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Knocked it off



By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

“Use it or lose it” has always been the attitude of Ngātea nonagenarian David Baker. Not only has the 90-year-old made good use of his legs throughout his life, traversing tracks overseas and throughout New Zealand, he has now become the oldest known person to have ever reached the summit of Mt Taranaki.

He climbed the peak alongside his wife Helen, 71, and family for his birthday celebrations last month, telling *The Profile* it was both a mental and physical challenge that was spurred on by a fundraiser for Starship.

“For the last five or six months, Helen and I have been working towards it; we knew how hard it was going to be,” he said.

Mount Taranaki, also called Mt Egmont, is a dormant stratovolcano that stands at 2518m high.

It is the second highest mountain in the North Island and it took David and his family 12 hours total to ascend and descend it.

David’s childhood home was under the shadow of the maunga. He recalled “living in the bush chasing goats for two and six-pence each”.

“I’ve always had an inkling to keep fit,” he said. “I’ve played a lot of squash, went for runs...”

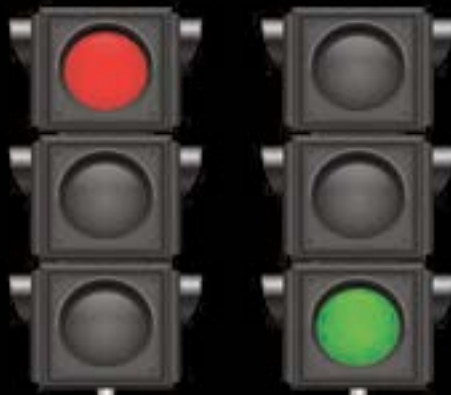
For five years, David was responsible for setting up 400 bait stations in the Waha-rau Regional Park - a steep climb he said

CONTINUED P2

David Baker takes a breather after his record-breaking fundraising climb to the top of Mt Taranaki for his 90th birthday. Photo: SUPPLIED

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The *Valley Profile* is delivered weekly to letterboxes in the Hauraki Plains, Paeroa, Waihi, Thames, Thames Coast, plus bulk distribution peninsula-wide. *Our focus is 100% local community news.*

NEWS/EDITORIAL

Publisher/Editor Teresa Ramsey
Ph 0204 0944 853
editor@valleyprofile.co.nz
Senior Reporter Kelley Tantau
Ph 022 619 4889
kelley@valleyprofile.co.nz
Reporter Alice Parminter
Ph 022 527 0988
alice@valleyprofile.co.nz

ADVERTISING

Advertising Manager Nikki Sanders
Ph 022 130 3885
nikki@valleyprofile.co.nz
Feature Writer Davidda Hikatangata
Ph 022 174 3988
davidda@valleyprofile.co.nz
ISSN 2703-5700

2 QUEEN ST, PAEROA
Ph 07 862 7077

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Retiree's record climb for charity

CONTINUED FROM P1
got his heart rate up - and, after retiring to the Hauraki eight years ago, he found other ways to continue his activity. "It's so flat in Ngatea," he said, "so what I do everyday besides my walk, is go up and down the steps at the pavilion for 15 to 30 minutes.

Thirty minutes is my record - that's 90 times walking up and down 15 steps - and that's the reason why when I came off the mountain, the next day there were absolutely no muscle twinges. Nothing."

David may also be recognizable for his generosity in picking up litter around town.

For at least five years, he has collected 20kg of rubbish a month, including glass, cans, and cardboard, and walks back home to recycle it.

But the inspirational Hauraki man remains ever humble.

Although he climbed Mt Taranaki for his 70th and 80th birthdays, he said his 90th-year excursion came with a "big push" - to fundraise for Starship.

He chose the children's hospital because, after nine decades of no serious health complications, David said he was well-aware how fortunate he and his family had been.

"I've been a teacher and feel children are our future," Helen said. "We have been really lucky with our children



and our grandchildren, but not everybody is as fortunate."

DETAILS: To donate to David's fundraiser, visit www.fundraise-forstarship.org.nz/david-baker



TOP: David Baker climbed to the peak of Mt Taranaki alongside his wife Helen, 71, and family for his 90th birthday celebrations last month.

RIGHT: David takes a breather during the epic climb.
Photos: SUPPLIED



Three serious crashes on Thames Valley roads

SH25 in Thames was closed for four hours on February 5 while emergency services responded to a crash involving a car and a motorcycle at the Banks St intersection just before midday.

Police said one person was transported to Waikato Hospital in a critical condition. The Serious Crash Unit attended.

Police thanked motorists for their patience while the road was closed, with northbound traffic turned-back at Kōpū and southbound traffic turned back in Thames.

A few days later, emergency services responded to another serious crash involving two vehicles at Tirohia.

Police said the crash happened around 4:35pm and one person was in a critical condition. Traffic management was in place in the area and the Serious Crash Unit was advised.

The following day, February 8, a two-vehicle crash closed SH25 near Hauraki Rd, Orongo, at about 6.50pm. Hato Hone St John sent three road ambulances to the crash and treated six patients.

One was in a serious condition, four received moderate injuries, and one had minor injuries.

