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RSA marks 100 years
with major upgrade

By KELLEY TANTAU

As it marks 100 years standing along Paeroa's main street, the RSA and Citizens Club is on the brink of a major transformation; earthquake strengthening and a long-awaited restoration are finally within reach.

But getting to this point hasn't been simple. For years, the club has been working to secure the funds needed to carry out the remedial work required under the country's earthquake-strengthening rules introduced after the 2011 Christchurch earthquake.

Since then, the Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Act 2016 has required councils across the country to assess older buildings using a consistent national standard.

If a building scored under 37 per cent New Building Code [NBC], it would be considered earthquake-prone and must be strengthened or demolished within a set deadline.

With support from the Hauraki District Council and Community Matters, the Paeroa RSA commissioned engineering assessments and received a final rating of just 15 per cent NBC, and the building was formally declared earthquake-prone in September, 2020, with the organisation having until May, 2032, to complete strengthening work.

But because the building had heritage protection, demolition was not an option.

This left the RSA with the costly task of fundraising for major strengthening work or eventually abandoning the building.

For Paeroa RSA president John Hallett, the latter wasn't an option. "It has been a busy 12 months," he told *The Profile*.

Fundraising has been ongoing since 2020, with community events, raffles, public donations, and member support all helping to cover the \$110,000 cost of seismic reports, detailed engineering designs, and building consents.

Now, as the year draws to a close and the building's centenary approaches, the RSA has secured a grant covering 66 per cent of the work from the Lotteries Grants Board through its Heritage and Community Service funds, totalling \$480,000.

To complete the full restoration, it will still need to raise

CONTINUED ON P2



The Paeroa RSA and Citizens Club on Belmont Rd is set to undergo long-awaited strengthening work, just in time for the building's 100th anniversary.
Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

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What was I Googling again?

The pool's opening hours.

Oh yeah, thanks.

Getting useful reminders.



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Major upgrade for Paeroa RSA in 100th year

CONTINUED FROM P1
an additional \$60,000 in early 2026.
John said the extra funding wouldn't delay the strengthening itself but was needed for important related improvements, including upgrades to the security and fire alarm systems, repairs to the toilet block and garage roof, and car park resurfacing.
A former civil engineer, John's motivation to see the RSA restored to its former glory stems from a family connection.
His dad was a returned serviceman and was "very much an RSA supporter", he said.
"So the RSA has been in the background all my life... and I mean, it is an iconic building."
"I firmly believe it has two functions now in the community. Originally, it was purely to look after the returned servicemen, but now it's also to provide a community facility."
And while his forte in engineering was more to do with roads, pavements, bitumen, and crushed rock, John has been at the forefront of the Paeroa RSA building's future-proofing; though he emphasised it had been a team effort all the way.



The Paeroa RSA and Citizens Club on Belmont Rd.
Photo: KELLEY TANTAU
"The members got behind us, and I remember sitting with the committee after getting the second report and saying: 'Look, the next step is a detailed design. We're going to have to spend \$85,000'. And I said: 'We're probably planting trees that we'll never actually get to sit in the shade of'.
"The committee said: 'No, do it. Otherwise, this club has got no future. If we're going to be there for future generations, then we need to do this'.
It's hoped the restoration will begin in the first-half of 2026.
DETAILS: To help with donations or for more information, contact the RSA president at: paeroarsa@xtra.co.nz.

Thames info centre closed after smelly assault

The Thames Information Centre was forced to close early on December 11 after a "health and safety incident" left the building smelling badly and in need of sanitising.
The Thames Business Association said the incident occurred in the courtyard outside the information centre, when a man and a woman became involved in an argument which escalated into the man throwing a "foul-smelling substance" at the woman.
Sue Lewis-O'Halloran from the Thames Business Association said the incident was very unpleasant.
"I didn't see it happen, [but] It was just like he dumped it all over her front and her top," she said.
"[The cleaner] came around and said, 'this woman, I'm trying to get her cleaned up because she was covered in whatever it was'.
Thames-Coromandel District Council and their contracted cleaning company, Green by Nature, were very responsive over the incident and cleaned and power-washed the area, but the stench lingered on for some time, Sue said.
"It was extremely embarrassing... all these people were pouring off the bus and the stench was still pretty bad," she said.
"It's very unpleasant for visitors coming to our town."

PLACE AN ADVERTISEMENT/ADVERTORIAL: Advertising Manager Nikki Sanders, Ph 022 130 3885, nikki@valleyprofile.co.nz; Feature Writer Davidda Hikatangata, Ph 022 174 3988, davidda@valleyprofile.co.nz.
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Thames Tides

Wed Dec 17

Thu Dec 18

Fri Dec 19

Sat Dec 20

Sun Dec 21

Mon Dec 22

Tue Dec 23

<div><div>6:14am 3.0</div><div>12:10pm 1.0</div><div>6:13pm 3.0</div></div> <div><div>5:53am 8:35pm</div><div><div>Best At 10:42am 11:05pm</div></div></div> <div><div>Rise 3:21am</div><div>Set 6:13pm</div></div>	<div><div>7:03am 3.1</div><div>12:56pm 1.0</div><div>7:02pm 3.0</div></div> <div><div>5:53am 8:36pm</div><div><div>Best At 11:29am 11:54pm</div></div></div> <div><div>Rise 3:54am</div><div>Set 7:13pm</div></div>	<div><div>7:47am 3.1</div><div>1:39pm 0.9</div><div>7:49pm 3.0</div></div> <div><div>5:54am 8:36pm</div><div><div>Best At 12:19pm</div></div></div> <div><div>Rise 4:33am</div><div>Set 8:10pm</div></div>	<div><div>8:28am 3.2</div><div>2:21pm 0.9</div><div>8:34pm 3.0</div></div> <div><div>5:54am 8:37pm</div><div><div>Best At 12:45am 1:11pm</div></div></div> <div><div>Rise 5:20am</div><div>Set 9:03pm</div></div>	<div><div>9:07am 3.3</div><div>3:02pm 0.9</div><div>9:16pm 3.1</div></div> <div><div>5:54am 8:37pm</div><div><div>Best At 1:38am 2:04pm</div></div></div> <div><div>Rise 6:14am</div><div>Set 9:50pm</div></div>	<div><div>9:45am 3.3</div><div>3:43pm 0.8</div><div>9:56pm 3.1</div></div> <div><div>5:55am 8:38pm</div><div><div>Best At 2:30am 2:55pm</div></div></div> <div><div>Rise 7:14am</div><div>Set 10:30pm</div></div>	<div><div>10:23am 3.3</div><div>4:24pm 0.8</div><div>10:36pm 3.1</div></div> <div><div>5:55am 8:38pm</div><div><div>Best At 3:20am 3:45pm</div></div></div> <div><div>Rise 8:17am</div><div>Set 11:05pm</div></div>
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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	LOW	Mn
Coromandel	-0	05	-0	03
Whitianga	-0	01	-0	05
Tairua	+0	10	+0	20
Whangamata	-0	03	-0	06
Waihi Beach	-0	21	-0	16

Thames residents light the way to Christmas

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

Christmas is drawing near, and for one Thames couple that means it's time to decorate.

Jubin Jose and his wife, Neyoni Job, have been decorating their Banks St home with Christmas-themed lights and decorations for the past half a decade. Every year their display grows bigger, with new lights and features added to delight the residents of Thames.

"We just did a little [display] five years back, and the amount of people that came to see it was just astonishing," Jubin said.

"We're trying to add more every year. The kids, they love it. So we thought, you know, we'll just keep going."

The idea was inspired by areas in Hamilton and Auckland where whole streets put up lights at Christmas time.

"It's for the kids and the people in the community... there's not much in Thames," he said.

"I couldn't quite agree [five years ago]... it was quite a lot of money and effort to set up," Neyoni added.

"I thought it would be a waste of time. But when eve-

rything's up, and people start watching... It's so, so good."

This year, Jubin has added Santa's sleigh to the display. Visitors are encouraged to wander around in the front garden and get their photos taken in the sleigh, he said.

"We started building the sleigh four months back," he said.

"One of my friends is an artist. He drew the lines on the plywood and I made the [light] pattern."

The other lights in the garden were installed with the help of Jubin's electrician brother.

"Most of the lights we bring back from India where my hometown is, because it's way cheaper than here," he said.

"We turned them on from the last weekend of November... it took some time and effort for us to do them all."

But the feedback from the community has been worth it.

"They're saying they've never seen anything like this, it's amazing, thank you for doing this every year. And even people bring me flowers," Jubin said.

DETAILS: The light display runs from approximately 8.30-11.30pm each night on Banks St.

"When everything's up, and people start watching... It's so, so good."

- Neyoni Job



Above: Jubin Jose and Neyoni Job with their custom-made Santa sleigh. Below: The Christmas display is an eye-catching sight at night.

Photo: ALICE PARMINTER





Hato Hone St John Thames

Thank you to our supporters, suppliers and sponsors.

To all of our supporters, suppliers and sponsors, thank you very much for the support that you have provided to us through the year.

Without the support of the community Hato Hone St John would not be able to provide those programmes and services that help to strengthen our community's resilience.

Thank you to our volunteers and staff.

