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"If I didn't have my phone, I would have died."

That was Richard Simpson's take on a casual bush stroll that turned into near-disaster a few days before the New Year. He shares his story with reporter ALICE PARMINTER

Waikou man Richard Simpson knows he is lucky to be alive after getting stranded in the Coromandel forest in inclement weather, with limited supplies.

Now mostly recovered from his ordeal, he has been left with a deep sense of gratitude for the many people involved in his rescue - along with stern instructions from his son to "[not] go into the bloody bush again, Dad".

Richard's December 28 adventure began innocently enough.

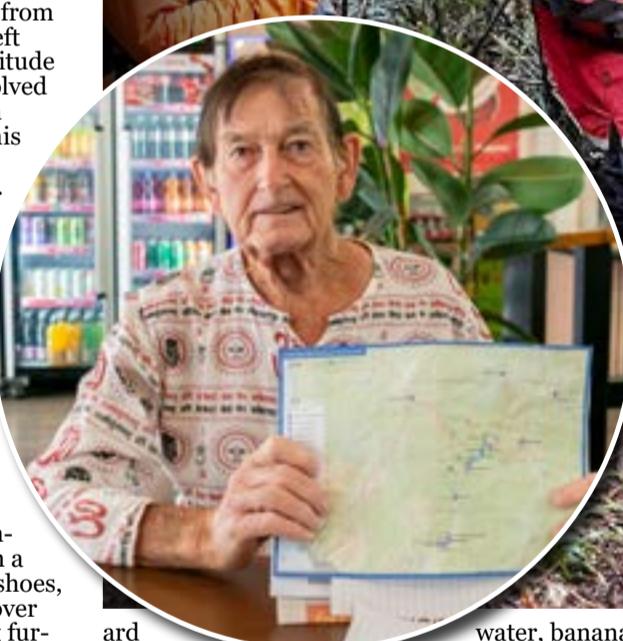
It was a sunny, clear morning, and he decided to walk from his home up to the Waikou Kauri Grove.

"Then I thought, oh, what a lovely day. I'll just move on a little bit further."

A bit further became a bit further still until Richard, who was clad only in a t-shirt, shorts and track shoes, found himself climbing over root systems and delving further along the Waikou Valley Track, a steep and difficult track with an elevation gain of more than 700 metres.

With the day mostly gone and the weather turning, Rich-

'Lucky to be alive'



ard eventually decided it would be safer to continue on to Crosbies Hut, which is around 10km from his starting point.

By now, he had finished the

water, banana, and handful of biscuits he had brought along.

He was also thoroughly soaked through from rain, and bleeding from a gash in his arm. "I sort of curled up in an area and phoned my son, who

lives in Tauranga, and told [him] the position I was in and to ring the police," Richard told *The Profile*.

"I was getting very cold at that stage and started to shiver."

It was now 10pm. While a policewoman stayed on the line with Richard, a lot was happening behind the scenes.

A helicopter was sent to pinpoint his position, which

CONTINUED ON P2

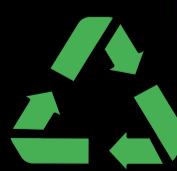
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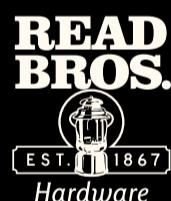


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Thames Tides

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
Jan 21	Jan 22	Jan 23	Jan 24	Jan 25	Jan 26	Jan 27
4 am 6 NOON 6 pm	6 NOON 6 pm	6 NOON 6 pm	6 NOON 6 pm	6 NOON 6 pm	6 NOON 6 pm	6 NOON 6 pm
3:36am 0.6 4:02pm 0.7 9:59am 3.4 10:14pm 3.3	4:13am 0.5 4:43pm 0.6 10:38am 3.4 10:53pm 3.3	4:52am 0.5 5:24pm 0.6 11:18am 3.4 11:33pm 3.3	5:33am 0.5 12:00pm 3.4 6:07pm 0.5	12:15am 3.3 12:44pm 3.4 6:18am 0.6 6:53pm 0.5	1:01am 3.3 1:32pm 3.4 7:07am 0.7 7:41pm 0.6	1:52am 3.2 2:23pm 3.3 8:03am 0.8 8:35pm 0.6
6:21am 8:37pm Best At 2:53am 3:16pm	6:22am 8:37pm Best At 3:39am 4:01pm	6:23am 8:36pm Best At 4:23am 4:45pm	6:24am 8:35pm Best At 5:08am 5:30pm	6:25am 8:35pm Best At 5:54am 6:17pm	6:26am 8:34pm Best At 6:42am 7:08pm	6:27am 8:33pm Best At 7:35am 8:03pm
Rise 8:18am Set 10:05pm	Rise 9:23am Set 10:31pm	Rise 10:28am Set 10:55pm	Rise 11:33am Set 11:20pm	Rise 12:41pm Set 11:46pm	Rise 1:51pm	Set 12:17am Rise 3:04pm

*Not for navigational purposes.
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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 Mn
Coromandel	- 0	0 05
Whitianga	- 0	0 01
Tairua	+ 0	10 +0 20
Whangamata	- 0	0 03
Waihi Beach	- 0	21 -0 05

died, there's no two ways about it," he said.

"I shouldn't have gone that far - that was my fault, dawdling along in the sunshine. And the equipment I took was really for going to the beach, not for getting into the situation that I got myself into."

Police Inspector Mike Henwood said the rescue was an uncomfortably close call, and a reminder to hikers to be prepared for any eventuality.

"[Richard] was very close to not being able to continue, and if it weren't for the family staying at the hut nearby, things could have been very different," the inspector said in a press release.

"It's important to wear appropriate clothing and take food and water even for a short walk - especially if you're not sure of the area. Emergency Locator Beacons are cheap to hire, and they're capable of saving your life, even when there's no cell phone reception."

As for his rescuers, Richard has nothing but effusive praise. And he is still in touch with the family from Wellington, who have asked not to be identified.

"The way the police handled it and the search and rescue guys was just commendable. I was more than impressed," Richard said. "And the family from Wellington, who were first on the job, were again to be commended. I was treated well everywhere, by everybody. Even in the hospital, I was well attended and well looked after... We're very lucky we've got services like this."

Grassroots podcast makes 'an impact'

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

When a trio from the Hauraki Plains Football Club kicked off the *From the Plains to the Pitch* Podcast in July last year, they never imagined how far it would reach.

Club president and podcast host Matt Vendt, vice president and co-host Jack MacDonald and co-host and producer Alex Langton are the dream team behind the podcast, which hosts conversations and interviews with people about sports, mental health and community.

"We've got listeners in China, Japan, Australia, the UK," Matt told *The Profile*.

"We've already hit over 400,000 listens. So yeah, it's pretty out of it."

The idea came about when Matt said he was at home brainstorming different things the club could do and an ad for a podcast popped up on the television - "basically I just thought, I wonder if that's something we could do".

He approached Jack and Alex who were keen to jump on board with the vision and the rest was history. "We've started this podcast because we believe strong communities are built through shared stories and connection."

Now 12 episodes in, the grassroots podcast has interviewed people from the foot-



From the Plains to the Pitch podcast crew Alex Langton, Matt Vendt and Jack Macdonald. Photo: SUPPLIED

ball-mad Rawnsley family at Hauraki Plains FC to FIFA Club World Cup star and Auckland City Football Club's Alfie Rogers and Thames Valley Vixen and Women's Rugby advocate Natalie O'Neil to a mental

health series with Craig Bulloch of MATES Matter NZ and Robert Dunne of Movember New Zealand. "I think that's been such a big buzz for us, and obviously the amount of people from around the world and

from New Zealand that are listening," Matt said.

"Four hundred thousand listens is people that have listened to it fully, like the whole episode, so for us, they're obviously getting something out of

it and listening to the whole thing. We're obviously having an impact on someone worldwide."

"It could be something simple that ends up helping someone out or resonating with someone and maybe changing their thinking or maybe giving them some ideas."

Matt said a few "massive episodes" were in the works, with well-known names from cricket, rowing and even the All Blacks.

"We've got some pretty big names coming up, which is just crazy. I literally just messaged some of these people on Instagram and suddenly they're messaging me back saying they want to jump on board."

"As soon as you mention you're just a small grassroots club and this is what you talk about - people are just like 'lets do it'."

Matt said they were away for a few football games last year and players from the opposition told them they listened to the podcast.

"It's so amazing, we're getting recognised now, which is pretty weird, but it's cool."

DETAILS: Listen to the *From the Plains to the Pitch* podcast on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and iHeartRadio. To get in touch with the hosts, email: fromtheplains-tothepitch@gmail.com.

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Man's humanity to man: mates offer help



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

When the manager of Tairua's Golden Hills mine called for volunteers to help a sick mate in 1908, 50 men stepped forward.

Forty-four-year-old miner John McLaughlin was suffering from pneumonia and needed to be carried 18 miles to Puriri over mountainous country along a rough bridle track.

The men, moving John on an improvised stretcher, worked in short relays of four, covering about four miles an hour.

At Puriri, John was seen by Dr Lapraik and then taken to Waihi by train. The report of how the men helped a comrade was headlined in newspapers as *Man's humanity to man*.

Twenty three years earlier, also at Tairua, a fearful accident befell bushman William Fraser and both his legs were dreadfully injured. His mates hurriedly fashioned a stretcher and 16 men, carrying him by turns, started for Puriri, a distance of 20 miles over very difficult country. On arrival at



An injured bush worker is carried on a stretcher to a doctor 20 miles away in 1905.

Photo: SUPPLIED

Puriri, Murdo McKenzie placed his spring cart at their disposal, and William was conveyed to Thames Hospital, which was reached at one o'clock in the morning. Dr Payne was promptly in attendance and the bones were set.

In 1903, Fred Power, employed at the Tairua Broken Hills mine, was severely injured when a charge of gelignite prematurely exploded. His mates at once rushed to his assistance and seeing that medical aid was imperative, immediately improvised a stretcher to convey Fred to Thames Hospital.

Although it was late at night, 20 men started off carrying their injured mate 25 miles over a demanding bridle track. They worked in relays through

constant rain and crossed seven swollen streams up to their waists. When they got to Puriri they just missed the train, and had to telephone to Thames for a carriage.

On arrival at Thames, about 24 hours after the accident, the men were soaked to the skin, covered with mud and greatly fatigued. Dr Aubin promptly attended Fred.

Three years later Peter Clark, a young mail carrier, while riding on the ranges at the back of Thames, was thrown from his horse, and jammed against a tree, fracturing a leg. With great fortitude he caught his horse, remounted, and rode to where help was available at a mining camp. He was then carried by relays on an improvised

stretcher to Thames.

In 1921, when felling a tree, William Wood, butcher, was pinned against a stump when the tree jumped back. His mates were unable to move the log, but they cut through it and carried William to a hut.

Heavy rain fell for two days before they could set out carrying William on a stretcher 14 miles along a bridle track to Thames. The journey was very challenging, and the first stretcher collapsed, so a sapling one was made. The party reached Thames exhausted.

Despite the heroic efforts of his mates, John McLaughlin died at Waihi hospital from complications of pneumonia and was buried at Waihi cemetery.

