

Danielle Aitchison has arrived back in NZ with two medals around her neck after competing in her first ever Paralympics. KELLEY TANTAU chats with the country's 211th Paralympian as she recuperates in MIQ.

It's Danielle Auction of fourth day in managed iso-Danielle Aitchison's lation at an Auckland hotel, and both she and mum Tracy don masks as they answer the door to get their temperatures taken.

After passing their first Covid-19 tests, they were given blue wristbands that offered them 45-minutes of outdoor exercise, but it's raining in Auckland, and the pair predict much of the day will be spent

"Mum and I have gone over-seas or to national competitions within New Zealand, so we know how to travel together without getting on each other's nerves," Danielle says.

The pair are close, with Danielle crediting her mum as one of the most influential people in her career, while Tracy has always instilled that if you never try, you never know.

Now, Danielle has become New Zealand's 211th Paralympian after success at the Tokyo Paralympics saw her clinch a silver and bronze medal in the women's 200m and 100m T36 sprint, respectively.

"I was really happy to be out there," Danielle said, "and I enjoyed racing with the girls, so when I got the silver medal it was more the icing on the cake.'

Covid-19 restrictions meant Tracy watched the events unfold from her Hamilton home.



Danielle Aitchison scooped two medals in her Paralympic debut in Tokoyo.

"I was bursting because I knew how much effort and work Danielle has put into her training. She's made a lot of sacrifices," she says.

'There are days when she doesn't feel like she wants to

go out and train, there are days when the weather is absolute sh*t outside, and yet she puts a jacket on and off she trots.

her.

'So that first silver medal... she was finally being rewarded, and I knew what it meant to

Danielle was born with se-

vere jaundice, two uncommon

types of cerebral palsy (athet-

oid and ataxia), and 80-90 per

Tracy was told her daughter

cent hearing loss

would likely suffer brain damage and be in a wheelchair.

However, after being in-spired by the 2016 Summer Paralympics in Rio, then-16year-old Danielle turned her attention to athletics for the 2017 Halberg Junior Disability Games.

Danielle, who grew up in Patetonga, moved to Hamilton a few years ago to pursue a university degree and to focus on her sport, joining the Hamilton City Hawks athletics club in 2018.

She has been training with coach Alan McDonald while she juggles her studies at the University of Waikato.

"I didn't think [the Paralympics] was possible when I was younger because I was compet-ing against able-bodied kids and I wasn't up to their level, so I was quite sad that I wasn't able to achieve what they were all achieving," she says.

"But now that I'm in the Paralympics, and to have been able to try different sports that were more suited to my disability, I'm super proud of how I've coped and how I've taken up the opportunity."

Danielle spent her 20th birthday - her first birthday away from family - in Saga, Japan, almost two weeks before ĥer first race in Tokyo.

She was surprised with notes and letters from loved ones **CONTINUED P2**



CONTACT US

The Valley Profile is a community newspaper that delivers 100% local news in the Thames Valley region. We deliver 12,500 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. NEWS/EDITORIAL **Fditor** Teresa Ramsey Ph 0204 0944 853 Email: editor@valleyprofile.co.nz Reporter Kelley Tantau Ph 022 619 4889 Email: kelley@valleyprofile.co.nz ADVERTISING Ad manager Nikki Sanders Ph 022 1303 885

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hames Autos

anielle's dream debut in Tokyo

CONTINUED FROM P1

back home, and a cake organised by her travelling companions.

But the realisation she was about to compete on the Para-lympic stage didn't hit her until she walked through Tokyo's Olympic Stadium to practise block-starts before the full competition began.

"It was the biggest stadium I had seen and there was no one there," she says. "I couldn't imagine if someone was there because it was so big and so surreal.'

Danielle, who completed her schooling at Kaihere School and Hauraki Plains College, has tricks to get into the right mental state before a race, including avoiding her phone, and reciting mantras.

'I do have a music playlist which is upbeat that me and my best friend made.

'It brings back good memories and it gets me in a good mood." she savs.

She hopes to inspire people, whether they are disabled or able-bodied, to give different sports a go and "aim for the stars".

"I know that the Paralympics have had so much interest from people who have a disability asking how they can get involved," Tracy says.

"It opened up their world,



Danielle Aitchison hopes to inspire people to give different sports a go and "aim for the stars".

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and they saw things that they never thought were possible.³ Danielle is now setting her sights on the 2024 summer Paralympics in Paris, France.

This time though, the whole family wants to be by her side. "I don't want to watch another Paralympics on the couch,' Tracy says.

"It is a lot of hard work," Danielle adds, "so you have to be committed to making the dream come true. At the end of

the day, it's all you."



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Masks quickly become handbag essential

By KELLEY TANTAU

A Thames Valley grandmother making 20 masks a day to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 believes face coverings are an item everyone will end up owning.

