



# Napier Boys' High School Association COLUMNS

VOLUME THIRTY THREE ISSUE ONE

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## Editorial

There is peace on the heights of Kaweka J, 1724 metres the highest point of the Kaweka Ranges, and it would have been a peaceful place for 11 young men who were members of the Heretaunga Tramping Club when World War II broke out. Those 11 men left the peace of their ranges and their tramping expeditions and went into the turmoil, terror and brutality of war. They did not return, but their names are firmly in place at the summit of Kaweka J where they once would have taken in the widespread landscape of Hawke's Bay below.

In 1947 the members of the club built a rock cairn at the summit, and upon the cairn they placed a marble plaque bearing the names of the 11 young club members who lost their lives during World War II. Since 1948, as close as possible to the Armistice Day of World War 1, on the 11th hour of that 11th month on 11th day of November, club members have made the two-hour trek from the Makahu Saddle to the summit of 1724m and placed the wreath of remembrance on the cairn. It is the time to remember those men, and for the club of that time to lose 11 of its members was tough. Among them "their" 11 trampers who passed: B Beechey, WE Boyd, CL Bright, DW Callow, J Cowlrick, FJ Green, K McLeay, M McCormick, H W Meldrum, B Wyn Irwin, B Woolcot. Two of these servicemen who are commemorated on the cairn were Old Boys of Napier Boys' High School namely: Kenneth Andrew McLeay MM (Military Medal) (NBHS 1932-1935) died on 5 December 1941 age 23 in Western Desert, North Africa, he was wounded when a truck hit a mine, but was drowned when the ship carrying him was torpedoed off Tobruk and Flight Lieutenant (Pilot) RNZAF No3 Squadron, Maxwell William McCormick (NBHS 1928-1930) who's death was by accident while training others 5 June 1943 age 28 in Suva, Fiji.

Sergeant McLeay was awarded a Military Medal for his part in the action on Crete. In May 1941, 5 Brigade was preparing for the expected landing of German forces on the island. In the area near Maleme planes bombed the airfield and gliders dropped paratroopers who landed close to the New Zealand force. Smoke, dust and gunfire coming from every direction were part of the ensuing battle. Communication between the FOOs (Forward Observation Officers) and the troops was difficult in the circumstances and telephone lines were damaged by the bombing and deliberately cut by the



*Kaweka J Memorial Cairn*

paratroopers. Sergeant McLeay who was NCO in charge of the signals of B Troop gun position took a party forward to repair the breaks. He continued to repair cable in the face of enemy advances and only returned to the gun position when it was obviously impossible to restore the line. On the afternoon of 5 December 1941 the SS Chakdina left Tobruk harbour carrying 380 wounded (including Kenneth McLeay,) of whom 97 were New Zealanders. The Chakdina was not a hospital ship, but her use had been arranged by the British ADMS in Tobruk.

In addition to the wounded she had on board some officers and men who were going to Baggush to resume duties with HQ 2 NZ Division. Just after nine o'clock an enemy plane released a torpedo, which exploded in one of the after holds of the Chakdina. She sank within three and a half minutes. There was very little chance of escape, except for those who were unwounded or only lightly wounded, and who were in a favourable position at the time. Only 18 of the New Zealand wounded were picked up by the destroyer HMS Farndale, which also rescued all except one of the Divisional Headquarters medical staff. The survivors reached Alexandria on 7 December, and the casualties were admitted to the detachment of 3 NZ General Hospital there. The sinking of the Chakdina was the only major misfortune in the evacuation of New Zealand wounded during the war."

Flight Lieutenant (Pilot) Maxwell William McCormick, after completion of an operational tour with 3 Squadron,

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## Committee

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McCormick embarked for Suva, Fiji, July 30th 1942 and later went to the forward area with No.3 Squadron. On completing his operational tour he was returned to Suva to assist with operational training prior to returning to New Zealand.

