

The Valley Profile

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Kiwi handler Neil John shows off a brown kiwi to students in the bush of Te Mata. PHOTO: RACHEL HOLMES

The man who gets up close with kiwi

By KELLEY TANTAU
Public Interest Journalist

Neil John's hand goes down into a burrow built by kiwi in the Thames Coast bush, and when it comes back out, it's holding a cracking egg with tufts of brown feathers poking out either side.

In an extraordinary circumstance, he watches as a baby kiwi is born before his eyes.

The moment has become one of Neil's highlights of his two-year career as a kiwi handler, and a moment he says he'll "never forget".

Neil monitors and looks after the kiwi that live in Te Mata, as part of his work with Thames Coast Kiwi Care (TCKC).

The society became involved in Operation Nest Egg in 2014, with Neil becoming a certified

handler two years ago after the Covid-19 pandemic made it difficult for Auckland Zoo staff to travel to the Thames Coast.

Neil locates the male kiwi sires and collects their eggs at around 65 days of incubation. He then transports them to Auckland Zoo for hatching.

The chicks are soon moved to a predator-free island to grow up big enough - 1.2kg - to

fight off predators before being returned to their home in the wild at Te Mata.

"If we don't take [the eggs], there's a good chance those birds won't actually get to adulthood. They'll be killed before they get to the 1.2kg weight," he told *The Profile*.

"And what people probably don't know is that the chicks will only stay with the father

for about a week anyway, and then they have to fend for themselves."

In the TCKC catchment area, there are transmitters on five kiwi, and Neil has got to know them well.

"They all have their own personalities," he said. "I've got to know all the ones we've got monitors on, so I know how

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The *Valley Profile* is a community newspaper that delivers 100% local news in the Thames Valley region. We deliver 12,600 copies each Wednesday to every letterbox, reaching approximately 30,000 readers in Hauraki Plains, Paeroa, Thames, Thames Coast and surrounding rural areas, plus bulk distribution around the Coromandel Peninsula.

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Valley Profile team welcomes new reporter

The *Valley Profile* welcomed a new staff member Gordon Preece to the team last week.

Gordon has recently completed his communications degree majoring in journalism from Auckland University of Technology and is anxiously waiting for his final assignment result.

This will be his first full time journalism position but he has had work experience at *Rotorua Daily Post* and TVNZ during his time at university.

“I always wanted to kick off my journalism career in community news so when I received the call from editor Teresa Ramsey offering me the position I was simply blown away,” he said.

“I look forward to meeting all the interesting characters who call the Thames-Hauraki districts their home and sharing their stories.

“Community news is all about celebrating the local people.”

Throughout his time at university, Gordon found a passion for stories involving sport, police and environment but is keen to tackle a variety of story topics.

“Working for a community newspaper like the *Valley Profile* can do wonders for a young journo’s career by offering more reporting opportunities and I hope to hone my skills in all reporting disci-



Reporter Gordon Preece started at the *Valley Profile* last week.

Photo: TERESA RAMSEY

plines with the support of the *Profile* team.”

Gordon is from Rotorua, but also has a connection to the Coromandel Peninsula where he lived in Whangamata many years ago and has still a family bach in Little Bay.

Teresa said she was excited to welcome Gordon to the *Valley Profile* team.

“It’s great to find a talented journalism graduate who knows the district and is keen to cover local community news and events,” she said.

Gordon joined the team last week on the same day the *Profile* opened a new office in Paeroa, next to the medical centre.

“We’re looking forward to

having even more of a presence in the community we represent,” Teresa said. “It’s great to now have a base for our hard-working team that’s central to our coverage area.”

To contact Gordon, Ph 022 174 3988, or email: gordon@valleyprofile.co.nz.

Valley Profile opens new office in Paeroa, P5

Hi, my name is Pete the Pukeko and I’m here to help you. Find me in one of the display advertisements in *The Valley Profile*, then email admin@valleyprofile.co.nz or Ph/txt 027 396 2459 with your full name, the business name and page number of the ad by the following Monday to go in the draw to **WIN a car valet from Thames Autos worth \$150!** The prize is drawn at the end of each month.



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Thames Tides

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
Nov 24	Nov 25	Nov 26	Nov 27	Nov 28	Nov 29	Nov 30
 Morning: 4:56am 0.7, 5:22pm 1.0 Afternoon: 11:16am 3.3, 11:39pm 3.1 Sun: 5:54am 8:15pm Best At: 4:25am 4:50pm Set: 9:09am	 Morning: 5:35am 0.8, 6:05pm 1.0 Afternoon: 11:56am 3.2 Sun: 5:54am 8:16pm Best At: 5:16am 5:40pm Rise: 12:29am, Set: 10:06am	 Morning: 12:20am 3.1, 12:39pm 3.2 Afternoon: 6:16am 0.8, 6:51pm 1.1 Sun: 5:53am 8:17pm Best At: 6:05am 6:29pm Rise: 1:09am, Set: 11:07am	 Morning: 1:03am 3.0, 1:26pm 3.2 Afternoon: 7:01am 0.9, 7:40pm 1.1 Sun: 5:53am 8:18pm Best At: 6:53am 7:16pm Rise: 1:44am, Set: 12:09pm	 Morning: 1:49am 3.0, 2:17pm 3.2 Afternoon: 7:52am 1.0, 8:32pm 1.0 Sun: 5:53am 8:19pm Best At: 7:40am 8:03pm Last Quarter Rise: 2:15am, Set: 1:13pm	 Morning: 2:41am 3.0, 3:10pm 3.2 Afternoon: 8:50am 1.0, 9:27pm 1.0 Sun: 5:52am 8:20pm Best At: 8:26am 8:49pm Rise: 2:43am, Set: 2:18pm	 Morning: 3:39am 3.0, 4:05pm 3.3 Afternoon: 9:52am 1.0, 10:24pm 0.8 Sun: 5:52am 8:21pm Best At: 9:12am 9:36pm Rise: 3:11am, Set: 3:24pm

*Not for navigational purposes. Graphic supplied by OceanFun Publishing Ltd. www.tidewiz.com www.tidespy.com www.ofu.co.nz

MOON AND FISH KEYS



TIME DIFFERENCES FOR OTHER PLACES

To determine tide times at the following places, add (+) or subtract (-) the given time difference from the Thames times listed in the calendar.

PLACE	Hr	Mn	Hr	Mn
Coromandel	-0	05	-0	04
Whitianga	-0	02	-0	06
Tairua	+0	10	+0	21
Whangamata	-0	07	-0	07
Waihi Beach	-0	12	-0	12

Low rural vax rates as Covid-19 comes to Thames

By KELLEY TANTAU
Public Interest Journalist

As Covid-19 arrived in Thames Valley last week, rural communities around the district remained some of the lowest-ranking throughout the country in being fully protected from the virus. And with the Auckland border opening on December 15, Coromandel MP Scott Simpson said there was no more time for complacency. On November 18, the Waikato DHB confirmed there was a positive Covid-19 case in Thames.

Before the *Valley Profile* print deadline on Monday, no locations of interest had been added to the Ministry of Health website, and no further cases had arisen.

However, the confirmed case prompted some businesses in Thames to close, including the Grahamstown Bar and Diner in Pollen St.

Owner Karl Edmonds told *The Profile* a family member of one of his staff was a possible close contact to the positive case, prompting closure of the business.

All staff had been tested and all

have since returned negative results.

Coromandel MP Scott Simpson said news that a person tested positive for Covid-19 in Thames would come as a shock to many, but it was only “a matter of time” before the virus was found in the region.

“Ours is a community which has many elderly members, some of them will be worried about what this outbreak will mean for them.

“The best advice I can offer them is to ensure they take all practicable steps to stay safe and healthy,” he said.

As at November 22, Hauraki Plains South was ranked in the bottom four per cent for fully vaccinated populations across New Zealand. Around 22 per cent of residents were unvaccinated there.

Hauraki Plains North had 17 per cent of locals unvaccinated, while rural Paeroa had 22 per cent of residents unvaccinated and was ranked in the bottom eight per cent.

While the suburb of Totara-Kōpū was ranked in the top 47 per cent for fully vaccinated

“People have had plenty of opportunities to get vaccinated.”

- Scott Simpson



People line up to be tested at a pop-up Covid-19 centre at Rhodes Park last week.

Photo: GORDON PREECE

populations, with only 60 doses needed to reach 90 per cent double-jabbed, the rural community of Matatoki-Puriri needed 216 doses, and was also ranked in the bottom eight per cent.

The data came as Prime Minister Jacinda Arden last week announced changes to the Auckland border.

From December 15, those who have received both Covid-19 vaccinations or have returned a negative test can travel into and out of Auckland.

That meant visitors could again be welcomed to places like the Coromandel Peninsula and Tauranga, passing through vulner-

able Thames Valley towns along the way.

Mr Simpson told *The Profile* that high vaccination rates were needed to ensure the survival of Covid-19-impacted businesses.

“Townships along State Highway 2, particularly, have been devastated by the lack of domestic travel between Auckland and the Bay of Plenty, so Ngatea, Paeroa, Katikati, and Waihi - all those places where people stop, have lunch at a cafe, or stop for petrol, have been missing out now for months,” he said.

“If they don’t have an opportunity to make money during the summer break, there’s very little

capacity to make that up during the rest of the year, even if borders were open.”

Mr Simpson said it was inevitable that Covid-19 would come to “a town, a community, a neighbourhood near us soon” - adding that low vaccination rates put people at risk.