Lynnette Mackenzie, from Puriri, has already made hundreds of reusable cotton face masks during the current Covid-19 outbreak. On one hand, she's surprised at just how booming her business has become. On the other, government regulations making mask-wearing the "new normal" contributed greatly to its success, she told *The Profile*.

In a September 1 update from the Ministry of Health, it became mandatory for people to wear a face covering if they were a customer or an employee involving customer contact at a business or service operating at Covid-19 alert level 3. At level 2, people legally must wear a face covering when on public transport, on flights, visiting healthcare or aged-care facilities, and inside retail businesses and public venues, such as libraries and museums.

"I think it's something we're all going to end up owning... in our handbags, in our cars," Lynnette said.

"This time I've made double what I did last time, and I think that's because it is mandatory."



LEFT: Lynnette Mackenzie's face mask business has been booming. RIGHT: Family members rock her washable masks.

Lynnette said having four children and nine grandchildren meant there was always "little sewing bits and pieces to do", but at the end of the last lockdown, she started making washable, reusable masks for her family. Things started developing

Things started developing when Lynnette's creations were put online, and she was now making at least 20 masks a day. She had been running on old stock until the Thames Valley dropped to level 3 on August 31, and she's since been buying more fabric through contactless delivery to keep up with demand. "A lot of people are saving they

"A lot of people are saying they are finding them comfortable. One lady said to me she would normally rip off her mask as quickly as she could once she'd get out of the supermarket, but she was actually in her car driving when she realised she needed to take my mask off. So that's really good feedback."

And although it wasn't mandatory for children under the age of 12 to wear a face covering, Lynnette had also been making and selling masks for the younger age group. Photos: SUPPLIED

"I'm pleased to think that I'm helping to look after the community, and that I'm doing something that isn't just for money," she said.

"[This lockdown], my house is not clean, food is not prepared, there is no baking... nothing is being done, except the masks." Lynnette's masks can be found

on Facebook Marketplace.



"I have used Thames Collision Repairs on three separate occasions.

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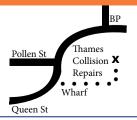
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Return to school after 'uncertain' lockdown

While some students benefited from not having long travel times to and from school during the latest Covid-19 lockdown, others too shy to seek support struggled, Hauraki Plains College says.

The sudden shutdown on August 17 saw schools around the country close their doors throughout the duration of Covid-19 alert level 4, only reopening to full capacity on September 9 under level 2.

Hauraki Plains College Year 11 dean Alissa Place said while New Zealand's first lockdown in March last year prepared the school and its students for learning from home, there was "a sense of uncertainty" brought upon by the recent lockdown's changing goalposts.

"Some students benefited from not having the long travel times to school and utilised that time to do more meaningful things. Sadly, there are definitely students who, for a myriad of reasons (lack of resources such as internet, having to help with family businesses, being too shy to seek support from teachers etc), struggled," she said.

"I would say that the students who did struggle last time were better prepared to seek support this time around."

Mrs Place said there would

A School

More

"definitely" be students who would return to school behind in their NCEA credits and achievements, but said the school had a number of interventions ready to be put into place to enable success for all students, regardless of their experience learning from home.

"Students need to prioritise their efforts and time well, they need to seek guidance from an adult they feel comfortable with at school (subject teacher, form teacher, dean) and prepare a realistic plan of attack," she said.

"The students need to make the most of teacher and senior student tutorials. They also need to take it one step at a time and not give up. It also helps when the family is on board supporting the school and the students in getting everything they need done."

NCEA exams have been pushed back by two weeks because of the lockdown, which deputy head boy Reefe Benny said should help students.

"Despite the shortening of summer break, we should be prepared as long as we push through right up to the dates of our exams," he said. "I think that this lockdown

"I think that this lockdown affected HPC not too severely. I feel as if students have coped much better this time."



Rueben Smith tests out his home-made BMX track during lockdown.



Isabelle Courtney brightens her neighbours' day with footpath chalk.

the block.



HPC students filled in their spare time with a variety of activities during lockdown

Ashton Woolworth rebuilt the motor in his homebuilt buggy.



Cerys Hasler, year 10, gets to work looking after the bee hives.

Trust a Good News Story

Following the 90th celebrations of the founding of Ngatea District High School / Hauraki Plains College in 2002, a group of past pupils on the organising committee made the decision to found a Trust which would provide additional resources and opportunities for the college beyond what the Ministry of Education provides.

