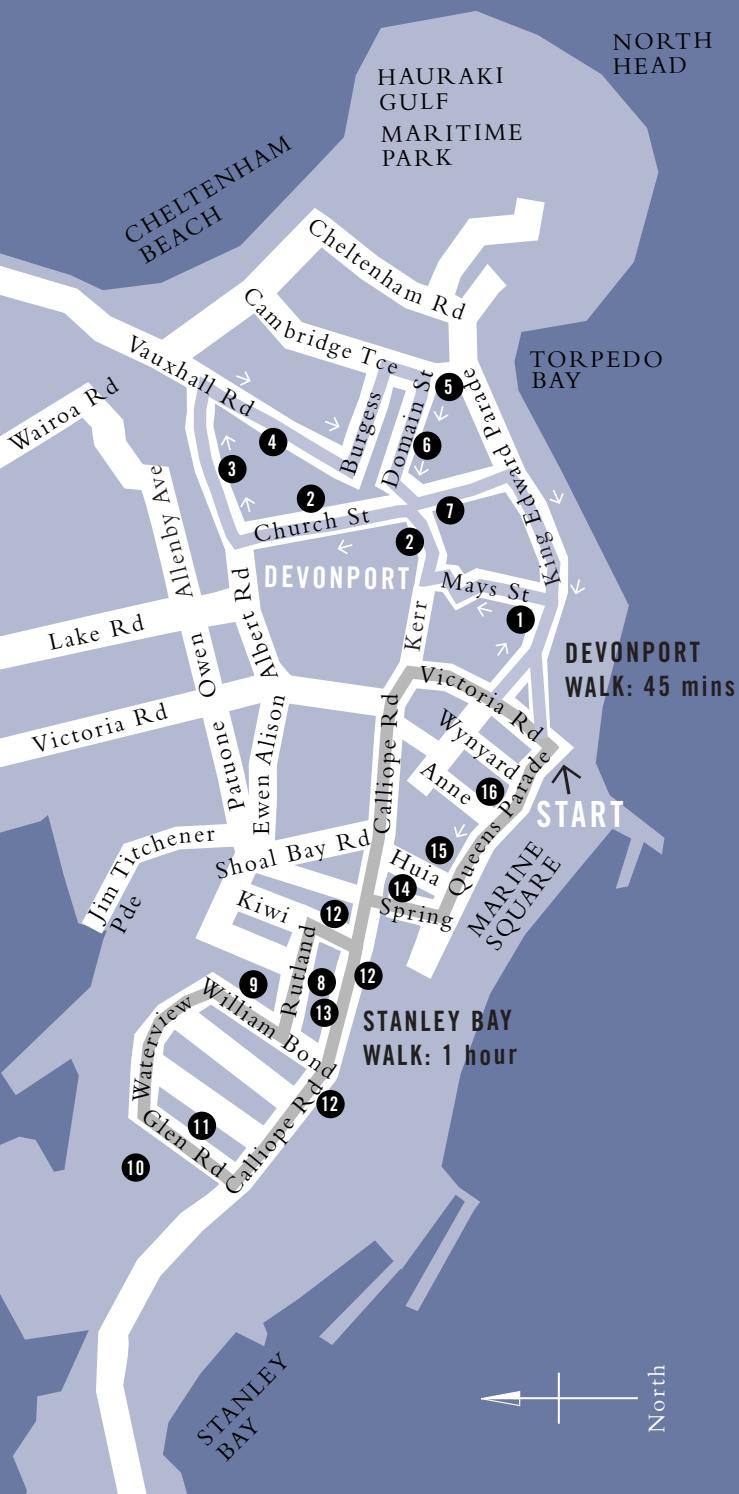
Undoubtedly Frank Sargeson's house would have suffered the same fate, were it not for the vision of his literary executor, Christine Cole Catley, and the forethought of the then-Takapuna Borough Council, who together ensured that Sargeson's long-time residence was preserved as a literary museum. Some of the other writers' houses also survive.

The main clusters of writers' houses in North Shore City are in three areas: Devonport, Takapuna and Milford-Castor Bay. They form the basis for the literary heritage walks in this pamphlet. Over the years, more houses will be added to the list, as the Shore's attraction for writers will endure. In the words of poet and novelist Kevin Ireland, writers love the Shore because of its, 'stunning position on the Waitemata Harbour, its superb hills, sea and beaches, its community of fellow writers and artists, and its isolation from, yet proximity to, Auckland. And there's always the pleasure of an ocean voyage by ferry to central Auckland. My only regret is that I can't buy duty free supplies each time I travel.'

**Privacy:** The walks are along public roads and contain historical facts about the buildings and the area. Most of the sites on the walks are private property and many are used as private residences. Please respect the environment and the privacy of local residents, and do not trespass on private property.

*Hauataki Rd, Takapuna, c1960.*





# DEVONPORT WALK

**Terrain:** The steep lower slopes of Mt Victoria; as well as level or descending terrain.

**Duration:** Minimum of 45 minutes.

**Parking:** Unrestricted along both sides of King Edward Parade, east of the intersection with Buchanan St.

The maritime suburb of Devonport dates back to the 1850s. A peninsula surrounded by the Waitemata Harbour and the Rangitoto Channel, Devonport is studded with volcanic cones, the most prominent of which are Mt Victoria and North Head.

*Start at the ferry terminal at the end of Victoria Rd, turn right and walk along the waterfront, King Edward Parade, to Mays St. On the corner, 7 King Edward Parade lived...*

Boys on pipe, Cheltenham Beach 1920s.  
Auckland central library collection.



Cheltenham Beach, late 1890s.  
Devonport library collection.



## A.R.D. (REX) FAIRBURN (1904-1957) ①

Poet, polemicist, satirist and critic

Fairburn lived here from 1946 until his death. His house was a gathering place for writers, artists, musicians, his many friends and acquaintances and once an entire Italian opera company visiting Auckland. Writers who visited frequently included Denis Glover, Sarah Campion, Anthony Alpers, Maurice Duggan and Frank Sargeson.

In a letter to a friend, Fairburn wrote, 'I look out on a stormbound harbour. A black shag is fishing among the rocks on the foreshore, spray and spindrift wreathed about him'. Only a sonnet's toss from the harbour, the house's position gave rise to one of Fairburn's most memorable quips: 'There are ferries at the bottom of my garden, the Takapuna people envy us...'



Rex Fairburn and Maurice Duggan  
Takapuna library collection.



7 King Edward Parade  
Takapuna library collection.

on some autumn evening when the mullet leap in a sea of silver-grey,  
then, O then will I come again  
and stay for as long as I may,  
stay till the time for sleep;  
gaze at the rock that died before me,  
the sea that lives for ever;

of air and sunlight, frost and wave and cloud,  
and all the remembered agony and joy  
fashion my shroud.