“People have had plenty of opportunities to get vaccinated, and those that have chosen so far not to be, I think need to take a good hard look in the mirror if they’re using the excuse that it’s hard, it’s difficult, or it’s challenging.

“That’s not the case,” he said. “It’s pretty easy, pretty simple, it

CONTINUED P19

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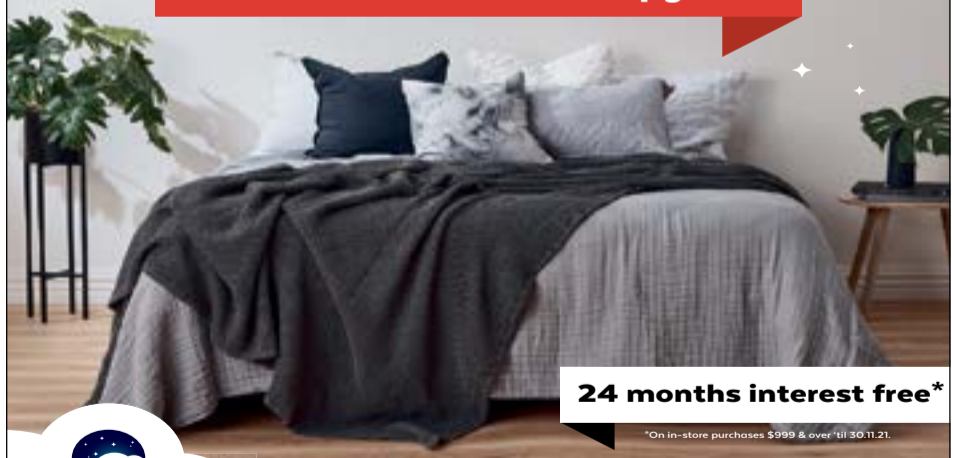
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Vaccine mandates impact teachers

By KELLEY TANTAU
Public Interest Journalist

As the Ministry of Education collates data around how many Thames Valley teachers have been affected by the government's vaccine mandates, one principal has acknowledged that three of his staff will spend the rest of the school term at home.

Thames High School principal Michael Hart told *The Profile* the vaccine mandate was "uncharted territory".

Three of his staff have been affected by the mandate - which required education workers to get their first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine by November 15 - and the school was "working with them to understand the full implications of this".

"I really feel for staff who are in this position, but we must comply with the mandate and our duty to keep students and staff healthy and safe, and provide a healthy and safe environment for learning," Mr Hart said.

"We will continue to work with affected staff to continue to support them and provide information to them."

The affected staff were working in alternative duties or hours to comply with the order, he said, which provided the school time to work though the next steps. "It is hard to say what the future holds as we are working through this challenging situation, but we are hopeful that we can reach a satisfactory resolution that will allow us to have continuity of

teaching and learning and well-being for all." Meanwhile, Maramarua School Principal Andre van Schalkwyk said one of his staff members did not get their first jab before the school reopened on November 17, after being included in Waikato's level 3 lockdown.

"That teacher will be doing online learning with the students who are deciding to learn from home," Mr van Schalkwyk said.

"But we're quite fortunate we haven't had any major hiccups compared to other schools through the mandate."

The Ministry of Education's leader (hautū) operations and integration Sean Teddy said the ministry had asked school leaders for aggregate information on vaccination data; however, this was not mandatory.

"We are giving schools plenty of time to come back to us, as we appreciate it is a busy time for them," he said.

Paeroa College and Hauraki Plains College were contacted but did not respond to requests for comment before deadline.

The vaccine mandates also applied to workers in the health and disability sector, with around 1309 staff being stood down nationwide because they did not receive their first Covid-19 vaccination before the November 15 deadline.

Waikato DHB, which includes Thames Hospital, had the highest number of staff stood down with 154. Of these, 65 were nurses, 10 were midwives and nine were senior or registered medical officers.



Receiving the Outstanding Community Service Award: Coombe & Associates, from left: Tony Coombes, Giona Jennings and Gina Morrison, presented by TCDC councillor Sally Christie, right.

Photo: NIKKI SANDERS

Heroes honoured at Life Ed awards

By GORDON PREECE

Long time supporters were recognised at the Life Education Trust awards at Ohinemuri Club in Paeroa last Thursday.

Coombe & Associates was awarded the Outstanding Community Service Award for looking after Life Education Trust's books and accounts for free for 30 years and Judith Trembath was awarded the Distinguished Service Award for her 17-year service as a trustee of Life Education Trust.

The two awards were presented by Thames-Coromandel District councillor Sally Christie and Matamata Piako Mayor Ash Turner.

East Waikato Life Education Trust Chairman Keith Trembath said the awards reflected all the "amazing" community support they're given.

"Without their support we wouldn't be able to function through teaching 70 schools in the region with up to 6000 kids about health and their uniqueness," Mr Trembath said.

"One of our new programmes we're doing at the moment called Out of the Shadows teaches kids about drug and alcohol abuse and how to stay safe on the internet, which is all important."

Mr Trembath also took the time to thank Valley Toyota chief executive Wayne Richards, who supplied them with a vehicle to tow the Life Education Trust trailer.

He also thanked all the community organisations who each gave up to \$2000 worth of annual funding.

More Than A School
Hauraki Plains College

Scholarships

Over \$326,000 has been offered to HPC students in school leaver scholarships for tertiary studies.



Bree McCowatt

Bree McCowatt has been offered a \$50,000 University of Bond (Australia) Scholarship for high academic and sporting achievement and leadership skills. Bree is intending to use her scholarship to complete a Bachelor of Exercise and Sports Science.

Morgan Harris has received a \$25,000 Waikato University Te Paewai o te Rangi Scholarship for Outstanding Academic Achievement. Morgan intends to study Environmental Science.



Morgan Harris



Maggie Martin

Maggie Martin was successful with a \$25,000 Academic Potential Scholarship at Auckland University to study Business Law. Also successful with Auckland University scholarships was Reefer Benny and Macey Jenkins, each winning \$16,000 to pursue a career - Reefer in Medicine and Macy in Psychology.



Reefer Benny



Florence Somerville

Congratulations also to Florence Somerville who was awarded a \$5,000 David Johnstone Scholarship to study Science at Waikato University.



Macey Jenkins



Daniella van Vliet

Daniella van Vliet receives the Thomas-Townshend Charitable Community Trust Business Scholarship \$5000.

Sports Awards

Mitchell Williams

Fair Play



Phillip Halden Memorial Award

Ashling Welch and Nicholas Hutt (joint)

Achievement in Minority Sport



Tina Dickin Cup

Emma Gordon

Outstanding Leadership in Sport



James McDuff & Stella Clayton-Greene Award

Motocross

Team of the Year Mahurangi College Cup



Ania Ballantine

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A V O'Brien Trophy

Katie Graham

Sportsperson of the Year



Flint Family Cup

Sporting Blues: Ania Ballantine, Touch. Ashling Welch, Shooting. Alysha Read, Gymnastics. Michael Ellis, Golf. Katie Graham, Equestrian. Heather Underwood, Equestrian. Ayisha Hull, Shooting. Jenna Humphrey, Motocross. Bree McCowatt, Surf Lifesaving. Reefer Benny, Netball Sporting Service Blue.

Thank You

HPC and the Gateway Team would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to all our Gateway Employers this year. We have had some fantastic outcomes with Employment and Apprenticeships for our students. Your support is much appreciated. We look forward to working with you all again in 2022. New Employers are always more than welcome to join us. The Gateway Programme runs from February-October each year. For more information or to register your interest for next year's Gateway Programme please contact: Lesley Spencer: Gateway Employer Liaison E: lesleys@haurakiplains.school.nz

Valley Profile hits major milestones

Last week was a big one for the *Valley Profile*.

Not only did we have our new reporter, Gordon Preece, join the team (see story P2), but we also moved into a new office in Paeroa and reporter Kelley Tantau became a Public Interest Journalist - all while working on this week's bumper issue.

Additionally, we have been hosting Wintec journalism student Kate Durie for the work experience part of her degree, albeit remotely while Hamilton has been in Level 3 lockdown.

The *Profile* team now has a home at 2 Queen St, Paeroa, sharing office space with lawyers Harkness Henry.

You'll find us next door to the Paeroa Medical Centre, and our doors are open from 9am until 4:30pm, Monday to Friday.

So if you need any classified advertising, display advertising, or want to share a news tip, please call in and say hi.

Editor Teresa Ramsey said it was exciting to finally open an office after 18 months of delivering 100 per cent local community news to the Thames Valley community.

"It's great to have a dedicated space where the *Profile* team can connect with our readers and advertisers," she



The *Valley Profile* team outside their new office at 2 Queen St, Paeroa, next to the medical centre, from left: Teresa Ramsey, Nikki Sanders, Kelley Tantau and Gordon Preece.

Photo: GEOFF SANDERS

said.

While the *Profile* was becoming established, and through the Covid-19 lockdowns, our dedicated team have been working from home while the paper grows and develops.

"But now, thanks to a great opportunity that arose with Harkness Henry in Paeroa,

we're in a position to have a permanent office in Paeroa, a central base only a few minutes away from the other towns and regions we cover.

"Being part of a busy newsroom will also be a great experience for our new graduate reporter, Gordon Preece, as well as Wintec and AUT journalism students, who will gain

valuable insight into how the newspaper industry works."

Reporter Kelley Tantau, who has worked for the *Profile* for one year, is now a dedicated Public Interest Journalist.