From this conversation, the Haurakian Charitable Trust was formally established in 2004 to enhance the educational, social and wellbeing



HPC students learning quad skills

outcomes for Hauraki Plains College and the local community. That was the beginning of a number of projects which have contributed significantly to the school. The first project to get off the ground was the purchase of the original Hayward Farm, which was made possible by the generosity а of small number of local families who saw merit in the project. At the

time, the intention

was for profits from the farm to provide additional resourcing for the college. When a subdivision opportunity became available to meet the needs of a growing population in Ngatea, 28 acres (8.8 ha) was re-zoned for students to have 'hands on' experiences in agriculture, horticulture, bee keeping, building, poultry and the like.

The subdivision also enabled the Trust to purchase a larger farm at Waitakaruru, in order to build up a sustainable funding base for grants to the college. A further recent addition of a block of land now forms a 174 hectare farm milking 550 cows. Considerable work has been completed to ensure an effective



HPC students learn fencing skills

Trees for Survival programme are two projects currently

dairy farming operation including

the extension of the cowshed and

development of races and fencing for

The Trust is currently working with the college to continue the development

of the Hayward

Farm as a site

for the delivery of

Primary Industry

and Trades hands

on learning. The

a classroom on

the farm and the

establishment

of a large shade

house for growing

trees under the

of

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being considered. Other projects the Haurakian Trust has either sponsored or initiated include the reconstruction of the Dog Box (the original school classroom); the Centennial (Sports) Centre; the Masonic Lodge for a Performing Arts Centre and 11 Orchard Road at the front of the school for a project yet to be decided.

As well as the provision of facilities to allow students to learn, the Trust has given over \$200,000 to assist the college with nonministry funded purposes. The \$20,000 donated this year has enabled the college to employ an additional school counsellor. With the ongoing development of the Haurakian Charitable Trust Farm at Waitakaruru, the goal is to eventually provide \$100,000 annually to the college.

Current Trust members are Ciarán Tully (Chair); Gill Leonard, Neil Gray and Ngaire Harris (all founding members of the Trust) along with Lee Carter, Derek Aislabie, Peter Schouten and Hayley Green who contribute a diverse range of skills. Trust Chairperson, Ciarán Tully, is clear on the value of the Trust to college and community: "The Trust is here to support the students of Hauraki Plains College. When we help the students, there is a flow on effect. Parents want to send their children to Hauraki Plains College. More students means more teachers. which brings more people to Ngatea and more investment in our local businesses and community. Everyone benefits".



HPC students learn fencing skills

Pair not 'lazy', just leaving their lawns alone

By KELLEY TANTAU

Sometimes, letters won't be delivered because the postie can't find the mailbox. Other times, neighbours knock on the door to make sure whoever is inside is "not dead in there".

But that's okay. Missing mail and concerned neighbours were to be expected by those taking part in the "nomow movement", John McKeowen and Deborah Macdonald Brown said.

The Thames friends, who live a few blocks apart, have taken the "unkempt" approach to their lawns and front verges - but they insisted it wasn't because they were "lazy".

- but they insisted it wan't because they were "lazy". "I think a lot of people think we can't be stuffed, but this is an active thing we are doing," John told *The Profile*. "Some people like a formal

"Some people like a formal garden, some people like a natural, wild garden, and people work hard to maintain it looking natural. It's a personal thing."

The idea behind the initiative was for homeowners to let nature take its course and allow all or part of their lawns to grow instinctively. Benefits included a reduced

Benefits included a reduced use of fossil fuels from petrol engines; the provision for a habitat for insects, which in turn provided food for birds; the establishment of wild flowers as a nectar source for bees; and long grass, which was better able to absorb stormwater run-off with less discharge of urban pollutants into the ocean, John said.

But the pair admitted the reaction of the neighbours and passers-by had been interesting to witness.

The complaints always boiled down to aesthetics, they said.

"Other people's lawns are beautifully controlled and manicured, with the lawns perfectly mown, and I think it's for that sense of order, that they can control their environment; whereas, I'm trying to let nature be," Deborah explained. "This is the easiest thing I can

"This is the easiest thing I can do for the environment."

John said having a perfectly manicured lawn was a recent trend in the world's history.

"One hundred years ago, no one had lawn mowers. Now, there's become a lawn standard."

He was an arborist by trade



Thames locals Deborah Macdonald Brown and John McKeowen are letting nature take its course by allowing their verges and lawns to grow instinctively.

and began being mindful about his lawn years ago, when he planted fruit trees along his roadside verge so passers-by could help themselves to the produce. However, once he began actively overseeing that his lawn and verges remained natural, he received letters, emails, and also physical visits from council staff, he said.

Thames-Coromandel District Council's roading manager Ed Varley told *The Profile* they were in contact with John regarding the trees on his verge.

He said the council was interested in maintaining vegetation on road reserves or verges to ensure services "above and below ground" were not affected by roots disrupting water pipes, or tree limbs "growing into power cables".