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Thames Tides

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
Feb 14	Feb 15	Feb 16	Feb 17	Feb 18	Feb 19	Feb 20
 Morning 5:08am 0.2 Afternoon 5:40pm 0.2 11:34am 3.8 11:54pm 3.7	 Morning 5:57am 0.3 Afternoon 12:24pm 3.7 6:29pm 0.3	 Morning 12:43am 3.5 Afternoon 1:15pm 3.5 6:50am 0.5 7:19pm 0.5	 Morning 1:35am 3.4 Afternoon 2:07pm 3.3 7:46am 0.7 8:12pm 0.6	 Morning 2:32am 3.2 Afternoon 3:02pm 3.2 8:47am 0.9 9:10pm 0.8	 Morning 3:36am 3.1 Afternoon 4:01pm 3.0 9:53am 1.0 10:15pm 0.9	 Morning 4:45am 3.0 Afternoon 5:04pm 2.9 10:59am 1.1 11:22pm 0.9
6:46am 8:17pm Best At 4:44am 5:09pm	6:47am 8:16pm Best At 5:34am 5:59pm	6:49am 8:15pm Best At 6:25am 6:51pm	6:50am 8:14pm Best At 7:17am 7:44pm	6:51am 8:12pm Best At 8:12am 8:39pm	6:52am 8:11pm Best At 9:07am 9:34pm	6:53am 8:10pm Best At 10:02am 10:29pm
Rise 11:24am Set 10:45pm	Rise 12:35pm Set 11:15pm	Rise 1:46pm Set 11:49pm	First Quarter Rise 2:56pm	Set 12:28am Rise 4:02pm	Set 1:14am Rise 5:02pm	Set 2:07am Rise 5:54pm

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

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	HIGH Mn	LOW Mn
Coromandel	-0	04	-0 04
Whitianga	-0	01	-0 05
Tairua	+0	10	+0 21
Whangamata	-0	03	-0 05
Waihi Beach	-0	12	-0 12

Learning to read at 65 after life of 'listening'

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

Stephen Ranger has amassed thousands of books about his favourite subject - New Zealand history.

He enjoys the ones about Māori culture, kauri trees, flax, and gold mining, but there's one question he always gets asked when someone stumbles upon his collection: "How come you have so many books when you can't read?"

For 65 years, Stephen hasn't been able to read and write, and for most of his adult life, he used the maunga [mountains] of Auckland to navigate. But now he's given himself a goal: to learn literacy with the help of Te Korowai.

"I could've said to myself 'I'm not going to bother', but I want to leave the world knowing how to read," he told *The Profile*.

Stephen was born prematurely in Mt Roskill, Auckland, in 1958. From the start, he said he struggled with reading and writing and was placed in a special learning class in primary school.

He only spent about two years at high school and got the cane and the strap "quite a lot".

He said he didn't understand the words on the board or what they meant, and often felt like a "square peg in a round hole".

But he was good at other things: swimming, woodwork, and technical drawing, and after being expelled from school at 14, he went on to work at a furniture removal company sweeping the floors and doing other tasks.

In the 1980s, he started his own cleaning business which became a



After 65 years, Stephen Ranger is learning how to read and write. INSET: Stephen with Romi Curl. Photos: KELLEY TANTAU

success.

"I stayed away from that world of reading and I did that for years and years and years," he said. "I cleaned pubs and hotels and night-clubs and the windows of high-rises, and whenever anyone asked me how I got around Auckland, I'd tell them how I looked at the mountains. I've always been good at memorising things."

Stephen even passed his drivers licence by remembering the shapes of the signs.

He's lived in Thames now for 20 years and said he no longer wanted "to just get by".

"I'm learning to remember my phone numbers off by heart, and how to use a money machine without it gobbling up all the money, and my home address in case I hurt myself," he said. "I never had to use my brain because I went by my ears - I was listening all the time."

About three months ago, he approached Te Korowai Hauora

o Hauraki for literacy help, and since then, pre-occupational navigator Romi Curl has helped him from the ground up.

Romi, a former teacher, offers creative opportunities for free within the community, such as journaling and CV writing, as well as the literacy sessions Stephen has taken up.

They meet once a week and Romi, who believed Stephen had dyslexia, said he was making great progress.

"One of the things that I was really impressed by is that he's always been able to make a living without that [literacy] skill. It is much easier to learn things when you're younger, but he's making amazing progress," she said.

They've begun by chronicling Stephen's own life story, seeing as they both share a love of history.

"I've still got a long way to go," he said, "but I'm running on determination."

"If you put your mind to something and if you want something bad enough, you will do it."

During the 1980s, Stephen met his future partner Shirley, who was brought up in a family of 13.

She told him how her father would bring all of the children together to teach them how to read and write.

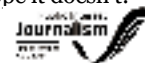
Stephen said he was so thankful for Shirley's help over the years, but he no longer wanted to rely on her.

"If it wasn't for my partner beside me being my right hand, I would be lost. She's there for anything, and she's been there for 25 years."

Stephen said if there were any others within the community in similar shoes as his, they didn't need to feel embarrassed.

"Life can throw you sh*t and give you everything at the same time. You don't need to be embarrassed about it."

"I don't care if it takes me the rest of my life to learn how to read," he said, then with a smile: "But I hope it doesn't!"



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Education

Waka Ama leads student to world champs

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

Hauraki student Manaia Taipari has the world stage in his sights after receiving a silver medal at the 2024 Waka Ama Sprint Nationals.

The 17-year-old competed in the sprint nationals at Lake Karapiro last month as part of the Asoy crew, which claimed silver and qualifying for the 2024 IVF Va'a World Sprint Championship at Hawaii in August.

Manaia also competed in the under 19s singles races at the national event, led by coaches Turanga Barclay-Kerr and Zanny Southon as part of the Te Toki Waka Ama club based in Hamilton.

Manaia told *The Profile* training with a goal like worlds in mind took commitment, discipline, and dedication - "training, eating good, and making sure you are at your best so you perform your best keeps you on all the time".

Manaia, who is a year 13 student at Hauraki Plains College this year, said it was "hard for a young person like me to keep 100 per cent focussed".

"Especially when your other mates are off doing fun stuff or just hanging out."

Having an awesome crew, and a team that is "on the same vibe" were important to Manaia.

Whanau backing him, and having a coach like Turanga, who only wanted the best for him, were key in helping him keep his eye on the



Manaia Taipari competes at the national waka ama competition.