This is thanks to a two-year Public Interest Journalist Funding grant through NZ On Air. The aim of the grant is to support media to continue to

produce stories that keep New Zealanders informed and engaged, and support a healthy democracy.

"Thanks to our commitment to top quality community journalism, the *Profile* was very fortunate to be one of 25 successful news organisations to receive the grant, of 63 applicants nationwide," Teresa said.


"The funding will allow us to cover more stories for the Thames Valley region, and give us the resources to delve deeper into issues affecting our people. And as a senior reporter who knows the region well and has made her mark breaking national stories, Kelley is the perfect person for the new role."


The grant did not come with any conditions or input about what stories to write, she said.

"There appears to be some misconception that the government will have some measure of control over journalism because of the funding, however, this is untrue.

"The *Profile* team will continue to provide unbiased, independent, top quality journalism like we always have."

Pop into the Valley Profile team's new office at 2 Queen St, Paeroa (next to the medical centre), 9am-4:30pm Monday to Friday. www.valleyprofile.co.nz





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Late-night Christmas shopping floated

By KELLEY TANTAU
Public Interest Journalist

An idea to try out a big-city tactic in small-town Thames to boost the local economy ahead of Christmas has received a positive response from shoppers.

Around 78 per cent of customers quizzed in a poll run by the Thames Business Association supported late-night shopping in town on one or more Fridays before Christmas.

Traditionally, many of the shops along the main drag of Pollen St close at 5pm during the week, but now Covid-19 restrictions have cancelled Santa parades

and kept Auckland borders closed, late-night shopping could be the "community, social event" the town needed.

In the poll, 65 per cent of retailers said they would consider offering late-night shopping on one or more Fridays prior to Christmas.

Their favoured date was December 17, followed by December 10.

One retailer said the scheme would only be effective if a sufficient number of businesses bought into it, while another said they had offered late-night shopping in the past but generally closed early, as it was "a

ghost town".

"I think if we want to make it viable it would need to be in conjunction with Christmas carolers, buskers, street food, and performances... It's not an easy task to get people out at night," they said, adding they would support whatever would be designed.

Another retailer said security for their staff and products was a "big issue", while another commented that late-nights were "so last century".

Shoppers were more positive about the proposed initiative, with only 22 per cent saying they would not utilise it.

"As we have lost the Santa Parade, maybe late-night opening could also be used as a community social event," one said.

"Invite buskers or have some kind of music. Have Santa set up outside Stirling Sports. How fun," another added.

A motel operator said they would encourage their guests to support the scheme, while a few other commenters said they could shop during the day, but it would be "a good thing for those who work 9-to-5".

"[It] would be great to finish work on a Friday afternoon and not have to rush to get to the store(s) by 5pm. Definitely what the town needs," one said.

"One of the reasons I want to do that little bit extra this year is because I feel like we all need that extra joy and love and light."

- Alicia Wilson



Earth Angel Magic owner Alicia Wilson is spreading extra Christmas joy this festive season.

Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

In Paeroa, late-night shopping is something Earth Angel Magic owner Alicia Wilson provides every year.

When *The Profile* visited her store on Thursday, there was Christmas music blaring, and festive signage painted by artist Brian Low on her window.

"One of the reasons I want to do that little bit extra this year is because I feel like we all need that extra joy and love and light," she said.

"A lot of people work, so the only time they've got to do any shopping is after hours.

"So for the first couple of weeks [of December], I stay open until 6, and then the two weeks leading up to Christmas, especially on Thursday and Fridays, I stay open until 8."

Alicia said Paeroa had been very quiet since the arrival of Covid-19 in the country, but under normal circumstances, late-night shopping would "definitely

ly" be successful.

Ngatea Santa Parade organisers are unable to go ahead with the parade this year, but have come up with an alternative that does not breach Covid-19 restrictions.

Spokesperson Shannon Stratford said Ngatea will hold festive late night shopping on Friday, December 10, from 5pm, with live street music and a visit from Santa, who will also be available for photos.

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Students back in class after Waikato lockdown

By GORDON PREECE

Students arrived back at Maramarua School on Wednesday last week after six weeks' learning from home in Covid-19 Alert Level 3.

Maramarua School principal Andre van Schalkwyk said it was a "great feeling" for himself and fellow staff after they'd been chomping at the bit to have their 77 students back after the school was closed on October 3.

"We've been up and down in alert levels and have Section 70 literally across the road so it's been a whirlwind, but from today hopefully it's a sign of normality which stays for the remainder of the year."

"The big stress has been the ongoing lack of plans from the government where an announcement gets made and it then feels like the plan is put in place afterwards and that's been a big struggle for the school to plan," he said.

"That's frustrating at times but we're very lucky in that we've had very strong relationships with the students and their whanau, a supportive community and supportive Board of Trustees throughout

this process."

Mr van Schalkwyk said one of the biggest difficulties they faced during level 3 was internet access issues within their rural community.

"What we did was we ensured whānau had online learning and hard packs produced by the teachers to cater for all students and keeping in contact with whānau if they

needed any more materials," he said.

"We had some students asking if this was what school would be like for the rest of their lives so that rings a bell and

allows us to get back into a routine so we end the year on a positive note and continue into next year on that same note."

The school will be having a strong focus on keeping everyone safe with social distancing as much as they can along with hand sanitising, washing hands, keeping classrooms well ventilated, ensuring all visitors wear face coverings and following any public health advice when practical.

"Because we're a small school, we have large families across the school so the bubbles are already big in a



Maramarua School students and principal Andre van Schalkwyk were delighted to be back.

Photo: GORDON PREECE

sense," van Schalkwyk said.

All but one of Maramarua School's staff received at least their first vaccine before returning.

"We also have staff who are crossing the Auckland border each day so we're ensuring they have their weekly compulsory Covid tests."

Mr van Schalkwyk said no parents had safety concerns about bringing their children back to school.

"I take my time to ensure our parents are well informed about safety precautions the school has in place and also the organisation around coming to school and leaving school," he said.

The school's classes will be holding 'fun and engaging' activities to celebrate their return throughout this week and term.

"Our senior students have missed out on school camps

and the Year 8 dinner for example so we want to continue holding special things for them as much as we can," van Schalkwyk said.

"Our prizegiving will also look slightly different but we will continue with this historical event as it's what makes Maramarua School so special."

Thames Valley schools and health workers affected by vaccine mandates, P4

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Rural Life



Protesters gather at Kōpū on Sunday before making their way to Thames as part of the Groundswell protest.

Photos: GORDON PREECE

‘Mother of all protests’ draws crowd

By GORDON PREECE

The region’s rural community were out in force on Sunday revving up over “unworkable government regulations, rules and taxes”.

It was part of a nationwide “Mother of all Protests” event organised by farmer advocacy group Groundswell NZ, who believed the government had not addressed the issues raised during its first Howl of a Protest event in July.

These issues included the national policy statements on freshwater and indigenous biodiversity, climate change, significant natural areas and the ute tax.

Groundswell NZ had added the three waters reform to their list of unworkable regulations as they believed it should be decided on by local communities and not mandated by central government.



Coromandel MP Scott Simpson joins the protest.

Sunday’s protest looked different to the earlier event due to Covid-19 Alert Level 2 restrictions, with protestors arriving in Kōpū from as far away as Colville staying in their vehicles to comply with social distancing rules. They then tuned in to Groundswell’s radio broadcasted statement before slowly descending down Pollen St in



Tractors and utes line Kopu Rd.

Thames blasting their horns. Federated Farmers Hauraki-Coromandel president Robert Craw told *The Profile* the organisation supported the reasons for the protest.

“We understand farmers’ frustrations have got to a point that they feel they’re not being heard and there’s too many unworkable legislations that are

trying to be rushed without being thought out properly, which is not going to help anyone in the long run,” he said.

Coromandel MP Scott Simpson, who attended Sunday’s event, said a lot of the region’s rural community was “frustrated and angry” the new rules and regulations didn’t reflect what happened in the paddock.

“That’s something that’s of concern because usually it adds a lot of red tape, a lot of costs, and not much obvious benefit to the environment or the way farming is conducted,” he said.

“Farmers are usually reasonably accepting of change but when change is hard for them to understand or see any benefit from they’ll push that.”

Groundswell’s local co-ordinators were contacted for comment but did not respond.

In a statement, the group said the people of New Zealand wanted an end to the regulations until genuine consultation was conducted so all New Zealanders were treated in a “fair and equal manner.”

“If the government is not forthcoming in addressing these issues, I call on all New Zealanders to join our protest in Wellington in February next year. We say enough is enough,” the statement said.

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Rural Life

Bowfisherman tracks down pest koi carp

By KELLEY TANTAU
Public Interest Journalist

A young bowfisherman has removed around 300 koi carp from Waikato rivers this year, leaving him top of the table in a national competition and the waterways more free from the pest.

Logan Dodunski, 14, won the NZ Bowhunters Society Carp Busters Competition - a year-long event that encourages its members to eradicate the accidentally-introduced species.

The Hauraki Plains College student usually hunts around the Whangamarino river near Mercer, or at the Waihōu and Piako rivers, which flow into the Firth of Thames.

His favourite thing about the sport is the anticipation.

"You never know when you're going to come across that big fish or your personal best," he told *The Profile*.

"Sometimes it's easy to see [the koi] and other times it's not, depending on the day and the water colour. It can be murky or there could be cloud cover; sun really helps you to see in the water."

According to the Department of Conservation (DOC), koi carp contributed to poor water quality and were a serious problem in New Zealand.