It was also important to maintain sightlines for drivers, to prevent the risk of fire, and not impede the passage of pedestrians or cyclists who might need to walk or cycle on a verge. However, there was no bylaw regulating this.

"In 2009, our council decided after consultation and, during the 10-year-plan deliberations at that time, that the mowing of residential berms (or verges) should be left to the adjoining property owner. This policy is consistent with the majority of other New Zealand local authorities," he said. "If a property owner or raci-

"If a property owner or resident doesn't want to maintain the verge, our council will do it, but only to the extent needed to mitigate the issues noted above."

But despite their lawns being a perceived eye-sore for some, John and Deborah were proud of their properties.

of their properties. "People think we aren't proud," Deborah said, "but it's not about that".

"It's bigger than us and what we feel," John added. "It's about the rest of the planet: the bugs and bees and fungi and bacteria that we actually need to live."



John McKeowen planted trees along his roadside verge to allow passers-by to pick the fruit, but council says they could damage infrastructure below ground. John's reasons not to mow your lawn include: unmown lawns act as a carbon sink; reduced use of fossil fuels from petrol engines; reduced particulate matter released into the atmosphere; wild flowers are a nectar source for bees; provides a habitat for insects which in turn provide food for birds; long grass is better able to absorb stormwater run-off with less discharge of urban pollutants into the oceans; reduced urban noise nuisance; more leisure time for homeowners; provides a seed source for bare ground; traps moisture to discharge during dry spells.



Church roof blows off in high winds $\begin{bmatrix} I \\ I \end{bmatrix}$

By ALLAN JUDD

Fierce, gusty winds tore the roof off the Baptist church in Thames on Friday night.

Winds gusting up to 100km/h lifted sheets of iron off the 140-year-old building, leaving the ceiling cavity exposed to the elements.

As the winds hauled through Thames around midnight, the sound of iron tearing from roofs, TV aerials and wheelie bins cartwheeling along the road could be heard in central Thames.

At 4am, sheets of iron were strewn all across the footpath and forecourt of Wenzlick Automotive. When owner Bernard Wenzlick arrived at work on Saturday morning, he had to spend an hour tidying up the mess.

He, was concerned Mary St had not been shut off to the public as there were still loose sheets of iron flapping in the breeze.

The Thames fire brigade attended but were not in a position to cover the roof with tarpaulins. A cherry picker or large extension ladders were not available and so the roof has been left exposed while they wait for insurance to assess the damage.

Baptist Church Pastor Chris Lee said he was concerned winds would get up again and take more of the iron off.



Winds gusting up to 100km/h lifted sheets of iron off the 140-year-old Baptist Church building, leaving the ceiling cavity exposed to the elements. Photo: ALLAN JUDD

"We were lucky that we didn't get the rain as well, as that would have caused some real damage," he said.

"There is daylight visible from inside the church."

Mr Lee said insurance would cover the damage, but getting tradespeople to do the job might be difficult: "It would mean the closure of Service Lane 6 for several days, which will affect the access to other building in the lane".

"We were lucky that it happened at night and the Early Childhood Learning Centre wasn't in attendance, imagine if there had been small children outside playing when the roof came down."

He says his parishioners will be fine as no service was planned for Sunday due to Covid-19 restrictions, which meant

services were being held online. Anglican Church Vicar Brendon Wilkinson has offered the Baptist Church the use of their church building to conduct their services.

"We are lucky the wind didn't take the roof off ours, the St James Presbyterian church or other buildings around Thames," Mr Wilkinson said.

Business nominations now open

Nominations are now open for three Hauraki Coromandel Business Awards' categories where candidates are chosen by the public.

by the public. The three categories are: People's Choice, Community and Not-For-Profit, and Service to Business.

Nominations close on September 20, and winners will be announced at the 2021 Hauraki Coromandel Business Awards gala evening on October 28.

The gala event was postponed last year due to Covid-19. This year's judges were still busy going through plenty of applications from entrants in the other award categories: Emerging Business, Hospitality, Manufacturing and Trade, Professional Services, Retail, Rural and Primary Industries, and Tourism. The Hauraki Coromandel

The Hauraki Coromandel Business Awards are an acknowledgement of excellence in all sectors of business within the Hauraki and Thames-Coromandel districts.

romandel districts. The People's Choice and Community and Not-For-Profit candidates who accept their nomination will then go into a public vote, opening on September 21.

Nominations can be made at www.haurakicoromandelbusinessawards.co.nz or by emailing info@haurakicoromandelbusinessawards.co.nz.



School being 'culturally responsive' with refresh

By KELLEY TANTAU

Come next year, students from Thames South School will don a uniform that will give them "a sense of identity and belonging".

On it will be the school's new logo, which was designed following a name change that would further connect the kura with its surroundings.