Photo: SUPPLIED/WAKA AMA NEW ZEALAND

goal, he said.

Keeping focussed and working hard at school throughout 2023 resulted in Manaia gaining all the NCEA Level 2 credits he needed by September. This allowed him to finish up the school year early and move to Hamilton to train during the summer season, where his crew and coach trained, to work toward his waka ama goals.

Manaia's mother, Carrie Tai-

pari-Thorne said trainings were initially once a day, two to three times a week while he worked full-time in commercial construction to help pay for waka ama costs and boarding.

He left work in late November to focus on training after it increased to twice a day, six days a week.

Carrie said training sessions for Manaia with his crew in Hamilton involved land and water fit-

ness, boot camps, water skills and technique sessions, as well as race planning and strategy.

To continue training for the world champs, Manaia will now travel back to Hamilton three days a week for training while completing his school work at HPC.

He is also currently helping train corporate groups from Hauraki to compete in a Corporate Regatta run by Te Toki in Hamilton this

month to raise funds for the World Champs. Manaia will be training them after school and will also help in training community groups who have just started their waka journey with their home club, Te Aputa Tira Hoe.

His advice for other students who may want to get involved in the sport was to "probably not to stay up late, and get to training".

"Get in there and try it."

New Beginnings at HPC



Victoria Dickey and Whaea Rangitahi leading our new Year 9 students into the powhiri.

YEAR 9 QUOTES

"Everyone was really friendly" ... "A girl helped me find my class" - Ruby

"I enjoyed it and can't wait to start food tech" - Fletcher

"Full on and enjoyed making new friends" - Scarlett

"I love the tuck shop" - Lachlan

"Really enjoyed the day but my feet were sore at the end of it" - Christian



Korehere Ngāpō speaking on behalf of mana whenua.



Year 9 students found the ropes

More Than A School



Hauraki Plains College

ADVERTORIAL

Third store set to open for SuperPrice Furniture

SuperPrice Furniture will soon open its third store, expanding its reach to supply top quality furniture to customers around the entire Coromandel Peninsula.

Owner Kamal Singh opened the first SuperPrice Furniture shop in Pollen St, Thames, in 2019, followed by a second store, the SuperPrice Bed Shop, in the same block to specialise in bedroom furniture.

Now, Kamal is gearing up to open another store in the former Fagans furniture shop in Whitianga's Albert St.

Kamal said he was ready to expand and reach out to the entire Coromandel Peninsula, with the Whitianga store looking to sell both beds and furniture.

The grand opening date had not been set, but was likely to happen mid to end of March, he said.

Kamal's younger brother, Diamond Thind, will manage the new store.

"He's quite experienced and he's been with me for five, six years," he said.

"He's capable of running the shop."

Kamal wanted anyone in the Coromandel area who needed to buy furniture to "think of us as first choice".

"Just come and talk to us," he said.

With an interest in supporting the older community, the SuperPrice Bed Shop in Thames offered adjustable electric beds, or lifestyle beds, which had been growing in popularity, he said.

"The older customers, they just don't mind about fashion and trends. They come here so that they can have a good experience."

Immigrating to New Zealand when he was younger and starting a business were things Kamal said he wanted to inspire both younger immigrants and let the younger community know that "anything is possible".

"It's my brand, it's not a franchise or anything. It's an independent family business," he said.

Kamal's brother in law, Sanket Gurung,



SuperPrice Furniture owner Kamal Singh looks forward to opening a new store in Whitianga.

Photo: DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

looks after the bed shop, while the furniture shop is looked after by sister in law Srijana Gurung Kothiyal. "And my wife, Simran Gurung, she does a bit of marketing," he said.

With a focus on delivering excellent customer service, Kamal said the best thing about being the owner of the business had come down to "connecting with people".

"I revolve around service," he said.

Kamal said customers walking in the store had either had a good experience with SuperPrice, or had heard about someone else's experience with the store.

"It might take me some time to find exactly what they [customers] need," he said,

but he aimed to listen and do his best to find a solution. Kamal said SuperPrice products were a "middle of the road" price point.

"We stick with Kiwi made, we want to provide quality and comfort," he said. "And we do deliveries by the way."

The flat rate of \$80 to deliver anywhere in the Coromandel Peninsula was something Kamal said he could offer. They just wanted to look after the community, he said.

"My wife, she's a nurse in the hospital, my baby was born here, and we are locals, we live here now. Come and support locals, we are here," he said.

- By Davidda Hikatangata



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'Town pride' at heart of Gordon's goodwill

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

The story of how Gordon Rogers came to live in Waihi is one of timing. After his second wife passed away from cancer in 2006, a friend of his told him to "hop on a plane and come over to Christchurch; spend a couple of weeks here to get away from it all".

The Australian-born did just that and, after discovering some family history within New Zealand, he returned home but was "80 per cent sure" he was going to come back.

Fast-forward to 2010, he married again and told his new wife he wanted to "live and die in New Zealand".

"We drove all round the North Island. I had a list of towns on an A4 sheet of paper - 20 of them. We finished that list and came back the next year and went to different towns written on another list. Waihi wasn't written on the first list. Waihi wasn't on the second list. It wasn't in the top 40," he said. "But one night, we came through to the roundabout and I looked up and I saw the lights on the poles and the flags... two days later, I leased a house for a year."

Gordon, 95, said he knew nothing about Waihi, but that



Gordon Rogers has been recognised for his generosity, but the 95-year-old doesn't do it for the glory.

Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

the lights and the flags told him it had plenty of "town pride" and he officially became a local a few years later.

That feeling of belonging to and being proud of the town where he lived has been a constant theme throughout the

goodwill Gordon has spread among Waihi, of which he was presented with a certificate of appreciation from the district's

Mayor Toby Adams last week.

