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Back on track



Staff, students and volunteers clamber aboard Thomas the Tank Engine as Moanataiari School welcomes its trusty engine back to the playground. Photo: ALICE PARMINTER

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

A beloved and well-missed figure has been formally welcomed back to Moanataiari School after years of deterioration. May 7 saw the children of Moanataiari School come together for a ceremony celebrating their beloved Thomas the Tank Engine's restoration and return to the playground.

Work began in November, 2023, to repair the former TR-24 shunter engine, which had sunk into the ground and rusted away until it was too unsafe to play on.

At the ceremony, Thames Rotary president Ella Lawrence detailed the hours of work put into the restoration by businesses and volunteers.

"We didn't know how rusty Thomas was. We have spent so much time getting rid of the rust, and we have some new panels on the back here that weren't there before," she said.

"Rotary couldn't do this by ourselves - we needed a lot of help from the community."

That help came from all over. Kōpū Engineering donated sheets of steel to repair the cab; Metal Recoveries donated the rails the

unit now sits on; school parent Luke Durlup sourced, welded and bent the steel with the aid of machinery from A&G Price. The train was moved by Thames Valley Hiabs, and STM Roofing and Scaffolding donated security fencing.

The restoration itself was mostly carried out by Rotarian and former engineer Peter Vale.

"Peter did most of the metal work that you see on Thomas. He has spent days and days here, cutting out rusty metal and putting fresh metal back," Ella said.

The donations meant the restoration,

which took nearly two years, only cost around \$5500. Most of the funds were raised by the school PTA.

Principal David Brock said he was thrilled with Thomas' new look.

"It looked like we didn't have any choice but to get rid of Thomas. And we didn't want to do that because Thomas has been such a special feature of our school. In fact, we've had children enrol at our school because of Thomas," he said.

"We're really grateful to Rotary for the work they've done... [Thomas] is something

CONTINUED ON P2

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Budget boost to improve after-hours healthcare

Access to urgent and after-hours healthcare is being strengthened across the Coromandel electorate – from Thames to Pauanui, Paeroa, and Colville – as part of Budget 2025, Coromandel MP Scott Simpson says.

It will invest \$164 million over four years to expand services throughout the country, including a new “weekend service” for Thames, as well as upgraded services for Colville, Paeroa, and Pauanui, he said.

“Our electorate includes a wide mix of small towns, rural communities, and isolated coastal settlements – and every one of them deserves access to timely, quality healthcare,” he said.

“Budget 2025 invests \$164 million over four years to expand urgent and after-hours services across the country.

“That includes a new weekend service for Thames, as well as upgraded services for Colville, Paeroa, and Pauanui – making it easier for locals to get care without long waits or long travel times.”

Colville, Pauanui and Paeroa were three of up to 70 rural and remote communities nationwide identified for service improvements – including 24/7 on-call clinical support, better access to tests and checks, and urgent medicines, he said.

A new 24/7 urgent care service has also

been identified for Tauranga, along with an extended after-hours service including new weekend hours.

“This will make it easier for communities in the Western Bay of Plenty, like Katikati and Ōmokoroa, to access care during evenings and weekends, while also reducing pressure on hospital emergency departments,” he said.

“These improvements will make a real difference for families, health providers, and emergency services across the peninsula – especially in places where getting care often means crossing steep terrain or travelling significant distances.”

The rollout will take place over the next two years, alongside continued support for existing providers and a more sustainable model for rural healthcare delivery, Mr Simpson said. “This National-led government is investing more in health than ever before – with a record \$16.68 billion across three Budgets. This investment is about putting patients first by strengthening healthcare services nationwide, to meet local needs and reduce wait times.

“This is a major step toward a healthcare system that works for everyone, ensuring all New Zealanders – including those in Coromandel – have access to timely, quality urgent care, no matter where they live.”

Thomas back on track

CONTINUED FROM P1

quite special and unique. And it’s much better served in a playground than in a museum.”

Also present at the ceremony was Ann Ridley, the school’s neighbour and former school committee secretary.

Having initiated Thomas’ installation as a playground fixture back in the 1970s, Ann said she was delighted to see the train looking like new once more.

“When I first set eyes on that, it was on a turntable at A&G Price, and I thought, what a rusty mess, but I know where it would be nice,” she said.

“And then it was here [at the school] for quite a long, long time... it rusted away to just about nothing. And I thought, my goodness, it’s a hazard now. Maybe New Zealand Rail should come and take it away. But these good people got stuck in.”

As for Peter Vale, the best part about the whole project has been seeing the kids’ excitement.

“It’s the inspiration the kids gave us, you know, they brought it back to life, really.”



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Thames Tides

Wed May 21	Thu May 22	Fri May 23	Sat May 24	Sun May 25	Mon May 26	Tue May 27
 Morning: 1:01am 3.1, 7:12am 0.8 Afternoon: 1:17pm 3.0, 7:27pm 0.9 Sun: 7:14am 5:14pm Fish: Best At 6:47am 7:11pm Moon: Last Quarter, Set 1:31pm	 Morning: 1:55am 3.2, 8:07am 0.8 Afternoon: 2:14pm 3.1, 8:30pm 0.9 Sun: 7:15am 5:14pm Fish: Best At 7:35am 7:58pm Moon: Rise 1:01am, Set 1:58pm	 Morning: 2:51am 3.3, 9:04am 0.7 Afternoon: 3:15pm 3.2, 9:34pm 0.8 Sun: 7:16am 5:13pm Fish: Best At 8:22am 8:47pm Moon: Rise 2:11am, Set 2:24pm	 Morning: 3:47am 3.3, 10:02am 0.6 Afternoon: 4:19pm 3.3, 10:35pm 0.7 Sun: 7:17am 5:13pm Fish: Best At 9:12am 9:37pm Moon: Rise 3:22am, Set 2:52pm	 Morning: 4:44am 3.4, 11:01am 0.4 Afternoon: 5:21pm 3.4, 11:32pm 0.5 Sun: 7:17am 5:12pm Fish: Best At 10:04am 10:32pm Moon: Rise 4:37am, Set 3:23pm	 Morning: 5:41am 3.5, 11:58am 0.3 Afternoon: 6:19pm 3.6 Sun: 7:18am 5:12pm Fish: Best At 11:01am 11:32pm Moon: Rise 5:55am, Set 4:01pm	 Morning: 12:26am 0.4, 6:38am 3.5 Afternoon: 12:53pm 0.2, 7:14pm 3.7 Sun: 7:19am 5:11pm Fish: Best At 12:03pm Moon: New Moon, Rise 7:15am, Set 4:47pm

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

MOON AND FISH KEYS

New Moon
 First Quarter
 Full Moon
 Last Quarter

Good Fishing
 Fair Fishing
 Not So Good

TIME DIFFERENCES FOR OTHER PLACES
To determine tide times at the following places, add (+) or subtract (-) the given time difference from the Thames times listed in the calendar.

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

'Unnecessary' damage at community hub

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

The entrance to the Morgan Park Hub Building in Waihi was left covered in shattered glass after an act of vandalism in the early hours of May 12.

Tennis players arrived at the community sports building on Monday morning to find glass spread across the entrance, and two large concrete paving stones resting on the floor.

A spokesperson for Sport'n'Action Waihi said the attack was "unnecessary", and disappointing for the many sports groups and volunteers who used the hub.

"Oh, it's just wasteful... Their time could be spent doing other community projects," they said.

Cameras on the property show the incident occurred at 4.37am, but only caught the offender's hand.

"They're aware of the [camera] placement. I'm guessing they've cased it out or even been in there during the day.

"It's a very strong person, because they're thrown from a side angle, and it's like a brick paver. It's like a concrete paver. So it's very heavy, and it's possibly just been thrown with one hand with force."

A wooden trophy case just inside the doors escaped damage - there were scrapes on the



Glass doors at the sports hub building in Morgan Park in Waihi were shattered by vandals on May 12.



Photos: SUPPLIED

front of the case where a paver had rebounded before coming to a stop on the floor in front of it.

The offenders did not enter the building, or take anything from the premises.

Police have labelled the incident "wilful damage".

"At this time, Police have exhausted all lines of enquiry and

the matter has been filed.

"However, should any new information come to light, Police are open to reassessing the matter," a Police spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, Sport'n'Action Waihi would now be looking into a viable replacement for the glass.

"We've just got two screens

in there at the moment and we need to work out going forward if it will be replaced with glass or left as a harder screen - it's not very appealing looking at it the way it is [now]," the spokesperson said.

"We just want to thank Sue Adams Glass. She came to our rescue and cleared it out and secured the doors so we were

able to use it straight away - the building wasn't closed at all."

And the last word went to the tennis club, she said.

"They just said if a person could join tennis with that sort of power, it would be great rather than focusing on damage."



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Kaihere celebrates

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

Students, staff and families of Kaihere School gathered together on April 11 to celebrate the Sri Lankan New Year, which is observed on April 14.

Principal Ngaire Harris told *The Profile* it was an important celebration as there was a number of Sri Lankan families within the school community.

“The best part of the day was seeing our kids have such a good

time while appreciating another culture,” she said.

“We have children from different parts of the globe at Kaihere School and learning to appreciate our diverse stories is really important for children to experience.”

Parents planned traditional games, explained aspects of their culture and finished off the event with a gift for each child and shared food.



Traditional start to the new year celebrations - the boiling of milk over a fire.

Photos: SUPPLIED



The Sri Lankan families of Kaihere School join the celebrations.



A big game of tug of war.



Students enjoy a Sri Lankan meal.



Sri Lankan students in their traditional dress.



Students join the balloon competition.

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REALITY

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Coastal request to be raised

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

It'll be a delicate dance, but "dance we must" says Thames-Coromandel District Council as it prepares to broach a touchy subject with its regional counterparts to see if elements of Thames' coastal protection be incorporated into the Waihou Valley flood protection scheme.

The scheme, alongside the neighbouring Piako River scheme, includes 357km of stopbanks and floodwalls, 139 floodgates, and 52 pump stations which help protect Te Aroha, Paeroa, Thames, Ngātea, Turua and Kōpū from significant weather events.

But following the initiation of the Thames Protection and Resilience project, the project team considered whether the town's coastal protection efforts could be incorporated within the Waihou scheme, a step that could help clear up historically muddied waters.

At council's May 13 meeting, staff asked how best to broach the subject with Waikato Regional Council: with a softer approach, or with an outright question. "You know, this is a big subject," Cr John Grant said.