Flight Lieutenant McCormick was a passenger on the Catalina en route from Espiritu Santo to New Zealand and died from accidental death on active service on Catalina Flying Boat PBY-5 NZ4006 of the Royal New Zealand Air Force when it was reported missing on a sea flight which it made on Saturday 5 June 1943. It had a crew of seven and also carried eight passengers, six of whom were members of the R.N.Z.A.F. One of the others was a representative of the National Patriotic Fund Board, and the eighth was an officer of the Agriculture Department. This was a transit (Ferry Flight) from Lauthala Bay Fiji. Extensive searches were made in an attempt to discover the missing aircraft without success. Some wreckage was found by a boat three days later on Kadavu Islands. The amount of wreckage recovered proved insufficient to establish the cause of the loss.

William Edward Boyd, also named on the memorial cairn was on the NBHS Roll of Honour until found to have attended Napier Technical College and not Napier Boys' High School.

*Chris Geddis, Editor*



## From the Headmaster

As this term draws to a close and I reflect on the journey we've embarked upon together, it is with a profound sense of pride that I acknowledge the milestones and achievements of our school. My tenure as Headmaster has been marked by not only personal growth but also by the remarkable successes of our institution. The shared experiences, challenges we've navigated, and the triumphs we've celebrated have significantly contributed to the legacy of our school.

Our recent successes serve as a testament to the strength and resilience of our school community. Despite prevailing national concerns over student attendance, our school has seen remarkable high school engagement and attendance rates, a clear indication of our students' dedication and our staff's efforts to create a welcoming and engaging learning environment.

Even in the face of adversity, such as COVID and the disruption caused by the cyclone in 2023, our students have shown incredible resilience, achieving strong academic results across all levels. This achievement is a testament to the hard work and perseverance of both our students and staff. The introduction of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) throughout the school highlights our commitment to integrating technology in education, while also recognising that these devices are tools that support, rather than replace, traditional learning methods.

Our school has experienced unprecedented growth, both in the day school and the hostel, reflecting the confidence and trust that families place in our institution. This growth is not only a measure of our success but also a challenge to continue providing an exceptional educational experience. We have also made a concerted effort to ensure greater inclusivity in our school community, particularly through the integration of matauranga Māori. This shift towards a more inclusive curriculum and school culture underscores our commitment to understanding and engaging with the rich cultural heritage of our students and wider community.

Furthermore, our focus on values-based education is designed to ensure that our students leave Napier Boys' High School as not just academically accomplished individuals, but also as better people. This holistic approach to education is crucial in preparing our students for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Construction is in progress, featuring a four-phase waterproofing initiative aimed at enhancing and repairing buildings to create cosy and welcoming educational environments. In the coming period, the campus will be revitalised with a fresh appearance and vibe.

The decision to step away from this role was not easy, especially given the timing and the deep connections I've formed here. Yet, as I prepare to embrace new beginnings, my departure is filled with gratitude for the experiences we've shared and excitement for the future of this institution.

To our exceptional staff, your relentless dedication, fervour, and commitment have not only inspired me but have also positioned our school as a paragon of excellence. Your contributions have nurtured a learning environment where our students are propelled to achieve their utmost. Your unwavering support forms the foundation of our collective accomplishments, and for that, I am grateful. Our journey, speckled with hurdles, was fortified by your resilience, binding us closer and stronger. My profound appreciation for your patience, your efforts, and your solid support. I hope my time here has guided us toward building a community where connection, relationships and inclusivity are paramount.

I extend my deepest thanks to our wider school community for your indispensable support. The diversity and vibrancy you infuse into our school from across the motu have been pivotal to our triumphs. To our hostel community and all whānau who volunteer, coach, mentor, and bolster our boys, your dedication has unlocked myriad possibilities for our students. Your involvement in our narrative is immensely valued. I am deeply thankful to the Board of Trustees for their outstanding support and trust in what we do. Their time, commitment, and attention

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are greatly valued. I am especially grateful for their faith in us and their comprehension that the management and staff always prioritise the boys in every decision we make.

To our incredible students, the soul of Napier Boys' High School, I impart to you thoughts of integrity and bravery. Life's journey is paved with decisions and obstacles—navigate them with honesty and valour. Remember, your deeds carve your identity. Aim to embody the virtues we've cherished together. "Courage doesn't always roar... Sometimes courage is the gentle voice at night whispering, 'I will try again tomorrow.'" Embrace this ethos, understanding that your resilience and determination to overcome setbacks chart the course of your triumphs.

