

# Changes at the Stony

**After an eventful three years, Sarah and John MacGregor have handed over the reins to Sarah's sister, Katie, and brother-in-law, Pete Simmonds.**

They have brought Sarah and John's half of the business and are now managing all aspects of the day-to-day running of the hotel.

Pete is from Swansea, South Wales and met Katie (a Kiwi) while living and working in London. Pete was a Welsh Guard for a short period, based at Windsor Castle and in Northern Ireland, which he enjoyed (apart from the long standing periods!). He took up a career path in the construction industry and progressed to Site Manager for Westfield in London. Pete's parents managed many pubs and clubs in Wales while Pete was a young lad, so he's not new to the hospitality business.

Katie is a Taranaki girl, brought up on a sheep and beef farm in Matau, Stratford

with her parents and elder brother and sister. On completing her tertiary education, Katie worked at Tegel in Bell Block as the Central Regions' Environmental Health and Safety Officer for three years. She enjoyed her employment at Tegel and it was a great stepping stone for future employment.

In 2004 it was time for her to "spread her wings" and head out of the country. She secured a position in the UK working as a Grants Officer at the London Borough of Hillingdon Council, based in the private housing sector, and she also worked as a Night Noise Patrol Officer.

Two years after Katie and Pete met, they decided to head back to New Zealand to bring up a family in what they felt would be a better lifestyle.

They have two lovely children – Carys, their bubbly, busy 22-month-old, and a second daughter, Reiley, just two months old.

Katie is now fully employed in caring for her two children and running the hotel. In addition to his hotel duties, Pete also works at the local quarry for Fulton Hogan.

The new venture is going to be both challenging and rewarding with their two young children in tow, but with the support of Katie's parents and Sarah and John, the transition should run smoothly.

The Stony will have a smorgasbord every Thursday from 6-8pm and in the near future they will be introducing Sunday roasts, both eat-in or takeaway – good to have with the winter nights coming along!

The next band night will be 17 May ("Hatcher").

We wish them well in their venture.

*By Milly Carr*

*Pete, Katie, Reiley and Carys Simmonds at the Stony River Hotel*



## a peek inside

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# editorial FROM THE TOM ZONE

This would have to be the best place to thank Adrienne O'Sullivan. Twenty-eight years ago she taught me and my best friend Debbie Gibbons – her only two students in the class – Third and Fourth Form French. At one lesson she bought croissants and plum jam. I was hooked, on the language and the food, and it has taken this long to get to the country I had lusted over all those years ago.

In March our family of five spent three weeks in France and I loved every minute of it. Well, maybe some minutes were better than others – if you can visualise travelling and living together 24 hours a day with a four, six and twelve year old. That aside, it was a fantastic opportunity and even though New Zealand is the best place to live, I would go back to France for a visit tomorrow.

Now Take One Moment with TOM and have a great month.

Tracey

Remember you can read Oakura TOM online at [www.thetom.co.nz](http://www.thetom.co.nz)

## Rich pickings

Hello everybody. Hope you are all well.

It looks like the weather may be starting to deteriorate a little. It is certainly getting a little colder at night. Winter is getting ever closer. However, the grass is looking lots greener and the sheep a lot happier, if only they knew.

However, in saying that, I am prepared to make a prediction that it will not rain all month.

On a crime note, there has been a little activity in the Oakura area of late. No doubt you will have seen the art work on the mighty Kaitake Clubrooms. Now, whoever has done this would have had to spend some time down there and I would be very surprised if nobody saw anything.

Remember, if something looks suspicious, it probably is and we need to know – let the Police make the call.

There have also been a number of cars broken into over the last couple of weeks, and things stolen include builder's tools and a leather gear-stick knob from a Subaru.

I have also had an incident where a house has been the target of some idiot. They have broken trees and thrown flour and other food items over the house. An 18kg gas bottle was also stolen – not something that can be easily hidden. Now this is very upsetting for the occupant, so whoever it was, grow up.

If you know anything about any of the above, please contact me at the Okato Police Station on 752 4111.

I have also received a large number of calls about a small group of people who have been riding their motorbikes in and around the village. I have been informed that these bikes are not in the best condition and that the riders have little regard for their environment. I believe that one of these bikes is now off the road but keep the complaints coming.

Did you know Thailand has about 26 million registered vehicles? Anyway, must go. Take care out there.