Gordon was one of the driving forces behind the planting of hundreds of cherry blossom trees throughout town, as well as the thousands of daffodil bulbs at Waihi Cemetery.

He is also the founder of the Waihi Cherry Blossom Society, but said he couldn't have done a thing without the help of Max McLean and Sel Baker.

"I've had lots of ideas that have ended up on the rocks, but this one worked," he said.

"Deep inside, I feel proud because, just as I taught my daughters and sons: at times in life you come to a fork in the road and you don't know which way is wrong or right. But if you choose one road, go right to the end because you won't know whether you win or lose until you're at the end. But every time I look [at the award], all I see is Sel and Max."

Mayor Toby said council did not give certificates of appreciation "out lightly" but instead made sure they went to someone who was "absolutely doing some amazing stuff in our community".

"I always put a lot of thought and effort into who is deserving and this was an easy no-brainer," he said.



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Tattoo triumph

The 31st annual Highland Games and Tattoo was held in Paeroa Domain on February 10. Thousands of people celebrated all things Scottish, with dancing, competitions, pipers and drummers, and a wealth of Scottish culture and food in the Clan Village. The day finished with a three-hour evening tattoo extravaganza. ALICE PARMINTER marched along to catch the festivities.



Andy from Tauranga represents the Kiwi team in finals of the caber toss.



The drum majors show their flair in the finals of the Flourishing of the Mace.



Every piper and drummer marches in unison under the mace of the Auckland Police Pipe Band at the Evening Tattoo.



Rows of pipers and drummers weave through one another in an impressive display of precision and musical talent.

Photos: ALICE PARMINTER



The Northland Caledonian Pipe Band.



The Hamilton Caledonian Pipe Band.

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See Strautmann dealer AgPlus for agricultural needs

Providing exceptional customer care, sales and services are top priorities for AgPlus, who are local specialists in agriculture and the exclusive Strautmann dealer for the Thames Valley-Coromandel, Waikato and Bay of Plenty region.

Owners Stan and Fi Knight bought the business in 2015, when it was originally Te Aroha Tractors & Garden Machinery.

"We outgrew it within 18 months," Stan said.

Now located on a bigger section in Lawrence Ave, Te Aroha, AgPlus has grown from just four technicians, to nearly 20 staff currently.

"We've got a diversely qualified team as we offer a range of services," Fiona said.

Not only does AgPlus offer a variety of services and products, but they are also the exclusive dealer for Strautmann sales, parts and services for the region.

"Strautmann are world renowned for their quality and durability, which makes them a very popular choice amongst contractors and farmers. Strautmann equipment is made in Germany using quality steel and components. They invest a lot in R & D too which keeps them at the forefront of new product design and improvements.

"AgPlus has a 24/7 service backup with excellent parts availability, and that's an important factor when purchasing



The AgPlus coverage area.

new equipment," Stan said.

With Fiona's extensive dairy farming background and Stan's experience as a multi-qualified technician, they have a great understanding and respect for the agricultural industry.

"Stan's passion is obviously the mechanic side of it, and I love farming, so I do that," Fiona said.

"AgPlus offers a variety of services and products but obviously agriculture is our focus."

Automotive, home and garden, air conditioning, heavy diesel, tyres, and hydraulic hoses are some of the products and services that AgPlus offer, as well as auto electrical.

"On farm as well, so we do a lot of field servicing."

Field servicing isn't the only work that requires travel for AgPlus. Stan also specialises in Elevated Work Platforms, or EWP's, and has worked on equipment as far away as Antarctica!

Regardless of where the work takes them, AgPlus remains committed to their home roots



The AgPlus team are here to help with any agricultural needs. BELOW: Stan Knight in Antarctica.

Photos: SUPPLIED

by sponsoring schools, sports clubs and charities throughout the Thames Valley and Matamata-Piako.

AgPlus is also a major sponsor for the Waihou Rugby club, which will host its annual fishing competition in March.

Past prizes sponsored by AgPlus include a Husqvarna ride-on as well as sponsoring over \$1500 worth of prizes for the kids section alone.

- By Davidda Hikatangata



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Rural Life

Live animal exports to return

Live animal exports look set to return, but not without new 'gold standard' requirements to protect animal welfare and safety, Federated Farmers says.

National, ACT and NZ First all committed during election campaigning to reversing the ban on live exports and putting enhanced animal welfare standards in place. The new government has confirmed its intention to lift the ban, and trade could resume by mid-2024.

Federated Farmers dairy chair Richard McIntyre said Federated Farmers had pushed for this move, and he was pleased the government would be following up on the campaign commitment.

McIntyre said live exports were a significant earner for farmers when domestic market and environmental conditions, such as droughts, are unfavourable.

Live exports have earned New Zealand around \$300-\$400m a year, which jumped to \$524m last year with the ban on the horizon.

The previous government's 2021 Regulatory Impact Statement noted: "...livestock exports make a small but important financial contribution to individual farmers by helping diversify their income streams.

"In addition to fetching premium prices, if export cattle are sold as yearlings, farmers can receive an earlier than normal return on investment."

In the 10 years to 2021, around 5000 farmers across all regions of New Zealand had supplied breeding cattle for export, the Regulatory Impact Statement said.

McIntyre said Federated Farmers welcomed stronger welfare standards.

"New Zealand farmers already have high standards for animal welfare on-farm, and we expect the same with exported animals. This is about protecting our international reputation, but it's also about maintaining our reputation here in our communities."

In October, a 1News Verian poll found 51 per cent of Kiwis wanted the live export ban, which came into effect in April, 2023, to continue. Some 30 per cent wanted to see the trade resume with increased animal welfare and safety standards, while 6 per cent wanted the practice to restart with no new requirements, and the rest 'didn't know'.