When the species fed, they stirred up the bottom of ponds, lakes, and rivers, muddying the water and destroying native plant and fish habitat.

Matthew Brady, a freshwater technical advisor for DOC, earlier told *The Profile* that koi were an ongoing issue for regional councils - particularly in the Waikato region.

Koi carp were known to be present within the Piako and Waihōu river catchments, with records showing the species had been in those catchments for more than a decade.

Logan's score of 76 in the Carp Buster's competition was 12 points higher than the second place-getter, and his best result compared to the 2019-2020 contest.

He said the key to doing well was consistency.

"You've got to be shooting constantly throughout the year. The first year, I was sitting around that sixth place position for quite a while, then I made it to the top three, and

"You never know when you're going to come across that big fish or your personal best."

- Logan Dodunski



Logan Dodunski won the NZ Bowhunters Society Carp Busters Competition for the second year in a row.

Photo: SUPPLIED/ANNA DODUNSKI

then for the last month I shot quite well," he said.

"This year, I've been at the top of the list for the whole time."

Logan, joined by dad Wayne and brother Reuben, could be out along the waterways for anywhere between two and four hours. After catching the koi, they either bury it, fillet it for bait, or use it as burley.

According to The New Zealand Bowhunters Society, members have been hunting koi carp in the waterways that connect to the lower Waikato River system since 1988.

The society has permits to hunt the species in the region.

September through to Christmas have proved to be the best time to find carp, it said, with the warmer summer months

seeing koi much more active and therefore easier to find.

DETAILS: *The Department of Conservation says people can fish recreationally for koi carp, but the pest fish must be killed as soon as they are caught, and dead fish are to be disposed of by burying them well away from the waterbody where they were found. Report suspected sightings to 0800 DOC HOT.*

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ENTERTAINMENT

Country rock festival to put Thames on the map

By TERESA RAMSEY

Around 10,000 visitors are expected in Thames next February for a country rock festival pegged to become one of the biggest events in New Zealand.

Organisers Andrea and Noddy Watts, who also run the Beach Hop event, have big plans for their new three-day Hootnanny Country Rock Festival, which will see some of the New Zealand biggest country stars on stage at the former Thames Racecourse.

"We want this to become, like Beach Hop, to be a major event on the New Zealand event calendar," Mr Watts said.

"We may add more days to it in the future... but for the first year we're pretty confident that it's going to be a cracker."

Mr Watts, who grew up in Thames, said he didn't want locals to miss out on getting a ticket to the event, which will also support local retailers, businesses and community groups.

"We've got a limit of 10,000 people on our resource consent, and I'll be really upset if 9000 people come from out of town to be honest, because we created this event for Thames."

Mr Watts said he learned a lot about holding a large event in Thames when they brought the annual Beach Hop to the town in March, which was a "huge success".



Andrea and Noddy Watts are bringing the Hootnanny Country Rock Festival to Thames in February. Photo: SUPPLIED

"It just blew everybody away, the way that the community got in behind it, getting the school kids there to welcome us and be part of it, retailers, the whole town."

Holding Beach Hop in Thames was a "tester" to see how the town would react to an event, he said. The Hootnanny festival came about after six visits to Nashville as part

of their business taking tour groups to the United States, which they've done for the past 10 years.

"On Broadway where all the honky tonk bars are, it's just full of young kids just playing their hearts out and Andrea and I just said we need an event in New Zealand where we can give them a break.

"So that's where the idea was

born to create a festival that we can get young kids from America to give them that big break supported by our top Kiwi musicians and... Thames is the perfect place."

Hootnanny was an old term for "country party", he said, and the original spelling was changed to Hootnanny to trademark it for the Thames event. The three-day festival will kick

off on February 25, with on-site camping and a shuttle bus running into the town centre for ticket holders.

Security and Covid-19 double vaccination certificate checks would be in place, he said.

There will be two stages at the festival, a Kiwi country stage featuring well-known Kiwi performers such as Brendan Dugan, Dennis Marsh and Marian Burns, and the NZ Motorcaravan Association stage, which will host young and up-and-coming country rock artists.

"These stars are just amazing, a lot of them are just as good as what we saw at Nashville. A lot of them come from Gore, which is not surprising... they'll be playing Queen and the Eagles and a bit of modern stuff as well, but they country it up and rock it."

Big rig trucks will convoy from Kōpū for a parade through Pollen St on the Saturday morning, arriving at the racecourse around 9:30am, where there will also be around 400 cars on show, country markets, carnival rides, barrel racing, monster trucks, lawn mower racing and freestyle motocross included in the ticket price. On Sunday, there will also be an automotive swap meet as well as attractions and entertainment.

DETAILS: More information or to purchase tickets: hootnanny.co.nz.

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Trash to flash

Miller Avenue School in Paeroa held its *Trash to Flash* fashion show on November 12, with students modelling their creative outfits hand-made from recyclable or reusable materials. Reporter **KELLEY TANTAU** went along to help judge and photograph the colourful event.



Emma Maber models a high-end bread-bag ensemble.



Dayton Prasad made his armour with apple cartons.

Photos: KELLEY TANTAU



Jackson Taylor rocks a jacket made of wallpaper.



Dante Taylor-Imrie, left, Jack Papp, and Bradley Vong strut down the catwalk.



Kimberly Boldero's Māori-inspired look.



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New market to raise funds for Rotary

By KELLEY TANTAU
Public Interest Journalist

Although a popular Thames market won't go ahead for the second year, a new monthly alternative will still raise funds for Rotary.

Earlier this year, "overwhelming" compliance costs brought to a halt the Thames Rotary Gold Rush Market usually held in January to raise money for youth programmes in the area.

With the country still in the middle of Covid-19 uncertainty, the market has been cancelled for a second time.

Upon hearing the news, Goldfields Shopping Centre manager John Freer contacted the local branch to set up a monthly farmers' market in the mall's car park instead.

He told *The Profile* Rotary came on board "straight away".

"We're stepping out into the unknown with this, but that just seems to be the norm these days," he said.

"With Rotary, we believe there's a wonderful opportunity to expose our local products, and that is what this market is about."

The first farmers' market will take place this Sunday, November 28, near the front entrance of the shopping centre. If it rains, the market will move inside the mall.

There would be around 22 stalls, Mr Freer said, including



Goldfields Shopping Centre manager John Freer, left, and Rotary Thames treasurer Greg Davenport are anticipating the launch of the Sunday Farmers' Market. Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

some which sold microgreens, oysters and cheese.

"We've attracted a really wide range of products, and we've had to be quite inventive because there are some producers who can't provide a stall, so the Rotary members will take on that role," he said.

"It has been delayed for a couple of months due to Covid, but we really wanted to try and get one done this side of Christmas."

A Covid-19 vaccination centre will also be placed in the car park.

Rotary Thames treasurer

Greg Davenport said the club was looking forward to working with the mall to run the market.

Depending on its success, it could move from monthly to weekly, he said.

DETAILS: Sunday Farmers' Market, this Sunday, November 28, 9am-1pm at Goldfields Mall car park.

Call for help to weed and mulch

Solarpunk arborist John McKeowen says it's time to do maintenance work on the thousand or so native trees planted at the Burke St dog park in Thames on Mothers Day and during Matariki.

John said he needed help to weed around the trees to prevent Kikuyu grass from overtaking the planting, then to mulch around them to provide nutrients and keep moisture in the soil over the dry summery months so the trees will survive and thrive.

"We need feet and boots on the ground," he said.

John encouraged people to come out and weed the trees anytime as necessary.

"Feel free to pull out weeds when you are on your walk. Do one or two [trees] at a time. Bring a wheelbarrow or bucket so you can spread mulch around the trees easily."

Doing a little bit at a time would make on-going tree maintenance easier, he said.

Another 200 or so native plants provided by Solarpunk Aotearoa's Plant for the Future initiative have been planted in regeneration projects on private land and the group is raising money for the 2022 autumn planting. The mulch to protect the Burke St planting has been provided by Tree Shapes of Thames. More info: contact John: 021 063 5483.



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Fundraising begins to save iconic RSA building

By GORDON PREECE

An estimated \$1 million is needed to earthquake proof Paeroa RSA's 95-year-old building.

The Wharf St building was given a New Building Code rating of 15 per cent under the government's Building Amendments Act, which means it's inadequate if an earthquake strikes.

An earthquake-prone building notice was issued by Hauraki District Council to Paeroa RSA in September last year requiring them to earthquake strengthen the building by 2032 or they would need to vacate.

President John Hallett, who's held the position for three years, said the building is an iconic part of Paeroa and can't be demolished because of its heritage status.

"If we were to vacate the building it would turn into a moulding ruin that will demolish itself over time," he said.

"We want to avoid that as we feel the club has an important function in the town where if anyone wants to host an event they can do it here for free."

Paeroa RSA also hosts weekly events, Paeroa Rotary Club meetings every fortnight and the Ulysses Club once a month and has recently been used for a pop up vaccination centre.

The building has recently undergone two seismic assessments where it was identified



Paeroa RSA president John Hallett says fundraising has begun for strengthening works. Photo: GORDON PREECE

they had to fix the brick panels, reinforce and pin the parapets upstairs and reinforce and strengthen the concrete framework downstairs.

Mr Hallett said the initial seismic assessment cost of \$2000 was funded by Hauraki District Council and the second assessment cost of \$17,000 was mostly funded through community fundraising events.

Mr Hallett said at this stage

Paeroa RSA, which has 380 members, has raised \$10,000 towards the detailed structural design work, which will cost a total of \$80,000.

