

the Ōākura Post

JULY 2026



Graeme
James
‘Send-off’
Page 2 **Show**

One man band, loop pedals, foot stomping folk and a room full of people dancing.

Graeme James Brings it Home Before Heading Back to Europe

After four years living in Ōākura, musician Graeme James is preparing to say goodbye with one last local show at Ōākura Hall on 4 July. For Graeme, the concert marks more than the end of another New Zealand tour. It is also the closing chapter of a significant season for his family, who have made Ōākura home in recent years.

"We've had a wonderful time here," he says. "Our daughter has been through kindergarten and has loved her time at Ōākura School. We've really enjoyed getting to know the community and we're really going to miss it."

Graeme grew up in Taranaki, but his first serious step into music happened overseas. His family lived in the Netherlands for a time when he was a child, and it was there, at seven years old, that he began learning the violin.

When the family returned to New Plymouth when he was nine, he kept playing. From there, two musical worlds developed side by side. There was classical training and orchestra playing, but there was also folk music with his

family band, along with formative times at festivals like the local Patuha Folk Festival.

Those two worlds still sit at the heart of what he does now. Graeme describes his music simply as "foot-stomping folk," but the live show is anything but simple. Performing as a one-man band, he uses a loop pedal and a collection of 10 instruments to build a full, high-energy sound designed to get audiences moving.

Street performance also played a major part in shaping him. His first busking experience came early, when his father took him to play outside Centre City in New Plymouth. "It was horrifying for an eleven-year-old," Graeme says. "I was very self-conscious. But it ultimately ended up being the foundation of my music career."

Years later, after buying a loop pedal, he returned to busking with a very different result. Crowds began gathering, and the idea



of music as a career started to feel possible. Since then, he has performed around 1500 shows and toured widely.

More recently, a show at Ōkato's Hempton Hall last October helped sharpen the direction of his live act. "That gig really cemented for me the desire to lean into playing foot-stomping folk," he says. Since then, he has played over 30 shows around small halls across New Zealand. The Ōākura Hall concert is set to be a last hurrah before he and his family move back to the Netherlands for a season.

For the July 4 show, Graeme says people can expect "a lot of fun": a one-man band, a loop pedal, foot-stomping folk, and a room full of people dancing.

After four years in the community, it is less a farewell than a send-off. **For show details and tickets visit www.graemejamesmusic.com**



Social Membership Bargain!

Have we got a deal for you – KCSH has slashed the cost of an annual social membership for 2026/27 to just \$15 per adult or \$20 per couple. Your support helps keep the Hub free for our youth, children under 18 and local schools, while giving you and your guests access to the facility.

Look out for our newly launched KCSH Table Tennis nights – social members can play free of charge and enjoy the bar. We'd love to have you on the team. Help us support our community and join today at <https://www.kcsh.co.nz/viewform/513911>. If you're a registered player with any member club, you're already a member and can enjoy the benefits.

Kaitake Hub Table Tennis

KCSH is excited to add community table tennis to the Rivermouth Hub. We've purchased two new tables and the Hub will be open Thursdays from 7pm–9.30pm for anyone keen for a hit and a laugh. Bring your own bat or use ours. As numbers grow, we hope to add junior sessions and cater for both social and competitive players.



The only cost is KCSH Social Membership for players over 18. See you Thursday at 7pm! Contact Jackie on 027 673 2900 for more information.

Tsunami Sports Kaitake Netball Club

The season has started strongly, with most teams near the top of their sections and, more importantly, enjoying their netball and displaying great sportsmanship. Access to NPGHS's gym for pre-season and training games has been a real boost, especially for teams welcoming new players.

With more teams entered this year, we were grateful to receive our new Tsunami uniforms in time for the Opening Tournament. Thanks to Tsunami and all our generous sponsors for keeping us looking sharp on court.

Jingo

After the success of last year's Jingo Night, we're doing it again. Join us at the Hub on Saturday 1 August at 6.30pm. \$30 per ticket. Purchase tickets by 25th July. Payments to Kaitake Netball.

Club: 15-3942-0630236-000
Particulars: Name
Reference: Jingo

Dates to note:

- 12 September – Closing Tournament
- 13 September, 3pm – KNC Prizegiving at Kaitake Community Sports Hub

Kaitake FC

Kaitake FC's 2026 season is well underway, with junior grading complete and senior competitions in full swing. It's been fantastic to see the yellow and black represented throughout our community each week.



Our senior teams have made strong starts, with the Cunningham Construction Men's Championship team sitting third, the Webber Building Men's Masters team fourth, and the Contact Energy Women's Senior team leading their competition.

Director of Football Billy Charlton recently completed junior skills sessions that were well attended and provided valuable development opportunities for our young players.

A huge thank you to our sponsors, volunteers, parents and whānau. Your support helps create a positive and rewarding football experience for players of all ages.

We're looking forward to several fundraising events in July and another great season ahead.

Go Kaitake!

Upcoming Events at the Hub

- Friday 24 July – Battle at the Beach: Taranaki Bulls preseason match vs Wellington Lions
- Friday 6 November – KCSH Golf Day (alternate date 13 November)

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(Best Nett winners) Clay Jordan, Paul Haskell (Sponsor) and Allan Bennett.



Kia ora from the Kaitake Golf Club

Winter has finally come and although we have had to cancel some club days we are still managing to get in plenty of golf.

In May we held a 2Ball-Best-Ball open tournament. (A shout out to Paul Haskell from Golf Zone for his continued sponsorship of this annual tournament, there were some great prizes). The format for this competition is basically the same as an individual competition, however you play with a partner. The difference is that only the best score of the partnership, for the hole, is recorded as a team score.

