

Rods and Reels . . .

Cape Egmont Boat Club held its open competition 21 -28 February 2009 at Bayly Road, Warea. Although weather conditions were not the best and boaties probably only had three decent days of fishing, the fish were still being caught.

Andrew Shearer with his huge hapuka.

Those keen surf casters came out with some pretty big ones. Approximately 200 people entered the competition of which there were three fishing sections, surf casting, bottom fishing and game fishing.

The competition has been running for approximately 20 years.

Originally, fishermen only entered the New Zealand Open, but then Cape Egmont Boat Club decided to run its own competition in conjunction with the New Zealand Open. The competition is open to all fisherman, any age or ability.

The youngest junior, 9 year old Thomas Morgan, entered in the surf casting section. Liam Parker, Rahotu, 13 years old, caught a 2.96kg kahawai and 7.24kg snapper, and gained a prize in bottom fishing. Hamish Kape, Okato, also 13 years old, caught a 3.40kg kahawai surf casting.

Prize giving was held on the Saturday night of the 28th, and prizes were awarded to recipients who caught the heaviest fish in each section.

The bottom fishing section saw Andrew Shearer, Oakura, bring in a huge 38.980kg hapuka. He also gained the heaviest snapper at 14.660kg, which is a boat club record to date. Andrew has donated this to the club where it will be mounted. There were some really good fish weighed in for the snapper section.

Fiona Lacey caught the heaviest trevally in the bottom fishing, weighing in at 3.30kg. Dianne Watts won the tarakihi section. This was the first time she has ever weighed in a fish in a competition and she has been fishing for some years. Go Possum! Dixon Doyle managed to win a beautiful lipstick pink fishing rod in the kahawai bottom fishing section. This section was particularly hard fought.



Surf casting saw Corey Leatherby catch an 11.48kg snapper, the heaviest in the competition for this section. Rowan Jordan took out the first prize for the heaviest albacore in the game fishing competition weighing in at 4.480kg on 3kg line. Kane Lacey caught the heaviest kingfish at 15.540kg, which was also the heaviest game fish caught during the week.

Many others made some great catches over the week, too numerous to mention in print. Each evening spot prizes were drawn and you had to be at the club to win them. The fishing committee faces a difficult task each year getting sponsorship and obtaining prizes. The process of approaching businesses starts early in the year. Sponsors are obtained locally and as far south as Hawera. A big thank you to all of those businesses.

During the week when sea conditions prevented fishing, a cricket game was held between the Northside and

Southside campers. This was held in honour of Craig Blinkhorne, or "Blinky" as many people knew him. Craig was tragically killed on his motorbike on the Sunday morning. He was a huge asset to the Boat Club in his many roles, and his death had a huge impact on the

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a peek inside

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editorial FROM THE TOM ZONE

I had a very pleasurable three days at WOMAD this year. WOMAD, a "World of Music and Dance" festival is a brilliant concept that brings together not only music and dance, but different cultures as well. Standing in a queue waiting for food with a visiting artist right beside is a humbling experience. All too often we put people on pedestals when in reality we are all just regular people, part of a big picture but at the same time we are the picture. There certainly are some exceptional people. To me they are the ones that do outstanding things, e.g. Mother Theresa and all the aid work she has done. The rest of us, well we are the regular lot. We all have to eat, sleep and toilet. No exceptions.

WOMAD shares with us these fantastic artists and lets us into their lives for three days. I went to three sessions that were interviews with the artists. It was fascinating to hear their stories and it gave a deeper meaning to their music. One artist commented on how the industry has changed because of the internet and free music downloads. He commented that you can not get a free download of an intimate interview at Pukekura Park because the audience are so much a part of the experience. He talked further about the importance of the audience's role saying, "It is no less important than the ability to play an instrument or have the ability to sing."

The artists that came to WOMAD were not on pedestals, they showed us another way. In the face of a recession the place was packed. Does this indicate that when we make choices about where we spend our money it will be for this type of experience? We can rekindle community interaction and Okato is the place to do that. It is a community whose people have strong links to each other.

