

## Riley Pollard: back from a silent world

*Riley recovers in ICU.*

Riley Pollard has had more challenges to face than any child of two should have but, with the support of her mum and dad, Rachel and Aaron, and her two big brothers, Morgan and Austin, and their local community, she is meeting them head on.

The family's incredible story begins at the end of July/beginning of August 2009, when Riley developed what seemed to be a tummy bug. She languished at home for a few days, just wanting to lie on the couch and watch TV. She had a sore neck, but it didn't seem severe and there were no other outward signs that would suggest she was in serious trouble. And if it wasn't a tummy bug it was probably the swine flu, which was laying people low at the time.

After a couple of days and no improvement, however, Rachel decided it was time she took Riley to the doctor. He took one look at her and sent her straight to hospital. There were tests, tests, and more tests, and eventually Rachel and Aaron were told that the horrifying diagnosis was meningitis. Bacterial meningitis; *Haemophilus influenzae*, Type F, an uncommon, virulent bacterial strain. No parent would want to watch their child go through what Rachel and Aaron watched Riley go through for the next two weeks or so. She lay pale and still, her eyes closed, or nearly so. She needed intensive medical and nursing care, and an intravenous tube inserted into a vein in her arm facilitated hydration and channeled into her body the antibiotics that would fight the bugs and save her life.

That Riley got better was little short of a miracle and, after two weeks, she was allowed to go home. She appeared to have had a bit of a personality change, but she had just turned two, and isn't that when kids turn terrible? It did seem a little strange that having always been a light sleeper, Riley now slept heavily, and that,



sometimes, she 'talked' but made no sounds. Apart from gaining some minor eccentricities, she seemed to have escaped unscathed.

Meningitis can cause deafness, so Rachel and Aaron took Riley for a routine hearing test. They didn't expect anything

untoward, so it was a huge surprise, and devastating, when Riley failed the whole battery. Against the odds, she had become profoundly deaf in not one, but in both ears. The infection had damaged

*(Continued on page 2)*

# editorial FROM THE TOM ZONE

Just the other day an out-of-towner mentioned to me how vibrant Okato seems these days and I was stoked to think that people are noticing the life force of Okato. And the events happening in the community bear this out — Warea Rock, Vintage Hay Day, etc.



That got me thinking about what a life force is, and in Okato it certainly isn't buildings like the derelict primary school site or other similar ones so it has to be the people. But what about the people makes a community full of life? Active people is the answer that comes to mind. Not people who are running around, but people who are actively engaged in their community and know what is happening in the community. And community can mean a group of people active in pony club or active in business or active in philanthropy, and doesn't Okato have all these?

Kim

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

## cover story



**Riley plays, unconcerned by her bionic ears.**

the hair cells in both of Riley's cochlea, so that sound waves would no longer make them move and, in turn, stimulate the nerve impulses that the brain translates as sound.

So it was off to Christchurch to meet the cochlear implant team. Assessment showed that Riley was a good candidate. Occasionally implants are unsuccessful, so it was agreed that she would have one for each ear. All up, it would cost \$50,000. The Government would fund the internal components for both ears, and the external components, including the processor (computer) for one. Rachel and Aaron would have to find \$10,200 for the other processor. It was a big ask. "However," enthused Rachel, "we are lucky enough to live in Taranaki, in an incredibly supportive community." Okato Lions Club have taken up the cause. Recently, they hosted the biennial Taranaki Vintage Hay Day to raise funds and they have pledged more fundraising for next year.

The wait for surgery was a long six weeks: Rachel says that the prospect of handing your baby to a surgeon who is going to drill holes in her head for four or five hours is pretty scary. But hand her over she did. During the ensuing operation, an electronic device that provides Riley with a sense of sound was implanted. Often referred to as a bionic ear, the device is a small but complex arrangement. An external hearing aid-like processor receives sound, converts it into an electronic signal and feeds it to a 'coil' that transmits to a receiver underneath the scalp. The coil is removable and holds onto the receiver by means of a magnet. The hair cells in the cochlea are replaced by 22 electrodes, which stimulate the cochlear nerves directly using electrical impulses. The brain then translates these impulses into sound. "It's extraordinary technology," says Rachel.