The tournament was well patronised by our own club members and there were many entrants from other clubs as well. Playing conditions couldn't have been better and a light (roast ham) lunch was enjoyed by all at the end of play. Congratulations to all winners - the best gross men's was won by Travis Stewart and Zac Lewis. The best gross women's was won by

Diane Jones and Annie Frame. The best nett section was won by – men's Clay Jordan and Allan Bennett and women's by Francis Farmer and Julie Yardley.

The ladies club members have entered many competitions around the district over the past few months and have seen some success – congratulations to Philly Mullin, 2nd in ladies stableford at the Pungarehu Pork tournament, along with Francis Farmer, Kim Woodward and Julie Yardley who also placed. Special mention to Kris White who won a great meat pack prize in a raffle! Congratulations also go to Lydia Braddock, Jane Shearer, Karyn Lehrke and Jo Kennedy who placed 2nd in the recent Inglewood ladies open teams tournament. Great to see Kaitake represented around the district clubs.

First week of June marked the start of our 18 hole club championship matches, both men

and ladies. Finals for men were scheduled for June 27th while the ladies will go through to July 18th – praying for better weather!

We don't just play golf at the club – one of our members, Kim Woodward, hosted a pink ribbon lunch for members and non-members. A quick round of golf was played by our 9 and 18 ladies before enjoying a "pink" lunch and catch up. There were many raffles and prizes and an enjoyable time was had by all. Kim managed to raise over \$2000 for this worthy cause.

That's it from us for the month – remember – keep you head down and follow through.





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Stories of the Past

THE OMATA GUSHER

Oil well on Omata farm! It all started in 1905.

The site was chosen by a Mr. Wade, a New Plymouth architect presumably with archaeologist background, after checking several sites in the greater New Plymouth area. He recommended drilling down to 2000 ft. The Omata area was chosen because of the amount of oil oozing from the ground. "During a spell of fine weather, the petroleum scum thrown up by the explosive gases below lie very thick and plentiful."

At that time New Plymouth was in fever, oil discovery fever. The town went crazy. Share prices rocketed. There were 14 oil derricks dotted along Ngamotu Beach.

This photo is described as "The oil craze in Taranaki: A burning natural gas jet on Mr. Vetch's [possibly Petch's?] farm) Carrington Road near New Plymouth." It shows several well-dressed possibly dignitaries around the jet. The gentleman at lowest right is not smoking a pipe. It is the outline of his shirt collar. But the gas jet shows another sure sign of the riches in oil and gas waiting to be tapped.

In 1905 the Moturoa Petroleum Company well was "spudded" in and blew out impressive amounts of oil and gas. Oil fever once again hit New Plymouth. Bold statements of the future were made by members of the public. "It is not too much to expect that the cow would be eclipsed by the bore," Nor was it too long before "speculators" moved in.

Such was the enthusiasm and speculation that a new company in Dunedin sent a Director overseas to recruit a professional, a professional in San Francisco for oil drilling. America was in an oil frenzy. "The oil industries in the United States had made more millionaires and multi-millionaires than any other industry." A Mr. H.E. Bunger (more later) with suitable experience and knowledge was recruited in 1906. His job was to manage the construction and drilling of the oil well at Omata. This included the purchase, shipping of all machinery, the upkeep and the management of drilling the bore.

There is no mention of Mr. Wade being present in the photo. The company formed to do the initial oil investigation was the New Plymouth Petroleum Company. Perhaps the Chairman of the eventual New Plymouth Petroleum Company, Captain Sundstrom was present. Perhaps some of the directors of the company and the Secretary Mr. E Tryhall are in that 1905 photo? The initial capital was to finance a bore

into this oil bearing Omata formation where indications were said to be highly favourable! Initially it was proposed that 2000 shares for a total of £20,000 be raised to set up the New Plymouth Petroleum Company. Later it was recorded as £10,000 of which 1500 shares of were fully paid up by wealthy businessmen of Dunedin. New Plymouth investors were not invited to buy shares. The Dunedin businessmen (speculators) would be the sole beneficiaries from this new form of wealth beneath New Plymouth.



But why all the initial capital from just Dunedin? Dunedin was a very wealthy city with several very wealthy citizens in 1905 due to gold. Obviously the Chairman and his directors knew about oil and the potential value of the oil discoveries in California. Due to this, it was a simple task to convince wealthy Dunedin clients to buy the shares. It is rather staggering to read in the 50 years 1857 - 1907 gold to the value of £25 million pounds plus had been discovered in the Otago gold mining area including Gabriels Gully, the site of the original discovery. An estimated 714,000 ounces worth NZ £25 million calculated at approx. £3 -10-0 or more per troy ounce. This had been the fixed price for gold for most of those 50 years. Today over NZ \$5 billion at \$7585 per troy ounce, this amount of course due to the USA/Iran conflict. Another report quotes £71 million, about NZ \$14 billion!

On 26 March 1907 the Taranaki Herald reported "In ten days' time, drilling will commence at the site west of Omata under the direction of Mr. H E Bunger." Mr. Bunger said, from what he had heard of the Taranaki Oilfields, he considered the crude oil would be of much finer quality to that of California. When he saw samples of the

Taranaki oil he thought it the finest crude oil he had ever seen.