- > the volunteers that help with our Opportunity Retail Shop
- > the volunteers and staff that run our Health Shuttles
- > the volunteer Friends of the Emergency Department / Hospital
- > the Patron, volunteers and staff of the Thames Area Committee
- > the volunteers and staff on our Ambulances
- > the youth and their volunteer leaders in our Youth programme
- > the volunteer Caring Callers
- > the members of the Order of St John of Jerusalem

Thank you for your dedicated service and contribution to your community through Hato Hone St John.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous and happy New Year

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HDC NEWS

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Kirihimete



16 December 2025



*Wishing you a
Happy Holiday Season*

Kia ora koutou,

As we head into the holidays, I hope everyone will take extra care on our roads as people move around our district.

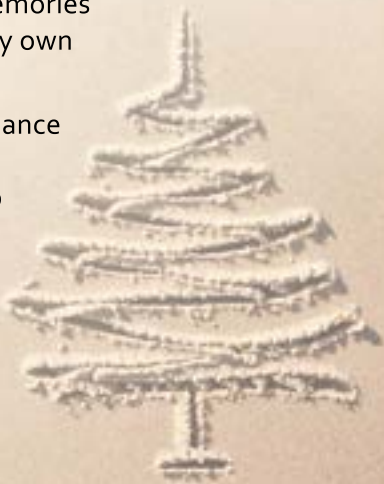
This time of year is also a great chance to slow down and enjoy all the simple things Hauraki offers. Spend a day at the beach, have a picnic at your local domain, or cool off at one of our pools. Some of my best childhood memories were made doing exactly that with my own whānau.

After a big year, I hope you get the chance to catch your breath, keep that spark of positivity. And as always, let's keep looking out for one another.

Wishing you all a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

Ngā mihi,

Toby Adams
Mayor, Hauraki District Council



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Council Services Holiday Hours

24 December 2025 to 5 January 2026

Council Offices

All service centres will be closed from 12 noon on Wednesday 24 December 2025, and will reopen from 8am Monday 5 January 2026.

For any enquiries you can still call 07 862 8609 or freephone 0800 734 834 (from within the District) 24 hours/7 days a week.

Libraries

All libraries will be closed from 12 noon on Wednesday 24 December 2025. Normal hours will resume from Monday 5 January 2026.

Swimming Pools

All pools will be closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Other days the pools will be open as per the usual schedule:

- Monday to Friday: 6-9am Lane swimming, and 9am - 6pm Public swimming
- Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays: 11am to 5pm Public swimming.

Refuse Transfer Stations

Paeroa and Waihi RTS

Closed on 25 and 26 December 2025, and 1 and 2 January 2026.

Open on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, 10am to 4pm
Closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Please note - the last day for RTS Vehicle Registration is 17 December and will open again 5 January.

Ngātea Recycling and Green Waste Collection Centre

Recycling bins are available 7 days.

Green Waste can be dropped off on Wednesdays and Saturdays, 12-4pm.

Kerbside collection days

Place bins at the kerbside by 7.30am

Areas	Rubbish + Food scraps	Recycling + Food scraps
	22-27 December Christmas week	29 Dec to 3 Jan New Year week
Whiritoa, Waihi (Zone1)	Mon 22 December	Mon 29 December
Waihi (Zone 2), Waikino, Mackaytown, Karangahake	Tue 23 December	Tue 30 December
Kerepēhi, Tūrua, Kaiaua, Ngātea, Waitakaruru	Wed 24 December	Wed 31 December
Paeroa	*Sat 27 December	*Sat 3 January

** Paeroa collections days will be 2 days later than usual due to Christmas and New Year public holiday*

Scan the QR code to view the 2026 Kerbside Collection Calendar for your area at www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/collection-days



Eyes and ears: community urged to act

Since we began our series on methamphetamine, The Profile has received a huge amount of feedback from readers about the impact this drug has had - on them, their neighbours, friends, and family. Community leaders are also chiming in, with plans to trespass Danby Field squatters before Christmas. They've also called for members of the public to take action. ALICE PARMINTER reports.

Thames Community Board (TCB) chair Adrian Cattran is calling on members of the public to report any and all suspicious activity to Police in a bid to push back against crime, violence, and social damage caused by the drug, methamphetamine.

His comments follow a statement from Police praising an anonymous whistleblower from Whangamatā, whose information helped them apprehend a 34-year-old man now facing charges of possessing methamphetamine for supply.

"Our confidential informants are the real heroes here," Sergeant Will Hamilton said.

"This great catch was a direct result of information provided to Police by members of the public. Thanks to the information they have given us, we were able to intercept a significant amount of methamphetamine, that was packaged and ready for sale to vulnerable members of our community."

Statistics obtained by The Profile show assaults in Thames and Kōpū increased an average of 125 per cent between May and October this year, compared to the same period last year. Theft has risen an average of 38 per cent for the same period.

Adrian said Thames no longer felt safe for a large proportion of the community, many of whom were elderly, and community members needed to do what they could to help.



Rough sleepers in Danby Field may soon need to find somewhere else to live. Photos: ALICE PARMINTER

"We need every single resident and ratepayer to be the eyes and ears of the Police and ring 105 and report where there's increased activity around a residential house, for example... That way the Police can build up an intelligence process so they can then work out a plan," Adrian said.

"The more people who phone in with information about where activities out of the norm are taking place, then the quicker we can get on top of this problem."

The community board would also be doing its part, Adrian said.

"Our board members are prepared to get behind a campaign where we can install more CCTV cameras in town... There was

some reticence in earlier days about the Privacy Act. My argument is, if they're doing what they're doing and it's legal, then they've got no fear," he said.

"We have just got to move into the 21st century and install cameras under our verandahs here in Pollen St."

"But cameras on their own are not sufficient. We need business owners, property owners, to start ensuring that the lights are on underneath their verandas at night."

Adrian said the board would discuss the measures at its February meeting, and had already spoken to Police about optimal places to install cameras in the central business area.

The Profile also understands Police have been working with Thames-Coromandel District Council, the Ministry of Social Development and local iwi to tackle the issue of the rough sleeper encampment in Danby Field behind Porritt Park playground, with the aim of trespassing any squatters before Christmas. The Profile contacted council and Police for comment.

Adrian said he welcomed such initiatives, and would ideally like to see the trees cleared from the area as well to deter people from returning.

"The drug dealers, the drug users, the rough sleepers, the homeless, they've built themselves a little circle who congregate in various parts around town and it becomes like a sort of club..."

"That saddens me because lots of them have got huge potential," Adrian said.

"Ngāti Maru are doing a wonderful job in the background, unbeknown to most people in town to endeavour to rehome and help these people, but as the old case is that drugs are far more exciting than living in a house and having a roof over your head and being a normal person."

The Profile has received many calls over the past few weeks about suspicious activities - one person said they regularly get up to 70 vehicles down their dead-end street every day, while another spoke of the traumatic discovery of a drug-related death at their neighbour's home.

"I encourage anyone who has information about drug-related offending, or any other offending, to please get in touch," Sergeant Hamilton said.

"Your identity will be well protected, so please contact us via 105 or come and see us at the local station."

DETAILS: Anonymous reports can also be made through Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111.



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Coastal birds to get reprieve from vehicles

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

Vehicles will no longer be allowed along a stretch of Hauraki coastland, over concerns for the safety of endangered birds in the area.

At its December 10 meeting, Hauraki District Council amended its traffic and parking bylaw to exclude all vehicles except emergency vehicles from driving on a 10km-stretch of the Wharekawa Coast beach between Haurahi Stream in Kaiaua, and Pūkoro Stream to the south, which includes Ray's Rest reserve.

The change follows a request made to the council by the Pūkoro Miranda Naturalists' Trust, expressing the need to protect rare Waharau/Pūkoro chenier plain birds and other shorebirds which nest in the area.

The affected stretch of beach is also recognised as part of the Firth of Thames RAMSAR site, a wetland of international significance.

Meanwhile, councillors also agreed to fund \$66,000 for the installation of solar photovoltaic and battery systems at four community facilities in the



A flock of South Island pied oystercatchers at Miranda. File Photo

Hauraki District, to support resilience in the event of emergencies. The selected sites are the Paeroa and Ngatea war memorial halls, Kerepēhi Marae, and Ngahutoitoi Marae.

The funding will come from the council's district community projects assistance fund, and will supplement a \$264,000 grant from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority's community renewable energy fund. The systems are estimated to cost around \$88,000 per site, and are expected to be fully installed by September, 2026.



Caroline Lind, fourth from left, stands among St John staff with the ambulance that now bears her name. ALICE PARMINTER

New ambulance for Paeroa station

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

Officials gathered at Paeroa's Hato Hone St John station on December 3 for the dedication of a new ambulance, a first for the Hauraki town.

The vehicle was purchased with funds donated by Caroline Lind.

Caroline told the gathered crowd she wanted to acknowledge her family's history by making a donation that would benefit the local community.

"It's just something I wanted to do. My mum and dad were in St John ambulance for as long as I can remember, and I was a cadet, and my brother was a cadet... I'm grateful that you were able to accept it here in Paeroa," she said.

The vehicle, bearing the num-

ber 794, is the first brand-new ambulance the Paeroa station has received in years.

Head of Order Matters Gary Salmon was on hand to accept the keys on behalf of St John, and said it would be put to good use.