*To a Friend in the Wilderness*, A.R.D. Fairburn

Fairburn wrote *How to Ride a Bicycle in Seventeen Lovely Colours* (1947), *Strange Rendezvous* (1952), *Three Poems* (1952), *Dominion*, (1938), *The Rakehelly Man and other Verses* (1946), *Collected Poems* (1966) and *Selected Poems*, edited by Mac Jackson (1995).

*Walk up Mays St, turn right into Kerr St passing number 4 where novelist Tina Shaw lived from 1996 until 1997. Turn left into Church St. Shaw lived at 40 Church St from 1991-95.*

## TINA SHAW (1961- ) ②

Short story writer and novelist

Shaw grew up in the Waikato and Christchurch. She moved to Devonport in 1991 and stayed until 1997. Her first two novels were written while she was living in Devonport and have an Auckland setting. Her short story *The Preparing of Bliss*, published in *Landfall* 192, is set in the Hauraki Gulf.

From the relative shelter of North Head, Bliss ventured out into the shipping channel, out into the choppy deep water. Here he had to watch for moving objects: cruising yachts, the patrol launch with its dramatic veil of wake, looming and majestic container ships, amused sailors high up and remote; the modern jet ferries and churning wakes of motor boats. Dangerous, thought Bliss.

*Bliss*, Tina Shaw

Shaw's novels include *Birdie* (1996), *Dreams of America* (1997) and *City of Reeds* (2000).

*At the end of the road turn right into Albert Rd. The villa at 46 Albert Rd was the childhood home of...*

## MAURICE DUGGAN (1922-1974) 3

Short story writer

After growing up in Devonport, Duggan became a member of the North Shore's literary circle and one the first 'sons of Sargeson' (see 5 Takapuna Walk). In 1945, at Greville Texidor's house (see 1 Castor Bay Walk), he met Barbara Platts and they married in 1946. The couple lived in Takapuna, then at 58 Forrest Hill Rd, Forrest Hill, in a house designed by avant-garde architect, Vernon Brown. The opening lines of *Along Rideout Road that Summer* are:



I'd walked the length of Rideout Road the night before, following the noise of the river in the darkness, tumbling over ruts and stones, my progress, if you'd call it that, challenged by farmers' dogs and observed by the faintly luminous eyes of wandering stock, steers, cows, stud-bulls or milk-white unicorns or, better, a full quartet of apocalyptic horses browsing the marge.

*Along Rideout Road That Summer,*  
Maurice Duggan

Duggan published *Immanuel's Land* (1956) and *Falter Tom and the Water Boy* (1957). *Along Rideout Road that Summer* (1965) is considered one of New Zealand's finest short stories. His *Collected Stories* (1981), was edited by C.K.Stead and his biography, *To Bed at Noon: The Life and Art of Maurice Duggan* (1997) was written by Ian Richards.

*At the end turn right into Vauxhall Rd. The imposing, gabled villa at 47 Vauxhall Rd was the birthplace of...*

## JAMES BERTRAM (1910-93) 4

Poet and academic

This was the manse, home of Devonport's Presbyterian ministers for most of the twentieth century, and Bertram's father was minister at St Paul's Presbyterian Church in Albert Rd in the early 1900s. In his biography, Bertram describes the house as, '...a vast wooden structure of two or three storeys on the lip of a quarry'. The quarry was located in the volcanic cone, Mt Cambria, which was behind the manse. Mt Cambria is today a lush, landscaped reserve. The Bertram family moved to Australia in 1915 but returned to the Shore from 1929 until 1933, when James was a student at the University of Auckland. At this time he lived at 10 Hamana St, Narrow Neck. A Rhodes Scholar, he took a First in English at Oxford, and in 1936 went to China, where he interviewed Mao Zedong, Chinese political leader and Marxist theoretician. Bertram later worked in the English Department at Victoria University.

Bertram wrote *Charles Brasch* (1976), winner of the Wattie Book Award and *Capes of China Slide Away: A Memoir of Peace and War, 1910-1980* (1993).

*Turn left into Burgess St, right into Cambridge Tce and right into Domain St. Here live two leading New Zealand poets, Kevin Ireland (8 Domain St) and...*

*View of Rangitoto, Devonport library collection.*



## MICHELE LEGGOTT (1956- )

Poet, critic and editor

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For privacy reasons Leggott's house is not listed in this walk. However, she has lived in Devonport since 1985, when she took up a lectureship in the English Department of the University of Auckland. The following lines are from her sequence 'Hesperides', in her book *As far as I can see*. 'Haukapua' is the Maori name for Torpedo Bay, a popular swimming beach in Devonport.

*dolce*

oranges seem to grow wild in the bay that is *cloud*  
*carried by the wind* there my boys swim out  
of the easterly blow *Haukapua* they shout  
the huff and the hook the kick and the splash  
the green bay is full of their golden bodies persistent  
ungentle the wind rides overhead as they trail back  
for showers by the open window a towel on  
the pillow

*Hesperides* from *As far as I can see*,  
Michele Leggott

*Swimming at Cheltenham Beach 1920s.*  
Auckland central library collection.



Leggott's poetry was first published in literary periodicals in 1980. Her poetry collections include *Like This?* (1988), winner of the PEN Best First Book of Poetry Award, *Swimmers*, *Dancers* (1991), *DLA* (1994), winner of the New Zealand Book Award for Poetry and *As far as I can see* (1999), in which she writes about her deep sorrow at losing her sight. Leggott was awarded a Blind Achievers Award by the Foundation for the Blind in 1999.

## KEVIN IRELAND (1933- )

Poet, novelist and short story writer

6

Ireland (also 4 Takapuna Walk), born Kevin Jowsey, moved to Narrow Neck from Mt Albert in 1938. The family later moved to Takapuna, and for a time the young Kevin was Frank Sargeson's paperboy. He moved into the army hut behind Sargeson's house after Janet Frame moved out, and



*Kevin Ireland pictured at Takapuna beach, 1940s.*

there began writing poetry. From 1959 he lived in London for 25 years before returning to the Shore to live, first in Anne St, then Domain St, both in Devonport.

he remembers more than twenty years ago lying embedded to the thighs in sand on a beach curved at the end like a hook

wishing to catch poems he could salt and peg out on a line in the wind to dry like dally fish

but all he brought in that day was: Rangitoto rises like an upper lip...its teeth sink into the sea's rim...it gnashes the sun-scaled waves

images he keeps for good luck in his exile:  
little nets of words to hold a moment and a view  
as he grows older and closer to his past

*The Literary Exile from Anzac Day,*

Kevin Ireland

Ireland's poetry collections include *Practice Night at the Drill Hall* (1984), *Skinning a Fish* (1994), *Anzac Day* (1997) and *Fourteen Reasons for Writing* (2001). North Shore settings are important to his novels *Blowing My Top* (1996), *The Man Who Never Lived* (1997) and several stories in *Sleeping with the Angels* (1995). His memoir *Under the Bridge & Over the Moon* (1998) won the 1999 Montana New Zealand Book Award for History and Biography. *Backwards to Forwards* (2002) is the second volume of his memoirs.

