

# COROMIND



Issue 29

## Ross' Ramblings

Tales of India: Curry, Karma, & Kindness

## EXPLORE NEW WORLDS

The Cognitive and Cultural Benefits of Language Learning

## THROW IT IN THE KILN!

Potter Kay Ogilvie and the Fun of Playing with Fire

## Inclusion or Isolation?

Gaming's Impact on Identity and Belonging

Audio ||||  
Version





Kia ora,

Welcome to Issue 29 of Coromind — your favourite local magazine shining a light on Hauraki-Coromandel artists and sharing stories from our vibrant communities.

One of the things we love most about putting this magazine together is hearing from you — our readers — when you reach out to share your knowledge and stories. Our region is home to some incredible professionals, both active and retired, and many understand that wisdom grows when it's shared.

If you've got something worth telling, don't be shy! We'd love to hear from you. And if you know someone who has a great story or valuable insight, send them our way — recommendations are always welcome.

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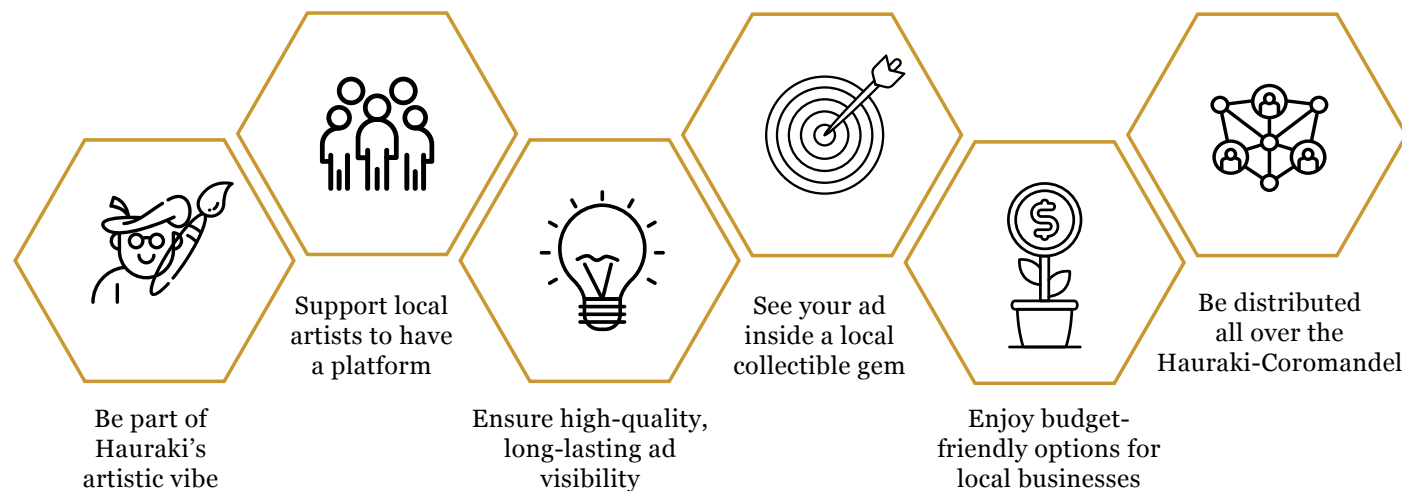
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Peace,

The Coromind Team



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## Team

**Art Director**  
Taylor O.G.

**Administration, Marketing & Production**  
Leonardo Magri, Lorelay Magri

**Design/Layout**  
Reuben Watson

**Audio Version**  
Lana Garland, Fabian Roberts

**Cover Art**  
Ross Paul Dunn

## Contributors

Altbays, Carl Muir, Coromandel's CFM, Department of Conservation (DOC), Elvisa Van der Leden, Gonzales Painting, Helen Oliver, Howard Saunders, Johnny Greaves, Kay Ogilvie, Matt Bowden, Mike Taylor, Mike Bennett, Monika Lange, Natalie Jones, New World Whitianga, Provider, Robyn Pearce, Ron Morgan, Ross Paul Dunn, Ross Liggins, Stella Pennell, STM Roofing and Scaffolding, Thames Museum Te Whare Taonga o te Kauaeranga, Wāhi Tukurua, Four Square Buffalo Beach, Four Square Paeroa

**Proofing**  
Helen Oliver

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## Art as a Conversation between People, Place, & Purpose

New Zealand-born artist Ross Paul Dunn has long explored the complex relationship between humans, animals, and the environment through his creative work. His paintings often weave narratives that challenge viewers to reflect on the way people shape – and are shaped by – the natural world. Whether through subtle symbolism or bold composition, Ross's art prompts conversations about environmental exploitation, loss, resilience, pop culture and the fragile beauty of shared ecosystems.

Originally from Tauranga, Ross began his career as an art educator, teaching art, design, sculpture, and photography. His own artistic journey is deeply rooted in both observation and storytelling, with a particular fascination for the ways animals appear as both subjects and silent witnesses in human-altered landscapes. His works often sit at the intersection of memory and environment, where the boundaries between species, objects and ideas become blurred.

Alongside painting, Ross's passion for sculpture led him naturally into the field of wearable arts. What began as an extension of his classroom practice – encouraging students to move beyond conventional recycled-material dresses, like those crafted from bread tags – evolved into a genuine love for sculptural costume as a unique form of expression. For Ross, wearable art is another stage for storytelling: a place where structure, movement and narrative collide. This resulted in a large amount of success for both him and his students.

Throughout his career, whether in the studio or the classroom, Ross has remained committed to the power of creative thinking. His belief in the transformative potential of the arts is visible not only in his own practice but in the communities he works with. His signature blend of technical skill and environmental narrative offers a visual reminder of how interconnected people are with the world around them – and how art can help make sense of it all.



To see more  
of Ross Paul  
Dunn's art  
← Scan Here

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# THE STORY OF FREDERICK MILLS

## A Soldier's Journey from England to Thames

While browsing through the museum collections, I was drawn to a photo of a gentleman in a uniform, with a number of medals pinned to his jacket. He appeared to have dressed carefully for the photo, with a sense of pride in his appearance and the uniform he was wearing. I was intrigued and wanted to know more.

I discovered that his name was Frederick (Fred) Mills. Fred was born in England in 1849, and arrived in Thames, New Zealand in 1874, aged 25. As far as I know, he had no other relatives in New Zealand throughout his lifetime. The framed photo of Fred was a gift to Thomas William (Toss) Hammond and Mrs Hammond from Frederick Mills, late Royal Artillery (March 8, 1909). Source: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira.

Fred's military career began in England. He was a very loyal member of the Royal Artillery and endeavoured over his lifetime to keep in touch with his military comrades in England. He appeared to enjoy writing letters, sending a letter and photo to the High Commissioner for New Zealand, the Hon. W. Hall-Jones (1908 - 1912), asking him to forward the photo to His Majesty King George V. Fred received a kind reply to his request, and was informed that his photograph had been 'laid before the King' by the King's secretary, and that the King had conveyed his thanks.