Once the surgery was over, Riley made a good recovery and, on January 12, she was 'switched on'. Ever since then it has been backwards and forwards to Christchurch, initially fortnightly and now at six-weekly intervals for tuning and checking, and for speech therapy sessions. Riley makes simple sounds now — animal noises, at about the level of a nine-month-old child. They're basic, but encouraging. She used to talk really well before her illness and Rachel trusts that Riley will catch up quickly and talk really

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well again. And as for her general, ongoing development? "With the way she's wired, it's unreasonable to expect her to develop entirely normally," says Rachel. "But she wants to do stuff and she's a Playcentre child through and through, so while lots else has gone haywire, that's been consistent. And her lovely little personality is still there," she adds fondly, "she just can't express it the way she used to."

Rachel and Aaron are immensely grateful for the community support they have received — for the Playcentre families who have been there for them, for the Lions Club and everybody who has supported their fundraising efforts, and for the people who have taken care of Morgan and Austin when needed. "They've been cool," says Rachel.

Story by Kerry Lilley

Pictures supplied by Rachel Douglas and Aaron Pollard



Riley enjoys riding her two-wheeler (with trainers, of course).



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# Merv and Iris Putt: a vintage couple

Local identities, Merv and Iris Putt, have been married for 60 years. Fittingly enough, I came across them at the recent Vintage Hay Day, where we sat on hay bales, in the shade, to chat.

Back in the late forties, Merv told me, the Young People's Club used to hold regular dances in the Hempton Hall. The Leith Road factory manager's daughter, Eileen Kettlewell, was very friendly with a girl from Huirangi called Iris Topless, and whenever a dance was to be held, Eileen would invite Iris out. Merv asked Iris to dance and eventually, asked her to marry him.

The wedding was held in St Mary's Church in New Plymouth on 4 February, 1950 and the Reverend J T Holland, who later became a bishop, officiated. The couple had four children, Glenys, Graeme, Carole and Wayne, and nine grandchildren, eight of whom are grandsons.

I asked Iris and Merv whether they had any secrets to their long and happy marriage. "In a word," Merv replied, "it's commitment." "And," added Iris, "doing things together, keeping busy and keeping involved, with your kids and your grandkids."

In January, their whole family joined them in Hastings to celebrate their 60 years together over dinner, so on their actual anniversary, Merv and Iris thought they'd have a quiet day at home. As it turned out, they were flooded with visitors and phone calls, and their house was transformed into a veritable florist shop. But the celebrations aren't over yet. The entire wedding party is planning to meet for lunch. All live in New Plymouth and all are over 80 except one — Iris's sister, Gwen, who is 75. Congratulations, Iris and Merv. We wish you many more years of happiness together.

Story by Kerry Lilley. Pictures supplied by Iris and Merv Putt



Left: Iris and Merv on their wedding day and below: enjoying the Vintage Hay Day.



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# Okato Lions

Hello readers,

We are well into the new year. Do hope things are going well for you all. We, as farmers, have been fortunate with the weather; grass growth is leaping away — not so good for haymaking though.

Our Vintage Machinery and Hay Days are behind us. My thanks to all concerned in making it the success it was (I won't comment any further, read Milly Carr's story in this issue of TOM).

Lions have been busy of late, and the months ahead will be also.

Sadly, we lost Lion Tony Butler last month. Tony was our secretary until December 2009. We all will miss him.

Our community dinner is still in the planning stages. Our District Governor visited on our tea night and Zone Chairperson, Gay Harvey, will visit on our stea night on April 7. A bus shelter has been placed on Dover Road for the use of seven to eight children. Our horse trek and bike ride will happen on Easter Sunday and Monday. Camp Quality at Opunake Beach on January 20 went off well. Coastal Lions were hosts to 65 cancer kids and 65 carers. Great fun was had by all.