Chris' Quiz

Weekly quiz compiled by Chris Par-minter

- What is a Labubu? a) An animal, b) a collectible toy, or c) a specific clothing item?
- In which country would you find the Nullarbor Plains?
- Are a vehicle's electrical systems primarily AC (alternate current) voltage, or DC (direct current) voltage?
- What does the NIMBY acronym stand for?
- Assuming an ambient temperature of 20°C or more, leaving a fridge door open in a room will (in the long run): a) heat a room up, b) not change the temperature at all, or c) cool a room down?
- The members of the band ZZ Top are famous for their long beards, but their drummer Frank was often the exception, usually clean shaven. What was his surname? a) Beard, b) Hair, or c) Moustache?
- Which metal element beginning with L, is a key component of medication for mental health conditions including bipolar disorder?
- True or false: the Coca Cola company was the first to give Santa Claus his now ubiquitous red coloured suit?
- Which offshore island has the higher human population: Chatham Island or Stewart Island?
- Born in Australia, but with Italian and Peruvian heritage, what is the last name of the Wellington Phoenix football team's coach, Giancarlo?



ANSWERS: 1. b) A collectible toy; 2. Australia; 3. DC (direct voltage); 4. Not in NY Back Yard; 5. a) here a room up; 6. (a) Beard; 7. Hair; 8. False; 9. Santa's red in many publications from the 19th century; 10. Italia.

St John Thames

Retail store.

The St John retail store in Pahau Street helps support our community in many ways. Revenue is directed towards the Hato Hone St John community programmes that we run such as Health Shuttles, Youth programme, Caring Caller, clinical services at our communities charity events and support for Ambulance; as well as maintaining our property and fleet.

The store is our retail community door. If you require a First Aid kit, need to pay a St John subscription or transport account, you can do that at our stores as well. And you are welcome to make donations or look for a bargain from an extensive range of clothing and household goods.

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Marty Supreme (149 mins) R13. Starring Timothée Chalamet (Golden Globe Award Male Actor Winner). Marty Mauser, a young man with a dream no one respects, goes to hell and back in pursuit of greatness.

Anchor Me: The Don McGlashan Story (88 mins) E. Captivating documentary celebrating the extraordinary journey of Don's career. An uplifting tribute to a truly original talent.

Not Only Fred Dagg (103 mins) M. A comedian for 40+ years. John Clarke (aka Fred Dagg) traces his steadfast resistance to authority, his early career in NZ, and his four decades in the entertainment industry.

Hamnet (126 mins) M. From Academy Award® winning writer/director Chloé Zhao, HAMNET tells the powerful love story that inspired the creation of Shakespeare's timeless masterpiece, Hamlet. Award winner.

Song Sung Blue (132 mins) M. Based on a true story, two down-on-their-luck musicians (Hugh Jackman and Kate Hudson) form a joyous Neil Diamond tribute band, proving it's never too late to follow your dreams.

Pets on a Train (87 mins) PG. When a train unexpectedly starts up, taking only pets with it, the animals discover that Hans, a badger with a grudge, is behind it all. A roguish Raccoon will do anything to save them.

Zootopia 2 (108 mins) PG. Detectives Judy and Nick find themselves on the trail of a mysterious reptile who arrives in Zootopia and turns the animal metropolis upside down.

The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants (96 mins) PG. SpongeBob and his Bikini Bottom friends set sail. A seafaring comedy-adventure that takes SpongeBob to the deepest depths of the sea.

Coming next week: **Nuremberg and The Choral, Mārama and Wuthering Heights** soon after. See the 'Coming Soon' page on our website for details.

Vehicles of all kinds on display

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

Big rigs will soon be cruising around the Coromandel Peninsula for the inaugural Classics Around the Coast Tour, as a preamble to the popular Wings and Wheels event this holiday weekend.

Forty classic trucks will travel in convoy over four days, beginning in Kōpū on January 21 and heading through Paeroa, Waihī, Whangamatā, along the East Coast to Coromandel Town, and back along the Thames Coast in time to park up at the airfield on Ngāti Maru Highway.

"[The trucks] are from all over New Zealand - Taranaki, Wairarapa, we have one guy coming up from the South Island," Wings and Wheels committee chair Mary Thomson said.

"Hopefully, we can get the drivers to toot and holler and make a lot of noise as they go through the peninsula."

The rigs will be joined at the airfield on Saturday by an array of vintage cars, aircraft old and new, military vehicles, motorcycles, tractors, and other interesting vehicles and machinery.

Meanwhile, the Wings and Wheels event itself is also shaping up to be a spectacular day. Along with all the vehicles on display, there will be music, food stalls, a beer garden, and a live reenactment display from the WWII Historical Reenact-



This year's Wings and Wheels show promises to have plenty to delight and entertain. File Photo: TERESA MAXWELL

ment Society.

The airshow, commencing at 12pm, will feature the New Zealand Warbirds, the Yak Aerobatic team, and solo aerobatic displays.

"We've also got the radial engine, which is a big aeroplane engine that makes a big noise and has a bit of an airstream behind it," Mary said.

There are several new features at this year's event. One is

a model aircraft display, featuring working miniature aircraft with wingspans of just three or four metres long.

And there will also be displays featuring FMX freestyle motorcycles. "There's so much to see - just come down and enjoy the day," Mary said.

"It is a big thing to put on, and we just want to attract as many people there as possible."

DETAILS: The Classics Around the

Coast Tour departs Kōpū on January 21. Wings and Wheels, January 24, 10am-3pm at the Sir Keith Park Memorial Airfield, Ngāti Maru Highway, Thames. Adults \$15, children under 12 free. Free parking available at Rhodes Park, shuttle available from the disabled parking spots. See www.wingsandwheelsthames.com for more.



Waitawheta Bridge to close for inspection

Hauraki District Council will close Waitawheta Bridge for two days next week to complete a detailed structural assessment that will inform future strengthening work.

The inspection on January 21-22 from 8am-4pm will assess whether the 1960s bridge can be upgraded to handle heavier High Productivity Motor Vehicles (HPMV), and to determine whether it can be widened to include another lane. This would improve the bridge's capacity as a detour route when State Highway 2 closes, council said.

"Waitawheta Rd serves as an alternative route through the Karangahake Gorge, but the current bridge can only handle standard heavy vehicles up to 44 tonnes," council group manager service delivery Adrián de Laborde said.

"By investigating whether we can upgrade it for HPMV vehicles, we're planning for better freight connections and more reliable detour options for our region."

The inspection will include concrete core sampling, structural measurements, and comprehensive condition assessment by specialist bridge engineers using a bridge inspection unit.

"This equipment lets us safely access the underside of the bridge structure to gather the data we need," he said.

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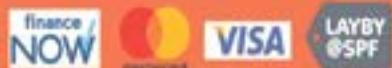
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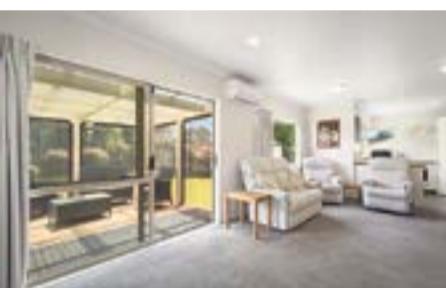
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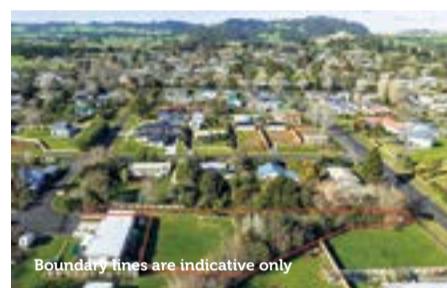
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New Listing



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**Comfort Meets Convenience**

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Mayoral taskforce helps Admire find his path

When Admire Hardwidge was given the opportunity to pursue a butchery career last year, he wasn't just starting a new job - he was beginning a new chapter in life.

Originally from Taumarunui and with a background in dairy farming, Admire was looking for a fresh start. Thanks to the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs (MTFJ) Community Employment Programme (CEP) and Meat at the Beach in Whangamatā, he found it.

"I used to be a little rascal when I was younger," Admire laughs.

"This opportunity has helped me mature and my mental health has gone through the roof - it's better now."

Owners Steve Hall and Janene Braithwaite said finding staff in butchery was tough.

"It's hard to get employees interested in the field because it's hard work," Janine said.

"But Admire's attitude is amazing. He's willing to give everything a go, takes feedback on board, and just gets on with it."

From preparing sausages and slicing bacon to setting up the display cabinet and cleaning, Admire is learning every part of the process.

"We're really impressed with where he is already," Janine said. "He's resilient, and he doesn't take things personally. Plus, it's great hearing him and Steve cracking up out the back - it's hard work, but they're having fun."



Steve Hall, left, Whangamatā Youth Trust's Simone Hughes, Admire Hardwidge and council's Helen Flynn.



Meat at the Beach win bronze for their



Real Beef sausage left; and Admire and Steve at work. Photos: SUPPLIED/TCDC

Recently, Meat at the Beach won a bronze medal for their Real Beef sausage in the 2025 Dunninghams Great NZ Sausage Competition - one of the sausages Admire helps make.

"We were very proud to have Admire and the team represent us at the prize giving," Janine said. "It's a real testament to the quality of work and the pride he takes in learning the craft."

The journey wasn't just about skills - it was about support.

MTFJ helped with essentials like uniforms and even assisted Admire in getting his full driver's licence.

CEP is a nationwide partnership between MTFJ and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), focused on getting young people into sustainable employment. It works at a grassroots level, giving councils

the power and funding to tailor solutions to local challenges.

"We wouldn't have found him without MTFJ," Janine said.

"The support from Simone Hughes, [Whangamatā Youth Trust], and Helen Flynn, [Thames-Coromandel District Council Community Partnerships Co-ordinator], to match the right person and keep in touch has been priceless."

Steve and Janene found their

partnership with MTFJ so rewarding that they've continued working closely with the team to bring another young job-seeker on board. Mana joined the Meat at the Beach team at the end of October last year, and like Admire, he's proving to be a great asset.

Steve and Janine describe these rangatahi (youth) as outstanding employees and remain committed to helping them learn, grow, and build successful careers in the industry.

Admire's advice for other young people was to work hard.

"Hard mahi [work] my guys. That's all you need. Head down, mahi on, and you'll get somewhere in life."

Looking ahead, Admire sees himself running the shop in five years. For now, he's focused on learning and maybe starting an apprenticeship after the busy summer season.

"It's fantastic to hear yet another local success story through the MTFJ programme," Thames-Coromandel District Mayor Peter Revell said.

"These young people are the future of our district, and when we see employers like Steve and Janine stepping up to provide opportunities, it makes our community one to be truly admired."

"Their commitment not only strengthens local businesses but helps build a stronger, more resilient Coromandel for generations to come."

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The stranded yacht is not expected to be recoverable.

Photo: COROMANDEL'S CFM

Yacht stranded at Wharekaho

A yacht was stranded at the northern end of Wharekaho Simpsons Beach on the Coromandel Peninsula on January 19 after an anchor chain broke during strong winds and swells, causing the vessel to take on water.

The boat washed ashore and became beached and it was unlikely to be recoverable after being assessed by authorities, Coromandel's CFM reported yesterday morning.

A digger was en route to the site to assist with removal at low tide yesterday afternoon.

No injuries were reported, with the sole occupant onboard at the time escaping unharmed.

Residents stepped in to help salvage items from the vessel, and those involved have expressed gratitude for the community's support.

Coromandel's CFM said Coastguard and the Harbormaster were on scene to manage the response and have urged the public to stay well clear of the area to allow for safe operations.

