

St Paul's gains another stained glass window

St Paul's Church in Okato has recently received a beautiful legacy. With the closure of St Nicholas's in Rahotu and thanks to the generosity of a local family, the foyer of St Paul's Church now features a stunning, stained glass window.

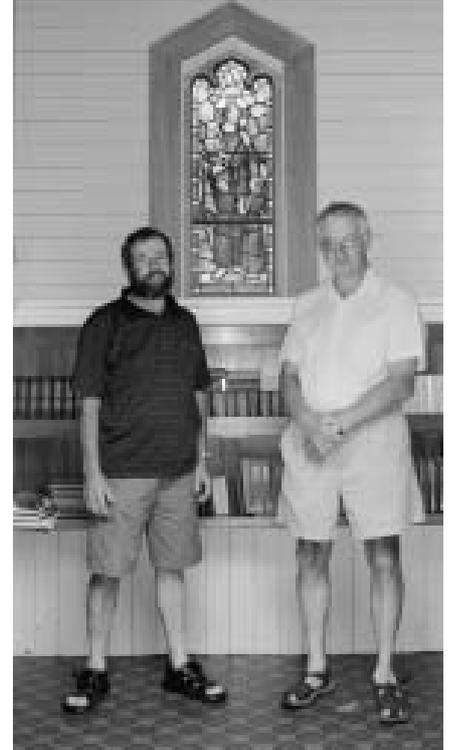
In 1959 the Gibson family – Massan, Alexander (Alex), Donald and Arthur Gibson, had applied to the Rahotu Anglican Committee to have a stained glass window installed in their church in memory of their deceased parents, George and Isabella (Jane). They submitted a proposed design of Jesus with two children created by Miller Studios Ltd of Dunedin, which was approved. However the Faculties Committee of the Waikato Anglican Diocese advised that some of the finished products by Miller Studios had "not been very satisfactory." The family took heed of this information and instead commissioned the English firm Messrs. James Powell and Sons (Whitefriars) Ltd, to do the work. Whitefriars was a well-known glasshouse that had been making high quality glass pieces in exceptional colours for 250 years. The business unfortunately closed in 1980. A comparison with the other, albeit beautiful, New Zealand-made stained glass windows in St Paul's testifies to the wisdom of their decision.

The completed window was shipped to Wellington on the SS Rangitoto and installed above the altar at St Nicholas' in 1961. The final cost was 94 pounds and 12 shillings, which the four brothers shared. To the disappointment of the Gibson family and the alarm of the

manufacturers, it was thought at first that the distinctive signature in the form of a Whitefriar motif had been overlooked. However, it was eventually discovered in the extreme right hand corner of the window. This motif increases the historical and monetary value of the piece.

Due to declining attendances, St Nicholas's Church has now closed and will be sold by the Anglican Church. Because George Gibson had been a lay preacher at Okato and to prevent the window from being lost or forgotten, his daughter-in-law Tansie felt it would be fitting that it to be donated to St Paul's. It was cleaned and repaired by Richard Landers and installed by Master Builder, Rodney Smith at a total cost of \$2,500.

The stained glass window donated in memory of James and Isabella Gibson.



Brothers Bernard (left) and Willie Gibson, flank St Paul's newest stained glass window.

Again, the bill was generously borne by the Gibson family. The parish will celebrate the installation and unveil the window sometime in February or March.

Story and photos by Kerry Lilley

Win tickets to the Simply Red concert with TOM!

(Details on page 6)



editorial FROM THE TOM ZONE

2009 – It will be a great year.

So far it is going to plan. Fantastic weather is making the holiday season a typical Kiwi summer. There has been plenty of opportunity for swimming, camping and fishing. We have been the recipients of some delicious crayfish, paua and mussels. There's nothing quite like the food you collect yourself. Our veggie garden has also done us proud and we are now savouring the sweet flavours of our tomatoes and scarlet runner beans.

Here at TOM we are set for another informative and interesting year, sharing your stories and getting more clubs and groups on board with their updates.