Tracey

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THE TEAM

Co-ordinator: **Tracey Lusk** 06 752 7875
tracey@thetom.co.nz

Co-ordinator/Features: **Kim Ferens** 06 751 1519
kim@thetom.co.nz

Advertising: **Cyril Henderson** 06 753 6885
cyril@thetom.co.nz

Writer: **Milly Carr** 06 752 4425

Writer: **Kerry Lilley** 06 752 4350

Proof Reader: **Elayne Kessler**

Graphics: **Ron Stratford**
origin@xtra.co.nz

The TOM Group Ltd, 25 Jans Terrace, Oakura.
email kim@thetom.co.nz
Phone 0800 THE TOM
www.thetom.co.nz

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community and the Boat Club members. Over the week the club flew a Holden flag at half mast.

The caterer, Muzza, had tragic news of his own during the week, with the passing of his wife Katrina. Our heartfelt condolences to Muzza and his family, and a big thank you to all those who kept the kitchen ticking over during our busiest week of the year.

The entertainment for Friday evening was a wood chopping competition. Once again Northside and Southside had the opportunity to battle it out amongst one another.

Saturday and Sunday meant vacating the Boat Club site, with tents dismantled and caravans returned to their homes. The committee made a huge effort over the week. With the unfortunate circumstances involved, it really showed how everyone could pull together in times of need.

By Milly Carr



Kane Lacey with his kingfish taken on his boat 'EZ'.

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Okato Lions

Hello readers

As I write this note for April's edition of TOM, I see Autumn has arrived. There is a cool Southerly blowing this morning as I write (22 March). Our feed for the girls is still abundant so a good Autumn for production is likely.

The Lions and their spouses who went to the McPhail and Gadsby show generally felt a little disappointed. We all, however, enjoyed our last speaker, Nic Fenner, talking about his time in the Royal Navy.

Our bike ride for Easter Monday through Warea farmlands is in its planning stages. I will report on that event in the next TOM. Repairs to our TOPEC hut at the Meeting of the Waters will take place after our bike ride. The Lions phone books should be delivered by now.

As usual, my plug for new members: Lions is a great club for fellowship, with a laugh or two thrown in.

Until next month,

Lion Merv Hooker 752 4086.

Rich Pickings

Hello, hope everyone is well.

First of all I would like to take this opportunity to send my condolences to family and friends of Craig Blinkhorne, of which there are many, who was tragically taken from them far too early.

On that note, it has been a tragic time on our roads in recent times, and the Coastal area has been over represented. What is very disappointing is that a number of accidents that occur have drink, speed or both as a mitigating factor. Already this year the number of drink drivers we have caught in this area has sky rocketed and this is unacceptable.

I know the options in the rural area for getting home are limited but, in saying that, I also know that the local pubs are all too keen to get you home safe. When they run a courtesy vehicle, use it.

I do not get paid enough to visit loved ones and inform them that they have just lost a valued member of their family because of a bad decision someone has made. Ask yourself, "Is it worth it?"

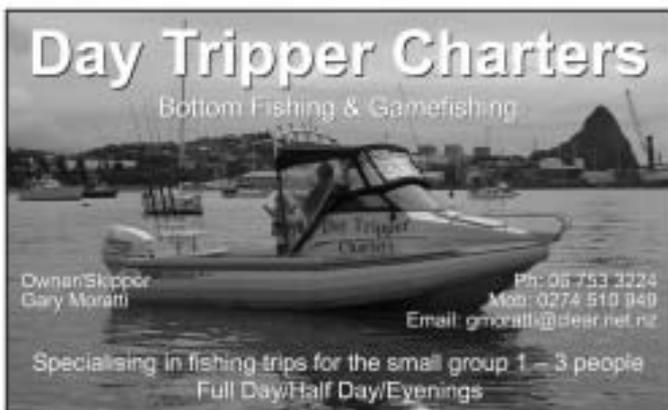
On a good note, I have noticed most of the youth in my area are wearing their helmets. Now if I could just get their parents to do the same . . .