Dig into archaeology these school holidays

Families and archeology fans of all ages will have the chance to step into the shoes of an archaeologist when the Thames School of Mines hosts a hands-on event this week.

The two-day experience will take place on Wednesday, January 21 and Thursday, January 22, from 10am to 2pm, at the Carnegie Library at Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga - Thames School of Mines.

As the final event in its summer holiday programme, the sessions will give children and adults the opportunity to try their hand at excavation, and learn directly from professional archaeologists.

Heritage New Zealand staff, alongside archaeologists from around the country, will be on site to share their expertise with attendees and talk about what their work involves, from uncovering artefacts to recording and researching finds.

Participants will be able to take part in digging, excavating, cleaning, sort-

ing, researching and recording the artifacts they find buried "below the surface".

They'll also have the chance to try on real archaeologist's gear and have a turn at learning about - and using - the equipment archaeologists use in all areas of their field work.

There will also be a Junior Archaeologist activity booklet that kids can get stamped at each activity.

Once visitors have four stamps, they can emboss their own Thames School of Mine gold sticker, and choose a small bag of gems to take home.

Attendees are encouraged to wear old clothes, as some activities may get a little dirty.

The event is free to attend, with koha appreciated, and no booking is required.

DETAILS: Archaeology event, 10am-2pm, January 21 and 22 at the Thames School of Mines, Carnegie Library, 705 Queen St, Thames. Cost is free, koha appreciated. No booking required.



Kids can get hands-on, practising excavation skills at an archaeology event in Thames. SUPPLIED

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Be the catalyst - you might change the world

OPINION



By MICHAEL WILKES

Sometimes the difference between a good idea and real change comes down to one thing: someone willing to act.

We all know dreamers. People with heart, vision, and fire - but no traction. And often, what they need isn't more advice or criticism. They need a catalyst.

Today I want to honour a

woman who was that for me and my wife - Lynne Chaffey. She passed recently, but her legacy still runs deep in the work we do.

See, we had a dream. My wife and I had long talked about creating something to help young people thrive. We wanted to reduce youth suicide in our nation, to build something that could actually change lives. It was written in journals, prayed over, talked about - but we weren't quite ready to start.

Most people we shared it with smiled politely. Many

said it was a good idea - but followed with a dozen reasons why it wouldn't work. "You're too young." "Do it after your degree." "Wait until you've got more experience." You know the kind of thing. Caution wrapped as care.

But Lynne? She heard it and said, "Let's do it."

She helped us establish a charity, got us in the door with our first school, and believed in the vision like it was her own.

That spark changed everything. That was the catalyst moment. Fast forward to today

- we now work with hundreds of young people every year. We've built a team, created multiple programmes, and seen lives genuinely transformed.

And it all traces back to one woman who didn't just nod at a dream - she moved.

Lynne is no longer with us, but her impact ripples on.

And it's got me thinking: how often do we cross paths with someone dreaming? Do we offer excuses... or do we offer help? You don't have to carry the whole vision - but you might just be the catalyst that

gets it off the ground.

So my question for you today is simple: when someone shares their dream, do you remind them why it's too hard... or do you lean in and say, "Let's do it?"

You might just change the world.

Michael Wilkes is a youth worker with Thrive Trust, supporting mentoring and resilience programmes across Thames and Paeroa. To support his local youth work or follow stories and insights, find him on social media @michaelwilkes.kiwi. Enjoy these articles? Grab his book The Unschooled Life at michaelwilkes.kiwi.

Style Your Space

ADVERTISING FEATURE



Create fresh spaces for summer

It's a brand new year and what better way to kick off 2026 than by getting some fresh ideas with the monthly *Style your Space* feature in *The Valley Profile*.

This is the place where businesses in the Hauraki-Coromandel, who offer products or services focused on the home, can share what they have to offer people in the community.

Styling your space for summer is a great way to bring freshness and vibrancy into your home.

It not only provides a sense of openness, but also allows your favourite pieces to shine.

Consider donating or recycling what you no longer need to make room for

new possibilities.

Once your space is decluttered, focus on lightening your decor.

Swap heavy blankets and dark pillows for lighter fabrics in cheerful colors. Soft pastels, crisp whites, and bright accents can create an inviting atmosphere and evoke the essence of summer.

Incorporate natural elements, like fresh flowers or potted plants, to breathe life into your rooms. Their vibrant colors and textures add a touch of nature and help purify the air, enhancing the overall mood.

Rearranging furniture can also refresh your space.

Create cozy nooks for reading or

relaxing, and consider bringing outdoor furniture inside to blur the lines between indoors and outdoors.

Accessorize with seasonal decor - think airy textiles, colorful art, or beach-inspired items that remind you of sunny days.

Finally, let in as much natural light as possible; open windows and draw back curtains to invite the warmth of the sun.

With these simple changes, your home will feel renewed - ready to embrace the joys of summer.

DETAILS: To join the *Style your Space* feature, contact Davidda: Ph 022 174 3988 or email: Davidda@valleyprofile.co.nz.

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Our Coromandel

News from Thames-Coromandel District Council



21 January 2026

Council workshops made public

Council workshops will now be open to the public in order to promote greater transparency.

Previously, these workshops (non-decision-making forums for briefings or exploring issues) had been closed. Now workshop dates and topics will be published in advance, and the public can attend in-person or online. Notes of what was discussed will be published on our website afterwards.

Check out all Council and Community Board meetings here tcdc.govt.nz/meetings



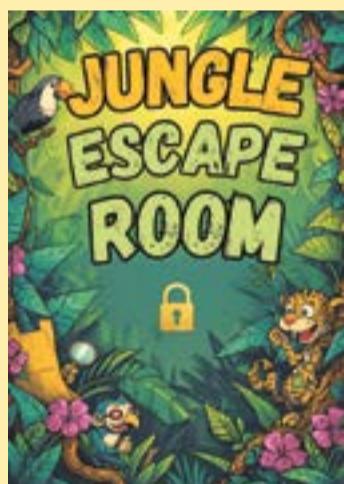
Visitor signage

Three quirky visitor signs have done Thames proud this summer – drawing interest from visitors. Funding for the design came from a Ministry of Social Development grant. Thames Community Board provided funds to install the sign.



THAMES LIBRARY HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

Thames Library's Escape Room is back in action these school holidays. Can you find the hidden gems and escape the jungle before it's too late? You and your fellow jungle explorers will have 30 minutes to solve the clues and find your way out of the room! Bookings are essential.



We also have crafts to make and games to play at all of our district libraries in our summer holiday activities. These take place Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 10.30–11.30am.

For more information, visit tcdc.govt.nz/library or phone 07 868 6616.

Every drop counts

Over the summer we're asking you to be careful with water use – particularly outside with sprinklers, paddling pools or hoses.



With drier weather and more visitors, the pressure on Council's water supply systems increases. We're monitoring water availability closely. Where necessary, we'll put in place water restrictions. They'll be announced on local radio, our website and Facebook page.

Thames Valley (Matatoki, Pūriri, Ōmahu, Wharepoa and Hikutaia) already has a watering ban, with no use of hoses and sprinklers, filling up paddling pools or washing cars, boats, decks or houses.

Essential garden watering with a hand-held watering can only is permitted.

Check out water conservation tips at tcdc.govt.nz/savewater

WATER DELIVERY PLAN

Council has approved an updated operating expenditure budget of \$234,000 for the 2025/26 year to help with implementation of our Water Services Delivery Plan. It's \$400,000 less than the initial forecast if we'd gone into partnership with nearby councils.



Council has reaffirmed our intention to continue progressing an internal business unit for water services under the Local Water Done Well reform. At the same time we're also exploring partnership opportunities with Tauranga City Council and Western Bay of Plenty District Council.

tcdc.govt.nz/lwdw

FIRE RESTRICTIONS

A reminder that we're in a restricted fire season. This means a fire permit is required for any open-air fires across the district. Private fireworks are also banned. Check if fire in your area is allowed and apply for a permit at checkitsalright.nz or call 0800 658 628. Let's help keep our communities safe this summer.

Know your local dog rules

Follow our traffic light signs to understand our dog rules. Our default rule is that dogs are to be kept on lead; so when in doubt, keep your dog on a lead.



Green signs denote exercise areas:

You can have your dog off lead, but it must be under control at all times.



Orange signs denote on lead areas:

Your dog must remain on lead for times noted on the sign.



Red signs denote prohibited areas:

This means no dogs at all. Most beach area prohibitions are either during the dotterel nesting season from Labour Weekend to 1 March, or over the summer period and holiday weekends. We also have areas that are prohibited all year round.

tcdc.govt.nz/dogrules

OUR NEXT THAMES COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING WILL BE 10AM WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, THAMES



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SPORTS

Email your sports news, reports and photos to editor@valleyprofile.co.nz

Gold medal, personal bests for Thames athletes

Thames Valley Athletics Club is celebrating a successful weekend following excellent results at the recent North Island Colgate Games.

The summer athletics event, featuring more than 1300 athletes aged 7-14 years old, was held at Tauranga Domain on January 9-11. Among the participants were 11 Thames Valley Athletics Club members, who were pleased to return home with several personal bests under their belts.

And in a first for the club, 10-year-old Jackson Ffowcs-Williams was awarded a gold medal in the long jump for his personal best attempt of 4.58 metres.

"Our 7-9 year old juniors competed in eight-person flights and competed for first, second and third pennant flags in each flight," a spokesperson said. "Our 10-14 year old seniors competed for medals against big start lists (up to 80 athletes in some events). "We were so very proud of each and every one of our athletes."

RESULTS: Jackson Ffowcs-Williams (10 Year Old Boys): 4th in 100m finals

(PB 14.03 seconds); 13th in 200m; 9th in high jump; gold in long jump (PB 4.58m). Tane Wray (14 Year Old Boys): 4th in 100m (PB of 11.87 seconds); 5th in 200m (PB 24.28 seconds); 6th in 400m (PB 57.01 seconds); 8th in high jump (PB 1.65m); 16th in long jump (PB 4.69m). Jacob Whiteman (13 Year old Boys): 23rd in 200m; 16th in 400m; 14th in long jump. Isla Palfrey (13 Year Old Girls): semi-finalist in 100m; PB in long jump (4.29m). Ava Palfrey (10 Year Old Girls): semi-finalist in 200m; shot put 5.87m. Addi Clarke (8 Year Old Girls): 1st in 60m; 1st in 100m; 2nd in 200m; 3rd in relay; 6th in discus; 1st in long jump (PB 3.43m). Nyla Bithell (8 Year Old Girls): 5th in 60m; 4th in 100m; 3rd in relay; 3rd in discus; 4th in long jump. Harlow Macaw (8 Year Old Girls): Finalist ribbon in discus; 3rd in relay. Ava Ball (8 Year Old Girls): Finalist ribbon in long jump; 3rd in relay. Sophie Bustard (7 Year Old Girls): 7th in 60m; 4th in 100m; 6th in 200m; 6th in shot put; 6th in long jump. Liam Palfrey (7 year old Boys): 2nd in 60m; 2nd in 100m; 1st in 200m; 1st in long jump (3.28m).

More Colgate Games coverage: P24



Jackson Ffowcs-Williams at the starting blocks, left, and with the club's first gold medal.



Photos: SUPPLIED



The eight-year-old girls relay team on the podium in third place.



Club members at the opening ceremony.