"It's the iceberg that sits with all the mass underneath the water. And in this particular case here, I feel very uncomfortable

as a councillor without clarity, without 100 per cent clarity, about who ultimately takes responsibility. And the longer we play, and the longer we dance, the more uncertainty we create for the area.

"We've seen cases of this in the recent [Cyclone] Gabrielle situation, where there was crossover between various entities, and it wasn't clear exactly who was responsible for [what]," he said.

"So my view is absolutely we should do it with diplomacy, but we should absolutely do it with a mind of getting an outcome and a clear view..."

"I know that I'm sort of saying that we need to have a perfect scenario in a situation where you're unlikely to ever get one, but I think it does deserve clarity around exactly where the costs lie."

Elected members voted to make a formal request to Waikato Regional Council to commence discussion on including elements of Thames' coastal protection into the Waihou Valley flood protection scheme.

They also asked Mayor Len Salt to write to the regional council chair to reinforce TCDC's commitment to the provision of information and support ongoing collaboration.



Kolitha, known as Koli, is bringing his wealth of experience from ensembles such as the Orpheus Choir of Wellington and the New Zealand Opera Chorus. Photo: SUPPLIED

New conductor for community choir

St George's Community Choir is embarking on a new chapter with the arrival of conductor Kolitha Jayatunge.

Kolitha, known as Koli, is bringing his wealth of experience from ensembles such as the Orpheus Choir of Wellington and the New Zealand Opera Chorus.

Currently serving as the Musical Director of Cantando Choir and the newly established Waikato Youth Choir, Koli completed his Post-Graduate Diploma in Music with Distinction at the University of Waikato under the guidance of Dame Malvina Major.

"With a lifelong passion for choir singing, I find deep joy not

only in blending voices in harmony but also in guiding others to do the same," he said.

St George's Community Choir committee member Sally Muir said the choir was "eagerly preparing" for its latest endeavour: *A Festival of Fauré*, featuring more than 50 voices and a talented instrumental ensemble.

"This musical journey promises captivating performances at St George's Church in the first weekend of August, inviting the community to experience the power of collective music-making," she said.

In anticipation of their upcoming performances, the choir is inviting all music enthusiasts to a special Choral Singing

Workshop on Saturday, May 24.

"Led by Gina Sanders, a distinguished soprano soloist and teaching fellow at the School of Music, University of Waikato, the workshop offers participants a unique opportunity to refine their choral skills," Sally said.

"From breathing techniques to sound formation, this workshop promises to enrich and inspire singers of all ages and abilities."

DETAILS: Choral Singing Workshop, May 24, from 10am-2.30pm, at St George's Church Hall, Mackay St, Thames. Registration: 9:30am, \$25 Adults, \$15 high school students and St George's Choir members (cash only).

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ENTERTAINMENT

Plans afoot for Waihi Lions' annual book fair

The team behind the annual Waihi Lions Book Fair is again preparing to welcome bookworms to the town's memorial hall this King's Birthday weekend.

The annual book fair is one of the Lions club's major fundraising events, with all funds being donated to the community.

Event co-ordinator Doug Longdill said recent years had seen significant donations made to the Lions Cancer Lodge in Hamilton and the purchase of special chairs for the folk at Hetherington House in Waihi.

He said the club's long history with the fair had been "a real asset".

"Over the years, we have developed a good understanding of what works best for our customers. We receive great feedback regarding not only the range of books we have on offer, but also for the way we layout the books and puzzles.

"This makes it so much more convenient for those customers who know what authors they want to follow, or what subjects they are interested in."

The fair was also a positive event from a club perspective, he said, as

all club members could contribute toward its success in some shape or form.

"As in past years, we greatly appreciate the effort and help we receive in the setting up process from our Waihi Leos from Waihi College," he said.

DETAILS: Waihi Lions Book Fair, Waihi Memorial Hall, May 31 from 9am to 4pm, June 1 from 10am to 4 pm. Books will cost \$2 each unless marked otherwise. An Early Purchase Night will be held on Friday, May 30 from 5pm to 7pm, with books \$5 each unless priced otherwise.



The annual book fair is one of the Lions club's major fundraising events, with all funds being donated to the community. Photo: SUPPLIED

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Bob Trevino Likes It (101 mins) M. After searching for her estranged father online, a people-pleasing young woman unexpectedly forms a close bond with a grieving, childless man with the same name as her father on Facebook. Inspired by a true story.
The Salt Path (115 mins) M. Based on the best-selling book. A couple embark on a year-long trek along the coast of Cornwall after losing their home and later discovering the husband has been diagnosed with a terminal illness. An honest and life-affirming true story of the healing power of the natural world.
One Life (108 mins) PG. Tells the inspiring true story of Sir Nicholas Winton, whose unsung endeavours on the eve of World War II saved more than 600 children from their doom at the hands of the Nazis.
Tinā (125 mins) M. Story of a Samoan teacher, who struggling after the death of her daughter in the Christchurch earthquakes, reluctantly takes on the role of substitute teacher at a wealthy private school.
The Tavern (101 mins) R16. Comedy. Followed by Director (Matt Hicks) Q&A on Wednesday 28th at 7pm. The Tavern is about five small town guys racing against time to save their beloved pub in rural Waikato from an evil Auckland property developer with sinister plans. Matt was Producer for Home Kills last year.

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 Sunday 8th June, 2pm
 Andrew Atkins and Catrin Morris (Piano and Cello)
 Sunday 13th July, 2pm
 Lisa Lorrell and Claire Caldwell (Voice and Piano)
 Sunday 10th August, 2pm
 Venue: St George's Anglican Church, door sales only.
 www.thamesmusicgroup.com

Thames Valley Club Rugby

Premier Men - R8 - May 24th

	The Lyons Den, Whitianga 2pm Kick Off
	Waitakaruru INTL Stadium 2pm Kick Off
	Rhodes Park, Thames 2pm Kick Off
	Boyd Park, Waihou 2pm Kick Off

SENIOR B - Championship Round 1 - May 24th

	Boyd Park, Te Aroha 12.25pm Kick Off
	The Lyons Den, Whitianga 12.25pm Kick Off
	Cory Park Domain Tairua 2.00pm Kick Off

SENIOR C - Championship Round 1 - May 24th

	Hayward Domain, Ngatea 12.25pm Kick Off
	The Boom Pit, Whangamata 12.25pm Kick Off
	BYE

Womens' Competition - Round 3 May 25th

	Hayward Domain, Ngatea 1pm Kick Off
	Waitakaruru INTL Stadium 1pm Kick Off
	Boyd Park, Te Aroha 1pm Kick Off

Please note there is no club rugby, mens or womens, on Kings Birthday Weekend

Tairua painter returns for Art Expo

Tairua intuitive artist Jessie Macaw will be one of the local talents whose work will be on display at the Whitianga Lions' annual Art Expo this King's Birthday weekend.

Jessie exhibited in her first Mercury Bay Art Escape around 18 months ago, and with the encouragement of Whitianga Art Gallery owner and fellow artist Monique Rush, she began selling her paintings.

However, Jessie admitted she once was a closet artist, painting regularly for pleasure and then putting her completed works in a cupboard.

But at last year's Whitianga Lions Art Expo, she sold several of her works and this year, has agreed to be one of the event's Artists in Show.

"People find intuitive painting quite stimulating. It's completely imaginary and every time you look at what you're painting there's something new," she said.

"This is a style that anyone can do, everyone can paint. You just have to find your style and not compare yourself to other artists."

The Art Expo committee said the Artists in Show portion of the event was where visitors could watch ceram-

ics, glasswork, and paintings unfold as the artists' work on their pieces.

Secondary schools on the Coromandel have expressed lots of interest in the Secondary Schools Art Competition, which this year we've divided into two categories: photography and visual art. The first place winner in the photography category will receive mentorships with Ian Preece covering astrophotography, and Peter Drury focusing on wildlife photography.

The winner in the visual art category will spend time being mentored by Kay De Baauw and Souzie Speerstra.

"All of these artists have a wealth of knowledge and skills to share, and aim to encourage the winners to continue on their learning path."

The public is invited to opening night on May 30, from 5.30pm to 8pm, where the winners of the Secondary Schools Art Expo will be announced.

The rest of the Whitianga Lions Art Expo will continue on through Saturday and Sunday, May 31 and June 1, from 10am-4pm; and Monday, June 2, 10am-12pm. Entry is free and all money raised over King's Birthday Weekend is going to the Cancer Society Lions Lodge in Hamilton.



Tairua intuitive artist Jessie Macaw is part of the Whitianga Lions' annual Art Expo this year. Photo: SUPPLIED

Hard life in Marototo bush leads to tragic death



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

Eighty-five-year-old Allen Miller had lived in a shack in the Marototo bush for many years, where he took very little care of himself and lived an impoverished life.

When he was able, he did a little gum digging and he also received the old-age pension.

It was not much, but better than the days when those over 65 were expected to provide for themselves or be supported by their families.

Grudging assistance could be had from Charitable Aid Boards who managed food rations, hospital treatment and medicine.

The pension, introduced in 1898, was funded from general taxation and paid in monthly instalments beginning the first day of each month.

With his pension due on Wednesday 1 November, 1922, Allen intended to walk to Hikutaia to collect it.

On the way he was picked up and given a lift by Joseph Martin, a Hikutaia farmer. Allen



A bush shanty in the Coromandel district.

Photo: SUPPLIED

spent about two hours at Hikutaia and then set out for his home on foot.

He was again picked up by Joseph who drove him as far as the Martin's gate. Allen tried to walk the rest of the distance to his shack but was found sitting on the roadside by Reginald Dickson, who had come out from Allen's bush camp to meet him.

Reginald encouraged Allen to get up and walk home, but Allen only shook his head. Reginald reluctantly returned alone, leaving Allen where he found him.

After a night of anxiety, at

about 5am, Reginald again walked out to Allen, and found him still sitting in the same place. He looked exhausted and emaciated.

Joseph Martin was immediately informed, and he took Allen at once to the Hikutaia train station to send him to Thames Hospital, but while waiting for the train Allen died at the station. His body was taken to the Hikutaia's Pioneer Hotel, and an inquest held the next morning.

Dr Little of Paeroa said he had found signs of old pleurisy, slight brain congestion and weak heart muscles. In his

opinion, death was caused by heart failure, due to old age accelerated by exposure.