The derrick was 71 ft. high. It had a base of 20 ft. and was different to all others in New Plymouth in that only the lower portion was boarded instead of the whole structure. It was like those used at all the large wells drilled by all the large oil companies throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico. The Omata rig is reported was the largest in the Colony. The machinery purchased is the best and most modern, the same as used in America and Canada. Mr. Bunger thinks the oil industry will be the largest of the colony's industries in a very short time and that it will be a grand opening for the employment of a large amount of labour in the development of crude oil and in its refinement. He cited products such as lubricating oils and illuminating paints, refined paraffin (largely used by confectioners) and as one of the most important motive powers (gasoline etc) (Taranaki Herald, 18th February 1907). Oil due to its widespread uses had become the new gold appropriately named "Black Gold."

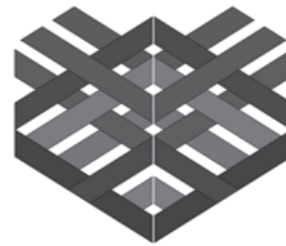
On 12th September, The New Plymouth Petroleum Company reported that indications were favourable. Mr. Bunger reported the bore was down to 600 ft, drilling through hard substance in the shape of large boulders. He

hoped to pass this conglomerate very shortly and better progress would be made. 681 ft and hitting heaving sand. This type of sand causes the walls of the well to collapse. Bore casings would solve this problem. At 862 ft, still drilling through very fine heaving sand but showing gas and oil. On the 4th October the bore was down to 1060 ft. The tools were frequently coming up dripping with oil.

Astonishingly, drilling was abandoned at this stage due to a lack of funds. Another 1000 ft perhaps, given the advice of Mr. Wade, would find oil. Where was the well? Until researching this article I did not know about this oil well. Now I know why an approach a few years ago was made to buy a certain piece of our land. This oil well, however, was not on our farm!! Next month Mr. Bunger sues!

Len Jury

Note: Special thanks to Sharyn Guthrie, Genealogy research, and Mike Gooch and Research Team at Puke Ariki. 1954 article by Sorrel Hoskin "The Good Oil" - Oil exploration in Taranaki has been valuable The article is Len's interpretation based on all this information.



TE KURA O OAKURA
OAKURA SCHOOL

Could you help?

At Oakura School our year 7 and 8 students are again preparing for the AIMS Games. Aims Games is an annual sporting event where intermediate schools from all over New Zealand come together to compete in 27 sports. The event is hosted in Tauranga September 5 to 11, and there are over 430 schools and 14,000 athletes plus attending.

This year, we have entered lots of students in loads of sports. We have individual athletes competing in cross country, swimming, tennis

and surfing, and we are also sending teams for boys' football and girls' football. It's a great opportunity for us to compete against some of the top athletes in our age group while at the same time making some new friends.

It is quite expensive to go to AIMS Games so we are doing lots of fundraising at the moment. We are also looking for sponsors. Any sponsors that can help us get to AIMS will be greatly appreciated. Please contact the school office if this is something you might be interested in.

Tūwhitia te Hopo, Mairangatia te Angitū – Feel the Fear and Reach for Success

In June our school leaders travelled to Palmerston North to attend National Young Leaders' Day. The theme for the day was 'Tūwhitia te hopo, mairangatia te angitū', which means "Feel the fear and do it anyway to achieve success."

We listened to five different speakers during the day. We learned that everyone feels fear sometimes – even the people we look up to and the people who seem the most confident and successful. What makes them leaders is that they choose to keep going despite their fears.

One of the speakers was Lola Fisher who is only 17 years old!. When Lola was only 13 years old, she noticed that most of the news stories about young people were negative. Instead of complaining about the problem, she decided to do something about it. She co-founded 'Create Happy', a magazine that shares positive stories about young people. Her research found that 83% of news stories about children were negative. Lola taught us that if we see a problem, we can take action and make a difference, no matter how young we are.

Another inspiring speaker was Stephen Gallagher. Stephen told us about his love of music and how he once had the chance to meet a composer he admired. Even though he felt nervous, he chose to introduce himself. That one brave decision changed his future. Today, Stephen is a composer and film producer who has worked on famous movies such as Avatar, The Lord of the Rings, and The Hobbit. He taught us that sometimes the opportunities we are most scared of are the ones that can change our lives.

We were also inspired by William Pike, who taught us to never give up no matter what you have gone through and to keep doing the stuff you love. After surviving the eruption on Mt Ruapehu, he had to learn to walk again. Most people might not go back to climbing mountains. But William did. He showed us that challenges and disabilities do not have to stop us from achieving our goals.

We heard from Riley Elliot who is also known as the Shark man. Riley told us that people have been influenced to believe that something that looks intimidating is dangerous. This makes you assume you know everything about them, but you never know their innocence, their



beauty, and importance. To know these things is to know the species more completely. That's what Riley Elliot did after he encountered a shark. He was inspired to learn about them to try to understand why they act the way they act. He now spends his life educating people and protecting sharks.

Graci Kim, a diplomat from New Zealand, was a great inspiration to us all. She told us about how failure happens to the best of us. She had failed so many times with many of her ideas, but she kept going because she knew that she had more to give. She kept trying new ideas, turning drawings into toys as well as being a cooking show host. The books she has written were rejected numerous times that she almost gave up but after many struggles she had a breakthrough and her first book was published. Now she is a New York Times best selling author.

National Young Leaders' Day taught us that being brave does not mean never feeling scared. Being brave means taking the next step even when you are afraid.

We left the event feeling inspired to try new things, take opportunities, and believe in ourselves. The theme, 'Tūwhitia te hopo, mairangatia te angitū,' is something we will remember whenever we face a challenge.