In the accompanying oval photo, Fred is wearing what has been described as a militia uniform, and a medal identified as his King's Empire Veterans Medal. (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections. 5 - 0583CJ.) Fred's Veteran's Medal was presented to him by his Excellency, Lord Ranfurly, Governor of New Zealand. He also received a medal for active service in the East Indies under Field Marshall Frederick Sleigh Roberts.

The alarm raised in Auckland and elsewhere, in response to the Northern War 1845 - 1846, led to the Legislative Council passing the first Militia Ordinance on 25th March 1845. This required all able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 65 years of age to complete 28 days of training annually, and to be ready for service. In 1858 a Militia Act similar to the 1845 Ordinance was passed by the NZ Parliament. The country was divided into militia districts and a permanent staff consisting of one officer, two non-commissioned officers, and a bugler were provided in

Words by  
**Robyn Pearce**

Volunteer of Thames  
Museum Te Whare  
Taonga o te Kauaeranga

each. Flintlock muskets were supplied, and the uniform consisted of a blue shirt, a serge jacket, a cap and any kind of trousers. (Source: 'The Militia' from An Encyclopaedia of NZ, edited by A.H. McLintock, www.Ara.govt.nz.)

The bronze New Zealand Empire Veteran's Medal is in the shape of a Maltese cross, surrounded by a wreath of Laurel leaves with NZEVA engraved in the centre. The medal is suspended on a red, white and blue ribbon. In 1910 the name of the association was changed to the King's Empire Veterans Association, and the letters in the centre of the cross were changed to KEV. Fred was also made a life member of the Victoria League in 1925. Fred established himself as a chimney sweep in Thames and supported the community in many ways. Sadly in 1913 Fred lost his medals, and other precious memorabilia in a house fire. Friends kindly rallied to help him replace equipment, so he could continue his chimney sweeping business.

Frederick Mills ended his days at the Tararu Men's Home on 22 July 1928, aged 79 years. The homes provided necessary care and were the last place of residence for pioneer settlers who had nobody to look after them in their later years. They were run by the Charitable Aid Board/Thames Hospital.

Why Fred decided to leave England and make a new life in New Zealand I will never know, but I acknowledge his courage, and all he contributed throughout his military career, and as a much-appreciated member of the Thames community. It is also clear that Fred never forgot his comrades, and the sacrifices they made.





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# THE WHAKAPAPA OF WAKA AMA IN TE WHITIANGA-A-KUPE

## Honouring the Past, Paddling into the Future

### Kupe's Crossing Place

Kupe, the legendary Polynesian explorer, journeyed from the Pacific to Aotearoa on the Matawhaorua, a great double-hulled waka. According to tradition, Kupe was 'chasing a wheke' – a giant octopus – which metaphorically describes how he and his crew navigated the vast Moana-nui-a-Kiwa (Pacific Ocean) using the many different currents. While in this area, Kupe named a local river Taputapuātea, which refers back to his home in Rangiatea, with Te Whitianga-a-Kupe, Kupe's crossing place, becoming the longstanding name for the area.

After returning home, Kupe provided directions for others to follow. The early voyagers travelled on waka hourua (large double-hulled canoes), while today, we paddle in waka ama, single-hulled canoes with an ama (outrigger) that provides stability.

Before people arrived in Aotearoa, waka ama were the primary mode of transport between villages in the Pacific, playing a crucial role in daily life – used for fishing and gathering, visiting whānau, transporting news and resources. Today, waka ama is one of the fastest-growing water sports in Aotearoa and a powerful way to connect with kaupapa Māori and build community on the water.

**E ai ki te kōrero? Did you know?** Kuramārōtini, Kupe's wife, is credited for naming the land Aotearoa after spotting a long white cloud, indicating land below, following their long journey at sea.

### Te Arawa Waka

Hei, who arrived aboard the Te Arawa waka with Tamatekapua (captain of Te Arawa), settled in Te O ā Hei (Hahei) and became a prominent chief, the ancestor of Ngāti Hei.

**Tikanga Tip:** Traditional hoe (paddles) were pointed, and were sometimes used as weapons. This reinforces the importance of paddle etiquette (as mentioned in Article 1) – we always keep the rau (blade or pointed end) facing upwards to show respect and avoid causing harm to Papatūānuku or the paddle itself.

### Waka Ama Today

The first waka ama club in Whitianga, Taputapuātea Club, was established with the guidance and tautoko of Ngāti Hei in the early 2000s. Today, we continue paddling in a waka named Taputapuātea, kindly donated for our use, alongside Takere, the waka you'll most often see on the wai.

Our current club, Whitianga Waka Ama, was founded in 2015 and was invited to participate in the Tuia 250 flotilla in 2019.

### Nāku te rourou, nāu te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi.

As Mike Bennett puts it, "This whakataukī speaks to the reciprocal nature of supporting each other in kaupapa Māori events and has been instrumental in our journey – such as Joe Davis lending the waka to our club and Whitianga Waka Ama participating in Tuia 250."

This whakataukī reminds us that by sharing resources and support, we uphold the kaitiakitanga (custodianship) and mana of the previous club while stepping into our role as new representatives.

Nau mai – we welcome paddlers of all experience levels to connect with us on the wai. Mauri ora!

Join **Whitianga Waka Ama** on Facebook or email: **wakawhiti@gmail.com**

Words by  
**Mike Bennett and Natalie Jones**



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# From TE PUIA, HOT WATER BEACH To ORUA ORGANICS

SHAPED BY PERMACULTURE, GROUNDED IN WHĀNAU VALUES

I clearly remember the purpose that brought me to Hot Water Beach sixty years ago — looking for a site for a family beach home with room for gardening. I was 15 years old. My parents came down and bought a beachfront section and a DIY beach home project was created. Eventually my brother and whānau became permanent residents there. Eight years ago, they shifted away from the hurly burly of beachfront living to the relative peace and quiet of 37 hectares at the back of Hot Water Beach valley.

Their new property contained pockets of ancient Whenuakite coastal forest, logged over regenerating bush and wilding pines. The old pasture areas had turned to grandfather gorse and the stream edge was thick with woolly nightshade (tobacco weed), privet and blackberry. There were no intact buildings. Infrastructure was needed urgently and a tractor with enough grunt to drive a heavy-duty mulch mower. For gardening, the flats had real potential. Nearby remnants of old fruit trees showed what could be grown. Beautiful peaches once grew there, and wild kiwi fruit still did. The bush backdrop provided some shelter as did a row of Japanese cedar and clumps of bamboo. To celebrate the land purchase, an apple tree was planted near an existing large sapote, and Orua Organics was born.

Hazel and Jacob Sims run the project along with their three tamariki. Their dream is to produce nutrient-dense fruit and vegetables for the local community, while repairing biodiversity and protecting the whenua (land). They are utilising the principles of permaculture supported by a desire to be on the whenua for a lifestyle that is sustainable and nurturing to the environment.

