

COROMIND

Issue 12

Hands in Clay, Heart in Waihi

Millie Robinson's artistic alchemy

A Sense of Place

Redefining 'Bucket List'

THE SUMMER REGATTA

Not just a boat race!

ECHOES OF STRENGTH

Aotearoa's emerging
hip-hop/RnB talent release
powerful debut albums

Audio 
Version



Editorial

Kia ora,

Guess who's back? That's right, your favourite Coromandel local mag, right here and ready for summer vibes! I'm not just a magazine; I'm your instant fan, keeping you cool when the sun's too hot to handle. Call me cool, call me confident – bragging? Maybe just a little.

I'm not your average mag; I'm the positive, young, fresh and energetic one in the room. I'm all about shouting out our local artists and sharing the heartwarming tales of our fantastic community. If you're a local, you probably know the drill. If you're a traveller: Kia ora! You're in for a treat. Dive into my pages and enjoy the ride.

Now, let's talk real talk. The past summers threw us some curveballs, but guess what? We're a resilient whānau, and we've been eagerly awaiting this time of the year. So, props to you for joining us in one of the most beautiful spots in Aotearoa NZ.

The coolest thing about me? I'm free. Shoutout to our local businesses and incredible community members who've got my back, allowing me to serve you with inspiring stories every month. Want to be part of the crew? Become a member of our platform! Check out all the perks at: coromind.nz

And that's not all – head to the website for my online and audio versions. That's right, I'm also digital, baby! From the Coromandel to the world, keeping everyone in the loop.

Summer's knocking on our door, so kick back, enjoy the read, and let's have some fun!

Peace,
The Coromind Team

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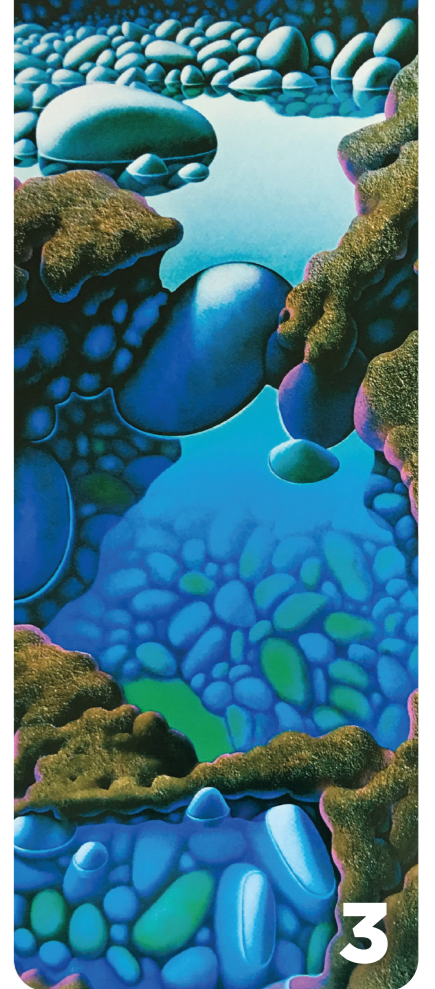
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Michael Smither

Coromind is honoured to have Michael Smither (Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit) as our featured artist. When our team asked Michael to share some words with our readers, we were stoked with what we received.

Here's a journal entry from Michael Smither from 27 October to 1 November 2023.

"Library, massage, coffee, walk. Very tired after my son Thomas's visit. Did a little composing, restructuring my 21 Piano Pieces for bassoon. Considerable demands on my memory for articles on the origin of the Govett Brewster Art Gallery in New Plymouth, and for this now one-year-old Coromind. My birthday coming on 29 October. Attendance in Coromandel at the CR Exhibit Space. 84 this time. 85 a long way to go. Thomas bought me some therapeutic boots for long cold winter evenings. Could be some way away as the forecast is for a long hot dry and windy summer. Had a taste of intense cold yesterday as I got into the pond to clean the glass to help see the little school of whitebait delivered by Chris Charteris from his stream, the Waitaia. The whitebait have big dark eyes that make them feel like aliens. The water was so cold it made my arm ache. I look forward to swimming in the sea.

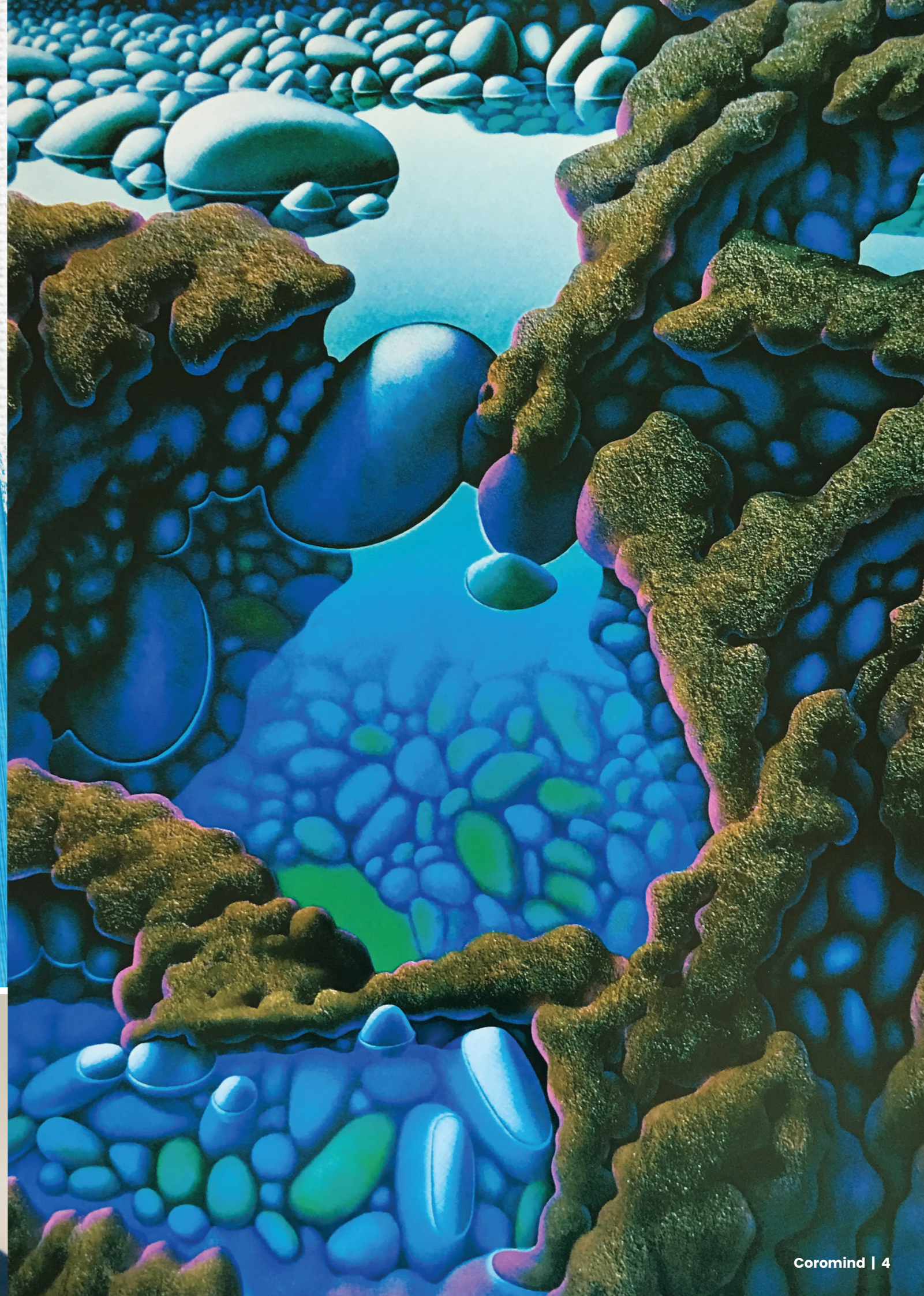
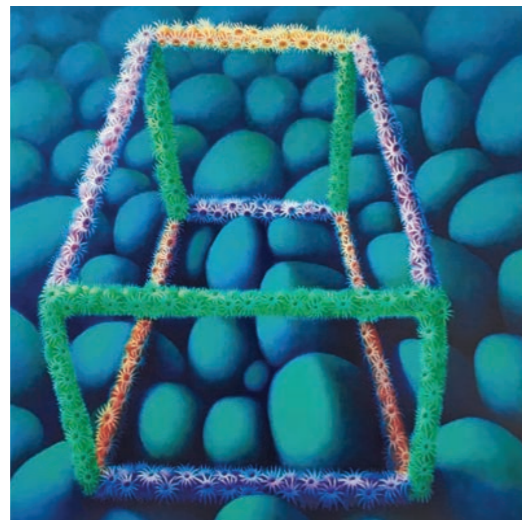
At the Otama Ratepayers AGM, I put out an idea for the prevention of the destruction of the Otama mussel reefs. Along with James. So far I have thought of a Pō to mark their significance, and somehow making it educational and attractive. Next idea to emerge was a children's book and perhaps t-shirts. Vivienne who showed her artwork