Enough about crime, did you know that Albatrosses can sleep while they are flying?

Must go, but before I do, contemplate this, "Why is it called a TV set when you only get one?" and "Why does your nose run and your feet smell?"

Catch you all later. Be safe.

Rich



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Jessica Williams and Gareth Mullan's "almost perfect" wedding day

Jessica Williams, daughter of Anthony and Kerstin, and Gareth Mullan, son of Francis and the late Jennifer, were married on 5 December 2008. The ceremony was conducted on Anthony and Kerstin's Puniho farm, Sw-n-y-Mor (pronounced soon-a-more), which is Welsh for "sound of the sea". The wedding was meticulously planned and promised to be perfect. It was . . . almost!

The day had dawned clear and still, and a white marquee contrasted strikingly against a backdrop of green farmland and intensely blue sky. Inside the marquee on that almost-perfect day, Jessica and her groom stood before the gathered guests. Jessica looked stunning in a white, form-fitting gown embellished with Swarovski crystals. In the decorative lacing in the small of her back, she carried the wedding rings that had been exchanged by her paternal grandparents in 1849. Gareth and his attendants, Daniel Williams and Kieren Young, were handsomely outfitted in dark suits, white shirts and plump, white ties. The bridesmaids, Rebecca Williams and Liana Gifkins, gloved in orange gowns with coffee coloured trim.



The ceremony was unfolding and the moment for Jessica and Gareth to repeat their vows had arrived. It was then that the sounds of a farmyard ruckus reached the tent. While a blissfully unaware Adrienne O'Sullivan continued the service and the bride and groom said "I do," Jessica, Gareth, their parents and assembled guests saw the bulls, which had smashed a gate with their fighting, sending numerous cows lumbering between the guests' parked cars. While one guest thought it might have been his fault for leaving a gate open and the poor sharemilker feared for his job, Kerstin pronounced it "the funniest thing that happened at the wedding."

There were beautiful and touching moments too. Jessica and Gareth were honoured to have Jessica's paternal grandmother, eighty-year-old Cienwen Williams, as one of the guests. She had travelled alone from Wales for the occasion. Gareth's maternal grandfather, Len Butler, was also there. These two special grandparents acted as witnesses and signed the register.

The reception was held in Oaonui Hall, which was swathed in white silk. Black curtains sprinkled with twinkling fairy lights provided a dramatic backdrop for the head table. The orange runners across the black linen tablecloths were strewn with coffee beans. It was in this setting that the bride and groom cut their three-tiered cake, which Kerstin had made from recipes that had been used for her and Anthony's wedding cake and for Jennifer and Francis' wedding cake.

Jessica and Gareth have made their home on Gareth's family farm at Rahoitu. We wish them a long, happy and prosperous future together.

By Kerry Lilley



COASTAL TARANAKI SCHOOL

Clowning Around



On Tuesday and Wednesday of Week 4, two clowns came to CTS for Year 0 - Year 8 students. We dressed up in funny clown clothes, all bright and snazzy. We painted our own face like a clown.

We performed balloon tricks and a tight rope activity. Strawberry and her mother picked two people to go up on the rope and try to get past each other.

It was fun and very funny! Strawberry is ten years old. She is the youngest clown in New Zealand.

By Ella Beaumont and Shearyn Adlam, Year 8 reporters

Coastal Taranaki School Book Fair

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Both of these books are in the library!

The Gargoyle by Andrew Davidson

This is an unusual story about a man who is badly burnt and is lying in a hospital bed. He gets a visit from a weird but enchanting woman who tells him strange tales about herself and him, stories of their past lives. The novel is set in modern times with lively interludes of their history together. At first he doesn't believe her but as time and tale continue he changes in many ways.

I enjoyed this book immensely, primarily for the historical descriptions of the characters' "past lives". They were stories that I found gripping.

The Monsters of Templeton by Lauren Groff

The cover drew me to this book. I know it shouldn't influence you, but hey!