Rich

# TOM

TOM-Okato is a free, monthly publication, delivered on the second Wednesday of the month to all homes and post-boxes from Timaru Road to Bayly Road.

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# The Great Escape – a trip to The Flying Fox

Annette Corbett, Anne Donald, Cheryl Peacock, Jacky Kopu, Joy Burmeister, Vicki Horton and Kerry Lilley are off to the Whanganui River on an adventure. At Koriniti, they leave their cars behind and swing out across the river by cable car, thirty metres or so above the water, two by two and with their luggage carefully balanced. Each pair lands on the other side about three minutes after take-off to an enthusiastic welcome from co-owner, John, and an excited fox terrier named Billy.

They have arrived at The Flying Fox, an “organic, environmentally friendly” retreat nestled among the trees, where they plan to relax, work on craft projects and enjoy a great girls’ getaway. As they negotiate the rustic path up to the two picturesque cottages on the riverbank that will briefly become home, they breathe a collective sigh of relief. Just for this short time there will be no responsibilities, no interruptions, no traffic, no computers “and best of all” according to Jacky, “no cell phones!”

The group gathers in the evening sun beneath the massive trees laden with ripe walnuts to sip wine and chat. “Watch out for your heads,” John had warned as a walnut landed, KLUNK, right beside him. But the friends have forgotten his warning already. As evening descends along with an autumn chill, they move inside to attend to their stitching and by the time the last of the group has gone to bed, it’s 3.30am. A rat scuffling in the wall ensures that Joy doesn’t get a lot of sleep even then.

Most of Saturday is spent quilting or knitting, embroidering or reading, but in the afternoon the group walks down to the river and watches Jacky swim. “Watch out, Jacky,” warns Cheryl, alarmed as Jacky drifts perilously downstream towards the rapids. Jacky ignores her. She keeps swimming, keeps drifting. “Jacky...the rapids!” cries Cheryl again and Jacky jumps up, laughing, thigh high in the drought-depleted river.

At dusk, Jacky and Kerry bathe in an old iron bathtub nestled in the bush and warmed by a fire of English walnut which John has cut for the purpose. The rest of the group gathers round, attending to the ambient lighting (candles) and giving advice. The bathers emerge eventually, warm and relaxed and smelling of smoke and river water. Back at “The James K”, in keeping with the weekend’s environmental theme, Kerry reads Dr Seuss’s *The Lorax* out loud. Then, after dinner, Jacky heads back out to the hot tub to relax in the quiet dark. She returns prematurely, looking pale and startled and tells us a tale about being confronted by a heavy breathing possum. By the end of the evening, Anne has unofficially won the prize for fortitude and determination by completing a whole block of her “Sea Angels” quilt, despite a series of disasters not of her making, and everyone retires happy and fulfilled. Joy sleeps on the couch, peacefully, to the occasional call of a morepork or a walnut falling on the tin roof.

We gather a bag of walnuts each (with John’s blessing) and prepare to head back to what we call civilization. As we board the cable car, Billy sulks. He’s enjoyed our company, we reckon. He stands stock still, every muscle tense, his ears straining forwards in the direction of our retreating figures. We too regret that it’s time to go but, in Joy’s words, “Aaahh”, we leave this place “refreshed and revived”. And we’ll be back!

*Story and pictures by Kerry Lilley*



*The Flying Fox Retreat on the Whanganui River.*



*Billy keeping Jacky Kopu company.*

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# Paul Hutchinson - painter

PART 2

**TOM continues its exposé of the private life of local painter Paul Hutchinson.**

He thought of going to art school – to Elam in Auckland or Ilam in Christchurch – and regrets to this day that he didn't. But he lacked entry qualifications and, being reserved, vulnerable and agoraphobic to boot, it felt safer to remain at home with his parents. So he gained his art education from the library instead. "People are surprised that I have such a good knowledge of art history and the like," he tells me with a small, satisfied grin. He also read about the Modernists, who refused to have a bar of art schools and believed one should teach oneself. He felt encouraged. "I had great ambitions – I was going to be a great artist!"

To support himself, he got a part-time job at the Westown Fish Shop, where he cut up fish and converted barrel-loads of potatoes into crinkle-cut chips every day, supplying all the fish and chip shops in New Plymouth. He'd finish at lunchtime and go home to paint for the afternoon. His parents were very supportive and he didn't pay board. Nevertheless, at \$1.20 an hour, it took him three hours' work to buy one tube of white paint. Eventually, the fish and chip job ended and he spent his days at home alone, painting. It wasn't a healthy environment for him though and he became so agoraphobic that he was too scared to go out to collect the mail from the letterbox.