in the exhibition of Māori and Pacifica wāhine in the Kūaotunu Hall, a stirring image. She and I worked on the Tairua school mural years ago. Smither rocks painted around the school swimming pool. I am going to ask her to support the 'save the mussel beds' with her imagery. The mussel is such a central part of the rocky coastal environment. The harakeke is its onshore partner in survival, sharing the same rocky bed with seaweed and fish.

In a day, my body clock moved from 83 to 84. It seems my slide into the 80s is inducing requests for my biographical notes. There are plenty of stories over the years, some written by me and others by interested professional writers. Most recent of these requests involves recounting the early stories of the setting up of the Govett Brewster Art Gallery in New Plymouth. Well I remember the bug house theatre on Saturdays where I got my dose of common culture for sixpence. The movie house that became the new flash Art Gallery. Set up by her funds to support local artists – that the City Council quickly killed off for exhibitions supporting international artists considered of 'great' importance. The cultural mafia at work. Don Driver, local artist of national repute, got a job at the front desk. He became gossip central till he retired."*

*Monica Brewster (née Govett, 1886–1973)

Words & Artwork by **Michael Smither**



COCONUT ROUGH!

PART 3

Hello there! I'm Roxane Dejoie, and this is the last part of a captivating tale about the incredible journey of a coconut traveling from a Pacific Island to New Zealand. Join her as she faces fears, explores a brand-new environment, and encounters countless adventures along the way. Have you ever stumbled upon a coconut during a beach stroll?



THERE IS ALWAYS LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS.

Words & Illustrations by **Roxane Dejoie**



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Word Find

KŪAOTUNU TALES

Guardians of the Mountain

Kūaotunu harbours resilience and unity that has shaped the community for over a century. In the late 1800s, the discovery of gold brought prosperity, transforming this once-sleepy village into a thriving settlement. By 1910, the gold rush waned, leaving behind a small seaside village that would later face a challenge that would test its very essence.

The tranquillity of Kūaotunu was disrupted in the 1980s when advances in gold mining technology reignited interest in the area. Mining companies eyed the sacred mountain, and the threat prompted the formation of the Kūaotunu Anti Mining Action Group (KAMAG). The community found itself at the forefront of a battle – against the prospect of mining encroaching on their homes and environment.

KAMAG, a grassroots movement, campaigned passionately to prevent mining activities in the area. This opposition persisted for 15 years, marked by a fierce determination to protect the land and uphold

the values of the community. The struggle against mining in Kūaotunu was captured in the feature film 'The Z Nail Gang', which portrayed the David vs. Goliath battle waged by a tight-knit community against global mining interests.

The film, based on true stories from the anti-mining movement in the Coromandel, depicted how a disparate community unified against authorities, ultimately prevailing against all odds. 'The Z Nail Gang' showcased the power of resilience, creativity, community spirit, unity, humour and passion – an embodiment of the outlaw Kiwi spirit that resonates with the broader narrative of Aotearoa New Zealand.

In recent times, the threat of mining in Kūaotunu has reemerged. The concern looms larger as the new government contemplates changes that could impact the delicate balance between economic interests and environmental preservation. The proposed 'fast track' law change planned by NZ First raises questions about community participation in

decisions that could alter the face of Kūaotunu once again.

The tale of Kūaotunu, from its gold rush days to the present, is a story of adaptability and resilience. It serves as a reminder that, even in the face of challenges, communities can stand together to protect their environment and way of life. As we navigate the potential shifts in mining policies, Kūaotunu's story stands as an enduring example of the strength found in unity and the enduring spirit of Aotearoa's communities.

Words by **Coromind Team**



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Local Action



Hey, I'm Emily Brickwood, a 17-year-old girl from Whangamatā. I play rugby and love to dance, but my favourite sport is skiing. I have been skiing since I could walk and come from a family where everyone loves skiing and we spend as many winter weekends as we can at the mountain. Some of my favourite things about skiing are: there is always a new challenge, the terrain is constantly changing, and being lucky enough to spend time with family or friends while doing something we all enjoy.

Over the October holidays, I passed my Level One Ski Instructor's exam. This qualification is recognised internationally and means I can introduce and get people enthusiastic about a sport that is such a big part of my life. To gain my qualification, I had to spend 5-6 hours on the Turoa side of Mt Ruapehu for five days. Over the first three days, Monday to Wednesday, we went back to the basics. We were taught how to help beginners who have never skied before get comfortable with the snow and feeling of skis on their feet, we perfected our demonstration of different kinds of wedge turns from basic wedge turns to advanced wedge turns, and learnt ways to keep our students engaged.