Take One Moment with TOM

Tracey

**Deadline for March issue –
Copy and ads 20 February, delivery 11 March**

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Greetings for 2009

This can be such a busy time of year for many of us, easing children into their school routine, following up on New Year's resolutions and tackling that never-ending honey-do list.

Despite the gloomy global economic climate we have much to be grateful for. Let's celebrate the human spirit and courage of men and women past and present. Every Day's a Good Day and To the Max are a couple of inspirational true life stories and we have many more to choose.

Or else transport yourself to another place, plan a holiday or simply dream about the endless possibilities. Michael Palin's New Europe and Family OE (a really useful guide for travelling overseas with your children) might fill the bill. Cloud Garden, "...a true story of adventure, survival and extreme horticulture", is highly recommended though not for the squeamish.

New Zealander Maxine Alterio's Ribbons of Grace is a beautiful novel set in 19th century Otago in the goldfields. Although fictional she "...blends historical evidence with historical imagination".

We carry a selection of tramping and surfing books and magazines. Come on in ladies for the Girl's Guide to Surfing.

Here at the library you can find all the latest information regarding the Council's campgrounds review and survey forms as well as its review of rural subdivisions.

Happy reading,

Karen and Vincenza

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Water Restrictions in Place for Okato Residents

20 January 2008

Low water flows in the Mangatete Stream have required New Plymouth District Council to introduce partial water restrictions for Okato residents.

The restrictions mean there is a total ban on the use of sprinklers, irrigation systems and unattended hoses. Hand-held hoses may be used on the odds and evens system: At odd-numbered houses on odd-numbered days, and at even-numbered houses on even-numbered days.

"We have a consent for drawing water from the Mangatete Stream but its current flows are at a level that requires us to introduce water conservation measures," says Manager Water and Wastes Brent Manning.

"It is therefore necessary for residents to keep their water use to a minimum until the partial water ban is lifted."

The rest of the district is reasonably dry, but recent rain has helped freshen the ground and keep the water flowing well in the district's streams.

"However water conservation is always a good idea at this time of year no matter where you live, as a few days of sunshine and wind can change the picture significantly," says Mr Manning.

"The less water we use, the less that needs to be treated – and that means savings in money as well as water supplies."

By Brent Manning

Okato Lions

Hello readers.

Greetings for 2009 from the Okato Lions. We do hope you all enjoyed your Christmas break – it's always a good time spent with family and friends.

Yes, we are into the new year with its sunny mild weather. The silage is well in and the hay is nearly there. The "girls" are producing well and so they should with green feed up to their eyeballs!

I am writing this edition for TOM on 24 January. Nine other Lions and I have just returned from the "Round The Mountain Cycle Race" where we acted as marshals at various points between Patua and the Stony River bridge.

Our New Year's barbeque went off well at Bernard & Pauline's home last month. Twenty-eight of us enjoyed a meal and drinks and plenty of chatter. We hope to carry out repairs to our hut at TOPEC next month. We will install 4x1 rails around the base of the hut, paint, and erect new spouting.

As you have probably heard Coastal School was successful in obtaining a school bus shelter through the Totalspan Steel Sheds & Building firm. The bus shelter is one of four allocated to the Taranaki region from a total of 120 nationwide. Okato Lions applied for the shelter on behalf of the Coastal School in Okato. It should be installed by the time you are reading this.

On 1 March quite a few members and spouses have arranged a group booking to see McPhail & Gadsby in New Plymouth – which I'm sure they will find very enjoyable.

As usual new members are always welcome, so please think about joining us. I am sure you would like our fellowship and the outings we have planned.

Until next time, keep safe.

Lion, Merv Hooker, 752 4086

Coastal Garden and Art Safari

Would you enjoy visiting local coastal gardens and also see displays of arts and crafts?

Eighteen gardens from Rahotu to Manaia will be open on the weekend of 14th and 15th February. Gardens will be open 9am to 5.30pm.