McIntyre said the poll highlighted that New Zealanders valued high standards of animal welfare.

But he said the average New Zealander was not likely to be aware of the live export industry-initiated 'NZ Gold Standard' animal welfare precautions put forward as a caveat on any re-start of cattle and sheep being shipped live from our shores.

"Often with these surveys, how the question is framed and what context those surveyed are provided with, has a big bearing on the answers.

"With live exports, it's important for people to understand what the Gold Standard would look like, and how far ahead of the rest of the world Kiwi farmers already are – and will continue to be."

It was also important people understood New Zealand live cattle exports were entirely for breeding purposes, he said.

"People sometimes confuse live cattle exports with the live export for religious slaughter trade, which New Zealand won't be doing."

Live Export NZ (LENZ) Chairman Mark Willis describes the Gold Standard animal welfare criteria, including post-arrival care and sustained monitoring in the animals' country of destination, as unmatched internationally.

Few countries matched the pre-voyage and voyage animal welfare standards the New Zealand trade employed before the ban, let alone the enhancements now proposed, he said.

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Boating accident casts gloom over Stony Bay

In Brief



Dead Cert

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

The couple was lying lifeless together on the beach near the high water mark at Stony Bay, Port Charles.

In their house the tea things were laid out expectantly on the table but Friedrich, 30, and Charlotte Otto, 28, would not be coming back.

They had last been seen the previous evening, March 11, 1879, about 5.30 by Charlotte's brother, Bridges Kensington. They were standing under the verandah of their house.

Bridges was on his way to visit his and Charlotte's mother. Friedrich and Charlotte said they were going there themselves; they were in the habit of making pleasure trips to Mrs Kensington in their boat.

The Kensington family patriarch, Charles Jephson William Kensington, had been born in France, and later managed the Lure Estate sugar plantation his father had owned in Tobago, West Indies.

In 1862, Charles sold the plantation and, with his wife and eight



Kauri in the Coromandel region.

Photo: SUPPLIED

children, set sail for New Zealand on the William Miles. Initially the family lived at One Tree Hill, Epsom, Auckland. Charles then purchased about 13,000 acres at Port Charles, where he moved his family and began milling timber. But by 1866, Charles Kensington had

gone bankrupt and in 1868 he sold up. The Kensingtons stayed at Port Charles, however, a visitor noting that Charles resided in a very pretty little clearing with a thriving vegetable garden.

In 1877, Charles died but his family remained, some working

at the sawmill and living further out at Stony Bay. A year after his death, daughter Charlotte married Friedrich Traugatt Otto - a German sawmill proprietor of Port Charles who had been naturalised five months previously.

When Bridges returned to Stony Bay with his brother Cedric around an hour later he noticed the boat was gone from the beach. He remarked to Cedric that the Ottos had better be careful in landing when they came back as there was a noticeable roll in the bay.

Bridges went home but the following morning he found Friedrich had not turned up for work at the mill. He went to the Otto's house and discovered he and Charlotte didn't seem to have returned from visiting Mrs Kensington the previous afternoon.

He guessed that they had stayed the night so he and his brother Henri took a dinghy to Port Charles in search of them, but on their arrival found that Charlotte and Friedrich had not been there the prior evening.

Now very alarmed, Bridges returned with all haste to Stony Bay where to his horror he found the bodies of Charlotte and Friedrich on the beach, about 100 yards from the place where the boats were kept.

The terrible news was relayed to Mr Wright, manager of the mill, who had the bodies taken to Mrs Kensington's house. The accident cast quite a gloom over the settlement at Port Charles where the couple was much respected.

Charlotte and Friedrich were buried at Port Charles. They had been married just six months.

HANDBAG APPEAL BEGINS

A charitable appeal in the memory of Grace Millane, the British tourist murdered in Auckland in 2018, is kicking off this week and will run until March. Dubbed the 'Love Grace Handbag Appeal', the New Zealand organisers said its aim was to help women in need by collecting handbags and filling them with useful items. The Love Grace charitable appeal was set up by Grace Millane's family following her death to combine her love for handbags with a legacy to end violence against women. Leanne Grinder, owner of Walter & Co Hairdressing in Thames, is the local co-ordinator and drop-off base for the appeal. She said that any bags donated would be passed onto Hauraki Women's Refuge: Te Whariki Manawahine O Hauraki. "This will be the first time Thames is on the collection map, so let's make it a success and honour Grace's memory," she said. People can donate good quality second-hand handbags either empty or containing items such as: toothpaste and a toothbrush; sanitary products; tissues; lip balm; hairties and clips; hand soap and plasters. The collection begins on February 14 and ends on March 8. Walter & Co, located at 558 Pollen St, Thames, is open Tuesday to Friday for drop offs.

CORRECTION

An error was made in the Paeroa Tennis & Squash Club advertising feature in *The Valley Profile* on February 7. Cliff Pett's wife is Judith Pett, who won the ladies doubles back in the 1960s. Rita Bedford is another club member who will cut the cake at the centenary. *The Profile* apologises for the error.

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Recovery works include intermittent road closures at Ruamahunga Bay. Photo: SUPPLIED

Recovery road works to resume

Road works will be ramping up across Coromandel's state highway network from mid-February, as Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency continues to repair damage caused by last summer's extreme weather.

Teams will be working with stop/go traffic management in place at up to six locations around the peninsula, and up to 10 locations from mid-March. Work will also be carried out on SH2 in the Karangahake Gorge and SH27 at Kaihere.

Recovery works also include intermittent road closures at Ruamahunga Bay on the Thames Coast to allow a helicopter to lift equipment and materials to the top of the slope and bring down trees that have been cleared. This work is weather dependent and work is expected to continue until mid-2024.