Liam Palfrey makes his long jump attempt.

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On the Land

Boaties urged to tackle seaweed threat

Waikato Regional Council, with funding support from Biosecurity New Zealand, is leading a campaign throughout the Coromandel Peninsula to raise awareness about exotic caulerpa, an invasive marine species threatening coastal ecosystems.

Two nearly identical species of exotic caulerpa are known to be in New Zealand waters - *Caulerpa brachypus* and *Caulerpa parvifolia*.

Together these are referred to as exotic caulerpa.

First detected in 2021 at Aotea Great Barrier Island, the pest has now been found in Northland, Auckland, and the Coromandel Peninsula.

Coromandel infestation locations include Ahuahu Great Mercury Island, Repanga Cuvier Island and Northern Coromandel locations between Fantail Bay and Square Top Island.

Once established, caulerpa forms dense carpets across the seabed smothering native habitats and displacing local marine life. It also impacts iwi and hapū by impacting the health and presence of taonga species.

Waikato Regional Council is teaming up with local iwi, Thames-Coromandel District Council, the Department of Conservation and MPI to get the message out: that even a tiny fragment can hitch a ride on anchors, chains, or uncleaned gear, spreading the pest to new locations.

And once established in an area, there's no proven way to successfully eradicate it from a site.

They will have ambassadors heading



Exotic caulerpa has now spread to the Coromandel Peninsula. Photo: MONICA NEVILL-JACKSON out this summer at local boat ramps, camp sites and community events to help spread the message.

The education push will also head indoors, with videos playing in cinemas and an online module available in some dive shops to reach divers as they wait for tanks to be filled.

Before leaving any waterway, boaters and divers are encouraged to check their vessel's anchor, anchor chain, and all equipment for tangled seaweed.

If any seaweed is found, it should be carefully removed, secured in a bag or container, and disposed of onshore in a rubbish bin - never return it to the water.

DETAILS: For more information, visit the websites of the Waikato Regional Council or Biosecurity New Zealand.



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Entries open for rural awards

Entries have opened for two awards in the New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards (NZDIA) programme, aimed at helping young farmers progress to farm ownership. The ASB Alumni of the Year award together with the Fonterra and ASB First Farm Award give the winners a financial advantage in their farm ownership journey.

NZDIA general manager Robin Congdon said the awards extended the scope of the NZDIA programme, from supporting dairy trainees right through to the people who were purchasing farms and were the succession story for the sector.

"The continuation of these two awards is significant to the NZDIA programme providing clear and valuable pathways for progression within the industry. NZDIA's mission is to support and celebrate excellence in the New Zealand dairy industry and these awards strengthen our ability to recognise excellence at all stages of people's dairy career."

Winners of the 2025 ASB Alumni of the Year Award Steve and Amy Gillies said access to 1 per cent interest funding from ASB had launched their farming business leaps ahead.

The couple won the 2018 Waikato Share Farmers of the Year and achieved third place at the Nationals and went on to purchase a 97ha farm at Te Awamutu in 2022.

Entering the Alumni of the Year was a further opportunity for the couple to assess their finances and have another conversation about their goals, Amy said. "Winning the award and being able to work with ASB has helped our budget immensely - we've had access to great rural managers who have looked at our business with fresh eyes," she said.

The ASB Alumni of the Year Award is a collaboration between ASB and NZDIA to specifically encourage and reward NZDIA Alumni who have made significant contributions to the programme and the industry.

The award is open to NZDIA Alumni who have been entrants in the past seven years and are no longer eligible to enter the Dairy Manager of the Year or Share Farmer of the Year categories, are not yet ready to purchase their first farm, or already own one.

Entrants are judged by representatives from ASB and NZDIA, with the winner of up to \$1 million of ASB Business term lending fixed at 1 per cent per annum for three years also announced at the National Gala Dinner in Rotorua on May 9.

The Fonterra & ASB First Farm Award (FFA) is a collaboration between ASB, Fonterra and the NZDIA Trust. The award aims to help the best in the industry successfully transition into farm ownership, ensuring good succession to ownership and the future of the dairy industry. The award is open to people who have previously entered the New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards.

There will be three winners, who will receive up to \$1 million of ASB Business Term Lending fixed at 1 per cent per annum for three years, along with a Fonterra launch package that includes \$20,000 of Farm Source account credit to drive productivity and sustainability, mentoring, and additional support to help them successfully transition into ownership.

Winners will also be announced at the NZDIA National Gala Dinner in Rotorua.

DETAILS: Visit dairyindustryawards.co.nz.

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On the Land

Second New Year Honour for rural leader

By KELLEY TANTAU

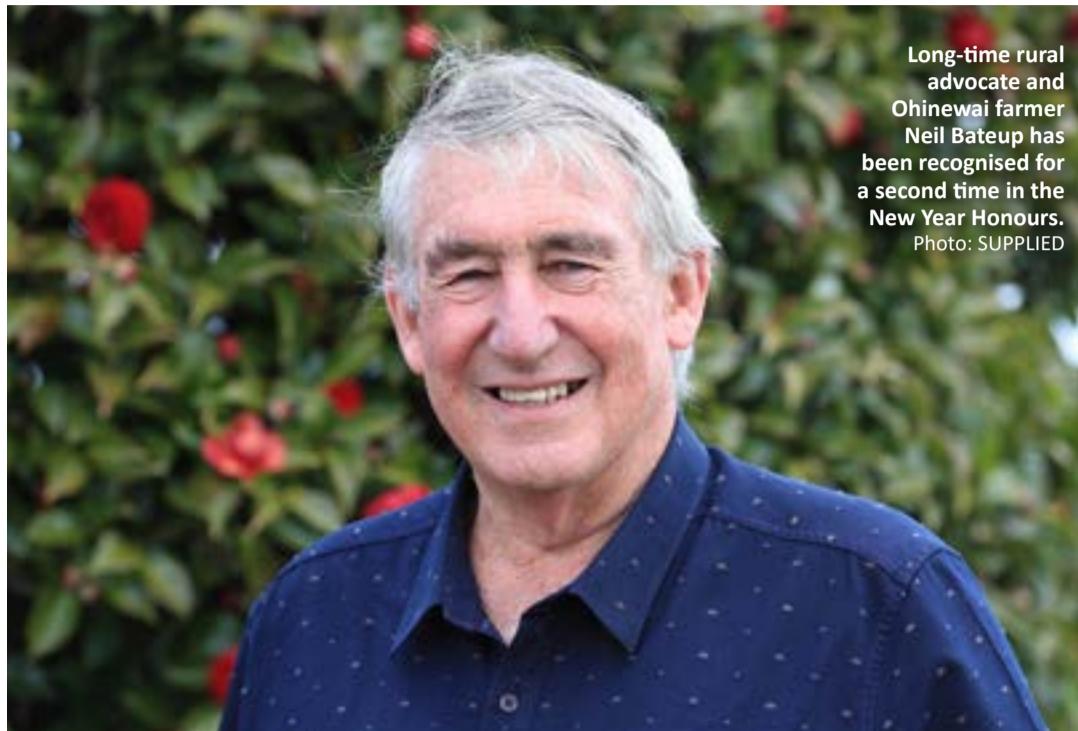
Long-time rural advocate Land Ohinewai farmer Neil Bateup has been recognised for a second time in the New Year Honours, having been appointed a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit this year for his decades of service.

Neil, whose farm is off the Tahuna-Ohinewai Road, was previously appointed an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2018, and said the newest commendation was an honour - but despite the recognition, he was quick to credit others.

"I was surprised and honoured to receive it, but I do wish to acknowledge the whole team across the country who quietly work behind the scenes to provide the support when and where it is needed," he told *The Profile*.

"It is a recognition of the part the rural sector plays in New Zealand, and the fact that there are challenges which face the participants from time to time. I have been fortunate to have had the time and resources to lead the team to provide the support needed."

Neil has served New Zealand's rural sector over decades of leadership, spanning



Long-time rural advocate and Ohinewai farmer Neil Bateup has been recognised for a second time in the New Year Honours.
Photo: SUPPLIED

governance roles, community engagement, and adverse event response.

He helped set up the Waikato-Hauraki Coromandel Rural Support Trust in 2004 and has continued his involvement as chairperson since 2018.

He also served as chairperson of the New Zealand Rural Support Charitable Trust from 2017 to 2024. He initiated the

Waikato Primary Industry Adverse Events Cluster, bringing together people from across the sector along with Civil Defence and welfare agencies.

He helped raise more than \$3 million in private donations following Cyclone Gabrielle, personally ensuring funds and support were directed at the worst-hit regions.

He was involved with

Community Trusts in Care Aotearoa from 2016 to 2021, and was named one of three Rural Hero finalists last year.

Reflecting on the eight years between his two honours, Neil said the rural sector faced pressure from climatic events, and the ongoing personal and business stresses experienced by farmers.

"There have been fluctua-

tions in product prices which can put pressure on farm businesses as well as a number of climatic events, the largest being the cyclones Hale and Gabrielle in close succession," he said.

"Also supporting farmers during the *M bovis* [Mycoplasma bovis] biosecurity incursion was a significant challenge. Fortunately, we are in pretty much a purple patch at the moment but there are still people needing support with relationship issues - both personal and employment - health issues, and the challenges of managing complex businesses."

And while his dedication to the rural sector will continue, Neil said the next chapter would also include making time for family and a few well-earned moments away from the paddock.

"I will continue to do what I can to support and mentor the RST team to continue the good work; still take an interest in the rural sector and the continuing development and innovations that have been happening during the full length of my farming career; and hopefully a bit more time to spend with family - and fishing!"



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2026 Back to School Information

Senior Course Confirmations

Students will be able to login and view their draft timetables from 19 January onwards. Senior students who need to make subject changes or selections must call into school before we are back to confirm their timetable.

20, 21 & 22 Jan: 2pm - 5pm

23 Jan: 9am - 12pm

22 Jan: Office opens

26 Jan: Anniversary Day (school closed)

29 Jan: Year 9 & 13 only (Pōwhiri 9am)

30 Jan: Year 10, 11, 12 only

02 Feb: All year levels attend

06 Feb: Waitangi Day (school closed)

Stationery: www.myschool.nz

Uniform: www.argyleonline.co.nz

P.E Uniform & Footwear:

www.nzuniforms.com



Hauraki Plains College



Student Life

ADVERTISING FEATURE



Students in Hauraki-Coromandel can look forward to the 2026 school year.
Photo: SUPPLIED

It's almost time for school

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

It's been refreshing to kick off a brand new year with the summer school holidays. It's a time when students from across the motu can take a moment to unwind, relax and reset for the new school year ahead.

But with the summer holidays soon wrapping up, students and families across the Hauraki-Coromandel will need to start getting ready for term one of the 2026 school season to begin.

There are all sorts of things for families and students to consider when preparing to go back to school, such as getting into the swing of routine. It's a good time to think about reintroducing routines a week or two before school starts, such as set

times for going to bed, waking up in the morning and meal times.

One key part of preparing for school is to also organise uniforms and stationery lists. It's never too early to freshen up on a few subjects by taking a look through some of last year's workbooks or the 2026 work books to wake up those parts of the brain. Something students and families can consider is setting small achievable study goals to help with motivation and inspiration. It can also be useful to keep track of important school dates on a family calendar for things such as sports days, events, parent teacher interviews or school mufti days.

One of the most important tools for students is to be hopeful and make room to dream and give term one their best shot.