Turn left into Vauxhall Rd and continue towards the sea, to 3/17a Church St.

## NOEL VIRTUE (1947- )

Novelist

Virtue has lived on the Shore since 1988, first in Ngataringa Rd and now in Church St. He also has childhood memories of visits to the Shore from his homes in Wellington and Morrinsville, and remarks on its village atmosphere. There he can enjoy, as he succinctly puts it, 'isolation without being isolated'.

She [Martha] sat on a bench at the harbour's edge, staring out across the water, admiring the cloud slowly forming along the southern horizon above the city buildings. Tasting her vanilla ice cream drenched in passionfruit pulp. Breathing the sweet, breezy cold air.  
'I am going to be very brave,' she said softly. 'I shall never return to England. This is my home.'

*The Transfiguration of Martha Friend*, Noel Virtue

Virtue's novels include *The Redemption of Elsdon Bird* (1987), *The Eye of the Everlasting Angel* (1992), *Losing Alice* (1999), *Lady Jean* (2001) and *The Transfiguration of Martha Friend* (1996), set entirely in Devonport.

Turn right into King Edward Parade and continue back to Victoria Rd. Here you can stop for a coffee, take a bite to eat or just browse the bookshops.

7

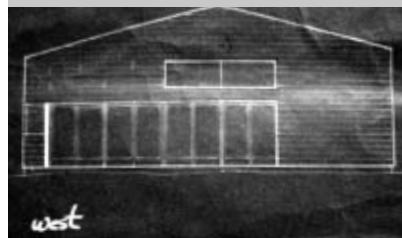
## STANLEY BAY WALK

**Terrain:** Fairly level with descending steps on Spring Street.

**Duration:** Minimum of one hour.

**Parking:** Available in front of the supermarket in Bartley Tce. A steep path leads up to Calliope Rd from the intersection of Bartley Tce and Fleet St, near the north-western corner of the car park.

NB: This walk is linked to, and marked on, the Devonport Walk map.



Walk up Victoria Rd, turn left into Calliope Rd. Continue along, turn right into Kiwi Rd and left into Rutland Rd. Jack Lasenby lived at 27a (Rotherham House) for several years, from 1963 onwards. The house, which is down a long drive, was designed for use as a studio by Bruce Rotherham, a member of Group Architects. It was built in 1951 and is listed by North Shore City Council for its exceptional heritage significance.

Part of a plan for 27a Rotherham House.

Fleet of American ships off Devonport Wharf, 1900s. Devonport library collection.



## JACK LASENBY (1931- )

Children's writer

8

Lasenby attended the University of Auckland from 1950 to 1952, before he left to spend the next 10 years deer-culling in the Urewera. He later moved to Wellington, where he lectured at Teachers' College before becoming a full-time writer.

Lasenby's books include *The Lake* (1987), *The Mangrove Summer* (1989), *Harry Wakatipu* (1993), the humorous *Uncle Trev* series and *Taur* (1998), winner of the 1999 New Zealand Post Children's Book Awards for senior fiction. Barry Crump (1935-96), bush novelist, also lived in a bach on the property at 27a from 1965 to 1966.

Turn right into William Bond St and continue along to the cottage at 26 William Bond St...

## JOHN GRAHAM (1922- )

Playwright, screenwriter and memoirist

9

Graham lived here during the 1960s. In the 1940s he had formed a strong friendship with the German poet-in-exile, Karl Wolfskehl (see 9 Takapuna Walk). Graham later moved to Great Barrier Island, where he still lives.

Graham's stage play *Lest We Resemble* was performed at the Auckland Art Gallery in 1960. He wrote the script for the New Zealand feature film, *Runaway* (1962) and a memoir, *Letters to a Distant Cousin* (2000).



Calliope Rd, Devonport 1900s.  
Devonport library collection.

Turn left into Waterview Rd. On the right, down a right-of-way leading to Stanley Bay Park is 29a Glen Rd, once the home of...

## SARAH CAMPION (1906- )

Novelist and columnist

10

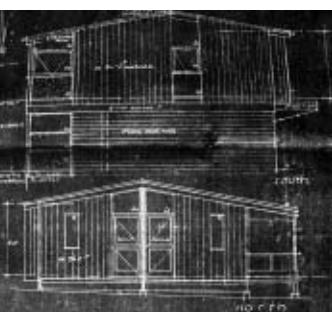
and her husband

## ANTONY ALPERS (1919-96)

Katherine Mansfield biographer

Alpers lived here until the early 1960s, when the marriage ended. Campion continued to live here until 1984. She published several novels in England and Australia before emigrating to New Zealand with her husband in 1952. Although she published no

further fiction after settling in New Zealand, Campion was a political activist, opposed in particular to nuclear armament and racism. Today she lives in a rest home at Beach Haven. In a February 1956 column, she wrote of their then-new house at Stanley Bay:



From the plan of 29a Glen Rd.

Among the small fry of the neighbourhood, mostly boys of the same age as our Philip [former Fair Go presenter, Philip Alpers] the new house has become famous not because of its undeniable beauty as a piece of architecture, or its architectural oddity (according to which school of thought you belong to), but because of a very simple thing. We have a walk-in larder (new-fangled pantry) whose door turns on its light.

Campion's work includes, *Mo Burdekin* (1941), republished (1990), and a collection of her columns, *I Live Here Now: Sarah Campion in 1950s New Zealand* edited by Rachel Scott (2000).

The son of the noted lawyer, actor and critic, O.T.J. Alpers, Antony Alpers worked as a journalist for the *Auckland Star* before moving to Britain. He returned to Auckland in the early 1950s and while living in Glen Rd wrote many of his books. Later he left New Zealand and lived in Canada, where he held an academic position.



Sarah Campion and Denis Glover,  
(film still). 1962.

## ANNE SALMOND (1945- )

Anthropologist

11

The elegant villa at 14 Glen Rd is the home of Dame Anne Salmond, (*Two Worlds, Between Worlds*) and her husband, conservation architect Jeremy Salmond, who has published books on heritage architecture. Jeremy has restored the villa and it is listed on North Shore City's Schedule of Heritage Buildings.

*Turn left into Calliope Rd. At 107 Calliope Rd from 1968-72 lived...*

## BARBARA ANDERSON (1926- )

Novelist and short story writer

12

The house can be seen down a long drive on the seaward side of the road. Anderson also lived at 61 Calliope Rd from 1961-64, while her naval officer husband was stationed at the Devonport Naval Base.

The New Zealand Navy has been virtually synonymous with Devonport since Calliope Dock, a dry dock to accommodate naval vessels, was opened in 1888, below the cliff at Calliope Point. There has been a naval base there and naval personnel housing in and around Devonport ever since.

