

COROMIND



Issue 28

Flavours from the Garden

A Personal Love Affair with
Local Produce

THE UNIQUE APPEAL OF SCREEN PRINTING

Pete Sephton and the Delicate
Balance of Skill and Surprise

WHEN WORDS DISAPPEAR

How 90% of the World's Languages
could Vanish in a Century

POSSUM TRAPS & PLOT TWISTS

How A Hikuaia Ex-Farmer Became
a Historical Novelist

Audio ||||
Version



Kia ora,

Welcome to Issue 28 of Coromind, your favourite community magazine celebrating positive stories and the great things happening in our region.

Good things take time. Building trust takes time. At Coromind, our ongoing efforts to showcase local creatives and share stories from people in our rohe (region) have created a safe and engaging space, building solid connections and bringing great things back to our community.

We're seeing this trust reflected in the increasing number of local businesses and groups choosing Coromind to share the incredible work they've been doing. More people are giving us feedback, and our audience continues to grow. Having a beautiful magazine that sticks around helps, as we guarantee a long shelf life for our content and advertisers, but our digital presence is also expanding rapidly. The number of visitors to our website grows every month and soon we will open the Coromind online store with local products and art.

We invite you to get in touch and let us know what you're up to! While we head into a quieter time of the year, we all know the Hauraki-Coromandel region is growing fast, so staying visible and fresh in people's minds remains important.

Our membership programme is also growing. You can subscribe for free or support us with a small contribution (starting at \$5 per month) to help us keep bringing more goodness to our community.

Visit our website and click on 'Become a Member' at the top right for more information.

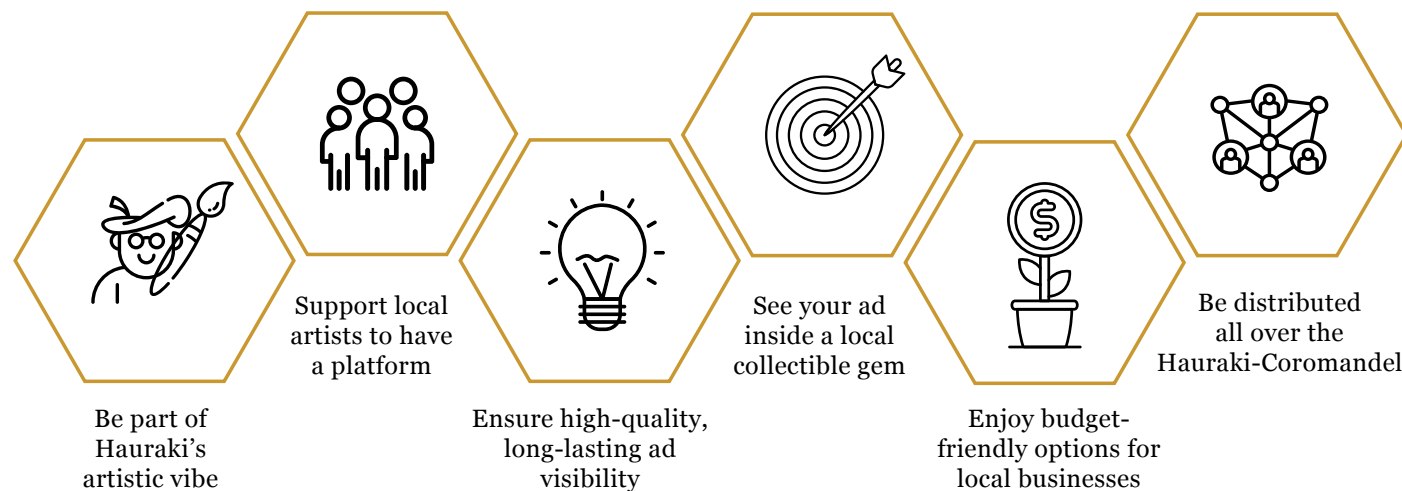
Now, sit back, relax, and enjoy Coromind.

Peace,

The Coromind Team



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Not a business owner, but keen to support Coromind and receive exclusive perks? Go to www.coromind.nz and become a member of our growing platform! With a small contribution (\$5 per month!), you can make a big impact on our community project!

Get in touch: ✉ hello@coromind.nz

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kanani cowell

I am not a writer. Yet, more and more, I am recognising how our words shape our experience and the world around us. And here I am again, putting words out, trying to art-iculate something deep and wide and immense: this human experience. My name is kanani cowell and I hail from O'ahu, Hawai'i, having come to Aotearoa 40 years ago via Tahiti and Samoa.

Always a Maker, I sold my first piece to a stranger when I was fourteen. Eventually, I took up art and art history, teaching here in Aotearoa (Thames High, etc.); I completed a Masters in Art in 2001. My early works were mainly large – sculptural mixed media felted pieces, where I occasionally incorporated words. I credit Colin McCohn's painterly biblical text with inspiring the use of words as a compositional framework for paint. My Master's work took wordplay to another area: working in situ in the old mining quarry up the Waiotahi Valley in Thames. I was doing work that acknowledged the scars of industry on the Earth's skin. One ephemeral piece involved the documentation of writing the word MINE with water in a dried-up watercourse. It's a simple word with dual meaning on the Coromandel, a gold mine and a claim of ownership. I won't explain my thesis here but it did propel my current painting.

By now, you can tell that a major theme in my work is our human-centric relationship with our environment and other life forms here. During the quietness of the Covid pandemic, I wondered "What does nature want to say to us? To me?" and this began a series I call 'Gaia Speaks' in which I imagine plants, native birds, te whenua/ the land speaking to me. I find the words and images simultaneously strengthening the message – a bop on the nose of my consciousness to remind me to be nature centric, in which all things matter. In this way, I have sometimes found potency in writing words of te reo Māori with English to lift the meaning of the work, to honour tikanga Māori, the importance and beauty of this language to Aotearoa and the world. After all, what language would the kererū or rata speak?