We have gained two new members over the past few weeks and perhaps one or two more in the near future. Not forgetting our 40th Anniversary on 8 May at Hempton Hall, Okato.

Take care

President Lion Merv Hooker, Ph. 06-752 4086

## Local club puts on rock concert

Warea Rock is on again, bigger and better than last year, on Saturday, 20 March. Warea Rock is held at the Old Warea Bowling Club, which is now the Warea Croquet Club, on Main Road, Warea. The Club was formed three years ago to make use of the old Bowling Club, which was no longer being used. The Club members cleaned it up and started playing croquet there once a month. Warea Rock is in its third year and is done primarily as a fundraiser for the Club but also as a social event for the community.

Warea Rock gets off the ground with seven bands, featuring rock band Sniper Alley, Reggae band Ire Exit, and local bands Painted Black, Alan Manu, Morgana, The Flys, and Mexican Blackbird. Bands start at 1pm.

Tickets are \$10 for pre-sales and \$15 on the day; kids are free. Tickets can be purchased at Okato Four Square and Coastal Welders, Warea. There will be a licensed bar with BYO wine only, and all day BBQ. EFTPOS available. Camping is available this year and a courtesy van will be running until late.

For more information ring Mark Fox on 06-752 4117 or 027-2384718 and Shane Honeyfield 06-752 8268 or 027-203 8111.

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## Okato Swimming Club

The Swimming Club group went for a trip to Opunake on Saturday, 13 February for our swimming camp. We stayed at the Opunake Surf Club by the beach.

We did lots of awesome activities. At night we went for a game of tug-of-war and played skipping with the tug-of-war rope. Just before dusk we went for a nice refreshing swim in our clothes because we couldn't be bothered putting our togs on.

Before bed, Anna Lacey, Renee Parker, Carys Pullar and I put on a play about swimming and surf lifesaving. That night when we went to bed we were all secretly sneaking lollies out of our bags that we had bought from the shop that day.

The following morning we did beach games with the lifeguards. We played stuck in the mud, seaweed and another game called beach flag. We also had a running relay. After this we rode the waves on the surf club's boogie boards. It was so much fun. Last of all, we had an IRB ride — it was really bumpy, scary but fun.

Our camp came to an end where we received spot prizes and goodies.

Thank you, Fiona Lacey and John Pullar, for organising our camp. I had such a great time. And a big thank you to Fiona who has been our Swimming Club instructor for the year; we have learned so much.

by Brittney Carr

The Okato Swimming Club had an awesome time going to camp. It was at Opunake, it was fun.

We did lots of cool things like playing tug-of-war, skipping, riding the waves on the surf club's boogie boards, sprints, playing flags, relays, and my favourite was riding in the IRB. One boy, Findlay, fell out. I can see why because it was a really bumpy ride.

Even though we didn't get much sleep, that didn't really matter as we got lots of sweets and spot prizes in the morning.

Before we went to bed we did some plays and American Idol. We also had fun dragging each other around in our sleeping bags.

This weekend wouldn't have been able to happen without John Pullar (my dad) and Fiona Lacey.

by Carys Pullar



*Lots of thrills at Opunake for the Okato Swimming Club. Above: the flag race under way, left: ripping it up in the IRB, and below: the start of the board race.*



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# Vintage Hay Day in Okato

by Milly Carr

PHOTOS BY KERRY LILLEY

Young and old alike experienced a 'step back in time' over the weekend of 13 and 14 February with our first Vintage Hay Day held on the corner of Upper Pitone Road and State Highway 45, Okato. Clyde Bishop has been the Project Convenor for the Vintage Machinery Club for many years and has been involved in three other Hay Day exhibitions throughout Taranaki over the years. With his involvement with the Okato Lions Club, Clyde put forward the suggestion of Okato hosting one and from here the rest unfolded. "It has been a long process and we have been working on this for about eight months," says Merv Hooker (President Okato Lions). "Without the help of Clyde this event would not have happened. He played an instrumental part throughout this time and he has been great to work with."