By Year 8 Student Leaders

Coming Up

July

2 Puanga Gathering at 6:30am

20 Term 3 begins

24 Y7/8 PCT Challenge at TSB Stadium

August

12 3D Conferences from 2pm

13 3D Conferences from 2pm



Ōākura Bowling & Social Club

Club News

Jackie Moehau featured prominently throughout the Bowls Taranaki awards night culminating with Moehau taking out the Taranaki women's player of the year, a well-earned result. The club and our members are always proud to have Jackie wear the Ōākura blue. Well done to Urenui Bowls for being awarded club of the year. It is fantastic to see the smaller clubs being recognised for their great results and commitment to both grow and improve their clubs.

The Ōākura club is looking forward to build on last year's record-breaking bowling season results and membership success through: (1) adding new club-based and interclub mid-week competitions; (2) offering group and individual training programmes; (3) encourage and support bowlers to participate in central and national events; (4) continue the ongoing commitment to support community-based bowls programmes such as the Saturday LegAsea tournament and the Friday twilight BBQ bowls competition. The club has achieved a record-breaking membership season with 46 full-playing and 92 (non-playing) social members.

Two Ōākura teams are contesting the midweek interclub competition played at the Paritutu indoor stadium on Wednesday afternoons over winter. The reigning premiers of Steve Muller and Peter Radich with new team members Kevin Fleming and Tim Ryan are keen to go back-to-back, while the Pat Walkin skipped team of Allan Bridgeman, Wayne Robinson and Roy Phillips are eager to press hard for the title. The club is also entering two teams in the indoor stadium 10y and under competitions starting mid-June. The squads for both evenings are Craig Murray, Geoff Farrant, Sam Sutherland, Mike Yardley, Paul Coxhead, Ross Buttimore, Mark Barraclough, Jim and Alesha Quay, Graig and Kim Atkinson, Martin and Michelle Walbank, Barry Watkins and Meagan Breedveld. There are opportunities for bowlers to play every week day at the stadium so no excuses for not enjoying this great game over the winter months.

The design of the Cunninghams' sponsored playing shirts were well received and admired amongst the players, visitors and the wider bowls community. The club is looking forward to resuming the collaboration with local Ōākura apparel supplier, Tsunami, for design and the



"I think it's time we got some fancy new club gear."

club also wishes life member and club legend, Jim Priest, a speedy recovery from a shoulder replacement. We look forward to seeing Jim on the greens next season showing us mere mortals how to play the game.

Congratulations to the Trio of Tim Ryan, Kerry McGovern and Andy Shearer for winning the Raglan winter tournament played in early June. The trio won 4 from 4 games to secure a popular and deserved win. As always, the result was well celebrated with plenty of festive cheer amongst the local Raglan members and club visitors.

The Underarm Bowler

Breast Cancer Fundraiser

For the past four years Kim Woodward has been organising a Breast Cancer Lunch for the ladies who play Thursday morning golf at Kaitake Golf Club. Prior to this she had organised lunches at home for friends but the idea came to her when she was Club Captain to expand to the current format. Describing the task as "simple and satisfying", Kim buys all the supplies herself (although this year Spuds helped with some sandwich fillings), bakes and freezes savouries in advance and has a friend assist her on the day to make sandwiches. Ladies are asked to make a minimum donation of \$10 (some donate up to \$50), and more recently raffles have been added to the day to increase funds. This year over \$2,000 was raised, the total bumped up by a match a donation scheme that Kim chased up while at the hairdressers. The generosity of local businesses including Sip N Surf, Butlers, Malva chocolates, Ōākura Pharmacy and R&CO to supply raffle prizes is awesome.

Like most of us, Kim has had friends whose lives have been lost or affected by breast cancer, but she is very modest about her contribution to the cause. As she said "simple and satisfying" but I'd like to add generous and kind.

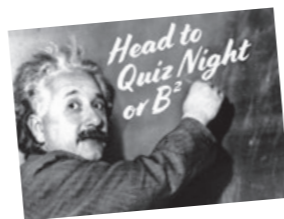







Butlers Quiz Night? Correct.

If you are wondering where all the excitement is on a Monday evening it's all happening at Butlers Reef at 6.30p.m. Every week 10-12 teams compete for the title of champion for the evening.

I went one Monday evening. People were enjoying dinner or drinks prior to kick off, with the bonus of a free kid's meal with every adult meal. Team names like Hey Presto, Choir and Team 67 were positioned at full tables in the front bar with an extensive age range and a great family friendly atmosphere. One of the youngest teams, Team 67, has been coming for several months. They said there was a lot of competition and they enjoyed learning lots of new information in a fun way, as well as having something social to do on a Monday night.

I recognised a few familiar faces in "Choir" who assured me they were more intelligent than they looked. The good news is there's even a prize for the second to last team, so if your team doesn't win, you are still in with a chance.





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David MacLeod MP for New Plymouth

Kia ora Ōākura,

Here's what you need to know about Budget 2026. Despite global volatility, our economic plan is working and setting New Zealand up for a bright future. We are seeing solid growth, with 220,000 more jobs on the way and wages rising faster than prices – the key to making life more affordable for Kiwis.

This Budget is about securing New Zealand's future in a more uncertain world. It is part of National's plan to fix the basics and build the future, with a clear focus on growing the economy, creating jobs, keeping taxes low, cracking down on crime, and improving education and healthcare.

We know we can't tax, borrow and spend our way to a brighter future. That approach leads to higher costs, fewer jobs, and stagnant wages. Instead, by stopping wasteful spending and making careful choices, we are keeping taxes low and getting the Government's books back on track, with a return to surplus forecast in 2028/29 and \$6 billion less borrowing than previously expected.

At the same time, we are continuing to invest in what matters most: roads, police, schools, and healthcare. We're delivering that investment through savings, so Kiwis still get quality frontline services while we restore fiscal discipline.