Willie returns to her hometown with a broken heart and discovers that her mother had been lying to her about the identity of her father. She sets out to find out the truth, and along the way we learn interesting things about her friends and her family's past. The way the author tells this story and the pictures both draw you into her life. I found myself really wanting Willie to discover the answers.

Delwyn Pearce

Library Manager

CTS Community Library - OKATO

Coastal Golfers

It was Thursday 12 March when Hamish Kape, Alex Kalin, Joe Brophy and Jamie Connett went to Waitara to represent Coastal Taranaki School for golf. It was the opening day for Years 5 to 8, and there were over 100 kids in the tournament. Hamish came first in the whole competition, Alex came 3rd, Joe came 4th and Jamie came 6th.

Hamish said the best part was that he played "pretty good". Alex thought that his best part was when he got his long, long putt — about 16 metres. Joe said his best part was his driving. Jamie liked winning the score counter, which everyone wanted.

By Matthew Moffitt Year 8 Reporter



Our hero golfers, from left - Alex Kalin, Joe Brophy, Jamie Connett and Hamish Kape.

Visual Arts Department 2009

AFTER SCHOOL ART CLASSES FOR YEARS 1 to 8

There is an exciting opportunity for our Years 1 to 8 students to enjoy specialist after school **Art classes** run by Karla Jorgensen. These will take place in our **Art room on Tuesday afternoons, beginning 2nd term: 28th April for Years 1 to 4 and 2nd June for Years 5 to 8.** Spaces are limited to 15 students in each age group, so be sure not to miss out and enrol your child today. The cost is \$20 per student and will be required to be paid at their first lesson. Other arrangements for payments can be made. Please discuss options with Jacky Kopu. Phone 752 4022. We also will be inviting Rahotu Primary and Omata Primary students to attend.

"Creative Creatures" - Years 1 to 4

Students will create a large mystical "puppet" creature. Using mixed media (such as; card, textiles, glitter, bamboo, feathers, paint, buttons, string and found objects) students will be encouraged to explore their imagination to create creatures that will seem to come to life through movement and expression. At the end of the five weeks students will proudly parade their amazing creations through assembly.

"Wearable and Magnetic Art" - Years 5 to 8

Students will create a series of magnets, brooches, and medals using mixed media and collage. Using mixed media (such as; card, textiles, felt, glitter, paint, buttons, photocopied images and found objects) students will be encouraged to explore their imagination to create art that can be worn in the form of a brooch or medal and also magnets. Students need to bring small found objects and other materials such as fabric, lace, beer bottle lids, miniature toys, etc.

Dates: Tuesdays, 3:15 to 5:00pm

Term 2, June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30.

Chase Chases the Waves at Fitzroy

Chase Yates, a Year 8 student from Coastal Taranaki School, recently took part in a surfing competition at Fitzroy Beach for Taranaki students.

What's the best part about surfing?

Just being on the wave.

What got you in to surfing?

My dad and my step brother Jordan and the movie Blue Crush.

How many competitions have you been in?

Two

What was your first competition like?

Scary, nervous and at the same time it was awesome.

How long have you been surfing?

10 months.

Have you ever fallen of or hurt your self on or in a wave?

Broke my toe, hit my head, cuts and scraps, worst thing was when I just about drowned.

What are your surfing results?

I came last in my first comp and in my second one I came 3rd.

Thank you, Chase.

Hazel Baker, Year 8 reporter



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Okato Swimming Club

Season 2008 – 2009

This season, for the first time ever, our club amalgamated with Swimming New Zealand. Swimmers also had the option of individually amalgamating, which provides the opportunity to compete competitively with other swimmers of their age throughout New Zealand and have their times recorded with Swimming New Zealand. Otherwise they could compete in the non-competitive section in carnivals, which many of our swimmers opted to do.

We had two "competitive swimmers", Anna Crowley and Jenna Barrett. They went on to compete nationally, and swam in the Taranaki Champs. Then Jenna moved on to qualify for the New Zealand Junior Nationals in Wellington. Fantastic effort, girls!