Simply the BEST

Aroha, Honesty, Self Discipline, Responsibility & Respect

WHY MILLER AVENUE SCHOOL?

Miller Avenue School has worked hard to reclaim its mantra as one of the region's best primary schools.

At our school you will find:

- Excellence in literacy and numeracy teaching
- A safe and fun environment where children thrive
- Caring teachers
- Interesting and stimulating science, technology and social studies based on the needs of the local community
- A heavy focus on sports, the arts and cultural programmes so that each child finds an activity they love.

BACK TO SCHOOL DATES

- 28th – 30th January. School Office open
- 2nd February. Teacher Only day, school office Open
- 3rd February. First day of school
- 6th February. Waitangi Day



Miller Avenue School

www.millerave.school.nz

30 Miller Avenue, PAEROA 3600

07 862 8602 ~ 027 952 3203

office@millerave.school.nz

ENROL ONLINE OR COME AND SEE OUR FRIENDLY TEAM!

Student Life

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Moanataiari kids learn and grow

Starting school is a big step, and at Moanataiari School, we make sure it is a happy and positive experience for both children and their families.

Our school is a friendly, caring place where children feel safe, supported, and excited to learn from their very first day.

Located at the northern end of Thames near Kuranui Bay, Moanataiari School offers a calm environment where every child is known and valued.

Our teachers take the time to get to know each child, helping them settle into school and build confidence as learners.

Learning at Moanataiari School is hands-on, engaging, and fun. Children develop strong early skills in reading, writing, and maths while also learning through play, exploration, and outdoor experiences.

These opportunities encourage curiosity, independence, and a love of learning.

Our school values guide everything we do. We teach children to be caring, to do their best, to respect others, and to feel proud of who they are.

Positive relationships and a sense of belonging are at the heart of our school community. We believe starting school works best when families and teachers work together. We run School Beginner evenings each term and welcome students during visits from early childhood centres.

Enrolments for 2026 are now open.

Families are warmly invited to visit, meet our teachers, and see how Moanataiari School gives children a confident start to school.

For more information, visit moana.school.nz, call 07 868 6504, or email office@moana.school.nz.

-Supplied by Moanataiari School



Support for young people a focus

Te Kura Tuarua o Te Kauaeranga Thames High School is looking forward to the 2026 school year with a clear focus on supporting young people to thrive academically, socially, and culturally. A key priority is the continued embedding of the school's Graduate Profile – Te Āhua o Ā Tātou Ākonga.

Developed over the past two years through consultation, the profile outlines the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions students are expected to leave school with. These include effective communication, cultural understanding, resilience, ethical decision-making, creativity, and a strong commitment to wellbeing.

The Graduate Profile helps ensure learning across all subjects is purposeful and connected to real-world pathways.

Alongside this, Thames High School will continue strengthening its Instructional Model, supporting consistent, high-quality teaching across the school. This includes clear learn-

ing goals, positive relationships, teaching approaches that meet diverse learner needs, and regular feedback to help students understand their progress. Attendance, engagement, and wellbeing remain strong areas of focus, with the school continuing to work closely with students and whānau to support regular attendance and early intervention when needed.

In 2026, the school will introduce Te Ara Whakamana, a small, locally delivered pathway designed to support a small number of students who need a more flexible, relationship-based approach while remaining connected to school, whānau, and community.

The school will also continue strengthening its partnership with Ngāti Maru, enhancing culturally responsive practice and Māori student success, while investing in facilities that support safe, welcoming learning environments.

- Supplied by Te Kura Tuarua o Te Kauaeranga Thames High School

MOANATAIARI SCHOOL

Learning & Growing Together

- No Enrolment Zone
- Committed to excellence
- Writers Toolbox
- Gardening for Life programme
- Enrolments open for new entrants to year 8



Prospective families can arrange a visit and collect an enrolment pack

Term 1 starts: 27th Jan 2026

Family Fun Night: 13th Feb 2026

Beginners' Evening: 18th Feb 2026

office@moana.school.nz

www.moana.school.nz

<https://www.facebook.com/Moanataiari>

instagram:@moanataiarischool

101 Kuranui Street

Thames, 3500

868 6504

021 026 34461

Te Kura Tuarua o Te Kauaeranga
Kia kōtahi ai te piki ake, kia ikeike rawa ki te taumata



Thames High School

We grow together to achieve ones true potential

KEY DATES FOR THE BEGINNING OF 2026

THURSDAY 22 - FRIDAY 23 JANUARY - UNIFORM POP UP - SCHOOL HALL

THURSDAY 22 - 10:00AM-5:00PM
FRIDAY 23 - 8:30AM-2:00PM

MONDAY 26 JANUARY - AUCKLAND ANNIVERSARY - SCHOOL CLOSED

TUESDAY 27 JANUARY - OFFICE OPENS - 8.30AM-3.30PM
ENQUIRIES & ENROLMENTS

FRIDAY 30 JANUARY - YEARS 11/12/13 COURSE CONFIRMATION
YEAR 12 & 13 - 10:45AM - 1:00PM / YEAR 11 - 1:15PM TO 3:00PM

MONDAY 2 FEBRUARY - PŌWHIRI FOR YEAR 9 & NEW STUDENTS - 9.30AM
WITH YEAR 13 AND STUDENT LEADERS FOLLOWED BY ORIENTATION
YEAR 10-13 ONLINE LEARNING MODULE FROM HOME: GOALS / REFLECTIONS / VALUES

TUESDAY 3 FEBRUARY - SCHOOL STARTS - 8.45AM-3.15PM

FRIDAY 6 FEBRUARY - WAITANGI DAY - SCHOOL CLOSED

MONDAY 9 FEBRUARY - STAFF ONLY DAY - SCHOOL CLOSED

TUESDAY 10 FEBRUARY - SCHOOL RESUMES - 8.45AM-3.15PM

If you have any questions please contact the school office 07 868 8688 or email office@thameshigh.school.nz

Thames High School Events and Celebrations



Welcome to 2026

School Office open from 29th January

- Thursday 29th January - Head Student Leadership Day
- Thursday 29th January - Course Confirmation & Enrolments
- Friday 30th January - Course Confirmation & Enrolments
- Monday 2nd - 4th February - Year 13 Camp
- Tuesday 3rd - 4th February - Year 11 NCEA Course and Year 12 1st Aid Course 8.50am - 3.00pm
- Thursday 5th February - Year 9 and all new students Pōwhiri starting at 10.00am - all new students please assemble in the gym by 9.00am. Returning Year 10 - Year 13 students, school starts 8.55am.

Late enrolment paperwork due by Thursday 22nd January.

Uniform Try On Day

Thursday 22 January 8.30am - 4.00pm

Year 9, Year 11 and any new students

Chromebook Distribution

Thursday 29 January 12.00pm - 4.00pm

School is closed Friday 6th February for Waitangi Day



PAEROA COLLEGE

Mahi tahi kia kaha

15 Te Aroha Road, Paeroa

Phone: 07 862 7579



WAIHĪ COLLEGE

BACK TO SCHOOL DATES

30th January: Powhiri, and all classes start

February 2nd-3rd: Year 11 Kickstart

February 2nd-4th: Senior Leadership Camp

February 2nd-5th: Year 10 at Dickies Flat

February 4th-5th: Year 11 stay home

Check our website for Stationery Lists

www.waihicol.school.nz



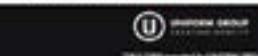
OPEN HOURS | 2026

22 Jan - 12 Feb

Thursday 22 Jan - Friday 23 Jan	2.00pm - 5.00pm
Tuesday 27 Jan - Friday 30 Jan	9.00am - 12.00pm
Monday 2 Feb - Thursday 5 Feb	8.00am - 11.00am
Monday 9 Feb - Thursday 12 Feb	8.00am - 10.00am

Closed on Public Holidays and Teacher Only days. Open Hours may be subject to change.

Visit for more info: www.wcol.uniformgroup.co.nz



OPEN HOURS | Term 1, 2026

17 Feb - 1 Apr

Tuesday	8.00am - 9.00am
Wednesday	1.40pm - 3.40pm

Closed on Public Holidays and Teacher Only days. Hours may be subject to change.

Visit for more info: www.wcol.uniformgroup.co.nz



Student Life

ADVERTISING FEATURE



The quiet strength of a small school

In an era focused on scaling up and going digital first, it's easy to overlook the value of the small and local. We often hear that "bigger is better" - a visit to Puriri School quietly challenges that idea. "Smaller" can mean stronger, deeper and far more connected. At Puriri, size isn't a drawback. It shapes the whole character of the school. The Tuakana/Teina model of older students guiding and supporting younger ones isn't a programme. It's simply how the school lives and breathes.

No child fades into the background.

Personalised learning doesn't come from new software or systems but from teachers who know each student well. That kind of connection is something unique. Schools shouldn't sit apart from the world. Learning is at its best when it's active and rooted in the places around us.

At Puriri, it flows naturally into the community, the awa (river) and the whenua (land). By weaving learning through local experiences and hands on activities, the school gives real substance to Kaitiakitanga (guardianship).

The children aren't just studying their environment. They're forming a relationship with it - one that may guide how they care for it as they grow. In a time of rapid change, Puriri School offers a steady anchor. It shows that a rich, holistic education doesn't need a sprawling campus or large role. It needs dedicated teachers, a supportive board, engaged whānau (families) and a clear sense of purpose.

Puriri School is tending its forest patiently and intentionally and in doing so, it is giving its students something truly lasting.

- Lydia Lester, Principal of Puriri School



PURIRI SCHOOL

Learning | Community | Nature

Excellence in Education.

- **Vibrant Learning:** Committed, inclusive education both indoors and outdoors.
- **Nature Classroom:** We actively use our environment to inspire curiosity and growth.
- **Strong Community:** A supportive place where every child belongs.
- **Lasting Values:** Be TRUE - Built on TRUST, RESPECT, UNDERSTANDING, EQUITY and EXCELLENCE.

Join our supportive community dedicated to nurturing confident, resilient children who are ready to explore the world.

Enrol Now and Discover the Difference.

Start date 2026: 9th February

Visit our website or call us:

www.puriri.school.nz

027 7874741



Student Life

ADVERTISING FEATURE



Five-year-old students Kaiya Challis, Ava Griffin, Edison Moffitt.

Photo: SUPPLIED



Students discover new paths

Tucked away among lush green spaces and shaded by mature trees, Kopuarahi School is more than just a place of learning - it's a welcoming haven where children thrive.

With its blend of natural and thoughtfully designed play areas, our school offers a unique setting where children can grow both academically and personally. At the heart of our school's mission is a deep commitment to the principles of kaitiakitanga - guardianship of the land - and sustainability, which are woven throughout our curriculum. We believe learning goes beyond the classroom, and our students are encouraged to build meaningful connections with the world around them. Whether exploring the outdoors, working together on projects, or engaging in hands-on learning, every day is an opportunity for discovery. Our approach to education places strong emphasis on developing essential literacy and numeracy skills, while also nurturing creativity, curiosity, and collaboration.

We view learning as an ongoing journey, where our role is to guide, inspire, and support each child as they grow and explore their potential. Every student is encouraged to ask questions, take risks, and discover new paths forward.

What truly sets Kopuarahi School apart is our

dedication to small class sizes, which allow us to create close, personal connections with our students and their families.

