

# The Valley Profile

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## KIDS SMASH SCHOOL BUSES

Paeroa community rallies around bus company owner after vandalism includes bus named after late son



By KELLEY TANTAU

One of the windows of Dee Olsen's vandalised buses cracks a little deeper.

"Listen to that," she says. "That's my heart breaking."

She's standing at the Paeroa yard where three of her buses were vandalised by youths over the weekend. The three buses that were used to carry students to and from school across the district. "I came down here expecting a broken windscreen, not every single thing smashed," she told *The Profile* on Monday morning.

One bus, that had just been purchased three weeks ago, now sits with a spider web-like smash in the centre of it. The second has not one salvageable window on its right side. The third - and it's the damage which hurts Dee the most - is shielded in tarpaulins, as broken glass lies scattered in the driver's seat.

Dee has owned Paeroa Private Hire since August, 2011. Her story is one of overcoming adversity, slowly building up her fleet which started with a seven-seater van.

But it's the little white bus, the one that is used to cart around kindergarten children, the one with the most wanton damage, that Dee is most desperate to save. She calls the bus Reece, after her late son, who died in a car crash in Netherton in 2017.

"Reece would drive this one when he could, and I wanted to hold on to it," she says between tears. "When he was killed, his finance was four-months pregnant with their baby, and some of the one videos I have are of him in

the bus, driving us back from Whangarei."

Reece's child will be four come December, and Dee had decided a long time ago that she was "never going to lose" that bus.

But the bus has been the victim of wilful damage undertaken by youths, who were dropped home by police following the incident on Saturday, and repairing it could be a long road.

"I love my buses, and I do love my little town... but this morning I hit rock bottom. This morning, I'm feeling it," Dee says.

Despite this, and despite the fact she hasn't received an apology from those involved, Dee doesn't condone any ill-will being sent the youth's way.

"I want them to be okay," she says. "They don't need a [negative] consequence, they need something that's going to be productive, like getting them to do a garden, where they are responsible for it, and maintain it. Then they can eat the fruit, the veggies. Then they can see the consequences of being positive."

A police spokesperson confirmed police attended a report of wilful damage on Francis St, Paeroa, at around 5.30pm on Saturday. "We attended and spoke to the youths involved and dropped them home." Enquiries into the incident are ongoing.

A Givealittle page has been established to raise money to go towards the insurance excess of fixing the buses. Since being created on Saturday, it has so far raised more than \$7600.

To donate, find Paeroa Private Hire at [www.givealittle.co.nz](http://www.givealittle.co.nz).



The damaged school buses, with the little white bus, right. Photos: KELLEY TANTAU

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# Beacon saves lost Kauaeranga trumper

Carrying a Satellite Emergency Notification Device (SEND) has paid off for one young solo trumper who found herself in need of lifesaving help after becoming too ill to complete a hike in the dense Coromandel bush.

The 23-year-old Hauraki Plains local had set off on an overnight tramp in the Kauaeranga Valley area, near Thames on October 23.

She walked to Crossies Hut in the Coromandel Forest Park, where she stayed Saturday night before beginning her descent on Sunday back to Kauaeranga Valley Rd where she was to be picked up by a family member.

But on the return trip, the woman fell ill and became lost, falling downhill and ending up about 20 metres from the track in a stream.

Waikato Police Search and Rescue Constable Brad York said the woman was wet and cold but was able to make it back on to the track to send an SOS message on her SEND device.

Around 2.50pm on Sunday, the Rescue Coordination Centre received advice from the International Emergency Rescue Coordination Centre in Texas that an SOS message had been received. The centre contacted a family member who confirmed the woman's tramping plans and GPS location was obtained with the message.

"Beacons are an effective way of letting people know that you need urgent help and where to find you," Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ)



LEFT: A total of 13 volunteers, including two field teams and management, turned out for the search up the Kauaeranga Valley. ABOVE: The unwell woman is winched from dense bush. Photos: SUPPLIED

senior Search and Rescue officer Keith Allen said.

"It made all the difference in this rescue."

RCCNZ then notified the Auckland-based Westpac Rescue helicopter. At the same time, Waikato Police Search and Rescue teams were notified. A search and rescue base was set up at Thames Police station and Thames LandSAR volunteers were called out. A total of 13 volunteers, including two field teams and management members, turned out for the search.

Brad said the first field team was dispatched to search the track to the GPS location of the beacon. With poor weather

clearing in the area, the Auckland Westpac Rescue helicopter was able to complete a first aerial search area but was not able to locate her due to the dense bush, so returned to Thames to refuel.

Updated GPS coordinates were provided by RCCNZ, Brad said, and as just as the Westpac helicopter arrived at the updated location, search teams on the ground located the missing woman.