Other Okato swimmers swam in carnivals throughout Taranaki over the season. They competed at the Aquatic Centre against NP Aquatics, in Bell Block, Inglewood, and Opunake, all with great results.

This year we were lucky enough to have a fantastic sponsor, AWE, which helped the club purchase six new starting blocks that were made by Coastal Welders. This is a great asset to the Okato swimming club. A huge thank you goes out to AWE, as we are very grateful.

Many new members joined our Learn to Swim programme this year. These lessons were held on Tuesday and Thursday nights for 30 minutes, and we had some fantastic results. We already had some of these children confidently swimming a length in the Club Champs.

Tuesday nights were our training nights, and some of these swimmers were swimming at least 1000m - 2000m. The results at our Club Champs really showed all their hard work. Thursday nights were our race nights when swimmers swam various events and tried to achieve their personal best times. Many of them did that - each week!

Recently our swimmers have been swimming their little hearts out. They started on Tuesday 3 March by swimming 400m freestyle, which is 16 lengths of our 25m pool. There was some great effort done here, as some of the children were as young as 7 or 8 years old.

On the Thursday 5 March it was the 800m swim, which is 32 lengths non-stop. Again, it really showed some gutsy effort, especially by the younger swimmers. Brandi Dakin-Spershott (aged 7) and Anna Crowley (aged 8) were amongst this group and swimming faster than some of the older swimmers. Jenna Barrett set new club records for both the 400m and the 800m in the 12 and under age group.

We then headed into the first of our two Club Champ nights. On Tuesday 10 March the weather was not kind to us and it was freezing! There were a few blue children, nevertheless, all events were swum and many new club records were set. Camden Lacey took 20 seconds off the 25m butterfly in the 8yr boys and Brandi Dakin-Spershott took 12 seconds off the 100m freestyle. Anna Crowley also showed her speed in the 50m breaststroke, taking 17 seconds off the club record for her 8yr age group. These were just a few of the great swims that night.

On the Thursday 12 March the weather once again was not

on our side, but the effort of all was huge. More records were set and there were some great swims and personal bests achieved. Jenna Barrett showed her class by setting another 10 new club records over those two nights!

Our club lost several of its older swimmers this year, but we have gained many keen young swimmers. Our main age group is aged 10 and under, so at Club Champs this age group was very hard fought. Congratulations to all of you! With great Okato spirit you all swim like champions!

Catch you next season.

Okato Cricket Club

4th Grade Competition

In what has become a fiercely contested grade in the last few years, even more so with the addition on new side Tukapa and a few old premier players starting to appear - Okato has triumphed at last!!!!!!

- vs NPOB win by 121 runs.
- vs Tukapa win by 4 wickets.
- vs Oakura win by 3 wickets.
- vs Woodleigh win by 48 runs.
- vs Merrilands abandoned due to rain.
- vs Mangorei win by 9 wickets.
- vs NPMU White win by 4 wickets.
- vs NPMU Black win by 217 runs.
- vs Tukapa lost by 8 runs.
- vs Oakura win by 6 wickets.
- vs Merrilands abandoned due to rain.
- North Taranaki Semi final - vs Woodleigh win by 5 wickets.
- North Taranaki Final - vs Merrilands win by 46 runs.

Taranaki Final

Stratford 72 all out. J Johnson 23.
 Okato 72-2 11.4 overs.
 C Moffitt 3-5.
 A Lane 48 not out.
 J Perry 5-21.

Honours Board

C McEldowney 204 runs
 C McEldowney 124 runs..
 J Perry 122 not out.

Players to mention for battling during the season during the season are definitely Chris McEldowney and James Perry. Bowling wise, Craig Moffitt has bowled a great line and length all season, whilst Andrew Lane has picked up more than his share of wickets. Later in the season James Perry has also proved a handful. I'm pretty sure Grylls and Tubs have one hand each on the Duck cup.

Thanks to captain Dan Chamberlain for dominating the toss and rallying the team in the field.