As I say goodbye, it's with a spirit filled with thankfulness and aspirations for your continued success. May your paths be enlightening, your friendships lasting, and your ambitions inspiring.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa. May your journey ahead be blessed, and let's look forward to paths that cross again. Farewell, and May you all flourish.  
Kia kaha, kia māia, kia manawanui. Be strong, be brave, be steadfast.

With heartfelt gratitude

**Jarred Williams, Headmaster 26 July 2021 to 12 April 2024**

**(Farewell Speech as Jarred Williams left to become Headmaster at Hamilton Boys' High School).**



## Simon Coe the new Headmaster for Napier Boys' High School

A former Napier Boys' High School science teacher is returning to the school as the new headmaster.

Simon Coe, currently rector at 2023 national secondary schools rugby 1st XV champion campus Southland Boys' High School, will replace Jarred Williams, who departed at the end of Term 1 to become principal of Hamilton BHS after just three years in Hawke's Bay.

From England, Coe started his New Zealand teaching experience at Napier BHS in 2006, and spent nine years at the school, before becoming a deputy principal at Whanganui Collegiate, and has been in Southland since mid-2017.

Announcing the appointment of the 15th headmaster in the 152 years of Hawke's Bay's biggest school, board chair James Mear said Coe had had a "successful tenure" at Southland BHS, most notably raising academic outcomes for boys across all levels of NCEA and supporting the school's rugby programme.

Coe said he is "very excited" to be able to return to Napier. "I understand the special place that boys' schools have in NZ and have always thought it a privilege to work in one," he said. "To be able to be part of guiding a young man through his high school journey and onwards to become a successful member of the community and a future leader is very fulfilling."

*HB Today*



Simon Coe

## From the Archives

It is nice to know that someone reads my Archives Column. Thank you Fraser McRae (1965-67) who responded by sending us a copy of the photograph of his grand-father Captain James McRae (1902-03, Master 1910-12) with King George V on the Western Front. Information he holds suggests to me that I may have had the wrong time/location after all – he suggests it may have been earlier, July 1917 at the ruined town of Péronne on the Somme. The photo will be framed and displayed when the memorial is remodelled in the library. No such luck with my request for information on the Scinde House rooster – SOBs are obviously not amongst my readers.

Alec Olsen (1962-65) has obviously been downsizing or decluttering because he has passed onto us a School songbook, 1963 athletics booklet and programme (with records), his Scinde House Annual Leaver's Dinner menu (all in French, "Roti de porc et sauce à la pommes". How sophisticated!) And his 1965 Scinde Prefects' photograph. Later he added his late brother's (Frank Olsen 1960-62) 1960 third form class photograph and Scinde House photo, both framed. It is worth mentioning here that we have very few class photos. Old Boys who remember the old B Block will recall the entire wall of the downstairs corridor lined with year- by- year class and sports team photos. Many assume they were lost in the 1991 fire, but to my recollection they had been removed when the

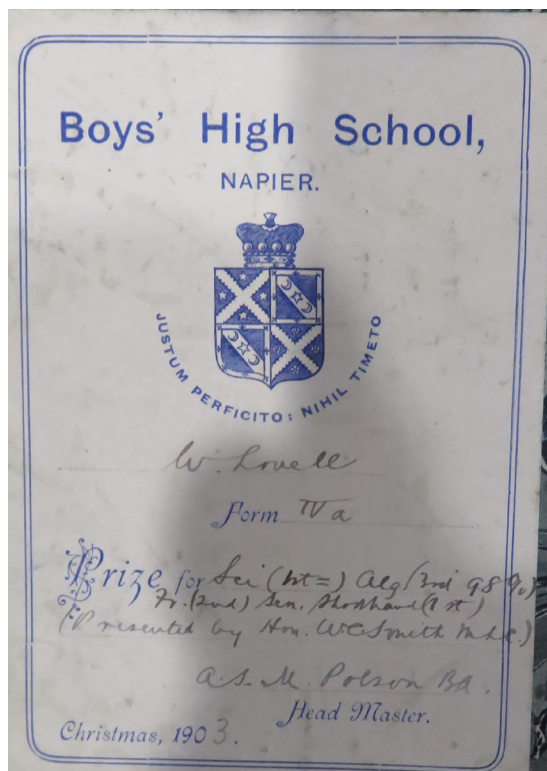
block was rewired and were "in storage" – perhaps under the stage where in my 52 years I have never ventured.

