

A day at the Patuha Acoustic Music Festival

It's not every day you happen upon a music festival that's pretty much in your own backyard and hardly anybody knows about it! Yet here I am, quite

Gail Church (flute), Helen Capes (Northumbrian pipes), Shirley (recorder) and Owen (tin whistle), having a good ole jam session.

unexpectedly, on this still, warm, late-summer's day, enjoying The Patuha Acoustic Music Festival being held in Tania Brown's Tataramaika garden on Taranaki Anniversary Weekend.

The event first came about in response to a request by Kerry Turner, who ran the Tahora Music Festival for about 30 years.

In the mid-1980s, Kerry's festival was becoming so big he suggested that an alternative Taranaki festival might take some of the pressure off. Local musicians Dave Owens and Mike and Skye Anderson decided to make it happen. Since then, for the past twenty-one years, music-makers from all over the North Island have been coming to Patuha, usually on Taranaki Anniversary Weekend, to have fun and celebrate their craft.

For the first three years, Te Maru Folk Festival was held on Philly Butt and Keith Plummer's farm at the mouth of the Timaru River. The first one, in 1987, was just days after Cyclone Bola had badly damaged Keith and Philly's home. The following year, there was another big wind. But again the festival went ahead. Then in 1990 it was relocated to Tataramaika. The current venue is not far from the first and is still on the banks of the Timaru River. According to my research, Te Maru and Timaru are actually just different versions of the same term and mean "place of shelter". Peter Bennett, who owned the property that

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editorial FROM THE TOM ZONE

My thoughts are with farmers at the moment. It seems such a cruel irony that when Fonterra has set a generous payout rate, Mother Nature turns off the tap and the milk dries up. I am sure any elation over the Fonterra announcement has long worn off as the land dries and shrivels in the drought. Hopefully by the time this goes to print there will have been some relief in the form of steady rain, but I won't hold my breath.

But "Take one moment" "TOM" and read the local stories our writers and contributors have put together for the community. I promise Paul Hutchinson's frank and courageous interview by Kerry will give another dimension to other people's life trials.

Our baby feature is a cheery look into our little folk and their families and we would love to see more of them. We are hoping this will be regular column (maybe if farmers have dried off their cows, they could get onto supporting the baby boom!).

You might also like to check out this month's *TOM* Oakura, which features Jessie Muggeridge and her volleyball success, Mathew Dickey, penguin boxes, furniture and more.

Take one moment and enjoy.

Kim

TOM Okato tidbit

The Coastal Garden and Art Safari Committee had a very successful AGM recently and very generously donated \$1000 to the RESCUE HELICOPTER TRUST. Well done everyone.

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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Points of view expressed in contributed articles are not necessarily the views of TOM.

**Deadline for May issue –
copy and ads 24 April, delivery 13 May.**

Okato Lions

Greetings to you all

By the time you read this, our annual bike ride will be over. Lions have been busy over the past weeks, liaising with farm owners, working through the route the ride will take and marking the course, which is quite a time-consuming job. We would like to thank all the farmers who allowed the bike ride to go through their properties.

We'll report on how the bike ride went in the next issue of *TOM*.

The speaker at our last meeting was the brother of Michael Campbell's caddy. He gave a very interesting talk with slides about accompanying his brother with Michael Campbell on a golf tour.

Our Club is in need of new members. We meet the first Wednesday of the month to enjoy a good meal, fellowship and interesting speakers.

The money we raise through different projects is used to help the community in different ways. If anyone would be interested in joining, we'd love to hear from you. You can contact Bernard Gibson, our President, on 752 4308 or me on 752 4086.

Lion Merv Hooker

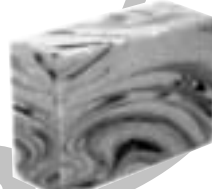
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A day at the Patuha Acoustic Music Festival

(Continued from page 1)

included the then defunct cheese factory, had developed and landscaped the land along the river, planting many of the trees and making it into the park it is today. He even built an earthworks berm as a sound shield from the highway.