He joined the Taranaki Society of Arts and exhibited through them, but the contributing artists were predominantly older people and conservative at that. However, when he held his first solo exhibition in 1977 in the little cottage that became Brougham Street Gallery, he met Michael Smither, who had been wandering round surveying his work. Introducing himself, Michael remarked that Paul's paintings reminded him of his own early works. Paul took this as a great compliment and adds, "Michael has always been the biggest encouragement." Then, when the Clearwater Gallery opened, Paul would wander around looking at the artworks for sale. Professional paintings with good frames sold for \$400. It seemed a fortune! He recalls those of Derek Bollen – big, fantasy Lord of the Rings style paintings. Paul dreamed of being "a real artist". He dreamed of being like Derek Bollen, exhibiting at Clearwater.

He mounted two or three exhibitions at the Brougham Street Gallery. Then, other young artists began to have shows there and the shows started turning into parties. "I was young and had lived a sheltered life," says Paul, "and I had never been to a party. We played loud music, got into alcohol and various other substances, and 'held up the walls'," he admits. Thus, he was initiated into the local art scene.

"The Govett Brewster Gallery was very supportive of local artists in those days," Paul tells me, and in 1975, the inaugural "Taranaki Review" was held there. Paul's paintings were exhibited there then and throughout the remainder of the Seventies. In 1981, he was Overall Winner of the re-named "TSB Review", a feat he repeated in 1988. 1981 was also the year that Paul, together with Michael Smither, Peter Lambert, Lee Morgan, Wayne Morris, Mark McGlaughlan and David James, decided to organise a "Salon des Refusées" – a sort of fringe festival, where artists whose work had been declined could exhibit. They named it "Renonsense" and it was so successful, they formed a co-operative to manage little festivals every six months or so. TACO (Taranaki Arts Co-operative) had been born and the art scene really came alive. "And



*Paul with his wonderful portraits.*

that's how I grew up in the art world," Paul informs me. After a while the enthusiasm died, people started going their own ways and in 1986, TACO disbanded.

"I'd never had much success promoting my own art," Paul tells me, "and then I met Dale, through TACO. Meeting her was the best thing that ever happened to me!" Dale invited him to join her at Puniho and he moved there in 1985. The birth of their daughter Toby – "the child of Renonsense" – in 1986 was the other "best thing" that has ever happened to Paul. But he found Dale's apparently easy success as an artist difficult when he had striven so long to be recognised. He became utterly disillusioned, spiralled into a deep depression and gave up painting altogether for a couple of years.

Then, in 1999, he acquired his dream studio – an "open air classroom" that had been the manual training block at Inglewood Primary School – and he started painting again. It had been his idea to set up the website ([www.virtual.tart.co.nz](http://www.virtual.tart.co.nz)) to showcase Taranaki artists, so it was a huge disappointment that he had little success selling his own work through the web. However, nearly two years ago, he decided to discipline himself to make a "Painting a Day" (see <http://postcardfrompuniho.blogspot.com>). Initially, it was an attempt to pull himself out of his depression, but it soon became obvious that it was also a means of actively marketing his work without making too many concessions to his artistic integrity. It took off! "You've got to make an honest dollar," he asserts, with the emphasis on "honest".

Many people describe his painting as realistic – "yet I don't really admire 'realistic'", he muses. "I like the paint to become the subject." For similar reasons, he feels strongly that his paintings must not be framed and become windows to something else – they must be mounted so that they stand on their own. He paints in oils mostly. "They're very physical," he says, "thick and impasto-like, with a 3D quality that holds the brush strokes." Figurative artist Lucien Freud, Sigmund's grandson, whom Paul holds in high regard, maintains that he doesn't want the paint to resemble flesh – he wants it to "be flesh". At first, Paul found this concept difficult to grasp. Now he embraces it and his success in doing so is admirably demonstrated in his mother's and father's encaustic (molten) wax portraits that won the "Painting" award at the 2007 Taranaki Art Review.