She was found about two thirds down the track, wet and cold, and still feeling ill, but in a stable condition. A paramedic was winched from the helicopter into the bush to retrieve the woman, who was then flown to

Thames Hospital for further assessment.

"It was less than four hours between her activating the emergency device and being located," Brad said.

"It's a great example of a trumper being well prepared, leaving detailed trip intentions with family, and carrying the right equipment for New Zealand's outdoors."

The woman also made the right decisions when things went wrong, he said.

She realised she was in trouble and sought help by activating the beacon while managing to move into a position where she could be seen from the air.



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## Thames Tides

Wed Nov 10	Thu Nov 11	Fri Nov 12	Sat Nov 13	Sun Nov 14	Mon Nov 15	Tue Nov 16
 Morning: 5:47am 0.4, 12:15pm 3.7, 6:22pm 0.6 Afternoon: 12:37am 3.4, 1:12pm 3.5, 6:40am 0.5, 7:22pm 0.7	 Morning: 1:33am 3.3, 2:13pm 3.4, 7:38am 0.7, 8:24pm 0.8 Afternoon: 2:32am 3.2, 3:16pm 3.3, 8:43am 0.9, 9:28pm 0.9	 Morning: 3:36am 3.1, 4:18pm 3.3, 9:54am 1.0, 10:29pm 0.9 Afternoon: 4:43am 3.1, 5:14pm 3.3, 11:01am 1.0, 11:26pm 0.8	 Morning: 5:45am 3.1, 6:06pm 3.3, 11:57am 0.9 Afternoon: 5:59am 3.1, 6:07pm 3.3, 11:57am 0.9	 Morning: 6:04am 8:00pm Afternoon: 6:03am 8:02pm	 Morning: 6:02am 8:03pm Afternoon: 6:01am 8:04pm	 Morning: 6:00am 8:05pm Afternoon: 6:00am 8:06pm
 Best At: 5:48am 6:18pm	 Best At: 6:46am 7:14pm	 Best At: 7:40am 8:05pm	 Best At: 8:29am 8:52pm	 Best At: 9:15am 9:37pm	 Best At: 9:58am 10:19pm	 Best At: 10:39am 11:00pm
 Set: 12:59am Rise: 10:38am	 Set: 1:50am Rise: 11:47am	 Set: 2:32am Rise: 12:55pm	 Set: 3:06am Rise: 2:01pm	 Set: 3:35am Rise: 3:04pm	 Set: 4:01am Rise: 4:04pm	 Set: 4:26am Rise: 5:03pm

**MOON AND FISH KEYS**

New Moon First Quarter Full Moon Last Quarter

Good Fishing Fair Fishing Not So Good

**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	MIN	Hr	MIN
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



# Hospital staff praised after alleged assault

**A Thames man is thanking Thames Hospital staff who acted as “human shields” to stop a “healer” from allegedly harming his wife. KELLEY TANTAU reports**

At around 9:30pm on October 28, a man entered the Thames Hospital emergency department unmasked. After evading staff and refusing to follow protocols, he declared he was “there to heal people”, Thames man Mike Wells told *The Profile*. “My wife and I were pretty much the only ones in view, and he made a beeline through the nurses, straight towards my wife. “The nurses and a doctor came flying over and stood as a shield and directed him into the corner,” he said. “An orderly and another nurse started to take my wife out of the room, and the guy started to get agitated and started pushing and shoving.” Mr Wells said he saw one of the staff “jolt back as if they had been struck”. He and his wife, from Thames, were then sent inside

the hospital’s plaster room while police arrived to deal with the situation. Police later confirmed to *The Profile* that a 55-year-old male appeared in Thames District Court following the incident. He is to reappear on November 16 on two counts of assault. Mr Wells and his wife Julie said Thames Hospital staff who came to their aid were “heroes of the highest order”. They threw their bodies on the line without a second thought, they said. “When your loved one is not well, you’re obviously a little bit vulnerable, but the [staff] were so professional and so courteous all the way through. “They were everyday heroes,” Mr Wells said. “It was just so impressive.” They also commended the team of around four police officers who defused the situation. “Everybody we dealt with, apart from the individual, was highly professional and super caring. “Now, hopefully something can be done to help him.” A Waikato DHB spokesperson said its staff provided care to all those in the community and, like everyone,

“The [staff] were so professional and so courteous all the way through. They were everyday heroes.”

- Mike Wells



A 55-year-old male will appear in Thames District Court on November 16 on two counts of assault after an incident at Thames Hospital.