"During the past 12 months, the Paeroa ambulance station attended, on average, four emergency calls every day.

"So if we calculate that over the life of this ambulance, this ambulance is going to respond to something like more than 10,000 emergency calls in its lifetime," he said.

"The people of Paeroa and the surrounding districts will be and are most grateful for this wonderful donation."

Area Operations Manager John Armitt said the vehicle

was a great boon for the response team.

"Paramedics work in an unstable and sometimes austere environment, and the only constant in that is the waka manaaki (ambulance)," he said.

"This is our environment, this is our safe haven, this is our tool of the trade... It's safe to travel in for the patient, family, and most of all, my staff.


"Caroline, you are now intrinsically linked to this waka manaaki and Paeroa Station, and to the paramedics who will provide care and transport within this community."

Ambulance 794 was put into service immediately following the ceremony.



Merry Christmas

FROM THE TEAM AT
'OPEN ADOPTION: THE GIFT OF LOVE'



OPENADOPTION.ORG.NZ



Become a Hato Hone St John Area Committee volunteer

We are looking for highly motivated volunteers in Paeroa to join our Area Committee and support the work of Hato Hone St John locally.

Hato Hone St John Area Committees exist to provide a local voice to enhance the health and wellbeing of communities across Aotearoa New Zealand. This may include supporting existing Community Health Programmes, as well as providing ideas for exciting new initiatives that address the needs of the community.

If you think you have what it takes to support positives changes in your community we would love to hear from you.

For further information, please email cefranklinhaurakicoromandel@stjohn.org.nz or phone 027 202 3389.



Good bakes on the rise in Hauraki

By KELLEY TANTAU

The newly-formed Hauraki branch of Good Bitches Baking is beginning to rise.

After joining the Thames chapter in August, Christine Laurenson has since launched a Paeroa group with a handful of volunteers on board.

And with plans being cooked up for further expansion, Christine said the organisation was already making a meaningful difference.

Good Bitches Baking [GBB] is a national organisation founded in Wellington in 2014, in which more than 3500 volunteers bake and deliver treats to nearly 590 organisations that offer support to those having a hard time.

“Starting up the Hauraki chapter has shown me just how many people in our communities are going through tough times for all sorts of reasons,” Christine said.

“The support agencies working quietly behind the scenes do an incredible job, and the more I connect with potential recipients, the more I realise just how many wonderful organisations are out there helping people in need.

“There is definitely a need for GBB here.”

Recently retired, Christine has a long history in hospitality and tourism - experience she said had been invaluable as she built up a network of bakers and recipients in the Hauraki.



Hauraki's latest Good Bitches Baking team. RIGHT: After joining the Thames chapter in August, Christine Laurenson has since launched a Paeroa Good Bitches Baking group.

In her “previous life”, she owned and operated Kōpu Café, managed Pedlars Motel in Paeroa for three years, and later started a touring business, Valley Tours and Transfers, alongside a shared partnership in Hauraki Bike Hire, servicing the Hauraki Rail Trail.

But Christine said she was drawn to GBB for its simplicity and heart.

“It felt like a no-brainer for

me,” she said.

“I love helping people and I love baking. Being part of GBB has also connected me with a whole new network of like-minded friends, not only locally, but across New Zealand who share the same mission.”

Christine is also focused on expanding the Hauraki outreach even further.

“Because we’re in the early stages of establishing within

the Paeroa area, our focus has been on recruiting our wonderful bakers.

“Our aim is to have around 20 bakers on the roster each month, giving us enough flexibility to cover baking days and match volunteers’ availability,” she said.

“At the moment we have three recipient organisations receiving weekly baking, and as we grow we’ll continue ap-



proaching others. My intent is to expand into Wāihi in early 2026, followed by Ngātea and surrounding areas.”

The Paeroa chapter’s first official rostered baking will coincide with Christmas giving, and Christine said her bakers would no doubt be creative in bringing “a bit of festivity to those receiving”.

She also encouraged anyone wanting to get involved to visit the Good Bitches Baking website, which explained how to become a baker or a recipient.

“You don’t need to be a master baker - just someone who can bake with love and wants to share that kindness with others,” Christine said.

“Spreading the word is also a huge help. Letting people know we’re here and working to make a positive impact in the community is one of the most valuable ways to support us.”

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Upgraded Hāhei Water Treatment Plant opens

One of the Coromandel's most iconic coastal communities now has access to safe and reliable water with less chance of water use restrictions during summer's visitor surge.

The upgraded Hāhei Water Treatment Plant was officially opened on December 10, celebrating an infrastructure milestone for the local community.

Deputy Mayor John Grant officiated the event on Pa Rd, unveiling a plaque to the plant that has been designed to comply with the Drinking Water Compliance Rules now and into the future.

Apart from the 150 properties connected to the Thames-Coromandel District Council supply, the plant also makes available safe, sustainable and reliable water to the Hāhei Water Supply Association that has 171 properties not previously connected to council supply.

Deputy Mayor Grant said the opening marked a significant milestone for Hāhei, bringing to fruition years of work and collaboration to provide safe, reliable water to the area.

The new plant also represented a commitment to the wellbeing of communities, ensuring every household, business and visitor had access to safe, reliable drinking water for decades to come, he said.

Until now, Hāhei properties had been accessing water privately through the association. However, ongoing increased demand - particularly during summer - and government reform have presented significant challenges for the small coastal community.

"This is more than a water treatment plant. It is an investment in our future," Deputy Mayor Grant said.

The plant has been designed to provide a flexible supply to cater for future growth to match population expansion to 2045 and beyond, council said.

Council project manager Ian Smith said there were concerns with scarcity of water from the existing bore sources in Kotare Reserve.

"It was imperative we find another source to provide a greater capacity of water and help to futureproof water delivery for the Hāhei community," he said.

The plant draws on the bore opposite 169 Hāhei Beach Rd, approximately 1.4km out of town, which - on its own - can provide almost 700m³/day compared to 300 to 350 out of the two Pa Rd bores which fed the association's and council supply.

The new bore will help protect the coastal aquifer that many, including the local camping ground, rely on.

The Hāhei upgrades follow completed upgrades to the district's other water treatment plants at Whitianga, Tairua, Pāuanui, Coromandel Town, Onemana and Whangamatā over the past seven years. Matarangi Water Treatment Plant is expected to be upgraded in the new year as the last in the series.



The upgraded Hāhei Water Treatment Plant from above. Photo: SUPPLIED



ADVERTISING FEATURE

Iconic farm a must-see

The Karangahake Gorge's Bullswool Farm Park is gearing up for a busy summer period.

The farm has undertaken some significant additions, and has more on offer for visitors than ever.

Owner-operators Tony and Sue Howse and their children Matt and Tallis currently run the farm.

"We have opened up a walk to the very top ridge of the farm," Sue says.

'Karangahake' means 'Meeting of the Hunchbacks', and refers to the two mountain ranges, the Kaimai-Mamaku and Coromandel Ranges meeting in the Gorge," she says.

"Our Top Rock walk sits in the middle of the Ranges, and offers magnificent views out over the Hauraki Plains. It is a challenging but achievable walk for most people of moderate fitness levels."

The farm's unique new Goat Walk positioned beside the farm's reception allows visitors to interact with the resident Anglo Nubian Goats, an elegant African milking breed that is known for its friendly nature and long floppy ears.

"Their ears work as a cooling system, having blood travel around their large ears cools them down on hot days, much the same as elephant and donkey's ears work too," Sue said.

A soon-to-open Coffee and Real Fruit Ice Cream cart is another addition to the farm.

"This is quite a new departure for us", Sue says. "We've long been asked if we offer coffee, so there's been quite a demand for it over the years."

"We see the coffee and ice cream cart as extending hospitality to visitors to the farm, and are excited to finally be offering it this year."

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On the Land

Mega effort to protect Coromandel wildlife

For 20 years, the Moehau Environment Group has been protecting native wildlife in northern Coromandel, and its efforts in establishing a 450-ha open-sided sanctuary, MEGa Pest Attack, has become a central part of that mahi.

With support from Waikato Regional Council, the sanctuary near Tangiaro/Port Charles has grown from an initial 250ha intensive rat trapping zone in 2004 to its current size of 450ha, within a wider network of stoat trapping.

Starting off as MEGa Rat Attack, it was renamed MEGa Pest Attack when efforts were stepped up to tackle the wild cats, possums, and ferrets that were threatening native birds in the area.

Waikato Regional Council's biodiversity partnerships lead Nicky Ismay said that the passion and dedication shown by groups like Moehau was inspiring.

"Waikato Regional Council really values the incredible work being put in by so many community members. These partnerships, working together towards a common goal of increased biodiversity enable us to achieve far more collectively than we could do alone."

MEGa Pest Attack is totally unfenced and open to the bush, meaning that kiwi can wander in and out while other birds can freely travel through the area.

It also meant the pests could roam freely, so a network of more than 2600 rat traps have been laid out in a grid, while a surrounding network of 150 mustelid traps keep their numbers low.

Moehau Environment Group chairperson Lettecia Williams echoed the value of

the partnership with regional council.

"Without the long-term support of Waikato Regional Council, we wouldn't be able to commit to the landscape scale protection of natural habitats that this funding allows," she said.