The price of tickets is \$5.00 for the entire weekend. Each ticket includes a programme and a chance at the lucky draw for three prizes that will be held on the 15th.

Tickets are available at:

Big Jims Garden Centre, New Plymouth

The Girlz Garden Centre, New Plymouth

The Crafty Fox, Oakura

Four Square, Okato

Four Square, Rahotu

Four Square, Opunake

Library, Opunake

Four Square, Manaia

Bruce & Kath's Dairy, Kaponga

Garden Edge, Hawera

Woody's Garden Centre, Hawera

Information Centre, Hawera

A dedicated Coastal Garden and Art Safari committee has again made this event possible and will donate the proceeds to Taranaki Hospice.

If you are interested in joining the committee in the future or want to show your garden please contact Rose or Margaret below. "Next year we will be celebrating 10 years of gardens on display and we welcome anyone," says Margaret.

Rose Ratahi 06 761 8809

Margaret Goodwin 06 7524 203

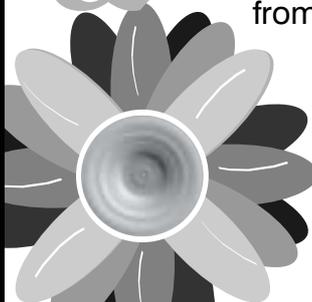
By Milly Carr

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Vehicles on Kaihihi Road Beach

Recently there have been a number of complaints about quads and 4WD vehicles racing around on sensitive areas of the beach at Lower Kaihihi Road. Of primary concern is the damage being done to the upper dune area near the marginal strip (the forested area along the cliffs/banks that is administered by the Department of Conservation).

Over the past years, sand has been building up in the area due to a large amount of sediment input down the Stony River (a result of the slips running into the Pyramid Stream). Plants are now colonising the dunes which will increase dune stability and allow them to increase in size.

Sand dunes of this nature provide important habitat for nesting shorebirds such as oystercatchers and terns. These species are extremely prone to disturbance as they nest on the upper shore and their nests are easily run over or stood on. Although currently rare on this particular piece of coast, there is the potential for the arrival of more shorebirds if disturbance can be kept to a minimum. Many shorebirds are found on nearby Komene Road Beach and we hope they will increase their home range.

Dunes also provide protection against erosion to the land behind. Although there is currently an abundance of sand in this area, it generally comes and goes over time. It is important that dunes are allowed to stabilise during times of accretion (when sand is deposited).

By and large, the majority of beach users are very respectful of coastal environments. We have no problem with people using vehicles and quads to access surf and fishing spots as long as they minimise their impact while doing so. At a recent site visit we were disappointed to see tyre marks over a small dune area that is naturally developing. Marram has started to colonise the dune, but vehicles are hindering progress.

The New Plymouth District Council has also been fielding complaints about the issue and we have been in discussion with them about solutions to the problem. A simple option to reduce disturbance to the upper dune area is to block off vehicle access. This is something that we do not wish to do! We have agreed with the Council that we will monitor driver behaviour on the beach but will be forced to close access if vehicles continue to disrupt sensitive habitats within the area. We ask the locals to assist us to prevent this from happening. Please:

- 3 Refrain from driving/riding on the upper dune area and areas colonised by plants.
- 4 Discourage others from driving/riding over these areas.
- 5 If you see people using the beach irresponsibly, record registration plates/vehicle details and notify DOC at 759 0350 or 0800 DOC Hotline, 0800 362 468 after hours).
- 6 Educate others about the effects of vehicles on sensitive dune areas.

Thanks for your help!

Callum Lilley

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Okato Tennis Club

We trust that everyone has had a great start to the New Year and are all ready to pick up a racket and get back on the court.

The New Zealand Army helped us to complete the fencing that had already begun and to level off the grass area at the front of the section. Thank you guys and gals, you all worked really hard in the rain.