File Photo: TERESA RAMSEY

DHB staff had the right to feel safe and supported while at work. “The DHB has zero tolerance for anyone who visits our facilities and does not respect that right. “It is unacceptable that anyone should be threatened

or experience abuse while working, especially when they are working to care for others.” Security staff were employed at all DHB facilities and worked closely with police, who responded rapidly to any events which required their involvement.

The DHB also provided support to any staff who were impacted by such behaviour. “At the same time, we are grateful to the vast majority of people in our community who are conscientious, supportive and kind across all interactions with our teams.”

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# Teachers, students cross border for NCEA prep

By KELLEY TANTAU

Five Hauraki Plains College staff crossed the alert level border last week in order to find a “safe solution” to allow locked-down students to complete their NCEA qualifications.

Four staff, plus principal Ngaire Harris, visited YMCA’s Camp Adair in Hunua, north-east of Drury, for two days, after the Ministry of Health announced students in years 11-13 were permitted to return to school under Covid-19 Alert Level 3 steps 1 and 2.

There, staff joined 25 students who all lived on the Auckland side of the Covid-19 Alert Level 3 border, from the Orere Point, Clevedon, and Hunua areas.

“The idea of a camp arose out of trying to find a safe solution to having alert level 3 students returning to an alert level 2 school,” Mrs Harris said.

“The option of setting up Camp Adair was much safer for the local community than allowing the level 3 students to travel backwards and forwards each day across the border, mixing with local level 2 students.”

Mrs Harris said the college also had some level 3 students cross the border to board within the alert level 2 area for the remainder of their academic year.

“They crossed the border with a negative test,” she said.

“We also have a very small number who are children of essential workers and who are regularly tested.”



Hauraki Plains College students and staff catch up on study at Camp Adair, over the Auckland level 3 border.



Photos: SUPPLIED

The staff who attended Camp Adair last week also crossed the border with negative Covid-19 tests and, as an extra precaution, stayed home from school pending another negative result, Mrs Harris said.

Overall, the camp was a huge success, she said.

“After so much time in isolation,

students were happy to be together, but were also well aware of the rules under alert level 3, and we never had to remind students at all,” she said.

“They knew the camp had a very sharp focus on their learning, and they got on board with that kaupapa. I think many students were relieved that they

had the opportunity to complete their NCEA qualification.”

Mrs Harris said while some of the students, who had now been locked down for three months, could cope with online learning, “a good many” needed the support of a one-to-one teacher, particularly for subjects like mathematics and sciences.

More days at Camp Adair were planned for those students who had external exams or still needed to complete their qualifications, she said.

And in the meantime, Mrs Harris also continued to help six of her grandkids, who were also stuck in Auckland, with their own maths studies over Zoom.



## Student’s Essay on the Holocaust a Winner



Jaymee Davies

Holocaust survivor Abba Kovner. Resistance during the Holocaust was the topic for this year’s Paul Seideman national Year 9-10 competition won by Year 10 HPC student Jaymee Davies.

Paul Seideman is a Holocaust survivor and established the competition to commemorate the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp by the Soviet Army in January 1945. As a young Jewish boy in then

“Brothers! It is better to fall as free fighters than to live by the grace of murderers. Resist! To the last breath!”

Czechoslovakia, Paul suffered enormously but managed to survive for several years in the Nazi German concentration and labour camps during World War II. After liberation, Paul emigrated to Australia and then New Zealand. He now lives in a Wellington retirement home.

As this year’s competition winner, Jaymee will now fly to Wellington to present her essay at Parliament and participate in a stone laying ceremony as part of the United Nations International Holocaust Remembrance Day in January next year.

Jaymee entered the competition with the support of her Humanities teacher and Head of Department Miriam Courtney. “It has definitely given me a new perspective on life in the 20th century and the long term impact an event like this has,” commented Jaymee after hearing about her success.

## Year 13 Photography Art Work by Sarah Blake

The inspiration behind Year 13 Photography student, Sarah Blake, was a fire, resulting in thousands of dollars worth of damage, to her parents’ property earlier this year. “However, through the event, our extended family came together to help the clean up and created stronger bonds. I liked the idea that beauty can come from something so destructive



and found this in the burnt objects themselves. My final board shows water and fire together, as a battle of elements that also work together to form abstract art, with smoke and the clashing colours of blue and orange. It symbolises how there are always battles in life but they are needed to make something special and beautiful.”



## School Spirit in Action

The finish of Practice Exams for seniors was marked by the annual School Spirit Day - an afternoon of fun activities organised by Year 13s as one of their last responsibilities as student leaders. Deputy Head Girl Morgan Harris enjoyed the experience: “We had great fun organising Spirit Day, a special event for our Year 13s. This year we changed it up with some different activities from previous years that were a big hit with the kids. The

4 metre tarp water slide was a lot of fun along with the Year 13 vs Teachers Tug of War. It’s a cool way to finish the week after practice exams”.