The growing economy is set to create 220,000 new jobs over the next four years, with wages continuing to outstrip prices. That is how we ease cost-of-living pressure and give New Zealanders greater choice about what to do with their hard-earned money.

Ultimately, this Budget is about responsible economic management to secure New Zealand's future. It's part of National's plan to fix the

basics and build the future – delivering jobs, opportunities, and higher wages for hardworking Kiwis, no matter what challenges the global environment may bring.

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This month features two of our awesome wahine interclub tennis teams from last season.

The Midweek section one team of Ana Spurdle, Anne Bridges, Shannon House, Wibbi Termath, Chris Davies, and Toni Peacock as a fill in ended up in 3rd place in the 2nd round. A move up of one place from round 1. We had a good round with 3 wins, 2 draws and 1 loss. Section one is pretty tight, with matches going either way on the day. Midhirst 1 dropped from 3rd place in round 1 to 7th place in round 2, therefore faces regulation to section two. Midweek competition starts again in October, with some casual hitting prior to the start.

Pippa Farquhar, Julie Shlosberg, Isla Kuriger and Elise Lewis were all part of the Ōākura Mana Wāhine Interclub tennis team who played together every Friday. It was their first season in Youth Grade and they came across some pretty tough opponents, but the girls stood their ground

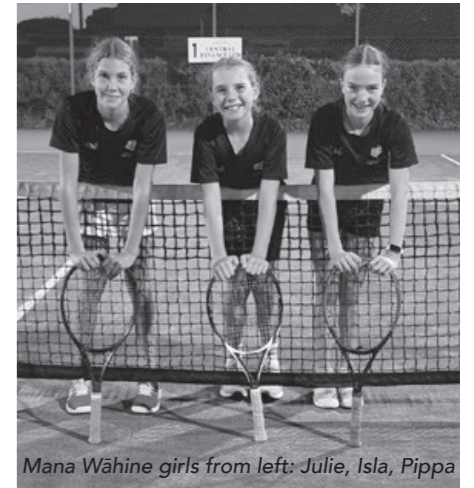
and had some great results. Mana Wāhine loved playing together and are really looking forward to next season.

Thanks heaps to Isla Walker for filling in when needed. And thank you Monika for coaching the girls, they have improved a lot over the year.

Monika is still running lessons over winter for those that are keen - see TOP Activities page for contact details.

May and June had great on court conditions and off court there was plenty to view with Roland Garros and now Wimbledon.

Jackie Mitchell



Mana Wāhine girls from left: Julie, Isla, Pippa

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I remember when... Ōākura

The one photo in my home that constantly reminds me of the many years I have spent on Ōākura Beach is of myself at four years old alongside the Ōākura River with my very large dog Chinook.

Its 83 years ago and while the beach remains exactly the same, life in Ōākura has changed considerably

I drove along a vastly different Messenger Terrace from that time today, there were no buildings I can remember overlooking the beach when we arrived on Mace terrace in the late forties. Now there are no gaps on a very narrow road just beautiful homes all the way to the river.

Prior to our 1/2acre on Mace terrace Mum and Dad camped every Xmas holidays on No 1 site directly opposite Jans Dairy (now the beach store) in a very large Army Tent .

Later (now with 3 daughters) Shearer's bach in the oval became our holiday home (that bach is now on Sole's property at the top of the cutting as you leave the river)

Late 40's Dad was able to purchase from a friend in Ohura (Mrs Ostler)1 acre of land on Mace Terrace(named after Captain Mace).For the sum of 100 pound!!

The only neighbour was Jack Russling's strawberry farm. Our property boundary was

overlooking Messenger Terrace end of the road in. (Hislops)

One of dads bomb disposal friends Howard Coad split the property with Mum and Dad.



Another Bomb Disposal friend Don Lobb had dad negotiate with the Ostlers for a plot on the now Messenger Terrace side boundary of our piece, the Lobb family still own it.

First we camped on our 1/2 acre then a cookhouse was built then a two bedroom Bach and only after my three sisters and I left home did Mum and Dad build permanently and lived there for many years. The present owners are the only other family who have lived there.

My pony Mischief carved out the access to the beach from Mace terrace by sliding on its bum down the sandbank (that is now steps) which was great fun.

Similar story with the access from Mace terrace. I just rode over the hill at the top of our place (now Doug and Peta Hislops property) and continued down the sandbank most times on horseback, many days running to dive into the river and swim with all the locals and friends from the Marae. Andy Hoskin, Daphne Tapaki, and local mates Judy Atkinson, Alison Coad, Lobb boys, Ian, Wawrick and Jimmy.

Most of Mace terrace was Jack Russling's Strawberry farm then, the bonus was school holiday jobs and eating strawberry's.

The West family who lived on corner of Hau Lane (same house still there) farmed most of Dixon St, their cowshed was virtually in the village. I regularly visited in the early days mainly to ride Beryl Wests horse, Jean. Beryl spent a lot of time teaching me to ride and owning my own became my goal.

Butlers was then as it still is, the local gathering place and those beer mugs remain in my memory. Mrs Sampson lived where the bottle store is now, she made the best ice cream ever!

Fay Looney



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A bus trip in April and Midwinter Lunch coming up.

31 members boarded the Weir Coachline bus and set off for an adventure and fun.

We travelled along the main roads through to Stratford then meandered along "The Forgotten Highway", SH43, as far as Whangamomona where we paused to have lunch at the Whanga Pub.

After a stroll through the busy town centre (lol) dodging the raindrops, we returned to



New Plymouth. Many thanks to our committee for organising this great day trip!