For the first festival, Mike Anderson cut the floor out of a house that was being demolished and trailered it out to Philly and Keith's farm. He and Dave set it up approximately level to serve as a stage. It had no roof. When the festival moved up to its present site, Peter, a master builder, supervised the building of the picturesque riverside sound shell. Early on, one of the old cold stores was used as a wet weather venue for the Saturday night concerts. Dave tells me that it had to be cleaned out for every event and there were no windows so it was pretty stuffy. Now that cold store is being used for cheese-making again.

It's a relatively small gathering this year, but there are still tents scattered everywhere. Pockets of people practise together or just enjoy singing and playing, while a group of children in colourful clothes play a kind of blind man's orienteering on the riverbank.

I ask why they've never sought a wider audience and the reply is pretty much that they haven't had to. People come by invitation and the organisers have never wanted it to be a well-known public event because of security issues. Lisa Dohig, one of those organisers, says that invitations get around by word of mouth in music circles. People sign a guest book, pay a small fee for tent sites and are given identification tags. This year, it's a key suspended on a ribbon. Last year it was a chunk of paua, and before that, a fridge magnet. Day-trippers are also asked to contribute to costs.

I sit on a bench seat in front of the riverside stage in Tania Brown's garden, among a small crowd appreciating the afternoon "Children's Concert". It's short, sweet and nice. A responsive affair with spontaneous audience participation – the enjoyment and good will is obvious.

On Saturday evening, everyone dons their best recycled finery and steps out into the cold, night air to attend the "Op Shop Ball". I've dressed up in my knitted butterfly-appliquéd skirt, sheer, theatrical, second-hand jacket and Mother Hubbard shoes, but I'm too shy to strut the catwalk. I realise I'm not the only one when I encounter Jeni Brown on the dancing lawn, exquisitely outfitted in "Ragtime". Others, like Suzee Freeman, whirl and twirl and earn the prize for "best dressed, top to toe", and a gorgeous pair of white gloves (which she will add to her dancing wardrobe) for her bravery.

We sit and listen to the crazy banter of the crazily attired MC, Ken Kowalchuk, and a variety of musical acts. They are all good in different ways and for different reasons, but I have a couple



Janine and Owen (front), with Robert (back), enjoy the children's concert.



Steve and Mickey Muggeridge sing and play to festival goers.

of favourites. In a stunningly convincing Northern English accent, Helen Cape recites a poem about taking her Nancy to the pub after they missed the train. Then she plays a haunting Medieval-sounding melody on the Northumbrian pipes. Thirteen-year-old Michael Muggeridge is the other star act in my books. I read somewhere recently that a "proper" journalist should never use clichés. But man, can that boy make his guitar sing!

After the concert, Gumboot Tango gets into action and the dancing lawn is packed with bodies swaying to the music. In the cold, crisp air, we dance the night away and the stars above dance with us.

Story and pictures by Kerry Lilley



Lizzie Brouwers paints Suzee Freeman's toenails in preparation for the ball.

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Paul Hutchinson - painter

PART 1

Paul James Hutchinson greets me with an engaging smile that starts in his eyes and lights up his face. The tall, handsome, bespectacled painter with the tousled, wavy, grey mane, looks younger than his fifty summers. As a painter he has arrived, but his has been no easy journey. This is his story.

He was born in Middlesbrough in the north of England in 1958, the third of Colin and Enid's four children and the only boy. When he was four, he immigrated with his family to Canada, where his father had secured a position as an accountant for a firm that dealt in forestry products on Vancouver Island. They lived there until Paul was twelve and he became a Canadian citizen. His father's real passion, however, was not accountancy but horticulture, and having gained an appropriate degree, he moved his family back to England in 1970, to Norfolk, where Colin worked in the prestigious garden, Blooms of Bressingham.