Year 13 vs Teachers Tug of War

## Locked Down - Not Locked Out

Sam Cleave completed a Wheeled Bike Stand Design for his Year 11 Engineering project. The Bike Stand allows for maintenance and cleaning tasks to be completed easily. Engineering teacher Pieter Aucamp



Samuel Cleave

was happy with the outcome. “Sam’s design was a good product to achieve in lockdown. With minimal input from myself, Sam put in all the effort.” Well done Sam!





# Recycled chip packets to keep homeless warm

By KELLEY TANTAU

The humble chip packet might be emptied in record-breaking speeds during a trip to the beach or on a family picnic, but to decompose, they take 80 years.

That realisation, plus the fact packets of chips were a common item in household cupboards, inspired Sam Horne to help lead the rubbish away from the landfill.

She's collecting empty chip packets to send off to the United Kingdom, where an ironing service is creating survival blankets out of them for the homeless. Sam, a nurse at Health Ngatea, did a six-week stint at the Auckland City Mission's medical centre, and saw first-hand the effects of homelessness.

"I had a lot of dealings with people living on the streets, and something like this would be absolutely life-saving for them," she said.

"The silver side [of the chip packet] reflects the body heat, and it keeps them warm and dry, and in England it's going to be coming into their winter."

Sam is originally from Buckinghamshire, in the UK, and found the project after her sister-in-law posted about it on her Facebook page.

After researching more about it, she discovered there was a New Zealand group, called The Chip Packet Project, who also created survival blankets for the homeless.

And while the UK donations



Ngatea nurse Sam Horne is collecting washed chip packets to be sent to the United Kingdom.

Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

will head overseas on November 22, Sam said she was interested in making the Ngatea collection an ongoing one, in order to support the New Zealand project.

"First of all, I thought we as a family would do it, but then I thought, there's got to be lots of chippie packets around Ngatea.

We've got two schools here. So, I thought we'd open it up and see if people wanted to drop their packets off [at the medical centre], and the managers were happy to support the cause."

Sam, who has two children aged 13 and 11 who enjoy a good packet of chips, said she had no idea what was left behind could

be recycled.

Not only was the project beneficial to people in need, but it also helped the environment, she said.

"It just saves all these crisp packets going into the landfill, because they can't be recycled. So if we can actually do something positive with them, and

stop so many going to landfill, that's going to help the earth."

**DETAILS:** People can drop off their washed chip packets at the Health Ngatea reception before November 22. Packets can be of any size. For more information about how to help, find: The Iron Man, or Chip Packet Project New Zealand, on Facebook.

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Keep your eye out for our Education Feature in the November 24th & January 12th & 26th 2022 editions.

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## New gallery showcases local art

By DEBORAH MACDONALD BROWN

A new co-operative art gallery was launched in Grahamstown on October 30 to a party-like atmosphere as the Thames arts community came out to celebrate this special occasion.

Thames local Eben Wilson initiated Vessel Shop and Gallery as an art co-operative, showcasing the work of ten local artists. He wanted to provide an opportunity for local artists to participate in a shared venture by making the presentation of art affordable and within reach of most people.

His approach has been different from other galleries - the collective itself decided how the gallery would work: "A process that has worked really well," Eben said.

"People were really happy. They were nourished by it. It was easy, supportive, self-organising, running off a shared generosity and cooperation. The process has been really organic."

There is no commission added to the artwork. Instead, each participating artist makes a small weekly contribution to cover the gallery overheads while receiving the full amount from the sale of the work.

Participating artist, John McKeown, said: "It's cool there are ten of us and the work is very different and unique - from nice soaps to sculptures, cards to tepees."

John has enjoyed the casual and easy relationships within the group and the fact the shop is in the old Palmer's Gallery, which is a beautiful historic space.

The gallery includes works by recycled metal artists Marti Wong and John McKeown; mosaic artist Gaye Mitchell, cafters Heini Ranay and Margaret Chic, painters Sandra Robbins and Katherine Engebretsen, jewellery maker Mandy Seth, tepee maker Eben Wilson and soap and balm maker Sister Maria.

**DETAILS: Vessel Shop and Gallery, 750 Pollen St, Thames. Open Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 3pm.**

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# i-Site move sparks opposition

By KELLEY TANTAU

The relocation of Thames' information centre, plus its transformation into un-manned kiosks, has upset residents, with one saying it reinforces the need to re-establish a link between the town's two main streets.