We had an assessed teach on Thursday where our examiner evaluated and marked our teaching strategies, accuracy of demonstrations, and knowledge of what skills we were teaching our students. On the last day, we worked on our personal skiing skills by getting feedback on our parallel turns and carving, as well as receiving our exam results.

Skiing overseas is what inspired me to attend the course. Earlier this year, I was fortunate enough to spend time in Canada. It was minus 20 nearly every day and everywhere was covered in snow. The ski fields and snow conditions were incredible. In the future, I plan to travel overseas to teach in different ski fields around the world.

I would definitely recommend the course to anyone who is passionate about skiing, the benefits are infinite. Some personal highlights for me were making amazing friends and growing my personal skiing and communication skills – plus now I am able to teach skiers in different countries all over the world.

Words by
Emily Brickwood



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WHERE ARE YOU LIVING NOW AND HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN THERE?

I'm currently living in Townsville, Queensland. I've been here almost 2 years (in a couple of months' time).

WHERE ON THE COROMANDEL DID YOU GROW UP?

Whitianga

WHEN DID YOU LIVE THERE?

I lived in Whitianga from when I was born in 1999 through to 2018, before making my first move.

WHICH SCHOOL DID YOU ATTEND?

MBAS

HIGHLIGHTS SINCE YOU FINISHED SCHOOL?

There've been a lot of highlights for me and my family across the years. My top 3 highlights would be:

- 1) Representing New Zealand for Futsal in the inaugural Futsal Fern Squad in 2017-2019.
- 2) Making the move across the ditch and really getting stuck into my coaching credentials in football. This has led me to becoming the Northern Women's and Girls' Participation Officer for Football Queensland. I've now been to two National Youth Championships, coaching within our U16 Girls Queensland State

team. This highlight also includes seeing the impact of hosting the Women's World Cup in AUS and NZ.

3) And lastly and most importantly, welcoming our baby boy into the world this year.

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR DAYS NOW?

First and foremost, mum duties come first. And then, onto working on ways of developing and growing the female space in football for both the young and old in Northern Queensland. Some long days and nights coaching and running programmes. With the added bonus of the juggling act between work and family life, but I wouldn't want it any other way.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE CULTURE WHERE YOU ARE?

The love, the friendly and caring people up here. Starting anywhere fresh is hard, but the community within the football space in Townsville is fantastic.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Our little family we've created.

WHAT ARE YOUR FONDEST MEMORIES OF HOME?

Summer days. With my old man heading down the beach for a swim, after finishing up football on

Wednesday nights with the Red Devils.

HAVE YOU BEEN BACK HOME RECENTLY? IMPRESSIONS?

I've only been back when the bubble between NZ and AUS opened during Covid. It was a very quick in and out trip to see family, but far out ... Whiti has changed. Some things you can hardly recognise any more, but overall it still feels like home.

WHO ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO CATCHING UP WITH NEXT TIME YOU ARE HOME?

My family. For most of them, it'll be the first time meeting the new addition to the family. We can't wait. And hopefully we might be able to catch some old friends from school if they're in town.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUNGER YOU?

Push to do whatever you love in life and make it your job, don't waste time doing things that don't make you happy.

BIGGEST LIFE LESSON SO FAR?

You'll never know what's out there or where you'll end up if you don't take steps out of your comfort zone. So overall don't be afraid to make big life changes.

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CAN PENGUINS FLY?

One eye, two wings, and a world of determination!

Can penguins fly? Yes, they fly underwater!

One exception was Pico the little blue penguin ... Are you intrigued?

Penguins do have wings, or are they flippers? Most people call them wings. The 'wing' structures of penguins evolved for swimming rather than flying in the air.

Pico the little blue penguin came to us in January 2021 from Corovets in Whangamatā as a young fledgling.

Though a little underweight, after a few days of nice, yummy fish slurry it did well, but was diagnosed with an injury in one eye (an ulcer on the cornea). The eye was treated with special eye medication provided by an avian eye specialist, but permanent blindness was the outcome after treatment didn't make a difference.

The question now was, would little Pico do well back in the wild with one functional eye now he was putting on weight and happy swimming around in our outside pool? After several calls to experts, it was suggested Pico would be too vulnerable to predators and would not survive.

A call to Auckland Zoo elicited that they had too many little blues already. Although a new bird would go into quarantine, it would upset the existing 'waddle' at that stage (a waddle is a group of penguins on land, and a 'raft' is a group in the water).

Then after some more calls we were told that Christchurch International Antarctic Centre would welcome little blues that couldn't live in the wild anymore for various reasons. So, how to get Pico there? Air NZ was the next call to make, and we found out they would take him to Christchurch

airport in an approved certified crate.

After organising the necessary documentation with DOC, we were told by Air NZ that a pet transport company needed to be contacted to do the final transportation.

PetJet Transport in Auckland gave us a quote and we decided to go ahead. My son Johan and I drove to South Auckland PetJet Cargo to meet up with the PetJet team. We were welcomed by the whole crew, including office staff, as this was the first penguin they had ever transported! Pico was transferred into their approved crate and photographed and adored by everyone. After signing off and paying we left in faith that Pico would arrive safely.

I called the International Antarctic Centre to let them know the arrival time so someone would be waiting at the other end. All went well and Pico arrived in quarantine in Christchurch and was examined the same day by veterinary staff.

Pico's name was selected after the public got to vote; the winner won a backstage Penguin Pass for a family to see them all in action.

Job done!

Pico needed to be handled a lot and was taught how to take fish from handlers, as well as other new adventures, as Pico would be on public display after quarantine.

Go well Pico...


 Words by **Annemieke Kregting**




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Hands in Clay, Heart in Waihi

MILLIE ROBINSON'S ARTISTIC ALCHEMY

Creativity flourishes in Waihi, and artists like Millie Robinson find inspiration at every turn. As the proud owner of Laughing Pottery, Millie feels her artistic journey is a tale of serendipity, resilience and a deep connection to a vibrant community.

Finding the clay path

Millie completed a degree at the Otago Polytechnic School of Art, immersing herself in the world of Jewellery and Metalsmithing. Despite her love for the craft, the attraction for ceramics lingered, patiently awaiting its moment. After a 12-year hiatus spent in Australia, delving into professions far removed from the arts, Millie found herself back in New Zealand, standing at the crossroads of a new beginning.

The decision to embrace pottery came naturally. She was gifted a wheel and a voucher for a lesson at Laughing Pottery, where she met the owner at the time, Andrew Killick. He asked her to do an apprenticeship, and less than a year later she owned the studio.

For Millie, art isn't just a medium of expression; it's an intrinsic part of her being. "Art is in you," Millie emphasises, underscoring the essence of creative expression.

Waihi, with its wealth of artistic talent and a welcoming community, became the backdrop for Millie's artistic metamorphosis. "I quickly discovered that Waihi is chocka full of artists, many of them potters, and it has been an amazing place to land. There is a wealth of knowledge around me, which everyone is so willing to share. Other artists and the community as a whole, have been so welcoming and supportive, which is very humbling and encouraging."