Over these months sponsorship was sought and the businesses have stepped up to the plate to help make this weekend a wonderful event. Tents, fertilisers and advertising, etc. were all provided. The Lions Club provided the manpower to get this up and running.

The week prior was all hands on deck with up to 20 guys per day helping to set up. "It was such a fun week, for all concerned," said Merv. "We constructed a kitchen and wash house using old Lawson logs and rustic iron for the roofing. Thankfully the weather was mainly fine but the odd shower we did get, we were quite happy to sit under the shelter of our newly erected kitchen area and watch the rain dripping as we supped our coffee."

Although this event was Lions driven there were many guys not involved in Lions or the Vintage Machinery Club who turned up every day to help. "Absolutely fantastic," says Merv.

The event was one that we hoped may provide some insight into the era that was once lived back in the 1930's to 50's. Bringing back memories for the older generation and enlightening our younger generations. The beauty is actually being able to see the machinery being operated, Merv tells me.

The facility was adorned with many tents, campervans and machinery as people from various Vintage Machinery Clubs from all over the West Coast gathered for the weekend to commence their setting up.

With many of the displays available on the day, the kitchen with its two old coal ranges (fired by wood) were making scones non-stop, which were being sold as quickly as they were being made. Who couldn't resist a hot scone with butter and jam?

On site was a diverse range of machinery, old top dressers, tractors, reapers and binders and an old 1932 model traction engine owned by Peter George, which has been rebuilt from an old machine and was used to drive the thresher. It weighs 13 tons and it takes several hours for it to fire up.

A McEwen's pole hay stacker was demonstrated throughout the weekend. The stack builder, Dave Warren, carried out the demonstration showing spectators how to build a stack. It is a rather arduous process involving many steps to achieve the desired end product. The hay is swept close to the pole, where the grab is operated by two men and pushed into the hay pile. A wire cable is attached to the grab, which goes up through a series of pulleys to the top of the stacker, down through the centre of the

steel pole to the bottom, and out where it is connected to the horse. The horse pulls forward to lift the grab of hay up and onto the stack and when the grab is pulled free from the stack, the horse backs up to allow the grab to be ready for the next load of hay. The horse was used for one or two small demonstrations but the tractor was used for the majority of the two days. The guys on the rope each have a job, one is to swing the grabful of hay onto the stack and the other uses the rope to trip the load. The stack builders then fork the hay out to build the stack.

The wash house on site was completed with old-fashioned concrete tubs alongside the wood-fired pumice copper. The 1950's style washing machine and ringer were also demonstrated and was enjoyed especially by the young. A real novelty in today's way of living. Alongside here the old-fashioned bloomers and nighties were floating in the breeze, pegged on the wooden propped clothes line.

The draught horses worked tirelessly throughout the weekend offering wagon rides and, for those wanting a faster ride, David and Heather Oxley had their restored Bedford bus, which toured the Lower Pitone and Lower Timaru Roads.

A few of the local 'senior' visitors were transported around the Vintage Hay Day site in an Army jeep owned by Graeme



McFetridge; his father Martin McFetridge came out from New Plymouth for the day and thoroughly enjoyed himself.

Okato Playcentre held a sausage sizzle to raise funds for one of their young members, Riley, who was diagnosed with meningitis late last year. The unfortunate circumstances of this disease have left Riley deaf. With the generosity of the Lions Club, they have set aside a portion of the funds raised over the weekend to be given to Riley to help assist in the purchase of hearing aids for her.

Another local family, Andrew and Nicci Hooker, kindly donated a trailer load of wood which was raffled off and won by local Heather Oxley. This brought in a considerable amount of money. It is kindness and generosity of this nature that reminds us of the great community we live in.