Look how lucky they were renting a house in Calliope Road, for example. Naval houses in the road were usually allocated to senior officers and no one could call a Lieutenant Commander senior but there had been a temporary lack of senior applicants at the time and William had been a flipper to the front. The verandah faced south to the same view as that from the Wardroom of HMNZS Philomel. William and Sophie agreed that a cool verandah was preferable in Auckland as the butter did not melt when they ate meals there.

*All the Nice Girls*, Barbara Anderson

Anderson's novels include *Girls High* (1990), the award-winning *Portrait of the Artist's Wife* (1992), *The House Guest* (1995), *Proud Garments* (1996), *The Swing Around* (2001) and *All the Nice Girls* (1993), the story of a naval marriage set in and around the Devonport naval base.

HMS Philomel and Royal tour, 1953.  
Devonport library collection.



Royal Tour at Devonport Naval base, 1953.  
Devonport library collection.

*On the left, 98 Calliope Rd was one of the childhood homes of...*

## DOROTHY BUTLER (1925- )

Reading educator and children's bookseller

13

Butler's family moved to Devonport in 1928, living firstly at Narrow Neck, then Stanley Bay, where Dorothy's father had a butcher's shop. Her early years in the Devonport area with her parents, brother Ross and sister Valerie are recounted evocatively in her memoir *There Was a Time* (1999).

I remember Stanley Bay School as consisting outside of large areas of asphalt bounded by low seats. The girls' playground was separated from the boys' by a high wire-netting fence. There was no grass for the girls, but, on a lower level than the main playgrounds, there was a 'big boys' playground', which was grassed, presumably for football. In summer, we used to walk in a long crocodile to Stanley Bay beach for swimming once a week.

*There Was a Time*, Dorothy Butler

Dorothy and Ross Norgrove at Stanley Bay Park, 1934.



Butler has written numerous children's books, including *Babies Need Books* (1980), a leading text in the field of early childhood reading. She has received several awards for her work, including the Margaret Mahy Lecture Award (1993).

*After 61 Calliope Rd (Barbara Anderson's house 1961-64) opposite Kiwi Rd, continue a little way along. Between 43 and 45 is a pedestrian footpath leading to Spring St.*

*The cottage at 10 Spring St was the home of...*

## SHONAGH KOEA

Novelist and short story writer

14

Koea lived here from 1997 until 2000. Although her work is not geographically specific, Devonport was important to her writing in that living there was, as she puts it, 'quiet yet stimulating, not lonely and within an easy ferry ride of libraries, book shops and galleries in the inner city'. She also found the Shore, 'tolerant, kindly and friendly'. While living at 10 Spring St, she wrote her novel *The Lonely Margins of the Sea* (1998) in which the main character, Stephanie reflects:



The shore is a beautiful, kind, tenanted place and when people are not present there are always the sea birds conducting their elaborate rituals of flight and feeding, dancing on the wet sand with fragile feet to leave marks like those of an arcane language. You are welcome here. This is a beautiful place. The rocks, the foam, the shore are your friends. It is not a lonely place and you are not lonely. You are alone, that is all, not lonely.

*The Lonely Margins of the Sea*, Shonagh Koea

Koea also wrote *Sing To Me, Dreamer* (1994), *The Wedding at Bueno-Vista* (1996), *Time for a Killing* (2001) and *Yet Another Ghastly Christmas* (2002).

*Turn left into Queens Parade, past the naval museum.*

*Near the corner, in the two-storey house at 2 Huia St lived...*

## HECTOR BOLITHO (1898-1974) 15

Novelist, short story writer and English royal family biographer

Bolitho lived here from 1911, when the house was built, until 1920. He attended Devonport Primary School which he describes in his autobiography:



The new school to which we went, at Devonport, was on the side of a hill, the summit of which was an old fortress, with guns that once defended the entrance to the harbour. They had been hidden by bushes and grass banks so that marauding ships coming in from the sea would be deceived and lured within the zone of destruction.

*My Restless Years,*  
Hector Bolitho

Bolitho worked as a journalist for the *New Zealand Herald* and the *Auckland Star* before moving to Australia in 1920 and England in 1924. There he wrote many books about members of the English royal family, which were prolific sellers, as well as novels and short stories. The house at 2 Huia St is still called Bolitho House which Bolitho describes as:

The last villa in my mother's progress, with the two balconies and the greenhouse, was at Devonport, within a stone's throw of the

harbour. On summer nights, when my brother and I slept on the back balcony, we could hear the waves breaking on the beach and see ships coming in from the sea, with lighted cabins that hinted at more thrilling lives than our own.

One morning a four-masted barque under full sail – one of the last of the Victorian beauties – passed so near that we could see it from our beds. At night we heard tipsy sailors singing their bawdy songs, and the squawk of windlass and rope.

*My Restless Years*, Hector Bolitho

Bolitho published over 60 books including the autobiographies *War in the Strand* (1942) and *My Restless Years* (1962).



*View from Devonport showing the departure of a troopship for the Boer War, 1900.*

*Continue along Queens Parade back to Victoria Rd...*

## JANET FRAME (1924-) 16

Poet, novelist and short story writer

Frame lived in a house near the corner of Anne St and Queens Parade in 1963. The house where she lived has since been demolished. Notes on her life and works are included on the Takapuna Literary Trail, as it was while she was living in Takapuna that she wrote her first novel.



Camping grounds at Takapuna beach, 1936.



## TAKAPUNA WALK

**Terrain:** Over Takapuna beach, gently sloping and level ground, and two busy roads at intersections. Most of the route moves through the lattice of quiet streets between Lake Rd and the beachfront. A short section of Burns Ave is the one section of the walk which is steep.

**Duration:** Minimum of 45 minutes.

**Parking:** Available in some of the streets off Lake Rd such as Hauraki Rd, Ewen St or Napier Ave.

Nowhere in Takapuna is far from its beach, and most of the writers who have lived in the town chose homes within easy walking distance of the glorious sweep of sand which extends from The Strand to Hauraki Corner. Frank Sargeson's house is the highlight of the tour and those wishing to view the interior can borrow the key from the Takapuna Library. Several other important authors have also resided in the area and are not within the area of the walk. Allen Curnow (see **10** Takapuna Walk) lived at 13 Herbert St overlooking Shoal Bay, an outlook which inspired several of his poems in the 1950s. Children's author Tessa Duder began her writing career at 8 Fenthams Rd, between 1971 and 1981. Novelist Maurice Gee occupied 20 Hororata Rd in 1973. His children's novel, *Under the Mountain* (1979), is set in Milford and on Rangitoto Island and *In My Father's Den* (1972), contains scenes set at a Takapuna beachfront property.



*Start at Hauraki Corner on Lake Rd. Walk along to  
6 Hauraki Rd.*



Hauraki Corner, 1930s.  
Takapuna library collection.