From concept to creation – The dance of artistic process

Millie's creative process is all about experimentation and a continual quest for mastery. Stepping into an existing studio, she initially absorbed knowledge like a

sponge, gradually finding her rhythm in the unpredictable world of pottery.

"I love the utilitarian nature of my work," Millie shares. The delicate balance between artistry and practicality is evident in every piece she creates. The process involves a dance of ideas and skill, with each piece embodying a unique fusion of artistic vision and craftsmanship. The natural wonders of the greater Waihi area play a pivotal role in shaping Millie's work. From the beaches to the bushwalks, the colours of the environment find their way into her glazes, each named after local places and wildlife. The textured, non-uniform nature of her pieces reflects the landscape's variations, creating a tangible connection between art and nature.

Mentors, influences and sustainability

A mentor and guide, Andrew Killick's selfless sharing of knowledge and trust laid the foundation for Millie's artistic evolution. Taking over Laughing Pottery, Millie's work has become an extension of Andrew's legacy, evolving into a unique style influenced by her experiences and insights.

As Millie emphasises, having a mentor and a community of supportive artists is invaluable. With its abundance of artistic minds, Waihi provides a nurturing environment where ideas are exchanged, advice is given, and the collective creative spirit thrives.

Millie's commitment to her craft extends to her choice of materials. Working with Macs Mud clay sourced from Waikato, she aligns her creations with the local landscape. It's not just about the clay; she makes a conscious effort to support local businesses, from materials to services,

reflecting the interconnectedness of the creative ecosystem.

Challenges and legacy

Every artist faces challenges, and for Millie, the pace at which she had to learn stands out. Taking over Laughing Pottery, managing a business and honing her craft simultaneously demanded resilience. Yet, with the community's support, Millie navigated the complexities, proud of her journey's distance and the obstacles overcome.

Laughing Pottery is a hub of creativity where Millie engages with the community through pottery lessons. The joy she finds in teaching others, witnessing them overcome doubts, and creating pieces they cherish, resonates deeply. It's a way of giving back to the community that has embraced her artistry.

Art as a tourist magnet

Waihi's rich art, history and natural beauty attract visitors from far and wide. Millie's work becomes more than just pottery; it transforms into cherished mementos of time spent in Waihi. The emotional connection people forge with her creations adds another layer to the town's allure, enhancing the local economy and tourism scene.

In Millie's hands, clay becomes more than just a medium – it becomes a bridge connecting the artist, the community and the enchanting landscapes of Waihi.

The Laughing Pottery store is open Tuesdays to Fridays from 9 am to 4 pm and Saturdays from 9 am to 3 pm at 18 Rosemont Road, Waihi 3610.

Classes can be booked on the 'lessons' page on the website: laughingpottery.com



A Sense of Place

REDEFINING 'BUCKET LIST'

One word that really annoys me is 'bucket list', as if the world is a commodity for our personal gratification, experiences we are entitled to before we die. It suggests we can travel the world contributing to pollution without contributing to better relationships and we can look at this place, Hauraki, as a pretty backdrop for our lives, without facing what is happening to its life.

A sense of place is vital to most human communities but in Aotearoa it has tricky connotations. Our colonial project has not only damaged the indigenous people but other indigenous life forms, and our economic systems grind on extracting from the earth. As Hauraki, the people, work to rebuild their home, the least the rest of us can do is recognise their effort and support regeneration.

We live in a remarkable place (as are all places) with a backbone of mountains and forest, cursed with an underground web of precious metals which belong in place, not in banks. We live on a sensitive, rugged surface surrounded by Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, that great ocean, and Tikapa Moana, that inland sparkling sea. Beneath the sea surface, the pollution from pine forestry sediment and the remnants of old gold mining waste, as well as the run-off from a huge city and from intensive dairying, all settle into Tikapa. And then there's commercial fishing, its damage goes on and on.

Those of us who moved here in the 1970s later fell in love with the land, its particular form of wildness, despite the relentless subdivision of the coast. If we look deeper, we see inequality and the housing crisis in the empty mansions and middle class 'baches' waiting for a summer we expect to deliver. Meanwhile Te Whāriki o Manawāhine o Hauraki tell me women and children are stuck in the Refuge safe houses because there is literally no housing for them to move to. We see unique places struggle from the onslaught of climate chaos and we demand a quick fix so we can keep tourism afloat, but a sense of place is deeper than we know.

The kuaka (godwits) have a sense of place. For them, it's an annual pilgrimage crossing the world to Alaska and returning to the sandy shallow

waters at Pūkoro. The day after the election I sat there with Keith Woodley from the Bird Centre and we talked about the rewards of living in that place of wonder, including the light. The people, be they Ngāti Paoa, tangata whenua kaitiaki, or the Pākehā volunteers, work for tiny feathered creatures with an extraordinary seasonal sense of place. This is how it used to be for the people of the land, seasonal relationships with land and sea.

As well as the kuaka, I am inspired by the maunga; from Te Aroha to Te Moehau they frame our lives. Sometimes they hide under mist or peer through rain clouds, but always they stand to remind us that we are lucky to be within Hauraki waka and we can learn what that means by listening, to the mountains and to the first people of these lands.

Wainuiototo, blessed and cursed for being in The Lonely Planet top beach list, a place of silence and surf that touches us. People do not realise that the fight against the development of the land beside that shining coast continues. It must continue. Wharekirauponga, home of the ancient tiny taonga, a 200-million-year-old species the size of my fingernail. I may never walk on those paths in the high forest behind Whangamata, but we will resist gold mining blasting beneath those tiny bodies who have no ears but feel through skin vibration. Their sense of home is within one or two metres.

That's part of my list, my sense of place which is only some 50 years old. We all have our own senses fed by this place, but the question is how to live within it – not on top of it, without care?

We can follow Hauraki in the long-term regeneration, not to create a tourist museum, but to find a common sense together, to respect this place in all senses.

Words by
Catherine Delahunty

COMMON GROUND

LOCALS' CREATIVE SPACE

Molly's Story

She's on the floor, face twisted
Towards her first-born, me...
My 4-year-old eyes meet hers,
Blue, pleading 'set us free'.
She's being choked, she's thinking
"Please don't let this be
My children's last image of me".

But it was a lasting image
It's with me all my life.
She survived for us, played the part
Kept going as his wife.
Stayed there for her children
Tried to get us through.
And sometimes, I'm wondering
When I listen to U2...

"You don't have to put up a fight.
You don't have to always be right.
Let me take some of the punches
For you tonight
And it's you when I look in the mirror..."

I wish I'd taken some punches, Molly
To take your pain away
But a 4-year-old to 11-year-old
Didn't know what to do, just pray...
"Make it stop, please Dad, stop!"
Was all that I could say.
And the strangulations I could never bear
The blood in her nose, the blood on her hair.

