

## "Those were the Days"

### More about WALWORTH INDUSTRIES

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As for me, I was a young person starting out in the working world, looking for interesting ways to make money. Perhaps the adventure side appealed and so I raced motor bikes. Any comparison to beekeeping ?!

There were no unions in those days so I was paid 8 pence an hour and often was working 60 hours a week. We wore boiler suits and had to wear enough clothing to protect ourselves from the stings and so it would become really hot in the warm weather, though the bees were mostly quieter working in the cold. During the winter the stinging was worse and the disoriented bees did there "clinging" to one's back or anything that gave out warmth. Back in the cab of the truck, as one drove to the next apiary they recovered in the warmth and "gave you a whack" if one didn't "whack 'em" first. Trucks in those days were slower, had less power, some had gate gears which had to be double de-clutched, especially the Brockway truck. When going up on the long, metalled roads on windy hills, the cab and the motor got hot and we had to use low gears to help brake. There were no radios in the trucks and petrol had a lot more power than gas producers.

The Wellington to Auckland road was still a metal one and narrow in places. Gas producers were on the side of the truck, down at the back of the cab, and were enclosed fires running on charcoal. When the vehicle was stopped or at other times you had to take the "bung out" or look in to see if the fire was still going, the gas inside exploded and blew out with enough force to take your first layer of hair off. There were times when we walked around with one of us without eyebrows and sporting singed hair. It was a laugh ! Once we stopped in Dannevirke for lunch and took the "bung out" of the gas producer before going up the street. We watched and waited ..... sure enough Al Qaeda or another terrorist had arrived 'cause it went off like a shotgun - sorry people !!

During the war many things like sugar were rationed. Beekeepers had plenty of it and it was great for an exchange on the black market for meat, petrol etc. The districts were zoned because of petrol and other contributions for the war effort. We were supposed to economise but there were times when

## About Walworth

### Beekeepers

Walworth's was owned and started by Joe Walworth.

Jow and Ann Walworth had one child, a daughter, who later became a doctor. Les Ferness, who was a Kiwi, went to the U.S.A. to live, later coming back to marry Joe's daughter. Les took over the business and changed it to "WALWORTH INDUSTRIES". He also started another company called "VISUAL EDUCATION" and ran the two companies from the office. Les later went to live in Australia.

Based in Palmerston North, WALWORTH INDUSTRIES, which was the largest Bee Keeping business in New Zealand, had over 4000 hives and covered areas over to Whanganui North up towards Jerusalem and the Paraparas, over to Teihape, over to Hawkes Bay and the coast, to just South of Hastings, down the Wairarapa, to Eketahuna, back to the Manawatu and to Foxton. On wet days we made our own gear : sorting combs, replacing old supiers, stools etc. We used to boil supiers etc. in queersote and wax. There were a few big, uncontrolled fires and visits from the Local Fire Brigade . One fireman fell into a big vat of honey - we pulled him out !!! and don't ask me what we did with the honey !!

There were times when we stayed away and slept out in the sheds. Pine needles make good mattresses, in a shed in the bush as well as burning in the smoker. Plenty of hard, heavy work (no mechanical help !! ), plenty of stings, adventures and happenings. When I was 14 or 15 years old I first started the "Bee Job".

I had a Love-Hate relationship : I left three times yet I still have bees. Here are some of the photos taken between 1942 and 1948 when I worked for WALWORTH INDUSTRIES.

Keith Schofield.