## KEITH SINCLAIR (1922-93)

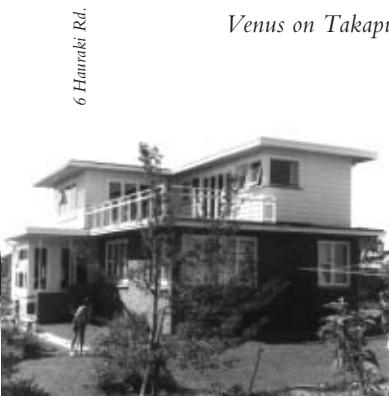
Poet and historian

Sinclair lived here from 1960 until the early 70s. He grew up in Point Chevalier, on the city side of the Waitemata Harbour, and moved here after the harbour bridge was built in 1959. He later moved to Birkenhead. Inspired by Auckland's land and seascapes in his poetry and prose, he claimed to comprise, along with his friend and fellow-poet Kendrick Smithyman, the 'mudflat school of New Zealand poetry', an allusion to the tidal mangrove flats which are a landscape feature around many parts of the Waitemata Harbour and which appear in their verse.



1

Imprisoning all that touch in its meshes,  
Face, breast, pale as moons in exhausted  
morning:  
A plump goddess on a quilt of scallop.  
Sand-castling children—where the ocean hymns  
To the painted squares of suburb, of time is short



6 Hauraki Rd.

And unending time—are joyfully deaf,  
In the wind, to an intolerable salt chord.

*Venus on Takapuna from A Time to Embrace,*  
Keith Sinclair

Sinclair wrote *The History of New Zealand* (1959 and reprinted many times).

*Continuing along, 41 Hauraki Rd was the site of the home of one of Takapuna's founding writers...*

## SUSIE MACTIER (1854-1936)

Poet and novelist

Born Susan Seaman, she was sometimes called 'The Takapuna Lake Poet', although she only published one volume of poetry. She came to New Zealand at the age of 11, became a teacher and was headmistress of Takapuna Primary School from 1877-80. She also ran a Sunday school and founded the Takapuna Library. Mactier's property occupied one acre of what is today among New Zealand's most valuable real estate.

Bright the morn shall rise again  
But never more for me.  
Gilding all the rippling lake.  
But I far off shall be.  
Oh! My home so dear and lovely  
By the lake and sea;  
Only heaven rests above me,  
I am leaving thee.

*Farewell to Lake Takapuna from Thoughts by the Way, Susie Seaman*

Mactier published *Thoughts by the Way* (1884) under her maiden name, Seaman. As Mactier, she published *The Far Country: A True Story of Domestic Life at Home and in the Bush* (1901), *The Hills of Hauraki, or, The Unequal Yoke: A Story of New Zealand Life* (1908) and *Miranda Stanhope* (1911).



Postcard of Lake Takapuna, late 1890s.  
Takapuna library collection.

*At the end of the road, turn left onto the beach and walk along to the next street. 26 Ewen St was the childhood home of...*

## BRUCE MASON (1921–1982)

Playwright, critic and fiction writer

Born in Wellington, Mason moved to Takapuna at the age of 5 and lived in Ewen St from 1926 until 1938. The setting inspired his most famous work, the one-person play, *The End of the Golden Weather* (1959). In this and other plays Takapuna is fictionalised as ‘Te Parenga’, and for him Rangitoto Island presented an image which endured for his entire life. Although the nature of Ewen St has changed enormously since the 1940s, the view is as inspiring as ever.

Ahead, across a narrow channel, central to vision and imagination, Rangitoto, enormous, majestic, spread-eagled on the skyline like a sleeping whale, declining from a central cone to the water in two huge flanges, meeting the sea in a haze of

3



Bruce Mason and his mother,  
Ann Mason, 1936.

blues and green. It guards Te Parenga from wind and tempest: it has a brooding splendour.

*The End of the Golden Weather*, Bruce Mason

Mason's plays include *The Pohutukawa Tree* (1957), *Awatea* (1965) and the monologue *Not Christmas but Guy Fawkes* (1976), which recalls his Takapuna childhood. The Bruce Mason Centre in Takapuna is named after him.

*Turn right into William St and left into Rewiti Ave. Here, at 9 Rewiti Ave...*

4

## KEVIN IRELAND (1933– )

Poet and novelist

Ireland (also 6 Devonport Walk) lived here during the 1940s. His youthful years in this house and the surrounding district are recorded memorably in his award-winning memoir *Under the Bridge & Over the Moon*. Takapuna Beach, naturally, played a large part in the writer's childhood. In 1942, for example, the coastline from North Head to Milford was fortified against a possible Japanese invasion.

Our schoolboy gangs took over the concrete pillboxes along Takapuna beach as soon as the Home Guard deserted them... We also used to fall about laughing at the way that, if the Japanese had really been mad enough to land on Takapuna beach, it would have taken them all day to form in ranks, answer a roll call and pump up the tyres of their pushbikes, and by the time they got themselves organised to pedal down to



the Devonport wharf they would probably have found they'd missed the last ferry. And that meant they would have had to hang about looking silly, whistling, with their hands in their pockets, while they waited an hour for the first night launch to get them over to town, one platoon at a time.

*Under the Bridge & Over the Moon*, Kevin Ireland

Ireland's works are listed in **6** Devonport Walk.

*Continue along to Lake Rd. Turn right, cross at the traffic lights and continue along to 14 Esmonde Rd. This fibrolite house is regarded as the fountainhead of New Zealand literature...*

## FRANK SARGESON (1903-1982)

5

Novelist, short story writer and playwright

Sargeson lived and wrote here for half a century. In 1923, Sargeson's father, Edwin Davey, bought a primitive one-room hut on a quarter acre section a few hundred yards back from Takapuna beach. The family travelled from Hamilton to use the hut during the summer holidays. In previous summers they had rented a bach at Castor Bay for their holidays, travelling to the isolated bay by train and ferry, steam tram and launch.

Castor Bay inspired Sargeson's best-known short story, which begins:

Sargeson in his garden, 1932.  
Alexander Turnbull Library.



At Christmas time our family always went to the beach. In those days there weren't the roads along the Gulf that there are now, so father would get a carrier to take our luggage down to the launch steps. And as my brother and I would always ride on the cart, that was the real beginning of our holidays. It was a little bay a good distance out of the harbour that we'd go to, and of course the launch trip would be even more exciting than the ride on the carrier's cart.

We'd always scare mother beforehand by telling her it was sure to be rough. Each year we rented the same bach and we'd stay right until our school holidays were up.

*An Affair of the Heart*, Frank Sargeson

After qualifying as a solicitor and travelling through Europe, Sargeson devoted his life to writing. In 1931 he moved into the family's Takapuna bach and lived here for the next fifty years. The sturdier but simple house seen today was built in 1948 by his friend and builder George Haydn. For half a century 14 Esmonde Rd was a gathering place for writers and artists of all kinds, and Sargeson was mentor to dozens of New Zealand writers. The catch-phrase 'sons of Sargeson' was used to describe his literary protégés, who included Maurice Duggan, G.R. Gilbert, A.P. Gaskell, John Reece Cole, D.W. Ballantyne and Roderick Finlayson. Later 'sons' included Bruce Mason, Kevin Ireland and Maurice Gee. Kevin Ireland wrote of Sargeson and his unique house in the poem, *A New Alphabet*.