The concentrated trapping regime requires an enormous amount of tough physical labour, not only to lay the traps in the first place, but also to clear them regularly. It takes the equivalent of "30 person-days" to clear all the traps each month.

Each year, between 80-90 volunteers also help out, whether tackling wild ginger, checking stoat lines, or supporting other projects across the 16,000-hectare mustelid-trapping network.

The volunteers are backed by contracted trappers and seven part-time staff, including an operations manager and a communications and engagement manager, all guided by a volunteer committee. "Volunteers provide more than just their labour, they also give us their joy and enthusiasm for helping our natural world. We love seeing the excitement of volunteers talking about their traplines, kiwi night listening, bird monitoring, or tackling invasive weeds. Their spirit keeps us all going," Steph Parkyn, the group's community engagement manager, said.

The Moehau Environment Group is also carrying out other projects in northern Coromandel, including a decades-long project at Waikawau Bay wetland, working to protect threatened birds and invertebrates, and a large-scale kiwi project helping to make a safe habitat for kiwi from Coromandel Town to Port Charles.

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On the Land

Kauri conservation at new Coro centre

A new marine and conservation outdoors centre in the Coromandel is giving young people hands-on experience in protecting native wildlife, including state-of-the-art kauri biosecurity protocols and education.

The Hillary Outdoors centre at Port Charles in northern Coromandel was set up in late-2024, with the first group of visitors welcomed in December that year for a pilot programme.

Students spend five days at the residential centre, surrounded by 340 hectares of regenerating native bush, including kauri, engaging in hands-on marine, land, and conservation activities.

“The centre aims to create meaningful outdoor, adventurous experiences for rangatahi, where they can explore the marine and bush environments while also engaging with conservation,” centre manager Hayden Devine said.

“In line with the vision of our patron Sir Graeme Dingle’s vision, we believe this learning happens best out in nature, where young people can experience it directly rather than in a classroom.”

Waikato Regional Council has provided advice and expertise on the centre’s biosecurity protocols - essential to protecting kauri in the surrounding forest.

This includes two hygiene stations, designed specifically to meet the needs of the centre.

The main station is at the entrance to the centre, while another smaller station is in the centre compound.

“Visitors arrive and the first thing they do is clean and inspect all of their footwear and equipment at the hygiene station,”

Waikato Regional Council’s biosecurity pathogens and projects unit lead Amy Lendrum said.

“Hygiene stations are typically designed with individual hikers or small groups in mind, who only need to clean the shoes they are wearing. The centre, however, needed a hygiene station that could cater for large groups of children who need to clean multiple pairs of shoes all at the same time.”

Amy said council also provided biosecurity training for centre staff, made available educational materials including its award-winning kauri protection virtual reality sets, and provided kauri artwork to help decorate the centre.

“It’s important that we promote best practice in biosecurity practices because this helps to protect kauri. Contaminated footwear can spread kauri disease which as the name suggests is devastating for our native kauri,” she said.

“We’ve found that the centre is really committed to good biosecurity practice.”

Hayden said students really embrace the hygiene stations and the chance to do their part to protect kauri.

“Our fantastic bookings team ensures teachers introduce the importance of it before students arrive, so they already understand the ‘why’ of the hygiene stations.”

He said the specialist biosecurity support provided by Waikato Regional Council had been “outstanding”.

“We are very proud of our kauri trees, and the council’s help enables us to both protect them and educate young people about their significance.”

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Is it time to quit — or just push through?

OPINION
By MICHAEL WILKES
 Sometimes we wonder if it's worth pushing through.

Let me say — for most things that matter, it is.
You might've heard me talk about my old truck. Big old Isuzu Bighorn.
It had a cracked cylinder head. The thing was almost written off. A lot of people would've scrapped it.
Walked away. Bought some-

thing newer.
But I didn't.
I made a decision. I chose hard. Bolt by bolt, spare hour by spare hour, I brought it back to life. It took months. It was frustrating. It was slow.
But I saw something worth saving.
And just last weekend, I was out again — knee-deep in river crossings, climbing rugged tracks, four-wheel-driving through bush with mates and my kids. That same truck. The one that once felt completely dead.
And it got me thinking.

What else have we called "dead" that just needs time? What dreams have we walked away from that still had life left — if only we'd kept moving?
Maybe it's that business idea. That fitness goal.
That broken relationship. That calling you once felt so deeply, but now feels like a memory. The thing is, those dreams don't die in a day.
They die in delay. In neglect. In believing the lie that it's too late, or too hard, or we missed our shot.
But what if the difference between dead and alive... is sim-

ply that you haven't moved toward it in a while?
You don't need to go full throttle overnight. Just start. Start with one bolt.
One phone call.
One conversation.
One early morning.
Most of what matters won't fall in your lap — but it can rise from the ashes, if you're willing to rebuild. One intentional step at a time.
So let me ask you — what's your truck? What's that dream, that goal, that part of your life that used to spark something in you?

Don't give up on what matters. Not yet.
Slow down if you have to. Make time. Ask for help. Get honest about the next step.
Then move — even if it's small. Even if it's clunky.
Because you might be closer to life than you realise.

Michael Wilkes is a youth worker with Living Well Trust, running mentoring and resilience programmes across Thames and Paeroa. To support local youth work or follow more stories and insights, find him on Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok @ michaelwilkes.kiwi. If you'd like to connect about a speaking engagement, community initiative, or supporting youth work, email michael@livingwell.org.nz.

Foodies

ADVERTISING FEATURE



'A glass worth lingering over' at Waikino

Tucked into the heart of the Karangahake Gorge, the Waikino Hotel has become a destination for travellers and locals seeking something a little special - and nothing captures that better than its craft cocktail range.
Each drink is thoughtfully built to showcase premium New Zealand spirits produced on site by the Kaimai Distillery, fresh local ingredients, and the kind of creativity you only

find in a true country gem.
Whether you're after something bright and refreshing or rich and indulgent, the Waikino bartenders have you covered.
Signature favourites include the Golden Bouquet, featuring award-winning Eliza's Claim Gold Gin, kissed with citrus and a hint of rosemary.
For something playful, the Kinolicious brings festive spice and berry

notes - a crowd-pleaser all year round.
Served in a cosy historic setting with genuine Waikino hospitality, each cocktail is an xperience - not just a drink.
Whether you're celebrating, exploring, or simply unwinding after a long day on the trail, the Waikino Hotel offers a glass worth lingering over.
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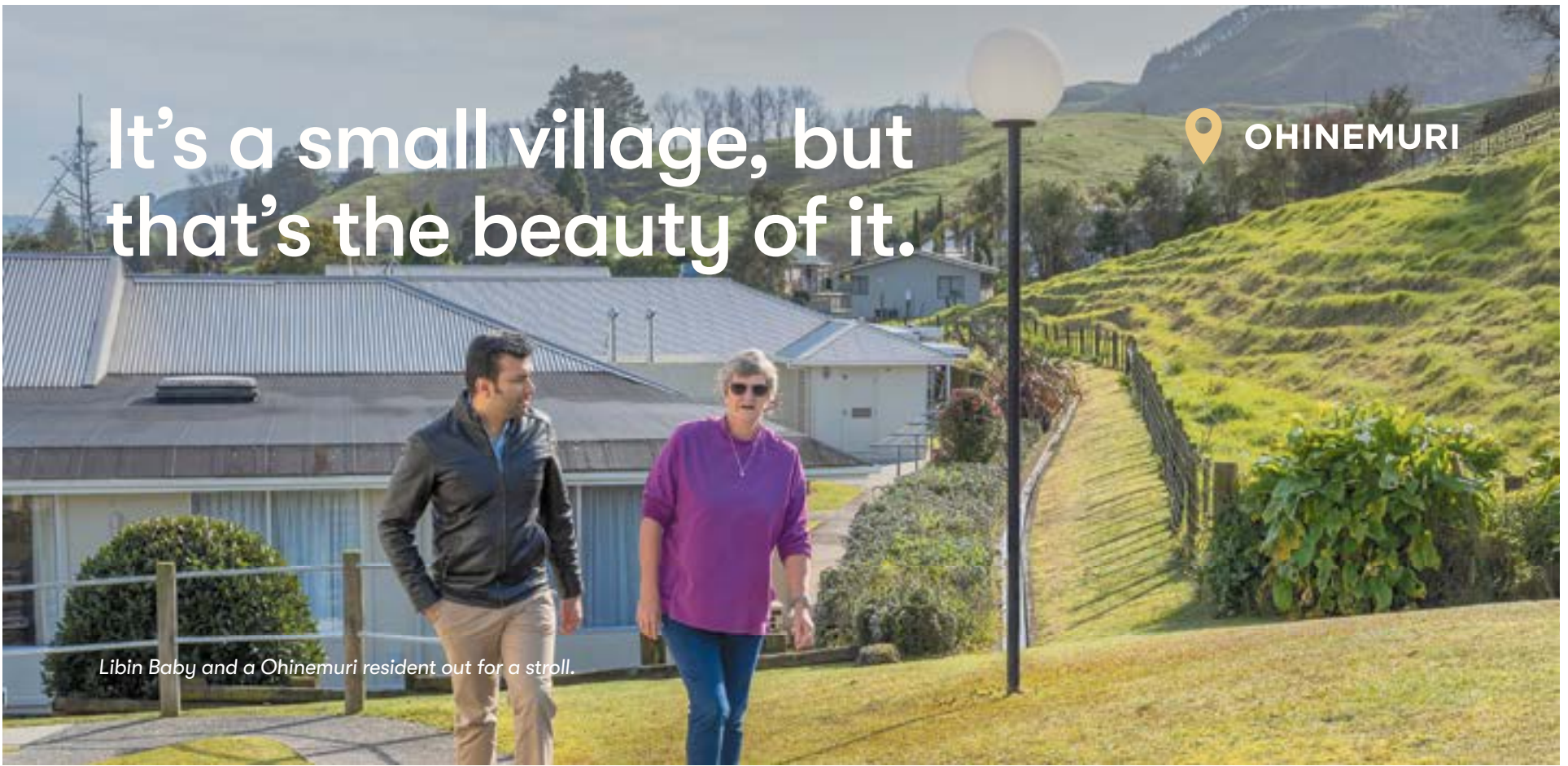
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It's a small village, but that's the beauty of it.