Words by
Sue Foster

It never stopped until he left
And Molly cried for days, bereft.
Because despite all his cruelty
She loved that man, endlessly...
For years I struggled, mistrust, fear
Never could let anyone near,
Yet, yearning for a helping hand.
But now I think I understand.

Sometimes you can't make it on your own
Sometimes you need someone at home.
And Molly, my blood, it's so much clearer
It's you when I look in the mirror.

"You don't have to put up a fight.
You don't have to always be right.
Let me take some of the punches
For you tonight
And it's you when I look in the mirror..."



Artwork by
Dylan Castle / Jimmy Flanigan

Prayer for Aotearoa

No matter my choice of religion
Even if there's no god I address
A prayer is a voiced inner feeling
A guide for my life, nothing less.
So I pray for peace in my country
Remembering the blood that's been shed
Dark layers of conflict and history
All of those who are still bleeding yet.

And I pray for hope in my country
Enough to resolve all disputes
For the lost, the sad and the homeless
And all who have suffered abuse.
Let's pray for fairness and justice
For both guilty and falsely accused
Our prisons are now overflowing
The balance of power misused.

And then pray for love and compassion
Let acceptance and tolerance grow
Let's set aside harshness and judgement
Allowing diversity's flow.
'Cos no matter our choice of religion
Even if there's no god we address
A prayer's a voiced inner feeling
A guide for our lives, nothing less.

Words by
Helen Oliver

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THREE STRIKES: *A student's take on this year's teachers' strikes* THEY'RE OUT!

Earlier this year, when I heard that teachers had voted to act on rolling strikes, I thought, 'Really, again?' Don't get me wrong, I'm all for supporting teachers, but this feels so preventable. As a government that claimed they were all about the people and supporting current and future generations, why would you not invest in the future of your country and those contributing to it?

On average, teachers work 55 hours every week, in and out of the classroom. On top of this, they work an extra 21 hours a week during holidays. For most, teaching is incredibly taxing and time-consuming. In an NZCER survey, a participant said they struggled to find a healthy work-life balance, and "[they] take so much work home at night and at weekends that [they] have less time with [their] own children." It's obvious that our teachers care deeply for their students and the quality of their education. They work endless hours, pouring their hearts and souls into making sure their students have a structured, interesting and supportive learning environment. As the child of a teacher, I've witnessed the mountain of time she spends on lesson plans, marking and other admin tasks. She constantly stays late after school to complete work, and evenings at home often include over an hour of even more work. They've worked through pandemics, cyclones and other interruptions over the past few years, with little support from our government. They stay up late, wake up early, and dedicate their lives to educating future generations. Teachers deserve to feel valued and supported by our government, so why don't they?

The reality is that teachers are still dealing with a lack of funding and resources for education. Worsening conditions in schools nationwide have created issues like crowded class sizes of up to 30 students. Back in March 2023, then education minister Jan Tinetti announced that classes would be reduced for 320 teachers by – wait for it – a staggering single student! From an average 1 to 29 student-teacher ratio to a 1 to 28 ratio! How much money was spent making the decision that won't – by the way – come into effect till 2025? The money you spent on sitting in an office, deciding whether or not you could downsize a class could have – hear me out – been spent on paying your teachers higher wages ... How relieving must it be for teachers to have one less child! In a class of 29 children all talking, shouting and making noise, one less student is going to make absolutely no difference, especially without help from a teacher aide. Teacher aides provide much needed assistance, but as they're also underfunded, there's a shortage of help for all schools in Aotearoa. The crippling workload, terrible pay and underfunded learning resources are destined to stress anyone out. Teachers can only put up with so much before action must be taken.

Strikes. Something we've all had the inconvenience of experiencing, hoping that maybe some good would come of it. With the strikes earlier in the year, students were blindly led to believe that for them, it was a free day off. Strikes might not have seemed like an issue but in reality, New Zealand's attendance was already at tragically low rates. In the wake of Cyclone Gabrielle, covid,

and other distractions, strikes were the last thing students needed. We were already feeling pressure to keep up with schoolwork, while having lives outside of school. Due to this, strikes created a division between schools and their communities, as teachers were labeled as 'greedy' or 'immature'. I get it, strikes weren't the best solution, but teachers could only handle so much before change had to be made. Teaching is high stress, so much so that 44% of teachers leave the profession within their first 5 years. Can we afford to lose any more teachers when there's already a shortage? Yes, at any time strikes pose issues for students and whānau; but though they aren't the most convenient, the issue could have been avoided if our government had listened to their teachers.

What was supposed to be a job for those who strived to support and uplift our future generations has become a rather unappealing career. Who would want to deal with parents and the community claiming that teachers are being greedy? Would you be happy putting up with years of poor treatment? If you were tired of the strikes, and if you thought they're a waste of time, imagine how our teachers felt. Instead of focusing your anger at them, point the blame towards the source of all of this – the government. How many strikes will teachers endure before they're out?

Words by
Poppy Carpenter





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ELDERSHIP: SOME IDEAS ON WHAT, WHY AND HOW

The concept of Eldership is implicit in many indigenous cultures. The word invokes images of age, wisdom and often a connection to the spirit world or some form of other reality. In the western context the word has often been associated with churches or used in a biblical context. The Wikipedia entry focuses on church governance and various dictionary definitions are similarly focused, with the common themes being sobriety, reliability, fidelity and age.

So how might we define an elder or eldership usefully in today's world? If leadership is defined as "The capacity

to pick up a role which in that moment is needed to keep things moving forward" then eldership is definitely a form of leadership. But it differs from leadership in that it has a quality of stillness rather than action; a quality of "being with" rather than "doing with", a quality of offering information or catalysing insight rather than directing, a quality of developing rather than changing. This leads to the definition:

"Eldership is the capacity to be with a person or situation in a way which catalyses and supports their or its development"

And what is the essence of eldership? It is more than just a certain set of behaviours. It demands what could be called "metacognition": knowing about knowing, or knowing about how we know what we know. It demands a mindset, skills, attitudes, knowledge, and an ability to reflect, that all go beyond the "normal".

These abilities fall into two groups, self-focused and other-focused. Here are two of each to start you on your journey towards eldership.

SELF-FOCUSED

1. Being present with one's own vulnerability

The elder can hold their vulnerability without being overwhelmed by it or needing to dismiss it from consciousness. This could also be described as a feature of authenticity, sincerity or transparency. It has at its core the ability to acknowledge one's own pain or fragility in such a way that it is a gift or catalyst for change rather than a burden to oneself or another.

2. Letting go of the need for validation

So often we become dependent on others for our own sense of self-worth. If we get good feedback, we feel fine. If we get back bad feedback, we at least feel noticed. If we get no feedback, we feel non-existent! An elder will be comfortable with their own validation, their own sense of self-worth. You might say "Aha, many people have this quality but that doesn't mean they're good people; it just means they think they are!" True. This quality as with all the others does not in itself make an elder but it is a part of the whole.