We believe that education is most powerful when it is tailored to each child's needs, interests, and abilities. Our dedicated and professional team works tirelessly to ensure every child feels valued and supported, helping them unlock their unique talents and untapped potential.

With a vision that looks to the future, our curriculum is designed to equip students with the skills and resilience needed to navigate a rapidly changing world. We foster adaptability, a strong sense of social responsibility, and the confidence to become active, thoughtful contributors to society. At Kopuarahi School, every student is seen as an integral part of our community.

Here, we celebrate the joy of learning, the beauty of curiosity, and the importance of caring for one another and the world around us.

It is a place where each child's potential is nurtured, and where the values of kindness, respect, and discovery are at the heart of all we do. If you'd like to learn more about our school and how we can support your child's journey, we'd love to hear from you.

- Supplied by Kopuarahi School

ENROLMENT | 2026



- Learners benefit from **high quality teaching practice** that improves progress and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Learners have **rich opportunities** to learn across the breadth and depth of the curriculum.
- The school successfully promotes learners' **engagement, wellbeing and inclusion**. (Education Review Office 2025).

www.parawai.school.nz Facebook: Proudly Pārāwai

Enrolment days: 29th January 2026 9am-12pm
30th January 2026 9am-12pm

Our Vision:
Kia Māia, Ki Hiranga, Kia Ngākau nui
Be courageous, Strive for excellence, Be of big heart.



- * Focusing on engaging children in real life learning
- * Rural school environment close to town
- * Small class sizes
- * One to one digital devices
- * Personalised learning
- * School van pick up and drop off with door to door service within the local area of a 10km radius, or by negotiation

Contact Chris Patel principal@kopuarahi.school.nz to arrange a visit.

KOPUARAHİ SCHOOL

Bush Road, Ngātea | 867 5048

Police chase after streakers at New Years

OPINION



Former Thames Police officer
RON AGNEW remembers
community policing as it used to
be in the 1970s

During the busy holiday periods in the past, the Police sent extra Constables to the busy hot spots.

At times, Coromandel would get one or two, Whitianga and Whangamatā, the same, and a Constable would be set up in Pauanui, where there has never been an official Police Station.

Obviously, Policing during the holiday periods involves attendance at different sorts of scenes. Crime still occurs, and traffic accidents and offences, although a lot of time is spent at disorder incidents. Especially over the weeks of New Year celebrations.

I was sent to Pauanui, quite some years ago to set up a mo-

bile patrol over the holidays. New Years Eve arrived, and I started receiving calls about naked people running through homes and in many different locations in the town.

As I attended each location and spoke to the complainants, calls were still coming from many streets away. It seemed that a group of males with no clothes on were running the streets of the town. It was a warm night, and many families were out on their front deck or lawn enjoying drinks and the celebrations. The young men would run on to the property, run in the front door, through the house and out the back door. Many home owners seemed to enjoy the sight and the occasion, but calls were still coming from those who didn't.

I found it difficult to catch up with the group while responding in the police car with its headlights on, visible from streets away. I did sight them on one occasion in the distance, but they weren't staying on roads, taking the option of cutting through back yards and over fences.

But it seemed that it was all done in good humour, and I hadn't worked out how I would deal with a dozen naked people if I had located them anyway.

As midnight came and went, so did they, back to their homes still in high spirits I im-

agine.

Whangamatā was a different story. For a number of years, we had to respond to New Years Eve riots around Williamson Park, mainly by young, intoxicated males.

On one occasion the store was broken into and ransacked, a lot of content was stolen, glass telephone boxes were smashed and the surf club damaged.

I recall arriving at Whangamatā late at night, and other police were arriving from Hamilton and around our area.

We formed a line across the road with our batons drawn, to confront the young crowd, throwing bottles, rocks, and other projectiles in our direction. But unfortunately, we didn't have enough helmets to go round. My helmet went to one of our female constables as rocks and bottles and cans were reigning down on us.

She yelled 'look out!' and a full can of Wattie's peaches landed at my feet! Upon reflection, I was quite glad that never made a dent in my skull!

When the call came through to advance and then to rush them, the rock throwing group scattered and ran in all directions. Those left behind were arrested.

These incidents don't seem to have changed much over the years on the peninsula!

Chris' Quiz - Kiwi nostalgia

Quiz compiled by Chris Parminter

1. Thingee, a puppet alien, cohosted TV shows with which children's entertainer in the 1990s?
2. What is the name of the iconic Kiwi outdoor toy made from a metal pole with a ball attached by string?
3. What is the name of the only motor vehicle mass-produced in South Auckland, with 2,500 units built between 1966 and 1972?
4. Which New Zealand band released the hit song *Slice of Heaven* in 1986?
5. ...and it featured on the soundtrack for which classic New Zealand movie?
6. What is the name of the mischievous black cat who steals a number of neighbourhood items, in a book written by Lynley Dodd?
7. What is the name of the New Zealand documentary television series focusing on rural life in New Zealand, that first aired in 1966?
8. A notable series of TV commercials in the 1990s used the line "You'll always be a Kiwi if you love our _____. Fill in the blanks.
9. Complete the line from the New Zealand cereal advertising jingle: "Kiwi kids are ____ kids".
10. In which decade was lemon juice first added to water from a Paeroa spring to make the beverage L&P?
11. What is the name of the occasionally-produced McDonalds burger targeted specifically at New Zealand consumers?
12. Which kiwiana toy was a young Prince William photographed playing with in 1987, on a royal tour of New Zealand?
13. Which New Zealand yeast spread beginning with M has been manufactured in New Zealand since 1919?

Answers: 1. Jason Gunn; 2. Swinjaball; 3. Trekkie; 4. The Herbs (featuring Dave Dobbyn); 5. Footrot Flats; 6. Jason Gunn; 7. Country Calendar; 8. Wettie's Sauces; 9. Weet-bix; 10. Footrot Flats; 11. The Dog's Tail Tail; 12. Slushy Malamal; 13. Marmitte; 14. Chees and Dale; 15. Chees and Dale; 16. Buzzy Bee; 17. Country Calendar; 18. Goodnight Kiwi; 19. Harry Mader; 20. George Pele.



14. "Red band" gumboots are a brand produced by which New Zealand company?

15. What were the names of the two cartoon characters who sang about Chesdale Cheese in advertising from 1969?

16. Known as flip-flops in the UK and USA, and thongs in Australia, what do New Zealanders call this type of footwear?

17. What song by the Patea Māori Club topped the charts for four weeks in 1984, and re-entered the charts in 2009 and 2010?

18. What was the name of the animated short used to signify the end of nightly broadcasts on Television New Zealand channels from 1975 until 1994?

19. In the book series by Lynley Dodd, what was the name of the dog from Donaldson's Dairy?

20. What was the name of the New Zealand homegrown fast food outlet that specialised in pies and operated between 1977 and 1998?

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Our spacious villas provide you with plenty of warmth and light and garden patios to enjoy. There are a variety of layouts including 2 bedroom villas, and 2 bedrooms with a double garage. All residents enjoy the use of the Village Community Lodge and participation in all activities and amenities at your leisure.

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to view
by Appointment!**
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experience
the difference!



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DIRECT CREMATION requiring transfer from Whangamata, Tairua, Whitianga, Waihi, Paeroa, Ngatea and Coromandel: \$3470.00*
DIRECT CREMATION requiring transfer from North of Coromandel or Waikato Hospital: \$3580.00*
 Outside all of these areas: \$3225.00 plus mileage

For additional information please refer to Twentymans website: twentymans.co.nz CONTACT: 07 868 6003

* Additional mileage may apply, according to roading conditions. ** Plus Doctors Fee. The Doctors Fee for medical paperwork required for Direct Cremations is an additional charge. This fee ranges from \$45.00 to \$200.00, determined by the patient's Doctor.



Please advise your Vet of your wish to use Forever Pets Crematorium



Visit the website: foreverpets.co.nz for further information.

CONTACT: Forever Pets 07 868 6003.

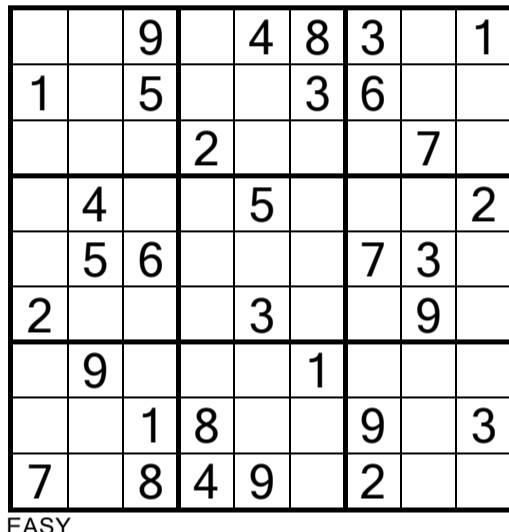
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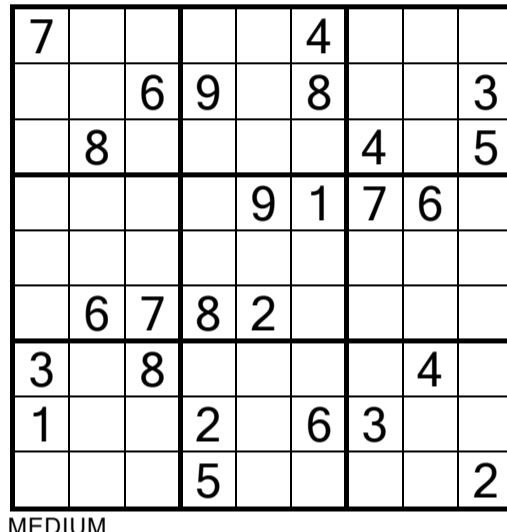
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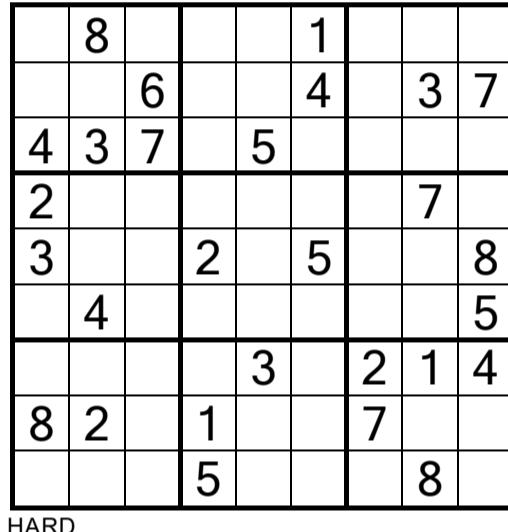
Fill the grid so every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9