Paul feels let down by the painting world. He reckons his traditional painting style has become extraordinarily unfashionable with the art-buying public and suspects that people are losing judgement of what is good. Abstracts, gliccé prints (prints on canvas to look like original paintings), Chinese mass production, Brut Art (the "school of bad painting") and people who haven't earned the right to call themselves artists are stealing the market.

"We're even being bombarded with digi-images now – images that move and flash... I feel like a watchmaker in the digital age," he mourns. "Yet there's still so much to say with paint." It's bizarre really that he used to be criticised for his big paintings ("Wherever would you hang it?") when now his paintings are considered too small. And because they're small, people expect them to be cheap. "How much do I deserve for five or six hours' work?" he asks.



*Paul in his studio.*

making stringed instruments. For him, that's playtime, and another string to his bow, so to speak. But that's another story. *Story and pictures by Kerry Lilley*

He's over worrying about any perceived lack of success now though because after thirty years' painting, he feels he's done his apprenticeship. He can paint and he's at his happiest when doing so, "and nothing really matters as long as I'm happy." He's happy to be fifty and a painter and proud of his craft.

And when he's not painting, he loves to walk Fergus, his black, bearded collie, on Komene Beach or by the Stony River. Or to be immersed in music... listening, composing, playing classical guitar or

# The Okato Town Hall – Hempton Hall

*Hempton Hall in all its historic glory.*



I must say it is very nice to see the local hall getting a bit of a "spruce up". I'd only recently been thinking it was about time it got an overhaul and just a few days later the painters are in, working their wonders on the building and repairing the guttering. What a great job!

It is all thanks to our wonderful Hempton Hall Committee, who attend to matters such as these, and it is now in the hands of the New Plymouth District Council to complete the job.

*By Milly Carr*

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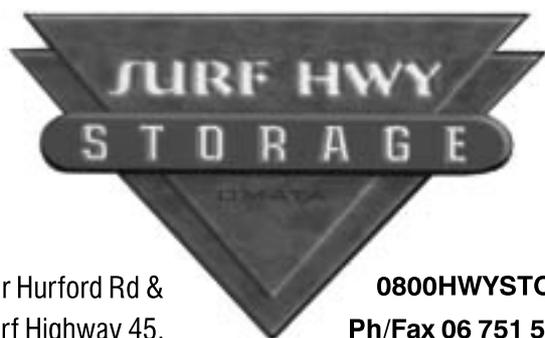


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## North Taranaki victorious in horse event



*Phillippa Grayling (flag holder), Zoe Laing & Yours Truly, Charlotte Grayling & Onetai Vitesse, Kimberley Downes & Windsor Blue, Anna Hinton & Oddspot, Hannah Trott & Prince Ransom and Darelle Martin & Asterix.)*

On 12–13 April, our North Taranaki Pony Club team competed at the Timberlands North Island Teams event in Tokoroa. The event went over two days, with three phases: dressage, show jumping and cross country. Four scores of the six counted, so we were lucky in having a full team. There were twenty four teams in total.

Our team consisted of six riders from various North Taranaki pony clubs: Darelle Martin, Charlotte Grayling (ex-pupils of Coastal Taranaki School) and myself from Okato Pony Club, Anna Hinton and Zoe Laing from Oakura Pony Club, and Hannah Trott from Waitara Pony Club.

The team came well under halfway in the dressage phase of the competition, and with only two rails in the show jumping we were still in the top few teams.

Unfortunately I could not compete in the last phase due to a paddock injury on my pony's leg.

The rest of the team completed the cross country with four vital clear rounds. The final scores were added up and we were declared the winners.

Waitemata was second and Tauranga was third.

It was an awesome experience and I will definitely be going back next year.

*By Kimberley Downes*

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## TSB Community Trust Fund has benefits for locals

The TSB Community Trust has allocated funds to many local community groups and individuals. One of the major recipients is the annual Literacy Programme that is run in local schools. Below is a list of recipients and the individuals listed are all outstanding sportspeople who have been featured in the *TOM*.

Okato Pony Club	\$400	ESOL – Coastal School	\$3200
Tumahu Golf Club	\$2000	Okato Historical Society	\$350
Literacy Programme		Okato Fire Brigade	\$6000
1 Oakura School	\$10480	Okato Community Trust	\$500
2 Omata School	\$5880	Finlay Neeson	\$500
3 Coastal School	\$8000	Mathew Dickey	\$500
		Jessie Muggeridge	\$500

## Okato Indoor Bowling Club

Looking for something to do on a Monday evening?