"Primary fundraising will be through community matters, which is effectively the lottery commission, who have a special fund for heritage buildings," he said. "But that will only fund two thirds so we'll also apply to local trusts, including Akarana Trust,

as well as holding raffles and dinners."

The Hauraki District has been categorised as a medium seismic risk area. Hauraki District Council is proposing to classify some of the district's streets as 'busy thoroughfares' under the national earthquake-prone building system. They've asked the public for feedback and a hearing was scheduled for November 23 in Paeroa's Council Chambers.

Feline fundraiser canned again

Animal Rescue Thames Christmas raffles due to be held outside Pak'nSave Thames this week has been cancelled due to Covid-19.

The fundraiser was quintessential to the unit's survival across the festive season to feed and care for our felines.

This is yet again another massive loss to us and another fundraiser gone and funds gone, which has put us in a very dire financial position and has been extremely stressful for us.

Having lost most of the fundraisers throughout this year due to Covid-19 has meant the rescue has struggled financially and this has been hugely stressful for the team.

All the basic costs of feed, vet care and flea treatments rising dramatically has put further pressure on the limited finances.

Irrespective of whether there are funds or not, the animals still require care 24/7, 365 days a year. They rely on us, they have hope and a future.

Donations of cat and kitten food can be placed in the food bin at Pak'nSave and are a huge blessing to us right now.

Financial blessings to the unit will ensure we can continue the mission of compassion to the dumped, unwanted, abandoned felines in our region, we never know what the season will bring us. Donations: Thames Animal Rescue Team 06 0457 0095150 01, (reference where you want funds spent). Enquiries: Thames Animal Rescue 07 868 2907.

- Alice Parris
Thames Animal Rescue

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Teacher bids farewell to Thames South

By KELLEY TANTAU
Public Interest Journalist

Every time Jeannie Apthorp walks into the grounds of Thames South School, she sees the pohutukawa and the citrus trees, and in spring, the daffodils that border the fenceline.

She's had her hand in many of the kura's projects, from its Trees for Survival education programme, and its soon-to-be-established Pataka Kai.

She has been at the school on Rolleston St for "30-odd" years, and come December 15, she'll be retiring, but it's not that easy to take her heart out of "the school with heart", she told *The Profile*.

Whaea Jeannie is Te Kura o Te Kauaeranga's deputy principal, and she teaches the junior school, from new entrants up to Year 4.

The school is unique in that it has three learning pathways: full immersion te reo Māori, bilingual, and English. They also have two Goldfields Special School satellite classrooms.

"We try really hard to find that spark [in a child]. We call it the school with heart, and you'll notice that everyone cares about everyone else."

Whaea Jeannie said giving back was a "huge" part of the school's ethos, and that would continue with the kura's new



Whaea Jeannie Apthorp is retiring after "30-odd" years at Thames South School.

Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

goal of creating a Pātaka Kai.

She had a hand in planting kai with the tamariki, and the school was now able to look at sharing it in its Pātaka Kai, which was an idea from members of the school community, including parents, board members, and staff.

The kura has vegetable gardens, and an orchard, as well as apricot and citrus trees that produce fruit all year round.

It has also been a part of the Trees for Survival programme for a number of years, and provides free school lunches to every child, every day.

"I've been involved in most things because I'm a gardener, I love gardening, so for me, seeing the grounds mature [has been a highlight]," Whaea Jeannie said.

"The only trees left from when I started here are the

rimu and the totara trees, and the oaks, but basically every other plant or tree here is what the children and the parent support team have grown over the years.

"I walk in, and it just lifts your spirits, and for many children at our schools, gardening is not a thing that happens so much, so if they're a nature-smart child, this is the place they can put their hands in the

soil and watch things grow, and for some of them, that's their 'thing'."

Some of the plants around the school have been planted in remembrance, like the daffodils that line the fence and bloom every year.

They were donated by staff members who had been impacted by cancer.

At the front of the school there is also a small pohutukawa tree with a plaque underneath it, in memory of a staff member's daughter.

There is also a seat near some of the classrooms, donated by a family who relocated to New Zealand from overseas.

Whaea Jeannie said she'd seen the school grow in spirit over the 30 years she'd taught there, and felt like she could "teach forever".

"But there has to be a time where you've got to just let it go," she said.

"There's a brand new journey happening at school and it's the perfect time for the new deputy to begin this journey.

"It's been ever-changing, nothing stays still, change is constant, and this is kind of like the end of one change, and the beginning of another.

"For me, the signs were perfectly aligned for my time, but that's not to say that Thames South is not with you forever. My heart will always be here."

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Te Kura o Awa at Puriri School

Most days the students of Puriri School's Te Kura o Awa programme visit their local awa/stream to enrich their learning through a combination of te ao Māori concepts and environmental play-based learning. Environmental play-based learning connects students to their environment and supports the students of Puriri School to achieve learning outcomes laid out in the science, technology, english, maths, social sciences, local histories and te reo Māori curriculums.

Technology is always in action at Puriri School. Through using nature to build waka, students gain an excellent understanding of the importance of choosing raw materials. Their choices of rakau or

sticks will determine how well a waka will float. Their choice of vine or harakiki/flax to lash their rakau/sticks together will be the difference between the waka staying together or falling apart.

When students test their waka, they develop their science brains by fully understanding what factors an object needs to float. If their waka fails, students develop their maths brain by analysing and then recalculating the size, shape, surface area and the angles that lead to failure.

Once back in the Whānau Room, the senior students are supported to use computer-aided design and drawing tools to create three dimensional images of their designs.

Rather than set homework assignments, students at Puriri School are encouraged to explore their learning at Te Kura o Awa further by spending time with their whānau in nature.

The human brain learns and retains knowledge best by doing and teaching. This style of learning has been used globally for centuries to grow the minds of our young and produce the next generation of inventors, leaders, engineers, doctors, lawyers, architects, educators and solution finders. It completely integrates a te ao Māori approach to learning into national curriculum outcomes. Tamariki learn that all things living and non living are interconnected within their environment.



Ag courses on offer

Valley Education operates a number of free Agriculture programmes, from entry level through to more advanced (Levels 2-3), along with free Mechanical Engineering, Retail, along with Foundation level.

If you have employees who need to upskill, or perhaps you want to continue your own journey, then our one-day-a week Agriculture Level 3 programme, which can be done between milkings or during the dry off period, might be the one for you. Among our other free programmes is our new Te Mahi Whenua Programme, offering a 15-week skills-based training covering quad bike, chainsaw and fencing. Take these skills into any workplace with you. We also offer free transport from Waihi, Paeroa, Kerepēhi, Ngatea and Thames, so really there is no barrier to your learning. We provide a safe and supportive environment for our students.

Among our fee-paying programmes are Barista and Driver Training. We've added a Driving Academy to support people to gain their licenses - prep for your learners, restricted and defensive driving licenses. Just give us a call and we can send you all the information you need to plan your future.

Valley Education: we might be small but we are big in the Valley. Ph 07 868 7892 or Ph/txt 027 314 1577.



Shawn Edlin and Thomas Courtney and their next waka design at Te Kura o Awa. Photo: SUPPLIED

PROGRAMMES AVAILABLE FOR 2022

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(these 3 programmes will help you achieve NCEA Level 1 and 2)

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FREE courses, FREE transport - no EXCUSES

Celebrating THE ARTS

Local artist brightens communities

By GORDON PREECE

Murals depicting local areas are the newest feature for many of the region's schools.

Waerenga artist Claire DuBosky worked as teacher in charge of art at Hauraki Plains College for six years before becoming a relief teacher for many of the region's primary and secondary schools.

It was at Thames South School in 2018 when she was approached by then principal Kim Nikora, who encouraged her to involve kids in art workshops and competitions, including designing murals for schools.

People began noticing her work and got a whole string of schools interested in the Waikato/Hauraki area, Claire said.

"The murals are designed by the students who draw inspiration for them from local areas," she said.

Claire has now completed eight murals around the region so far, including at Kerepēhi School in 2020 and Paeroa Central, Turua and Waerenga Schools this year. Students based the murals on birds, legends of the waka, rivers and what goes on in the rural communities.

"The murals take between six and nine days to create and add a huge amount of vibrancy and colour because they're so bright and bold, which bring joyfulness to the communities," she said.

"I've really loved the whole experience and seeing your legacy left on the wall is a real buzz.

"We've entered every year for the Resene schools mural competition and have come



Claire DuBosky's murals at Kerepēhi School represent wetlands, above, and core values, below.

Photos: SUPPLIED

third twice and hope to better that result but it's amazing when you see how great all the other school's murals are."

Hikutaia School is next on the cards, where students will be designing their mural at the end of the term.

"The students are brainstorming ideas and want to illustrate their five houses with the locality depicted," she said.

Claire will be also completing a 10 metre mural for the Community House in Te Kauwhata during the summer holidays alongside students from Te Kauwhata College.



Waerenga artist Claire DuBosky.



SUPPORT OUR ARTS PAGE

The Valley Profile publishes an arts page every 2nd month. If you are interested in supporting this page, please contact Nikki for more information. There are limited spaces available.

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Profile

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Cemetery sexton dies in accident



As part of a Valley Profile series, **MEGHAN HAWKES** explores our local history by seeking out stories of life and death in the Thames Valley

All that remained was for the grave to be lined with ti-tree. James Chapman, Sexton of Shortland cemetery, had finished the back breaking work of digging and now reached for some tufts of ti-tree scrub. He pulled at a clump which suddenly gave way, sending him tumbling backwards. James fell on a sharp stump of ti-tree which had been cut within a few inches of the ground. The stump entered his back and gut. When he was found he was taken to his home, which was near the cemetery, and attended by Dr Perston.