Allen was buried at midday the following day at Paeroa's Pukerimu cemetery.

His had been a hard life where even trying to take care of yourself could be fatal – in February, 1913, John Paddy, 42, a bush contractor, had been found dead in his shanty in the Marototo bush.

He had been disinfecting it with cyanide of potassium, the fumes of which suffocated and killed him.

John was buried at Omaha cemetery.

Chris' Quiz

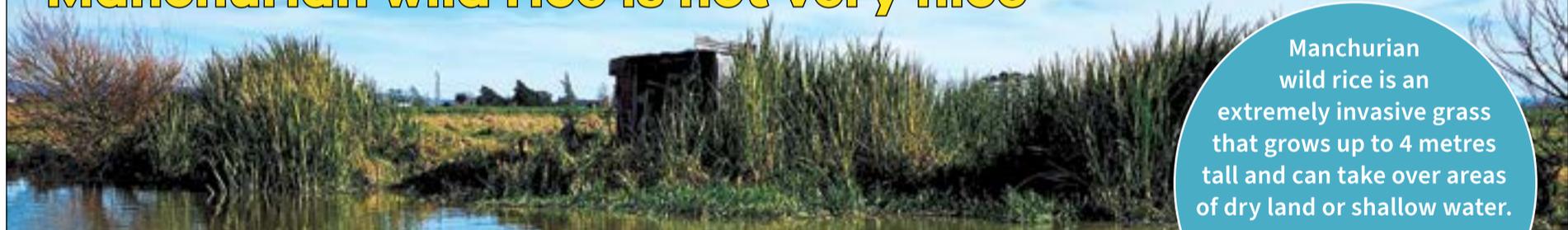
Weekly quiz compiled by Chris Parmenter

1. Earlier in May it was announced that a newborn baby featured in the 1992 pilot episode of which New Zealand drama series would be returning to play a nurse in an upcoming episode?
2. Pope Leo XIV, appointed on May 8, 2025, was born in which country?
3. Which nation has the highest mountain: Australia or New Zealand?
4. The term 'score' in numerical terms refers to what quantity?
5. In Australia, which tradition is associated with election day? a) Coffee drinking, b) mountain climbing, or c) sausage sizzles?
6. The game known as Keepie Uppie or Keepy Uppy involves keeping which object in the air as long as possible using any body surface?
7. Which band formed in 1977, but had to wait until the year 2000 for their first top 10 song with *Who let the dogs out*?
8. Which A-League football team had the longest unbeaten streak in the 2025 season? a) Auckland FC, b) Sydney FC, or c) Wellington Phoenix?
9. Which of these is the name of a Pokémon from the first generation of Pokémon released? a) Slowbro, b) Slowdude, or c) Snuzzle?
10. About two thirds of the observable galaxies spin in which direction? Clockwise or Anticlockwise?

ANSWERS: 1. *Shortland Street*; 2. The United States of America, though he is also a naturalized citizen of Peru; 3. New Zealand; 4. 20; 5. a) Sausage sizzles; 6. A ball or balloon; 7. The Bathmen; 8. a) Auckland FC; 9. a) Slowbro; 10. Clockwise.

Duckshooters beware

Manchurian wild rice is not very nice



Manchurian wild rice is an extremely invasive grass that grows up to 4 metres tall and can take over areas of dry land or shallow water.

Manchurian wild rice may be planted by people who mistake it for native raupō and as a result is commonly found around duck shooting mai-mai. Please beware, Manchurian wild rice destroys native plant, fish and waterfowl habitats. Do not move or plant Manchurian wild rice around your mai-mai.

Know your raupō from Manchurian wild rice



Raupō is slightly smaller, has blue-greenish leaves with no midrib and dies back in winter.

Raupō has distinctive velvety chocolate brown seedheads.



Manchurian wild rice leaves are dull grey-green, pointed and erect, with stout midribs, and stay green year round.

Manchurian wild rice has flowers that are purplish or red-brown and approximately 40-60 centimetres long, seen between November and December.

Why is it a pest?

Manchurian wild rice (*Zizania latifolia*), a rhizomatous giant grass, forms dense invasive stands, displacing native species. It can be found on riverbanks, tidal flats, roadsides, lagoons, ditches and damp pasture blocks.

In the Waikato region, it has been found along the riparian areas of the Waihou River near Turua and the Piako River near Ngātea, and as outlier patches in farm gullies around Cambridge. Manchurian wild rice can tolerate both fresh and salt water. It spreads by seeds dispersed by water and wind and by the movement of rhizome fragments.

If you see Manchurian wild rice, please report it to the Ministry of Primary Industries' pests and diseases hotline. Phone 0800 80 99 66.





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ENTERTAINMENT

Rockin' out at the Civic with Thames MAD musical

REVIEW

School of Rock

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

The Thames Civic Centre was rocking out on May 17, as Thames Music and Drama took the stage for the opening night of its rock musical *School of Rock*.

Set in a prestigious fictional school called Horace Green, the musical follows the story of Dewey Finn, a down-and-out rock guitarist. Dewey is strapped for cash and lies his way into a substitute teaching position - where he turns order on its head, bonds with his students through music, and finds new purpose in life.

The slacker-turned-educator was played by Ruth Germon, and she brought an excitable charm to the role. It's a tough task to keep up the rock-star energy for two full hours, but Ruth's Dewey didn't lose pace as she belted out number after number. Initially loud and brash, she let Dewey's softer side shine through almost immediately as the character brought each student out of their shell, finding that spark of talent within each and helping them shine.

And boy, did they shine! *School of Rock* might be about Dewey, but the show's appeal lies in the youthful, energetic, and talented children's ensemble. Thames Music and Drama has done a fantastic job here



Ruth Germon as Dewey.

with their classroom casting.

Each student's personality was on-point, from Billy the wannabe-fashionista to Summer the strait-laced, bossy teacher's pet. Tomika, played by Lena Rumble, was a particularly high point of the show, busting out some impressive vocals at the beginning of the second act.

But it was the band members - bassist Cody, played by Elijah Lester; drummer Freddy Hamilton, played by Alzora Taylor; keyboardist Lauren, played by Chloe Bergersen; and lead guitarist Zack Mooneyham, played by Sophia Haakma - who really stole the show.

The quartet played their instruments live throughout the show, and pulled off some impressive vocals to boot. As Dewey's new bandmates, their final performance at the Battle of the Bands was fun, energetic, and wouldn't have been out of place at a real rock concert.

The cast was rounded out by



It was the talented students who really stole the show.

Photos: SUPPLIED

a bevy of adults, who played the parents, teachers, and Dewey's roommates. These roles were solidly in the "supporting role" category, and through no fault of their own, the adult-centric scenes at the beginning of the show felt a little staid - their portions of the plot serving mainly to establish backstory and push Dewey and the students together. However, it gave the rebellious band something to push back against, and provided a nice

counterpoint to the chaotic and over-the-top energy of the back half of the show.

The adults had their chance to shine later on, with a well-portrayed contrast between their ambitions and their children's feelings in the poignant "If Only You Would Listen", and in Ned's eventual breakdown as he learned to stand up for himself.

Rosalie's transition from stick-in-the-mud principal to supportive co-conspirator was also

a sweet touch, helping dispel the last of the disapproval as everybody finally learned to embrace their inner rock.

Overall, the show was loads of fun with some fun surprises sprinkled in. No deep, profound theatre here: just good laughs, rockin' music, and a thoroughly entertaining evening.

DETAILS: *Thames Music and Drama's School of Rock*. May 17-24 at the Thames Civic Centre. See www.thamesmad.co for details.

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The Historical Reenactment Society at Thames Museum in 2024.

File Photo: ALICE PARMINTER

VE Day at Thames Museum

Eighty years ago, huge headlines in the morning papers on May 8, 1945, announced the German Third Reich's unconditional surrender.

The war in Europe was over, although many troops were re-deployed to fight in East Asia and the Pacific for three more months.

With the surrender of Imperial Japan on August 15, World War II officially ended on September 2, 1945, designated as Victory over Japan Day or VJ Day.

Thames Museum Te Whare Taonga o te Kauaeranga is commemorating the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day (VE Day) on May 31, 2025.

The World War II Historical Re-enactment Society will be attending, bringing displays related to the New Zealand Home Guard, 21st Battalion, the Long Range Desert Group, American and German forces and more.

There will be inside displays and talks, as well as music from the era, a sausage sizzle and crafts for children.

Brendan O'Carroll, an authority on the Long Range Desert Group, will speak about the group. At noon, the raising and lowering of the New Zealand flag and one minute's silence will be observed in honour of all those who gave their lives in the name of freedom.

DETAILS: VE Day 80th anniversary, May 31, 9am-3pm at Thames Museum. Entry by donation, all ages welcome. In the event of inclement weather, the event will be postponed. See Facebook for cancellations or phone 868 8509.

Tararu cairn restored

Veterans gathered in Tararu on May 8 to witness the rededication of the Tararu World War I and World War II Memorial Cairn.

The cairn, originally organised by Bupa Tararu resident Elizabeth Jones, was installed at the end of Wilson St in 2015 alongside a new set of stairs down to the beach.

It bore a plaque commemorating those killed in the wars.

The cairn was damaged earlier this year when the plaque was removed from the stone.

Veteran and historian Russell

Skeet arranged for the cairn's repair, and the subsequent rededication ceremony.

Around 30 people attended the solemn event, including Thames Coromandel District councillors Peter Revell, Robyn Sinclair, and Martin Rodley, along with four medalled veterans including Russell Skeet and Mike Anderson, and locals.

The 6th Battalion (Hauraki) Regimental Association laid a wreath of remembrance and sprigs of rosemary for the fallen servicemen.



From left: Russell Skeet, Elizabeth Jones, Mike Anderson, Richard Sturgeon, and Terry Brennan with the cairn.

Photo: SUPPLIED

Waihi cherry blossom friendship tunnel opens

The Waihi Cherry Blossom Festival Society has had a long-held dream of planting an avenue of trees that would eventually form a tunnel.

It was not until Hauraki District Council built the new Walkway/Cycleway path in Gilmore Reserve that it became possible.

The curator for the Japanese Library in New Zealand, Jillian Yorke, arranged a meeting on July 13 last year.

Society president Max McLean and secretary/treasurer Gordon Rogers were invited to attend this meeting in Karangahake.