Another photograph received at the office is that of the 1945 Cricket 1st XI – unfortunately the name of the donor was not recorded. Which brings us to my pride and joy – the collection of repatriated prize-books, now numbering 150, with these the latest acquisitions. Dorothy Finlayson has given back to the school her late husband's (Ian 1953-55) five crested prize-books. Unfortunately all prize labels have been removed, but looking back through Scindians I found most were awarded for commercial subjects. The pièce de résistance (I've caught the French bug) was found for us by our friend and colleague Judith Craigie – in the archives collection of the Feilding District Community Archives at the Coach House Museum – and they let us have it. It is 'Seas and Lands' by Sir Edwin Arnold and was awarded to W Lovell, IVa (Wesley Lovell 1902-04) in 1903, a boarder although his address was Lucy Road, Napier. Young Wesley was quite a scholar – his prize was for Science (1st) Algebra (3rd with 98%) French (2nd) and Senior Shorthand (1st). The prize was presented by the Hon. W.C. Smith, Member of the Legislative Council (MLC), Parliament's Upper House) and signed by Headmaster Mr Polson. Of special significance of this beautifully bound volume in brown leather with gold embossing is that it was the first year the school crest was embossed on the cover. We have six other prize-books (from the 1880s and 90s) but none as handsome as this 'first edition'.

*Phillip Rankin - Archivist*



Cover of 1903 Prize Book



W Lovell Prize Label

### Memorabilia

The School has a growing collection of Memorabilia in our Archives which includes war medals and artefacts, photographs and printed material, prize books, uniforms and many other items pertaining to the School and its Old Boys. We are also interested in obtaining Memorabilia from the "Napier Technical College" to ensure that this school is not forgotten. If you have anything you think we may be interested in, please contact us.

*Phillip Rankin - Archivist*

# 2024 New Year Honour: Clive David McLeod (David) Hill, CNZM (NBHS Old Boy 1955-1959)

In the world of New Year Honours, New Plymouth author David Hill has just been promoted. He has been made a companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (CNZM). In 2004, he was made a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM). The citation for the honour described Hill as “a part of the backbone of New Zealand’s children’s literature”.

Born 24 June 1942, Hill, 81, was startled to receive the email advising him of the award, he said. “My first reaction was somebody was playing a trick on me. I was flattered. “And I’m always thrilled when kids reading and kids’ books get acknowledged. It’s really nice to see that. “I feel there are few things more important for kids than words. Words empower you.”

It was a nice award to get, he said, but the nicest awards were the comments he has had from children, such as a letter sent by a girl, aged about 12, after she read one of his books. “She said, ‘After I read your book, I felt all kind and good.’ And I went around for days going ‘Aah’ to myself. That’s a thrill when you get that sort of thing.”

His interest in writing began at Napier Boys’ High School (1955-1959). During his last year there, he had stories and poems published in the school magazine “The Scindian”. “They were dreadful, but I was paid ... I thought, I can make a career out of this.”