PHONE

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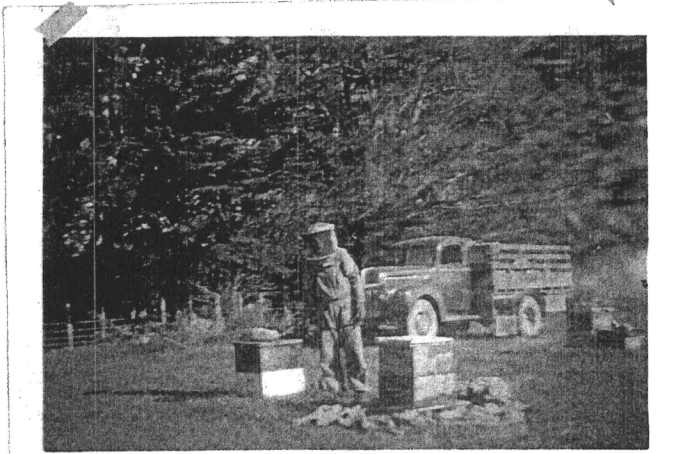


Turakina Valley

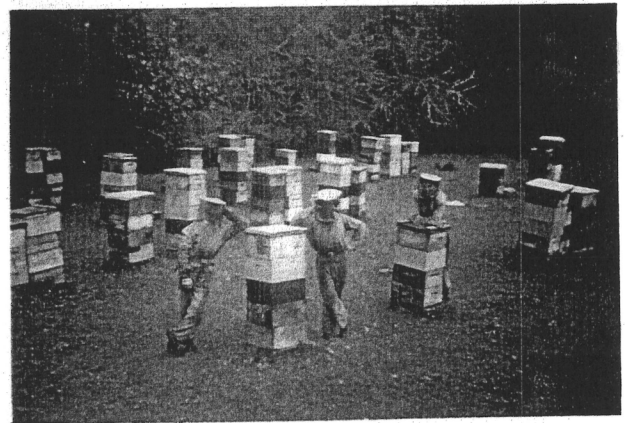


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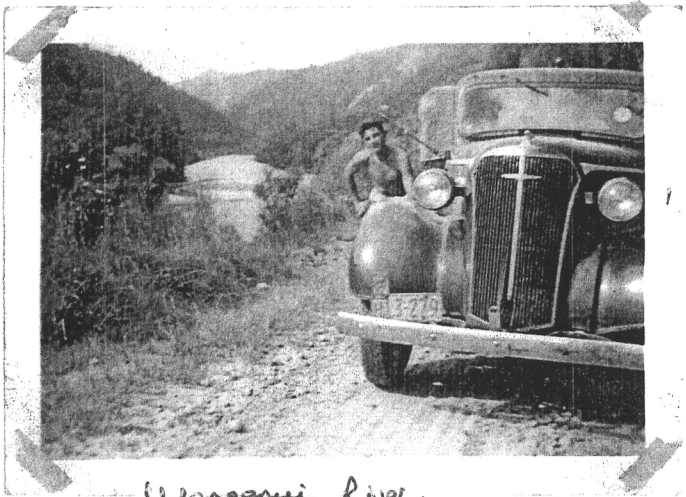
Papapapa



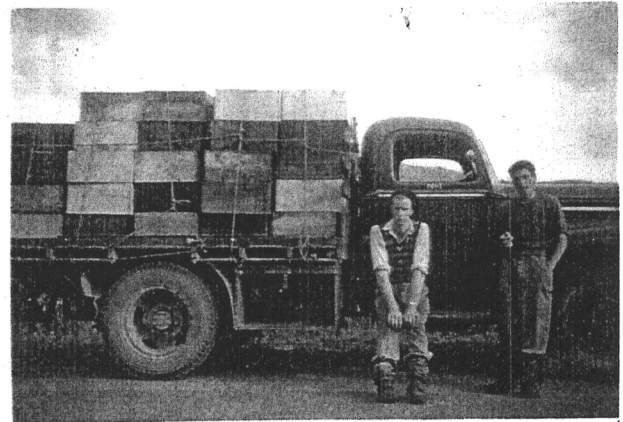
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Papapapa's (evening)



Wanganui River



Cliff Bird + Keel Schofield  
1948.



Cliff  
Bird

Walworth Staff. 1949.



Walworth Industries office.