Like Merv said, "I have been overwhelmed by the interest, especially with comments like: When is the next one? What a great event! And we were very happy with the response we received from our survey we had at the gate. With over 1000 people frequenting the event, the results were very positive. Ninety-nine percent of people stated they would definitely visit the Vintage Hay Day again and yes, they enjoyed their day."

Jesse Nicholson (9 years old) said, "I had a cool day. The carriage ride was fun with the Clydesdale horses leading and I also liked the parade with all the different sorts of tractors."

Des Corbett said, "It was a very good day, it was all very well done. It was great to see all the different machinery and implements from the olden days."

Both Merv and Clyde would like to thank everyone involved who made this weekend such a success.

Elsie Jordan  
(Inglewood)  
and Claire  
Brown  
(Wanganui)  
exchanged  
laundry  
tips.





## COASTAL TARANAKI SCHOOL

### Upcoming Events

We have all settled into the new school year and are working hard. Swimming sports are on 11 March for Years 7–13; junior swimming sports are Friday, 12 March for Years 1–6. Athletic sports will happen on 24 February for Years 7–13; the juniors are on 25 February.

Coastal Taranaki School has brought two interactive whiteboards for the middle and junior school. We look forward to using these.

TOM reporters will be bringing articles about our school to Okato every month.

by Nathaniel Davy and Beni Kalin (Year 7 reporters)

### New Faces

As most of you will know, we have all returned to school and have been settling back into a routine.

We have new students who are all settling in well; we interviewed some of them to see if they are enjoying being here. The two Japanese exchange students, Takako and Yukie, are loving it here so far. They think Mr Oldfield is very funny and enjoy having him as a teacher. They have made lots of new friends.

Kaitlin Chapman is Year 4 in Miss Zimmerman's class and has made lots of new friends as well.

In the middle school we have Tane Hohaia, Sabrina Marsh and Kyle Langdon-Williams. All students are enjoying school so far and Tane has impressed us with his moonwalk.

by Lisa Appert (Year 7 reporter) and Phillippa Grayling (Year 8 reporter)

### New Year, New Staff

We have three new teachers at Coastal Taranaki School this year: Kelly Madden, Nichola Hunt and Ruth O'Connor. We were able to ask Mrs Madden and Miss O'Connor some questions.

#### Miss O'Connor

Reporter: How have your first few weeks been so far?

Miss O'Connor: It has been really great. The staff and students have been really welcoming and supportive.

Reporter: Has your class been awesome so far?

Miss O'Connor: I have a large class of 28 but they got off to a very productive and exciting start.

Reporter: Where did you come from?

Miss O'Connor: Previously I had been working with Access Ability in New Plymouth. Before that I worked as a secondary school teacher in Midleton, Cork, Ireland.

#### Mrs Madden

Reporter: How have your first couple of weeks been?

Mrs Madden: Fabulous — staff and students are wonderful.

Reporter: How has your class been?

Mrs Madden: Great class and all want to learn.

Reporter: Where did you come from?

Mrs Madden: From Uruti School, and before that Matiere School in the King Country.

We hope to catch up with Mrs Hunt soon.

by Holly van der Poel (Yr 8 reporter) and Harmony Reid (Yr 7 reporter)

### Japanese Exchange Students

Coastal Taranaki School has a proud history of hosting students from Kunyei School, Osaka, Japan. These students are integrated fully into school life here and live with a family.

#### Profile: Takako Sato

My goals for my year at Coastal Taranaki School are to speak English properly, to make many friends and to adapt to living in New Zealand.

In Japan

#### My family:

Father — Kazuhiro.

Mother — Masako.

Big sister — Aiko.

Big brother — Kouichi.

Twin sister — Seiko.

Favourite subject: PE.

The thing I like best at school: Playing with my friends.

In the weekend: I hang out with my friends.

Favourite food: Plums, Udon.

In NZ

Host family: Rod and Kylee Douds.