At its October 26 meeting, Thames-Coromandel District Council approved the visitor information centre on Mary St being replaced by digital kiosks at Goldfields Shopping Centre.

The i-Site, run by Destination Coromandel, closed its doors on October 31, with two staff being made redundant.

Council said the i-Site service had become unviable since the Covid-19 pandemic, with visitor numbers and revenue both down significantly.

But Pollen St businessman Greg Hampton, who spoke in the public forum of the Thames Community Board's meeting on November 3, said the relocation of the site provided "commercial advantage" to Goldfields Mall. He urged council to reconsider.

"To me, the decision to move visitor services away... that reinforces the need to reopen Mary St to reconnect Goldfields Mall and Pak'nSave to the town centre.

"The Vibe has failed to generate additional activity. It has removed 10 car parks and it has closed the road and yet, as a result of that, we have more vacant car parks around our business that we've ever had before."

Mary St was partially closed back in March, as part of Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's



Thames i-Site closed its doors on October 31. Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

Innovating Streets pilot programme. Dubbed Create the Vibe, it was a temporary project, council said, but one which could see Mary St closed to through traffic for up to two years.

Thames Business Association chief executive Sue Lewis O'Halloran shared similar concerns, and wondered how council could go about encouraging tourists to the main drag.

"Do we put a kiosk in front of the existing i-Site as part of the deal? Do we put a kiosk in the [Create the Vibe] container? Do we open up Mary St and only close it for events?"

"The reason they put Create the Vibe on Mary St was because it was near the i-Site, it was near cafes," she said. "We were trying to find a heart for our town, and I'm just not sure it's achieved that."

The sole expression of interest

for a Thames information centre to replace the current i-Site came from Goldfields Shopping Centre Manager John Freer.

He said the kiosks would be very "user-friendly", and would provide visitors and locals with detailed, up to date information for both Thames and the wider Coromandel.

"Located just inside the main Goldfields entrance, the kiosks and tourism display will include categories covering the likes of accommodation, tours, points of interest, activities, and eateries, right through to bus timetables. And there is no cost for operators to have their listing on the site," he said. Access to the kiosks will be available 12-hours a day and up to 14-hours a day during peak periods. They should be up and running before the peak summer season, council said.



Thames model maker Ted Egan receives a Community Service Award from Thames Community Board deputy chair Cherie Staples. Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

## 'True Thamesite' celebrated

By KELLEY TANTAU

Model maker and Thames Museum life member Ted Egan has been awarded a Community Service Award by the district council.

At the Thames Community Board meeting on November 3, Mr Egan was presented with the award by deputy chair Cherie Staples, who said the man - who undertook hundreds of hours making models of iconic Thames buildings - was both generous and loyal.

"I read that Ted is born and bred in Thames, a true Thamesite, of which I'm sure knows every inch of this town and could probably tell a good ole fishing story or two no doubt," she said.

"Ted, you have well and truly made a huge contribution to our Thames history.

"Your generosity and loyalty

will continue to amaze the many who not only visit the Thames Museum, but also Thames Hospital, where yet another one of your magnificent models is housed."

Mr Egan was a builder by trade and a motor mechanic, and earlier told *The Profile* of his childhood making things out of tea boxes and clocks.

He then moved on to constructing models of iconic Thames buildings, and since then, has donated all of his creations, some 50 of them, to the museum.

"This is a great honour for me, having been born in Thames and raised in Thames, and lived here all my life," he told staff, whānau, and friends at the meeting.

"I've been all over the world, but there's no place like Thames. It's a great little town and wants looking after."

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Bookarama team leader Althea Loveday at this year's event.

Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

# Thousands raised at Bookarama

By KATE DURIE  
Wintec Journalism Student

The Zonta Club of Thames Valley held its annual Bookarama event on Labour Weekend, raising approximately \$7500 for charity.

Bookarama was a little different this year, following the new Covid-19 restrictions allowing only 50 people into St James Church hall at a time, with masks or face coverings to be worn.

Thames Valley branch president Pam Harsant said they were “very anxious” about not being able to go ahead due to Covid-19 uncertainty.

“None of us wanted that effort to be put in for it to be cancelled last minute,” she said.

Pam also feels books are expensive to buy in bookstores and if the annual Bookarama missed a year, the public would be “very disappointed”.

This year, Pam and her team noticed people were buying DVDs, jigsaws, and

books to send to relatives stuck in lockdown in Auckland to brighten their day and help them through this tough time.

The funds raised will go towards club initiatives, including the Janet Waddell Memorial Midwife grant for a local graduate and a bi-annual study award for Thames Valley women to undertake further education.