And can these abilities be learned? Absolutely! They can be learned by anyone who believes in them and who is prepared to become their own elder and learn fully about themselves.

And is eldership solely the domain of the old? No! It is the domain of the wise, the self-aware and the compassionate. It is the domain of those who are committed to the continuing development and transformation of people and organisations. It is the domain of tomorrow.

Words by
Dave Burton

OTHER-FOCUSED

1. Being gracious with the differently informed

An elder carries knowledge and wisdom gently and often in an almost invisible way. An elder is not a zealot beating a drum for a cause, or someone trying to convince others of what is 'right'. Knowledge is not regarded as power or an advantage over another; it is something that is offered graciously when sought and gently restrained when not sought.

2. Being generous.

An elder can acknowledge the successes and achievements of others generously while understanding that those successes and achievements are completely different from their own. The elder can see progress in others without having to have it for themselves and this allows a generosity of fulsome praise.

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE NEXT EDITION OF COROMIND FOR MORE ABOUT ELDERSHIP. AND IF YOU WANT FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE TOPIC AND HOW IT COULD BE RELEVANT TO YOU OR YOUR ORGANISATION, CONTACT ME AT POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (DAVEB@POTENTIAL.CO.NZ).



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Dive Zone Whitianga, situated in the magnificent Mercury Bay, is the hub of diving knowledge and offers a gateway to outstanding dive locations on the Coromandel Peninsula. Spoilt for choice with beautiful islands and secluded bays, you're bound to find a sheltered spot here when the weather elsewhere would normally prevent you from diving. Their purpose-built dive vessels depart from the Whitianga marina, literally a stone's throw away from a multitude of ideal dive spots. Living a life less ordinary starts right here.

Dive Zone Whitianga has become the largest PADI dive training facility in the country, teaching both recreational and career dive courses from PADI Open Water through to PADI Specialty Dive Instructor as well as PADI Freediver training.

Dive Zone's full-time Diploma in Professional Scuba Instruction programme offers the opportunity to gain nationally and internationally recognised qualifications, enabling graduates to work in the dive and outdoor tourism industry.

Darrell Bird, owner of Dive Zone, says, "It's important to us that you finish your course feeling experienced and confident, with the opportunity to have a higher number of dives under your belt than the standard course requirements. Because our shop is open 7 days a week, there's definitely no shortage of opportunities to get out on the water and interact with real learner divers. With a great seaside community to reside in, beautiful beaches, as well as good services and facilities and seasonal work opportunities, Whitianga ticks many boxes. How could you not be excited at the thought of spending your

year exploring the underwater world in such a stunning location?"

Students work their way through the range of levels of dive qualifications from PADI Open Water through Advanced, Rescue, Dive Master and ultimately PADI Dive Instructor and PADI Specialty Instructor courses. "This qualification is recognised worldwide and sets graduates up with a head start when entering this exciting industry."

Dive Zone offers NZQA registered courses via their approval to subcontract to the Academy of Diving Trust, which is NZQA registered. This means the Diploma course meets the government's Fees Free policy criteria and also enables students to apply for Student Loans and allowances while on course. Darrell says, "It's awesome to see our young people enter as newbies and watch their personal growth through the course till they exit at the end with such worthwhile qualifications – many then take up jobs within the industry. We also love it when our ex-grads return and share their stories of where their quals have taken them."

Dive Zone believes their standard of delivery of this programme is particularly high and the proof for them is that they are regularly contacted by other dive businesses seeking our graduates every year. Dive Zone aims to ensure their students experience many opportunities to get out on the water on our boats and to dive on days off course – getting more dives under their belt. And because they're also taking trips of recreational divers and school groups out to learn to dive, Dive Zone students get to practise their training on real life people – all year around. Darrell says, "Learning by doing is our

motto, and because of the way we've set up our facility, you get more time in the water and more hands-on experience all throughout your training."

One of the most attractive parts about being a PADI Dive Instructor is the multitude of stunning locations throughout the world that you can work in – think idyllic tropical locations like Mexico, the Cayman Islands, Fiji, Florida, the Caribbean, the Bahamas and Hawaii.

The most beautiful (and tropical) locations in the world become your office when you embark on a career of diving. And given that oceans cover 70% of the earth, you shouldn't be too hard-pressed to find a location that floats your boat.

If you love the outdoors and have a passion for adventure, then diving is the life for you.

Dive Zone offers recreational PADI training all year round and has intakes in February and August each year for the Diploma programme. And along with that, their store at 10 Campbell Street offers great dive gear purchase and hire options, tank testing and refills, and gear testing.



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THE SUMMER REGATTA

NOT JUST A BOAT RACE!



Summer in Te Whanganui o Hei/Mercury Bay was an exciting time as it meant one of the biggest events of the year was being held – the New Year's regatta.

The history of the regatta began in December 1887, when it was held because the SS *Iona* sailed in from Auckland with visitors and a band onboard to race against the Mercury Bay crews.

With the establishment of a hospital in 1898, the regattas were used as part of the many fundraising events to keep the hospital open. The Regatta was always followed by a dance called the Basket Social. This was where a decorative basket of food was auctioned to raise money.

Early regattas included Māori waka/canoe racing between the wharves, horse riding and racing and swimming horses across the estuary.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, the events were suspended until 1946 – when a group of local men were at the wharf and had a conversation out of which came the thought to hold these once again. They then created a committee and this is when the Mercury Bay Boating Club was born. From the recommencement of the regatta the flag ship, until her retirement, was the freight vessel *Lady Jocelyn* proudly dressed all over, her pennants strung from stem to stern.

The first post war regatta was held on New Year's Day 1947. This event became the high point, not only for the local community but also for tourists and those

who had discovered that Mercury Bay was an ideal place to come for a holiday.

The programme for the 1957 regatta was a launch race, a yacht race, a beauty contest and a sandcastle contest, followed by a dance in the evening. The regatta became a more finely tuned event and in fact some events had to be held according to the tides. The 'Across the River' swim had to be held at either a high or low tide when the rip had ceased. Today, the Across the River swim is still a large community event that is run by the local area school and a unique one here in Aotearoa. This event can only run with significant support from other organisations such as the Hot Water Beach Lifeguards, Whitianga Coastguard, and the Harbourmaster to keep everyone safe.

As time went on, it became the policy of the Boating Club committee to add any new aquatic event to its regatta programme when the event became popular. For instance, a barefoot water skiing display was added when water skiing became popular. In 1964, the following events were added: swimming, diving, a speed boat race and water skiing. This showed a continuing expansion of the regatta. This pattern led to an affiliation with the Bay of Plenty Beach Resorts Association.