It was the worst year of Paul's life. He was at "an extraordinarily sensitive stage" and in fiercely parochial, rural Norfolk, where Americans were unpopular, he was bullied and tormented for the way he spoke. "Go home, Yank!" his schoolmates jeered. There was little point explaining that he was, in fact, Canadian. He was tall for his age and his eyesight began to deteriorate. Sitting at the back of the class, he was unable to read the blackboard and he attempted to find the questions written on it by copying them from his neighbour. He was accused of cheating. Paul believes they thought him stupid, but he didn't want to admit he was short-sighted – kids in glasses were tormented. Quiet and reserved anyway, he became disturbed. When the family moved back to Yorkshire a year later, Paul quickly and deliberately picked up the local accent. Three and a half years after that, when he was sixteen, the family moved to New Zealand and his father got a job with Duncan and Davies' Horticultural Nurseries, which brought them to Taranaki.

Paul had no idea what he wanted to do with his life, just that he hated school and didn't want to go back. He had painted, with his father's guidance and encouragement, ever since he was very young. But while he launched enthusiastically into developing his drawing and painting skills, he didn't think about art as a means of earning his living. He tried jewellery-making but decided he'd prefer to make watches and sought an apprenticeship. "This was 1974," he smiles ironically, "and I had just been given a quartz watch!" But watch-making apprentices were no longer being taken on. In the end, he enrolled in an architectural drafting course at Taranaki Polytechnic. He hated it! He hated the maths and physics, and the drawing was devoid of artistry, so during his many free periods, he wandered round Pukekura and Brooklands Parks, sketching. He may have been a polytech drop-out that year, but he did win a Bernard Aris painting competition for young artists.

Paul, a vulnerable, impressionable young man who had managed to make few friends as yet, was lured into the fold of The Children of God. "The philosophy of the 1970s encouraged followers to give up everything to follow God," says Paul wryly, "and I almost did!" The seduction for Paul was not the promises contained in their "thinly veiled political propaganda", however, but the potential for companionship. He felt uneasy though and when he took up their suggestion to pray for guidance, an electrical storm blew up, bringing with it copious thunderclaps and flashes of lightening. From this he extracted a clear message from God that membership of the sect wasn't for him. He should be painting!

Next month we continue our expose into Paul the Painter.

By Kerry Lilley



Paul with his 50's works.



Paul -
guitarist,
too.



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TOM Babies

Okato seems to be having a baby boom. This month, we're delighted to introduce some of them and their families to you and to welcome them to our community.



On 5 January, **Jay Rawiri Adams** was born at Taranaki Base Hospital. Jo and Dave hail from Somerset, England, and moved to Okato last June, gaining residency in November. They gave Rawiri, the Maori name for Dave, "to celebrate New Zealand". Dave is the Taranaki Manager of the roading construction company, Downer EDI Works. Jo also works for EDI, assisting people to resettle in New Zealand.

Lisa Dravitski and Stuart Bailey moved to Okato from New Plymouth about eighteen months ago and welcomed their first baby, **Mason Wilfrid**, on 22 December 2007. The name, Wilfrid, honours Stuart's English Great Granddad, who was an important role model for Stuart. Stuart is contracted to Kupe as a quantity surveyor and is also the Director of an electrical company, Blue Ray. Lisa was formerly a tutor at the Naturopathic College of New Zealand.



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).

Story and pictures by Kerry Lilley



Seppy Nima Binsbergen was born at Taranaki Base Hospital on 17 January to Christina, a Swiss immigrant of ten years ago and Lars, a Kiwi of Dutch descent and a furniture maker. Seppy has two older brothers, Finnley and Lenny. Nima is a Nepalese name and as Sir Edmund Hillary had died not long before Seppy was born, "it just felt right", Christina told me. Seppy will be joining his Mum, Dad and older brothers up on the mountain this winter and it won't be long before Christina, a ski instructor and coach, will be giving him lessons. "Seppy won't have a choice," says Christina. "We've already got his skis."



Meet **Marcel Erasmus O'Sullivan**.

He was born to Richard O'Sullivan and Pip Jones on 20 October 2006, so he's seventeen months old now. His middle name comes from the play and film, "Number 2". He has a big brother, Soul, who's just turned four. Richard is a local, the son of Trisha and Bernard, and Pip originally hails from Invercargill. They farm on Mangatete Road.