"These works will mean delays for road users, so plan ahead and allow extra time for your journey," the agency said.

While SH25A was closed last year, work across the wider Coromandel highway network was carefully managed and sequenced to minimise further disruption to peoples'

journeys around the peninsula, Waikato regional manager of infrastructure delivery Jo Wilton said.

"Coromandel's highway network remains vulnerable because of the unstable natural environment, and exposed coastal areas. Repairing the remaining damaged sites as quickly as possible is essential for ensuring the resilience of the Coromandel."

The region was benefiting from these works with local suppliers being used where possible, Waka Kotahi said.

Last summer's storms resulted in 50 major slip sites as well as surface flooding related damage at multiple locations across the Coromandel highway network, leaving it in a fragile state. During 2023, work was completed at 32 sites along SH25 and SH2. Work was also prioritised on SH25A while it was closed to ensure the entire corridor was safe and more resilient.

Traffic on SH25A quickly returned to usual following the reopening of SH25A. Traffic data from Waka Kotahi shows average daily vehicle numbers during the peak holiday period of around 7300 a day.

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Perrin Newland of Thames Hire Centre is ready to help find project solutions. Photo: NIKKI SANDERS

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Perrin has been operating the business for five years with help from his wife Natasha, and is focussed on delivering good customer service and building a good reputation, he said.

"As the local tradesmen have been getting more work due to SH25A being opened up again, I start getting busier too. It's sort of that flow on effect.

"When businesses are doing well in Thames, then I'm doing well," he said.

Perrin had been working on a new website which outlines all the hire equipment and specifications.

Visit thameshire.co.nz to see what equipment is on offer, including the latest featured item, a charcoal roasting spit, or pop in to the centre and chat to Perrin. "We're open from 7am-5pm during the weekdays and 7am-12 on Saturdays."

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Drink driving, theft by 'fascinating' locals

OPINION



By RON AGNEW

In the 70s and 80s, I feel Thames was a town generally made up mainly of locals who were mostly known to each other, or their families generally were.

Many were quite glad that the tourists and holiday makers drove straight by to the tourist areas of the peninsula.

The town had its fair share of fascinating characters. I knew a lovely elderly lady whose husband passed, and she had to take over the family car to get to town and the supermarket as she lived up the hill in Richmond St above town.

I became aware that the doctor had declined renewal of her driver licence in her 80s or 90s. However, she just kept driving to town regularly. I didn't like to pull her over in town, so I went to see her privately, and



The former Thames Police station in Queen St.

Photo: SUPPLIED

talked of ways for her to travel other than driving.

Her reply was: "I need the car, let them fine me. Let them put me in jail, at my age am I worried?"

Thankfully, before we could follow up with her, she had a couple of big frights and gave up driving. How could we put a 90-year-old into the cold cells?

One of the functions of the Police was going through the hotels at night and helping the publican clear the bars out by 10:30pm. We had nine pubs

in and around Thames at that time, and we generally knew the people who were heavy drinkers and who drove home. One character in Pārāwai we knew drove home by the back roads after closing time. A favourite route from The Lady Bowen, was along Brown St. We managed to get behind him a couple of times there, but each time, he pulled over and ran off into the mangroves before we could initiate a drink driving process.

In those days the Police and Ministry of Transport Traffic

Officers could not do random stops of vehicles as is allowed now. We had to have a reason, such as tail light out, or erratic driving etc.

Jack would wait till we knocked off at 2 or 3am to make his way home, with mud up to his knees. I am blown if we wanted to follow him in there!

Another Pārāwai character was sometimes involved in thefts around town. I was driving into Thames past the Rugby Club during the day. A crash occurred on the old Kauaeran-

ga bridge, a few cars in front of me. One car hit the gutter and flipped on to its roof. When I got to it, the car was still spinning, and the driver hanging upside down but was unhurt.

The window was down, and I recognized the driver. I said to him "Harry, where did you get the car?" He replied: "I stole it man". I must say I liked Harry; in many ways he was so honest!

Although he did get a huge fright one night. The president of the Thames Rugby Club had an alarm in his bedroom wardrobe. It was attached to a silent alarm on the bar at the club. He used to bravely attend by himself each time, but always with his loaded shotgun. At 2am he arrived and rounded the corner of the building shotgun in hand to be confronted by Harry loaded up with three crates of beer.

The shotgun went off, the crates dropped to the ground and smashed. When I got there, he described the big afro on the offender, who had run across the paddocks and swum across the river, up Herewaka St, in a very wet state.

I knew straight away who it was and headed up there to find a very wet and deflated Harry. (Names have been changed to protect privacy).

- Ron Agnew is a former Thames Police officer

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We're looking for people to help assess funding for the Creative Communities Scheme

Who is needed?

- People who know what's happening in the arts locally
- People who have experience in one or more forms of art
- People from a range of communities
- People with specific cultural knowledge relevant to the arts
- People of all ages. We would particularly like to include young people on the committee.

What's involved?

You'll help assess applications for funding from artistic individuals and community groups and attend assessment committee meetings twice a year.

The Creative Communities Scheme

Each year Creative New Zealand provides Creative Communities Scheme funding to local and district councils throughout New Zealand to distribute in their area. The scheme supports more than 1,800 projects every year.

Signing up

If you're interested contact the Creative Communities Scheme Administrator for Hauraki District Council at Katie.Mclaren@hauraki-dc.govt.nz or phone (07) 862 8609.

For more information go to www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/community/grants-funding/creative-communities-scheme

Thanks to the Waihi Lions Club for the recent Waihi Arts and Street Festival and the rousing performance from the Katikati Concert Band!