I am pleased to advise that we have now been successful in getting a grant of \$10,000 from the New Zealand Community Trust that will go towards completion of the fencing around the courts. Plans are under way and this should start in April when the tennis season is finished.

All our teams did well in their respective competitions during the last round and they are now getting ready to begin again this year. We currently have an A3 Grade Team, an after school Junior Team, and three midweek Ladies Teams. We will be starting an additional new midweek team this round. We wish them all well and trust that they will enjoy themselves.

If you are interested in joining in and playing some tennis, come along on a Wednesday night to twilight tennis at 6.30pm or to ladies tennis on a Wednesday morning at 10am. Both of these are relaxed and cater for all abilities. Juniors play after school on Friday 3pm to 4pm.

Club contacts are Maree Moffitt 752-8107, Raewynne Lawn 752-4466 and Angela Phillips 752-4451.

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"What is the name of 'Simply Red's' latest album?"

Okato Eyesores

You will undoubtedly be aware of the appalling and deteriorating condition of Okato's former primary school and of the doctor's surgery, both government-owned properties. In an effort to have the situation rectified Jim Lawn, on behalf of the Okato Community Trust, has written to Members of Parliament Shane Ardern (Taranaki/King Country), Chester Borrows (Wanganui), Pita Sharples (Maori Affairs), Anne Tolley (Education) and Jonathan Young (New Plymouth).

The Trust has placed a petition and copy of this letter at local businesses, to remain until the end of February. If you agree with the sentiments expressed in the letter, please call in at one of the local businesses and sign the petition. You may sign a petition only once or you will invalidate your signature.

The letter reads as follows:

Dear Member of Parliament,

Congratulations on your electoral success in November and we wish you every success in helping govern our country.

We, on behalf of the Okato Community and others, would like to bring to your attention the deplorable situation the last Labour Government brought to our once pretty little town with the closure in 2004 of the Okato Primary School and reconstructing and integrating this school on another site with the Okato College.

We believe this action by the Labour Government, and its failure to remedy the same, contributed to the Labour Party losing the New Plymouth electorate by some 100 votes.

The old primary school building, as well as the old doctor's surgery (another deteriorating, government-owned building), are government assets surplus to requirements and are supposedly to be now earmarked for Treaty settlement. With the deterioration of these buildings and therefore a rapid loss of value, this will cost the New Zealand taxpayer more to fund a Treaty settlement.

Surely it would be more advantageous to the New Zealand taxpayer that recipients of any Treaty settlement and the Okato Community to have these old buildings sold and removed; with the resultant bare land maintained or sold as farmland, residential development, or used as a park and the monies received from sale put into a fund for Treaty settlements.

On the edge of the school property is the town cenotaph honouring those who fought in war, of which some paid the supreme sacrifice for our country. In close proximity is a roundabout erected in memory of our early settlers and pioneers who would be appalled and greatly saddened to see how their early work and great sacrifice for this community and their country is not being shown the appreciation it deserves by those who have governed our country in recent times.



Top: historic Room 10 is boarded up against vandals.

Above: the baths are derelict and dangerous

Right: rubbish litters the cenotaph precincts.

(Photos by Kerry Lilley)

TOM Baby

This month I met up with baby **Ava Charlotte Radcliffe**, daughter to Cherie and Jason who live on Cumming Street, Okato. Ava was born on 18th May 2008 at Taranaki Base Hospital. She is now eight and a half months and has an older sister and brother, Ashlin and Liam.

Cherie says they chose the name Ava just because they liked it. They have now discovered it was one of the top names listed for 2008.

Cherie trained as a Beauty Therapist in 2001 and continues to do some beauty therapy treatment from her home or she will visit yours. At present she is working part time as a Support Worker for Pathways in New Plymouth. Jason owns his own business, Coastal Section Maintenance, which provides lawn-mowing, pruning, tree cutting etc. When Cherie works her two days Jason is able to stay at home, a perfect situation for all.

At present Ava is exploring the world by crawling and pulling herself up. Having Ava as our neighbour we have come to the conclusion that she has also found her voice! We love hearing her babbling and squeals of excitement.