It was May 1876 and James' accident was the latest in a string of blows to the family. James, 37, had for several years been the caretaker of Shortland cemetery. His work was hard, excavating graves by hand using only a pick and shovel. Graves were dug in all weathers and cave-ins were a constant danger. Sextons were generally semi skilled or unskilled and their pay was notoriously low.

In March, James had ap-



Shortland Cemetery.

Photo: SUPPLIED

proached the Waiotahi District Highway Board, one of many local road boards set up in the Provinces, saying that although he was employed as Sexton, his earnings were insufficient, and that his time was not fully occupied. During the preceding two weeks there had only been two burials and those were children. The work was inadequate to support his wife, Elizabeth, and their young family. James also wrote to the Council after hearing that heavy paths were to be made at Shortland cemetery. He reminded the Council he was only digging graves for a pittance each week, and could not take work elsewhere. He applied to be employed three days a week making paths and doing other work. His pleas appear to have fallen on deaf ears.

Worst of all, his five month old son, John Edward, had died the year before and in all likelihood James would have had the heartbreaking job of digging his child's grave. As James lay recovering at home the council discussed the necessity of having someone appointed in his place in the meantime. Applications for graves usually made to James were now to

be made to the Town Clerk.

After a few days of unsuccessful treatment at home James was moved to the hospital where he lay in precarious state under Dr Fox's care. There were very little hopes of his recovery, although he occasionally appeared to rally. Fourteen long days after the accident, James died from the effects of the wound.

He left his family almost destitute. The community was asked to urgently assist them. The Cemetery Committee, recognising the family's distress, unanimously voted that the sum of ten pounds be presented to them. Other donations trickled in. Financial relief for widows and fatherless children was a major problem and there were calls for a permanent Widow and Orphan's fund to be established. James Chapman was known as an honest and industrious man and his wife decent and respectable, but she received little help after his death. There were five applications accompanied by good testimonials for a new Sexton and after due consideration William Swinden was appointed.

James was buried with his small son at Shortland cemetery.



Kiwi handler Neil John shows off a brown kiwi
Photo: RACHEL HOLMES

Getting up close with kiwi

CONTINUED FROM P1

they're going to react when I do a health check and so forth.

"Some are quite calm, others are pretty grumpy, but quite often, most of them go back to sleep."

As well as witnessing the hatching of the kiwi chick, Neil has had many memorable moments out in the bush, like when a kiwi dropped its transmitter earlier this year.

"When a kiwi drops a transmitter and there's no movement, it gives off a mortality signal, so I thought I was going in to pick up a dead kiwi," he said.

"I found the transmitter, and as I was coming back, I remembered I'd picked the eggs up from this sire not too far away from here last year. I wondered if he was in the same burrow.

"I put my hand in and had a look and, yup, he was definitely in there."

Neil collected the eggs but because Auckland was locked down, and the Wairakei facility

was closed, he had to keep them in the hot water cupboard at his home overnight. "I had to get up during the night and reheat the hot water bottle to keep them warm," he said. "We've had little special moments like that."

On the flip side, however, Neil has also had to endure the worst type of kiwi recovery: locating a deceased bird.

"I get to know these birds quite well, so it does affect you, it does cut you up quite a bit.

"They are very, very special to me, so it does upset me when people say: 'My dog will never hurt a kiwi'. They don't understand what it's like," he said.

"Once a dog grabs a kiwi, the damage is done."

And with the birds moving closer and closer into the backyards of Te Mata residents, it was as important as ever for home and dog owners to know how to keep them protected.

DETAILS: TCKC run kiwi avoidance training. For dates and further information, visit: www.thames-coastkiwicare.org.

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Low vax rates for rural areas

CONTINUED FROM P3

“doesn’t cost anything, and it’s not hard to get done.”

Mr Simpson said with borders opening, concerns about a potential outbreak in the Thames-Coromandel and Hauraki districts were valid. He had written to Waikato DHB chief executive Kevin Snee asking what extra services and facilities would be available to both visitors and residents on the Coromandel over the summer period.

As at November 17, he was yet to get a response.

Meanwhile, the Waikato DHB area, which included the Thames Valley, passed its first-dose vaccination rate of 90 per cent of the eligible population over the weekend. According to the DHB, 321,464 people had their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine and 290,419 their second. The Waikato Pacific population had also achieved 90 per cent first dose, with 9614 first doses and 8411 (78.7 per cent) second.

Waikato Covid-19 programme lead Maree Munro said with summer coming, people were wanting to make sure they could get out and about.

“Once we move into the new system, you won’t be able to do a lot of the things you love unless you are fully vaccinated,” she said. “That’s a big incentive for people to get cracking. The Delta outbreak in Waikato has also

been a reminder that Covid-19 can spread far and fast and hits the unvaccinated hardest.”

Munro said hitting the milestone was a great effort, but the job wasn’t “done yet”.

“We need to reach that 90 per cent fully vaccinated rate. We also need to look at who has been vaccinated. We have a large and vulnerable Māori population who are 7265 (79.5 per cent) short of reaching the 90 per cent first dose target.

“Although we have vaccinated over 95 per cent of our Māori and Pacific kaumatua who are 65 years old [and over], we need to reach the younger generation to achieve 90 per cent first doses for Māori and then for full vaccination so everyone in our community has a high level of protection.”

DETAILS: As at November 22, the Thames-Coromandel District was 3,106 doses away from reaching 90 per cent fully vaccinated. Out of the population of 26,266 people, 86.48 per cent (22,715 people) had one dose, 78.17 per cent (20,533 people) had two doses, and 13.5 per cent (3,551 people) were unvaccinated. In the Hauraki District, there were 2,948 doses needed to reach 90 per cent fully vaccinated. Out of the population of 17,324 people, 82.78 per cent (14,340 people) had one dose, 72.99 per cent (12,644 people) had two doses, and 17.2 per cent (2,984 people) were unvaccinated.

Community champions celebrated

The Hauraki District Council held their OnYa Awards evening recently to celebrate and recognise community champions across four categories.

Mayor Toby Adams said this year’s OnYa Awards, previously named Citizen and Young Achiever Awards, was the best one yet.

“Covid may have cancelled a lot of things lately but one thing it hasn’t cancelled is the dedication and commitment from community champions to make a difference,” he said.

“Year on year I’m so impressed with the calibre of the folk who are nominated by the community for these citizenship awards. I take my hat off to all of them.”

The OnYa Award 2021 recipients are: OnYa – for knocking it out of the park! award for service or achievement in sport or recreation: Jessica Penwarden, of Paeroa College; Rimu Alexander, of Paeroa College; Reefe Benny, of Hauraki Plains College; Kyla Walker, of Waihi College; Bree McCowatt, of Hauraki Plains College and Ben Hennessey, of Waihi College.

OnYa - for working together to make a difference, community group award for service to the community: Mairi Jay, of Paeroa Stream Care Trust; Margaret Andreassen, of Waihi Town Cats; Jana Smith, of Paeroa College; Sarah Keall, of Waihi College; Thomas Neil Gray, of Haurakian



The Hauraki OnYa Awards winners.

Photo: SUPPLIED

Charitable Trust and Search and Rescue; Adam Matete, of Up in Smoke BBQ competition, the Ngatea 12 Week Fitness Challenge, coaching primary school rugby, community garden clean ups and charity fundraisers.

OnYa - for enhancing and enriching our lives award for service or achievement in arts or culture: Pauline Germon – Royal Academy of Dance – a ballet and contemporary dance teacher who inspires students to go on to the highest level of training and achievement at national and international levels.

OnYA - Tu Meke award: Special award for outstanding service to the community: Walter Tye, a Rotarian for more than 20

years, involved with the V8 Car & Motorcycle Show; Vintage & Classic Car Show; Strange Road Charity Rides, Volunteer at the Highland Games; Co-Op Parish Committee; Paeroa Carehouse and kids’ day camps, NZ Jaycees and Federated Farmers. Barry Williams – another Paeroa Rotarian for over 20 years, Barry has been involved with Ngatea Scouts, Kaihere School, Homes for Humanity in Fiji and Nepal, Hauraki Plains College and the Paeroa Community Support Trust. Bill and Ngaire Tissingh, who have supported the community through their work as pastoral carers, family counsellors, a marriage and funeral celebrant and their church work.