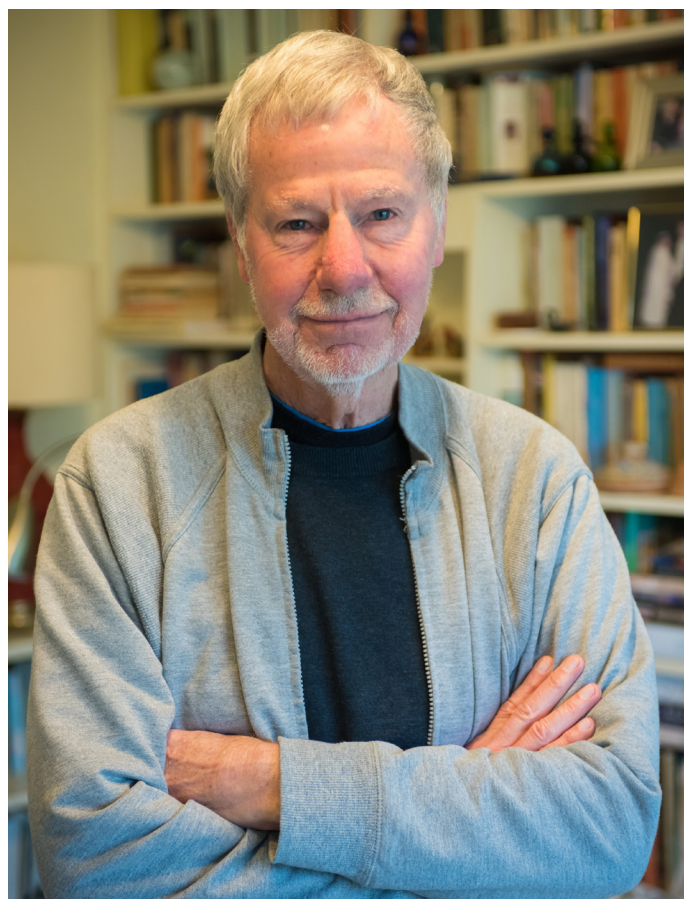
A graduate of Victoria University (MA Hons, 1964). First he worked as a school teacher, teaching English and rugby. He spent fourteen years teaching before writing full-time. Hill said, he came to New Plymouth in 1976. He took the plunge into full-time writing in 1983 but didn’t write his first book until eight or nine years later. “I was lucky because I went full time at a time when there were lots of outlets. Radio New Zealand was buying lots of short stories and scripts. A lot of magazines were taking fiction. I even got a short story once in the New Zealand Railways Magazine.”

And he was “immensely supported” by his wife of 58 years, Beth, he said. After all these years, Hill still writes large swathes of his books in long hand. “I got given a total of 11 ballpoints this Christmas by grandsons and Beth. And by the end of next week I will have lost four of the 11.” He has written 41 novels and numerous small books of about 4000 to 5000 words each. “About 20 years ago, I could do about three kids’ novels in two years. Now I’m lucky if I do one in two years.” Over the past 40 years he has won numerous awards, but the

one that has always stayed with him was the prize for a short story in a competition run by Western Bay of Plenty Federated Farmers, he said. The prize was a small amount of money and a side of beef. Hill’s advice to budding writers was: “Read, read, read all the fiction you can. You unconsciously pick up the way to use words. It’s not so much picking up the words – it’s the way they are used.”

And as he thought ahead to the New Year Honours ceremony, his main concern was what he would wear. “I think I’ll have to buy a tie.”

*Taranaki Daily News/Chris Geddis*



*David Hill CNZM*

**The school website is**  
[www.nbhs.school.nz](http://www.nbhs.school.nz)

## **Ties & Cufflinks**

Association / Old Boys  
Ties - \$27 & School Crest Cufflinks - \$25  
Are available from the School

## King's Birthday Honours 2024: Rex Kerr, Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) for services to the community and rugby.

Rex Kerr (NBHS F6 1954-1955) lives in a cosy villa in a Paraparaumu retirement village with his wife Elizabeth but Ōtaki is never far from their thoughts. They lived in the township for 47 years before moving south recently. "We still look upon Ōtaki as home although we live here, and that's not denigrating this place at all, but that's where we put our soul into while we lived there."

Kerr was Ōtaki College principal for 21 years, coached many college rugby teams, and authored five books to celebrate the township. His love of rugby led him to roles with the New Zealand Secondary Schools Rugby Union, Hurricanes Youth Council, Rāhui Football and Sports Association, and Horowhenua-Kāpiti Rugby Football Union.

Now, Kerr has been made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to the community and rugby in the King's Birthday Honours. "I feel both honoured and humbled to receive the award recognising my achievements as I am aware of the many other people who worked hard for their communities but are not recognised."

Kerr said his passion for education was instilled by his mother Myra "who never had an education but sensed it was important". "She had to leave school at 12 to look after her younger siblings."