At that meeting, Max and Gordon met Shinji Matsui the New Zealand Consul General for Japan and his wife Yuka,

who both gave their strong support for the concept of a friendship tunnel.

The support given to the Allies by the Japanese Government during World War 1 became the link or nexus.

This eventuated in the proposed tree tunnel becoming a reality for the society patron, the late Sel Baker, and its members.

Council gave permission for the location of the planting of nine trees on each side of the Pathway. Funding was sought, and provided by OceanaGold Waihi for 18 trees and 1550 daffodil bulbs.

The final trees were planted and watered on November 10 last year by Shinji and Yuka Matsui, members of society

and interested people of the Waihi community.

The concept then became an international community project.

A large rock was donated and delivered onsite by a local quarry, and a plaque was made in Thames, donated by four society members.

A short, simple and moving "Unveiling of The Plaque" ceremony was held on the afternoon of April 25.

The tunnel is close to the Tunnellers Memorial to the members of the New Zealand Tunnelling Company in World War 1.

RIGHT: The unveiling of the plaque by Consul General Shinji Matsui and Hauraki councillor Carol Daley.

Photo: SUPPLIED



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SPORTS REPORTS

TV CLUB RUGBY

WAIHI CONTINUE WINNING WAYS

Club Wrap Round 7 : May 17, 2025, From the quill of Tighthead Ted

Well thankfully there isn't a tipping competition for this year's Premier league, as ole Tighthead Ted would have looked sillier than PC after a few glasses of giggle juice at a Cedarwood karaoke night last century. Zero from four after some great efforts, and because of some plain dumb picking!

Anywho, business as usual for the usual suspects Waihi, Waihou starting to flex their muscles as semi finals approach, Whangamata finally got into gear, and the Snakes came out hissing under the mountain to beat the Blue Bulls.

We'll start off with the replay of last season's final, Paeroa started off well, landing two early penalties as they took every opportunity for points that came their way. Waihi tried to respond, but Collard's radar was out, and with two sitters missing, it had the feeling it could be Paeroa's day. But then Collard slotted his first penalty, and an intercept from Ish Leilua as Paeroa swung onto attack saw the visitors leading 10-6, even after making more mistakes in 20 minutes of rugby than they had in the previous six matches combined. The game was still there for the taking for the home side, Waihi were holding on, but only just. But the home side's discipline fell apart, and with the players doing more talking than playing rugby, the result was inevitable, and Waihi took the match away. It was still a close affair until Waihi's outstanding eight-man Lesen Huirangi also took an intercept and showed good pace for a low number and bolted away on an 85-metre run to the line.

The Paeroa scrum had an edge on the Waihi pack, but couldn't gain any advantage from this, otherwise the forward battle was pretty equal as the packs tried to bludgeon each other into submission. James Mahi from prop was again the go to man for forward momentum, and replacement Peni Tafia also was hard to stop. Paeroa was well served by Talalelei Moli at eight, a human wrecking ball, and his right-hand man Misi Palea, who blotted his copybook with a yellow card. Tyrone Keith for Paeroa with a searing break setting up Paeroa's first half try being the highlight of both sides' back divisions who by and large cancelled each other out with solid defence.

Paeroa, 16, lost to Waihi Athletic, 28. Whangamata hosted the previously high-flying Mercury Bay side, who had thumped the Red 'n' White's 60-12 at their last meeting. A vastly different result this week, with Whangamata winning 22-10, Mercury Bay lucky to get the 10 according to some of their



The Paeroa-Waihi match was a replay of last season's final.

Photo: SUPPLIED/TVRFU

supporters! Whangamata to a man played well and thoroughly deserved the win, a genuine team effort with no one outstanding - because everyone was outstanding.

The visitors produced an error ridden performance, filled with wrong options, knock-ons, missed tackles, you name it, they did it wrong. Their worst game of the last few seasons. The only strong point was a dominant scrum that would have the home side back pedaling at a rate of knots, only for the number eight to burst off the back and make 20 metres before anyone knew he had even picked up the ball. The smiles from the win over Waihi and taking the Silcock Shield will be wearing off now.

A couple of comments from THT's spies from the two opposing camps say it all. From Whangamata: "never underestimate the Dynamite at home", and from the Bay: "turn up half baked, and you'll get a half baked result".

Another team that finally got it all together was Waihou, who travelled to Thames and came away with a thumping 32-18 win. The visitors were class across the field, from lineout time where the throwing of Scotty Day was a clinic, to the halves pairing of Devyn Sheehan and Jake O'Connor, who are gelling now like 10-season partners, not a seven match pairing.

Thames were their usual direct and brutal selves, their pack carrying ferociously and making Waihou work hard to contain the never-ending supply of willing ball carriers. Jahvani Lolesi at prop and Laulea Ma'u were hard to stop, but the Waihou close quarter defence, led by Caleb Hazelton and Atelea Moeata were up to the task. Out wide though Waihou had the better of proceedings, Harry Lafituanai, filling in at centre combined well with Bronson Wilson-Beech, showing the class that saw him crack over 50 matches for the Swampies.



Xavier Brown pulls one back for Thames Football Club men's.

Photo: SUPPLIED/MARK BROWN

THAMES FOOTBALL

Mistakes prove costly as Thames fall short in Hamilton

Hamilton Wanderers Classics 6 - 2 T&R Interior Systems Thames FC

Saturday was a dismal day at the office for Thames Football Club, as a flurry of first-half errors shaped a 6-2 defeat against a well-organized Hamilton Wanderers side. Ironically, conditions couldn't have been more idyllic. After the early morning fog had lifted, Porritt Stadium, with its picture-perfect surface, was bathed in sunlight, ready for the midday kickoff.

The game's opening period was evenly contested, as both teams sized each other up with only half-chances being created.

Michael Kim's speculative effort tested Jon Marden in the Wanderers' goal, while Samuel Ward threatened for the hosts after latching onto a long ball over the Thames defence. Despite warning signs, Thames were caught flat-footed as Jason Forsyth opened the scoring after breaking through the back line and slotting home. The lead was soon doubled as Thames failed to clear a long free kick that was eventually bundled over the line.

Starting to show signs of life, Thames gained a foothold in the match when Sanket Gurung won possession and fed Kim, whose teasing cross just evaded Ben Taylor's lunge at the back post.

Growing momentum soon paid dividends when Apperley won the ball in midfield, sparking a fluid move that saw Fernando Bassem Souilem and Taylor combine with a cross, finding Kim, who controlled expertly with his chest before applying a smart finish.

What followed was a disastrous, error-ridden 10-minute spell. Thames conceded three goals in quick succession. Forsyth and John Shand capitalised on the lapses before Brett Kennedy hammered home a poorly cleared ball, with the hosts taking a commanding 5-1 lead into the break.

The second half saw Wanderers rotate their lineup and manage their unassailable lead comfortably, while Thames committed forward seeking a consolation goal. Xavier Brown provided one, firing home from close range after latching onto Apperley's deep cross. Any hopes of a late miracle were extinguished when Forsyth completed his hat-trick after a swift counter-attack.

"We didn't show enough character today; we lost the individual battles," admitted Thames Vice Captain Keegan Apperley. "It's fair to say the better team won."

A tough outing for Thames, who are left to reflect on an uncharacteristic first-half capitulation that left them fighting an uphill battle. Such mistakes can't be repeated next week as they welcome a combative Ngaruawahia United side to Rhodes Park in a traditionally ill-tempered fixture. - Jonathan Coles

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Rural Life

Hahei walk to reopen

Planning is underway to get Hahei Beach Walk rerouted and open in time for next summer.

The track, which links Hahei to the Mautohe Cathedral Cove Track, has been closed since early 2023 due to landslide risks and land movement following severe weather events including Cyclone Gabrielle.

Initial funding will come from the \$5 million allocated from the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy in July 2024, the Department of Conservation (DOC) said.

“Initial estimates put the design and delivery costs for this work around \$140,000,” DOC Coromandel opera-

tions manager Nick Kelly said.

Construction is scheduled to begin in September and be completed by the end of November, 2025.

The Hahei reroute will branch off midway along the existing Hahei track and connect with Grange Rd near the start of the Mautohe Cathedral Cove track.

“This track has been a priority for DOC since reopening walking access to Cathedral Cove,” Nick said.

“The proposed reroute offers greatly improved safety and resilience, avoiding the unstable upper section of the old track altogether. It follows moderate terrain and avoids the need for complex structures like staircases or bridges.”



The injured spoonbill had to be euthanised.

Photo: SUPPLIED/DOC

Spoonbill euthanised after shotgun injury

A protected royal spoonbill/ kōtuku Angutupapa has been euthanised after it was found with a shotgun pellet injury to one of its wings.

Department of Conservation (DOC) Hauraki biodiversity ranger Rachel Langman said a farmer at Pipiroa, near Thames, discovered the injured bird on his property on May 7. The farmer contacted DOC and suggested the bird had been shot, which was confirmed by a subsequent veterinary assessment.

The bird was euthanised on May 9, based on veterinary advice. X-rays revealed a shattered wing joint where shotgun pellets were found.

“The bird was quite underweight so we believe it may have been injured for several days before it was found,” Rachel said.

“This beautiful and defenceless animal has suffered for some time after it was shot.”

Royal spoonbills are protected under the Wildlife Act, and hunting or killing a protected species can result in a fine of up to \$100,000 or two years in prison.

Fish & Game Auckland/Waikato chief executive David Klee said shooting protected birds – including this incident – was unacceptable.

“Hunters must clearly identify their target and there is no excuse for shooting a royal spoonbill, which bears no resemblance to waterfowl species that can be legally hunted,” he said.

“Our code of conduct states licence holders must ensure they can accurately identify and distinguish game birds from protected species.

“We have detailed guides in our regulation handbook of the species you can and can’t target.”

He echoed the call for people to report any information about this incident, or any others in which hunters shot protected species.

“All hunters should follow the rules. We have very few incidents like this, but it can bring everyone in the hunting community into disrepute,” David said.

“Law-abiding hunters – it’s in your interest to report these few rule-breakers.”

Fish & Game compliance officers have been working alongside DOC staff since the opening of the duck hunting season to ensure hunters are following widely publicised rules for their sport.

A Fish & Game compliance team is on call at weekends and will investigate any incidents.

Warranted Fish & Game officers and rangers perform thousands of checks across the duck hunting season. Incidents of this nature are very rare, and anyone with information is encouraged to pass it on to Fish & Game or DOC so the agencies can investigate.