The "refresh" is a way to inform whānau and re-energise the kura (school), and has been a work-in-progress since 2020.

"We've been to-ing and froing for a while because we had a few design changes for the uniform," board chair Michael Barlow told *The Profile*.

"We didn't want to do anything until we were 100 per cent sure that this was the way we were going to go.

"We had given ourselves until term three to put it all out there," he said.

Following an approach from local iwi Ngāti Maru, it was suggested the school look at the original Māori name for the area it was located. It was discovered there was a large pā located at the mouth of the Waiwhakaurunga (Kauaeranga) River and the name of that pā was Te Kauaeranga.

The Te Kauaeranga pā was very large, and was given the name Shortland after the then-acting governor of New Zealand, and had been trans-



Tamariki at Thames South School are excited about their new 'refresh'.

literated by Hauraki Māori as Hotereni ever since.

Hotereni ever since. Therefore, Thames South School changed its name from Hoterini ki te Tonga, to Te Kura o Te Kauaeranga.

"It's about being more culturally responsive and mindful of why we use these terms, what they relate to, and being a bit more true to who we are and what we believe in," Whaea Janna Brewster said. "After our discussions with the name change, we then started talking about new logos," Matua Barlow added. The new kura tohu (school

The new kura tohu (school logo) has been designed with input from the school's whānau, and with help from kaumātua Wati Ngamane and Matua Rick Fisher, as well as Whaea Tineka Rhind and Whaea Kylie Turoa.

It incorporates a poutama

(stairway) that represents genealogies and the various levels of advancement; a Tētēkura (warrior scholar) that strives for excellence in Te Ao Māori whilst serving the whenua and iwi; and a whai (stingray), the kaitiaki that acknowledges mana whenua.

The three implementations - the name reset, the logo, and uniform - all worked together to provide the kura with a sense Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

of connection and pride, Matua Barlow said.

"It is exciting, especially for South School.

"There hasn't been much change for a while and there is relevance to what we are doing."

ing." The uniform is currently in production, and, already armed with a positive response from whānau, it is hoped it will start rolling out in 2022.



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ance Farm Environment Awards now open

E^{ntries} are now open for the Ballance Farm Envi-ronment Awards (BFEA) programme.

This year, the NZ Farm Environment Trust announced the addition of two new initiatives for the BFEA programme, including a new Catchment Group Award and partnership with Farmax to provide free Farmax analysis for every awards entrant.

The Catchment Group Award is supported by a new partnership between the NZ Farm Environment Trust and NZ Landcare Trust, and is designed to show-case and celebrate the great work being done by catchment groups throughout the country. "The new Catchment Group

Award recognises the efforts of a rural community working together to improve water quality in local rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands," NZ Farm Environment Trust chair Joanne van Polanen said. "This new initiative is designed

to celebrate the efforts of catchment groups and help inspire other rural communities with examples of good practice.

The NZ Landcare Trust Catchment Group Award will be open to catchment groups from all 11 regions in which the Ballance Farm Environment Awards op-

erate. "It's exciting to be initiating this new award across New Zea-land," NZ Landcare Trust chief executive Dr Nick Edgar said.

"We provide support to a large number of catchment groups doing amazing work to protect biodiversity, clean up waterways and respond to the climate challenge. This award provides an excellent opportunity to showcase what farmers in these groups have been able to achieve

by working together". BFEA sector experts will meet

with catchment group entrants to hear their stories and assess the great work they are doing based on a range of criteria, including identification of risks and actions addressing water quality issues; involvement of the local community including iwi and youth; robustness of monitoring and evaluation to inform their work; approach to other outcomes such as soil, nu-

trients, climate and biodiversity. The 2021 programme sees Farmax join the Ballance Farm Environment Awards as a new partner. "Farmax is thrilled to be supporting the awards which

showcase some of the country's most sustainable and profit-able farmers," says Farmax CEO, Gavin McEwen.

All entrants are provided with feedback from sector experts about their activities and poten-tial areas of focus for the future, something previous awards entrants site as being of great value and use to them as they continue on their sustainability journey.

DETAILS: Farmers, growers and catchment groups are encouraged to visit www.nzfeawards.org.nz to find out more, enter or nominate an entrant into the Ballance Farm Environment Awards.

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'Hook' sculpture's home decided

By KELLEY TANTAU

sculpture tipped for a cen-Atral Thames location might weigh 300kg, but the heavy lifting continues to be undertaken by a public arts trust eager to see civic art adorn the town.

For two years, a group of volunteers have been doing the "grunt work" required to get the new sculpture installed at the Campbell and Pollen St apex.

The project has passed its first hurdle, with the Thames Community Board last month approving a Licence to Occupy at the site for a period of up to three years.