 OHINEMURI

Libin Baby and a Ohinemuri resident out for a stroll.

When you sit down with Libin Baby, the Village Manager at Ohinemuri Village in Paeroa, you quickly understand why people here speak so fondly of the place. He has cared for the village for more than eight years and says the appeal comes down to three simple things: quiet, affordability, and community.

“This village has been part of Paeroa for over 35 years, Libin reflects. Many of our residents, or their families, helped build it through fundraising, volunteering or lending equipment. That history still lives here. You feel it in the way neighbours look out for one another.

Every day begins the same way: a walk through the community centre, a chat in the car park, a glance at the garden requests book. “It’s not about having an office,” he explains. “It’s about being seen. If someone wants to talk, they can.”

The rhythm of village life is gentle but connected. Residents enjoy Friday happy hours, the occasional line dancing class, or gathering to watch a game together on the big screen. “It’s relaxed,” Libin says. “Not busy or overwhelming. Just enough to feel connected.”

He leans forward slightly. “People are often surprised by the affordability. We meet all the same standards as bigger villages, but our price point is very competitive. That’s one of the reasons people travel from out of town to see us.”

What truly sets Ohinemuri apart, he explains, is its scale.

“Most providers have a big village with a small care centre. We’re the opposite, only eight villas, with a large care centre beside them. That balance means independence with peace of mind.”

For one fortunate new resident, there’s now a rare chance to join this community. When conversation turns to the vacant villa, Libin’s expression brightens.

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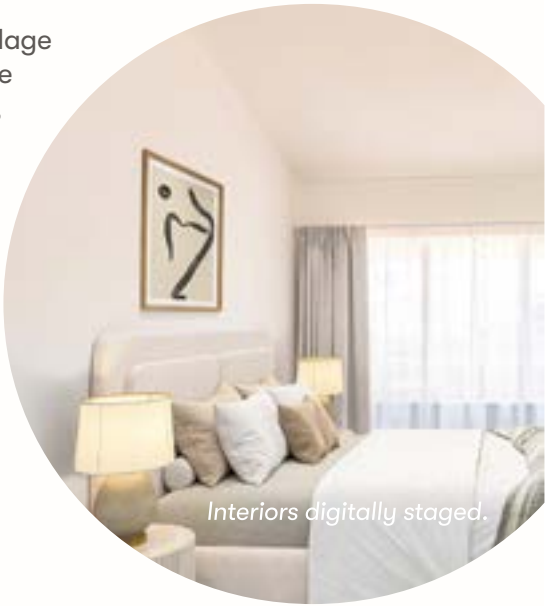
Yet what matters most, he insists, isn’t the buildings, but how people feel once they’re here.

“What I hear most often from residents is, ‘I should have made the move sooner.’ They still have their independence, but with the ease and peace of mind they didn’t realise they were missing.

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Newspaper man strikes over female labour



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

Mr Riddle, as he was often in-accurately called, had been most incensed when the *Thames Advertiser* decided to employ female labour in 1875.

Riddle, actually John Riddel, was a 58-year-old newspaper compositor who manually set type by hand for printing. He had been employed on different papers in Auckland at various times, but lately had worked and lived at Thames.

John went on strike in protest at the outrageous development, which was also happening at the *New Zealand Herald* and the *Evening Star*. The *Daily Southern Cross* further inflamed the situation by suggesting the male compositors marry the girls and “relegate them to domestic duties in homes of their own”.

There was also great indignation among the members of the Typographical Association who complained to Messrs Reid and Brett, newspaper proprietors.

They also made threats, which failed as the girls were kept on and by now were deep into the mys-



A compositor at work.

Photo: SUPPLIED

teries of compositing. The proprietors were untroubled, saying: “strike, gentlemen, if it so please you - we are quite willing to accept the consequences”.

In April, John Riddel packed his bags and left Thames. His wife, who had very satisfactory references, had recently found employment as matron on the female ward of Thames hospital, and stayed behind. She was replacing Miss Morris, former matron, who was unwell.

John lodged with Fred Cooke, a printer at the *NZ Herald*, in Mr Maine’s house, off Nelson St in Auckland. Over the next few weeks

John began drinking very heavily.

Early on a mid-May morning he left home without eating any breakfast, arriving back about 5pm. Fred spoke to him about the folly of his conduct and for not eating properly. John went away in a huff and did not come back till half past midnight. He was drunk and fell on the kitchen floor. Mr Witney, another lodger, took off John’s coat and boots and put him to bed. When Fred came home from work at two in the morning, John called out as usual, “Is that you, Fred?”

Between 3am and 4am, Fred woke and heard John breathing

very heavily; he appeared to be in pain. Fred got up and gave him a few drops of painkiller in some water, which seemed to ease him.

At 6.30am Mr Witney called out to Fred to come, as John was certainly either dead or dying. Dr Kennedy was sent for, arriving within a few minutes. He at once pronounced life extinct.

An inquest was held at the Criterion Hotel, Hobson St. Fred Cooke said he had known John for the past 12 years. He was much addicted to drinking. John had come to Auckland about five weeks earlier saying it was to vote in a local election.

He had done no work since. A few days after his arrival, he received a remittance from his wife who was still working at Thames hospital. A couple of days before he died John received some more money from his wife. John often came home to the lodgings in a state of intoxication. He subsequently complained of stomach pain for which he procured some medicine which seemed to help. Dr Kennedy said he believed death to have resulted from natural causes, accelerated by intemperance. The jury returned a verdict in accordance. John was buried at Symonds St cemetery, Auckland.

In early July, Mrs Riddel resigned from Thames Hospital, Miss Morris having recovered her health.

Despite the ructions around employing women, which included the declaration that in America female compositors were prostitutes, they proved well suited to the trade. The work required a good deal of quickness and ready adaptability.

Chris’ Quiz

- Weekly quiz compiled by Chris Parminter
1. In the regular episodes of *The Simpsons*, how many children do Homer and Marge have?
 2. The Datsun car brand, phased out for a final time in 2022, is owned by which well known vehicle company? a) Honda, b) Nissan, or c) Toyota?
 3. Fletcher Christian and William Blythe are key figures in which historical event?
 4. The US term ‘monkey wrench’ refers to the tool that is usually called what in New Zealand? a) Adjustable wrench, b) socket wrench, or c) open-end wrench?
 5. The top secret device used in the *Men in Black* franchise to wipe people’s memories is called what? a) A neuralyzer, b) a nullifier, or c) a scrambler?
 6. Which plant has timber that is used for cricket bats, and bark containing a compound used in the manufacture of aspirin? a) Pine, b) poplar, or c) willow?
 7. Which fruit is the main ingredient in guacamole?
 8. Champagne by law is only allowed to be produced in the Champagne region of which country?
 9. At normal room temperature and pressure, how many Elements in the periodic table are liquids? a) One, b.) two, or c) three?
 10. Which currency is used by many countries including France, Belgium and Germany?

ANSWERS: 1. Three - Bart, Lisa and Maggie; 2. b) Nissan; 3. The Mutiny on the Bounty; 4. a) Adjustable Wrench; 5. a) a neuralyzer; 6. c) Willow; 7. Avocado; 8. France; 9. b) Two (bromine and mercury); 10. The euro (and euro cent).

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Paeroa dux: 'I love to push myself, aim high'

Something that helped Madelline Eastham to stay motivated and to work hard in her schooling was to focus on “all the little wins”.

The 17-year-old Paeroa College student said she didn't look too far ahead because that "just made me overwhelmed" - so she focused on one assessment at a time.

It's what makes her recent achievement so remarkable.

The year-13 student snapped up the Paeroa College dux award for 2025 and told *The Profile*: “it feels like all my hard work has been recognised”.

“When my name was called out as dux my heart dropped for a second and then I just felt proud and really grateful.

"It was surreal and I felt like that for a while after but it made everything I'd worked for worth it," she said.

"The support from all my friends and family was the best feeling as they believed in me throughout."

The young dux winner said she would go to Otago University in 2026 to study sports science.

"I'm not sure yet what career I want to lean towards but I know what I'm interested in so I'm going to take the classes and figure out my career from there."



Paeroa College dux for 2025 Madelline Eastham.