Pets: Johnny (dog), cat, chickens.

Favourite subject: Food Technology.

What I like best at school: Talking with my friends.

After school: I watch TV.

At the weekend: I spend time with my host family.

Favourite Kiwi food: Fruit.



Takako.

### Building a Sustainable Future at Coastal Taranaki School

After securing a grant from AWE to use on environmental projects in our school, Coastal Taranaki is beginning to plan programmes to make our children aware of living sustainable lifestyles.

A tunnel house has been built and kitchen gardens and fruit plants are to be the next step. We are lucky to live in an area that already has such an awareness of the need to treat our environment with care; our community is very supportive of our initiatives.

An around the mountain regeneration tour will be launched here in Okato on Saturday, 20 March. This is to include a street party and a working bee at our school. Our local church has been approached to allow a community garden on land that borders the school. We hope to work closely with them to produce an area where children can learn from experience about growing their own food.

Sharleen Burrows

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# Digging Up Fort St George

It is well acknowledged that events of the past shape the future. Archaeologist Nigel Prickett in his paper "The future of New Zealand war sites and landscapes" (2002) reminds us that, "The sacrifices that were made, the terrible events that occurred, the action and heroism — and the blunders — did not occur in thin air but in the familiar landscape around us." And so visible and invisible remains of sites relating to the New Zealand Wars are protected by law and are important to us all for the stories they tell.

St George's Redoubt, locally known as Fort St George, lies at the seaward end of Pitone Road, just north of the Katikara River and, if it wasn't for its signage (Fort St George), it would be pretty much invisible to people passing by. The major portion (an estimated 98%) was recently gifted to the people of New Zealand by Graham and Pauline Snowden and will be managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC) as an historic reserve. A recent archaeological dig, needed before boundary fencing could be completed, allows us a glimpse into the lives of the colonial soldiers who were stationed and fought there.

DOC commissioned the week-long dig and DOC's Taranaki/Wanganui conservancy archaeologist, Jonathan Welch, together with local archaeologist, Ivan Bruce, headed a team that included archaeologists and DOC volunteers. According to Jonathan, "The main research reasons for the dig were to confirm our otherwise previous assumptions regarding the site, and to gather new information about the site and the troops who were stationed there. This information goes towards developing a more accurate record of a significant event in the history of Taranaki and New Zealand."

Ivan says that there was quite a bit of guesswork involved. "We dig up as much as we need to confirm our best guesses and, once we're pretty sure, we leave the rest undisturbed to prevent more damage. If and when another theory arises, we'll uncover (the site) again."

The excavation revealed how the defences were constructed. The entranceway was an earth bridge traversing an outer ditch, and it was protected on three sides by parapets and a large wooden gate, with a gantry (scaffold) for troops to fire from. Two fireplaces, including



**Archaeologists, David Rudd (seated) and Kate Lilley, record cross-section details of the defensive trench adjacent to the former entrance of St George's Redoubt.**



**Department of Conservation Ranger, John Cowie, undertakes final excavation touches of that part of the site containing British troop tent positions.**



**Department of Conservation Ranger, John Cowie, explains the site layout and history to Dave Lilley, while Department of Conservation Technical Service Officer/archaeologist, Jonathan Welch, takes a break from excavating one of the fireplaces found around the site.**

a stone-lined fireplace in what appeared to be the cookhouse, a cut throat razor, metal matchboxes, whisky bottles and empty stoneware stout bottles were amongst the artifacts found. Round tent sites, with associated trenches for drainage, were also located.

The redoubt (fort) was built by 300 troops over a period of three days in 1863 at the beginning of the Second Taranaki War. It included trenches on the outside and buildings within. It was built to a standard design, measured 80m by 70m and was used as the base from which troops attacked nearby Porou Pa. It was finally abandoned in 1866.