It will now face a full council meeting, set for Tuesday, Thames Public Art Trust trustee Rob Johnston told The Profile, where a decision will be made on whether the sculpture needed just resource consent or building consent too.

The project has been a lengthy work-in-progress for the charitable trust, which has also developed the Rail Trail Sculpture Trail, with its three artworks so far installed along its stretch towards Kopū.

Work was still ongoing to get more sculptures along the trail, Rob said, but as an alternative, the trust implemented a temporary art installation project in town, which would see works rotated on mobile plinths.



The first was David McCracken's Baron, which was unveiled on the corner of Mary and Pollen Streets in September last year. The same was set to be done at the Campbell St-Pollen St apex, with a new 'Hook' sculpture by Auckland artist Jay Hogan.

Jay had contacted the trust back in 2019 offering a work to the trust. In April this year, the ball began rolling and a preferred site was selected.

"There's been a long phase of design and getting the plinth made, and then an exploration and research phase finding what sites might be suitable around town. Now we're in a phase where we've got a sculpture ready to go and the

thing to put it on, but there is a long process actually getting it done," Rob said.

"But once we've got the okay [from council], we can apply for the resource consent, and that should be it. There are other little things: when you cart around a couple of tonnes of concrete on a truck and the sculpture itself, you've got to have things like traffic management plans in place and additional costs and organisational planning to take care of.'

The resource consent application alone could cost the trust around \$1300, but despite the "masses and masses" of "grunt work" to get through, including the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the trust and council, Rob said it was all done with a passion to bring art into the public sphere.

"There is scope for it, and the appealing thing about this, even for the people that don't appreciate it terribly much, is that these are all temporary works," Rob said.

"They're moveable and interchangeable, and we have an idea to change the sculptural works periodically - wē just haven't determined how long that will actually be.

Pending council's approval and a successful resource consent application, Rob hoped the trust would be able to have Jay Hogan's 'Hook' on display by the middle of October.

Season begins for Swamp Foxes

HEARTLAND RUGBY

Thames Valley play their open-ing game in the Heartland Rug-by Championship against Wai-rarapa Bush at Masterton on Saturday.

Covid-19 lockdowns have caused the postponement of the scheduled first four games, which will now be played in weeks five to eight of the competition. The Valley's second game will also be an away match as the team travels to Ruatoria on September 25 to play Ngati Porou East Coast. Therefore, local fans have to wait until October 2 to see the Swamp Foxes on home soil when they meet Buller at Boyd Park, Te Aroha

A new trophy will be at stake in the Wairarapa Bush encoun-ter. Thames Valley stalwart, Ross Cooper, who represented both unions, has donated a cup for competition between the two provinces

This will promote an extra edge to the game as both teams strive to be the first to have their name engraved on the cup.



Waihou's Ben Bonnar, left, and Mercury Bay's Connor McVerry have been named Thames Valley cocaptains for the 2021 season.





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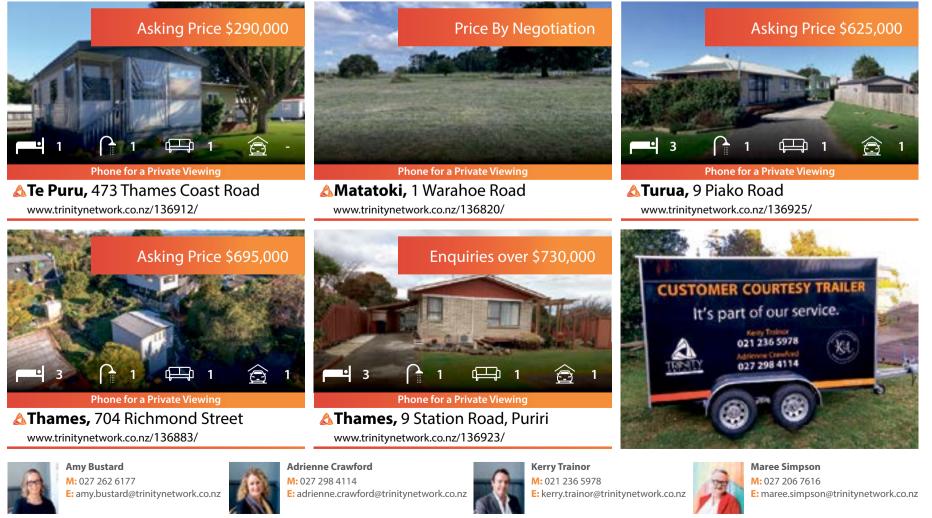