Money also goes towards Te Whāriki Manawāhine O Hauraki: Hauraki Women’s Refuge with past support including money to aid with food parcels over lockdown, bedding for the refuge and funds to help women set up homes.

The next fundraising event held by the Zonta Club is the Pink Walk, raising money for The New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation.

**DETAILS: Scheduled for November 17 at 5.30pm, the Pink Walk event has entry by koha. People are encouraged to dress in pink and walk from the Wharf to Kuranui Bay where a barbeque will be held with spot prizes for the best dressed.**







# Rural Life

## Group Day held

Kaihere School hosted the Hauraki Plains Group Day on November 4, and it all went off without a hitch. Students from Ngatea, Turua, Kaihere, and Waitakaruru all took part, with calves, goats, and lambs on show. Reporter **KELLEY TANTAU** went to check it out.



Brock Stephens and kid White Chocolate wait their turn in the ring.



Abby Irving gets a kiss from calf Zoe.

Photos: KELLEY TANTAU



Bradley Murdock from Waitakaruru doesn't let crutches get in the way of him competing.



Jethro Schouten with his cute calf, Flashy.



Maddison Eccles from Ngatea Primary wins with calf Chelsea.



Rowan Nielsen leads calf Kash around the ring.



Emma MacKay does a last inspection before the show.

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# Rural Life

## Rural job campaign kicks off

The Hauraki District is taking a fresh approach to powering up their business community by targeting young people in cities with specialised work skills in a new campaign selling the benefits of living in the country.

The Think Rural campaign is launching nationwide, with eighteen rural districts signed up. Their goal is to contribute towards filling 1150 jobs in rural areas with young people wanting to experience a new way of life.

The campaign is driven by Local Government NZ's Mayors Taskforce for Jobs (MTFJ), with support from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).

Hauraki district Mayor Toby Adams said he hoped encouraging young people to Think Rural would attract keen and hardworking new recruits to the area to help grow local business.

"What's not to love about Hauraki?" he said.

"We have everything you need and so much more on your doorstep and we're still within reach of the cities. Beaches, mountains, trails... just waiting for you to explore and there's a constant supply of jobs coming up from growing businesses. With the skill shortages due to Covid-19, we want to support our local businesses to help them thrive."

MTFJ national programme manager Noa Woolloff is 23 and passionate about getting young people into jobs that give them a new lease on life.

"Young people often think about going overseas to have new experiences, but with the borders closed, we're highlighting the incredible things New Zealand has to offer – right on their back doorstep," he said.

"They say the grass is greener, but in this case it actually is. Think Rural will showcase what these towns have to offer



Plumbgas owner Darron Steer, left, with Masterlink, Business Development Manager Peter Shields, and new apprentice Caleb Howard. Caleb explored plumbing through his Gateway work experience while at school and continued his studies at Trades Academy in Kōpū with Wintec. Gr8 Job Hauraki put him in contact with Plumbgas and at 16, he is excited to be starting his apprenticeship with them, as he will learn all three trades – plumbing, gasfitting and drain laying.

Photo: SUPPLIED

– from welcoming communities to interesting jobs and outdoor adventures."

The rural councils getting behind the Think Rural scheme in the hope of drawing a younger crowd are Ōpōtiki, Otorohanga, Central Hawke's Bay, Chatham Islands, Gore, Ruapehu, Waimate, Westland, Wairoa, Hurunui, Tarrarua, Grey, Rangitikei, Clutha, Hauraki, Mackenzie and Buller.

**DETAILS:** Wannabe rural-dwellers can find the right community for them at [www.thinkrural.co.nz](http://www.thinkrural.co.nz), or call into our home-grown Mayors Taskforce for Jobs brand, Gr8 Job Hauraki, 30 Balmoral Rd, Paeroa.

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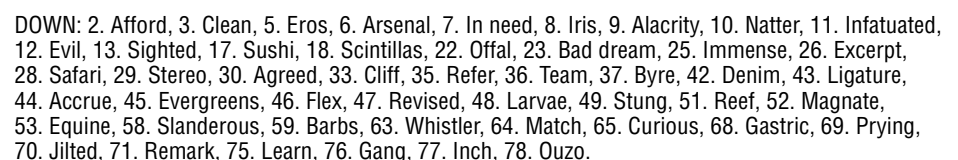
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# Sudden death for high flyer



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

“Oh Tom!” exclaimed Robert Kelly before dropping stone dead with his gun clutched tightly in his hand.

It was around 4pm in early June, 1880, and 45-year-old Robert was out pheasant hunting on the Puriri land where he had lately taken up residence. Robert was one of the successful proprietors of the Puriri Mineral Springs that were on his property, which he had spent the past two years developing with his brother in law, E B Fraser.