"I was lucky enough to receive the New Frontiers Excellence Entrance Scholarship which was worth \$6500 and because I got Dux I received the University of Otago Dux Scholarship which was worth \$3000," she said. "All of this money will go straight to my accommodation for my first year."

Something Madelline enjoyed outside of school and study was playing football.

She played for the first XI football team at her old high school in Papakura and also for the Papakura City FC women's team, she said.

It meant she would drive up to Papakura for all the training

and games which was around four times a week, she said.

Even though it racked up a lot of time and petrol - playing football was “worth it” to Madelline.

It was something that “helped me get through the year”, she said.

“At the beginning of this



Third placegetter Justin Smith, left, proxime accessit to dux Kylie Harris, and dux Madelline Eastham.

year I didn't even think Dux was possible and I hadn't even thought about it until term two, where I realized that I had gotten excellence in every assessment so far," she said.

Her friends encouraged her to work toward the goal.

"I knew I had a lot on and I wouldn't have a lot of free time - but I love to push myself and aim high. Once I received it I felt accomplished and proud for pushing myself," she said.

Sometimes times were tricky for the young achiever.

"I think juggling sports, school, doing assessments while having a social life was hard at times," she said.

“Although I was busy a lot of the year I liked being busy and I’m thankful I figured it out in the end because I don’t regret anything.”

Meanwhile, Kylie Harris received the proxime accessit to dux award, with Justin Smith third.



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Christmas cheer

The hum of Christmas cheer filled the air at the Paeroa Baptist Church hall on December 10, where a group of volunteers turned out to wrap Christmas gifts for the annual Paeroa Toy Appeal. Organiser Jill Robertson told *The Profile* it was humbling to see the generosity of people in the community. “[It] shows the true spirit of giving at this special time of year.” Jill wanted to share a “huge shoutout” to all the schools, agencies, the Paeroa Information Hub, Paeroa Library, Paeroa Pigeon Post, the sewing ladies, her team and the Paeroa Lions, she said. “But most of all - you amazing people of our town. You made this uniquely Paeroa event possible to spread some joy to some of our families who might otherwise miss out.”



Wrap stars Lois Waugh and Sheryl Dymock. Photos: DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA



Melissa McDonald, left, Sybil Woolmore and Cathy McDonald join the fun.



Organiser Jill Robertson, third from left, alongside the group of sewing ladies who made bags for the children's gifts.



Naomi Dibble lends a helping hand.



Nita and Samuel Bhagat share in the Christmas joy.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Boogie back in time at Karangahake dance

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA
An evening of music and Christmas carols in the Karangahake Gorge might begin with the Kerepēhi Brass Band at 6:30pm on December 21, but it doesn't end there. That's because the Kati-kati All Stars Authentic Dance Band has a treat for music lovers and dancers alike, following straight after the brass band's Carols in the Gorge event. People will need to think

about lacing up their shoes to “dance all night” as the Kati-kati All Stars get ready to play Christmas hits from the 1920s, 30s and 40s for the Christmas Dance event at the Karangahake Hall from 8.30pm. Event helper Tee Carroll told *The Profile* the event would be magical, and was organised by musician Brett Lowe. “There's nothing he can't play. He's been running these bands for probably 34 years and his music is just top draw-

er. It is just fantastic,” she said. “He's just a wonderfully clever musician.” While the event was not a fundraiser, Tee said it was a community event. “We're just asking people for a [gold coin] donation so we can all pay for the hall,” she said, but entry for musicians was free. Tee said she wanted to thank Rotary Paeroa, who offered to help with the supper on the night at a time when a lot of

people are busy. One thing is certain - it would definitely be a night to remember. “Can you imagine a 12-piece band playing for a dance? It's just magical.” **DETAILS: Christmas Dance event on December 21 from 8.30pm at the Karangahake Hall, Crown Hill Rd, Karangahake. Gold coin entry, free for musicians. For more information call 021 039 9076, email katikatallstars@gmail.com.**



The Christmas Dance will follow the Brass Band's Carols in the Gorge.

Scott Simpson

MP for Coromandel

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Paeroa Society of Art's Jessica Lines, left, and Jan Clark, right. Photo: ALI KOIA-HAMLING

Decking the gallery halls

By ALI KOIA-HAMLING, journalism student

The Paeroa Society of Arts has decked their gallery halls and rooms with festive magic and cheer in preparation for Christmas.

The community organisation known for supporting Hauraki artists held its Christmas Extravaganza event on December 6.

Home-baking such as Christmas cake, along with plants and a sausage sizzle were all available to purchase on the day, while the gallery was open to browse a range of festive art. Everything from stockings and bags, to paintings, and decorations were on display.

Paeroa Society Of Arts president Jan Clark said the day went "very well", resulting in a fundraising total of around \$500.

"We were fundraising for our roof, because we've got such an old building," she said.

"It is nearly 100 years old, so our roof really needs replacing."

The Extravaganza wasn't just to celebrate Christmas magic or to fundraise for a new roof though - it was also to encourage people to visit the gallery, with busy stalls providing a focal point out front. "So people can go, 'oh there's something going on'," she said.

The festive cheer at the Society Of Arts will continue until Christmas. On December 19, the group will host a Christmas raffle outside Paeroa ANZ. Also, decorations, ornaments and Christmas art will continue to be on display and for sale at the gallery.

Moving into 2026, Jan said there were a few events in the pipeline for next year to celebrate their 100th anniversary.

Jessica Lines, who fronts the marketing for the society, said "we're always looking for new creatives and members in the area".

"We run painting and pottery groups that will be starting up again in 2026.

"We're also looking at various other events we can run here to fundraise, but also to bring creativity into our community, so keep an eye out."

Thames pop-up art expo

A pop-up exhibition highlighting contemporary art is on now at The Depot in Thames, next to Cafe Melbourne.

Thames Valley artists Helen Casey-MacDuff from Ngatea, Lena McKillop from Whangamatā, and Shannon Silcock from Thames have joined forces for the LOCAL Art Collab exhibition.

Featuring diverse works, the exhibition surveys ethereal light forms, expressive gestural abstracts, figurative landscapes and modern pinhole black and white photography.

"Our connection is location, yet visually, we are like one strange venn diagram of creativity that portrays our inner worlds through the elements of colour, gesture and pure creativity," Helen said. "We're so different, yet our work, when together, has a dynamic and entirely unexpected cohesiveness."

During the exhibition, the artists will be actively creating art in the gallery, and offering insights into their practices.

"I really want to raise the profile of the arts here, and decided to create an event to enhance connections with community," Helen said. "I create in an isolated studio and it's fantastic to share my work and engage in dialogue with people from all walks of life.

"Art is a medium for processing life and is a wonderful mode of expression and connection to vitalise community, especially during challenging times.

"We welcome engagement from the public by exhibiting in this space at the Depot, as some may find it less intimidating than a white box, that is, the conservative, gallery space."

The artists will be donating 10 per cent of their sales to Motor Neurone Disease NZ.

DETAILS: LOCAL Art Collab, December 10-24 at The Depot, Thames. Open 8am-4pm weekdays and 9am-4pm weekends.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Summer blast

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

It was a day to celebrate the start of the summer season at Wilson Park, Waihi Beach on November 29. That's because tamariki, whānau and people gathered for the Waihi Beach Summer Kick Off Festival.

Waihi Beach events and promotions co-ordinator Hollie Jones said the park buzzed with tamariki, families on picnic blankets and the "unmistakable sense that the season had officially begun".

The festival opened with a powerful performance by the Waihi Beach Kura Kapa Haka, she said, followed by musical acts Amir Yussof, IZ Waddid IZ, King Cool and Jordyn with a Why, who won the 2025 Best Pacific Music Album award at the Aotearoa Music Award in August.

The park was filled with stalls from the Saturday Farmers Market, community groups and a range of activities such as mini golf, ten pin bowling, face painting, a photobooth and more.

"As a small not-for-profit organisation, Waihi Beach Events & Promotions simply couldn't deliver days like this without the generosity of our funders, sponsors, and wider community."

"Thanks to the Tauranga Western Bay Community Event Fund and our local main sponsor Harcourts Gold Star Waihi Beach, we were able to welcome thousands of locals and visitors to Wilson Park for a full day of free summer fun."

"We can't wait to bring the community together again next year" she said.



Soulful sounds by Jordyn with a Why.



Waihi Beach School Kapa Haka opens the event.



Fun and dress-ups entertain at the photo booth.

Photos: SION AND HOLLIE JONES/ DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA



Janice Misipeka and Helen Rickard soak up the sunshine.



Waihi Beach band IZ WADDID IZ perform for their home town.