This year our midwinter lunch is the 17th July. For details please contact Brenda Ryan 06 757 3537 or 027 748 9698

GROWMEEZ: Communal Gardening

Growmeez is the brainchild of Shari Corbett-Dwyer who had "an epiphany" after she studied level 4 Horticulture with Karl Freeman at Witt. Communal gardening became her focus! She presented her ideas to Sustainable Taranaki with a personal goal of "a communal garden in every neighbourhood." She named her project Growmeez and Sustainable Taranaki agreed to support her work.

At a book launch at the Green School in April 2026, Ōmata resident Lisa Lister overheard Shari talking to someone about communal gardens. Lisa's immediate reaction was "I would love to be involved in that," and she offered her property of mostly under-utilised acreage.

A 'communal garden' differs from a 'community garden'. Sustainable Taranaki describes a communal garden as a community-driven gardening initiative that connects small groups of 8-10 people to grow healthy, spray-free food on under-utilised private land. It is designed to help those who lack space, time, or gardening confidence by turning local backyards into shared, productive spaces.

Small, closed groups meet weekly for 1 to 2 hours at the same time and day. Members work together to maintain the garden, and all harvested produce is split equally among participants. The participants contribute a small fee of \$40 per month to cover seeds, soil, and tools. Expert guidance is provided by a Growmeez coordinator.

That's the concept, how has it been going on Lisa's Ōmata property? The first step for Lisa was to find people who wanted to be part of her communal garden. She put a post on Facebook and had many replies within 24 hours. She had her 10 people, and referred the

extras to other communal gardens. That was in early May 2026.

Nine women and one man come and garden together at 3.30pm each Thursday, with just enough time before dark at this time of year. They do the garden preparation, planting, weeding and compost building. They also plant flowers that will attract bees. Lisa says, "At the end of each session we record everything we've done. This is what we did and what we need to do next. A lot gets done in that time and at the end everyone walks away smiling."

They began work on Lisa's property with one garden and have been expanding to additional garden areas throughout the property. They plant following Maramataka, the practice that aligns gardening tasks with the lunar cycle. It operates on the principle that the moon's gravitational pull and light influences the moisture levels in the soil and the flow of sap in plants, similar to how the moon's gravitational pull affects ocean tides.

The obvious reward for the gardeners is lots of healthy, spray free vegetables to take home, but there are other benefits. Seeing each other weekly, incredible connections and friendships are formed and there becomes a strong sense of community when both the gardens and friendships flourish.

I visited one Thursday afternoon to take some photos. Everyone was involved in building a 'lasagna' compost, getting instruction from their coordinator as they went along. "What should we put on next for carbon? ... We don't pat the compost down, leave it light." I observed a lot of learning going on.

Talking with the gardeners, they said things like:

"I've already applied what I've learned to my own garden, like composting and pruning trees".

"There's such a sense of community. Everyone's head is in the same place".

"We're caretakers of the land, feeding ourselves and our families nutrition food".

The Growmeez concept is growing= exponentially, so more coordinators and sponsors are needed. There's talk of a new communal garden starting soon in Ōkato. If you are a property owner and have an under-utilised section of land or want to join as a participant, you can make contact with Growmeez through Sustainable Taranaki.

www.sustainabletaranaki.org.nz. Look at the part called "our programmes" and scroll down until you find GROWMEEZ - Communal Gardens.

Elayne Kessler



Caption from left: Karen Vesely, Christina Davies, Front Lisa Lister, Leeanne Presland, Heidi Turner, Matthew Steen, Maria Tihema. Photo by Shari Corbett-Dwyer. Absent: Jacqui Penn and José Armstrong.

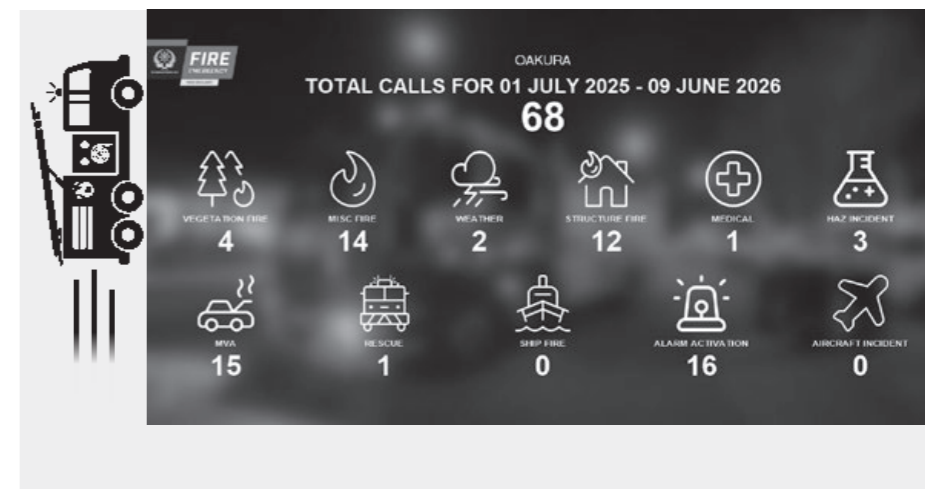
It's been a busy month for our crew!

Bruce, Ian, Noah and Mani completed the Firefighter challenge in May and with your help raised over \$8,000 for Blood Cancer NZ. The total number raised hit over \$2.5M, being the highest ever raised. A massive effort for those climbing and those who donated. You're all appreciated!



June 8 we held our AGM and it was interesting to see what exactly we had responded too. From 1 July 2025 to 9 June 2026, the Ōākura Volunteer Fire Brigade responded to a total of 68 callouts across our community.