The natural springs and their medicinal qualities had been well known to Māori but their isolation meant others were not familiar with them. Access to the springs had been very difficult but when the County authorities laid a road in 1877 it passed within a stone's throw of them. Taking advantage of this, Kelly and Fraser built extensive bottling, aerating, and packing works. The water when analysed was an alkaline mineral water. It was described as effervescing strongly when escaping from the spring and was clear and



Puriri Mineral water

sparkling. Newspapers went into raptures when reporting the laboratory results – the water was set “to astonish the world with its wonderful natural qualities”. It could cure kidney disease, gout, rheumatism, stomach acidity and would have great value in pregnancy and sea sickness. “If Puriri mineral water is taken in a methodical manner with regard to diet and exercise, it can be best compared in value to the celebrated mineral waters of Kissengen in Bavaria,” said Dr Payne of Thames. The magical water, which naturally contained a large amount of bicarbonate of soda, was conveyed into the bottling works by a siphon inserted into the centre of the springs and covered with a flannel bag through which it was filtered then bottled.

The Puriri Mineral Springs went from strength to strength and by November, 1878, the first consignment of Puriri Mineral Water reached

Thames and was soon in demand at the hotels. By 1879 Kelly and Fraser had an office in Pollen St opposite the Shortland Hotel. Robert Kelly sold most of his property at Puriri but kept about 30 acres surrounding the springs. In mid 1879, they exhibited a case of Puriri mineral water in pints and half pints at the Sydney Exhibition. It was anticipated the medicinal properties would cause a large demand for the water in Australia. In January, 1880, a consignment of Puriri mineral water was sent to Sir Julius Vogel, agent general for New Zealand, to introduce it to London. This was the path to success that Robert Kelly was on when he suddenly died. Robert had left County Down, Ireland, for Australia in 1851, before coming to the Otago goldfield in 1862 and later finding success on the Thames and Coromandel goldfields. In 1875, he built Hikutaia's Pioneer Hotel. But the young entrepreneur had been suffering from heart disease. Dr Payne had quietly informed his friends that Robert might expire at any moment, but he was in such good health when they went pheasant hunting that they felt no alarm at all.

Robert left a wife, Alice. His funeral at Shortland cemetery was largely attended and out of respect for one of the district's entrepreneurs, the offices of the Thames Stock Exchange were closed during the afternoon.

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SPORTS

Winning streak ends for Valley

HEARTLAND RUGBY

In gaining a 35-27 victory over Thames Valley at Te Aroha on Saturday, Whanganui ended the Swamp Foxes' undefeated record in the 2021 Heartland Rugby Championship. However, the Valley's second position on the points table was not at risk and they now head off to Timaru for the final of the Meads Cup next Sunday.

The two teams were evenly matched but Whanganui were desperate - a win would enable them to host the final of the second tier, Lochore Cup. They got off to a cracking start and scored a converted try within the first two minutes.

Thames Valley worked their way back into the game but the going was tough, tense and tigerish with both sides giving no quarter and none being asked for. This led to some feisty play and the referee awarded a total of three yellow cards - two against Whanganui and one against Thames Valley.

Jamie Hughes celebrated his 50th game for Whanganui by scoring that early try which was converted by Ethan Robinson.

Once again Todd Doolin was to the fore with his goal kicking. He kicked three penalty goals in the first half and converted an excellent try by Joe Cook.

Robinson had added two more penalty goals for Whanganui so just before half time the score was: Thames Valley



Thames Valley wins a lineout.

Photo: JAKOB ANDREW

16 Whanganui 13.

Whanganui immediately went on the attack. Their centre, Kameli Kuruyabaki caught a clever cross kick and had clear run in to score. There was no conversion and Whanganui had regained the lead to make the half time score: Whanganui 18 Thames Valley 16.

Ten minutes into the second half the scores were level. Robinson had kicked a further penalty goal and Sam van der Walk scored a fine opportunist try off the back of a lineout for Thames Valley.

A try to Te Rangatira Waitokia, converted by Craig Clare saw the Whanganui Butcher Boys ahead 28-21. Doolin closed the gap with a penalty goal but Clare then scored a try of his

own, which he converted.

Doolin's fifth penalty goal enabled the Valley to still be in touch at 35-27 but there was no further scoring.

With his 17 points from five penalty goals and one conversion, Tod Doolin has now scored 119 points for Thames Valley with 107 of those being in Heartland games. The tough workout will have been beneficial for the Swamp Foxes as they prepare for the final against South Canterbury - the only undefeated side this year. They may go in as under dogs but they will be doing their very best for the huge number of Swamp Fox fans all around the motu.