Royal spoonbills are a mobile species found in increasing numbers around New Zealand, and are identifiable through their unique bill, long black legs and white plumage. They feed by distinctively swishing their bill from side to side, while wading through shallow water.

DETAILS: Anyone who knows about the incident should call 0800 DOC HOT, or email wildlifecrime@doc.govt.nz, and quote case number CLE-9126.

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Rural Life

Neil Bateup named NZ Rural Hero finalist

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

A familiar face in the farming community, a man who has given “countless hours” supporting rural families facing hard times, has been named a Primary Industries NZ Award finalist.

Neil Bateup, whose farm is off the Tahuna-Ohinewai Rd, is one of three Rural Hero finalists - alongside the late Chris Allen, and Ian Jury.

But Neil, who helped set up the Waikato Hauraki Coromandel Rural Support Trust in 2004, and still remains its chair, said he wasn't a lone hero.

“I think the Rural Support Trust is the hero,” he said.

“I just happen to be privileged to be able to chair it. But really, it's the team of about 350 people around the country who are out there supporting those people in need. They are the real heroes.”

Neil said the Waikato Hauraki Coromandel Rural Support Trust was “growing phenomenally” with around 60 people now in the local team.

“In those early days we were getting very few calls because people didn't know a lot about us. We became a bit more visible, I think, after the 2008 drought, which was a very se-



Neil Bateup is one of three Rural Hero finalists.

File Photo: SUPPLIED

vere drought in the wake of it. “I'm really proud of the work that we do,” he said, “and it's growing phenomenally.”

Neil had been out on his 240-hectare, 670-dairy cow, Te Hoe farm the day he spoke with *The Profile*, and said the

profession had been “really good” to him.

“I still enjoy farming, and farming's been good to me. The whole journey has been about the people.

“[In 2004], a group of us could see a need, and I can still

see that need because farmers and growers are often working on their own, and things happen, things go wrong from time to time. It could be climate issues, it could be financial issues, it could be personal issues, mental health issues. It

could be a whole range of different things.

“And when things go wrong, it's just being able to help people work through it and come out the other side, and be stronger after it.”

The seventh annual Primary Industries NZ Awards are a highlight of the two-day PINZ Summit taking place at Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre on June 24 and 25.

Federated Farmers chief executive Terry Copeland said the awards celebrated the country's primary industry “movers and shakers” - the leaders who go the extra mile.

“Their efforts inspire others and lift the employment prospects and standard of living for fellow Kiwis,” he said.

Alongside Neil, the two other Rural Hero finalists are Chris Allen and Ian Jury.

Chris, who died in an accident on his Ashburton farm last December, gave 14 years' service as an elected Federated Farmers leader, including eight years on the national board.

Ian meanwhile spent 20 years raising money for the Taranaki rescue helicopter by collecting batteries for recycling.



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Hauraki Plains Adaptation Planning Project Update



We are now beginning work on a Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the Hauraki Plains. It will include learning more about changes that are likely to occur across the Hauraki Plains due to the impacts of climate change. Together we will define the actions we need to take to increase our resilience, and we will agree how to implement these actions. We will focus on climate and natural hazard challenges but also take account of other opportunities to grow and develop our communities.

The project is partially funded by central government's Better Off Funding package to invest in the wellbeing of our communities.

Keep an eye out for our events in July to come check out the flood modelling work.

Project update

There's been a lot going on behind the scenes in the Hauraki Plains Adaptation Planning (HPAP) project since our last update to you in December 2024. The flood modelling work that Waikato Regional Council (WRC) are doing is nearly ready, and we'll be running some events in July where you can come talk to us about the project and see the modelling results. We're doing this flood modelling because more frequent, intense and extreme weather events as the result of a changing climate, combined with rises in sea level and lower ground levels, may exceed the capabilities of our flood protection schemes and land drainage networks. Using flood modelling to see what this could look like will help us understand the impact, and then we'll work with the community to come up with solutions.

We've also heard that people want more information about the flood and drainage schemes on the Plains. So we've prepared a handout that shows where the schemes are and how they work. The parts of the schemes, like drains, canals, stopbanks and ponding areas are explained as well as the risks that may impact how they operate. You can read this handout at <https://letstalk.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/auraki-plains-adaptation-plan>

Community Panel

The Community Panel have also been busy. They are now meeting on a bi-monthly basis, and are here to act as a key go-between for the community and the councils.

If you have any questions or comments about the project, you can contact the Panel here: plainsadaptation@gmail.com

The Community Panel members are:

- Lee Carter (Chair)
- Ian Sara (Chair)
- Keith Barriball
- Wanda Barriball
- Cynthia Bates
- Conall Buchanan
- Noel Challis
- Tessa Fisher
- Morgan Harris
- Makayla Holtham
- Roger Hunter
- Gill Leonard
- Mark McWatters
- Julie Pirie
- Kim Reid
- Hanne Vanhoovels
- Luke van Vliet



Ian Sara
Co-Chair

"I've lived on the Hauraki Plains and worked on the flood protection works for over 50 years. I'm looking forward to working with the community on this project".



Lee Carter
Co-Chair

"This project is an opportunity to have your voices heard for future generations. It's your chance to have a say in how the council and communities adapt to natural hazards and manage risks. Get involved!"

Ways to stay connected to the project



StoryMap

Add this to your favourites. It'll be our one-stop shop for information about the project. We'll be updating information as it becomes available, and let you know the next steps for the project.



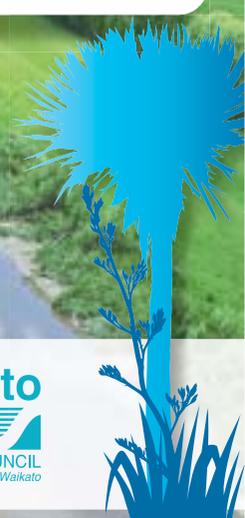
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Sign up at <https://www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/council/newsletter-signup> to get project updates and hear first-hand about upcoming engagement events.



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Smashed faces yet still opting to stand tall

OPINION



By MICHAEL WILKES

Yesterday my little boy - just shy of three and an absolute pocket rocket with more spunk than I know what to do with - came flying back into the house.

Quite literally.

He'd run full noise along the concrete, tripped over the hose, gone airborne, and landed headfirst.

Grazed knee, grazed nose, grazed forehead, even his fontanel took a hit. Hands?

Completely untouched. I couldn't help but laugh a little - not because he was hurt, but because it took me straight back to a memory of showing up to my own dad in the same sorry state.

Mum poured on the sympathy, but Dad just looked me up and down, cracked a grin and said, "Hope you've learned to put your hands out next time".

Now this isn't a piece about tough love.

It's about the kind of resilience that gets us back on our feet.

Because once the tears dried and the pain wore off, my little

guy was off again.

Full throttle.

No smashed-up face was going to hold him down.

But here's the thing - somewhere along the line, as adults, we lose that.

A face-plant like that becomes a reason for a sick day. A break from the chaos. A chance to lie low. (Not you, of course. Just... other adults.)

Then there's this absolute legend of a woman I know - early 80s.

She took a nasty fall last week, landed flat on her face and broke her nose. That's a good enough reason to stay

home and let the world wait on you, right?

Not her.

She rocked up to church on Sunday - face black and blue, smiling, and ready to run the coffee machine like she does every week.

"Looks better than it did yesterday", she said, and got straight to it.

No drama.

No fuss.

Just bred tough, with a heart to serve and a quiet resolve to not stay down after a hard knock.

So between my wee boy and this coffee-slinging warrior

woman, I saw something pretty inspiring this week.

Because as Chumbawamba once sang - "I get knocked down, but I get up again, you're never gonna keep me down".

Maybe it's time we remembered how to do that too.

Michael Wilkes is a Living Well Trust Youth Worker. He and his team provide mentoring and resilience programmes across Thames and Paeroa to more than 300 students a year. They are passionate about supporting our young people to thrive. Much of this work is funded outside of schools and it becoming increasingly challenging in the current climate. Email michael@livingwell.org.nz to sign up to their quarterly newsletter or become a supporter, or donate at givealittle.co.nz/org/living-well-trust.



Foodies

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Kaimai Brewing & Distilling triumphs at prestigious 2025 World Gin Awards

Kaimai Brewing & Distilling, nestled in Waikino's historic Waikino Hotel, has clinched a gold medal and the title of New Zealand's Best Contemporary Style Gin at the 2025 World Gin Awards.

This prestigious accolade was awarded to their signature Eliza's Claim Gold Gin, a testament to the distillery's dedication to quality and innovation.

Founded in 2020 by Wayne and Kathy Chowles, Kaimai Brewing & Distilling draws inspiration from the rich gold mining history of the Karangahake Gorge.

Their gins are crafted using 50,000-year-old artesian spring water from the Coromandel Ranges, infusing each bottle with a unique taste of the region.

Eliza's Claim Gold Gin, the distillery's inaugural release, previously secured a gold medal at the 2021 New Zealand Spirits Awards.

Its recent recognition on the world stage underscores Kaimai's commitment to excellence and the growing global appreciation for New Zealand's craft spirits.

This achievement not only highlights the distillery's prowess but also places New Zealand firmly on the international gin map, celebrating the fusion of local heritage and artisanal Craftsmanship.

- Supplied by Kaimai Brewing & Distillery



Kaimai Brewing & Distillery wins gold and the title of New Zealand's Best Contemporary Style Gin at the 2025 World. Photo: SUPPLIED

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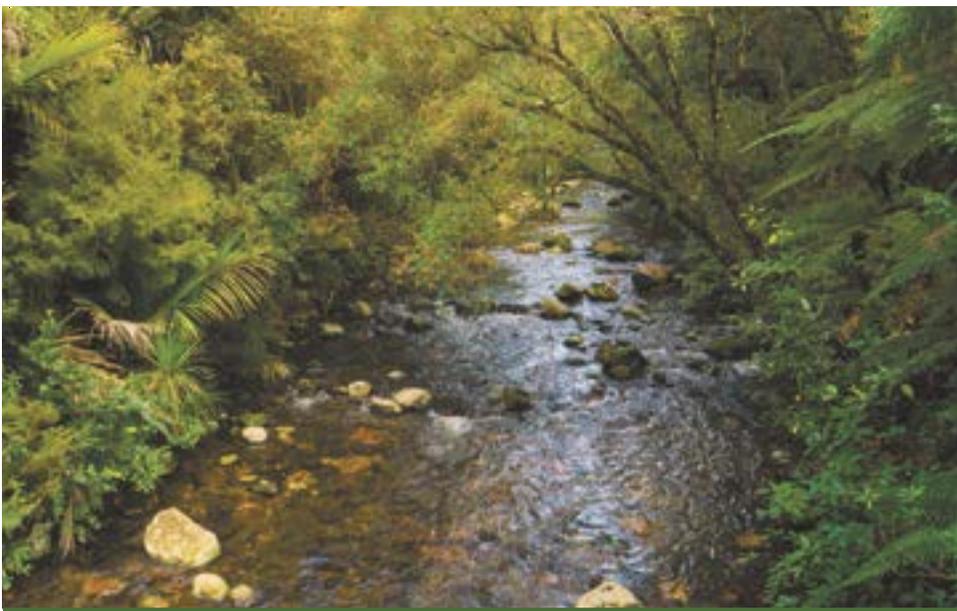
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COROMANDEL / HAURAKI TOO PRECIOUS TO MINE

Gold prices are high, and big companies are coming to our area planning to extract it. They aim to mine in and under the forests and mountains – and, as seen in Waihi, even beneath our homes.