Come along to our indoor bowls held in the Hempton Hall, Okato at 7.30pm on Mondays from March through to August.

All ages are welcome. It would be great to see some new faces.

Contact Judy Barker on 752 4189 or Betty Pepperell on 751 5501.

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# Meet Mary Goodwin

In typical Kiwi fashion, Mary didn't think she had a "story" to tell, but I am feeling very pleased that I have managed to record and preserve a fascinating snapshot of a life lived simply . . .



Mary is one of the eldest members of our community. She lived here in Okato for over 70 years and has only just recently left our township because of health reasons.

Mary was born in England in 1912, the daughter of Alfred and Emily Edwards. With her elder brother, the family immigrated to New Zealand in 1915 and four more children were born into the family here.

The family lived on a farm in the Wellington region for several years. Mary didn't go to school until she was eight years old as she could not ride a horse and it was too far to walk. Instead she would stay at home and hand milk the six or seven house cows and feed the pigs, ducks and fowls. Her education was cut short four years later when her mother had another child and needed Mary at home to help do the house-keeping.

She recalls learning to swim: "This will be a novelty for you," she says, "We would go to the creek with our benzene cans flung over our backs, used like flutter-boards or wings! And that's how we learnt to swim." When the family shifted to Otakeho Mr Edwards found work in a butchers, so when the Okato Butchery came up for grabs, they seized the opportunity. The shop was in the building just recently removed, opposite 44 Carthew Street.

The venture was a success and Mary worked in the shop for five years: "I could do everything in the shop." Her dad purchased a van to use for delivering the meat and taking all the hides through to New Plymouth, both of which were done by Mary.

The village life was always busy. There was a great community and Mary knew everybody, "not like today". People new to the area were always welcomed with a party and the same thing would happen when a family left.

Mary was involved in the Tennis Club, which was strong in both men and women players. Competition games took them to many other clubs in the area and Mary was one of the top players for two years. "I remember biking from Okato to Warea to play tennis. We biked everywhere."

She was also involved in the Okato Indoor Bowling Club.

She tells this of the Okato Pool: "I only ever swam in there once as it was so dirty with it being fed by the creek near the pool. I became so ill after swimming there that I had to go to the doctor. He advised me never to swim in there again because of this and from that day I never returned." If only she could see it now, huh?

She has many memories of the dances and as she tells them, I can see her looking inward as she casts her mind back. "There were always dances to go to and we all had so much fun. When we lived in Otakeho, we would go to the Oeo hall and the Oeo Pa also held dances."

Mary met her husband Frank Goodwin at the Okato swing bridge and when she was 21, they married. They had six children – Arthur, Marina, Dudley, Owen, David and Molly – and lived at 38 Carthew Street, Okato, where they had 14 acres of land on which they kept 15 cows and many chooks. They also leased the land next to the Catholic Church for grazing their cows. Mary had a large vegetable garden as "this was just what people did back then," says Mary. "We were self sufficient."

The children would have turns at hand milking the cows and later on they had what they called a two-cow plant where the cows could be milked. Mary would scrape the cream off the settled milk to put

on the porridge in the mornings (something she still does today. Don't tell the doctor her daughter in-law says!), and she would also make her own butter. The milk would be given to the locals as this was the only source for people who didn't have their own cows. Mr Hill and Mr Fox who also had house cows would supply milk for others in the district.

For many years they had to draw water from their well by the bucket to fill the troughs for the cows. Over the years her boys came up with a solution to make this process easier. They set up some old guttering to run from the well down to the troughs.

The wood stoves and coppers needed lots of wood and they would source a lot of this from the beach. The car would be loaded with all six children and all hands were put to work to fill the wagon.

Mary doesn't say too much about the sudden death of her husband Frank, which was a very sad and difficult time for them all. Mary recalls that they had celebrated their eldest son Arthur's 18th birthday just the day before Frank died.

With Mary now a solo mother, it was very challenging for her to manage a house, pay bills and look after children, and it meant finding a job which would fit her lifestyle.

For many years she did housekeeping for people right around the coast and as far away as Wanganui. A lot of the time this involved a house sitting arrangement while people were away. She also did a short stint at the Okato Dairy Factory wrapping cheeses and worked Thursday evenings at the Okato Bakehouse, wrapping the bread and delivering it with Morris Fisher. She worked for Des and Nola Corbett when Nola came home with her twin daughters.