At Napier Boys' High School Rex was awarded the Ashcroft Cup for All-Round Excellence. After gaining an MA (Hons), he became a teacher at Colenso High School and Wairoa College, in Hawke's Bay from 1963, before being appointed Ōtaki College principal in 1975, at the age of 39, making him one of the youngest to be appointed into such a role. Kerr's highlights at the college were establishing a bilingual unit (later total immersion unit), appointing quality staff when teachers were in short supply, establishing the Weraroa unit for severely disabled students which integrated them into normal school life, and founding a Tuesday forum group. Kerr has always had a passion for sport, especially rugby and cricket, which was instilled by his father Ken. "He used to coach rugby and would throw me on the bar of his bike and take me off to training, and games on

Saturday, when I was quite small. "It was his love of sport, and his involvement, that carried over naturally to me.

Kerr also had an appreciation of those who gave their time to help teams too. "When I started teaching, I coached both cricket and rugby." He recalled taking the Wairoa College 1st XV to Fiji in 1975. "It required fundraising of \$14,000 which was a vast amount to achieve in Wairoa at that time.

"Most of the boys had never been beyond Gisborne and Napier." "The boys were feted throughout Fiji. The boys and their families have never forgotten this trip which was also well supported by the community. Kerr believed coaching sports was an important part of teaching. "You got to know the students and they saw you in an entirely different way. I think the good relationships I've had with students is because of that."

Kerr, who was a Rotarian for many years, was inducted into the Ōtaki College Hall of Fame last year in recognition of his service to the college and community, and, some years ago, was awarded a Kāpiti District Council Civic Award for dedicated and outstanding services to the district.

*Kapiti News/Chris Geddis*



*Rex Kerr MNZM*

## Junior Golden Shears Champion learned from Master

Napier shearer Kaivah Cooper's decision to drop out of school four years ago at age 16 might have seemed not the best of life-choices, but he wasn't going anywhere, other than to the top. After four years of tertiary education in the woolshed, mentored by 2017 World champion and four-times Golden Shears Open champion John Kirkpatrick, he claimed the ultimate reward – a Golden Shears Junior shearing title on 2 March 2024.

Cooper had been in near unbeatable form and won at Taumarunui, Apiti and Pahiatua on successive days in the last weekend before the shears. Kaivah Cooper's junior wins at both Taumarunui and Apiti, taking him to eight wins this season.

A former Napier Boys' High School pupil, (2017-2019) Cooper shored his five sheep in 7m 37.755s to be first off the board and won the title by 1.663pts. 20-year-old Kaivah Cooper from Napier said "I started after school, I didn't finish I dropped out, I just got working as a presser picking up the wool, then I finally got a turn on the stand and I just loved it."



*Kaivah Cooper*

# Sport Hawke's Bay appoints Ryan Hambleton as chief executive

Sport Hawke's Bay's new chief executive Ryan Hambleton (NBHS 1998-2002) has been given the role he says he has been working toward for more than a decade.

Sport Hawke's Bay chairman Graeme Taylor said the board promoted a leader from within the organisation as a replacement for Mark Aspden, who steps down after eight years at the end of this month.

"Ryan provides a seamless transition in stepping up to the role; he is very well-respected by his colleagues with our regional partners, as well as by our lead funding partner Sport New Zealand, which had already identified him as a future leader." "We had overwhelming interest in the role, but Ryan impressed the board with the direction he wants to take the organisation: building the influence of Sport Hawke's Bay within the sport, recreation and wellbeing sectors and ultimately getting more people active."

Born and bred in Hawke's Bay, Hambleton has been with the regional sports trust since 2015, firstly as its commercial manager and more recently as the general manager, responsible for managing key relationships with Sport New Zealand, councils and funding partners as well as managing the play, active recreation and sports team.

Hambleton said the promotion was particularly special, being "home-grown", and it's a role he aspired to fill when his career in sports administration started with Sport Wellington in 2013. He has recently had experience as a chief executive, serving as interim CE for the Hawke's Bay Regional Sports Park in 2023. "This is a role I have been working towards for over a decade, as I've always wanted to make a positive impact in a leadership role in Hawke's Bay and am honoured to be leading a key regional organisation that supports our communities to get more active, more often."