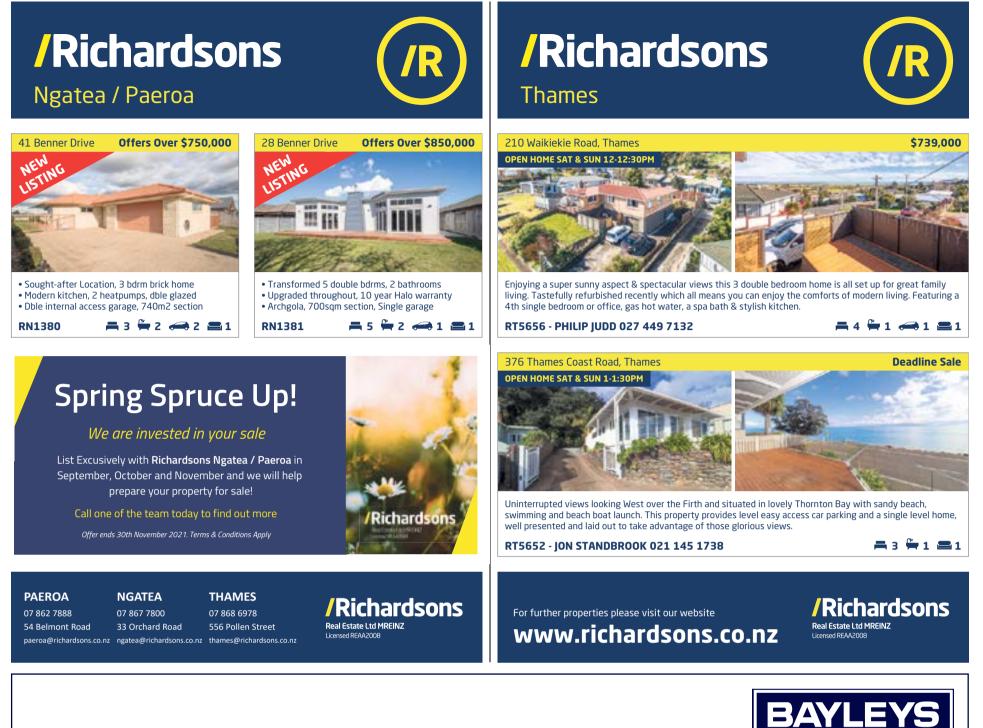


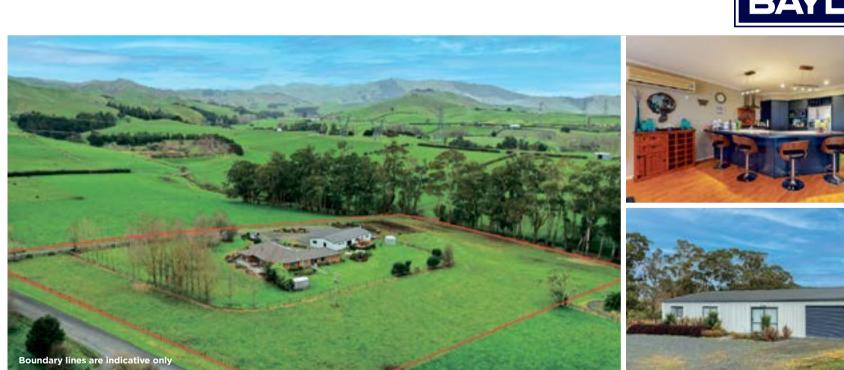
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83 Orphan, 84 Saga, 85 Apparel, 86 Stationary, 87 Abandon.

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Ready, set, go!

To celebrate the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, Hikutaia School held their own Olympic ceremony early last month, with students representing countries such as New Zealand, Scotland, Fiji, Australia, and Japan. There was even the lighting of the Olympic Flame. Sports were also planned but were postponed due to rain. Valley Profile reporter **KELLEY TANTAU** was in attendance on the day.



Valerie Sampson dressed in yellow to represent Australia in style.





Students warm up on the courts



Torch bearer Te Mana Hearn.



Pippa Campbell-Spinks waves the flag for Fiji.



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Tuwhakaea Mohurori waves the Scottish flag.



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Bitter response to husbands' death in mine

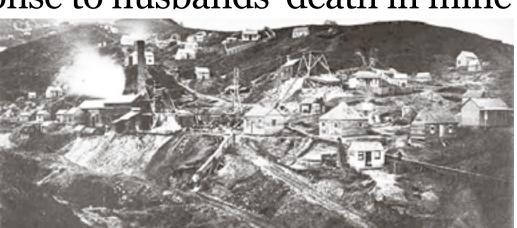


As part of a Valley Profile series, **MEGHAN HAWKES** explores our local history by seeking out stories of life and death in the Thames Valley

PART TWO Read part one in last week's Valley Profile

The loss of her husband was a catastrophic blow to Hugh Hill's wife, compounded by her precarious financial situation. But the community pulled together and in May, 1886, fundraising efforts began for the relief of the families of the two men killed. Mrs Casley stated she had been provided for – her husband, Thomas Casley, had his life insured. She said whatever funds were raised be solely devoted to Mrs Hill.