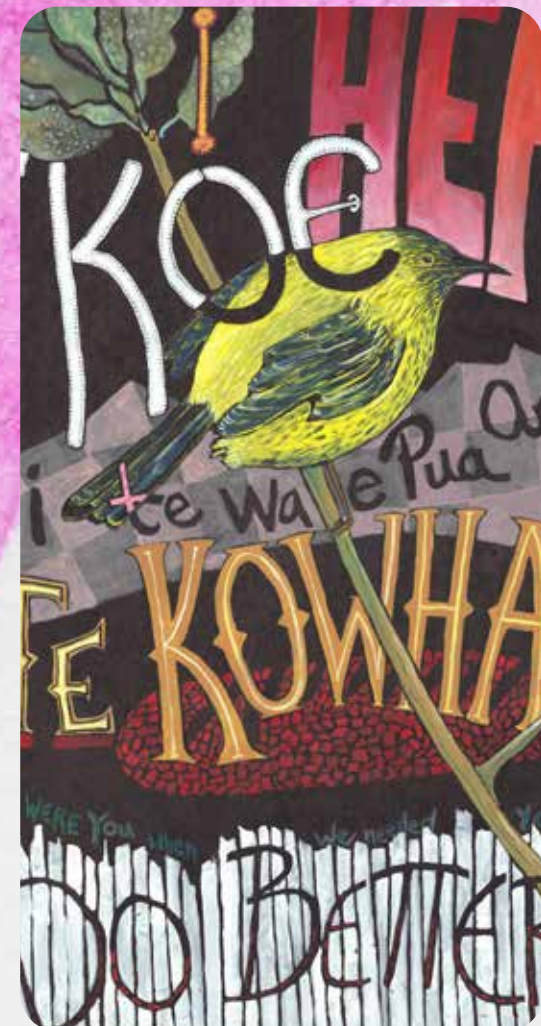
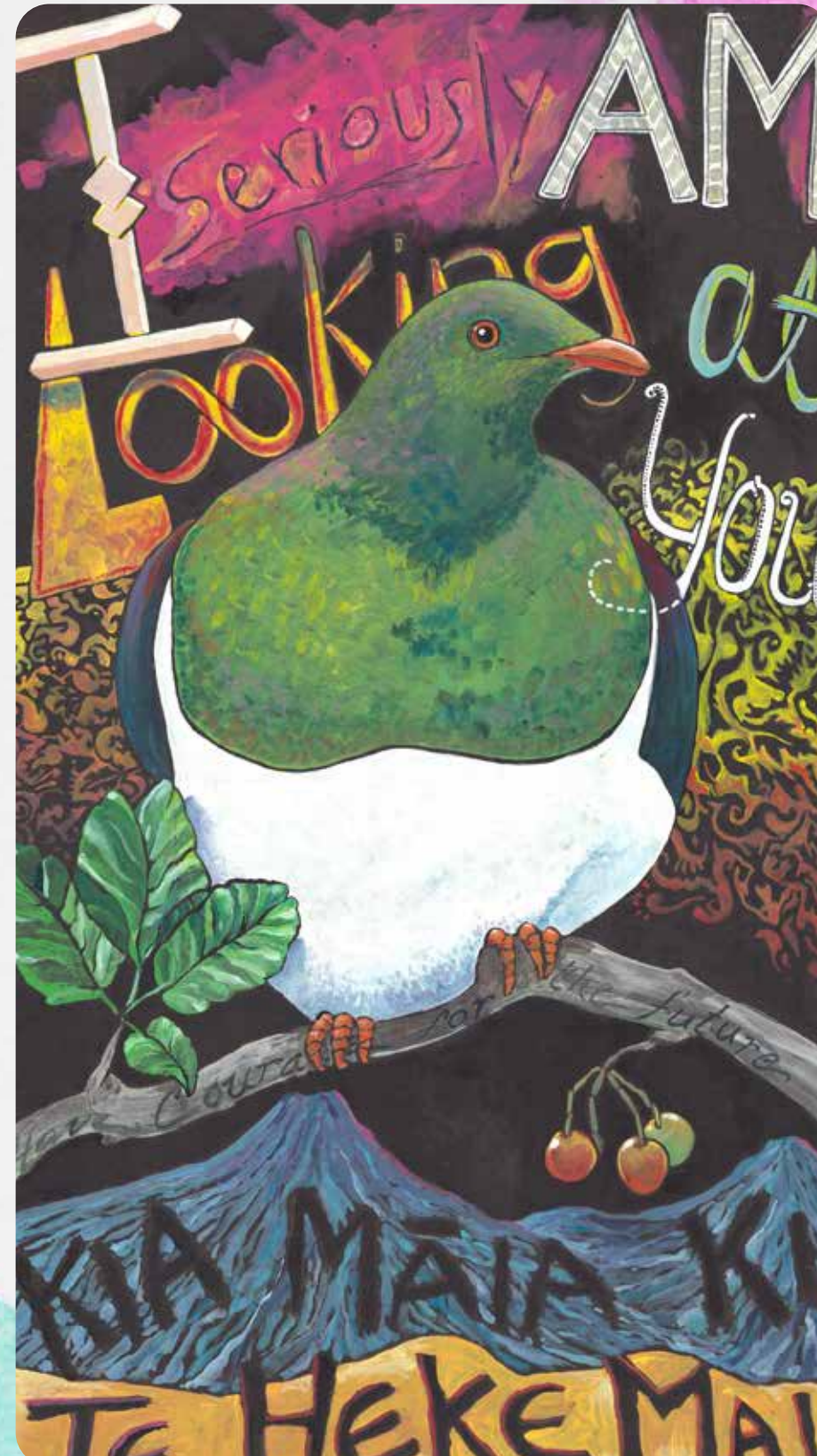
If the words we think and speak send an energy into the world, then the question is: Do we send them with Fear or with Love?

You can contact kanani at kananikowell@gmail.com and if you would like to see more of her work, visit the Vessel Co-op in Thames - 752 Pollen Street

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kanani cowell



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Nature's classroom at Kauaeranga Valley

Learning is a lifelong journey, and nature serves as an endless classroom. Every trail, tree, and tide offers us new insights about the world and ourselves.

Nature isn't just a place to visit; it's where we find balance, restore our energy, and reconnect with ourselves. With a passion for the natural world and a background in environmental and outdoor education, DOC Community Ranger, Maree Limpus, has witnessed the positive impact nature can have on people and their well-being.

"The well-being of our communities depends on healthy nature, and time in nature is proven to improve people's physical and mental health in many ways," says Maree.

"Teaching people about nature not only connects them to the world around them but also fosters a sense of responsibility and respect for the environment, shaping their future."

Maree works with kaiako (teachers) to develop and deliver nature-based educational programmes from the DOC Kauaeranga Visitor Centre, located 20 minutes from Thames in the Kauaeranga Valley.

Last year, an outdoor learning area was created near the Visitor Centre with the help of volunteers and rangers.

"The outdoor learning area and Visitor Centre offers opportunities for all ages to immerse themselves in nature and learn about our unique natural environment, the history of the Kauaeranga Valley, and themselves," says Maree.

"We couldn't do it without the help of our awesome rangers and volunteers. Together, we've created a space where people can come together and be fully immersed in nature for learning and mindfulness."

Sensory based activities are an effective way to engage with te taiao (the natural world) – looking, touching, listening, and thinking about ways we can be kaitiaki (guardians).

Some of the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre's popular educational activities include a lawn maze quiz, native tree discovery, and exploration of miniature life through magnifying glasses.

"These activities encourage people to slow down and deepen their connection to nature. Have you ever picked up a magnifying glass and looked closely at the bark of a tree? There's a whole miniature world to be discovered," says Maree.

Last year, Maree and Jo Buchanan – an environmental education facilitator from Waikato Regional Council –



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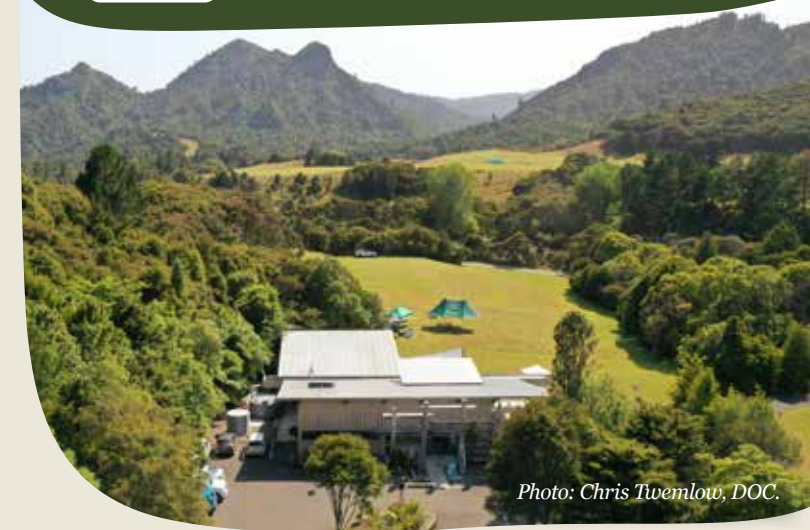


Photo: Chris Twemlow, DOC.

collaborated to host a professional development day for local kaiako at the visitor centre.