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Team Grayling ponder what might have been

TOM takes a moment to ask Matthew Grayling about Olympic hopes, aspirations and the heart break of very nearly making it to the Beijing Olympics but having to pull out due to his mount Gordon suffering an injury.

Have horses always been in the family?

As long as I can remember, we have always had horses on the farm. My dad Malcolm had a horse he used for droving in his school holidays.

What was your first memory of being on a horse?

The first memory I have of riding was on a pony called 'One-Eyed Misty' who used to canter down the paddock and do a 180 and head home without us! I first rode a horse when I was eight or nine.

What was your attraction to horses?

I can remember being at Okato Pony club when I was nine. I seem to recall that the ratio of girls to boys was in the boys' favour!

How was your first Olympic experience and in what year?

My first Olympic experience was in 2004 in Athens and it was amazing. The atmosphere was electric and made everybody determined to do their best. It was amazing competing for my country and all the support from people back home was amazing.

How do you juggle farm life and equestrian commitments?

I am very fortunate to have a very supportive home team – my immediate and extended family. It would be very difficult to juggle farm life and do this sport at this level without their support. It allows me to concentrate and not worry about home so that I can give the horses every opportunity to perform to their best and reach their potential.

How many horses do you train at any one time and what type of training is required?

I can have up to five horses in work at any one time and these can be at different levels of training and competition. This would take about 5 hours each day of training. Horses are a bit different to humans and do not require 5 hours training per day to get to Olympic standard. Instead they require a lot of repetitive consistent training in their early stages then strengthening, fitness and skills training so they can graduate up the levels of competition.

Do the horses require a special diet?

Diet for the horses is very important. As we travel quite a bit during the competitive season, we need to be able to take their food with us as grass is not always available in enough quantity or quality. We feed them according to their energy levels and the physical demands of their work. We are fortunate that NRM sponsor the team and supply their feed.

It must be very disappointing to have Gordon out with an injury.

It was very disappointing when Gordon suffered his injury – very disappointing for his owner and all concerned. We had targeted these Olympics since taking on Gordon some three years ago, so naturally we are all disappointed. I did have a similar big disappointment with Revo, but you have to just take it on the chin and carry on. You just work on coming back stronger.

Matthew Grayling

Okato Swimming Club Summer Wrap Up

The Okato Swimming Club and Community Pool have had a brilliant season. With the heat pump installation and the extremely dry spells, the pool usage has soared and the community has embraced this awesome facility.

The Swimming Club held its swimming camp on 15-16 March at the Okato Pools with 34 children 'bedding down' in the Okato Squash Club overnight. The weekend involved many fun-filled hours of activities, including many hours of coaching from Anita Kitto, a swimming coach from the Iceberg Squad in New Plymouth. The Club was very fortunate to have her input over the weekend.



The swimming camp.

After attending the Opunake Challenge competition, it was very evident that breast stroke and butterfly were the two strokes needing attention, said Anita. The weekend work was also to improve on other strokes, underwater work and diving techniques.

Saturday morning involved coaching on breast stroke and butterfly, involving correct techniques for gliding through the water. The example of 'walking like a penguin' made me chuckle, as all the children waddled through the water.

After several hours the kids were starting to look weary and in need of a good feed and a bit of down-time. A scavenger hunt

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ensured 30-45 minutes of time out for everyone and involved a yummy Easter treat once all the clues had been solved. Most kids mentioned that this was the highlight for them. Kids and parents also exerted themselves with a game of softball and cricket, probably to run off those Easter treats!

Late afternoon saw everyone back in the pool to concentrate on dive starts and tumble turns, which would be put to good use in the Club Champs on 18 and 20 March.

I was very impressed with Anita's ability to capture the attention of all 34 children. She has a really natural teaching style. Anita encouraged the children to enjoy their swimming training. "Improvement leads to enjoyment," she said. And no doubt enjoyment also leads to improvement, as could be seen at the camp.

Sunday revealed some very tired-looking kids but this did not hinder their success in swimming 200 metres for their Swim for Life Challenge.