Most locals want to protect freshwater, forests, and communities long-term, not be left with a legacy of toxic waste. While we have protected areas north of Kopu/Hikuai from open cast mining with the Schedule 4 (open cast mining ban) for the past 20 years, mining companies now propose another pit at Waihi and mining under homes and a new mine in conservation land.

Economic risks and threats from mining

- 1. Minimal Returns** 2% royalty and many tax breaks make it economically insignificant even if royalties increased.
- 2. Jobs – for how long?** Jobs matter but not at our environment's expense, Mining isn't sustainable and automation could soon replace miners.
- 3. Offshore profits** Where are the billions in gold dollars? They went offshore. Despite decades of mining, Waihi still faces high deprivation, blasting underhomes, and toxic waste risks.
- 4. Environmental economy** The environment IS the economy - you cannot buy it back! Our economy depends on our natural environment.

Fast-track law, RMA changes and our right to be heard

The Government has changed the law so that companies can Fast-track mining, overriding several other laws. OceanaGold has applied to Fast-track the huge Waihi North Project meaning there will only be 'expert panels' and Government Ministers making the decision. There will be limited iwi input and no public consultation. Our concerns, issues and local knowledge will be excluded from these decisions. Proposed changes to the RMA will also exclude hapū and iwi and limit public participation, as well as groups like ours who represent wider public interest.

Who are the mining companies?

OceanaGold, RuaGold, Mineralogy, New Talisman Gold, Zealandia and Otagold are all foreign-owned gold miners (mainly Canadian and Australian) with a single goal – shareholder profit. Some cause serious damage overseas while here they promise offsets like pest control while using fossil fuels to blast under the homes of at risk species as well as our communities.



UNDERGROUND MINING - THREATS AND RISKS:

Environmental

- 1. Toxic legacy** Heavy metals from gold extraction remain toxic for generations in huge earth dams behind Waihi.
- 2. Blasting under habitats and forests and homes** Large-scale underground blasting causes land subsidence and disturbs wildlife, including the endangered 200-million-year-old Pepeketau (Archeys Frogs).
- 3. Water depletion** Underground mining requires "dewatering" tunnels, affecting aquifers and surface water. Heavy metal leachate threatens vital future water supplies.
- 4. Tourism impact** We rely on a sustainable visitor economy. People come here to experience the environment, not mining degradation
- 5. Historical contamination** The burden of cleaning up old toxic mine sites and the huge new ones Oceana Gold has created will fall on communities. We already have polluted mine waste from over 100 years ago contaminating land and water. The Ōhinemuri River turned orange from Comstock mine heavy metals, with arsenic affecting watercress and tuna.

ABOUT COROMANDEL WATCHDOG OF HAURAKI

Our group has been working to protect the area from further gold mining damage for more than 45 years. We are an umbrella group and support local groups based in communities from Kūaotunu, Kāpanga/Coromandel, Whenuākite, Karangāhake, Whangamatā, Thames Coast, Thames, Pāeroa and wherever we are needed! We are local people with a positive vision for the future. We support the mining of e-waste to reuse gold, silver and other minerals instead of digging up the land.

For more information,
please visit our website:
www.watchdog.org.nz



Top left: Beautiful river in the threatened Parakiwai forest. Photography by Chris Pryor

Top right: Ōhinemuri river polluted by old Comstock Mine leachate, Aug 2024. Photograph courtesy of Coromandel Watchdog

Above left: Pepeketau (Archeys Frog) under threat. Photography by Ian Preece

Above right: Protest against Gold Mining, Thames, Oct 2024. Photography by Gaysorn Thavat

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Heath van Leeuwen of Tree Tops Arborist is ready to help. Photo: SUPPLIED

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Lenny Torrens, 15, shreds his way to an NZ 6th place ranking at the 2025 Skateboard National Championships.
Photo: GLYN STRETTON - PIXEL PROOF PHOTOGRAPHY

Hauraki skater lands NZ top 6

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

Lenny Torrens is no stranger to kickflips and backside tailslides.

It's something the 15-year-old skateboarder made very clear at the 2025 Skateboard National Championships recently, where he competed in the Open Men's division against riders from ages 13 through to 50 plus at the Mount Maunganui Destination Skate Park.

But the teen star didn't just compete. Lenny shredded his way to the top 10 and landed a sixth place ranking in New Zealand for the Open Men's Street Skating.

The talented teen of Hauraki Plains College said he achieved it by "putting down a line" which meant skating around the whole park, where he used a variety of obstacles and techniques.

The young shredder told *The Profile* even though he made a few mistakes and knew

he could've done better - he was "pretty stoked" with the outcome.

"I have put in a bit of work to achieve this by training every day at Pukekohe skate park or wherever I can find a skatepark. I usually have my skateboard with me."

He said he was also stoked about his mates who ranked in third and fifth places. Something Lenny said he learned from the experience was "putting in the time matters".

The teen athlete looked forward to making a Street Part, which is a collection of video clips of him skating in the streets, and taken by his mates or his dad, he said.

But it was evident his success was backed by a strong support network.

"I'd like to thank my mum, dad and sponsors Irrom Distribution, After Hours and The Good Room," he said.

"Without them I can't do what I love."

Local shop wins shop local comp

The Paeroa Business Association announced the winner of its Mother's Day window-dressing competition on May 13. The winning store was Fee and Mands on Willoughby, with Earth Angel Magic coming in second.

"Owners Fiona and Mandy created a fun purple, pink and white themed window display," the association said.

The competition was part of the association's Mother's Day promotion event, encouraging people to shop local.

Sybil Woolmore (left) presents the award to Fiona Pennell from Fee and Mands. Photo: SUPPLIED



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CLASSIFIEDS - Deadline 12pm Monday

Death Notice	Firewood	Public Notices	Trades
<p>WATKINS, Lois Ann OStJ, (nee Tresidder): 16.08.1938 – 15.05.2025 Passed away suddenly, Aged 86. Dearly loved wife of the late Maurice – now reunited. Treasured mother of Lesley and Alan, Lynn & Jack, Grant and Kate, Fiona & Barry, Tina and Chey, and Arlene. Adored nana, great-nana. Cherished friend to many. Officer of the Order of St John and devoted community member. Her service is on Saturday 24th May, 11:00am, at St Joseph's Catholic Church, Waihi</p> 	<p>Big double load of ti tree mix. Dry shed stored and free delivery. \$340 Ph: 022 386 0395</p> <p>Old Man Pine \$140 per cube. Ti Tree \$240 per cube Phone Mark 027 655 8661 or Steph 027 385 2806</p>	<p>Thames Valley Basketball Assn Annual General Meeting Monday 26 May 2025 Jack McLean Rec Centre Thames 6pm All welcome Contact: R Ruka on 021 121 1953</p>	<p>FENCING CONTRACTOR Residential & Rural Retaining walls & more High quality workmanship Competitive prices Call Matt 021 1727 148</p>
Church Notices	Garage Sale	THAMES COMMUNITY PATROL AGM	Builder
<p>Waihi Assembly of God Church "Worship & Healing" 10am Sundays Scout Hall, Baker St, Waihi</p>	<p>Sat 24th, 9am. Heaps of everything. 2 Church Rd, off North Rd (old Mangatarata school). Opp Native Tree Cafe (H'way 2 & 27)</p>	<p>To be held at: Thames Police Station 404 A Queen St. Thames (back entrance- Lane 6A, off Sealey St.) Wednesday 4th June 2025 @ 5:30pm</p>	<p>Reno's, decking, fencing. For free quote ph Phil 021 088 63559</p>
Waihi Bible Chapel	Gardening	Storage	Painter
<p>Ph. Num 021 522 668 Come read the Word. Learn Scripture (King James) You want the truth, it's all here. Come help us read and learn. Bible Study Wednesday nights 6pm</p>	<p>STUMP GRINDING. All sizes, all areas. Thames based. Ph 021 060 7659</p>	<p>STORAGE KOPU, PAEROA TE AWAMUTU "New Units" Ph 027 440 7101 07 868 3033 Safe n Sound Storage www.safestorage.co.nz</p>	<p>Painter available now, experienced in interior and exterior work. Ph 0272142442</p>
For Lease	Pets	Storage Unlimited	
<p>Yards for lease, Thames and Kopu. Suitable for trucks, vehicles or trade business base. Ph 027 440 7101</p>	<p>KENNELS WAITAKARURU Boarding Kennels and Cattery. "A great place for your pet to stay." Shane & Sherrin Hansen. Ph: 07-867-3344, SH25 Waitakaruru, RD6 Thames</p>	<p>25 Ngati Maru Highway Kopu, Thames Clean, secure, dry Units available 7 x 3.6m and 7 x 5.5m Phone 07 868 9944</p>	
Handyman	Handyman	Storage	
<p>Handyman Services. Waihi and surrounding areas. Building maintenance and repairs. Mobile - Grant 027 333 8331. E-waihi105@gmail.com</p>	<p>Mowing, hedges, fencing, gardening, carpentry, painting, retaining walls, welding, waterblasting. Work is good quality and I will not attempt to work outside of my skills. Insured. Dennis Schuler 022 129 0169</p>	<p>TOTAL STORAGE LTD KEREPEHI / PAEROA We will beat any legit quote for storage in 10ft or 20ft containers T&C's apply 021 67 67 99 info@totalstorage.co.nz</p>	
Handyman Services	Handyman	Situation Vacant	
<p>THAMES HANDYMAN & BUILDING SERVICES Building, home maintenance & general gardening services Phone: Fleur or Crighton • 0273 913 283</p>	<p>An experienced handyman covering all trades with over 20 years exp building trade. Please contact Laurie King 0212510246. ktproperty.com</p>	<p>Stepping Out Hauraki An opportunity has arisen for a Kitchen Facilitator for a small unique mental health and addiction peer support organisation in Thames. Task/Duties: • To plan and facilitate the Monday Cooking Programme • To plan Meals in consultation with consumers as to their needs • To participate in special events and fundraising events if required You will need: • Food Handlers Certificate • Current Drivers License • First Aid Certificate • Pass a Police Check This is a 5 hour a week position on a Monday 9 – 2:30pm Please send CV to manager@steppingouthauraki.org.nz Any further enquiries phone 07 868 5595 Applications close 30th May 2025</p>	
PAPER DELIVERIES	Handyman	Home Maintenance	
<p>Although we endeavour to deliver our paper to everyone, sometimes we just cannot achieve this. If you are one of the few who did not receive your weekly paper, please note they are available here: NGATEA - Ngatea 4 Square, HDC Council Offices, Ngatea Post Shop, Z Petrol Station, Ngatea Purple Dairy PAEROA - Moores Caltex, Countdown, HDC Council offices, Takenote, Paeroa 4 Square, Paeroa Information Hub WAIHI - Maybelle Superette, New World, Toyworld/ Takenote, Information Centre, Daffodil Dairy, Waihi Supervalve THAMES - Totara Veggie Shop, Mobil Kopu, Gull Service Station, Martina 4 Square, Bin Inn, Tararu Dairy, Queen St Mobil, Goldfields Mall, Pak'N'Save, Paper Power, Thames 4 Square, Carson's Bookshop, Thames Council Offices, Kauaeranga Store TURUA: Turua Dairy KEREPEHI: Kerepehi Dairy</p>	<p>Handyman Services. Waihi and surrounding areas. Building maintenance and repairs. Mobile - Grant 027 333 8331. E-waihi105@gmail.com</p>	<p>'SHE SORTS IT' From Mess to Impress: Gardening, home clearing, painting, declutter, odd jobs, deceased estates. <i>Creating Beautiful, Organised, Serene Spaces.</i> Qualified and experienced horticulturist. Ready to Present to market or event! Contact Pippa Jackson Ph 027 747 7000</p>	