By Milly Carr



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Reproductive Care

Natural Rhythms, Naturopathic Medicine in Okato is hosting a public talk on "Reproductive Care" at Seed Coastal Organics on Tuesday 26 February. Entry is by gold coin and partners are welcome.

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The Travels of an Extraordinary Bear



Lesley and "The Travels of an Extraordinary Bear"
(Photo by Kerry Lilley)

Rainbow Teddy is an extraordinary bear who has travelled all the way to Kharikhola in Nepal to befriend a little boy. Lesley Dowding has written a children's book, "The Travels of an Extraordinary Bear" about his big adventure. It is illustrated with photographs taken on location by Inglewood businesswoman Robin Drake. Robin, with plantsman and avid trekker Allan Jellyman, established a charity in 2004 called "The Band Aid Box" which provides funds and volunteer support for the medical, dental, optical and educational needs of Kharikola village and surrounding areas where Rainbow Bear has gone to live.

Every year, members of a volunteer medical team including doctors, nurses, a dental surgeon and a pharmacist pay their own fares to fly from New Zealand to Nepal. Then, carrying the medical supplies they've brought with them, they trek for up to three days to join their Nepalese counterparts for a 14 day medical clinic held in Solu Khumbu, a remote rural health post 2,300 metres above sea level in the Everest region. A group of trekkers from New Zealand accompanies them and is part of the sustainability plan: they carry a separate allocation of medical supplies and help to set up the clinic. (If you are interested in volunteering your skills or joining an annual trek, contact Robin via her website; robin@bandaidbox.com.)

In April 2009, a new team will be setting off for the 5th consecutive year. And this time, there will be an exciting first for education in the region: Sarah Davey, an international

educator who specializes in teaching English as a Foreign Language and develops related programmes, will conduct English enrichment workshops for teachers in Kharikhola and its surrounding villages. Lesley and Robin's book will be making the trip too, to be translated into the local language.

Robin says that the trust is indebted to Lesley for the gift of her story, which she has also narrated for an audio CD that accompanies the book. All proceeds from the sale of the book go to the Band Aid Box Charitable Trust. To buy your copy, go to Poppies Bookshop or contact them via their website www.poppies.co.nz, call Lesley on (06) 752 4545 or e-mail Robin at her "bandaidbox" address.

Story by Kerry Lilley



The picture that inspired Lesley's story
(Photo by Robin Drake).

Container of Aid Went to Zimbabwe

What a Christmas present for the struggling orphanage and people of the city of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe who were the focus of our recent aid project. At a critical time for the nation, the 40 ft container of aid sent by our local community went as promised to the destination and people who were supposed to receive it - this alone is a miracle!

One of the wonderful aspects of this aid project run by New Zeal Church in Oakura and Okato is that against all odds 100 per cent of what was given to the people of Zimbabwe was received by the people of Zimbabwe - this at a time when aid is being rejected due to political hindrances.

There were no funds taken for administration or costs incurred here in New Zealand.

The container of aid varied from food and medical supplies to new underwear and bedding. The response to us from Zimbabwe was one of exceptional gratitude.

"Reverend Ndoda and the hospital stated that this was the largest single donation they had ever received. THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH. You have made a difference and showed the love of Christ in a way that few people ever can. God made sure the donation arrived at a very important time – e.g. when the eyes of the whole international community are on Zimbabwe and people's hearts are very tender at the moment. This is the largest Christmas any of these organisations have received." - Pastor Sarah Nyathi of Zimbabwe:

Our heart-felt thanks to all of those individuals and businesses who gave so freely to this project. Giving to people in need can bring such a sense of satisfaction.

Mt 25:40 "...whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine you did for me"

Pastor Kevin McFetridge

New Zeal Church Oakura & Okato



Above: The vehicles transporting the donated goods to the orphanage.



Above, left and below: The goods being redistributed to their various destinations)



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