To begin the infrastructure, a level site was cut for a pole shed. What started as an open bay implement shed was gradually upgraded to a staff room facility by installing a concrete floor, closing in the front, attaching a utilities building and a septic tank system. The concrete work was directed and supported by Ngāti Hei kaumātua, Joe Davis. He got stuck in and led the concrete pours and trained us up as he went. His expertise and 'hands on' help left a lasting impression on our whānau. The entire property is off the power grid so ideally everything has to be

solar powered, including the solid wood homestead, built in 2021.

With time, mixed species shelterbelts were created, orchards contoured for maximum water retention, hothouses built, shade houses and garden beds. Considerable pest control, wilding pine removal, gorse mulching, privet and woolly nightshade cut and pasted. Some areas are still mulch mowed when gorse regrows and the soil is improving, with the green material naturally 'sheet composted' back in.

The gardens are a testament to Jake's growing skills, with carefully set-out beds of seasonal vegetables, some covered with cloche, others in the hot house. Seedling plants are propagated onsite. Fresh locally grown produce goes into weekly veggie boxes. It hits the spot for 'foodie' locals and visitors. As the orchards mature and the veggie gardens respond to being nurtured with compost and 'no dig' approach, the resulting produce gets more nutritious by the day.

The mauri (life force) of the ngahere (forest) and whenua (land) has definitely been enhanced. As the fledgling 'food forest' mingles with the existing ngahere, large fruiting banana palms, tropical trees, seem at home amongst kahikatea, tōtara and kānuka. The atmosphere as you enter this forest is almost mystical, cooling and calming. I think of the old stories of this being a place of patupaiarehe, fairy-like creatures of the forest and mountain tops. I imagine they would love fruit, clear stream water and shady hiding places.

The dual history reveals itself. Māori shadows still lie on the whenua, the ridge smothered in kūmarahou (golden tainui), a suggestion that Māori travellers passed here and spread seed of this valued rongoā mauri. Now pākehā also make their mark, māra kai (gardens), where and a genuine wish to leave the land better for future generations. It all adds to the positive vibe from Orua Organics, a continuing story of resilience, hard mahi and having a dream.

Words by  
**Howard Saunders**





# FROM COFFEE TO CONSERVATION

## How Eggcentric Café Champions Waste-Free Living

Eggcentric Café operators Sam Fowell and Rachel Saunders are showing that hospitality and sustainability go hand in hand.

### Eco-conscious values

Sam, once a shy eight-year-old when the café opened in 1998, took over from his dad in 2015. With Rachel's support, he's continued to build on the café's unique, eco-conscious values. "We use organic milk, free-range eggs, grass-fed meat—we don't cut corners there," says Sam. "Now, we want people to think waste-free too. It's about caring for your health and the planet."

Eggcentric has long led the way in waste reduction. They won the Good Egg award in 2011, introduced a mug library for travellers, charge extra for takeaway cups, and offer discounts for reusables. More recently, they joined the Chunky Cup system, letting customers borrow or swap cups for a refundable deposit.

### But the effort doesn't stop there

Each week, Sam and Rachel collect used beverage containers from the café. These are picked up by Wāhi Tukurua volunteers, then sent to SAVEboard in Hamilton—a facility turning composite packaging waste into low-carbon, moisture-resistant building materials. SAVEboard's products are not only made from upcycled waste like milk cartons and soft plastics—they're also recyclable at end of life, making them a truly circular solution.

Sam and Rachel's message is simple:

"Go waste-free. Don't use takeaway cups and straws—just don't."

Thier partnership with Wāhi Tukurua is a powerful example of what's possible when local businesses step up, collaborate, and champion change. It's also a reminder that small actions like skipping a takeaway cup can be part of a much larger movement toward sustainability.

wāhi  
tukurua



# Coromandel LOCAL FLAVOURS AND SPECIAL TREATS

## Why These Foods Are Worth the Splurge

In the last five issues of Coromind, I took you on a trip, sharing my insights into the great food and drinks you'll find in our lovely Hauraki-Coromandel region. To find those, go to [www.coromind.nz](http://www.coromind.nz) and search for 'Time to Indulge.' There are both online and audio versions of all the articles, plus some cool videos on Coromind's Facebook and Instagram!

For this last article, I wrap up with a few special things which occasionally feature as a real indulgence in my diet.

### Dark chocolate – Where taste meets wellness

In its earliest form, chocolate (many hundreds of years ago) was different to the packaged bars we observe in stores and online today. It was originally consumed as a beverage, generally with a bitter taste. The Spanish were some of the first to mix cocoa beans with honey and sugar, drawing closer to the sweet versions of chocolate we know today. With dark chocolate, specifically the point of difference is the health benefits that combine with flavour and texture to make a compelling package. These benefits include improved blood flow, high antioxidants, anti-inflammatory properties, skin enhancement and brain function. At Allpress Olive Groves we have recently partnered with Wellington based Shirl and Moss to produce a dark chocolate range infused with extra virgin olive oil. This produces a beautiful creamy texture and remarkable taste profile.

### Duck eggs – Bigger, bolder and richer

If you enjoy chicken eggs, then I imagine you being highly receptive to duck eggs. These are not typically sold in supermarkets so explore online sources or other more boutique outlets. The reward is a beautiful rich and flavoursome egg with high vitamin content. These eggs have approximately double the yolk content and the white component is crystal clear. This produces a creamy generous set of flavours that are rich but still subtle. These eggs are perfect when cooked traditionally (fried/scrambled/poached) but remember the size of the yolk means cook a little longer to ensure the yolk is set. If frying or poaching, serve with salmon, asparagus or ham. I find duck eggs a real treat and a nice variant on chicken eggs, with a vibrant look when preparing and serving. The extra cost is worth it for those with a bit of discretionary spending power.

### Whitebait – A seasonal treasure from our rivers

A delicacy made up of various tiny river species, some of which are native to New Zealand, caught in the lower reaches of rivers in scoop nets with tight mesh, whitebait is seasonally gathered (late spring) and considered endangered if over-taken or threatened by poor water quality in rivers and waterways. I find cooked whitebait seriously delicate but also subtle and nuanced in terms of interesting flavours. Typically, whitebait is sold in packets containing hundreds if not thousands of tiny fish. I make fritters with egg-whites only, ensuring the flavour of the whitebait is the 'main event' and the egg component does not overpower. I like to make one big fritter (essentially an omelette) and serve it with a green salad and a glass of chardonnay. The other way (slightly less healthy) is to jam your fritter into a white bread sandwich with pepper, salt and lemon.

### Whiskey – A timeless sip of elegance

If I could only consume one alcoholic beverage for the remainder of my life, it would be whiskey. I am conscious that whiskey is a hard liquor and do not advocate any over-use. I take it straight over plenty of ice without a mixer (often full of sugar). If before dinner, I like one single drink sometimes accompanied by a small glass of cold mid-strength beer (a chaser); alternatively, I enjoy it after a good meal with someone else who appreciates it. In terms of affordable whiskeys my two favourites are The Famous Grouse and Jameson Irish. These are proven commercial whiskeys, sensibly priced and solid quality. Up the price range a bit, I enjoy Johnnie Walker Black Label. These are brands I trust. If you are visiting Waiheke Island try the interesting range at Heke.