A big thanks to sponsors: Okato Four Square - our shirt sponsors; JFM contracting - Jared McBride; Totally Toyota - Trent Doyle.

Watch out for Okato's cricketers in a higher grade next season.

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On 10 March 2009 the courts were patched and repaired. The turf was laid, followed by 19 tonnes of Waikato river sand. A special thank you to all who helped with both the laying of the courts and the provision of refreshments. It was a very busy week. We hope to have the opening of the courts on 4 July 2009 with the Davis Cup coach and some of the Davis Cup team members present.

The Warea Club has three mid-week ladies' teams in Section 3, 4 and 6, and many keen community members who use the facilities. We plan to use the courts throughout the winter for Friday night tennis anytime after 5:30pm, when all are welcome.

If you have any queries, phone Maria van der Poel on 752 8130 or Jan Brophy on 763 8666.



Rolling it out!

All done!



Coastal inline hockey goes all the way . . .

Our locals have come up trumps with selection into the New Zealand Inline Hockey teams and will now take flight to Perth, Australia in April. Kayden Gibson, Okato, attends Coastal Taranaki School and will represent the under-16 team, Abbey Bridgeman, Okato will represent the Junior Women's Team and Khord Kopu, ex Warea will represent the Senior Men's Team. Khord's mother, Jacky Kopu, and Kayden's mother, Amara Gibson, will also be travelling to Perth, as the officials for the team.

Khord is not unfamiliar with travel as he toured to Slovakia in July last year representing the Senior Men's Team. Khord was originally selected to play for the under-20 team but when the Senior goalie became unavailable, Khord was chosen for the Senior Men's since he had experience playing in this team in Slovakia. Abbey toured the United States last year representing the Junior Women's Team.

The players had to put many hours of play and dedication into their games, playing in both the Nationals and Regionals during the season. They then became eligible to trial for the New Zealand team. The training continues within their clubs and all must ensure their fitness levels are up to speed. To enhance their fitness they must maintain a healthy diet or at least try, though it can be difficult when you are flatting!

Khord is also trialing to go to the World Championship that will be held in July in Italy. All of this travel can be very costly and anyone who wishes to kindly make a donation to sponsor these fine sports people can contact Jacky Kopu on 752 4022 during the day.

We wish Kayden, Abbey and Khord all the very best in their venture "Down Under". We will keep you posted on their progress.

By Milly Carr

Japan Karate Association

Okato karate kids Ethan Corry and Matthew Hooker have just passed their first grading, earning them a black tip on their white belts. Their first grading of 9 gets them on their way to achieving black belts. Matthew and Ethan train twice a week under the expertise of Sensei Jim Hoskin. Training nights are Tuesday 5.30pm - 6.30pm and Thursday 6pm - 7pm in the Oakura Hall. New members are most welcome. Please phone Jim Hoskin on 752 7337.

If there is sufficient interest, a club may be opened in Okato.

By Nicci Hooker



Ethan and Cory with their hard won certificates.



And again, in action..



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“Hold the line please.”

Lorraine Whittle talks about working on Okato's manual telephone exchange

Last month I outlined a brief history of Okato's manual telephone exchange. This month I talked with Lorraine Whittle about her work experiences. “I said I'd never work on the telephone exchange,” announced Lorraine by way of introduction, “but I ended up working there for 4 years, from early in 1971 until it went automatic in 1975.”



Lorraine Whittle at “the board”.

PHOTO SUPPLIED BY LORRAINE

During her time there, the manual exchange was located behind Okato's purpose-built post office on Carthew Street, and all incoming and outgoing phone calls were routed through her and her colleagues. The exceptions were for calls made between people who were already connected to each other on “party lines.” They could call each other at will.