The beauty contest was judged solely on poise, body shape, and facial expression. No interviewing was done. Of the three groups – junior, intermediate, and senior

– the senior winner was flown at the expense of the Boating Club to Tauranga for the Bay of Plenty contest. One of the judges on several occasions was Mrs May Nathan.

In January 1969, the club proposed to hold a snapper fishing contest with the prize being \$50 for the heaviest fish; no commercial fisherman allowed!! This contest was so successful that it became an annual event.

1969 was a big year due to the Cook bicentenary celebrations and one of the big events was the Miss Whitianga pageant. The organisers wanted it to be the biggest year ever and a huge platform was built at the Whitianga Wharf; Mrs Savage, who owned the local ladies' boutique, sponsored the bathing suits and clothing out of her shop. It was a whole day affair. The girls had to parade through town during the day in their smart 'daywear' and then there was an evening event held at the old soundshell.

The soundshell is no longer in Soldiers Memorial Park, but this does not stop summer community fundraising events being held in the park – markets, fairs and food fests are all a way of bringing our community together.

Words by **Becs Cox**
Mercury Bay Museum Manager

ECHOES OF STRENGTH

AOTEAROA'S EMERGING HIP-HOP/RNB TALENT RELEASE POWERFUL DEBUT ALBUMS

Music heals. Whether we're listening to it or making it, music embraces us at our most vulnerable, and our most joyous. It uplifts, unites, motivates and provides an outlet to share and analyse our thoughts, feelings and stories. As I write this, I reflect on the countless times music has literally saved my life.

I'm always inspired by young people harnessing music to share their unique perspectives on life. So I am excited to introduce you to the young artists who are creating a niche for conscious Hip Hop & RnB music in Whitianga: Chance Taiaroa Wiari Haddon aka 'C33Y' (Ngāti Ruanui) and Te Paea Puha aka 'Te Paea Seasons' (Ngāti Te Rangī).

The debut albums *Find Your Way* by Chance and *Seasons* by Te Paea are the epitome of music as a means to navigate the human experience.

Both former Mercury Bay Area School students, the pair have been working on their albums for the last two years, under the mentorship of award winning Māori Hip Hop artist, Tipene. They collaborated on tracks for each album, and have been performing together regularly, drawing strength from each other's creative talent.

Te Paea, originally from Tauranga Moana, was raised in Whitianga. Her broad musical style ranges from afro pop and acoustic RnB to rapping socially conscious messages over modern trap beats. The last year has tested her resilience and made her even more determined to release her debut album. In March, her sister Mina took her life after years of struggling with mental distress, and in November her father passed away after illness. Her music has been a source of solace, resulting in the album track she's most proud of. "If Only I Knew" is the song I connect the most to. It was made for my sister Mina who passed away this year. Writing this song helped me navigate my grief and enabled me to channel all my sadness into something beautiful."

Te Paea currently works at Evolution Fitness in Whitianga, as a kickboxing and jiu jitsu instructor, but with the passing of Mina her career path has changed. After Mina's death, Te Paea held a fundraiser on Givealittle which raised \$6,688 for the I Am Hope Foundation, plus another \$3k through a raffle. When Gumboot Friday/I Am Hope founder Mike King visited Whitianga in October, Te Paea reached out to him with her story, and within minutes Mike offered her a job as a Hope Ambassador, a mental health advocate for tamariki and rangatahi across New Zealand.

Chance, originally from Whanganui, was also raised in Whitianga. He's been writing music since he was 16, building on the poetry he wrote when he was younger. He has an old school soul to his writing coupled with a new skool flow that speaks to his life experiences. When the pandemic hit and New Zealand went into lockdown for several months, Chance participated in the Creative Mercury Bay 'Bubble Bites' project, where local artists filmed performances of their music in their 'bubbles' which were shared on YouTube. Since then his approach to music creation has evolved, "I feel as though my passion is the same, but as time has passed my writing and belief have grown for my music and myself."

He recently became a father, which has had a profound impact on his life and music. "Becoming a father has been a blessing, but being a voice as a young Māori father to other young Māori fathers is beautiful ... In my song 'Son', I talk about all the emotions, tribulations and blessings that come with becoming a young father, and I want to use this song to acknowledge other young fathers out there to say, 'I know how you feel my bro.'"

While he enjoys his day job as a plasterer, music is his ultimate passion and looking ahead he sees himself more deeply rooted in his music creation, touring and "making music for my people."



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

HOW DOES MUSIC SUPPORT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING?

Chance: "Music has been a blessing to me. It's helped me through tough times in my life, and it's been there when I needed to vent or express myself in the form of writing or poetry. It helped get things off my chest, share a message that's important for people to hear, step out of comfort zones, push boundaries with performing and experiment with writing and recording."

Te Paea: "Songwriting enables me to contextualise my thoughts and emotions and being able to put a melody to it helps with my creativity. As a whole I also feel a sense of freedom being able to create a song, especially when I'm not feeling the best mentally; it always makes me feel calmer and better about my situation."

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT PUTTING YOUR ALBUM OUT INTO THE WORLD?

Chance: "I can't wait! I've put a lot into making this album and I'm not expecting anything of it but I just want people to listen to it and take in the stories and the emotion in this piece of art. I'm proud of this project, my first project, and I can't wait for it to be out so I can start pushing out more music."

Te Paea: "I am nervous and excited at the same time! I feel that this album is an extension of myself and putting it out into the world is a little bit daunting for me. But I have learnt from speaking to other artists that the biggest gift from sharing your music is what it can do for others, and if I can make someone smile or help someone through tough times, then it makes it all worth it."

FOR THE READERS AND LISTENERS...

Chance: "If you love something, never give up on it. I hope you enjoy *Find Your Way*. I want to say thank you to all of my Poutama family, my whānau and everyone who supports me and my music."

Te Paea: "My album is dedicated to my sister Mina Erana Puha who took her life at the age of 21. If you or somebody you know are going through tough times, be kind; be kind to yourself; be kind to others and spend as much time as you can with the ones you love."

Words by **Anusha Bhana**

FOLLOW THEM ON INSTAGRAM FOR FIND YOUR WAY & SEASONS STREAMING INFO.



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ROSS' RAMBLINGS

BOATS AND THINGS PART 2

Boats come in many shapes and sizes and degrees of beauty. One of the ugliest and most ominous to my mind is the submarine. My opinion is no doubt influenced by a close-up experience of one in the Waitematā Harbour in 1979. A year before that, my friend Dave had taken part in a waterborne protest against the nuclear powered and probably nuclear armed submarine *Pintado* as it steamed at high speed past North Head, led by the NZ navy warship Waikato. A large flotilla of Auckland Peace Squadron yachts and other small craft crewed by concerned New Zealanders stretched itself across the channel to try and stop the nuclear sub's progress. Police boats and navy helicopters did their best to disrupt the protest; many small craft were capsized by the downdraught from the helicopters and the wake waves caused by the many boats, and one small craft was briefly stranded on the bow of the sub. The submarine was eventually able to dock in downtown Auckland.