I hope you like this information and description of some indulgences – all of course a matter of opinion. Food and beverage is a life-long journey and our open minds and creativity in the kitchen are the gateway to discovery. The health component is important but so is the pure enjoyment factor. We are blessed in NZ to have an environment producing amazing foods complemented by cutting edge local/international beverages. Within the confines of your budget, I hope you get the best of these.

Words by  
**Mike Taylor**





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BEYOND THE CLICK SERIES

# Inclusion or Isolation?

GAMING'S IMPACT ON IDENTITY AND BELONGING

Gaming isn't just for teenagers – it's a cultural phenomenon for millions of people around the world, including a lot of adults. It's more than just a way to pass the time; gaming lets people explore different identities, build skills and connect with others. It's also been demonstrated to have a wide-ranging impact on well-being, from improving thinking skills, helping with pain management, improving social connections, relieving stress and helping players keep their minds active. But just like other parts of the digital world, gaming isn't free from problems. There are still big issues around who gets to feel included, who gets left out, and how much time spent gaming is actually healthy.

Gaming encourages personalisation by the use of avatars, or digitised characters. You can choose your avatar's gender, ethnicity, hairstyle and even personality traits. Some people create avatars that look like them in real life, while others might choose characters that are totally different, like a brave warrior or a sneaky wizard. This ability to experiment can help players explore different sides of themselves. Research shows that people who create avatars of different genders or ethnicities often become more aware of discrimination and more understanding of people's differences.

But even with all this creativity, the actual game content often uses outdated and damaging stereotypes – hyper-masculine heroes and female characters who are highly sexualised or need to be 'rescued'. These stereotypes send a message that only certain types of people belong in these stories, or worse, that they reflect 'real' life. Additionally, LGBTQIA+ characters are also missing from most games. When they do appear, they're often shown in problematic ways, overly stereotyped or treated as a joke.

The reason for this often comes down to who's making the games. Game developers are predominantly white, middle-class males (although this is changing), and people tend to create characters and stories based on what they know. This doesn't mean developers are trying to be unfair, but it does mean there's often a narrow view of who 'belongs' in these games.

But that's not the only issue with gaming. There's also the problem of spending too much time playing games, which can lead to social isolation. Games that focus on solo play can sometimes make it easy to get lost in digital worlds and ignore what's happening around you. For some, gaming can become a way to avoid dealing with personal problems or difficult social situations. Spending too much time gaming can make it harder to connect with family and friends in real life. This is especially concerning for young people, who are still developing social skills and

retreat to interacting predominantly online rather than face-to-face.

Another issue is that some games have addictive elements built in, such as loot boxes – virtual items that you can buy in games, and what's inside is a surprise. Sometimes it's something awesome; other times, it's just junk. It's a bit like gambling, a dopamine hit to keep you playing and spending money.

Games can also be really expensive. Many popular games are 'free' to download, but if you want to level up faster or get cool in-game items, you often have to spend real money. The addictive nature of game design is directly related to monetisation.

Bullying and harassment have also been demonstrated to be major problems in online games. Some players use the anonymity of the internet to proliferate harm. This can make gaming spaces feel unsafe or hostile, especially for women and younger players, and there is ample evidence that gaming can have adverse mental health effects when people encounter bullying.

Despite these challenges, gaming can also be a powerful tool for bringing people together and building empathy. Gaming communities can also provide a lot of support, especially for people who find it hard to connect in person. For example, many gamers share tips, discuss stories, and bond over shared experiences, building friendships which extend beyond the boundaries of the game and around the globe.

Gaming is sometimes brushed off as just a way to escape reality, but it's so much more than that. It's a place where real-world issues like identity, inclusion and representation come to life.

Words by  
**Stella Pennell**



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# THROW IT IN THE KILN!

*Potter Kay Ogilvie and the fun of playing with fire*

When I first visited Kay Ogilvie's studio, the diversity of her work immediately caught my attention. I loved the massive bats hanging upside down – as they would, of course – but what really stood out was how varied everything was. If you spread her pieces across a gallery floor without any labels, you'd be forgiven for thinking they were made by a group of different artists. In my humble opinion, that's part of Kay's magic.

Kay Ogilvie is a potter – and so much more. Her studio pieces range from playful platters to towering totems, made with a mix of clay, glaze, glass and whatever else the day inspires.

Kay tells me that although her body often begs her to rest, she's a self-confessed workaholic – her mind is always ticking, full of ideas and energy to keep going. And so she does. Inspiration hasn't stopped arriving, even decades into her creative journey. One themed exhibition gave her a poem to respond to, and years later, the influence is still showing up – in totems, pots, plates, and more.

She's happy to share her secrets, too. When I asked about how she achieves the patterns, colours and textures in her pieces, she laughed and explained one of her favourite techniques: pit firing. "My wonderful husband made me a small portable kiln out of two laundry tubs. I stack it with firewood and all sorts of ingredients – seaweed, Epsom salt, cow shit, garden fertiliser, copper wire, rusty metal – packed around low-fired pots. Then I light it and wait impatiently to see what magic happens." The results, she says, are "wildly erratic, often wonderful, and great fun".

That curiosity started back in 1993 during a design course at Tai Tokerau Polytech, when pottery was one of the subjects. "I was immediately enchanted by the feel of clay, the way it responded to every touch," Kay says. "The heat and noise of the kiln being fired, the buckets of sludgy glaze that would transform – usually! – into beautiful colours. I'm as captivated by that magic now as I was then. Still experimenting, still learning, still loving it."

Her current work often combines clay, glaze, and glass – a vibrant mix that she says she 'stumbled on' after a lot of trial and error. It's become a recognisable part of her style, although in typical Kay fashion, she doesn't try to lock herself into one direction. "I've always just made what draws me at the moment," she says. "When I was at Polytech, the tutors kept wanting me to 'find my direction'. I never have, as I enjoy all the directions."

Kay's playful side is also nourished by her grandchildren, whose fearless, colourful, and delightfully asymmetric clay creations have helped shape her own artistic perspective. "Their work has a spontaneous looseness, which is very appealing," she says.

From her Wyuna Peninsula studio – appropriately named Gannets Nest – Kay creates everything from hand-built platters and tumblers to large garden sculptures like totems and planters. The sea views bring her joy, and that sense of beauty and brightness flows into her colour choices too. "I tend to just reach out to my glaze shelves and let my hand fall on one, and then the next one that goes with it," she explains. "It's a lovely feeling – as if the surroundings choose the colour."

This past summer, Kay was one of the artists featured at Coromind ArtWorks. "Taylor, Leo and the whole Coromind team were so lovely to work with," she says. "The displays were magnificent." Pop-up galleries like Coromind ArtWorks, she believes, play an important role in giving people more chances to see and buy local art.

She's also a familiar face in the Coromandel Arts Tour, where her open studio gives the community a peek into her world. "Feedback from the public is very useful and appreciated," Kay says. "I hope visitors enjoy the visit as much as I enjoy them visiting."