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SUDOKU

Fill the grid so every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9

1				6	4			
	3	6		4	7		2	1
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EASY

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MEDIUM

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	8	1	7	4				2
7			5					

HARD

137

137

Puzzles © The Puzzle Company
www.thepuzzlecompany.co.nz

HARD

2	6	5	4	1	1	7	8	3	9
8	7	4	9	2	3	5	1	6	
1	9	3	8	6	5	2	7	4	
3	4	7	2	8	1	9	6	5	
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7	3	6	5	9	2	1	4	8	

MEDIUM

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9	8	2	5	6	7	3	4	1	
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4	1	5	3	2	8	9	7	6	
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2	4	3	6	1	9	8	5	7	
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EASY

5	9	7	6	4	3	2	8	1	
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8	2	4	7	9	1	3	6	5	
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1	4	3	8	7	5	9	2	6	
7	8	6	9	1	2	4	5	3	

JUMBO CROSSWORD

157

ACROSS

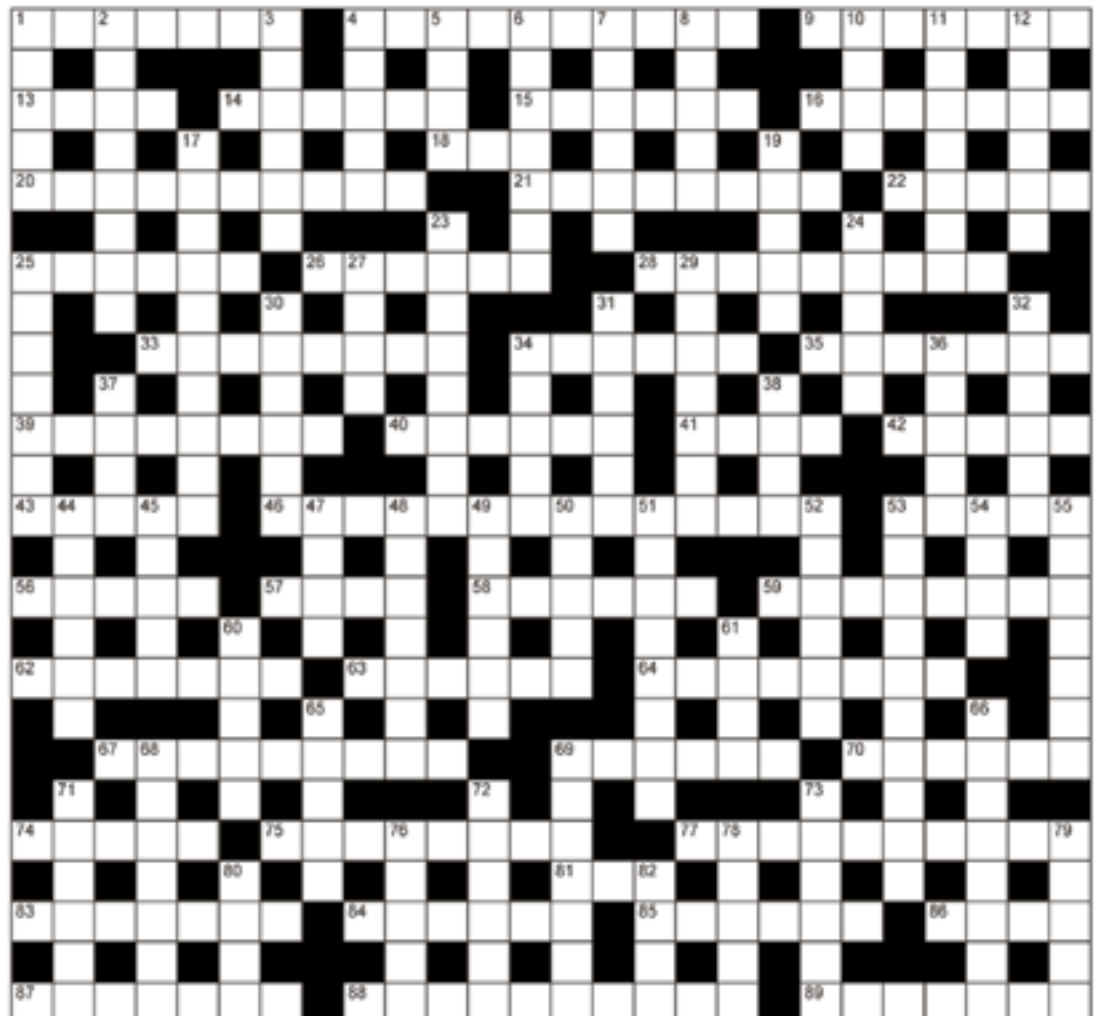
- 1 Butcher's chopper (7)
- 4 Hater of women (10)
- 9 Ink-soaking paper (7)
- 13 Enthuse wildly (4)
- 14 Standing posture (6)
- 15 Assessed (6)
- 16 Human-like robot (7)
- 18 Canine animal (3)
- 20 Campanologist (4-6)
- 21 Apprentices (8)
- 22 Small crowbar (5)
- 25 Meal (6)
- 26 Sponge-like (6)
- 28 Artificial universal language (9)
- 33 Lover's song (8)
- 34 Green club (6)
- 35 Fiasco (7)
- 39 Reduces in weight (8)
- 40 Swot up on (6)
- 41 Conspiracy (4)
- 42 Camera adjustment (5)
- 43 Bottomless chasm (5)
- 46 Time when one has to account for past actions (3,2,9)
- 53 Icy rain (5)
- 56 Waterway (5)
- 57 Lawsuit (4)
- 58 Oil carrier (6)
- 59 Catch off guard (8)
- 62 Book (7)
- 63 Spite (6)