More than a dozen teachers from schools in the Thames and Hauraki districts attended to explore the educational resources on offer and learn how to use more nature-based education with their classes.

"In today's fast-paced world, nature can offer a much-needed escape, helping us recharge and rejuvenate," says Maree.

"No matter what age, we see people come away from our visitor centre with a renewed sense of appreciation for the natural world."

The Kauaeranga Valley/Te Waiwhakaurunga is a special place of local iwi and hapū meaning 'the many bathing pools of the upper reaches'.

Whether you're with whānau, school groups, or professional teams, the Visitor Centre provides a unique opportunity to reconnect with nature. With a range of resources and activities available, it's an ideal spot to escape, recharge, and engage in meaningful outdoor experiences.


It offers a range of nature-based activities for all ages: hikes, swimming holes, camping, and interactive experiences at the Visitor Centre. There is also a 50-seat audiovisual room which is often used by agencies and organisations for hui (meetings).

Interested in hiring the AV room, ngahere space or booking an educational visit? Call the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre at (07) 867 9080 to book.



L-R: Pārāwai school students in the ngahere space, looking at trees up close, Maree with teachers during a professional development day.

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BEYOND THE CLICK SERIES

HOW ONLINE SPACES SHAPE US

IS IT REALLY ‘YOUR’ ALGORITHMIC IDENTITY?

Every time you scroll through TikTok, ask Siri to play a song, or search for a cool new recipe on your tablet, you’re adding to what’s called your ‘algorithmic identity’. Basically, it’s a collation of data-points about your life that companies use to figure out what you might like or want. While it might sound helpful, this also has a big impact on your real-world experiences.

Platform capitalism refers to the business model of tech giants like Google, Facebook and Amazon, which generate immense profits by controlling online platforms that people rely on for information, communication and commerce. Nearly everything connected to the internet – from your phone to your smartwatch or even your car’s GPS – plays a part in building your digital identity. This network of connected devices is called the Internet of Things (IoT).

Think about it. Your digital shopping list shows what foods you like to eat, your fitness tracker records your exercise habits, and even your garage door opener logs when you leave the house. Do you work a 9-5 job, are you retired or unemployed, a shift-worker, a parent with school-age kids? Together, these seemingly unrelated bits of information create a picture of your daily life that companies use to guess what products you’ll buy, sometimes even before you know you want them!

All this data is collated, sorted and reconfigured to create a digital profile that shapes the ads you see, the videos suggested to you, and even the prices you’re shown for different items. This process turns ‘you’ from an individual to a ‘dividual’ – a set of data-points that can be sold and traded.

But here’s the big question. Is your digital self deciding what you get to see and do in real life? Let’s break it down: You wake up and check your phone, then watch TV for a bit before work. You might listen to Spotify on the way there and pay for your lunch with Apple Pay. Each one of these interactions is logged and used to tweak your algorithmic identity. When you decide what new shoes to buy or where to go on holiday, your digital profile has already influenced what options you see.

Take this example from my own life: Imagine you’re planning

a holiday with your sister and you realise you’re getting totally different search results for where to stay. That’s exactly what happened to me when we were organising a trip to Rarotonga. We were using the same websites, at the same time, on a video call. But while her results were full of luxury hotels, mine only showed cheap, not necessarily cheerful, rooms. It didn’t matter what site we used – she always got the high-end places, and mine were at the flea-bitten budget end. (The internet gods think I’m just cheap!) What’s worse is that the luxury rooms weren’t even further down the list of choices made available to me – they had actually completely disappeared.

Algorithms had categorised us differently based on our past behaviour, and we saw different options because of it. Imagine how many choices you might be missing out on because your ‘digital self’ has already been boxed in by these algorithms. Decisions are being made for us before we even know it.

Platform capitalist companies shape what you think you should want, because their real power lies in aggregating and monetising vast amounts of user data. By tracking everything from our browsing habits to our social connections, these companies can build detailed profiles that predict and shape our behaviours, preferences and desires. This data-driven control allows them to influence what we see, buy and believe, thus making us more able to be ‘packaged’ into saleable databases to onsell our info to various other organisations. They are the new gatekeepers of digital life with unprecedented power over markets and societies.

So, next time you find yourself clicking on yet another recommended video or ad, remember that your algorithmic identity is hard at work, shaping how you see reality. The challenge is to be aware of these influences and find ways to take back some control over how your digital self is created.


 Words by
Stella Pennell








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Thames Music and Drama (MAD) produce plays and smaller revue-type shows at their base at the Tararu Cultural Centre. They utilise the Thames Civic Centre for their musicals, including recent sell-out successes Mamma Mia and Chicago. MAD is fortunate to have some gifted local writers and frequently stage original plays.

The society has a strong culture of inclusivity, with terms like 'family' often used to describe the sense of belonging. To support their tikanga of encouraging youth in all aspects of theatre, they facilitate school holiday workshops and regularly stage shows that involve young people. Their upcoming production, School of Rock, gives rangatahi an opportunity to showcase their talents in acting, singing, and musicianship. They also have youth in technical roles and often include youth members in the bands/orchestras.

(Sam)antha Connors, 28, who has practically grown up in theatre, is extremely excited to direct School of Rock. "I first saw it staged in London's West End and simply loved it. I am embracing themes around ensuring young people are given the space to find their voice," declares Sam. This musical is based on the 2004 hit movie, starring Jack Black.



SCAN FOR TICKETS



The Alternative Dance Collective

A Passion for Dance, a Space for All

From the moment Emma Lovell could move, she was dancing. As a child, her mother would watch her twirl on tiptoes before she could even walk, captivated by the rhythm and movement that seemed ingrained in her very being. That innate love for dance led her on a lifelong journey – one that has now brought her to Whitianga with a mission to share the joy of movement with the community.

"Some people believe they can't dance, and I want to eradicate that belief," Emma says. "Dancing is for everyone. It's about joy, self-expression, and connection."

Her passion was sparked at just four years old when her mother, despite having to work hard to afford it, enrolled her in dance classes. She trained in ballet, tap, jazz, and cabaret throughout her youth, finding a home in the studio where she could fully express her dramatic and flamboyant nature. At ten years old, she saw a professional ballet for the first time – Cinderella at the Royal Albert Hall in London. From the hush of the audience before the music began to the sweeping movement of the dancers, Emma was mesmerised. At that moment, she knew she wanted to bring that kind of magic to life.

"I had a perfectly choreographed plan – dance every day, work hard, perform at the Royal Albert Hall, and bring joy to people's hearts," Emma recalls. "But life has its own choreography, and in 2007, my path led me to Whitianga, where I fell in love with its magic – and with my wonderful Kiwi husband, Blair."

Now, Emma is leaping straight to step four of her plan: bringing joy through dance. With the launch of The Alternative Dance Collective (The ADC), she hopes to create an inclusive space where people of all ages can experience the magic of movement.