Many people, in those cold war times, were concerned about the possibility of a nuclear accident in a large metropolis like Auckland or becoming a nuclear target should war break out. The US government would neither confirm nor deny whether their warships were nuclear armed. Understandably this did not sit comfortably with many Kiwis.

The following year, another visit by a US nuclear powered/armed submarine, the *USS Haddo* was planned. So, Dave and I decided to take our small fishing boat from its Waiheke home to the inner Waitematā to join the protest flotilla. It was a repeat of the year before, with police and navy boats creating dangerous conditions by nudging away or sometimes ramming the small protest craft, while the helicopters repeated their disruptive tactics. One brave Auckland man jumped onto the bow of the sub and shook his fist at the sub captain who stood looking down from the conning tower. Dave, who was much braver than me, was keen to follow him onto the bow, but fortunately or unfortunately our not-very-fast little fishing vessel was prevented by the police boats from getting close enough to perform this extremely dangerous feat.


After these events, until 1983, opposition to nuclear powered and armed ships rose from 32% of Kiwis to 72% and set the stage for David Lange's Labour government victory in 1985, the banning of nuclear ship visits and the passing of the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament and Arms Control Act in 1987. We were the envy of many people around the world. Of course, the all-powerful US government didn't take kindly to a tiny country like NZ standing up to its mighty military establishment and down-graded our status from ally to friend. It doesn't appear to have done us much harm and even the National party later ratified this legislation which still stands today.

The French government also took exception to our stance. In the years leading up to the nuclear ship visits, NZ warships were used in a peaceful way under Labour government prime minister, the highly respected Norman Kirk. He sent two navy frigates, the *Otago* and the *Canterbury* to join small yachts from NZ, Australia and Greenpeace, which had sailed to Mururoa Atoll near Tahiti to protest the atmospheric testing of nuclear bombs by the French military. Imagine how much nuclear radiation was blown across neighbouring islands. However, France had assured the world it was safe, after defying an International Court of Justice ruling to stop testing. Why didn't they test in the Mediterranean if it was so safe? - Yeah right! A later French administration however compromised slightly and ordered future tests to be done underground. Poor worms.

The standoff came to a head in 1985 when the Greenpeace ship *Rainbow Warrior* was sunk in the Waitemata Harbour by French navy divers, resulting in the death of the ship's cameraman. Those of you of my generation will no doubt recall these events, but younger readers who would like a history lesson can access the 'Rainbow Warrior' movie, starring Sam Neil, and the documentary 'Mururoa 1973'. Testing in the Pacific continued until 1996, when international pressure and widespread unrest in Tahiti finally brought it to a halt.

So, as you can see, boats can be a lot of fun or they can be downright dangerous, depending on the skipper's skill and motivation, safety procedures and lady luck. Of course, warships are inherently dangerous with their captains bound to obey orders from political leaders, with some not being fit to wield such power or be anywhere near nuclear codes. Even being on a peace boat can be dangerous when French secret service divers are around.

Here in Whitianga, boats are used mostly for fun, with a majority of us hopefully employing sensible safety procedures - the exception being during summer holidays, when it often becomes open slather on the water. Luck sometimes comes into play, but having a comprehensive safety plan more often than not pleases the lady. And a final comment about boats: if you want some entertainment, take a deckchair down to Kūaotunu or one of the Whitianga boat ramps on a busy day and watch the chaos. Happy boating.

 Words by **Ross Liggins**

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DISCOVER, CONNECT & LISTEN: ALT BAYS TABLE TALK

Welcome to the vibrant world of ALT BAYS Table Talk, the podcast sensation produced in Whitianga, Coromandel, since February 2022. As the podcast recently marked an impressive milestone of 235 live-streamed episodes on the ALT BAYS Facebook page and YouTube channel, it's evident that this show is becoming a dynamic force in the digital realm, engaging audiences every Tuesday and Thursday at 7 pm. ALT BAYS is more than a podcast; it's a living, breathing conversation where the audience is welcome to join by asking questions and commenting via their live chat.

Imagine a table where diverse voices gather, each with its own story and perspective. No scripts, no teleprompters – just genuine, raw dialogue. Some guests might challenge your views, and that's exactly what the ALT BAYS crew believes in – the power of real kōrero, transcending differences to find common ground.

In a world full of echo chambers, ALT BAYS Table Talk is all about welcoming different opinions. It's like taking a step towards harmony in our society by understanding diverse perspectives. When we listen to all kinds of voices, it's not just about challenging what we think; it's about being more empathetic and making our communities more colourful and connected.

WWW.ALT BAYS.NZ

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SHOWS ON THEIR
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BUILDING CONNECTIONS: GUESTS TURNED CO-HOSTS

ALT BAYS Table Talk isn't just about one-off conversations; it's about building lasting connections. The podcast innovates by welcoming past guests back as co-hosts, ensuring that every episode brings a fresh perspective and a new layer to the ongoing narrative. It's a unique approach that strengthens bonds and expands networks.

Some of the ALT BAYS Table Talk's crew were not born in NZ, which brings a unique flavour to the podcast. Their genuine curiosity about Aotearoa's history and culture allows them to contribute diverse perspectives, fostering a space where harmony, understanding, and healthy relationships can flourish within our communities.

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT: BEYOND CONVERSATIONS

Acknowledging our digital age, ALT BAYS Table Talk is a testament to social media's power. As a Media Support company, ALT BAYS works with businesses and individuals willing to grow their online presence, making themselves guinea pigs for the best marketing practices. From September to November 2023, the podcast reached a remarkable 50K followers across social platforms and garnered an impressive 5.6M impressions, which is the number of times your content is seen.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY: VOICES ACROSS THE SPECTRUM

In its two-year journey, ALT BAYS has welcomed a diverse array of guests, from award-winning artists to politicians, sports champions, comedians, and beyond. The podcast embraces the beauty of diversity, showcasing the richness of the Coromandel community and beyond.

HIGHLIGHTED SHOWS TO IGNITE YOUR JOURNEY:



#223 HORI (THE MAORI ELITE):

Delve into the world of controversy with Hori, an artist, fashion designer, and comedian tackling Māori elitism in his political satire piece.



#224 – LUKAS REILLY (LUKES KITCHEN):

A great chat about surf, diving, fishing and good food with the mastermind behind Kūaotunu's famous spot, Luke's Kitchen.



#225 SHAY WILLIAMSON (KEEPING IT WILD):

Explore primal skills for sustenance with possum trapper and content creator Shay.



#226 TIPENE, TE PAEA SEASONS, AND C33Y

Legendary Aotearoa Hip-Hop artist Tipene brings Te Paea Seasons and Chance "C33Y" to chat about the production and release of their first albums.

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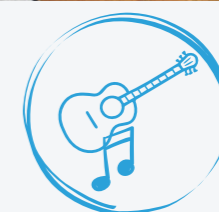
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