Keith Trembath with Governor-General Dame Cindy Kiro. Photo: SUPPLIED

Keith Trembath receives MNZM honour

Keith Trembath was formally invested as a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) at a ceremony held at Government House, Wellington, on May 2.

The event was hosted by the Governor-General, Her Excellency The Rt Hon Dame Cindy Kiro.

Guests were treated to an elegant high tea, and each recipient was personally congratulated by Dame Cindy,

who offered words of encouragement and gratitude.

She urged honourees to wear their medals proudly and publicly, as a way to inspire and uplift others in their communities.

Keith, a Komata farmer, was awarded the honour in December, 2024, in recognition of his contributions to public service, agriculture, and education.

Photo: SUPPLIED

Public Notice

Rating Information Database

Pursuant to Section 28 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 that the Thames-Coromandel District Council has available for public inspection a complete copy of the rating information database. The rating information database (RID) records all information required for setting and assessing rates and is available at the Council's principal office, 515 Mackay Street, Thames, during ordinary office hours, 8:00am – 4:30pm Monday - Friday, except public holidays. The database includes the following information relating to each rating unit: -

- (a) All information that relates to the rating unit that is included in the district valuation roll for the district; and
- (b) All information that relates to the unit that is required to
 - (1) determine the category to which the unit belongs for setting general rates and
 - (2) determine the category to which the unit belongs for setting targeted rates.
 - (3) calculate the amount of liability for a targeted rate.
- (c) The name and postal address of the owner unless Council has received a written request to withhold the owners' name or postal address (or both) from the database.

No fee is payable for inspecting the rating information database but a fee is payable for being supplied with a copy of the particulars.

Any ratepayer may object to the information contained in the database on one or more of the following grounds:

- (a) that a rating unit included in the district valuation roll has been omitted from the database;
- (b) that information included in the district valuation roll has been omitted from, or inaccurately entered in, the database;
- (c) that information included in the database, other than information entered from the district valuation roll, is incorrect;
- (d) that there has been a failure to enter a lawful amendment to the district valuation roll into the database.

A condensed version (without name and address information) of the RID is also available on Councils website www.tcdc.govt.nz

Objections must be lodged in writing, setting out the grounds for the objection and forwarded to the Acting Chief Executive, Thames-Coromandel District Council, Private Bag, Thames.

A Lawrie
Chief Executive Officer
Thames-Coromandel District Council





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SUDOKU

201

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

	2		3	1	6	8		
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	3			7	9	4		1
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EASY

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HARD

201

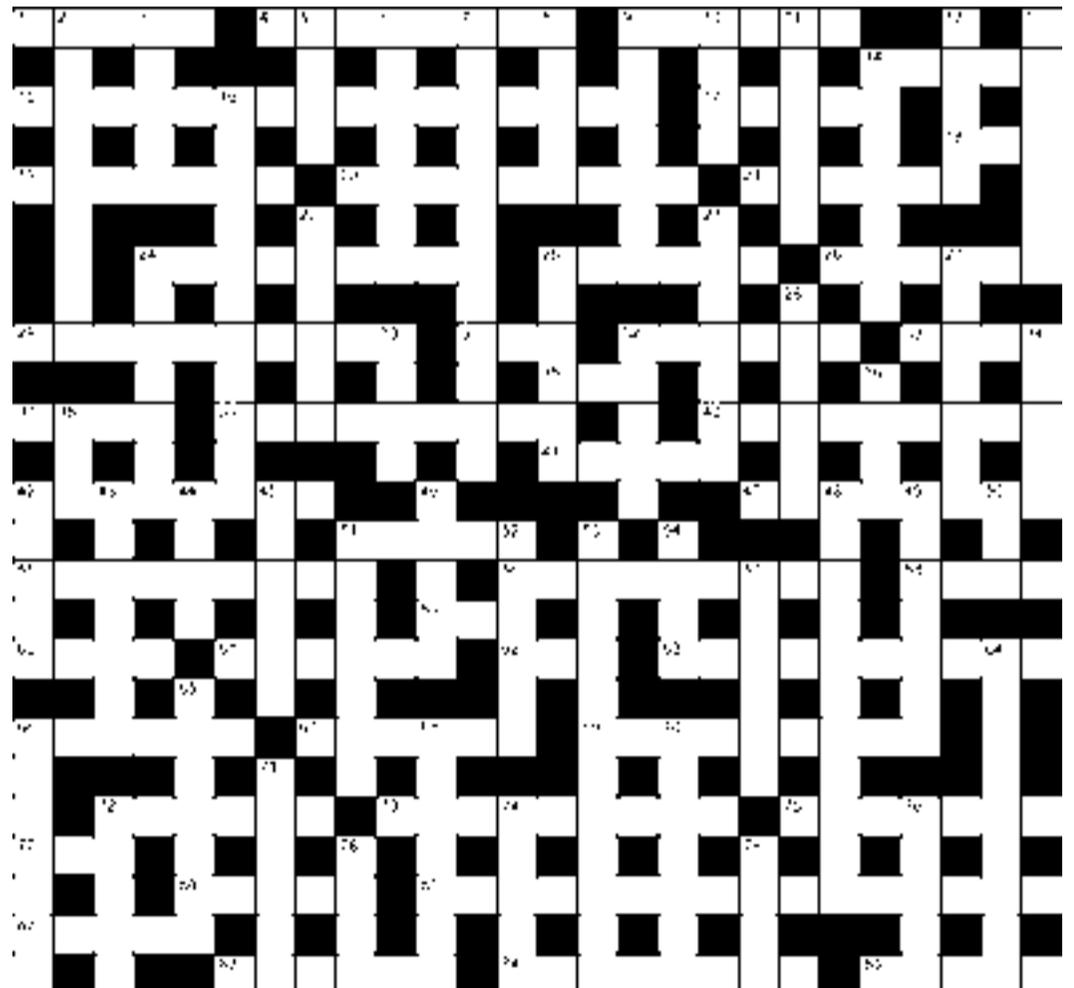
Puzzles © The Puzzle Company
www.thepuzzlecompany.co.nz

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

JUMBO CROSSWORD

221

- ACROSS**
- 1 Pause mark (5)
 - 4 Forging under provocation (8)
 - 9 Climbing aid (6)
 - 14 Pungent (5)
 - 15 Look everywhere for something (6,4,3,3)
 - 17 Skinflint (5)
 - 18 Little (3)
 - 19 Bewildered (2,1,4)
 - 20 Still the same (9)
 - 21 Associated (6)
 - 24 Summary of invoices (9)
 - 25 Gloss (6)
 - 26 Bisected (6)
 - 29 Constituent (10)
 - 31 Curve (3)
 - 32 Leafy vegetables (6)
 - 33 Complacent (4)
 - 35 Family (3)
 - 37 Topple (4)
 - 39 Pigheaded (9)
 - 40 Of great beauty and delicacy (9)
 - 41 Discourage (5)
 - 42 Capital of Belgium (8)
 - 47 Plumage (8)
 - 51 Hawaiian greeting (5)
 - 55 Short leisure journey (9)
 - 56 Old gun (9)
 - 58 Notion (4)
 - 59 Pixie (3)
 - 60 Action (4)
 - 61 Tune mixture (6)
 - 62 Bolt (3)
 - 63 Singer's accessory (10)
 - 66 Swore (6)
 - 67 Shrewd (6)
 - 69 Citadel in Athens (9)
 - 72 Liveliness (6)
 - 73 Remiss (9)
 - 75 Fine-tunes (7)
 - 77 Admirer (3)
 - 80 Dapper (5)
 - 81 Be conceited (4,1,7,4)
 - 82 Starboard (5)
 - 83 Phonograph inventor (6)
 - 84 Anticipating with great fear (8)
 - 85 Bore (5)
 - DOWN**
 - 2 Passed (9)
 - 3 Ethical (5)
 - 5 Leave out (4)
 - 6 Make better or more attractive (7)
 - 7 Wife of a famous playwright (4,8)
 - 8 Claw (5)
 - 9 Legal advisers (7)
 - 10 Moist (4)
 - 11 Without effort (6)
 - 12 Throng (5)
 - 13 Stuck to (7)
 - 14 Tsarina (anag) (7)
 - 16 Engaged man (7-2-2)
 - 22 Precious stones (6)
 - 23 Spreading plant (7)
 - 24 Extra (7)
 - 25 Was deficient (6)
 - 27 Bat (7)
 - 28 Without equal (6)
 - 30 Follow secretly (4)
 - 32 Biting flies (5)
 - 34 Estimate (5)
 - 36 Money plant (4)
 - 38 Discuss publicly (3)
 - 42 Lose blood (5)
 - 43 Ill-defined (7)
 - 44 Positive (4)
 - 42 Lose blood (5)
 - 43 Nuclear (anag)(7)
 - 44 Positive (4)
 - 45 Hang about idly (6)
 - 46 Lucre (5)
 - 48 Indicate recognition (11)
 - 49 Altitudes (7)
 - 50 Regret bitterly (3)
 - 51 Rentals (anag)(7)
 - 52 Fight (6)
 - 53 Silent communication (4,8)
 - 54 Stop the flow of (4)
 - 57 Dwell in (6)
 - 64 Dusk (9)
 - 65 Rebellious (7)
 - 66 Verify (7)
 - 68 Spruce up (7)
 - 70 Extended the period of validity of (7)
 - 71 Talented (6)
 - 72 Drawbacks (5)
 - 74 Cherished (5)
 - 76 Theatre guide (5)
 - 78 Watches (4)
 - 79 Open tart (4)