CLASSIFIEDS - Deadline 12 noon Monday

Death Notice	Church Notice	Handyman	Painters	Handyman Services	Storage
THOMPSON, Amiria Muriel May (nee Tawhiti): Passed on December 2, 2025 at home in Whangarei enveloped in the love of her daughter Tara and grand daughter Kayah. Born in Waihi. Formally of Waikino, Omokoroa, Bowentown, Paeroa, Whangarei and Dargaville. We acknowledge one of many legacies left through 'Experience, Strength and Hope' which we are forever grateful for. After a long career in education and then choosing to care for others as a home help support worker, she spent her final years living her best life in Thames. We will listen for you in the noises of nature Nan. As per her wishes, a private cremation has been held. All communications to PO Box 4179 Kamo, Whangarei 0141	Waihi Assembly of God Church "Worship & Healing" 10am Sundays Scout Hall, Baker St, Waihi	Mowing, hedges, fencing, gardening, carpentry, painting, retaining walls, welding, waterblasting. Work is good quality and I will not attempt to work outside of my skills. Insured. Dennis Schuler 022 129 0169	Professional roof painter. Mario Kerkhof 027 961 4055	 THAMES HANDYMAN & BUILDING SERVICES Building, home maintenance & general gardening services Phone: Fleur or Crighton • 0273 913 283	STORAGE KOPU, PAEROA "New Units" Ph 027 440 7101 07 868 3033 Safe n Sound Storage www.safestorage.co.nz
	For Lease Yards for lease, Thames and Kopu. Suitable for trucks, vehicles or trade business base. Ph 027 440 7101	Land Wanted Wanted to Lease/Rent land while I look for another farm to buy anything considered Please call or text Richard 0279332015	Trades FENCING CONTRACTOR Residential & Rural Retaining walls & more High quality workmanship Competitive prices Call Matt 021 1727 148		Storage Unlimited 25 Ngati Maru Highway Kopu, Thames Clean, secure, dry Units available 7 x 3.6m and 7 x 5.5m Phone 07 868 9944
	Gardening STUMP GRINDING. All sizes, all areas. Thames based. Ph 021 060 7659	Builders Reno's, decking, fencing. For free quote ph Phil 021 088 63559	Situation Vacant We are looking for 2 mechanics to join our team. A qualified car mechanic must have a WoF ticket & a motorbike mechanic. Some experience would be an advantage but training will be given to the right applicant. If you are reliable and a team player send your CV to miles@hpmotors.co.nz or ph 027 227 1121 for a chat.	NEED STAFF? GOT SOMETHING TO SELL? Advertise in The Valley Profile and get results! Phone Nikki: 022 130 3885 Phone Davidda: 022 174 3988	TOTAL STORAGE LTD KEREPEHI / PAEROA 10FT CON. \$125 per mnth 20FT CON. \$240 per mnth T&C's apply 021 67 67 99 info@totalstorage.co.nz
Church Notice Waihi Bible Chapel Ph. Num 021 522 668 Come read the Word. Learn Scripture (King James). You want the truth, it's all here. Come help us read and learn. Bible Study Wednesday nights 6pm	Handyman • Carpentry • Painting • Plastering • Tiling 40 years experience Shane 027 480 5586 An experienced handyman covering all trades with over 20 years exp building trade. Please contact Laurie King 021 251 0246 ktpropertyservice.com	Painters HAURAKI REGIONAL PAINTERS Over 12 years experience, interior/ exterior. Refs available. Free quotes. Phone Graeme for all your painting needs. 020 485 1312		PAPER DELIVERIES Although we endeavour to deliver our paper to everyone, sometimes we just cannot achieve this. If you are one of the few who did not receive your weekly paper, please note they are available here: NGATEA - Ngatea 4 Square, HDC Council Offices, Ngatea Post Shop, Z Petrol Station, Ngatea Purple Dairy PAEROA - Moores Caltex, Countdown, HDC Council offices, Takenote, Paeroa 4 Square, Paeroa Information Hub WAIHI - Maybelle Superette, New World, Toyworld/Takenote, Info Centre, Daffodil Dairy, Waihi Supervalu THAMES - Totara Veggie Shop, Mobil Kopu, Gull Service Station, Martina 4 Square, Bin Inn, Tararu Dairy, Queen St Mobil, Goldfields Mall, Pak'N'Save, Paper Power, Thames 4 Square, Carson's Bookshop, Thames Council Offices, Kauaeranga Store TURUA: Turua Dairy KEREPEHI: Kerepehi Dairy	

Hauraki festive fun

Twas a sunshiny evening in the Hauraki Plains on December 11 with a small risk of rain. The road cones were out to help detour the traffic from Ngatea’s main street, which would host all the magic. Tamariki and whānau turned out to survey the Hauraki Plains Community Christmas Parade. There were pirates on boats, people dressed up as trees, riders on wheels, brass musicians played C. From the animal crossing to helpful elves in abundance - if one thing was certain, the scene was splendidly wondrous. Reporter **DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA** took out her lens to capture merriment, joy and the fella in red.



Ngatea Playcentre wins best float overall.



Hauraki Plains Youth Rugby enjoy being part of the fun.



Santa has fun riding his lawnmower sleigh in the parade.

Photos: DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA



Santa spreads cheer and joy at the end of the parade.



A pirate ship pulls into town, with Elly Cossey and her little one on the Lions Club of Ngatea float.

LETTERS

Send your letters to the editor: editor@valleyprofile.co.nz. Letters must include your full name and address, be 250 words or less and may be edited, abridged or rejected at the editor’s discretion.

THANK YOU THAMES

Dearest Thames, It is with a heavy heart that we depart from this place just after the New Year. It has quickly become our home and stolen our hearts. To the taxi driver who brought us from the airport on that first day. We did go to Sunday brunch at Buggars and the Ngatea Water Garden and we loved it. Ngā mihi. To Greg and Theresa and Carson, bookstores are my happy place, and yours is now one of my happiest. Ngā mihi. To the ladies of the Bright Smile Community Garden, especially Jaqui, thanks for putting on an evening for a change so I had a place to get my hands dirty. Ngā mihi. To the ladies of the library bookclub, sorry if I spoke over you, or talked too much. It was a pleasure reading with you. Ngā mihi. To the cafes and shops on and off Pollen that we frequent, to Vida and Tash and Simon, thanks for the matcha, the peanut butter and the warm atmospheres. Always nice to chat. Ngā mihi. To the library, thank you so much for fostering a space my children feel wel-

come and excited to be in. Ngā mihi. To Music group, for the grooves and the good times, always a highlight. Ngā mihi. To the churches that welcomed us, thank you Elim for making space my children crave and to St. James for your trust in us and for being our first friend. Ngā mihi. To the little school on the Thames coast, you have shown our children so much whanaungatanga. We belong. Ngā mihi. To Te Korowai and Te Ataraangi, my staff and colleagues for showing me the ropes, for your compassion and friendship, for giving me a chance to care for this community and to my patients for trusting in me. Ngā mihi. But mostly I want to say thank you to my friends. There are some pretty amazing humans in this tiny town. How are there so many cool individuals in such a concentrated area? I have fallen in love with these people and this place. I would stay forever if I weren’t needed back home. However my heart is not done here yet, so I won’t say goodbye, I’ll just say Ā tona wā e te tau, Dr Anna Gladstone.

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Christmas pub crawls a ‘tricky situation’

OPINION



By RON AGNEW

In the 1970s and 80s, the one night we did have to be alert and be seen was that of the afternoon in late December; when A&G Price’s Foundry staff at one end of town, and the Toyota car factory staff at the other, all finished work the same day, at a similar time late in the afternoon.

With perhaps up to 500 staff at each location in a happy holiday thirsty mood, the pub crawls started.

Toyota staff started at the Warwick Arms Hotel, where Mitsubishi is now, and A&G Price staff at the Lady Bowen Hotel.

Hours later they would all end up somewhere between the Junction/Salutation/Imperial hotels, all drinking fairly heavily.

The banter would start, and then the tussles, and on some occasions, it became a tricky situation for the few policemen on duty to deal with.

Which of the three rugby clubs one belonged to, (HuiMai, United, THS Old Boys) would also often be a friction point!

The Traffic Officers and ourselves, had to keep an eye on the cars leaving the pubs at closing time.



Lawyer Paul Keane. Photo: SUPPLIED

Unlike today, police were not allowed to randomly stop vehicles, as of right.

We had to prove there was a reason, ie; a taillight out, or a car driven erratically, and if we couldn’t the court case could be lost.

Some defense Solicitors tackled this question quite forcefully in an eventual court case, and sometimes it was the four occupants’ word against that of the one policeman, about the manner of driving, or car defects.

I was only accused once thankfully by a defense solicitor of not telling the truth, when my evidence opposed that of her client and his companions.

However, we all got on really well with the criminal court solicitors in town,

Jane Hunter, Heather Simpson, and Paul Keane.

Heather was later appointed a judge, and Paul used to come along to Police functions and socialise with us.

Paul was an amazing Solicitor in court and terrified us on occasions.

Court mornings, all the cases would be called, and guilty pleas dealt with.

There was a lunch break, and the defended cases were heard in the afternoon.

On some occasions, Paul enjoyed a ‘liquid lunch’, and he was an amazing orator anyway, and after lunch at times it was pure theatre - Paul spoke at length so convincingly, and so forcefully, it was pure joy to listen to. I recall on one occasion; the judge had to tell Paul to please stop... the judge was convinced!

Paul was a wonderful man, and a wonderful servant of the court, and of his clients, many of whom were on legal aid.

He had the ability to convince the judge and the listening public that his client was actually an ‘Angel’ in disguise, even though some of us were aware of perhaps an offender’s long list of past offences and convictions!

Many of those we dealt with in Thames regularly, in those days, were wonderful local characters, and we got to know them well, in the court or police station or out of these, and many we got to quite like, others, not so much.

Many we would come across many week nights, and every weekend, and enjoy a chat and some alcohol fuelled banter, in the pubs or out on the street.