Giving pleasure to friends  
with food, brilliant talk and praise,  
tributes from the garden,  
glass of citrus wine upraised,

he would be generous, open, kind,  
then suddenly go for the jugular,  
bristling with gossip and mischief.  
Standing behind the wooden bar

that marked the kitchen's frontier  
and served as table, workbench,  
secular pulpit, refuge,  
he would hack peppers, wrench

lettuces apart, put tomatoes  
to the knife, and feed the multitude.  
A lectern where books were read from,  
the place where tea was brewed,

A trading-post for counter-  
intelligence, puns, wit, bile  
literary gas, good fun, outrage  
news from the street, guile

interpretations of trifles,  
wisdom. Everyone took  
something of immeasurable value away...

*A New Alphabet*, Kevin Ireland

Sargeson at 14 Esmonde Rd, 1947  
Alexander Turnbull Library.



Now preserved as a literary museum by the Frank Sargeson Trust, the writer's house is New Zealand's most significant literary location.

*The Stories of Frank Sargeson* (1964) his most popular work, is still in print.



Harry Doyle and Frank Sargeson, 1964.  
Alexander Turnbull Library.

6

## JANET FRAME (1924- )

Novelist and poet

Considered New Zealand's most distinguished living writer, Frame spent several periods of her life on the North Shore. In 1954, after her release from Seacliff Hospital in the South Island, where she had been wrongly diagnosed as having schizophrenia, she met

Janet Frame playing billiards, Sargeson collection,  
Alexander Turnbull Library.



Frank Sargeson and was invited by him to live in the old army hut at the rear of his house. Here, during 1955–56, she worked on her first novel, *Owls Do Cry* (1957), before travelling to Europe.

She returned to New Zealand in 1963, and has at various times lived in Northcote, Devonport, Browns Bay and Glenfield. Frame describes the beginning of the crucial period of her life at Esmonde Rd:

Our visit was short. What could I say? I was self-conscious, the 'funny' sister being taken for a drive. Mr Sargeson, a bearded old man in a shabby grey suit and grey pants tied with string, smiled kindly and asked how I was, and I said nothing. He had an army hut in his garden, he

said. I was welcome to live and work there. I neither accepted nor refused, I was so overcome by my ‘mental’ status, and by seeing in person the famous writer whose anthology of New Zealand writing, *Speaking for Ourselves*, was a treasured book; the famous writer for whose fiftieth birthday I had signed a letter of good wishes, not knowing him and knowing nothing of the other signatories of the letter. Frank Sargeson. Mr Sargeson.

*An Angel at My Table*, Janet Frame

Frame’s novel *Living in the Maniototo* (1979) contains elements of Glenfield, fictionalised as ‘Blenheim’, and there is a moving account of her time at 14 Esmonde Rd in the second volume of her autobiography, *An Angel at My Table* (1984).

*Continue along, cross at the traffic lights into Burns Ave and walk past Tennyson Ave on the left. It is fitting that the streets in this part of Takapuna are named after famous poets (Burns, Byron, Tennyson), for at 24 Tennyson Ave lived...*

## R.A.K. (‘RON’) MASON (1905–71)

Poet

After living at Castor Bay and Crown Hill on the Shore, Mason moved to a cottage in Tennyson Ave (since demolished) until he died. Described by Allen Curnow as ‘New Zealand’s first wholly original, unmistakably gifted poet’, Mason was also a classics scholar, teacher and a stalwart supporter and chronicler of the working class.

His body doubled  
under the pack  
that sprawls untidily

on his old back  
the cold wet deadbeat  
plods up the track

The cook peers out:  
‘oh curse that old lag  
here again  
with his clumsy swag  
made of a dirty old  
turnip-bag’

‘Bring him in cook  
from the grey level sleet  
put silk on his body  
slippers on his feet,  
give him fire  
and bread and meat

Let the fruit be plucked  
and the cake be iced,  
the bed be snug  
and the wine be spiced  
in the old cove’s nightcap:  
for this is Christ.’

*On the Swag*, R.A.K. Mason

Mason’s poetry collections include *The Beggar* (1924), *No New Thing* (1934), *This Dark Will Lighten: Selected Poems 1923–41* (1941) and *Collected Poems* (1962, reprinted 1990).



A typical 1930s bungalow in Tennyson Ave.  
Takapuna library collection.

## GRAEME LAY (1944- )

Novelist, short story writer and editor

8

Lay lived in Tennyson Ave from 1972 to 1973. He later moved to Glenfield, then Devonport.

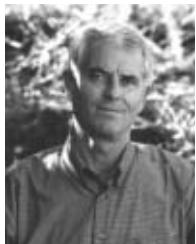


Photo Jane Ussher.

I rented a small, beach-side flat on the North Shore of the city. It stood alone on a lawn at the bottom of a flight of steep steps which descended from a cul-de-sac to the sea. The place was very small, just a tiny lounge with a bathroom and a kitchen leading off it at one end, but it was peaceful and private, sheltered by gnarled pohutukawa trees, and from the window at one end of the bach I could lie on the bed and look out over the Channel, watching the ships as they passed between Rangitoto Island and the land. The presence of the sea was comforting, but as October came, and with it the first days of spring, I only grudgingly acknowledged the pureness of the sea and sky, thinking of the beech trees turning to gold, and the mists suspended in the hollows of the Downs.

*The Mentor*, Graeme Lay

Lay's novels include *The Mentor* (1978) whose central character is modelled on Frank Sargeson, *The Fools on the Hill* (1988), *Temptation Island* (2000), *Leaving One Foot Island* (1998), *The Wave Rider* (2000) and *Return to One Foot Island* (2001). *The Town on the Edge of the World*, his new and selected short stories, was published in 2002.

*Walk down the steep dip into the hollow in Burns Ave. At the top of the rise, turn right into Bracken Ave. On the corner, 25 Bracken Ave, now a doctor's surgery, lived...*

## KARL WOLFSKEHL (1869-1948)

German-Jewish refugee poet

9

Born into a wealthy Jewish family in Darmstadt, Germany, Wolfskehl came to New Zealand in 1938 as a refugee from Nazi Germany. Physically and intellectually imposing, though myopic, while in Auckland he developed friendships with younger writers such as R.A.K. Mason, Fairburn and Sargeson. When he was evicted from his Mt Eden flat in 1943, Sargeson found him accommodation here in Bracken Ave. As the poet's sight worsened he came to rely on Sargeson more and more. Sargeson had his own problems and had to end the friendship.



There were times with Karl Wolfskehl when I could feel myself overpowered, weighted down by so much civilisation, a feeling which I had often and keenly experienced during my time in England. And now here I was once again being overpowered by Europe, and this time in my own country.