PREVIOUS SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Shown, 4 Burning question, 14 Force, 15 Snide, 16 Gladiators, 17 Loyal, 19 Nip, 20 Trawler, 21 Liberated, 22 Seemly, 25 Genealogy, 27 Fathom, 28 Mother, 33 Miniatures, 35 Doc, 36 Keeper, 37 Club, 39 Tin, 41 Flutter, 42 Bikini, 43 Tsetse fly, 44 Orate, 45 Arrested, 50 On, 51 Entailed, 55 Scoop, 58 Broadcast, 59 Pimple, 60 Spiders, 61 Oar, 63 Meek, 64 Stigma, 65 Elk, 66 Psychiatry, 68 Voyage, 69 Census, 71 Speedboat, 76 Spoils, 77 Generator, 79 Placate, 81 Cut, 84 Equip, 85 Passageway, 86 Panic, 87 Naked, 88 Shiver me timbers, 89 Blitz.

DOWN: 2 Hungry, 3 Widow, 5 Ugly, 6 Nodding, 7 Neared, 8 Quota, 9 Easiest, 10 Tile, 11 Oxygen, 12 Crony, 13 Despair, 14 Flummox, 18 Resentment, 23 Flare, 24 Rosette, 26 Epistle, 27 Fiction, 29 Helpful, 30 Miller, 31 Admit, 32 Aegean, 34 Skip, 36 Knead, 38 Bayed, 40 Asia, 45 Album, 46 Rookery, 47 Side, 48 Enacts, 49 Cocoa, 50 Oppress, 52 Top the bill, 53 Indiana, 54 Errors, 55 Stagger, 56 Smoke, 57 Flop, 62 Tyres, 67 Ignored, 68 Vaccine, 70 Sleeper, 72 Proverb, 73 Sleuth, 74 Salami, 75 Strict, 76 Stake, 78 Ensur, 80 Crawl, 82 Spiv, 83 Lair.



Boundary lines are indicative only



Turua 174 Hauraki Road

Well set up lifestyle block with extras to match

This 1.76ha (more or less) Hauraki Plains lifestyle property offers a renovated three-bedroom home, a separate two-bedroom sleepout, and excellent shedding. The main home features open-plan living, a heat pump, and neutral interiors. The detached sleepout includes a covered deck, ideal for guests, teens, or home business use. Shedding includes a 9x6m high-stud Totalspan shed (built 2020), haybarn, ex-dairy shed, and more. The flat land is well-fenced into seven watered paddocks—great for stock or pets. Located near Thames, Ngatea, and Paeroa, and zoned for Hauraki Plains College. A flexible, functional property with strong lifestyle appeal.

bayleys.co.nz/2630064

1.76ha 5 1 5

Auction (unless sold prior) 11am, Thu 5 Jun 2025

96 Ulster Street, Hamilton

View 10-10.30am Sun 25 May

Karl Davis 0508 83 83 83

karl.davis@bayleys.co.nz

Seth Roe 027 320 6937

SUCCESS REALTY LIMITED, BAYLEYS, LICENSED UNDER THE REA ACT 2008



Boundary lines are indicative only



Maramarua 2292b State Highway 2

Versatile living with income, shedding and SH2 access

Set on 3.1 hectares (more or less) of gently rolling land just off SH2, this versatile property suits blended living, rental income, or both. The renovated three-bedroom character home blends heritage detail with modern ease, while a self-contained one-bedroom (more or less) cottage offers privacy for extended family or tenants. A high-stud 218sqm (more or less) shed features a lined sleepout, workshop, and truck-friendly access. Outdoors, enjoy paddocks, fruit trees, vege gardens, and a motocross track. With schools, town, and major routes nearby, this is adaptable country living at its best.

bayleys.co.nz/2630080

3.16ha 5 3 3

Auction (unless sold prior) 11am, Thu 19 Jun 2025

96 Ulster Street, Hamilton

View 3.30-4.30pm Sun 25 May

& 12.45-1.45pm Mon 2 Jun

Karl Davis 0508 83 83 83

karl.davis@bayleys.co.nz

Connor Davis 027 496 4622

SUCCESS REALTY LIMITED, BAYLEYS, LICENSED UNDER THE REA ACT 2008



Boundary lines are indicative only



Hikutaia 590 Maratoto Road

Room to grow and space to play - Exceptional lifestyle

Nestled in the scenic Maratoto Valley, this 6.4ha (more or less) lifestyle property offers space, privacy, and self sufficiency. The four-bedroom home features open-plan living across two levels, with a wood burner, wide rural views, and seamless indoor-outdoor flow. A covered entertaining area with a pizza oven, spa, and games zone is perfect for relaxed evenings. A self-contained unit adjoins a three-bay shed, offering flexible living or work-from-home options. The land includes fenced paddocks, raised beds, an orchard, and a high-stud barn. Just minutes from Paeroa, close to Thames and local attractions, this is an ideal spot for those seeking a balanced, rural lifestyle.

bayleys.co.nz/2630078

6.42 ha 4 1 1

Auction (unless sold prior) 11am, Thu 5 Jun 2025
 96 Ulster Street, Hamilton
View 12.15-1pm Sun 25 May
Karl Davis 027 496 4633 karl.davis@bayleys.co.nz
Connor Davis 027 496 4622
 connor.davis@bayleysngatea.co.nz
SUCCESS REALTY LIMITED, BAYLEYS, LICENSED UNDER THE REA ACT 2008



Boundary lines are indicative only



Mangatarata 120 Mahuta Road South

Elevated setting, everyday ease

Set on (more or less) 4.3ha of gently rolling pasture, this Ngatea property offers classic comfort and room to breathe. The three-bedroom brick home features a modern kitchen, woodburner, sunlit conservatory, and sweeping views. A tidy bathroom, separate laundry and good storage complete a practical layout. Sheltered by established trees, the property includes several graze-ready paddocks, a standalone garage, and water tanks. Tucked down a quiet country road, just minutes from town, it's a chance to live simply—connected to the land and what matters most.

bayleys.co.nz/2630081

4.37 ha 3 1 2

Auction (unless sold prior) 11am, Thu 12 Jun 2025
 96 Ulster Street, Hamilton
View 2-2.45pm Sun 25 May
Karl Davis 027 496 4633
 karl.davis@bayleys.co.nz
Seth Roe 027 320 6937
 seth.roe@bayleys.co.nz
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Young rugby star trains with Chiefs

By DAVIDDA HIKATANGATA

It's not everyday people get to train with legendary rugby icons, let alone their favorite player.

But it's exactly what 10-year-old Sage Claridge of Paeroa got to experience when she trained alongside notable Gallagher Chiefs Team players on April 24 as part of a Skills & Drills session at Bay Oval, Tauranga.

The promising rugby player told *The Profile* she was nervous and excited when she first stepped foot on the field.

The year-6 Netherton School student said her goals in rugby were to get better at gripping on tackles and stealing the ball back. The young athlete trained alongside Ollie Norris, Daniel Rona, Xavier Roe, Samisoni Taukei'aho, Samipeni Finau, Damian McKenzie and her favourite player - Naitoa Ah Kuoi.

But rugby wasn't just a thing to do - it ran in Sage's family.

Her brother, Crue Anderton, 18, also got to train alongside the Chiefs players when he was Sage's age.

Samantha Anderton, Sage's mum, said there was an opportunity for people to register their kids online to join the training session, which was sponsored by First Windows and Doors, and Sage was selected alongside around 50 other kids.

Samantha said there were



Paeroa's Sage Claridge, 10, and Naitoa Ah Kuoi. Photos: SAM ANDERTON

freebies, a goodie bag, sausage sizzle and an opportunity to get signatures and take photos with the players afterward.

It's something the Chiefs players did every season, she said. "[It's] such a cool thing that they offer the kids."

One moment from the Skills & Drills session where Sage said she felt most confident was

when she made a new friend.

The friend asked Sage if she could do handstands and the rest was history.

But when it came to the challenges, the rugby player said the biggest one was "shaking off all the nerves".

One way the group of young rugby allstars got to shake off the nerves was during the ice



Tips from Damian McKenzie.



Sage chases down the ball.



Samipeni Finau runs drills.



Rugby star Samisoni Taukei'aho.

breaker at the start of the session when "Naitoa made us scream and dance", she said.

If Sage could choose someone to be her coach, she said she'd pick Naitoa because "he's funny and a good player".

But if Sage had the opportunity to train with any other rugby player, she said she would pick Anton Lienert-Brown.

Bullrush was the activity Sage said she enjoyed most, and felt proud when her team won.

But her highlight was when Naitoa told her she looked like Ruby Tui, who was Sage's favorite Chiefs Manawa player, she said.

For other kids who want to play rugby, Sage said it's so fun. "Just give it a go!"








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