TEAM KERRY & ADRIENNE



AMY BUSTARD




Maree Simpson



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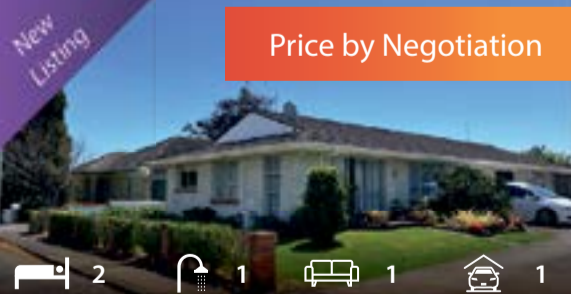
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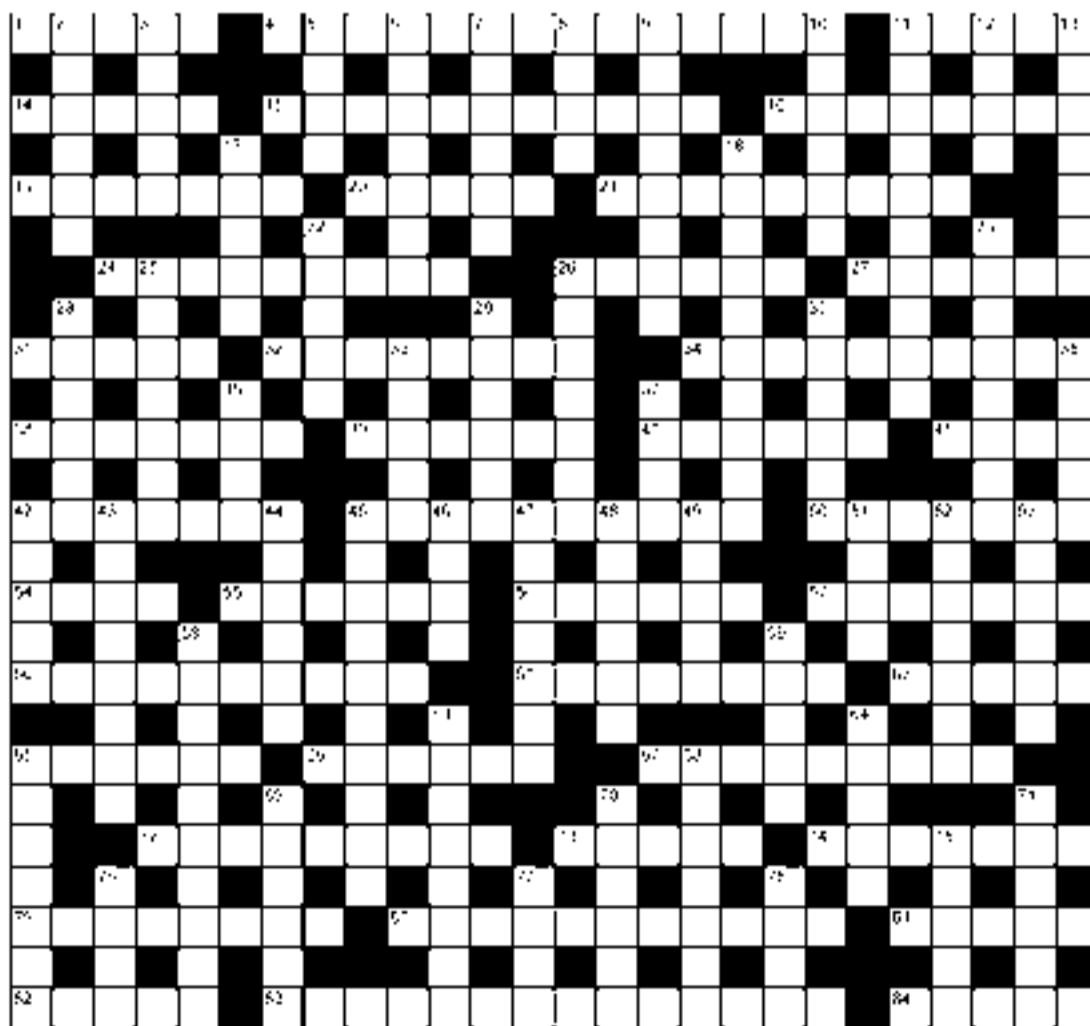
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JUMBO CROSSWORD

47

- ACROSS**
- 1 Convulsion (5)
 - 4 More important matters to attend to (5,4,2,3)
 - 11 Theories (5)
 - 14 Titan (5)
 - 15 Doctor's instrument (11)
 - 16 Bears out (anag)(8)
 - 19 Surgical pincers (7)
 - 20 Measuring instrument (5)
 - 21 French flag (9)
 - 24 Moved ahead (9)
 - 26 Thin paper (6)
 - 27 Vale (6)
 - 31 Oily fruit (5)
 - 32 Courgette (8)
 - 34 Fantasist (10)
 - 38 Petty (7)
 - 39 Heavenly body (6)
 - 40 Repulsive (6)
 - 41 Indication (4)
 - 42 Of the heart (7)
 - 45 Analogy (10)
 - 50 Dry (7)
 - 54 Skin eruption (4)
 - 55 Traps (6)
 - 56 Snake (6)
 - 57 Trooper (7)
 - 60 Aiding in the birth of a baby (10)
 - 61 Unnatural (8)
 - 62 Throbs (5)
 - 65 German city (6)
 - 66 Stress (6)
 - 67 In a short while (9)
 - 72 Pouch on horse, bike (9)
 - 73 Pollute (5)
 - 74 Title (7)
 - 79 Bicycle riders (8)
 - 80 Tiny (11)
 - 81 Power (5)
 - 82 Frequently (5)
 - 83 One who prevents others from having things not needed by oneself (3,2,3,6)
 - 84 Long-legged bird (5)
- DOWN**
- 2 Toxin (6)
 - 3 Of sound waves (5)
 - 5 Dancer's skirt (4)
 - 6 Severe (7)
 - 7 Taken in (6)
 - 8 Foot cover (4)
 - 9 Most important or high-ranking officials (3,5)
 - 10 Every twelve months (6)
 - 11 Vaccinated (10)
 - 12 Biblical garden (4)
 - 13 Doctor's rooms (7)
 - 17 Piquant (5)
 - 18 Line of work (10)
 - 22 First appearance (5)
 - 23 World sports event (8)
 - 25 Brought back to life (7)
 - 26 Tornado in the US (7)
 - 28 Girl's name (6)
 - 29 Abduct (6)
 - 30 Fine-tune (6)
 - 33 Stringed instrument (5)
 - 35 Flowing (5)
 - 36 Emanating magma (4)
 - 37 Auction items (4)
 - 42 Was concerned (5)
 - 43 Stealing livestock (8)
 - 44 Singing bird (6)
 - 45 Makes historical records (10)
 - 46 Thin fog (4)
 - 47 Road-surfacing material (7)
 - 48 Purpose (6)
 - 49 Smell (5)
 - 51 Boxing blow (4)
 - 52 Revolutionary (7)
 - 53 Balance unsteadily (6)
 - 58 Removal from a place of danger to a safer place (10)
 - 59 Untrue (5)
 - 63 In-law (8)
 - 64 Beneath (5)
 - 65 Country in Africa (7)
 - 68 Dilapidated (3-4)
 - 69 Checked and corrected (6)
 - 70 Fragrant ointment (6)
 - 71 Fasten securely (6)
 - 75 Go aimlessly (5)
 - 76 North Briton (4)
 - 77 Part of foot (4)
 - 78 Citrus fruit (4)



PREVIOUS SOLUTION

ACROSS: 11 Tobacco, 4 Red herring, 9 Hatchet, 13 Iota, 14 Admire, 15 Resume, 16 Liaison, 19 Flea market, 20 Industry, 21 Knave, 24 Studio, 25 Sprang, 27 Grand Prix, 32 Creation, 33 Slogan, 34 Bouquet, 38 Incensed, 39 Blinds, 40 Hoop, 41 Topaz, 42 Steps, 45 Give the glad eye, 52 Harem, 55 Tamed, 56 Jobs, 57 Aboard, 58 Trinidad, 61 Scuttle, 62 Unsure, 63 Barbecue, 66 Blistered, 68 Voting, 69 Walrus, 73 Nurse, 74 Approval, 76 Goldilocks, 81 Through, 82 Guinea, 83 Poetic, 84 Toga, 85 Prosper, 86 References, 87 Yawning.

DOWN: 1 Thief, 2 Butter up, 3 Orders, 4 Raise, 5 Duel, 6 Earring, 7 Reside, 8 Names, 10 Arid, 11 Chianti, 12 Evolve, 17 Immigrants, 18 Prone, 22 Gauntlet, 23 Spoon, 24 Sequins, 26 Pail, 28 Reached, 29 Bad egg, 30 Fossil, 31 Menace, 33 Sense, 35 Quota, 36 Acne, 37 Copy, 43 Trance, 44 Pleat, 46 Idol, 47 Essence, 48 Hiatus, 49 Grove, 50 Acrobats, 51 Earned, 52 Honourable, 53 Rude, 54 Meddles, 59 Clash, 60 Grin, 64 Tempt, 65 Broccoli, 67 Lessons, 68 Village, 70 Author, 71 Avenue, 72 Oddity, 75 Rouge, 77 Opens, 78 Slang, 79 Ogre, 80 Epic.

GARDENING

Prepare your garden for Christmas

The weather is still very changeable, sometimes four seasons in one day. It's time to get the garden shipshape before Christmas and New Year holidays arrive. Growth at this time can be unbelievably rapid, and there are many urgent jobs needing attention almost daily. One of the hardest decisions is how best to ration available growing space especially the vegetable garden. What to grow and how many. Importantly, keep the garden well cultivated so the plants don't have to compete with the weeds.

VEGETABLES

Harvest is now complete for asparagus, so cultivate beds, weed, fertilise and mulch heavily. Beans: continue successive sowings of dwarf beans. Feed and keep well-watered and continue harvesting to promote further flowering. For scarlet runners, feed weed and keep well watered. Start harvesting beetroot once ready for summer salads. Further sowings can be made for extended harvesting. Cabbages: watch for aphids and white butterfly and treat accordingly. Thin carrot seedlings where necessary. Eggplants, capsicum, tomatoes – keep beds well weeded and watered. Keep making regular sowings of lettuces at 3-4 weekly intervals to give you a regular supply of fresh salad greens. Continue to mound up earlier plantings of potatoes to protect new tubers from light as crops start to make rapid growth.