There's something refreshing about a maker who's just as open to surprises as her kiln. With every piece, Kay Ogilvie keeps discovering new directions – and making sure she enjoys the ride along the way.

Kay's studio, Gannets Nest, is located at Wyuna Bay Rd in Coromandel Town. Give her a call or send her an email to book a visit!

**020 4191 7611 or 020 4003 1399**

**[kaythepotter@gmail.com](mailto:kaythepotter@gmail.com)**



Words by

**Leonardo Magri**



**We visited Kay's studio. Scan the QR Code to watch.**

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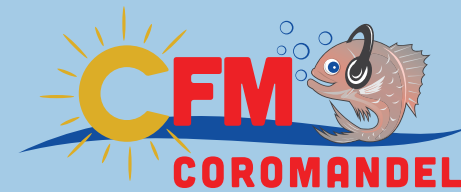
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## PROUD TO BE LOCAL *Johnny Greaves*

Johnny Greaves and his family made Mercury Bay their full-time home in 1967 when he was just two years old. His parents established Mercury Bay Ready Mix, a towing and contracting business that became a staple in the community.

Johnny attended Mercury Bay Primary School, then spent a short time at the Area School before heading to St Peter's in Cambridge. He returned to Mercury Bay Area School for his University Entrance year in 1982 before diving straight into the world of high-performance engineering. His first job, at Paton & Black Speed & Marine in Morrinsville, was a dream come true, but it was only the beginning of his motorsport-driven career.

By 1987, Johnny had landed in Sydney and entered real estate, but his heart remained in the fast lane. His love for speed propelled him into the world of auto racing, where he worked alongside the sons of legends like Peter Brock (son James), Larry Perkin's son (Jack) and some of today's V8 Supercar drivers, establishing a reputation as a high-performance coach. His expertise led him to collaborate with top-tier brands such as Ferrari, McLaren, Lamborghini, AMG Mercedes, Bentley and many more exotics, contributing to the success of many 'Gentleman Racers' and drivers going on to win championships.

Johnny's engineering and sales skills saw him involved in many competitive racing projects in the Southern and

Northern Hemisphere, from GT & touring cars to single seater Formula in UK & Europe. His technical coaching knowledge became highly sought after in elite racing circles and motorsport schools. As did his ability to bring real estate deals together in Sydney.

Despite this international success, Johnny's roots in Mercury Bay remain strong. He fondly recalls summers spent watching powerboat races, schoolyard bullrush games, and the excitement of game fishing boats unloading their sharks at the wharf. His family's business even played a role in shaping the town, pouring footpaths that replaced the grassy tracks he ran barefoot as a kid. To this day, he maintains a deep connection with the place that first ignited his love for speed, often returning to reconnect with friends, family, and the waters that once fuelled his childhood imagination.

While still involved in motorsport and real estate, Johnny now shares his expertise through consulting and mentoring young engineers and racers. His influence continues to shape the next generation of high-performance specialists, proving that even from the quiet shores of Mercury Bay, one can make waves on the world stage.

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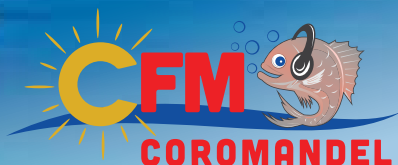
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# Ross' Ramblings Tales of India

## Curry, Karma, & Kindness



In 1975, after a three-week stay at a Buddhist monastery in Sri Lanka, I made my way by ferry across the Palk Strait to Tamil Nadu in southern India and from there caught a train to Pondicherry, a city south of the state's capital Chennai, which at the time was called Madras. The name was changed in 1996, apparently to rid the state of the last vestiges of British colonialism.

Near Pondicherry, I wanted to visit Auroville, a yoga centre named after the spiritual teacher Sri Aurobindo and established in 1968 by one of his collaborators Mirra Alfassa, also known as 'The Mother'. Their vision was to create a universal township that would contribute to the advancement of "humanity to its splendid future by bringing together people of goodwill and aspiration for a better world".

Alfassa stated at the township's opening, "Auroville wants to be a universal town where men and women of all countries will be able to live in peace and progressive harmony, above all creeds, all politics and all nationalities. The purpose of Auroville is to realise Human Unity." Imagine if all the great cities of the world adopted a similar vision. There would be no room for many of the nutters in world leadership roles today.

Auroville is situated on 20 square kilometres of desert, in the centre of which is a magnificent dome called the Matrimandir. It is the spiritual centre of the township, took 37 years to build and is covered in gold discs which reflect sunlight, giving it an ethereal glow. Silence is maintained inside to create a sense of tranquillity, something that the so-called 'leaders of the free world' may struggle with.

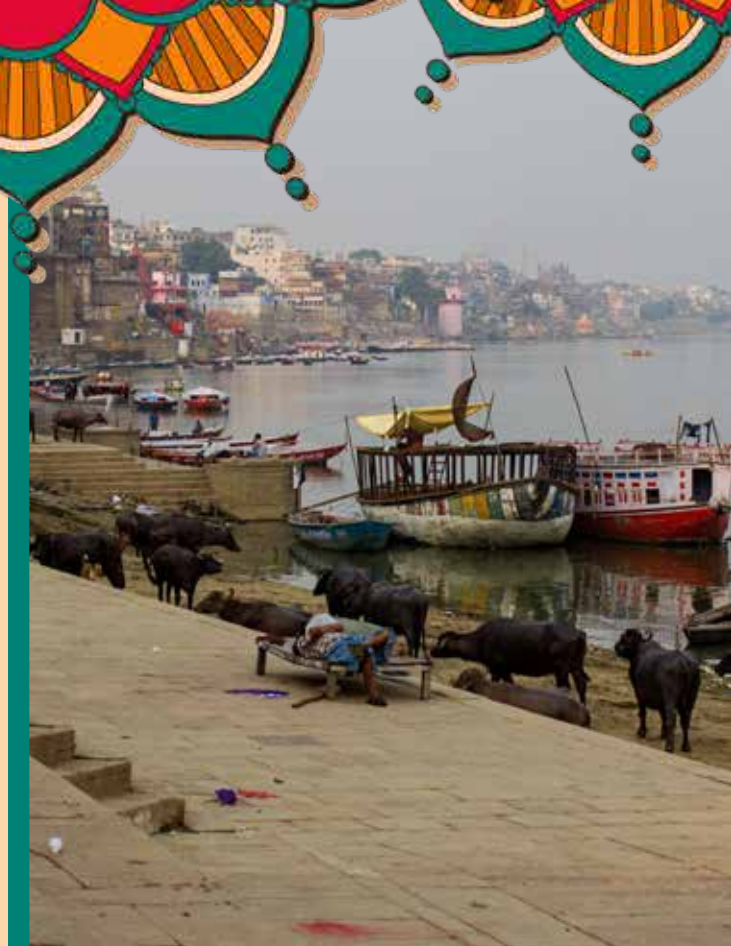
While spending some time in Auroville, I stayed in a coastal village five kilometres away and helped out teaching English at the centre's Montessori School. I had met a young Indian guy who one night invited me to dine at his parents' place in their small earthen thatched home. We sat on the floor and ate with our hands off banana leaf plates, but as I was about to put the first fingers full of food into my mouth a slap from my Indian host's hand sent my food flying. I was using my left hand which is normally used to wash the bottom after dropping a log. Needless to say, toilet paper wasn't widely used at that place and time. I was unfortunately guilty of a grievous action which deserved the reprimand I received.