Its story begins during the first Taranaki war of 1860–1861, when Te Ati Awa fought against the Government over the purchase of the Waitara block. As part of that struggle, Ngati Ruanui had driven European settlers off prime land at Tataraimaka. Governor Grey, acknowledging that the land at Waitara had been wrongfully purchased, pledged to return it to its rightful owners, but instead of carrying out his promise, and without warning, he reoccupied the Tataraimaka block and built a redoubt. Understandably, Maori were incensed and hatched a plot to kill the Governor as he travelled from New Plymouth to Tataraimaka. It is unclear why, but on 4 May 1863, a small detachment of soldiers escorting a prisoner back to New Plymouth were attacked instead, in what became known as the Oakura Ambush.

This gave Grey the excuse to seek revenge. Exactly a month later, with artillery cover from the steamship HMS Eclipse and Governor Grey on board observing the action, 873 officers and men (hundreds of whom had marched in great secrecy from New Plymouth in the very early hours of that morning) initiated what became known as the Battle of Katikara. From their base

at St George's Redoubt, troops attacked nearby Porou Pa and during the ensuing battle they forced the Maori occupants to retreat from their palisades to the inland earthworks, where many became trapped. Of the (probable) 28 Maori warriors who were killed that day, said to be mainly of Taranaki, Ngati Ruanui and Wanganui iwi, 24 are buried in a communal grave near the redoubt. This area was gifted to the Crown by Graham Snowden's parents, Sidney (Sid) and Mary (Molly) Snowden, in 1956.

If you go to the reserve, take time to cast your mind back to those troubled times, and look at the Katikara Memorial which has been placed at the grave site. Designed by the local hapu, Nga Mahanga a Tairi, and the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, it was erected in 2002 and was the first memorial to be erected as a joint venture between Maori and the Crown.

*Story and pictures by Kerry Lilley*

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# Okato Playcentre

This article is a chance for us to say many thanks to our community for the help and compassion they have shown to one of our Playcentre children. In August 2009, one of our little Playcentre girls, Riley (age 2) was very ill with meningitis. The illness has left her completely deaf. Riley's mum, Rachel, is our Playcentre President and also the President for the Taranaki Playcentre Association.

Rachel has spent the last few months flying around with Riley between hospitals in Auckland and Christchurch to visit hearing specialists and have surgery and follow-up treatment. This has meant a busy, stressful time for our President with extra financial burdens also. Thankfully, Riley has been able to have bi-lateral cochlear implants, which allow hearing processors to be externally attached. This has enabled Riley to hear again, in a different fashion, so she is now relearning the meaning of sounds. The hearing processors are only partially funded though, which has left their family covering a shortfall of about \$10,500. Through all of this, Rachel has somehow still managed to run our Playcentre — and do an excellent job of it! Our members wanted to support Riley and her family, so we have been looking at ways to help them raise funds.

First of all, we would like to thank the Okato Lions Club. When we told them about Riley, they were very keen to help raise some funds for her hearing processors. They also gave our Playcentre members the opportunity to help raise funds for Riley by running a food stall at their recent Vintage Hay Day, so our members spent two days running a sausage sizzle and selling homemade fudge there. We would also like to thank Bruce Thompson who provided 100 sausages from Riverlands, and Brett Follas from Okato Four Square who donated all of the bread for our sausage sizzle. Many thanks to the Clydesdale horse wagon rides team who collected donations for Riley each day. Also, thanks to Warea Domain who donated \$100 for Riley. We are truly grateful to all these groups — please support them!

The Vintage Hay Day was a great success, with our families enjoying running our food stall and watching the array of old machinery at work. The Clydesdale wagon rides were a big hit and many enjoyed the nostalgia of a ride in their old school bus. The Lions Club members were a terrific support for us at the event, and we are all overwhelmed at the support shown for Riley. Thanks everyone!