The Alternative Dance Collective isn't just a dance school – it's a movement dedicated to wellness, creativity, and self-expression. The studio will offer classes for all ages, from toddlers to seniors, helping them find strength and balance through movement. Styles include ballet, tap, hip-hop, contemporary, cabaret, burlesque, tribal fusion, and more. The ADC will also host collective practitioners offering Kundalini yoga, belly dance, massage therapy, and other holistic practices.

"Dancing is more than just exercise – it's therapy, self-discovery, and a connection to something ancient," Emma explains. "Since the first drumbeat, humans have responded to rhythm. It's in our DNA. Whether you're tapping your foot to a song without even realising it or expressing deep emotions through movement, dance is an intrinsic part of who we are."

For Emma, dance helped her overcome shyness, build confidence, and develop valuable skills that extend beyond the dance floor. Now, she wants to share that gift with Whitianga.

"We have something for everyone – whether you're looking to perform, improve fitness, find a creative outlet, or just have fun," Emma says. "Come dance with us and experience the joy, balance, and freedom that movement brings."

The Alternative Dance Collective is here to inspire, uplift, and create a space where everyone – no matter their age, ability, or background – feels welcome.

To learn more, get in touch with Emma at 021 076 9953 or emma.theadc@gmail.com. Follow The ADC on social media for updates, class schedules, and more.

Facebook: The Alternative Dance Collective
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The BOD. Approach to a Healthier, Happier You

Hi, Alisa here. Mother of two young children and the owner of BOD. Skincare & Massage in Whitianga. As an advocate for mental wellness, I often wonder – are people truly happy in their day-to-day lives? I can sympathise with your never-ending to-do list.

You have to work. Your son Bobby is sick. The washing pile is overflowing. Your warrant is due, and you've volunteered for the bake sale tomorrow. On top of that, you haven't been eating or sleeping right. You're run-down, scatterbrained, and now you've caught whatever virus Bobby has.

You're at the bottom of the list that never ends.

The bad news?

The list isn't going anywhere.

The good news?

Once you put yourself at the top of that list, everything else falls into place.

Start with the basics:

- **Healthy food** – Plan the next three days of meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner), then get the groceries.
- **A good night's sleep** – Give yourself a bedtime. How much time do you need to wind down before getting eight hours of sleep?
- **A walk** – Move your body, get fresh air, and soak up some sun.

These are basic human needs. Do this for two weeks, and you'll start to have enough energy to get your stuff done and enjoy life.

How you feel on the inside is reflected back to you. It's important to do things that make you feel good. Raise your vibrations so you shift into a better reality.

Never rush – when you do, you create more reasons to keep rushing. Your perspective will change when you learn to love yourself first. You'll start to feel grateful for everything on your to-do list.

You can transform from human doing to human being. You are enough, and you deserve a happy, healthy life. My passion for helping people fill their cup has filtered into my work.

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Words by
Alisa Clapham



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Flavours from the Garden

Time to Indulge series

A PERSONAL LOVE AFFAIR WITH LOCAL PRODUCE

Being married to Dianne, who generally prefers vegetarian food, has presented challenges for me as someone who is more naturally carnivorous. However my tastes have certainly flexed over the years and I am passionate about several plant and fruit items grown in NZ. I'm also involved in vegetable growing as a Director of a large-scale Hawkes Bay-based cropping operator.

Here I introduce certain vegetables and fruit I love for both nutritional and taste profiles.

Avocado – The creamy, versatile powerhouse

Avocado is super versatile and accompanies many dishes perfectly. The combination of avocado and fresh lemon juice is a strong match, with lemon cutting through the buttery/creamy texture of the avocado. Rock salt and chilli flakes are also natural accompaniments. A tip for checking ripeness is to move the stem around and note the degree of looseness. If the stem is easy to move, your fruit is probably ripe. We have a 5-year-old avocado tree on our Whitianga Waterways property. Despite the impact of Gabrielle, and associated repair job, we are getting some of the best fruit I have tasted and quite heavy crops. The health benefits of avocado are broad – great for quality fats/cholesterol levels and high in fibre and nutrients.

Lemon – The zesty king of freshness

NZ grows amazing lemons packed with zesty juice and beautiful lively acidity. I will always remember Peter Gordon telling me fresh NZ lemons taste like no other. Lemons contain abundant Vitamin C, an important component of supporting the immune system. I am particularly fond of lemon with seafood, and a small amount brings many salads to life. Adding lemon to your baking will enhance flavour and give complexity. Lemon is great in drinks and very refreshing. The proliferation of high-end gin in NZ is well served by our quality local lemons.

Kiwifruit – Nature's sweet and nutritious gem

Kiwifruit is another incredibly tasty and healthy fruit. My favourite is the gold variety. This fruit can become a little mushy if over-ripe, but when presented well the sweet flavours are delightful (despite relatively low sugar levels). This is a seriously healthy fruit packed with fibre. I mix gold kiwi with a low-sugar cereal and yoghurt, and can easily get through a morning on that.

Butternut Squash – Caramelised comfort

The Hawkes Bay business with which I am involved is a significant producer of butternut squash. Most of this is exported to Japan and Korea through the NZ summer and

autumn. This fills a gap in Japan when their own local crops have been largely consumed. Squash are beautiful and highly nutritious, full of Vitamin A and C. Amongst other things, this provides benefits for your eyes and skin. My three favourite ways to eat squash are: roasted until a little caramelised (use plenty of olive oil and a sprig of rosemary); as soup, sometimes adding grated onion and mashed kumara; and as a component of any vegetable salads served at room temperature (crumbly feta cheese works nicely in these dishes).

Onion – A humble staple with big flavour

We also grow onions in Hawkes Bay. Onions, produced in many parts of NZ, are a globally-traded product and NZ is a net exporter. They store well and are staple in many countries. I never get tired of eating onions and use them as a base in various dishes. I like pairing them with leeks (similar but different) and of course tomatoes. Onions are an excellent base in curries; I particularly like fish curries with a strong underpinning onion component.

Slow-roasted onions are great – and unlikely to dry out too much. Onions contain antioxidants and have anti-inflammatory effects. Importantly they are a tasty/healthy vegetable that will not stretch your wallet.

Coriander – Fragrant and full of flavour

My favourite herb, coriander, grows vigorously in our garden and is the perfect accompaniment for Asian or Middle Eastern cooking. I love the fragrant aromas that lift a dish and also help it look great. If you like it, use it generously; it's another very healthy item, with antioxidant properties and other benefits.

Meat Alternative – A surprising twist

Finally, a tasty meat alternative is the Bean Supreme Wholefood Mince (available locally). We make pies from it, using filo pastry; add chilli beans and onion with some cheese for a great pie and a nutritious filling meal. I believe these alternative products, when well prepared, have the potential to turn around carnivorous types (like me), having flavour and texture that will surprise.

Eating and growing food are two of the great things in life. I hope you take the time to enjoy both.

Words by
Mike Taylor





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THE UNIQUE APPEAL OF SCREEN PRINTING

Pete Sephton and the Delicate Balance of Skill and Surprise

I remember a friend giving me good advice once: “You don’t have to share everything you do with someone you just met. It’s nice when you find out more about people as time goes by.” Wise words.