Fiona Lacey, Okato coach and committee member, said it had been great watching the kids over the season, achieving personal bests and showing enthusiasm while learning. In just one day improvements were very evident.

Anita said one of the highlights over the weekend was seeing the improvements in the younger children. Also, several children who were at intermediate level were put into the senior section and seemed to cope well.

With the training at an end, everyone enjoyed a BBQ lunch and Sue Crowley, Club secretary, thanked Anita for coming out for the weekend and all the parents for their help and input. It has been a great time, with great weather, great kids and a great atmosphere, she said.

The pool is an amazing community asset, but it is the input of our local people that maximises its potential. Congratulations and thanks to all who have contributed to the vibrancy of the Swimming Club and the success of the swimming season this year.

By Milly Carr

Swim for Life Challenge



'Swim for Life' Challenge children.

In conclusion to the Okato Swimming Club Camp, all the children who attended had the opportunity to participate in a 'Swim for Life' Challenge on the morning of 16 March.

Fiona Lacey, a Learn to Swim Instructor at New Plymouth Aquatic Centre and a swimming coach at Okato, initiated the challenge and liaised with NZ Water Safety. She sees swimming competence as a necessity for everybody in the community, "especially with all the unnecessary and very unfortunate drownings in New Zealand this summer," she said.

To complete this challenge the children had to swim 200 metres (eight lengths) of freestyle confidently and correctly without stopping. The successful completion meant the children would be registered in the New Zealand Water Safety database and awarded a 'Swim for Life' certificate.

Spot prizes of t-shirts and rash tops, donated by NZ Water Safety, were drawn for those who completed the swim.

Statistics reveal that only 14% of children aged between 8-12 years can swim 200 metres. I am astounded by this appalling statistic. With our country surrounded by water and our lifestyles involving many water sports, we should be more proactive in making this a priority for our children. An essential skill for life!

By Milly Carr



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Coastal School cleans up

During Seaweeek Year 5 and 6 students from Coastal Taranaki School took part in a local beach clean up in conjunction with the NPDC. This is part of looking after our own community. We went to Fort St George down Lower Pitone Road, where we'd taken the children last year to do riparian planting in the sand dunes, and they were surprised to see how things had grown.

It was difficult work as the beach is mostly rocks, but the high-tide zone was filled with plastic rubbish and, as usual, lots of bottles left behind under bushes.

The children were treated to afternoon tea supplied by the Council and a fun-filled afternoon in the sun. The rock pools proved to be too much for many of the boys, and one group was surprised by the arrival of a huge seal which sunned itself on a big rock.

The children felt that this is how they would like the environment to stay for their future.



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CTS goes all sporty!

We have had a very busy term with Athletics and Swimming Sports held in the first few weeks of March.

Both events were well supported by many young and old. This really shows what a great community we live in.

We were fortunate to have the weather on our side, with only a short spell of rain during senior athletics. This meant a brief coffee break for all (the local café was inundated with parent helpers!).

Farmers were perhaps thinking this was the end of the drought? Wishful thinking!

Results for both events will be published in the next issue.

The school has farewelled office secretary, Katrina Warren. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours. Jacky and Lee are sharing this position.

By Milly Carr

Community Library, OKATO

Did you know there is a Community Library at CTS? And everyone is welcome to become a member!

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burning issues

Once again we have had another dry month! Unfortunately water restrictions are still in place and your vigilance on this front is vital. If you have any water leaks on your property please ensure they are repaired sooner rather than later. Remember also that a total fire ban is still in place.

Chief Officer Barry Harvey suggests farmers may be able to help us identify potential water sources for use during an emergency situation. This can be identified using a yellow triangle posted on a fence post adjacent to the water source.

If you can help or have any queries regarding this matter, please contact Barry on 752 4568 or me on 752 4425.

Progress on the building site continues at a good pace.

Milly Carr

Going, going gone . . . !

I caught Marcel O'Sullivan at The Waiting Room recently, having his daily Fluffy fix.

Kerry Lilley




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