## Playcentre Awareness Week: 21–27 March 2010

### "Whanau Tupu Ngatahi — Families Growing Together"

This is our time to celebrate Playcentre. Please come along to our events and find out who we are and what we are all about:

#### Trike-athon — Sunday, 21 March at 10am, Coastal Taranaki School

Please come and support our Playcentre children from the sidelines as they do their sponsored laps (Sunday, 28 March if wet). Bring a picnic lunch for the family. Bouncy castle!

#### 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Open Day — Thursday, 25 March at 10am, Okato Playcentre

Open day for past, present and future Playcentre members. Please come and check out our fun family co-operative or take a walk down memory lane. Morning tea and a cuppa provided for all.



*The Playcentre tent at the vintage hay day – doing what all good community parents do – get out and fundraising for a good cause.*

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**THE LOCAL CONNECTION**

## OKATO CLUBS & GROUPS

### Playcentre

Main Road, Okato (over the Stony Bridge). Tuesday and Thursday, 9.30 - 12.30pm. Contact Rachel 752 4463.

### Playgroup

St Luke's Hall, Main Road Okato. Wednesday morning, 10am - 12 noon. Contact Vanessa 752 4431 or Danelle 752 4916.

### Plunket

Meet bi-monthly at Jaclyn Fisher's home. Contact Jaclyn 752 4872.

### Okato Fire Brigade

Weekly. Monday night trainings, 7pm - 9pm. Contact Barry Harvey 752 4568.

### Historical Society

Meets quarterly in the Community Trust Hall. Contact Iris Putt 752 4182.

### St Patrick's Church, Okato

Daily mass 8.30am. Saturday evening mass 7pm. Inquiries to Steak Goodin 752 8160 or Nora Fox 752 4062.

### St Paul's Church

10am services. Congregate first and third Sunday of the month. Contact Jan Putt 752 4188.

### New Zeal Church

Service 10.30am, Sundays at St Luke's Hall. Contact Angela and Kevin McFetridge 752 4993.

### Okato Co-operating Parish Women's Fellowship

Meet bi-monthly, first Wednesday of the month in St Luke's lounge, 1pm. Contact Lorraine Whittle 752 4359.

### Care and Craft

Get together Thursday fortnight at St Luke's lounge. 10.30am - 2.30pm. Contact Thea Fisher 752 4290.

### Highway 45 Craft

Meet weekly on Monday mornings 10am - 12noon at members' houses. Contact Iris Putt 752 4182.

### Tumahu Rural Women

Meet every second Wednesday of the month, 1pm at alternate members' houses. Contact Joyce Downes 753 4122.

### Tumahu Golf Club

Roly Harvey 752 4314. Sunday: Mens golf day, Tuesday: womens golf day. Every 2nd Wednesday of the month: mixed golf.

### JKA Karate, Okato

Monday and Wednesday 6pm - 7.30pm in Coastal Taranaki School Gymnasium. Contact Nicci 752 4529 or 027 259 6223.

### Squash Club

Monday evening club night. Contact Steve Kelly 027 2333 229.

### Tennis Club

Contact Maree Moffitt 752 8107 or Raewyn Lawn 752 4466.

### Okato Bowling Club

Club day held every Sunday at 9.30am onwards. President Bruce Peacock 752 4538, Secretary Fiona Liddall 752 4509, Convenor Cheryl Neilson 752 4218.

### Okato Lions

Contact Merv Hooker, ph 752 4086.

### Okato Pool

Learn to Swim - Tuesday and Thursday nights from 5.15 - 6pm. Swim Club: Swimming Training - 6 till 7 - 7.30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. For more inquiries contact Fiona Lacey 752 4535.

### St Peter's Guild

Meet fourth Friday of each month. Contact Angela Montgomery 752 7738.

### Probus

Meet every third Friday at the Oakura Golf Club. Contact Margaret Hodges 752 1371.

### Coastal Garden Circle

Meet every third Monday of the month. Contact Rae Hooker 752 4086.

### Pony Club

Contact Carey Brophy, 752 4458.

Please contact Milly 752 4425 for any additional listings or amendments.