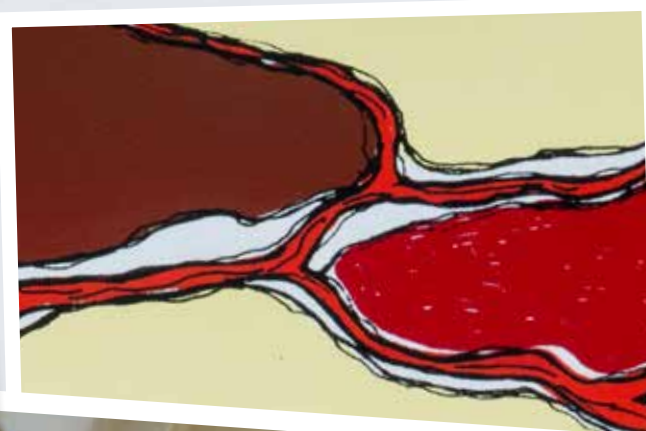
A couple of years ago, while dropping off copies of Coromind magazine at the Thames Art Gallery, I was greeted by a kind gentleman behind the desk with a friendly smile.

“Hi, I’m Leo. Can I leave some mags here for you?”

“I know who you are. I’m Pete – Matt Sephton’s father.”

I have massive respect for Matt, so meeting his father was an honour. We had a great chat and quickly connected. Since that day, I’ve seen Pete actively supporting local artists through different platforms. One iconic moment was at Coro Summer Fest, an event organised by Matt, Caitlin Moloney, and their crew on Pete’s property – he was loving it. I’m pretty sure he even helped the Coromind team with a hammer and some bamboo.

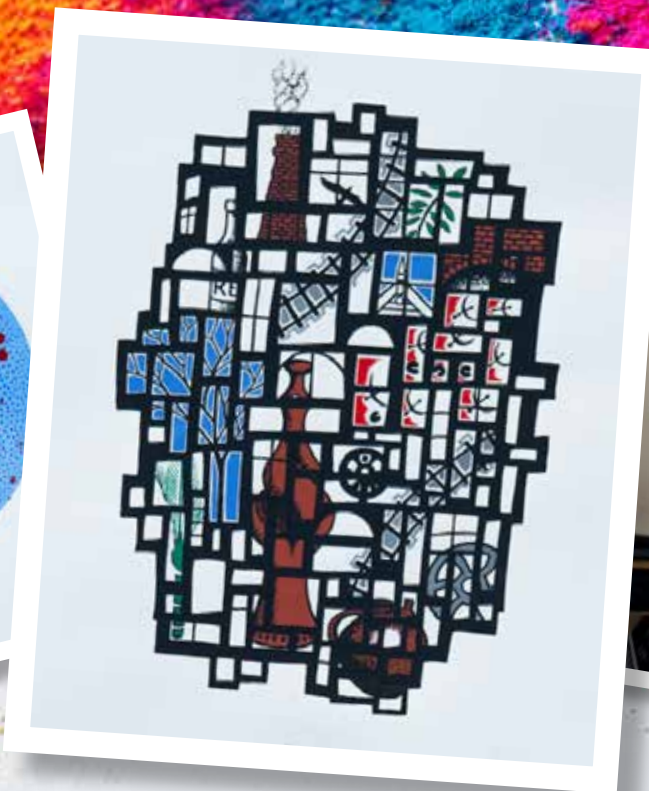
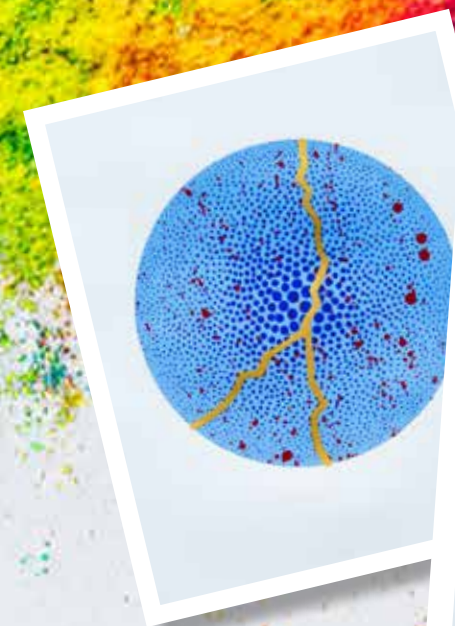
I knew Pete was an artist, but it wasn’t until I finally came across his screen-printing work that I realised just how onto it he is!



We visited
Pete’s studio!
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Or visit www.coromind.nz/pete-sephton



A journey into screen printing

Pete was raised in Thames but left at 18, first to attend university and then to travel across Australia and South-east Asia. In 1972, he returned to university to qualify as a teacher, and by 1977, he was teaching art in Kawerau. It was here that he first encountered screen printing, initially through a project printing T-shirts with students. This soon turned into a side job, producing shirts for a local school. By the time he moved to Coromandel in 1981, he had transitioned from teaching to running a small business, printing T-shirts full-time. After two decades, he sold the business and took up a role as a train driver at Driving Creek Railway while also setting up a small studio to pursue his real passion – screen printing on paper as an art form.

The art and craft of screen printing

Screen printing is an intricate process, involving both artistic creativity and technical precision. For Pete, the appeal lies in the hands-on nature of the work. From stretching fine mesh over wooden frames to meticulously hand-tracing colour separations, everything is done manually. The final stage – printing – happens quickly, but it’s the most rewarding part. Until the final colours are layered, the outcome remains a mystery. “I get a lot of pleasure making complicated work look simple,” Pete says.

One of his most memorable pieces, The Memory of Persistence, took 48 years to come to life. The print originated from a small, intricate ink drawing he created in his late teens. Rediscovering it decades later, he reflected on how the work had taken on new meaning. “At the time I drew it, I was going through a difficult period in my young life. I realised it really had become a piece about memory and the puzzles that memories present us with.” Enlarged and enriched with additional colours, the print became a meditation on how memories persist even as time changes everything else.

From fabric to paper

Pete originally printed on fabric but later transitioned to paper, a shift that brought both challenges and rewards. While the basic printing techniques remain the same, working on paper requires high-quality archival inks,

which he sources from the US. He also prints on exquisite handmade Italian and French papers, some costing up to \$24 a sheet. These materials elevate his work but also demand precision – changing atmospheric conditions can cause the paper to expand or contract, making alignment between colours a challenge.

Recently, Pete has begun experimenting with high-quality tapa cloth. “Tapa is lovely to print on, but because of its uneven texture, it lends itself to just a single colour or two at a pinch,” he explains. Having previously printed on Savai’i tapa, he’s keen to explore this medium further, perhaps even making a trip back to Samoa for more.

The unique appeal of screen printing

Unlike other printmaking techniques, screen printing requires careful planning – every step must be executed with precision, as even a small mistake early on can be glaringly obvious in the final print. But it’s this element of uncertainty that makes it exciting. “The first print in a series is always thrilling to see,” Pete says.

Beyond creating his own work, Pete enjoys sharing his knowledge with others. His workshops, limited to just three students at a time, allow for hands-on learning, good conversation and plenty of laughs. “Over a weekend, they start with an idea and end up with a series of multi-coloured prints after a lot of hard work and fun.” Teaching also reminds him how much he’s learned over 40 years – and that there are always new things to discover. “Old dogs can learn new tricks!”

Pete’s passion for screen printing, dedication to craftsmanship, and generosity in sharing his knowledge make him a valued figure in Coromandel’s art scene.