One hundred subscription lists were printed, a fundraising lecture was given on 'Billy Brag the Cornish miner', the Manukau Gold Mining Company donated two guineas, the Waiotahi Company five and the Thames Drainage Board gave 10 pounds, all in aid of the widow Hill. But by August, things had begun



The Caledonian Mine - the most productive of the Thames gold mines.

going wrong for Mrs Casley who found herself tripped up by a new law. Her husband had no will made and according to the old law, his father could claim one half; the new law only allowed the father one third. Mr Casley successfully put in his claim on the 12th of May for every shilling he could claim.

By early 1887, both Mrs Casley and Mrs Hill had become bitter.

They wrote an astonishing letter to the *Thames Star* expressing their disgust that the Humane Society was to award bronze medals to the 13 men who tried to save their husbands.

their husbands. They did "not think it was very brave of the men when they found the body of Thomas Casely to turn the hose on him . . . then to put him in the cage on his head, tie him in it with his feet up and not one of those brave men would come up in the cage with him . . . we are only weak women but if we had known the position our dear husbands were in, we would have rushed to them and have come up in the cage with them."

The rescuers replied that in No 3 level they found the chamber was partly clear of gas owing to the stream of water coming down the shaft but it was with the greatest difficultly they got the candle lit. Thomas Casley was found first and raised out of the deadly gas by the men who were nearly suffocating themselves. He was placed carefully in the cage in a sitting position, but his boots were hanging out a little, and for fear they would catch on the shaft going up they were tied back to the bar.

"We defy Mesdames Hill and Casley, or any other person to deny that Thomas Casley was not sent to the surface in as comfortable position as was possible under the circumstances . . . we are very much afraid, had Mrs Hill and Mrs Casley been at the No 3 level on that occasion, they would not have been so anxious to rush to their dear husbands as they would have the public believe." They had the deepest sympathy for the ladies, but they advised them both to stick to facts and write their letters themselves. Whoever the writer was, he was either a rogue or a fool.

Photo: SUPPLIED

a rogue or a fool. "We feel sorry that Mrs Hill and Mrs Casley should so far forget themselves as to put their signatures to such an inhuman scrawl."

On September 27, 1887, at the Academy of Music, a bronze medal was presented by the Royal Humane Society to 13 men for their efforts to save the lives of Thomas and Hugh when overwhelmed by bad gas in the Caledonian Mine.



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Lockdown vandalism 'disrespectful'

By KELLEY TANTAU

Vandals have broken level 4 lockdown rules to wreak havoc at a much-loved and "off the beaten track" location.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) was made aware of recent vandalism up the Maratoto Valley in Hikutaia after a staff member came across it while exercising. It appeared a gate installed by DOC earlier this year to curb "anti-social" activity at the site had been deliberately knocked out of alignment, potentially rammed by a vehicle. The locking post also appeared to have been shot at.

"This is very disappointing," DOC Hauraki district operations manager Avi Holzapfel said.

"Whoever is responsible was not only breaching the alert level 4 rules, they've also forced an additional repair cost on DOC and therefore the taxpayers of New Zealand."

DOC is still working through the logistics of repairing the damage at the site.

Mr Holzapfel said recurring issues such as vandalism, rubbish



dumping, and firewood collection occurred at the site, and Maratoto Rd resident Tim Cruickshank said it had "certainly ramped up through this last lockdown".

"It had been building, but this lockdown it has got out of control."

Mr Cruickshank said the area was popular with walkers and horse riders, but doing either of those things now was "almost impossible" thanks to the large tyre tracks that had churned up the unformed road.

"I just think it shows a com-



The area is popular with walkers and horse riders, but that was now 'almost impossible', a resident says. LEFT: A gate installed by the Department of Conservation appears to have been shot at and rammed.

plete disrespect for a shared environment," he said.

"My thought would be that reasonable use, as in, driving to take your children for a swim might be fine, but I think the extent of the abuse of the landscape shows a disrespect for all other users."

Legally, vehicles were allowed access along the road; however, DOC's long-term preference was to limit vehicle access to protect the tracks, Mr Holzapfel said. "One of the reasons we ar-

"One of the reasons we arranged for the gate to be installed was to prevent damage from vehicles and maintain good walking access tracks for visitors.

"The gate has been left open while we work through access arrangements with counterparts at Hauraki District Council." Council's group manager service delivery Adrian de Laborde said although the area was within Hauraki district, it was not an area council actively monitored as it was primarily a DOC site.

"We are disappointed at this vandalism and damage to the environment. Unfortunately, there is very little we can do to prevent such vandalism," he said.