Some were a lot trickier, some were readily prone to turn violent at the sight of a police constable!

- Ron Agnew is a former Thames Police officer

New SH25 speed limits

Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency is set to introduce reduced speed limits on four short stretches of State Highway 25 in the Coromandel Peninsula, with the changes expected to take effect before Christmas.

According to the agency, the move followed strong community support throughout the region.

It received 982 submissions during a six-week public consultation held from August to October, and the majority of respondents backed lowering the speed limits on all four sections under review.

In Kūaotunu, 71 per cent and 69 per cent of submitters supported reducing two SH25 zones from 70km/h to 50km/h.

In Wharekaho, 63 per cent were in favour of the same reduction, while 58 per cent of respondents backed dropping the limit to 50km/h between Thames and Tararua.

NZTA said it gave priority to these reviews in response to community feedback, enabling the lower speed limits to be implemented sooner.

The changes will become legally enforceable once new signage is installed, it said, which is expected before Christmas.

DETAILS: More info at: www.nzta.govt.nz.

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HARD

231

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JUMBO CROSSWORD

251

- ACROSS
- 1 Paper hankies (7)

4 Outward breath (10)

9 Misdemeanour (7)

13 Stone fruit (4)

14 Defeated (6)

15 Blameworthy (6)

16 In the middle (7)

19 Thinking deeply (10)

20 Loathed (8)

21 Carpet nails (5)

24 Categories (6)

25 Chase (6)

27 Skydiver's accessory (9)

32 Top tightrope (4,4)

33 Attraction (6)

34 Warn (7)

38 Away from land (8)

39 Slowly (mus)(6)

40 Shout (4)

41 Less (5)

42 Provisos (5)

45 Basic livelihood (5,3,6)

52 Scold (anag)(5)

55 Marks correct (5)

56 Very small loaf of bread (4)

57 Within (6)

58 Hatch by warmth (8)

61 Blatant (7)

62 Pays (6)

63 Unleash (3,5)

66 Ill will (9)

68 Surgical stitch (6)

69 Wound (6)

73 Nozzle (5)

74 Flying military organisation (3,5)

76 Subjugation (10)

81 Is contrite (7)

82 School dodger (6)

83 Dwell (6)

84 Pastry type (4)

85 Luxurious (7)

86 Faultless, exemplary (10)

87 Unknown (7)

DOWN

1 Subject (5)

2 Caviar fish (8)

3 Daytime nap (6)

4 Consumed (5)

5 Whetstone (4)

6 Traveller's stuff (7)

7 Leg tops (6)

8 Water-dwelling animal (5)

10 Sense (4)

11 Contestant (7)

12 Blackboard sticks (6)

17 Braking signals (10)

18 Of the kidneys (5)

22 Moved upwards (8)

23 Group of fish (5)

24 Distribute (4,3)

26 Component part (4)

28 One who examines and determines (7)

29 Winged child (6)

30 Poise (6)

31 Plump (6)

33 Inert gas (5)

35 Spin around (5)

36 At a distance (4)

37 Bolt (4)

43 Fit to eat (6)

44 Manufacturer (5)

46 Public disorder (4)

47 Malady (7)

48 Sour-tasting (6)

49 Writing tables (5)

50 Move in waves (8)

51 Haphazard (6)

52 Awkwardness in movement or shape (10)

53 Elliptical (4)

54 Stage background (7)

59 Garden figure (5)

60 Agitate (4)

64 Meat jelly (5)

65 Performer's tryout (8)

67 Unbiased (7)

68 Doubter (7)

70 Maintenance (6)

71 Fold mark (6)

72 Wears away (6)

75 Public meeting for open discussion (5)

77 Skiing slope (5)

78 Rope loop (5)

79 Boy's name (4)

80 Aquatic creature (4)
-
- PREVIOUS SOLUTION
- ACROSS: 1 Feint, 4 Familiar, 9 Meddle, 14 Fence, 15 Move with the times, 17 Litre, 18 Out, 19 Moistened, 20 Impresses, 21 Partly, 24 Arrogance, 25 Update, 26 Delude, 29 Estimation, 31 Tar, 32 Remove, 33 Acid, 35 Eve, 37 Glut, 39 Ingenious, 40 Consumers, 41 Teach, 42 Warranty, 47 Featured, 51 Dingo, 55 Impassive, 56 Fantastic, 58 Even, 59 Off, 60 Lead, 61 Weapon, 62 Sir, 63 Sentiments, 66 Ease up, 67 Misfit, 69 Tardiness, 72 Define, 73 Billiards, 75 Ballast, 77 Toe, 80 Equal, 81 Wrap in cotton wool, 82 Scold, 83 Flashy, 84 Haggling, 85 Crude.
- DOWN: 2 Economics, 3 Needs, 5 Ache, 6 Inhuman, 7 Intersection, 8 Ramps, 9 Misdeed, 10 Dolt, 11 Lethal, 12 Enjoy, 13 Textile, 14 Feather, 16 Inebriation, 22 Ogling, 23 Stomach, 24 Aviator, 25 Unrest, 27 Unclear, 28 Avenue, 30 None, 32 Relay, 34 Dosed, 36 Rust, 38 Lea, 42 Whirl, 43 Repeats, 44 Apse, 45 Tribes, 46 Onion, 48 Archipelago, 49 Useless, 50 Ewe, 51 Despair, 52 Offset, 53 Ingratiating, 54 Saws, 57 Tennis, 64 Threshold, 65 Muffled, 66 Ecstasy, 68 Fairway, 70 Radical, 71 Annual, 72 Depot, 74 Leash, 76 Lower, 78 Alps, 79 Stun.

Historian digs into Thames’ boom and bust era

By KELLEY TANTAU

A job offer in 2010 set in motion a decade-long journey of research into the life of pioneering timber merchant and ironmonger John Read, a story now chronicled in a newly-released book.

Russell Skeet, Thames historian and the author of *Beyond Gold*, told *The Profile* his interest in John Read was sparked the day he stepped into Read Bros Hardware on Pollen St to begin work for then-owner Stuart Read.

“The notion of working for an old Thames business that was still in the ownership of the founding family appealed to me because of my interest in local history.”

Russell said John Read established his business as a timber merchant in September, 1867 at Brown St, Grahamstown, barely one month after the goldfield was opened.

He then established a second branch of his business at Shortland at least as early as 1881.

The Brown St, Grahamstown, site was sold in 1933, and by 1935, his son Arthur had closed the Shortland store and relocated the hardware store to the present 308 Pollen St site.

The 150th anniversary of John Read establishing his business at Brown St, celebrated in 2017, piqued Russell’s interest in writing a book about the Read family business.

However, the idea was quickly put on hold due to his full-time job and the growing realisation of just how complex the project would be, he said.



Russell Skeet, left, talks with John Read, fifth generation and director of Read Bros, about *Beyond Gold*. SUPPLIED

“As my research project developed, it became evident that Read was a more complex character than I imagined,” Russell said. “For his story to be properly understood, it needed to be set against the bigger backdrop of the changing ‘boom and bust’ fortunes of the town.

“My 10-plus years of research revealed the story of a man of more than ordinary attributes, who was well connected with other leading businessmen and influential personalities in Thames. He was involved in a range of business activities and adapted to changing

economic prospects. His involvement in local politics was short-lived, but he held positions on other boards and societies. He was a respected parishioner in the Anglican Church and the governance of the Parawai School. Most of all, John Read supported his family and their continued welfare and prosperity.”

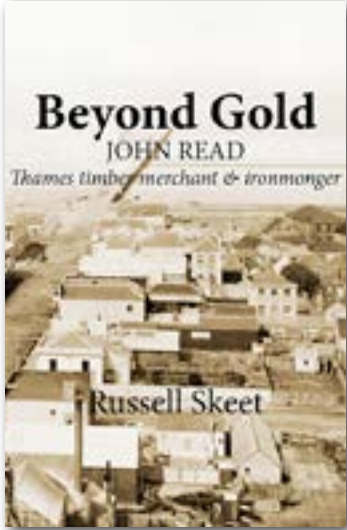
And so, Russell said, his research grew both deeper and wider, reflecting the “increasingly obvious complexity” of the subject and his interest in it.

In the process, he also came

to appreciate just how rich, diverse, and sometimes perplexing Thames’ own history is.

“My most challenging issue in researching and compiling the narrative was staying on focus and ‘in the zone’.

“Thames’ history is deeply interesting, diverse, challenging, and at times perplexing. A close examination of our history, and the people who made that history, reveals, in smaller scale, most of the elements that shaped New Zealand’s history - and it was easy to be drawn into side-bar topics that, while provid-



ing some context to the story, did not, directly, relate to John Read, the Founder,” he said.

“One of the beautifully distracting issues was that of tangata whenua, specifically, the capability and prescience of rangatira who were bound up in the unfolding story of the Thames and its’ development - a story waiting to be revealed; a story that will assist in positioning Māori in the complexities of today’s politics.”

Beyond Gold is available to purchase from Read Bros Hardware and Carson’s Bookshop, both along Pollen St, Thames. Copies are limited.

“To those who have purchased *Beyond Gold*, thank you for having an interest in our local history - use the book as a springboard into enquiry about your own whakapapa,” Russell said.

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