**DETAILS: The final kicks off at 3:30pm on Sunday and will be broadcast live on Sky TV.**



Peter O'Hagan in action during Kerepehi Bowls' Memorial Optional fours held on October 24. A great turn out to celebrate the memory of Murray Fisher, who died on May 31 this year. He had been an active member of Kerepehi Bowls since joining and was president from 2016 until May, 2020. The Fisher family sponsored the Memorial Optional fours (Invitation, two bowlers, two non-bowlers) and also donated a fine trophy for the winning team. RESULTS: 1st Peter Glass, Gary Barbur, Natasha McMurtrie, Royce McMurtrie; 2nd Rowans team, 3rd Graham Pykes team, 4th Fish Austen's team, 5th Barry Feltons team, 6th Mike Proctors team, 7th C Evans team, 8th Peter Sutherlands team. November 28 is the next scheduled tournament of Optional Fours Christmas Hams (Linn Motors/Pak'n Save Thames) with all the other weekends taken up with Club Championships. - Terry King

School cricket season begins

After weeks of difficulties associated with outdoor training - weather and ground conditions - plus Covid restrictions, most local cricketers have now been fortunate enough to begin their season by means of re-arranged competitions.

For one group in particular, consisting of talented and certainly dedicated young athletes ranging in age from 10 to 17 from Hauraki, Tairua, Thames, Whangamata and Te Aroha districts, it has been time well spent honing physical and mental skills which will assist them to achieve at a high level in their sport in the future.

While buying into the old adage that the only place you will find "success" before "work" is in a dictionary, these young stars of the future have been 'doing the mahi' since early in September while utilizing the Hauraki Plains College practice facilities and equipment and coaching expertise.

Their performances over the summer months will hopefully reflect the benefits of their personal sacrifices plus the input from coaches, parents and sponsors and friends in their pre-season preparations. While the local primary school age players are scheduled to play at venues relatively free of existing lock down regulations - for now at least, secondary school teams from Hauraki Plains, Te Aroha, Morrinsville and Matamata Colleges have had to re-organise and set up a mini competition among themselves for the early portion of the season because at present they cannot visit or host teams from Hamilton's secondary schools.

- Mike Cotter



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# Puriri fire brigade gains independence

By KELLEY TANTAU

A rural fire brigade that has spent almost the past 50 years as an auxiliary has gained its independence.

The Puriri Volunteer Fire Brigade, off State Highway 26, has been reclassified as a stand-alone brigade, meaning it now had its own chief fire officer in Wayne Cryer.

He said it was a milestone for the “vibrant” crew.

“We’ve been going now for 47 years, so for the first time in that long, we have our own chief, and being an auxiliary, it hasn’t been a bad thing at all, but to have the recognition of the brigade being its own entity is probably the biggest milestone,” he said.

The brigade was formed on March 14, 1956, with 10 members in attendance.

Historical records showed it went into recession in July, 1968, and reformed again in July, 1974, with 12 members and as an auxiliary brigade to the Thames Volunteer Fire Brigade.

“As far as the day to day running went, we were still our own brigade, but anything major, any issues, the buck stopped with the chief in Thames, as such. Now, everything is on us as a brigade,” Mr Cryer said.

The transition took about 12



Puriri Volunteer Fire Brigade’s first chief fire officer Wayne Cryer, left, and deputy chief fire officer, Tim Lyes. Photo: SUPPLIED

months, and was helped along by Thames’ brigade chief Greg Rendall.

Tim Lyes has been appointed Deputy Chief Fire Officer, and both he and Wayne, who was the officer in charge before the transition, underwent a formal recruitment process.

“I’ve been a part of the brigade for 28 years, and in that time, we’ve had two differ-

ent officers in charge,” Mr Cryer said. “From 1974, right through to 2015, the first officer in charge was Arthur Lundberg, and when he retired, his son Kim took over.

“In 2016, I became the officer in charge out here.”

Mr Cryer joined the brigade 28 years ago at age 16. His father was - and still is - a part of the crew.

He said they were always looking for new volunteers to come on board.

“Every brigade around the country has issues with recruitment during the day, because in smaller communities like ours, there are a lot of people who work out of town,” he said.

“Basically, we’re always looking for people who would be around, not all the time, but during the day to look at coming in and joining up.”

Mr Cryer said there were certain impressions of the fire service - such as needing to be around constantly, and only going to car crashes and fires - that weren’t true.

“We do so many different things now,” he said. “We’re quite a young, vibrant brigade, and we’re always looking to be a part of the community and help out where we can.”

For more information about recruitment, find the Puriri Volunteer Fire Brigade on Facebook.

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