The exchange was manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week by a staff of eight, including Hayden Butterworth, Eileen Gray, Arthur Goodwin, Trevor Hooker, Nola Wooldridge, Ann Sim, Diane Putt (now Rookes), Jeanette Putt, Ngaire Biddle, Erin Lawn and Alan Niwa. There were between one to three operators on duty at a time, depending on the day and time. Lorraine worked about 42½ hours a week over five shifts. She was guaranteed two days off in 35 (a weekend). If there was no one on holiday she could get a second weekend off. Lorraine quite enjoyed the daytime shift work. “You could go to New Plymouth for a bit of retail therapy and be back in time for work,” she said. Lucky for her, the men covered the night shifts. However the irregular working hours meant there was little point belonging to groups that required regular attendance.

There were about 500 subscribers on the exchange at the time, extending between Tataraimaka and Bayly Roads. The system consisted of three boards, each about 30cm wide and 90cm high with fifteen plugs. Above the plugs was a bank of 100 shutters, each representing a potential phone call. The

boards could be operated separately or connected to the others if fewer operators were on duty. When a caller lifted their receiver a shutter would drop to reveal his or her number. The operator would then insert a plug into the appropriate socket to make contact and the caller would request a connection. The connection was made when the operator linked the caller's line to that of the requested subscriber's line and, if it was a party line, identified the subscriber required by transmitting the delegated Morse code signal. Sometimes a shutter was stuck and the operator had to try to work out which one was “trying to drop.” If the power went off, the operator would have to use a crank handle to generate power for the board.

The system often became overloaded. “All the plugs would be up and more shutters would be dropping,” explained Lorraine. Then it would be impossible to take any more calls. Weekends could be particularly hectic, and on Saturday mornings the operators were kept busy dealing with telegrams in addition to answering the phones. “Diane and I were on duty one Saturday morning when two well-known local families had weddings,” Lorraine recalled. “We had to cope with dozens of telegrams wishing the couples well. It was chaotic!”

Saturday was sports' day and after the matches were over there were numerous calls to and from the pub or the various clubrooms. Sometimes, there were demands like, “Come home and milk the cows!” To top it off, if it was racing day there were also numerous calls from the local TAB to the New Plymouth branch.

On the other hand, when Coronation Street was on everything would go quiet. The instant it finished, all the shutters would drop. “You could still hear the music fading in the background,” Lorraine grinned. It was the same on Saturdays and Sundays when “films” were screened on TV. Lorraine would routinely make a “cuppa” just before they were due to finish. “You'd have no show afterwards,” she said.

(We'll just put you on hold there, Lorraine's story continues in the next issue of TOM.)

Story by Kerry Lilley



Lorraine Whittle today.

PHOTO BY KERRY LILLEY

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TOM Baby

Meet our TOM baby for the month:

Miley May Elizabeth Davidson, born on 15th January 2009 at Taranaki Base Hospital, weighing 6lbs13oz. Her elder doting brother is young Orlando James Rolfe Davidson, who was born on 1st September 2007. Miley and Orlando live locally in Okato town-ship with their parents Emily and James.

The choice of names for the children originates from both James' and Emily's families. James' grandfather was James Rolfe Davidson and Emily's grandmothers are Edna May and Mary Elizabeth. James' mother has Elizabeth as her middle name.

Emily is currently on maternity leave from her position as Head of Faculty in the Art Department at Coastal Taranaki School and James holds a similar position down the coast at Opunake High School. "Having a husband as a school teacher means we get to enjoy holidays together and I can look forward to seeing him return from work in daylight hours. It's just great," says Emily. Previously James and Emily lived in a schoolhouse at Pungarehu, and in 2007 they had their home built in the village. "We absolutely love it here in Okato and I cannot believe how many other mothers are living in the community. It's great to have some friends living nearby." Miley and, especially, Orlando enjoy the playgroup on a Wednesday at St Lukes Hall in Okato. Emily intends on visiting Playcentre in the near future

By Milly Carr



Miley and Orlando with mum, Emily.

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Clubs and Groups

The Okato Squash Club:
 Monday Club
 Night begins 16 March.

Merial/ Riverlands/ EcoLab:
 Fun Tournament 27 and 28 March - Okato Domain, Kaihihi Road, Okato, Ph 752 4804 (entries close 20 March).