*More Than Enough*, Frank Sargeson

Wolfskehl is buried in Waikumete cemetery. His grave bears the words, *Exul Poeta – Poet in Exile*. Some commentators believe that his finest work was written during his 10-year exile in Auckland. One of the poems he wrote here was addressed to a Feigenbaum, a Fig Tree, which like himself, was a transplanted exotic.

You are a stranger, friend! These islands' children,  
Transplanting you, dislike your crooked lines.  
You care not to conform to shaven lawns,  
Figs cannot be – how could they – to their taste!

You suffer not alone. We are both stranded.  
Say: do we flourish? Do we live? Who knows!  
To wither in the scantlest sand of homeland  
What kinder lot! Is it not so, my tree?

*Fig Tree*, Karl Wolfskehl  
(translated by Margot Ruben)

Wolfskehl was fond of impromptu verses and this poem, written for Gladys Salter, creates a picture of North Shore in 1943.

Sargeson described Gladys and Len Salter as "friends who

have a live-in shop". At the time of the poem they were selling their general store in Lake Rd.

O Takapuna, suburban Metropole  
Of mysteries, legends, songs a glowing bowl  
Full of refined drink of every type  
Keen to ferment and ripe

Gladys, you brew this wine, you pour this wine  
Reminding us Ebro, Garonne and Rhine.  
In our dark sky you smile, a bloomy moon:  
Don't leave your Takapuna!

*The Voice of Takapuna*, Karl Wolfskehl  
(translated by Friedrich Voit)

Wolfskehl's poems include *Job* (published posthumously), and *To the Germans* (1947) a poem that some say inspired the would-be assassins of Hitler when it circulated in Germany in draft form towards the end of the war.



*Make your way towards Takapuna Beach by turning right into Lake Rd and left into Sanders Ave. At the end of the road, turn right onto the beach and walk along to Hauraki Rd where you started.*

10

## ALLEN CURNOW (1911–2001)

Poet, critic, playwright, journalist and academic

Born in Timaru, Curnow grew up in Canterbury, and from 1951 to 1961 lived at 13 Herbert St, Takapuna, overlooking Shoal Bay. The house inspired at least one notable poem, '*A Small Room with Large Windows*'. The pine trees featured in the poem are still present in Herbert St.

Seven ageing pine-trees hide  
Their heads in air but, planted on bare knees,  
Supplicate wind and tide. See if you can  
See it (if this is it), half earth, half heaven,  
Half land, half water, what you call a view  
Strung out between the windows and the  
tree-trunks;  
Below sills a world moist with new-making  
where  
The mangrove race number their cheated floods.

Allen Curnow,  
(film still) 1962.

*A Small Room with Large Windows*,  
Allen Curnow



Curnow's works include *A Book of New Zealand Verse 1923–1945* (1945), *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse* (1960) and *Early Days Yet: New and Collected Poems* (1997). He won many awards for his poetry and is considered one of New Zealand's greatest poets.

# CASTOR BAY WALK



**Terrain:** Steep, hilly land. If the trail is begun at Seaview Rd, the going is mostly downhill. The walk is not circular so the return is uphill. The northern end of Milford and the Castor Bay area is hilly. Beach Rd, which leads from the Wairau Creek mouth to Castor Bay, also rises steeply.

**Duration:** Minimum of one hour.

**Parking:** Available on Seaview Rd and Rangitoto Tce.

Although the surrounding area is today entirely built up and covered in luxurious houses, Castor Bay is as tranquil as it was when it became both a sanctuary and an inspiration for so many North Shore poets, short story writers and novelists.

*Start at Seaview Rd. Looking up East Coast Rd on the left is Sheriff's Hill at the corner of East Coast Rd and Stanley Ave.*

Castor Bay 1920s.  
Takapuna library collection.



*The house at 1 Stanley Ave, behind the shops was the home of...*

## GREVILLE TEXIDOR (1902-64)

Short story writer

1

Texidor came here from England with her German husband, Werner Droscher, in 1948 and lived on a large section at Sheriff's Hill. While on the Shore Texidor became part of the Sargeson literary circle, which included Maurice Duggan and R.A.K. Mason. The Texidor-Droscher household also became a gathering place for many North Shore writers and artists during this period. Texidor's daughter Christina married the New Zealand painter, Keith Patterson.

Texidor published short fiction in New Zealand, Australian and English periodicals from 1943 until 1948. *These Dark Glasses* (1949) was followed by a posthumous collection of stories in 1987.

## JOHN REECE COLE (1916-84)

Short story writer

2

The Texidor-Droscher section was large enough to allow Cole to live in a caravan on the property from 1946 until 1948. Cole came to Auckland in 1944 after he was invalided home after serving as a fighter pilot in World War II. In Auckland he met R.A.K. Mason, who introduced him to Frank Sargeson.

Cole (right) with Maurice Duggan, 1949.

Cole became a protégé of Sargeson's and part of the 'North Shore Group'. He later moved to Wellington where he met and married Christine Bull, who as



*Castor Bay, 1927.*  
Takapuna library collection.

Christine Cole Catley later founded Cape Catley Publishing and the Frank Sargeson Trust.

Cole published a short story collection, *It Was So Late and Other Stories* (1949, reprinted 1978).

*Walk down Seaview Rd and turn right into Rangitoto Tce. 41 Rangitoto Tce was for many years the home of...*

## PHOEBE MEIKLE (1910-1997)

Writer, editor and teacher

3

Working at Takapuna Grammar School for over 25 years, Meikle taught many of the North Shore's literary minds, even if, in Bruce Mason's case, it was only for dancing lessons. In the 1960s Meikle became editor of Blackwood Paul and went on to publish a number of New Zealand short stories. Writers looking for advice and guidance used to visit Meikle at her cottage here.

Meikle's autobiography is entitled *Accidental Life* (1994).

*Continue along and turn left into Prospect Tce. At the corner, pause for a moment to take in the stunning view that inspired so many writers. At 9a Prospect Tce, down a private right-of-way, lived...*



*Milford beach and reserve, 1936.*  
Takapuna library collection.



## ROBIN HYDE (1906-1939)

Poet, novelist and journalist

Robin Hyde was the nom-de-plume of Iris Wilkinson. She lived in baches at Castor Bay and Eastcliff Rd, then in 1937 moved to Prospect Tce. She became friends with Frank Sargeson and visited him frequently. Hyde later left Milford for China, then England, where she took her own life.



Alexander Turnbull library.