The largest number of incidents attended were alarm activations (16) and motor



vehicle accidents (15), followed closely by miscellaneous fires (14) and structure fires (12). We also responded to vegetation fires, hazardous substance incidents, weather-related events, rescues, and medical assistance calls.

These numbers show that our brigade is being called on for a wide variety of emergencies — not just fires. These incidents highlight how important prevention, preparation, and community awareness are for keeping everyone safe.

As we move further into winter, it's a timely reminder for everyone to take extra care around the home and on the roads. Please

make sure smoke alarms are working and tested regularly, fireplaces and heaters are used safely, chimneys are cleaned, and escape plans are discussed with your family. Drivers are also encouraged to slow down in poor weather conditions, avoid distractions, and stay alert on rural roads.

Every small preventative action can help reduce emergencies and keep our Whanau and community safer. Ōākura Volunteer Fire Brigade thanks the community for its continued support and encourages everyone to do their part to help prevent avoidable incidents.

Nga mihi, Ōākura Fire Brigade.

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Toiaa Taiao, detail from Whiria ko te iwi tūna, 2025

Kaitake Community Board



The June 8th Kaitake Community Board meeting was held at the Hempton Hall in Ōkato and what a fantastic turnout – thanks to you all for attending.

The meeting proceeded with two deputations.

The first regarding the beach access on the north side of the Wairau stream which has proven to be difficult for NPDC Parks to manage and the latest reprofiling of the existing rock steps in April didn't last long. Council suggested using the boat ramp and access on Surf Club side as an improved access for the public until such time as a better solution can be provided on the north side of the stream.

The second from the Ōkato Energy Collective group and focused on water supply. The information and report provided clarified to the KCB that this issue is of the highest priority and as a result officers from Council's Water Team are scheduled to provide an update on water supply prospects and issues in Ōkato at the July KCB meeting.

Other points raised included:

Ōkato Energy Sustainability and Resiliency - Officers from Taranaki Emergency Management Office (TEMO) are to attend the next Board meeting to provide an update to the Board and community.

Coastal Public Transport - Buses servicing the area are overcrowded. A request was received for a bus shelter at Ōkato.

A request was received that Council revisit the Ōkato Domain Management Plan in consultation with iwi and hapū, with a focus on strengthening community education and ensuring protection of sites of cultural significance.

Rubbish bins - A further request was received from Ōkato residents for recycling bins.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss and vote for the use of the last portion of the discretionary fund 2026/26 to be used to supply a drinking water fountain at the Ōkato swimming pool entrance to be available for public. The vote was unanimously in favour

and consequently funding for this project will be available and the water fountain should be installed by the next season's pool opening.

At this stage I did something slightly unorthodox for a council meeting and opened the floor for anyone to input as there was such a good keen group attending. What followed was some very frank and real discussion about Ōkato's needs and its constituents' requirements. The KCB has a much better understanding of the priorities for Ōkato which we are now able to act on and direct to the correct council staff for action.

Response to the May meeting deputations as follows:

- NPDC has installed speed and traffic detection on Koru Road which has proven higher traffic volume and speed average at 61.5km/h with most staying at slower speeds but a few speeding. The KCB recommendation to NPDC is to reduce speed limit to 80km/h on Koru Road from SH45 to Plymouth Road intersection. Please slow down on this road as there is the Green School and a growing residential population being impacted by your speed.

- Support for the prioritisation of underground reticulation/ services rather than overhead lines and poles in Ōākura village, which needs to be presented in a written submission to PowerCo and is in progress.

- Use of chemicals on lawns and sports fields and the contractor identified has been provided with the NPDC philosophy on such, which had not been followed.

The most consistently discussed topic that the KCB continues to have is the development of cycleways/walkways. As the Kaitake trail from Pukeiti to Ōākura has been put on "permanent hold", the focus has turned back to extending the coastal path to Fort St George along the inland side of the Marine Esplanade, from the Timaru Stream bridge to Lower Pitone Road. We look forward to a local group presentation to be delivered at the July 13th KCB meeting.

Finally, the KCB continues working on our community three-year plan, and our draft plan is well underway and on schedule for your review in July.

The LTP early engagement survey will go out in July for your review and input into this plan. We have already had some input and need much more.

Our New Zealand liberal democracy ensures the freedom and rights of all individuals are protected by constitutionally established norms and institutions. So stand up, have your say and be assured our role as KCB elected members is to respond without opinion and direct our community concerns to the correct council department for their response and action.

Next Meeting. Monday 13 July 11am, Kaitake Sports Hub

Mike Anderson
Chair Kaitake Community Board

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TOP Activities

Ōākura

Ōākura Hall Bookings
Vicky Jury 027 215 2465

Adult Ballet Class - Friday 8:45am - 10 am.
Register your interest for adult tap class. Jane 027 6940933 or janeroseman@xtra.co.nz.

Bowling and Social Club
Bowling tournaments September through to April. Both mid-week and weekend games. Steve Muller 021 169 5863

Oakura Bowling Club Mahjong Group
We meet each Monday from 1pm at the club. All welcome including beginners. Contact Heather 021617894

Dancing in the Dark
Glenys Farrant 027 753 0120

Gym Classes - Fun & friendly community circuit training sessions at The Well Nest gym Tue 5:20pm & Fri 9:30am. Tempofit.org/gym Hayden - 0274835942

Indoor Bowls
Enquiries to Marvin Clough 752 7531

JKA Karate - Tues 5.30-7pm,
Thurs 6-7.30pm. Jim Hoskin 022 601 3070.

Justice of the Peace - Lynn, Anne, John, Krys. Ōākura Library Thurs 10am-12.30pm.