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Coastal Garden and Arts Safari

Well another Safari has been and gone. Many thanks to all who took part by displaying their gardens and crafts. Ticket sales were slightly down in comparison to last year but our donations to Hospice Taranaki will be \$1000.00 plus individual public donations, a significant contribution. Thank you to the public who bought tickets.

The Lucky Gardener was: Judith Bell.
 Lucky ticket holders were: Gwen Flavell, Opunake.
 Margaret Holmes, Oaonui.
 Carol Mack, Okaiawa.

Next year is our 10th anniversary so, "Come on Okato and the Coast, let's make it a big one!" Our charity will be the House for Karen. Anyone out there who has something to put on show for next year, please phone Margaret on 752 4230 or Carol on 752 4429.
The Safari Committee

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Welcome to Okato Playcentre

Okato Playcentre is a parent run, early childhood education provider. Playcentre is based on "parents as first teachers" and "children learning through play". Parents and children learn together.

Session times: Tuesday and Thursday 9.30am-12.30pm.

Ages: 0 - 6 years.

Cost: Under 2yrs free, 2yrs+ \$20 per term (\$5 per additional child). Casual enrolments pay \$5 per session, but do no duties.

Contact: Rachel on 752 4463 or Kerryn on 752 8095.

We are keen for more people to join Okato Playcentre. Please don't be put off by the "stories" about the hard graft here! Many people believe that our local Playcentre is all about mowing lawns, mopping floors, cleaning toilets and doing courses, when really Playcentre is a great, fun place for both kids and parents, and with minimal commitment.

Below we respond to some of the common misconceptions about Playcentre. We hope you will take a fresh look at what Okato Playcentre has to offer your family.

Common Playcentre Misconceptions:

"Its hard work - imagine having to clean up after all those kids each time."

We operate a duty roster system, and each member is rostered on to do only 2-3 duties a term. Everybody helps pack up and tidy up before leaving, so the duty person is only left with mopping the floor before heading home too. Mums with new babies get a 6-month maternity leave from duties.

"You have to mow the lawns."

In 2009 we hope to employ somebody to mow the lawns and then this generally won't be a task any longer. At worst you may be rostered to mow the lawns once or twice a year.

"You have to study and attend courses."

There is the opportunity to attend free child education courses. However, this is entirely up to you.

"You have to provide morning tea."

For each session, we all bring one thing towards morning tea e.g. a piece of fruit, cheese and crackers, popcorn, a few biscuits, a handful of raisins etc. Nobody is ever expected to provide morning tea for everybody! That said, home baking for the adults is never turned away.

"The kids get too dirty and messy."

This can sometimes be true, however better to play with all the messy stuff like painting, play dough and clay at Playcentre than at home. Just bring a change of clothes and then your child can go home clean and dry.

"It's a big commitment."

Your commitment can be as big or small as suits your family. Come and go as you wish on any Tuesday or Thursday. Your two or three duty days are the only committed mornings each term. Monthly meetings are always a good night out, and not compulsory. Casual enrolments have no commitments at all.

"Everyone knows everyone else already, it's too clicky."

This is true, but give it three weeks and you'll be one of the gang as well!

Playcentre is not just for the kids, we have a great social side too.



Tadpole watching is big here.

TOM CLASSIFIEDS

BEFORE & AFTER

SCHOOL care required in Okato for Year 7 Coastal Taranaki School pupil, 7.45am - 8.30am and then after school, 3.10pm - 5:00pm approx. Please phone Janine on 027 6788100 days or 752 4499 evngs.

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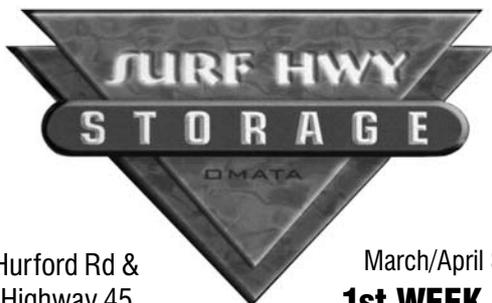
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