To book a visit to Blind Creek Studio in Coromandel Town, contact Pete at:

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Or visit his website for more information:

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Words by
Leonardo Magri

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WHEN WORDS DISAPPEAR

How 90% of the World's Languages could Vanish in a Century

The world's languages are dying!

Every single language on this earth is an intangible taonga, each containing an entire people's identity, history, philosophy, culture, economic and technological knowledge, and more. And when a language dies, that intangible part of humanity dies with it.

Linguists estimate that there are over 7,000 languages spoken around the world today, but in just 100 years they expect 90% of humanity's languages will be dead. Today, over 50% of the world's languages are already endangered, the majority of which belong to indigenous communities whose populations number in the tens of thousands or less. Te reo Māori is still on this endangered list, by the way.

While languages like English, Mandarin and Spanish have huge speaker populations and won't disappear any time soon, the coming die-off of languages will hit indigenous communities extremely hard all around the world.

Now you might ask, why is this important? Well, aside from being a significant part of human cultural heritage, there are practical aspects as well. When a community loses their language completely, they lose a connection to past knowledge about their local area.

Fishing, farming and horticulture practices are lost, challenging how the community supports itself. Knowledge about who owns what and why that is the case is lost, weakening indigenous claims to their own land and increasing the threat of forced homelessness. There is so much more to say here but that would turn into a book.

The loss of language also impacts identity, where a people who were once rooted strongly in their cultural values lose that important sense of self and direction in life. We can't replace languages once

they are gone, so keeping them around is the only way to preserve our world's cultural and linguistic diversity.

Why are so many of the world's languages dying? While there are many drivers, one of the recurring themes is climate change. And no, this isn't a Greenpeace advert. A huge amount of the world's indigenous populations live in coastal areas at risk from rising sea levels and worsening storms. Many others that live inland away from the coast are threatened by increasingly unreliable rainfall patterns and rising temperatures.

In both cases, indigenous communities face much greater challenges regarding physical safety and their ability to farm, fish or grow food. This forces people from these communities to migrate as climate refugees, splintering the language by breaking up the community. The new generation will normally learn the language used in their new schools, creating a language barrier between them and the generation before that prevents crucial knowledge from being passed down.

This process is already happening, and the current rate is one language death every 40 days.

Learning to speak a new language is something we can all do, but it's not always practical. We can instead put time and resources towards encouraging people who speak different languages to preserve, revitalise and promote their languages. We can create environments for these languages to continue existing in, be it here in Aotearoa, or by contributing to overseas ventures that have the goal of language preservation, wherever that may be.

Words by
Matt Bowden



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FROM THE COROMANDEL TO THE SOUTHERN ALPS

*How a Broken Helmet
Saved my Life!*



A long way from the Coromandel, in the middle of the Southern Alps somewhere, my two rock-climbing partners' looks of concern terrified me! "Rachael, we have taken off your helmet and replaced it with mine and we have set off your emergency locator beacon!" I felt sorry for my partner at home, in Whitianga, my first emergency contact! He'd be receiving an almighty fright as emergency rescue services contacted him.

Two days before, my two climbing partners (Jess, Cliff) and I had splashed out and helicoptered up to Cloudy Peak, in the middle of the Southern Alps. We were planning to do a few climbs, especially a 300 metre rock climb called Mission to Mercury. After that there would be a long walk out with heavy packs full of climbing and camping gear.

Now, we were on a ledge, part way through abseiling down that 300 m rock face. At 240 m, the ropes dislodged a rock from the top that hit my helmet. I felt nothing.

I regained consciousness, not even knowing I'd been out. We still had to get to the base of the climb and then down a steep 1-hour scramble back to camp. I had never tested the rescue beacon and had no idea if a rescue team would arrive or not.

Our many years of doing big rock-climbs together had readied us to cope with the new difficult situation. The back of my head was bloody and a bit smashed up. Unlike the usual me, I started crying. The strong care behaviour from my climbing partners was traumatic as we had always worked side by side, equally. They wouldn't let me help and kept me as still as possible, and to one side – this kind of super-care freaked me out. I was used to friendly scathing-sarcasm!

I stayed conscious and was able to abseil down the next 240 metres. It was getting dark. Still no helicopter.

It was dark and I was puking by the time the rescue team arrived at the area called Cloudy Peak. We'd shifted about 400 vertical metres since setting off the beacon. The helicopter touched down just enough for one hero/rescue guy to leap out. I vomited. I was grateful to be vomiting because I thought I might look too healthy to warrant such a serious rescue.

My climbing partner Jess's words:

What is Rachael doing sitting like that? Crap, there's blood! Crap, as I watch you turn to jelly and go unconscious. Okay, okay she's starting to come round. Eyes aren't focused, but conscious. I was still a bit hopeful you were okay. It's the next part when I figured that you were in real trouble. Standing

now, but still not coherent, and your legs start buckling and an arm tries to reach out to grab something but it just kept dropping. Buckle, stand, buckle, stand, grab with an arm, drop. You did it three or four times before Cliff grabbed you and sat you down. Now I'm super worried.

It was clear to the rescue team that my smashed helmet saved my life. It was also clear that Chris, my partner and first emergency contact, had helped to save my life by giving the emergency locator beacon to me years ago. His gifting words were, "Don't use this as an excuse to do crazy shit". Oops.

Confirmed cracked skull and airhead.

I arrived at Christchurch hospital just after midnight. I was taken for a CT scan of my brain, which showed that I did, in fact, have a brain. It also showed a crack in my skull and a punctured part of the lining of my brain. I didn't need brain surgery, which was a relief. I had no idea what the doctors notes meant, a bone fracture and something about air cells, but I gathered them to mean, 'I was a confirmed airhead'.


Rescue team hero Dave's words:

"... That's our work and we love it, through all the vomit, day and night!"

"Being able to self-rescue, off the wall, as you did with Cliff and Jess, is a commendable team effort. Knowing how to self-rescue without increasing the risk profile of your predicament further is a skill in its own right. Knowing when to 'stay and play' (staying in place of the incident) is also part of that self-rescue decision-making. The choice between the two options can be a hard decision at times. At the end of the day, you had the capability and skills between your group to remove yourselves effectively and safely from a place of danger."



Words by
Rachael Mayne




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Weightless Relaxation



The Origins and Evolution of Float Therapy

When Gaz and I went for our first float, we were hooked! Not only did we want to experience that weightless, relaxing feeling again, but we wanted to share it with others ... that's how Coro Float started.

So what is flotation therapy? It involves floating in lukewarm water saturated with Magnesium Sulphate (Epsom salts). The weightless, zero-gravity environment induces deep relaxation while the absence of external stimuli allows the brain to rest, escaping daily distractions.

Isolation tanks were first developed in the 1950s by neuroscientist Dr John C Lilly to isolate the mind from the body. Early tanks were upright, filled with seawater, and required breathing apparatus. Later, they were redesigned for participants to lie flat, with Epsom salts introduced, evolving into the floating experience we know today. Modern pods are sleek and well-designed, far from their coffin-like predecessors.

Coro Float's purpose-built cabin houses our Dreampod VMax float tank. Inside, 1000 litres of body-temperature water (just 12 inches deep) with 550 kg of Epsom salts allows you to float effortlessly. The water is kept at around 34.5°C, which matches your skin temperature, creating the sensation of not knowing where your body ends and the water begins.