A few days later, the school staff decided to have a party for the village children, with a feast, some games and some small presents for the kids. The people of the village were really poor, and I had already witnessed women physically fighting over their share of the tiny fish catch that their fishermen husbands brought to the beach on a bad fishing day. But I was unprepared for the chaos that erupted during the party. What we thought of as 'healthy food' in the way of fresh salads and fruit and curry rice was prepared by the school staff and Indian helpers and was offered to the villagers, but little of it was eaten, due to it not being similar to their normal diet and definitely not spicy enough. Raw vegetables and salads were rarely eaten. And then, when small presents were handed

out to the gathered children, a free-for-all ensued with adults grabbing the gifts from the kids and guarding them jealously from other adult would-be thieves. What had been a well-intentioned celebration for the local village had turned into a noisy riot of arguing, shouting adults.

When my stay at Auroville came to an end, I boarded a 3rd class carriage of a steam train for the 1800 km journey north to Varanasi, the holy city on the banks of the river Ganges where many Hindus go to die in the hope of ending the cycle of rebirth and achieving nirvana. Varanasi is a noisy bustling city ironically seething with life in a place where people go to die. The journey itself was extremely hard as we humans had to share the carriage with goats, chickens and, worst of all, bed bugs which came out at night and feasted on human blood leaving us scratching ourselves for days after. After 52 hours on that agonisingly slow train, we finally reached our destination, where long ghats or riverside steps allow easy access to the sacred river where Indians bathe and perform cleansing rituals. Two of the ghats are used as cremation sites. When a person dies, they are immediately washed by family members and covered with muslin cloth and decorated with flowers. Holy water from the Ganges is sprinkled on the body after which it is placed on a stack of firewood and cremated. The head and feet were visible when I witnessed several bodies burning simultaneously. The heat caused muscles to contract and limbs to move and in one case a skull to pop which was a little disconcerting. When the fires died down, the ashes were scattered into the river while dogs scoured the cremation area for remnants of bone. I also saw bodies floating in the Ganges and was told by a local that lepers, children and pregnant women are among groups that cannot be cremated and are consigned directly into the river. Death at Varanasi was stark and confronting, very different from the sanitised crematorium experience so common in the west.

One night when returning to our accommodation in a busy street, a fellow traveller and I came across an old man lying on some cardboard on the pavement. People were just walking straight past him without offering help, ignoring his pleading eyes, so my friend and I bought some yoghurt and attempted to give him some nourishment, whereupon an obviously wealthy woman looked down at us and explained that the man was experiencing the karma of having committed bad acts in a previous life. I looked up at the righteous sounding lady and wondered whether she would end up in a similar position in this life or a future one for not having displayed compassion. The next morning, we were told that the old man had died during the night and had been taken away. I don't know who cleansed his body or who paid for the firewood used at his cremation. Perhaps he was just quietly lowered directly into the Ganges.



Words by  
**Ross Liggins**

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# More than meets the eye

Have you ever wondered about a plant, animal or insect you've seen in nature? Your observations can make a valuable contribution to scientific research and conservation.

Whether you're relaxing in your backyard, strolling along the beach, hiking through the bush, or out on the water, DOC Community Ranger Cheyenne Walmsley encourages people to take notice of nature.

"One of the easiest ways to learn more about your local environment is by exploring it and taking notice of what catches your eye. If you're doing this, you're already on your way to becoming a citizen scientist," says Cheyenne.

Citizen science is where the public help with scientific research by collecting data, making observations, and sharing findings.

"People across Hauraki-Coromandel are aiding scientific research by identifying bird calls, sharing species photos, testing water quality, and reporting predator kills like possums or rats," says Cheyenne.

Environmental agencies including the Department of Conservation (DOC), NIWA, Waikato Regional Council, Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research and various district councils, leverage citizen science observations to gather information on species and habitats, track environmental changes, and engage the community in conservation efforts.

Although observations of the natural world have been made for centuries, smartphones have revolutionised citizen science, allowing it to scale globally. In just a few taps, phone cameras and apps can collect real-time data, including images, precise locations, time, and environmental conditions to support scientific research. The nature recording platform, iNaturalist NZ–Mātaiki Taiao, is one such app.

"If you notice an interesting plant, fungi or animal, you can take a picture, upload it to iNaturalist, and people will identify your observations quickly. You get to learn what the species is and contribute to mapping the biodiversity in your area," says Cheyenne.

"For young explorers and anyone who wants quick IDs, the Seek by iNaturalist app is great. It uses image recognition to identify the plants and animals you spot instantly."

Scientists and agencies including DOC use observations from iNaturalist to understand the distribution of species across New Zealand.

In Hauraki-Coromandel, DOC rangers keep an eye out for observations of rare native species like Archey's frogs, and the indigenous flora *Dactylanthus taylorii* (pua o te reinga). They also look for invasive species like plague skinks and European paper wasps.

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DOC Community Ranger Cheyenne shows how simple it is to identify plants with the Aotearoa Species Classifier app.

Photos taken at CoastSnap stations track coastal changes; Marie (DOC) and Ella (Hahei Explorer) collect litter on the Mautohe Cathedral Cove track.

In addition to iNaturalist, DOC Coromandel's Marine team contributes to the Litter Intelligence citizen science project. Rangers conduct regular beach surveys of Honeymoon Bay and analyse the litter collected to assess its impact in the Te Whanganui-o-Hei Marine Reserve. Anyone in Aotearoa can join Litter Intelligence to conduct surveys of their local beaches and contribute to a national database of litter.

Cheyenne says there are many citizen science projects anyone can join, today.

"There are countless initiatives to suit everyone – and if you've got a smartphone, you can do this nearly instantly. Your contributions can help inform scientific research and preserve native species."

## You can take part in citizen science

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- **CoastSnap:** Take photos of beaches to track coastal changes over time. Stations set up across the Coromandel Peninsula.
- **TrapNZ:** Record and upload data on predator trapping, baiting, and monitoring to help reduce pest populations in New Zealand.
- **Litter Intelligence:** Collect and analyse coastal litter to better understand and reduce NZ's litter problem.
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Residential re-roofing projects in Kauaeranga Valley (left) and Paku, Tairua (centre). Extensive corrosion and poor condition of fixings (right).

## WHY GET A ROOF INSPECTION PRE-WINTER?

We are counting the days before winter. While some people are already looking forward to its colder temperature to snuggle under a thick fleece blanket, or to clutch a warm cup of coffee by a fireplace, other Kiwis might be anxious about some basic needs during this season. One that every Kiwi shouldn't miss is having a sturdy roof for winter and beyond.