Sow short and long maturing varieties of corn now. Photo: IGOR LUKIN/PIXABAY

Sweet Corn – Sow short and long maturing varieties at the same time to give a spread of harvest. A side dressing with a nitrogen fertiliser when plants are about knee high and keep weed free and water regularly. Seeds to sow – directly outdoors - beans, spring onions, parsley, radishes, NZ spinach.

FLOWERS

Summer flower borders should be well established. Early season flower displays will be commencing. Seeds to sow – marigold, zinnia.

FRUIT

Earliest maturing peach, plum and cherry varieties start to ripen early this month. Other varieties follow in quick succession throughout mid and late December. Strawberries, gooseberries, black currants, raspberries and boysenberries will also be ready for harvest. Close attention to brown rot control is important

for stone fruit, particularly under humid, wet conditions. Treat as required. When harvest is complete all trees need to be heavily summer pruned. Apples and pears – complete fruit thinning. Maintain regular fortnightly spraying to prevent codling moth. Summer prune vigorous growing trees. Grapes – growth which becomes excessively long should be trimmed back to 5 or 6 buds above bunches of fruit. Trim leaves covering grapes to help promote ripening.

ROSES

Once early flowering is complete all rose bushes should be pruned back lightly to stimulate new growth to produce successive flushes of summer blooms.

LAWNS

Hot summer weather causes lawns to rapidly dry out. Avoid cutting the lawn too close. Irrigate frequently in the evenings.

- Ngatea Garden Circle

Funds raised for cancer

By KATE DURIE
Wintec Journalism Student

Once again the Zonta club has held its annual pink walk from the Thames Wharf to Kuranui Bay to raise money for The New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation.

Despite rainy weather on November 17 at 5:30pm, Pam Harsant from Zonta Club said they raised “\$392 thanks to some generous donations”.

This event has been held for approximately the past six years, and Pam said it was “important to donate to the Breast Cancer Foundation and to contribute to the overall well-being of women”.

There was not a huge number of people in attendance this year due to the conditions, but those who attended had lots of smiles and were dressed in loads of pink, she said.

The group had to “just have our coats ready, and get walking,” she added, “we didn’t keep totally dry but it didn’t matter”.

There was a sausage sizzle held after the walk to the bay and prizes on offer for the best dressed, the oldest and youngest walker.

The Zonta Club of Thames Valley thanked the community for their support in this fun event, she said.

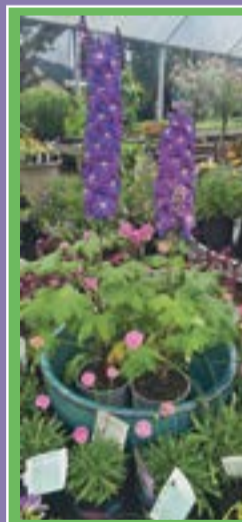


Moira Coatsworth took part with her pooch Panda. Photo: TERESA RAMSEY

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6 Plant above ground crops	7 Plant above ground crops	8 Non planting Day	9 Non planting Day	10 Plant above ground Crops, Liquid Feed	11 Plant above ground Crops, Liquid Feed	12 Non planting Day
13 Non planting Day	14 Non planting Day	15 Plant above ground crops	16 Plant above ground crops	17 Non planting Day	18 Non planting Day	19 Full Moon
20 Plant root crops, Liquid Feed	21 Plant root crops, Liquid Feed	22 Summer Solstice	23 Non planting Day	24 Non planting Day	25 Non planting Day	26 Non planting Day
27 Plant root crops, trees and shrubs	28 Plant root crops, trees and shrubs	29 Plant root crops, Liquid Feed	30 Plant root crops, Liquid Feed	December 2021 Moon Planting Calendar		

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Paeroa's cricket pitch roller has been refurbished and now resides at Tairua Rugby and Sports Club. Photo: LEON SMITH

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My Life so far as a High Roller

I was born in the workshop of Beaney and Sons in Auckland about seventy years ago. Shortly afterwards, I was loaded on to a railway wagon and arrived in Paeroa to serve as the roller for the new grass cricket pitch which had been laid on the Paeroa Domain. I was referred to as simply "The Roller".

When playing headquarters for Paeroa's cricketers moved from the picturesque Domain to the rather austere Rawhitiroa Reserve, I was sad. As well as the beautiful setting, I missed watching the year round action associated with other sporting codes on the Domain.

Yes - I know the multi-use of the Domain was unhelpful at times regarding the scheduling of club and representative cricket but.....

It was quieter at the reserve but I must admit, without mentioning

names of course, that some of the activities I witnessed behind my abode in a back quiet corner were also highly entertaining. Certain 'after dark' social interactions, on warm dry nights topped the list without doubt.

Another change of home occurred when the Rawhitiroa Reserve was converted into river berm and the cricketers moved to the newly developed sporting complex named Centennial Park in the mid 1970s. A cricket pitch was laid down with imported clay proving to be highly successful in providing a first class batting-bowling surface - with my help of course. I was a light roller when empty but a much heavier unit when filled with water.

Ten years later, my motor was worn out. A larger former road works roller was purchased and I

was retired from service. For the past thirty years, I have been neglected, ignored - just sitting, waiting and hoping. Threats of a scrap metal destination were a worry. Then redemption! One evening six weeks ago, I was loaded on to a large trailer and when I woke the next morning I was in Tairua. I now have a powerful new motor and a reconditioned gearbox. My old joints have been filled with grease and the gleaming new paintwork on my bones has led to my new name "The Wasp". Much nicer is that than simply "The Roller" don't you think? I am employed and loving my work.

Auckland to Paeroa to Tairua and the promise of a new entertaining life. I am very happy again.

Signed- "The Wasp."

- Mike Cotter

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SPORTS

Season finale for Swamp Foxes

HEARTLAND RUGBY

The Thames Valley rugby team wound up the 2021 season with a prize giving at Te Aroha last Friday.

Confirmation that Connor McVerry, Sam Van der Valk and Te Huia Kutia had all been selected for the New Zealand Heartland team ensured that the evening got off to a great start. The Heartland XV will play the Barbarians at Taupo on Sunday, December 5.

The main awards presented were: The Most Improved Player: Will Newbold (Hauraki North); Rookie of the Year: Trinity McQueen (Mercury Bay); Iron Man: Cameron Dromgool (Te Aroha Cobras); Most Valuable Player: Te Huia Kutia (Thames); The Michael Tarry Memorial Trophy - The most dedicated Swamp Fox: Matt McCahon (Waihou); The Reg. Elvidge Trophy - Player of the Year: Connor McVerry (Mercury Bay).

The try Ben Stephens (Te Aroha Cobras) scored against South Canterbury in the Meads Cup final was voted as the Try of the Year. The joint Head Coaches, David Harrison and Joe Murray presented a comprehensive review of the season and although they were disappointed in not winning the Meads Cup, the Swamp Foxes can take some satisfaction from being ranked the Number 2 Heartland side in New Zealand.



Te Huia Kutia (Thames), left, receives the Most Valuable Player award and has been selected for the NZ Heartland team. Photos: JAKOB ANDREW



Will Newbold (Hauraki North) was named Most Improved Player.



Club members enjoyed catching up on open day. Photos: SUPPLIED

Croquet season begins

The Thames Croquet Club had several working bees over the winter, preparing the lawns for its opening day on Monday, November 1. Club secretary Sheryl McConnell said there was a good turnout of members at the open day who enjoyed catching up with each other and playing some croquet. "We are all looking forward to a good summer of play including competition with other clubs," she said.



Several working bees were held over winter.

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SPORTS

Trail upgrade in the works for bike club

By KATE DURIE
Wintec Journalism Student

The Thames Mountain Bike Club has raised \$75,000 towards an \$86,000 track upgrade that will open the Karaka Trail to mountain bikers as well as the public.

Club spokesperson Jacob Tyrell-Baxter said the aim of the upgrade was to create a loop linking the Karaka to the existing Waiotahi track, making a 12km-long, grade three, dual-use track for riding and walking.

He said the club wanted to create a “decent trail that will get people out of town and into the bush”.

He said it was important to get this trail created for several reasons: “The lack of this sort of trail being available, and potential for an increase in tourism and an opportunity for people within the town and utilise the backcountry”.

The Thames Mountain Bike Club received a quote from local company Walkway Solutions for \$86,000 to help them upgrade the track.

So far, the club has received a \$40,000 grant from the Lion Foundation, \$20,000 from Thames-Coromandel District Council (TCDC), plus \$15,000 through pub charity.

The club, which has about 200 volunteers and around 30 paid members, has some



LEFT: An upgrade is planned for the Karaka track. RIGHT: Thames Mountain Bike Club members during a club ride.

Photos: SUPPLIED

more fundraising to do to raise the remaining \$11,000 before work could begin, Jacob said.

The club was currently having frequent meetings with the Department of Conservation, TCDC and local iwi to work out the best solution for the go-

ahead for construction.

As it stands, the Karaka Trail is a paper road and was very overgrown and not well maintained, he said.

Previously it was used to service the mines and for logging. Now it had been left as an

advanced grade tramping track by the Department of Conservation, he said.

The club has been working for the past ten years towards the goal of making the Karaka track a multi-use tramping and biking track.

In 2017, the club managed to open up the bottom of the Karaka track by adding a bridge.

After some stagnation, the volunteers and club members have now jumped back into action, he said.

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