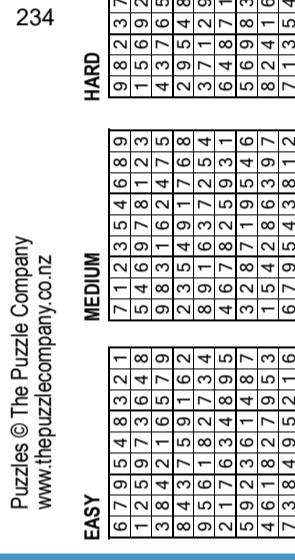
EASY



MEDIUM



HARD



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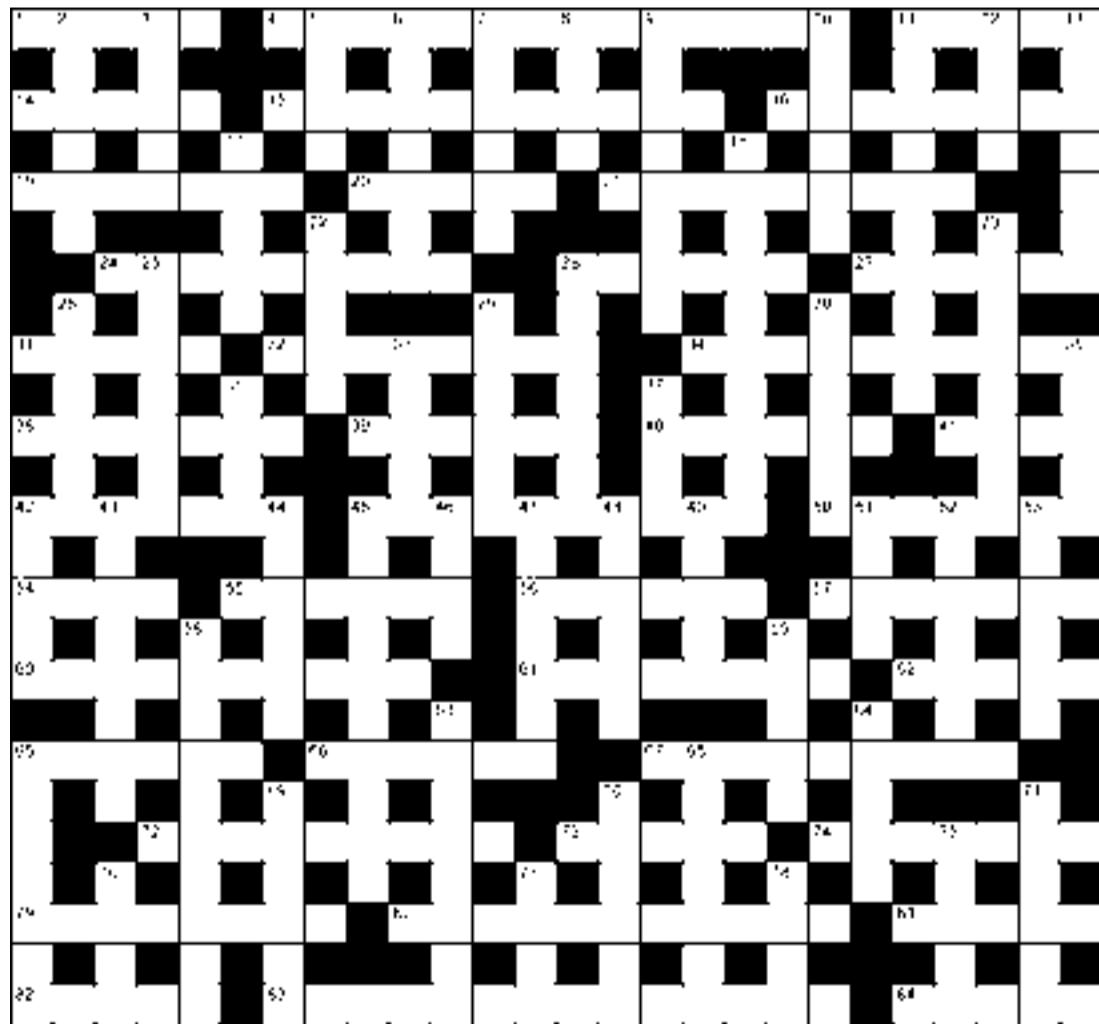
JUMBO CROSSWORD

254

ACROSS
 1 Bottomless pit (5)
 4 Kin member (3,2,3,6)
 11 Cove (5)
 14 Scandinavian goblin (5)
 15 Vulnerable to (11)
 16 Cold ants (anag)(8)
 19 Progress (7)
 20 Minister's house (5)
 21 Putting money into (9)
 24 In reverse (9)
 26 Petty details (6)
 27 Energy (6)
 31 Boredom (5)
 32 Verbal onslaught (8)
 34 Everlastingness (10)
 38 Mocked (7)
 39 Communicate silently (6)
 40 Removes grime (6)
 41 Skin growth (4)
 42 Suspended (7)
 45 Evaluation (10)
 50 Race official (7)
 54 Deafening (4)
 55 Small wave (6)
 56 Mountain chains (6)
 57 Aquatic plant (7)
 60 Firmly ingrained (4-6)
 61 Burnished (8)
 62 Counterfeit (5)
 65 Grip (6)
 66 Undresses (6)

DOWN
 2 Hair cutter (6)
 3 Cold dish (5)
 5 Common sense (4)
 6 Fruit farm (7)
 7 Keyboard operator (6)
 8 Heinous (4)
 9 An ocean (8)
 10 Sailboats (6)
 11 Aims (10)
 12 Go first (4)
 13 Small child (7)
 17 Slightly sticky (5)
 18 Withdrawal from position or occupation (10)
 22 Fundamental (5)
 23 Dejected (8)
 25 Droll (7)
 26 Latticework (7)
 28 Girl's name (6)
 29 Engaged man (6)
 30 Alters (6)
 33 Journeys (5)

67 Frothy cold drink (9)
 72 Put right (9)
 73 Around (5)
 74 Glossy coating (7)
 79 Lifted (8)
 80 Met halfway (11)
 81 Liberated (5)
 82 Chuckle (5)
 83 Change of resolve after considering again (6,8)
 84 Feel (5)
 35 Go in (5)
 36 Fronded plant (4)
 37 Spots (4)
 42 Perforated (5)
 43 Queasy (8)
 44 Stringed instrument (6)
 45 Trainee (10)
 46 Meat dish (4)
 47 Abrades (7)
 48 Old laundry appliance (6)
 49 Requirements (5)
 51 Layer (4)
 52 Oar rest (7)
 53 Come forth (6)
 58 Dangerous maniac (10)
 59 Type of lizard (5)
 63 Damaged or impaired by age (4-4)
 64 Cereal crop (5)
 65 Hide (7)
 68 Prickling (7)
 69 Sneaks (6)
 70 Hired male companion (6)
 71 Weigh (6)
 75 Courage (5)
 76 Meal list (4)
 77 Expectorate (4)
 78 Retained (4)



PREVIOUS SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Ample, 4 Sanskrit, 9 Walrus, 14 Drone, 15 Point the finger at, 17 Suave, 18 Get, 19 Isthmus, 20 Blistered, 21 Tutors, 24 Midwinter, 25 Absorb, 26 Pigsty, 29 Tenderness, 31 Tie, 32 Beggar, 33 Daze, 35 Nil, 37 Etna, 39 Outermost, 40 Meteorite, 41 Sushi, 42 Coventry, 47 Gratuity, 51 Adult, 55 Aggrieved, 56 Earthworm, 58 Urge, 59 Ell, 60 Seam, 61 Madrid, 62 Lei, 63 Disrespect, 66 Little, 67 Sniper, 69 Aggressor, 72 Visual, 73 Samaritan, 75 General, 77 Doe, 80 Erode, 81 Take in one's stride, 82 Never, 83 Snaked, 84 Daydream, 85 Learn.

DOWN: 2 Moonscape, 3 Lunch, 5 Axel, 6 Skillet, 7 Registration, 8 Terse, 9 Witness, 10 Last, 11 Uranus, 12 Songs, 13 Destiny, 14 Deposit, 16 Thunderbolt, 22 Silent, 23 Origami, 24 Mediate, 25 Agents, 27 Swahili, 28 Batter, 30 Sari, 32 Bliss, 34 Elegy, 36 Root, 38 Two, 42 Claps, 43 Vagrant, 44 Nail, 45 Reveal, 46 Ruled, 48 Aimlessness, 49 Usurper, 50 Tag, 51 Adoring, 52 Teller, 53 Irritability, 54 Shed, 57 Oyster, 64 Commander, 65 Cluster, 66 Leading, 68 Plaited, 70 Glamour, 71 Lagoon, 72 Verve, 74 Asked, 76 Eyrie, 78 Teak, 79 Feta.

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- Land clearing and reclamation
- Stump grinding - Scrub mulching
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'Embrace the game': Waihī Beach scavenger hunt set to kick off

Calling all mystery-solvers to Waihī Beach.

It's almost time for all the mystery-solvers to touch down in Waihī Beach.

That's because The Great Waihī Beach Scavenger Hunt is back this summer and is set to take place on January 24.

The event has been completely reimagined as a village-wide detective case that will challenge teams to use their brains, observation skills and teamwork to solve one big mystery: who stole \$1500 in cash?

But it won't be a traditional treasure hunt.

Teams will take on the task to work through a series of location riddles, evidence collection points and optional endeavors scattered throughout the village. Each clue will draw the mystery-solvers closer to cracking the case and earning a shot at the final beach dig for the cash.

Waihī Beach events coordinator Hollie Jones told The Profile it would be the first year of running the scavenger hunt in this format.

"I'll admit I'm feeling a little nervous. I've created the entire game myself, from the riddles and case files to the evidence."

The co-ordinator said she was able to draw on local knowledge and her own experiences of playing more in-depth detective-style games with friends.

"What I'm most looking forward to is seeing people really lean into it: puzzling things out together, debating theories, and having those aha! moments when it all starts to click.

"And of course, watching three teams walk away with a decent chunk of cash

won't hurt either."

The day will finish up with an exciting beach dig finale, where the top teams will battle it out for the cash prize, sponsored by Raine & Horne Waihī Beach, she said.

First place winners will snap up \$750, second place winners will walk away with \$500 and third place will take home \$250.

With more than 70 teams already signed up, it was shaping up to be the biggest and most interactive scavenger hunt Waihī Beach had seen yet, she said.

"The format is designed to be fun, clever, and a little bit challenging, encouraging participants to slow down, think things through, and piece the story together.

"While the game is primarily aimed at adults and teens, younger children are more than welcome to tag along helping with tasks, soaking up the atmosphere, and enjoying a great day out in the village," she said.

Hollie's message to participants is to "come along with an open mind".

"If you don't crack the case, it's absolutely not the end of the world.

"The riddles and tasks will help bump up your points, so everyone is in with a chance."

"Embrace the game, and most importantly, have fun. This isn't about taking things too seriously - dress up, get into character - I sure will be!"

DETAILS: RSVP before January 21 at 10am, search for the event on Eventbrite.co.nz to RSVP. The Great Waihī Beach Scavenger Hunt kicks off at 10am on January 24 at Waihī Beach Information Centre, 26 Wilson Road, Waihī Beach.

Pet Profile

Meet Lena – sweet, loving, and desperate for a home

Lena is a beautiful young female dog, just under two years old, who has been waiting far too long for her second chance.

Originally adopted as a puppy, a change in family circumstances has sadly brought her back to SPCA, where she is now a long-stay dog.

Shelter life is not suitable for Lena, and she is really struggling here.

Lena is clever, affectionate, and already knows her basic commands.

She loves playtime and adventures but also has a calm, gentle side and enjoys quiet moments with her favourite toy or people.

Her trusting nature and happy smile make her a wonderful companion.

Lena would be ideal for a trial adoption, allowing her to spend a few days in a home to see if she fits with the family before making a full commitment.

She is also suitable for full adoption or a foster home.

Fostering through SPCA is easy, with all costs covered - including food, bedding, and veterinary care - while you provide love and a safe place to land.

Lena is de-sexed, microchipped, vaccinated, and fully up to date with treatments.



Lena is now a long-stay dog waiting to be adopted.