So why float? Studies show that floating weightlessly in total relaxation can provide a wealth of health benefits. Like many therapies, flotation's benefits build over time, improving physical, emotional and psychological well-being.

Some key benefits include:

- Stress relief** – Reducing sensory input lowers cortisol levels and blood pressure.
- Relaxation** – Weightlessness releases muscle tension and eases joint pain.
- Faster recovery** – It is ideal between workouts, reducing lactic acid and inflammation.
- Enhanced sleep** – It helps combat insomnia.
- Pain relief** – It alleviates chronic pain and promotes healing.
- Reduction of jet lag**
- Habit-breaking support** – It is useful for overcoming addictions.
- Improved athletic performance** – Athletes use the tank for visualisation techniques.
- Better focus and concentration** – Floating guides the brain into theta state, enhancing learning, creativity, and mental health.

So what happens when you visit Coro Float? You'll float in 12 inches of water (about 30 cm), with 550 kg of Epsom salts. As you lie on your back with ears just below the waterline, the insulated tank allows you to relax without distractions. Once you close the lid and turn off the lights, you'll be in total darkness for a whole hour to unwind and de-stress.

Some common questions we get asked:

- Will I feel claustrophobic?** Our pod is spacious, and everything is under your control. While not recommended, you can float with the lid open and the light on.
- Is the water clean?** Absolutely. After every float, the water is filtered through a system fine enough to catch particles a quarter the size of a human hair, plus it passes through UV light. A daily dose of hydrogen peroxide is added as a sanitiser, and the high salt concentration creates an inhospitable environment for bacteria.
- Is it safe to fall asleep?** Yes! Many of our customers do, and it's perfectly safe.

Floating is one of the most relaxing experiences your body will go through. Take a break from the busyness of everyday life and try something just for you.

 Words by **Tonia Williams**

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PROUD TO BE LOCAL

Megan Carmichael

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Our family moved to Mercury Bay after my father, who had been a sales rep, travelled there for work. He decided it would be a great place to raise his family. My parents purchased Mercury Bay Mobile Service Station on Monk St. I had the best life growing up in Whitianga!

WHERE ARE YOU LIVING NOW?

I've built my life in Perth, WA, over the last 25 years. I worked in retail for nine years and developed great skills and friendships during that time. I then moved into the disability sector, working for Avivo for the last 16 years. I've had four different roles there and currently work in the 'Shared Living' environment. This allows people with disabilities to live with a host family or have a home sharer live with them, providing a natural environment compared to institutions or group homes.

WHEN DID YOU LIVE IN THE COROMANDEL?

My family moved to Whitianga in 1984. I attended MBAS until 1992 - some highlights include the teachers and opportunities available. Helen Scott, my first teacher, made the transition to a new school pleasant. Ron Morgan, the best PE teacher ever, was the driving force behind our amazing school camps at Opito Bay and the ski trip. My time in the Coromandel gave me lifelong friendships. I went to Perth in December 1999 after meeting another local, Conan Taylor.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING SINCE SCHOOL?

I left school in May 1992 and had my daughter. Between 1992 and 1999, I worked locally at the dairy, as a kitchen hand at the Whitianga Continuing Care Unit, full-time at Richardson's Real Estate, and then at Betta Electrical with Roy and Brenda Herbert. In Perth, I worked in a women's clothing retail store across multiple locations, eventually becoming a 2-IC. In 2001, our son Baylee arrived while we were building our first home. In 2006, I started working for Mission Australia in the Language and Literacy programme for troubled youth or ESL students. In 2008, I moved to CAPE, a company delivering training tickets required for the mining industry. In 2009, I moved to Avivo, completed my Diploma in Community Services, and I am still there.

WHAT ACHIEVEMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

My family. Baylee is a qualified carpenter, and Jaydin is a hairdresser. I have two beautiful grandchildren, Bodhi (8) and Koa (5). Moving to Australia and building a life here has also been amazing!

WHAT ARE YOUR FONDEST MEMORIES OF THE COROMANDEL?

Cycling around town with friends, and to the water hole, fishing off the wharf, exploring Lovers Rock, catching the ferry to Front Beach with our bikes on top, and school camps to Mt Ruapehu and Opito Bay. Getting up early on Saturdays, rain hail or shine, to deliver the local paper out to Tin Town (no longer there now). Another stand-out memory is when I was 12-13 and stayed over at Amanda Forsyth's house in Rings Beach for the weekend. We went exploring and stumbled across something by the creek ... banging and tapping it with spades. When we showed her parents, they located the authorities. The inspector of explosives came in and it was discovered to be a dangerous bomb used as a flare marker from an Aircraft-Navigation MK1. We made the paper - it was thought to have been washed up onto the beach 40 years ago, back then!

Instagram



Brought to you by **Ron Morgan**

This is an edited version of a bigger heartfelt chat between Megan and her ex-teacher Ron Morgan. Scan the QR code below to read the full story online!



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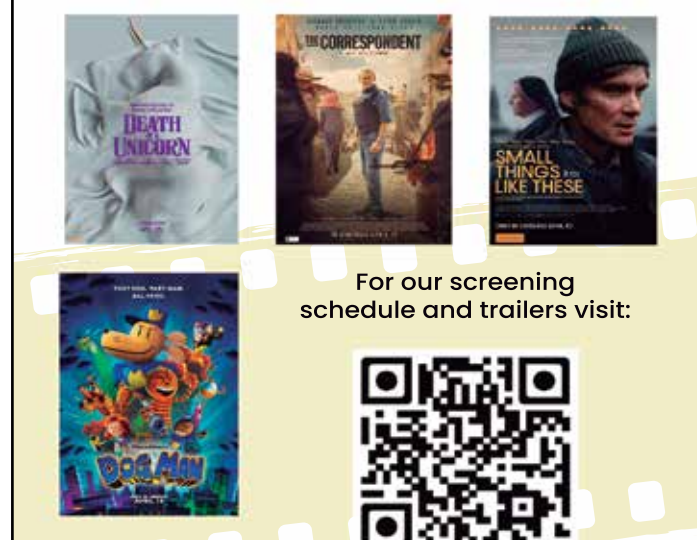


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POSSUM TRAPS & PLOT TWISTS

HOW A HIKUAI EX-FARMER BECAME A HISTORICAL NOVELIST



Possum hunting is the unlikely catalyst for a historical novel written by Hikuai man, Jonathan Peet. But this ex-farmer, musician and history lover says when hunting possums years ago he discovered evidence of old mining sites in the bush, sparking his love of history and the writing of his first book, *Wairata*.

Jonathan – known as Jono – has enjoyed loading his car up with his books over the past few months and travelling around markets and fairs to promote them.

And the keen interest and sales have encouraged him to continue writing, with the draft of his second book just complete. The latest plot came after Jono read about World War 1 hero William Barnard Rhodes-Moorhouse, a pilot with Māori ancestry who posthumously received the Victoria Cross. Jono has a way of linking this man's remarkable story to the hero of his first novel. And his writing softens the brutality of war with a love story.

His first novel features the life of young immigrant, David Campbell, who is orphaned in a storm on New Zealand's 'wild and wet west coast'. It starts in 1890 with a shipwreck and Jono's descriptions of that dramatic storm might make readers feel queasy! The book is beautifully written in an easy reading yet imaginative style.