DOWN

- 1 Chocolate substitute (5)
- 2 Letter holder (8)
- 3 Portly (6)
- 4 Shredded meat (5)
- 5 Cast off (4)
- 6 Swimmer's eyewear (7)
- 7 Chewy confectionery (6)
- 8 Rear part (5)
- 10 Optical glass (4)
- 11 Extreme mental distress (7)
- 12 Mystery (6)
- 17 Course catalogue (10)
- 19 Barrister's instructions (5)
- 23 Unable to distinguish differences

IN MUSICAL PITCH (4-4)

- 24 Light beer (5)
- 25 German measles (7)
- 27 Spoken (4)
- 29 Wake late (5,2)
- 30 Wrote (6)
- 31 Long thin mark (6)
- 32 Woman's shirt (6)
- 34 Grade A (5)
- 36 Coral reef (5)
- 37 Hideous (4)
- 38 Unite (4)
- 44 Jacket (6)
- 45 Musty (5)
- 47 Absent (4)
- 48 Swimming style (7)
- 49 Keep (6)
- 50 Paddled boat (5)
- 51 Cloudy (8)
- 52 Cantankerous (6)
- 53 Faster than sound (10)
- 54 Heinous (4)
- 55 Playhouse (7)
- 60 Shun (5)
- 61 Be keen on (4)
- 65 Time lag (5)
- 66 Target centre (8)
- 68 Straddling (7)
- 69 Praise excessively (7)
- 71 Set (6)
- 72 Came down with (6)
- 73 Meal outdoors (6)
- 76 Smell (5)
- 78 Drain (5)
- 79 Bare (5)
- 80 Journey sections (4)
- 82 Persian fairy (4)



PREVIOUS SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Sitting pretty, 8 Resist, 14 Wrath, 15 Octupled, 16 Follows, 17 Flare, 18 Kin, 19 Essence, 21 Translate, 22 Pastry, 25 Triplicate, 27 Uncooked, 28 Crisis, 31 Safari, 33 Succeed, 34 Mortar, 35 Plus, 37 Doe, 39 Dome, 40 Innings, 41 Entourage, 42 Yielded, 43 Insolent, 48 Forecast, 52 Strikes, 56 Statuette, 57 Cohabit, 58 Yarn, 59 Leu, 60 Exit, 61 Jovial, 62 Caramel, 63 Intone, 65 Weaken, 66 Casualty, 68 Equivocate, 71 Studio, 72 Deadliest, 74 Brusque, 76 Nip, 79 Rogue, 80 Rewrite, 81 Eyesight, 83 Scene, 84 Dearth, 85 Step out of line.

DOWN: 2 Incisor, 3 Truce, 4 Nil, 5 Pods, 6 Effervescent, 7 Talon, 8 Risotto, 9 Safe, 10 Scarab, 11 Tacky, 12 Changes, 13 Mollycoddle, 14 Western, 20 Criticise, 23 Bassinet, 24 Decead, 26 Placebo, 27 Uneasy, 29 Sultana, 30 Tattoo, 32 Acorn, 34 Mends, 36 Scent, 38 Ruse, 43 Issue, 44 Stamina, 45 Laud, 46 Notion, 47 Drill, 48 Fabulous, 49 Retriever, 50 Cryptic, 51 Siren, 52 Seminar, 53 Knuckle down, 54 Scurvy, 55 Chimney sweep, 64 Require, 65 Witness, 67 Unearth, 69 Toughen, 70 Single, 71 Spree, 73 Idiot, 75 Swill, 77 Seer, 78 Beau, 82 Ego.

SPORTS

Teamwork trumps for Valley touch teams

By ALICE PARMINTER, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

Teamwork and dedication were the name of the game at a touch tournament in Rotorua recently, as two Thames Valley junior teams came away with podium finishes.

Thames Valley Touch sent two teams to the inaugural Rowdy's Memorial Touch Tournament on January 27 and 28.

The under 12 mixed touch team, Thames Valley Turbos, won their grade with a 5-4 win against Lake City, while the under 14 mixed team, Thames Valley, narrowly lost their final 4-3 to Waioranga after a draw at full time forced a drop off to decide the game.

Turbos manager Hinemoa Thwaites said her team's win was a testament to the hard work the 13 kids had put in over the summer to prepare for the tournament.

"We're really proud of the kids," she said.

"The amount of effort and dedication that goes into this, we're talking about a whole summer period. They had a little bit of time off over the Christmas period but there was homework; they were having to do 50 passes every night, they were sending off photos to our little group chat, and [having] regular check-ins."

Hinemoa said many of the 10- and 11-year-olds on the team were new to touch, and

so their focus was on building their connection as a group.

"We had more girls than we had boys, so we just paired the boys up and said, 'Hey, this is your buddy system'. We had some really beautiful friendships grow from it," she said.

At the tournament, there were only two u12 mixed teams, so the Turbos played most of their nine games against all-boy teams.

They played their final against the other mixed team, and even when they won Hinemoa said the kids were gracious in their victory.

"We had a few tears, we had a whole heap of in-the-air high-fives, it was really really beautiful," she said.

"And then they did a haka for the other team. [We] wanted to make sure that the legacy they left was, we're happy and proud of the mahi we've done, but we're also mindful of the other team. And just being a little bit humble, just to make sure that they're okay."

The u14 team also faced all-boy teams for most of the tournament, but their two games against mixed teams both resulted in draws, a feat which coach Savaan Ballantine was impressed by.

"I think that the kids really grew up over the course of the season, and that it showed during the tournament," she said.

Despite the initial disappointment of their loss, Savaan



The Valley under 14 team at the Rowdy Tournament. BELOW: The under 12s come away with a win.

Photos: SUPPLIED

said the kids were thrilled at their performance during the final.

"They were so excited, being in a final and being in a drop off. They said that playing that game felt like being in an All Blacks game," she said.

"[And] I think the best way to lose in a final is at a drop off. They really put their all into it."



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