If you've lived in New Zealand all your life, you should know by now that this season could bring some of the harshest weather conditions damaging to roofs:

**Strong winds** – Wind gusts can cause lifting of roofing materials, allowing water ingress.

**Heavy rainfall** – This puts roof drainage under pressure. Poorly designed and maintained spouting and gutter can overflow into your roof space.

**Condensation and Moisture** – The warm and moist air coming from inside your home can condense into cooler surfaces of the roof cavity, which could result in mould build-up and wood rot.

### IS YOUR ROOF READY FOR WINTER?

Here are some basic things you need to check to determine if your roof is still good, or if it needs replacing:

**Age of the roof** – Most roofs have a lifespan of 20-25 years in coastal and extreme environments. If your roof approaches this age, it may be time for a replacement.

**Missing fixings** – The fixings are what hold your roof on. If some of your fixings are missing or compromised, it can lead to roofing materials lifting and allowing water in. In the worst case, you could lose part or all of your roof!

**Corrosion** – Excessive corrosion can allow water to seep through; it also weakens the roofing materials, which can lead to failure of your roof envelope.

**Leaks or water damage** – If you notice any water stains on your ceiling or walls, it could mean that your roof has developed leaks and needs to be replaced.

**Sagging roof** – A sagging roof is a sign of structural damage and requires immediate attention.

### RE-ROOF OR REPAIR?

Deciding between repairing or re-roofing depends on the extent of the damage and the overall condition of your roof. The best way to know is through a proper roof inspection.

While some Kiwis love doing DIY inspection and repairs, it is always best to consult the experts such as **STM Roofing and Scaffolding**. They have been in the trade since 1999, servicing hundreds of homes, businesses, and larger building contracts around Thames-Coromandel, Hauraki, Matamata-Piako, Western Bay of Plenty, and Hamilton.

As experienced roofers, STM Roofing and Scaffolding first evaluates the age of the roof, the materials used, and the severity of the issues. If the damage is localised – such as a few damaged sheets or a minor leak – repairs may be sufficient to restore functionality.

However, if your roof is older, has multiple rusted or damaged sheets, or has recurring problems like leaks or sagging, re-roofing is often the more cost-effective and long-term solution.

STM Roofing and Scaffolding guides homeowners through this decision with a detailed inspection and honest recommendations and makes sure that your investment is well-spent.

### ROOFING AND SCAFFOLDING IN ONE

Save yourself from the hassle of dealing with multiple suppliers for roofing and scaffolding because Team STM has it all. They are also experts in residential, commercial, and industrial scaffolding which gives you peace of mind that they prioritise safety.

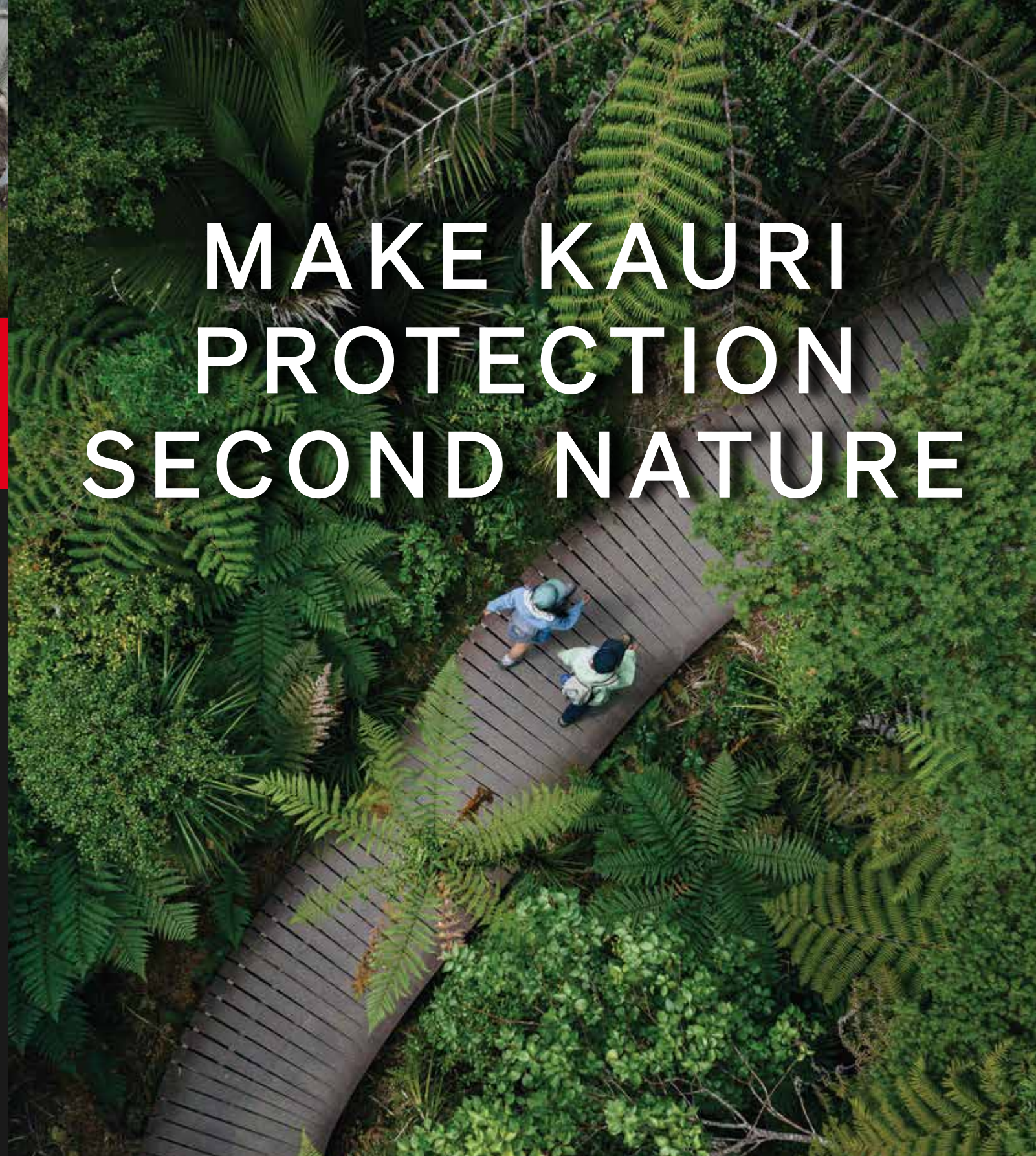


GET A FREE ROOF INSPECTION AND TRANSPARENT QUOTE FROM STM ROOFING AND SCAFFOLDING

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# EXPLORE NEW WORLDS

## THE COGNITIVE AND CULTURAL BENEFITS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

Using language is this cool inbuilt ability, when you think about it.

It takes the basic sounds we make with our mouths, or the signs we write or make with our hands, and forms entire codes that we then use to communicate. It even impacts the way we view, categorise, describe, and understand the world around us, inseparable and working side by side with culture.

The physical form of a language, that is its words, pronunciation, sounds and grammatical patterns, are also historical artefacts and evidence of major historical events that shaped the language over thousands of years. Sorry, I'm a bit of a language nerd, so I'll get back on track.