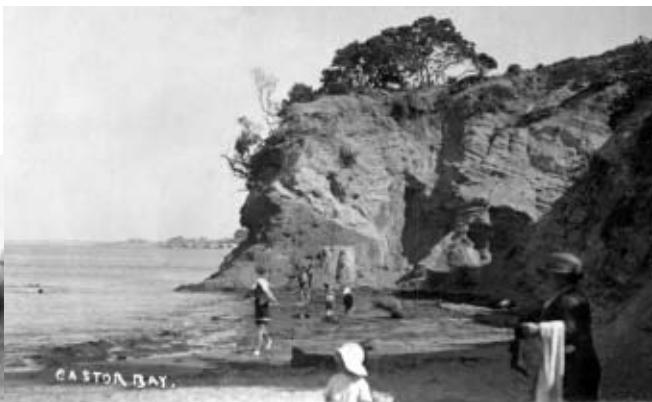
Close under here, I watched two lovers once,  
Which should have been a sin, from what you  
say:  
I'd come to look for prawns, small pale-green  
ghosts,  
Sea-coloured bodies tickling round the pool.  
But tide was out then; so I strolled away  
And climbed the dunes, to lie here warm, face  
down,  
Watching the swimmers by the jetty-posts  
And wrinkling like the bright blue wrinkling bay.

*The Beaches, Part VI*, Robin Hyde

Hyde wrote *Check to Your King* (1936) and *The Godwits Fly* (1938).

*Cut through Margery Lane on the right to Inga Rd. Of interest, a little further along is 37 Prospect Tce, once the home of...*

House at Castor Bay,  
Takapuna library collection.



Castor Bay, 1920s.  
Takapuna library collection.

## MARGARET ESCOTT (1908-77)

Poet and novelist

Escott came to New Zealand from England with her family at the age of 17. They lived on a Waikato farm before moving to Milford. Her most successful novel, *Show Down*, contains an episode describing a trip to Milford by steam tram, and a meeting of lovers on the cliff by the ancient pa at Castor Bay. Escott later became well-known in drama circles and in broadcasting. She drowned herself in the sea at Milford, in 1977.

After she'd done the telephoning I took her up over the cliffs and along the coast to an old Maori camp under some Christmas trees [Pohutukawa] that were in full blossom. It was very quiet and cool under the shadow of the trees and the grass grew short over the old earth-pits so that the place looked almost like English down-land set with a cluster of oaks, except for the scarlet blossom. You could just hear the wash and ripple of the sea running through the rocks below and that was all.

*Show Down*, Margaret Escott

Escott wrote *Show Down* (1936, republished 1973). Her poems are collected in *Separation and/or greeting* (1980).

*Walk down Margery Lane, turn right into Inga Rd and walk along the edge of the Milford marina across the Wairau Creek bridge and left at the roundabout into Omana Rd.*

*Continue up the rise and turn left into Craig Rd. 27 Craig Rd was the childhood home of...*

## SAM HUNT (1946- ) Poet

The Hunt family's beachside Californian bungalow has been replaced by a modern house. Hunt was born at Castor Bay and grew up in Milford, near the Wairau Creek estuary. He attended Campbells Bay Primary School, St Josephs in Takapuna and St Peters Secondary School, in the city.

I have no memories as others do  
Of family outings: we had it all here,  
White sand, ocean, Wairau Creek and bridge,  
The orchard where we laid our bodies bare.

*Return in Spring*, Sam Hunt

Although he has moved on to live in various other parts of the country, Hunt was strongly influenced by his childhood in the Castor Bay area. He relished the Hauraki Gulf's north-easterly storms, which to him

6



*Playing mini-golf, Milford 1950s.  
Takapuna library collection.*

seemed 'like anarchy come to town', while to prepare for an otherwise unbearable day at secondary school, he would row his dinghy from Milford across the Wairau Creek mouth to Castor Bay, and there catch the bus to school, then at the end of the day return home in the same manner.

A volcanic  
island, I remember. Grey  
sea, the grey sky quickening to  
blackness. And the gulls, black-backed  
but white, white underwing, they  
return in legions to rock  
ledges of the night.

*The Gulls*, Sam Hunt

Hunt's *Collected Poems 1963-1980* was published in 1980.



*Craig Road,  
Takapuna library collection.*

*Continue along to the beach beside Milford Reserve. To your left is Castor Bay, across the mouth of the Wairau Creek where pohutukawa trees cling to the side of the cliffs. This place inspired many writers such as D'Arcy Cresswell, Frank Sargeson and Sam Hunt. Stop here for a picnic or a swim before retracing your route, and read about another writer who lived nearby and was influenced by the area.*

*On the inland side of the marina, where Inga Rd becomes Beach Rd, a few hundred metres up the hill, on the left is Rahopara Rd. In the early 1930s, 9 Rahorapa Rd was the site of the North Shore's first literary gathering place...*

## D'ARCY CRESSWELL (1896-1960)

Poet

7

Cresswell was born into a well-to-do Canterbury family, and came to live in a bach on the site in the late 1920s. The bach was on a property owned by the Stronach family. Jane Stronach, an octogenarian widow and patron of the arts, allowed Cresswell to live here rent-free. An eccentric vagabond who wrote verse in a deliberately archaic style, Cresswell and his bach became a focus for literary gatherings and conversation. These 'bohemian' gatherings were the first indication that a North Shore 'school' of writers and artists was emerging. Visitors to Cresswell's bach included Robin Hyde, Jane Mander, R.A.K. Mason, A.R.D. Fairburn, Roderick Finlayson and Frank Sargeson. The bach was on the crest of a hill, and although the whole area is today covered with large, modern houses, the view which Cresswell and his fellow-writers undoubtedly savoured is still inspiring. From the upper end of

Rahopara Rd there is a magnificent panorama of the Rangitoto Channel, the Hauraki Gulf and Waitemata Harbour. Cresswell left for his fourth voyage to England in 1938, returning to New Zealand only once for a brief visit in 1950.



*Storm at Thorne Bay*  
Takapuna library collection.

Tis not the moon that with her naked light  
Doth leave these world-wide copies of her skill,  
These carven rocks, bare sands, and treasures  
bright.

But in the waves how doth her pencil still  
Her task perform! Even as my spirit will,  
With thy near aid, O Nature, come to write  
What 'tis her heavenly office to fulfil;  
Else were she ever muffled in all night...

D'Arcy Cresswell



Cresswell's autobiographies are *A Poet's Progress* (1930) and *Present Without Leave* (1939). The literary gatherings are described in chapter 11 of *Frank Sargeson – A Life*, by Michael King (1995) and in the second volume of D'Arcy Cresswell's autobiography, *Present Without Leave*.

*Further along the road on the right is Eastcliffe Rd where Robin Hyde briefly occupied a bach before moving to Prospect Tce. Eastcliffe Rd leads into Castor Bay Rd and back onto Beach Rd. Across the road is The Esplanade leading to Castor Bay beach.*



*Wairau Creek mouth and Castor Bay.*

*Mitford Reserve, 1920s.  
Takapuna library collection.*



*We hope you enjoyed these walks. For more information about North Shore City writers, please contact your local library.*

#### *Acknowledgements*

*Thank you to Graeme Lay for researching and writing this guide, Greg Bowron and Johanna Barnett for their significant contribution and pHd3 for design.*

*Castor Bay, 1950s.  
Takapuna library collection.*



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