Farming family

Jono grew up in a Katikati farming family and trained as a chef until he found working as a possum hunter more profitable than a weekly wage.

"It was in the 1970s and at that time there was a demand for possum fur in Russia and China. I averaged \$5 a skin and could make around a thousand dollars a week. My wife Kathy worked alongside me preparing the skins."

The couple switched to dairy farming about 1984, starting as sharemilkers in Katikati. Jono smiles when he recalls making notes for his book while he was working in the shed. "I'd have a blackboard propped up and would write things down when they came into my head. I reckon most of the plot for *Wairata* was written while I was milking cows!"

Later they bought a farm in Waihi, where they raised their three children, Leon, Courtney and Sarah. The family moved around the North Island over the years, including a spell at Whitianga. At one stage Jono dabbled in real estate.

Five years ago the couple bought a bush block in Hikuai, where they now run a Bed and Breakfast.

Hated school

Jono admits he hated school and left as soon as he could. "I squeezed through with a few passes in School Certificate. But I did have a love of reading and *Lord of the Rings* was one book that lit up my imagination. I've always loved history and started to think about writing my own novel when possum hunting in Waihi. When I discovered evidence of old campsites and mineshafts, I thought about those people and their lives. I love old photos and ponder on the lives of those people who, like us, had dreams and hopes and fell in love and raised families. I also enjoy listening to older people reminiscing about their lives."

Jono also finds time to play his guitar and you may find him with a bunch of other enthusiasts creating music at Tairua Music Club fortnightly on Tuesday nights at Tairua Bowling Club. He loves David Gilmour's guitar on Pink Floyd's *Comfortably Numb* and is also a fan of Neil Young. He also enjoys renovating houses with Kathy.

It is nearly 30 years since the first seed of a story formed and then developed into *Wairata*. So what did he learn from that first novel that helped him write the sequel? "Well," he muses. "I learnt that I need to write a lot faster because 30 years is a long time! My latest book has taken about a year to write and after editing it should be out by Christmas."

Words by
Pamela Ferla

Ross' Ramblings – Part 2

England Revisited

From London to Aotearoa and back again...

Following up on Part 1 of the Barton Wood story: One day one of my housemates, Dave, decided to explore the several sheds on the property, which unfortunately weren't locked. I say unfortunately because they contained some pretty interesting stuff which immediately caught Dave's aesthetic eye. Our landlord's parents had been in the army, stationed in India, and had brought back loads of souvenirs which were stashed in the sheds. One of them was a fully-grown tiger's skin complete with head and claws. Well, one night, after a bit of a party, Dave decided that an old shed was not the right place for four tiger's claws, so he cut one off in the mistaken belief it would be much happier occupying a place of honour in his house when he returned to NZ. Of course, the next day, when he came to his senses, he realised what he had done and felt the inevitable shame at having performed such a mindless act, so he offered the grotesque thing to us housemates. All refused of course and Dave was left to fess up when the landlord came to do her inspection and discovered the vandalism. Needless to say, she was pretty livid but didn't throw us out of the house, although she might have if she had known what was hung up drying in the laundry cupboard.

I had stopped eating meat soon after arriving at Barton Wood. I distinctly remember my last meat meal was rabbit, stewed in an olive-based sauce cooked over an open fire in a Moroccan earthenware dish called a tagine. Unfortunately, after taking the tagine off the coals, I placed it on the cold hearth where it immediately cracked in two with the obvious result. We scraped the spilt stew off the hearth and scooped it down. I must say that despite the added flavouring of ash and chips of firewood, it was delicious.

One lasting memory of my time at Barton Wood was of a beautiful summer's day. I was sitting beside the pond in the gorgeous English garden. Time suddenly seemed to stand still and I experienced an almost overwhelming sense

of stillness and peace, a feeling of being totally present in that moment. I later read in a book that I found called *Be Here Now*, by a guy called Richard Alpert (also known as Baba Ram Dass), that this 'nowness' was what we should aspire to. However, despite many more years of living on planet earth, these moments of clarity have been few and far between since that day.

After the summer at Barton Wood it was back to London and more office work to save enough money for the return journey home. In those days, you could go to the NZ Embassy and ask for help finding accommodation and work. I was lucky enough to find both on the same day. Like in Auckland nowadays, different areas of London were home to different races. My new home was in Acton where the population was mainly Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi. My taste for hot curries was well satisfied there. I worked as an accountant doing temporary work for firms that needed one-off jobs done. Some of the work was easy but there were a few jobs in which I was out of my depth due to lack of experience accompanied by a lack of knowledge and a lack of passion for counting other people's money. I remember one job when the accounts refused to balance. In a business with thousands of pounds worth of sales there was a discrepancy of just fifty pence. I could not find that 50p anywhere, despite trying for the better part of a full day. It cost the firm 15 pounds in wages for me to try to find that damn 50 pence and I didn't locate it, so, out of frustration, I did something unprofessional, something no accountant should ever do – I changed a figure by 50 pence to make everything balance. I figured that it must have been a clerical error like a wrongly-written invoice by a bored accounts clerk, or some other mysterious accounting anomaly and as I was leaving the job in a few days, no one would be any wiser. I hope the NZ Embassy didn't receive any negative feedback for having recommended a corrupt accountant.

Accounting was a good money earner for Kiwis in London, who had a reputation for being better workers than your average Brit of the time, so despite not being real accountant material, I stuck it out for the money. The most

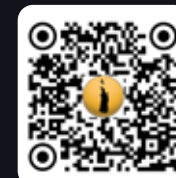
exciting part of my brief accounting career, apart from receiving fat pay cheques, was being very close to the 1974 IRA bombing of Westminster House, a 900-year-old part of the British Houses of Parliament. Shortly after arriving at work to audit the accounts of a small jewellery shop, in which the employees had obviously been stealing from their elderly employer, there was a huge explosion which shook the shop violently. We all raced out of the shop and saw a plume of smoke rising from the direction of Big Ben, the famous clock. Fortunately, no-one was killed although 11 people were injured and part of the building was wrecked. The Provisional wing of the Irish Republican Army had struck again.

London was a great city for entertainment. There were buskers at every underground train station and day-long rock concerts featuring bands who later became household names. I remember attending one such festival where Van Morrison, the Doobie Brothers, 10cc, the Allman Brothers and Supertramp all played on the same day.

Before leaving England, I was lucky enough to score a temporary job as a barman at the twelfth century Llanthony Priory Hotel in Wales. It was an ancient site located in a tiny village near the Black Mountains, a hauntingly beautiful place with wonderful walks and night sky watching. The 'village' comprised two houses, one on either side of the country lane. They were only 30 metres apart and yet we were told that the families who occupied them hadn't spoken to one another for years and years because of some age-old family feud. This seemed extremely strange to me, as I remember thinking that a one-hour meeting or perhaps a meal together might be all that was needed to sort stuff out. In hindsight, I realise this was probably an unrealistic expectation, as I have since learned that it can be comforting to have another to hate or blame or feud with. It somehow makes us feel better about ourselves, and besides, it's not easy to look at ourselves and admit we were wrong or to let go of old grievances. If we can't get on with our neighbours, what hope is there for our troubled world?

A few weeks after leaving the Priory, I flew back home to Aotearoa unannounced after three years of travel. I knocked on the door of my parents' house and when my father opened the door, it was the first time I had seen him cry.

Words by
Ross Liggins



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