Because language is such an integral part of how we work, stimulating the language learning parts of the brain in adulthood comes with some awesome extras like resistance to dementia or just an improved memory. More below:

### 1 Learning languages improves memory

A study featured in the journal *Frontiers of Psychology* (2014 edition) found that people who learned a second language had better attention spans and memory retention. This is particularly useful for people with a history of depression or other mental health disorders that negatively affect memory.

The researchers also found that compared to monolingual speakers, bilingual students had better concentration and were less distracted by outside noises and movement.

As for older individuals, a study published in the 2018 edition of *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* found links between increased cognitive function and second language learning in elderly learners. Researchers noted that while monitoring brain behaviour, they saw improvements in structural and functional connectivity within the brain resulting in faster memory recall.

### 2 Your brain develops extra resistance to dementia and Alzheimer's

As mentioned in the first point, language learning improves memory. That same research (published in *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*) found that language learning in adulthood "may prevent cognitive decline in later life by approximately 4.5 years".

Language learning environments also give older individuals a stimulating social outgoing experience. Engaging in fun regular activity is just as important for older learners as it boosts neurological health and can hold dementia and Alzheimer's back.

### 3 Language learning creates new opportunities

Once you can speak and understand at a basic level, your new language skills can open many new doors in more than one sense.

For starters, you can travel much more easily through countries where they speak your second language without needing a translator. Speaking the local language then increases your ability to conduct business on an international

level. Having a second language also gives you an edge in teaching, translating, interpreting and more.

### 4 Decision-making skills

Making simple decisions is a straightforward process, right? Well, not quite.

Researchers from the University of Chicago found that people who think through decisions in their non-native language tend to make better and more analytical decisions.

The experiments looked at over 600 people across five different languages. Researchers found that when using non-native languages, participants were more likely to take favourable risks. Since people tend to avoid risky situations out of fear they will lose, using a non-native language removes emotional bias.

Because you must consciously think through a second language, the same conscious thought patterns carry over to decisions made in your second language, suppressing emotional attachments, fears and more.

This study was published in the April 2012 edition of *Psychological Science*.

### 5 It gives you insights into other cultures, as well as your own

When you expose yourself to new ideas, new ways of expressing yourself, and new ways of looking at the world, you can then compare those perspectives to your own culture.

You might learn about a particular culture's methods and strategies for self-expression that differ to what you hold. You probably didn't realise that your culture normalises one style of emotional expression over another, because it just seemed normal without something to compare it to.

By discovering different cultures and ways of being, you can look at yourself and discover ways you would like to improve, from how you behave to the values you hold. You'll also discover the things you love about yourself and your culture.



Words by  
**Matt  
Bowden**





# PIONEERING MEN'S WELLBEING MOVEMENT

## IT STARTS WITH YOU!

Are you a man who continually shows up in service for others but often leaves your own wellbeing as the last priority? Signs of this might be poor sleep, feeling exhausted, getting sick, feelings of tension, overwhelm, carrying too much weight, overthinking, or relationships breaking down.

BROTHER, I am here today to gently remind you that to support your family, community, mates, or colleagues well into the future, you need to prioritise No 1 – YOU – now!

I know all too well what happens when you don't. I myself have been through the fire of poor sleep, mental distress, and relationship breakdown. I know the struggle of being self-employed for 20+ years. I've lost too many family members and friends – good men – too early.

The pain I have been through, I have turned into purpose in the work I now do with men's wellbeing.

In 2019, I committed and trained to do my bit to help change the trajectory of men's health in New Zealand. Since then, I've worked in a private capacity with hundreds of Tāne from around Aotearoa who turn up to me in Tairua, with burnout, depression, trauma, addictions like alcohol/vaping, mental unease, relationship issues – an awareness that there is a better way to live – and are looking for answers.

I'm a big believer that we find the answers in Te Taiao (nature – the environment), and so that's where I do most of my work with men: on our regular 4-day Men's Wellbeing Retreat in Tairua.

Men are drawn to and relate to our down-to-earth, non-pharmaceutical-based approach. We use a non-judgemental and safe space for men to unpack the weight off their shoulders.

After 35 of these small personal retreats, I'm bringing many of my community of good men together for a gathering on 22–24 May in Opoutere, and I extend an invitation for local Tāne who feel the call to join us. We've put the karanga out right around Aotearoa and Australia, but would love to see the local bros making the most of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

To support me in this larger hui, I have brought together a powerhouse team of facilitators from around Aotearoa and Australia to join me, including a legend, Dr Arne Rubinstein, who has spent 30 years helping communities around the globe create Rites of Passage camps for father and son.

What can you expect at this gathering? Honest and brave kōrero around the fire, nutrient-dense kai, hīkoi, swims, tools to regulate your nervous system like breathwork and meditation, tools to get self-sufficient like food forestry, tools to raise good young men, and tools to navigate adolescence as a father.

The world, more than ever, needs strong, emotionally healthy MEN. They are the protectors, providers, leaders, and lovers. Regeneration of the land, ocean, and community starts with the regeneration of our own 70 trillion cells, and the little things we do each day to stay well in mind, body, and spirit.

Words by  
**Carl Muir**



### Do you feel the call?

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[www.theprovider.co.nz/retreats](http://www.theprovider.co.nz/retreats)

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## CHILDREN IN CARE THAMES TE MANAAKI TAMARIKI

*Local Charity Brings Comfort to Children in Need*

Born from a simple callout for sock donations, Children in Care – Te Manaaki Tamariki is a grassroots initiative supporting vulnerable tamariki (children) across the Thames/Coromandel District.

Founded by Betzy (Maggie) Jury, Monika Lange, and Ngaire Gedy, and now operating under the Thames Rotary Charitable Trust with Cr Peter Revell as Patron, the charity provides free Care Packages filled with clothing, toys, toiletries and essentials to children aged 0–10 (though older kids aren't excluded). Many items are donated or gently used, while some – like socks and underwear – are purchased new when needed.

Behind it all is a dedicated team of volunteers driven by compassion and community spirit. They respond to real needs – no red tape, just kindness in action.

### How you can help:

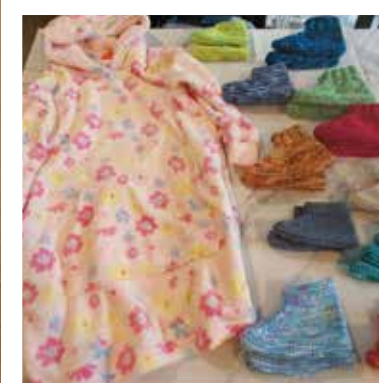
Children in Care welcomes donations of new or preloved clothes and toys, as well as financial support for items they can't source through the community. Volunteers are always needed too!

Never forget that even small acts of generosity can have a huge impact on someone's life!

### To support or connect:

[childrenincarethames@gmail.com](mailto:childrenincarethames@gmail.com)  
027 426 4772 (written messages preferred)  
Facebook: Children in Care Thames – Te Manaaki Tamariki

Words by  
**Monika Lange**



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