Mary also took in boarders for many years, which helped her to pay the mortgage. They were usually teachers or Post Office workers.

It was a very busy life for Mary and her children and she has seen a lot of changes over the years in Okato, with many people having left the district and a lot of new ones having come in too.

She says that she finds the young people hard to deal with and that they are certainly different to the young ones in her day!

It was only a few months ago that Mary made the shift to New Plymouth and she says it is taking a little while to adjust to, but she is very grateful to her son Dudley and daughter in-law Elaine for taking her in. "Elaine is absolutely wonderful to me and is taking me out to lots of places, which I am thoroughly enjoying."

Mary's social calendar is pretty booked, with cards twice a week at the RSA and the New Plymouth Club, and a day at Tainui's Ascot House. I was very lucky to be able to slot in a time to visit and gain this insight into Mary's life.

The next goal for Mary is to take a helicopter flight over Mount Taranaki. Won't that be wonderful, I say. The next story you will be doing will probably be for the *Daily News*. She smiles at the thought.

By Milly Carr



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## A new tune for CTS

### Konnichiwa

Miss Shinada is the new music teacher at Coastal Taranaki School. We asked her a few questions about her time in New Zealand and what it is like in Japan.

Miss Shinada first became interested in music when she was a teenager, listening to American and British music that she says SHE DIDN'T EVEN UNDERSTAND! She enjoys any kind of music, "just as long as it sounds good."

Miss Shinada enjoys playing the drums and taught the drums in the past, so she decided to become a music teacher.

Her first job in New Zealand was as a tour guide in Queenstown and she said it was very enjoyable and meeting lots of new people was a highlight.

Miss Shinada said that there are many differences between the two countries. When it comes to teaching, she believes that in New Zealand we have a lot more freedom. She finds New Zealand a very peaceful country because there is nature everywhere. Although she enjoys New Zealand's spaciousness, she says, "New Zealand can't beat Japan's food!"

A powhiri for Miss Shinada was held to celebrate her arrival.

*Jasmin Warren and Zjahmyr Baker* – student reporters at CTS.



*Miss Shinada.*

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## Okato tidbit

Spotted out and  
about recently was  
one of the local  
favourite trannies!



# Okato Lions

## Hi from Okato Lions

Our mountain had its first coating of snow a few weeks ago – I reckon winter must be on its way.

Members visited the Urenui Club on the first Wednesday in May for fellowship and a meal. Our President Bernard and his wife Pauline are at present touring overseas. We wish them an enjoyable trip away.

Our bike ride was a huge success and was enjoyed by 170 riders. It was a 40–50 km course, finishing with a sausage or steak sandwich and a drink. The weather held until we started packing up and then the showers set in. Once again we thank all who helped make this event a great success, especially the farmers who allowed us to ride through their properties.

For our June meeting we will visit the Taranaki Helicopter Hanger and then trainee chefs will prepare and serve dinner for us at Westown.

We are still looking for new members and would like to have interested people on board with us. Please contact a Lion member or myself on 752 4086.

*Lion Merv Hooker*

## Fun day had by all at “Warea Rock”

Although weather conditions were not what we had hoped for, as it was overcast with drizzle, the Warea Croquet and Social Club were exceptionally happy with the great turnout to Warea Rock and the much needed rain!

Warea Rock was held on the 29 March at the Warea Croquet and Social Club, which used to be the Bowling Club, at Heifer Park, Main Road, Warea.

Many of our members had huge input into providing the fun-filled day for all those who attended Warea Rock, our first of many big days to come.

Quote from a six year old: “I had a ‘cool as’ day, listening to the music. We made really neat Warea Rock T-Shirts and the lolly scrambles were great – I got heaps of lollies.”

There were five musicians or bands featured for the afternoon and evening: Colleen (piano accordion), MMC, Alan Manu, Richard and Tim, and The Flies.

The Club would like to express their gratitude to all the performing artists for donating their time. All those who performed on the day were absolutely fantastic, with good easy listening music. I don’t think there was one person who could say they didn’t have an enjoyable day.

Warea Croquet and Social Club Inc was restarted in February 2007 to create an environment for all community members to enjoy and participate in. Club days are held most fine Sundays from 11 am. New members are welcome. Contact Emma 752 4281



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# burning issues

## Okato Fire Brigade

The weather is starting to get that winter feel and it really is hard to get out on a Monday night to do our training. But we do have to be thankful for the rain, which has taken the pressure off a lot of people, including the Brigade and you farmers too.