Kaitake Ranges Conservation Trust
Pete Morgan 027 372 5182
morgpt@xtra.co.nz

Kaitake Social Netball - Sundays 3pm during Term 2 & 3 Oakura School Netball Courts Contact Jenna 027 489 4929.

Morning Talk - coffee group
Thursdays 10-11am at NPOB Surf Club. Free tea/coffee. Tracey Lusk 752 7875

'Move it or Lose it' - Strength and Balance Fitness Classe - Ōākura Hall, Wednesdays and Fridays 9.30am. Contact Gloria Zimmerman 027 284 9111

Mini Groovers - Music Group
All parents welcome with babies/under 5's. Every Tues during term time 10-11am at the Ōākura Hall. Visit their Facebook page: Mini Groovers - Ōākura.

Ōākura Maimoa Club - after school care
Monday to Thursday 3pm to 5.30pm
Bookings essential through Facebook @oakuramaimoaclub or by text to 022 323 7210

Ōākura Crop Swap - 3rd Saturday 3-4pm

Ōākura Village Hall. Contact Adam Harris adam@frankandfearless.com

Ōākura Walking Talking Group
Every Monday 10am. Meet in the carpark next to the skatepark on Messenger Tce. Phone Mae 027 314 2995 or just turn up.

Pickleball Ōākura - Ōākura Hall - Tues & Thurs 9-11am, Wed 7.30-9pm, 10am-12pm most Saturdays. All skill levels and equipment is provided. Elayne 027 937 7173 or Vincenza 027 739 6574

Playcentre
14 Donnelly St. Sessions run Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 9am - noon during school terms. oakura@playcentre.org.nz

Pony Club - Tracey Mackenzie 027 319 0238 traceymackkyle@gmail.com

Pool Club - Meets every Wednesday night 7pm over winter commencing April at Butlers Reef. All welcome. For more info call Margaret 027 232 1899

Probus Club - Ōākura Bowling club, 3rd Friday of the month 10-11.30am. Contact Brenda Ryan 757 3537 or 027 748 9698

TempoFit Kids Run Club - run club, Friday 8am at Ōākura Hall, 8-13yrs. Hayden Shearman 027 483 5942 tempofit.org

St James Church - Sunday Service 10am, Every week. Sunday School Every 2nd and 4th Sunday 9am Breakfast club & 10am Sunday School. stjamesoakura@gmail.com

Strength & Balance - Ōākura Hall, in the supper room (school term only). Monday 10:30. Jane 06 752 7743

Sunday School - St James Church
Every 2nd and 4th Sunday 10am. stjamesoakura@gmail.com

Surf Lessons - Deken Waves Surf Coaching. Group & Private sessions available. Contact Simon: 021 122 9525 dekenwaves@gmail.com

Tennis Club - Coaching for all ages and levels. Enquiries - Jackie 027 673 2900

The Coastal Dippers - Mon-Fri 7.00am, Sat & Sun 8.00am. Turn up in front of the Surf Club for a quick sea dip. Facebook or Kama 027 769 1101

Tai Chi Classes
Every Monday 9-10am at Ōākura Hall. Judi 027 268 2601. Just come along or contact: taranakitaichichuan@gmail.com

Val Deakin Dance School - Children's ballet class. Tuesday 3:30 to 4:30pm. For ages 5 -9. Contact janeroseman@xtra.co.nz

Sunday Waves - 5Rhythms Dance Class
SUNDAY 10.30-12 fortnightly - Oakura Hall.

Beginners welcome. A fun somatic practice without steps... Mira 02108090172/ Dance5R@mirawatson.com

Dance 5Rhythms
MONDAYS 5-6.30 fortnightly - Corbett Park Hall. No experience needed. A free movement dance practice to increase somatic connection, co-ordination and joy. 02108090172 / Dance5R@mirawatson.com

Kaitake Golf Club - Wednesday Open Casual Haggie Competition. \$10 non-members \$5 members. 8am to 1pm open to everyone. Phone Penny 7527665

Tataraimaka Hall

5 Elements Fitness Sessions
5pm -6pm everyday. Barney 027 752 7076 barney@5efitness.com or visit www.5efitness.com

Starts Term 2 - Gymnastics Group for children - 5-7 yrs
Tuesdays after school at the Tataraimaka Hall for basic level gymnastics sessions. Rose at rosem@realfoodnutrition.co.nz

Okato

Okato Community Church meeting

At Hempton Hall on Sunday mornings 10.30am - all welcome.
Contact Nicky 027 497 3764

Okato Bowling Club - Friday Twilight Bowls during Daylight Saving, all welcome. Club opens 5:30pm, starts 6pm. Supper \$6. Sandra 0274662129

Okato and District Historical Society
Meg Cardiff 752 4566

Okato Lions Club - Contact Colin Tyler 027 5421853 - Meet at Hempton Hall first Wed of the month.

Okato Squash Club - Monday nights from 6.30pm. All welcome.

St. Patrick's Catholic Church - Saturday Vigil Mass @ 6pm. 36 Cumming Street.

St. Paul's - Sunday Service 10am 1st and 2nd Worship Service. 3rd Sunday 10am - Communion Service, 4th Sunday at 7.00pm. Open church for silent reflection - Pew for You, 3rd Wednesday of each month

Te Ruru Market - Okato Community Market - Crafters, Growers, Makers.

Every Wed. Hempton Hall Okato 4-5:30pm.

Ōkato Tennis Club okatotennis@gmail.com

Playcentre 37 Carthew St. Mon and Thurs 9am-1pm during school terms. okatoplaycentre.org.nz

TOP Information

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