Photo: SUPPLIED

DETAILS: Learn more about Lena here: www.spca.nz/adopt/animal/605513/dog-lena-thames.**- Supplied by SPCA Thames & Coromandel**

Wellbeing walking challenge launched

If more time in nature or increasing your exercise were among your New Year's resolutions, The Department of Conservation Hauraki has just what you need.

The Hauraki DOC team's new 'Walking into Happiness!' initiative encourages people to take up the challenge to walk a selection of tracks in the Kauaeranga Valley, which together add up to 23km – further than a half-marathon.

Community ranger Maree Limpus said summer was a wonderful time to get out "naturering in the great outdoors", and experience the calmness and clarity it could bring.

"Whether you're with friends or whānau, it's all about connecting with the whenua, with yourself, and with each other.

"Walking is a proven, simple and uplifting way to boost both your physical health and your mental wellbeing," she said.

"Connecting with nature enriches people's lives and gives an opportunity to understand and appreciate the natural and cultural heritage DOC protects for New Zealanders and visitors.

"Sometimes all we need is a little encouragement to get out and do something that can bring us joy and satisfaction – we hope this might provide the encouragement where needed.



DOC Hauraki's Walking into Happiness! challenge covers 23km of Kauaeranga Valley tracks, with maps available from the visitor centre. File Photo: SUPPLIED

"It also raises awareness of the local resources and opportunities available for our community and visitors."

Maree said one family of five from Levin, comprising two parents and three children camping in the valley for five days, completed the challenge last week.

The family reported back to Kat Quax in the DOC Hauraki team about how much they enjoyed themselves.

"After finishing the tracks

comprising the challenge, they told Kat they were buzzing, and loved it.

"It was terrific to have that feedback so immediately."

The tracks chosen for the Walk Into Happiness! initiative were all accessible within 20km of the centre of Thames, meaning the carbon footprint was low and cycling was an option, Maree said.

All tracks included in the initiative are managed by DOC, clearly defined and are suitable

for most ages.

A map is available at DOC's Kauaeranga Visitor Centre and walkers will find a motivational reminder placed at each of the selected tracks.

Entry to Walking into Happiness! is by gold coin donation, which can be paid to the visitor centre team.

All proceeds go towards conservation initiatives.

There are spot prizes for those who participate, including a family night in one of the

DOC cottages in the Kauaeranga Valley. People who complete all the walks comprising the half-marathon also receive a small reward recognising their achievement.

DETAILS: The Walk into Happiness! challenge is underway now and will run through the year. The first major spot prize will be drawn on the first day of winter: June 1. The Kauaeranga Visitor Centre is open daily between 8.30am and 4pm, and is a short drive from Thames.

CLASSIFIEDS - Deadline 4pm Friday (Auckland Anniversary weekend)

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Pick up a summer read at Paeroa book fair

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

The Paeroa Lion's Book Fair is back for a third year this Anniversary Weekend.

The popular annual fair sees the club selling thousands of donated books to raise funds for the community.

Paeroa Lions President Wei Zhang said club members have been hard at work for weeks, in preparation for the event.

Collection of book donations ended on January 18, and members are now sorting, stacking, and pricing the items.

This year they've also had some extra help, from the Paeroa Rugby Club and the Hauraki Tigers.

"Most of the Lions are in their 70s and 80s, so it's pretty exhausting for them to move those heavy boxes of books. So this year we have actually teamed up with Paeroa Rugby Club and the Hauraki Tigers - they've got the muscles," Wei said.

"[And they] are going to help us during the book fair as well. We will have fewer Lions [available] because the Paeroa Lions will be at Wings and Wheels with their food caravan.

"So it's a win-win situation because it makes it easier for the Lions, and then also we can contribute funds to the local teams."



Last year's Lions Book Fair had more than 25,000 books for sale.

File Photo: SUPPLIED

The Lions have raised around \$15,000 from the past two book fairs.

Some of the proceeds were donated to the Lions Cancer Lodge in Hamilton, with the rest providing free stationery packs for every new entrant student in the Paeroa region.

"It's about a hundred kids - every year one student enrolled in the eight primary schools around Paeroa: Millers Ave, Netherton, Hikutaia, Paeroa Central, Paeroa Christian School, St Josephs, Tirohia, and then Karangahake," Wei said.

The club plans to do the same with the funds raised from this year's fair, as well as donating to their assisting sports clubs.

"I want to thank the community for their support in the last couple of years. Without their support we can't raise so much money and give back to the

community," Wei said. "That's much appreciated."

DETAILS: Paeroa Lions Book Fair, January 25 from 9am-5pm and January 26 from 9am-3pm at the Paeroa War Memorial Hall.



Award-winning writers to be showcased at challenge

The 10th annual Harcourts Art Challenge is on this weekend at the Memorial Hall in Whangamata.

With a record number of entries this year in all genres, the award night this Friday is set to be well-attended with strong ticket sales.

This year, to celebrate the growing number of writers on the Coromandel, the organising committee arranged for an Authors Table.

Included on the table is recent King's Birthday Honours recipient, Dawn McMillian, with two of her children's books, *Easter Bunny Needs a New Bum* and

There's a Crab in my Castle.

Also on the table is community councilor Neil Evans, historian Jonathan Peet with his top selling book *Wairata*, and Coromandel entertainer Glen Carley, with his book *One Good Love*. There is still room for more authors on the table, contact artscollectivewhanga@gmail.com

DETAILS: The Harcourts Art Challenge awards night held this Friday, January 23, at the Memorial Hall, Whangamata. Tickets \$25 at the Information Centre. The Big Arts Day Out will also be on from 10am to 4pm Saturday and Sunday. More info at: www.artcollective.co.nz/whats-happening.

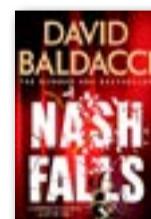
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Nash Falls, by David Baldacci

The first episode of a pulse-pounding new series from international bestselling author David Baldacci. Walter Nash is a mild-mannered, happy and successful businessman with a loving family. He has never lifted a weight or fired a gun in anger, and he has no special physical or investigatory skills. The dark world is not a place he knows – until the FBI comes calling on the very day of his estranged Vietnam veteran father's funeral. They tell him the company he works for is actually a criminal organization and they need his help. In doing so, Nash's perfect world is destroyed. And in seeking justice and revenge, Nash must become someone else: a man of violence and physicality who must find traction and purpose in the same dark world that invaded and crushed everything near and dear to him. Can Walter Nash reinvent himself into a weapon of righteousness and justice? The odds are not with him. But bet against Walter Nash at your peril. Killer twists!



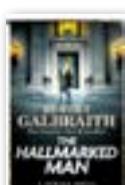
Sharp Force, by Patricia Cornwell

Patricia Cornwell delivers another tense Scarpetta thriller perfect for those who enjoy edge of the seat entertainment. During the early hours of Christmas morning, chief medical examiner Dr Kay Scarpetta receives a chilling call. The Phantom Slasher has struck again. The serial killer has terrorized Northern Virginia for months. His pattern is to stalk with a sophisticated technology that enables him to invade his victims' homes and watch their every move. They wake up to a ghost-like hologram before being murdered in their beds. Scarpetta is summoned to Mercy Island, the site of a notorious psychiatric hospital where two people have been brutalized, one of them from Scarpetta's past. It soon becomes apparent that she could be next.



The Hallmarked Man: Cormoran Strike #8, by Robert Galbraith (J.K. Rowling)

The brand new instalment in the highly acclaimed bestselling Cormoran Strike series. A dismembered corpse is discovered in the vault of a silver shop. The police initially believe it to be that of a convicted armed robber – but not everyone agrees with that theory. One of them is Decima Mullins, who calls on the help of private detective Cormoran Strike as she's certain the body in the silver vault was that of her boyfriend – the father of her newborn baby – who suddenly and mysteriously disappeared. The more Strike and his business partner Robin Ellacott delve into the case, the more labyrinthine it gets. The silver shop is no ordinary one: it's located beside Freemasons' Hall and specialises in Masonic silverware. And in addition to the armed robber and Decima's boyfriend, it becomes clear there are other missing men who could fit the profile of the body in the vault. A gripping, wonderfully complex novel which takes Strike and Robin's story to a new level, *The Hallmarked Man* is an unmissable read for any fan of this unique series.



A new mural is now greeting visitors to Kōpū boat ramp. Designed by Ngāti Maru artist Rick Fisher, the mural is on the new visitors toilet. The toilet, funded by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment Tourism Infrastructure Fund, has been connected to town supply water and wastewater system.

Photo: SUPPLIED/TCDC

SPORTS

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Tamahau shines with help from track star

ATHLETICS

By KELLEY TANTAU

In the days after the annual Colgate Games, Tamahau Hicks had been catching the eye of fellow runners and athletic fans across the country.

News coverage, social media attention, and a wave of supporters followed a memorable moment at the Tauranga event for the 12-year-old visually impaired runner from Waikino, when rising track star Sam Ruthe stepped in at the last minute to guide him in the 1500m race.

Tamahau, who suffered a traumatic brain injury as a toddler, has limited vision and spatial awareness, meaning he relies on a guide to navigate the track safely during races.

When his regular guide had to pull out of this month's Colgate Games just before the race, it looked as though the young athlete might have to withdraw.

Tamahau thought: "Oh no, I'm going to have to scratch because there were too many people in my heat," he told *The Profile*. "I felt very disappointed because I had been [training] for months and months for the Colgate Games."

Tamahau's mum, Emily Kay, quickly tried to find a solution.

She put a post on a running page on Facebook where it was seen by Andrea Neal from Tauranga Athletics.

Initially, an official was arranged to guide Tamahau, but

Waikino runner Tamahau Hicks on the podium with rising track star Sam Ruthe, who guided Tamahau in the 1500m race at the recent Colgate Games, right.

Photos: SUPPLIED



just half an hour before the race, another unexpected development occurred.

Sam Ruthe, one of New Zealand's fastest rising track stars, stepped in to help. Sam made headlines last year when, at just 15, he became the youngest New Zealander to break the four-minute mile. Since turning 16, he has broken long-standing secondary school records and set new national U19 and U20 marks.

Sam also broke his own New Zealand junior 800m record at the Potts Classic in Hastings last week, winning in 1:45.86 ahead of Olympian Sam Tanner and climbing to seventh on New Zealand's all-time 800m list.

Tamahau said a good guide was "someone who is chill, talks clearly, has a plan before we run, and is good at keeping pace" - something Sam was "perfect" at.

Mum Emily agreed.

"We look for guides who are good at communication and are reliable."

And despite being used to attention from his presence helping with the local food delivery charity The Neighbourhood Project, and in the running community, Tamahau admitted it was a bit "weird" seeing his face and videos of him all over social media after the Colgate Games.

His social media page - Bokeh



Runner NZ - also saw a spike in followers.

But he may yet see the interest around him continue, as he aims to build on an already impressive track record.

His top achievements since taking up running in late-2022 included winning cross country at the AIMS Games, coming third in the Under 14s in the Taupo Marathon 10km, and winning the Auckland Half Marathon Series in the Under 13s.

He was also named Youth Athlete of the Year at last year's Achilles International NZ Sports Awards.

"When I turn 13 at the end of the year I can start breaking para records," he said. "I'm training to break the U17 10km road running record as soon as I'm eligible. I also really want to do the New York Marathon, but I can't until I turn 18."

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