We've had great progress on the new building (as you can see). Builder Brian Hill is very pleased and comments on the great performance from all involved and how smoothly it has all gone. While this is at print the carpet will be getting laid and with everything going to plan, the building should be operational at the end of May. The big shift into our new building is getting near. How exciting!

According to our strategic plan, the old building will be demolished sometime in June. Our existing sectional door will be coming up for sale. It has a glass top and an automatic opener. Offers over \$1000 are welcome.

A big thank you to the TSB and the Australian World Wide Exploration Oil Company for their generous contributions towards the new station. It is very much appreciated.

So, enough of the chit-chat. Here are some safety messages from the Brigade:

- 1 Please ensure you have your chimneys swept before your first fire.
- 2 Get those electric blankets checked before use.
- 2 Make sure you have checked the batteries in your smoke alarms. If you don't have any in your home, please put this on your "to do" list or give us a call at the station on 752 4110 (Monday evenings) as we have them here and we can install them for you.

Keep safe and be fire wise!

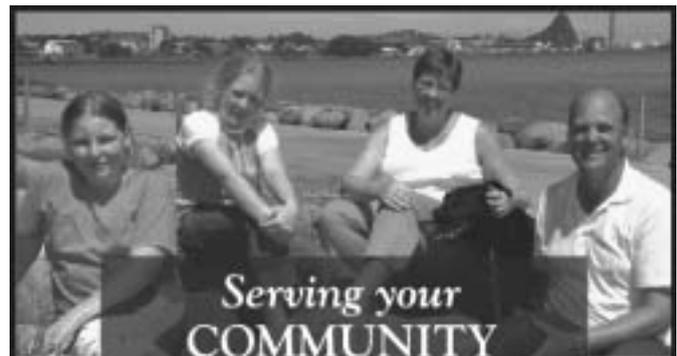
Milly Carr



The fire station renovations coming along nicely.



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# TOM Babies

**Arlo James Theadore Maunderson** was born on 5 June 2007. He has a big brother called **Olly (Oliver) Jean**. His Mum, Jessie, has a BA in English literature and media studies and a background in journalism, and is the daughter of well-known local artist Peter Lambert and Rene. His Dad, Laurent, is a chef and runs our popular café and coffee stop, "The Waiting Room".

**Jasmin Tracey Ellison Inness** joined her family out in the world on 3 March. Her Mum Lindsey, Dad Demian and big brother Rio (two years, two months) welcomed her at home. Two days later, Lindsey was out and about with Jasmin in the front pack.

Originally from Lancashire, where she was a recruitment consultant, Lindsey immigrated here three years ago. She will be taking a break from working in "Seeds" to spend time with Jasmin and Rio.

Demian, from Whangarei, spent five years in Europe before moving to Okato. He has been working in the building trade since his arrival here but his life is taking a new turn – he is launching into a fulltime Environmental Management course. We wish him luck.

**Timothy Howard Muggeridge** was born to Rebecca (Becky) and Robert Muggeridge on 28 December 2006 at Taranaki Base Hospital. The name Howard honours Timothy's late, paternal great grandfather. Becky tells me that Tim is a real farm boy, who's never happier than when he's in a truck or on a tractor or farm bike. Becky is the daughter of Joy and Murray Burmeister, while Robert is the son of Opunake farmers. Becky and Robert now operate Burmeister's Porikapa Road farm.

*Story and pictures by Kerry Lilley*

If you have a new baby, or you know of someone who lives in the Okato TOM delivery area (Timaru Road in the north to Bayly Road in the south) who has, please contact Milly (752 4425 or milly@thetom.co.nz) or Kerry (752 4350 or kerry@thetom.co.nz).



*Arlo being scragged by big brother Olly.*



*Timothy Muggeridge hard at work.*



*Jasmin Innes being cuddled by big brother Rio.*

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## ANZAC Day

On **ANZAC Day** I participated with other Kaitake Board members in the Okato Service. It was another sobering experience for us. The service, which was set up very well indeed by the 85-years-young Oakura resident of many years, Ivor Ellis, attracted a large crowd of all ages to remember those who had made the ultimate sacrifice for us all.

*Doug Hislop*

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