"It has also been great to work alongside Mark, who has been a great leader and empowered leadership from within the organisation. I am thrilled that the board has appointed me to the role, and it provides consistency going forward both for staff, but also with our partners in the community."

"I'm also very keen to take the organisation to a new level to ensure Sport Hawke's Bay is regarded as an influential partner with councils, health organisations and the play, active recreation and sports sector."

*HB Today/Chris Geddis*



*Ryan Hambleton*

## Ravensdown Scholar, Ryan Redpath

'Scary' floods inspire scholarship winner to improve rural climate resilience Lincoln University student, Ryan Redpath (NBHS 2018-2022), Hostel Prefect, Scinde 1stXV, has been announced as this year's recipient of Ravensdown's Hugh Williams Memorial Scholarship. Several days with no contact to his home in Gisborne convinced Ryan he wanted a career that would improve the ability of farms to deal with natural disasters. Ryan, 18, is starting his second year of study towards a Bachelor of Agriculture and Commerce at Lincoln University and will use the scholarship to help fund course fees and travel between university and the family farm in rural Gisborne. After Cyclone Gabrielle hit his parent's sheep and beef farm in February last year, Ryan wants to focus his studies on how the sector can increase its resilience to weather events. "I was a week into university when Cyclone Gabrielle hit the Gisborne Region. I couldn't contact home for a while which was a bit scary." "It had a massive impact on our rural community. A lot of people lost effective land and tracks throughout their farm." "I think it'll become more important to diversify farm income streams that give off-farm income outside the usual stock profits."

Finding different ways to diversify will ensure we can keep farming into the future." Garry Diack, Ravensdown CEO, says it was Ryan's academic excellence and dedication that won him the scholarship. "Agriculture is under increasing pressure, from global supply chain disruption to climate events. It's great to see the new thinking coming through from students like Ryan,

and we're proud to be able to support him in his studies." Ryan says winning the Hugh Williams Memorial Scholarship was a big deal. "The scholarship will take pressure off the financial side of things and make it easier to get back to Gisborne and help on the farm during the study breaks." "Growing up on the farm, I was always interested in agriculture. Dad was a big influence and invested a lot of time to teach me how to do things the right way," says Ryan. In his last year of school, Ryan sat NCEA scholarship for agriculture and horticulture, and placed second in the country.

Ryan says his courses at Lincoln are helping him work out where he wants to be in the future. "I'm definitely keeping my options open, but I'm keen to use my skills to help farmers, like in rural banking or as a field representative." Before going back to university this month, Ryan is getting more farm work under his belt. "I'm working on farm during the week but take time during weekends for hunting or crutching to earn more money. I'll still be playing club rugby this year, so looking forward to that." The scholarship offers \$5,000 per year for a student studying agriculture or horticulture at Lincoln or Massey universities for the duration of their studies. In addition, the recipient may also be offered paid holiday employment with Ravensdown if a position is available.

*HB Today/Chris Geddis*

## Young couple named HB Farmers of the Year 2024

Karen and Michael Toulmin are this year's Silver Fern Farms Hawke's Bay Farmer of the Year winners 2024. Michael (NBHS 1996-2000) and his wife Karen Toulmin have been named the Silver Fern Farms' Hawke's Bay Farmers of the Year. The Toulmins farm Makuranui, a 210-hectare sheep and beef farm located in the Waiwhare District in north-western Hawke's Bay. The Toulmins' operation has a large trading component alongside heifer grazing.

They were presented with the award at the Hawke's Bay Primary Sector Awards on April 4 at the Toitoti Hawke's Bay Arts & Events Centre. Organised by the Hawke's Bay A & P Society, the Primary Sector Awards have a long history and contribute significantly to the primary industry across the region.

According to the judge's citation, the Toulmins use of crops and feed management alongside great stock management is achieving extremely high production levels. "Michael and Karen set themselves apart from strong competition through a highly professional presentation of their farming business, which not only showed through in the information provided to the judges but was borne out through what was exhibited on farm," the citation reads. "They had a comprehensive understanding of all facets of their business across key strategic pillars, which gave the judges confidence that an overriding sustainability mindset was both talked and walked."

Their business growth, while holding down varying stages of full-time employment and raising a family, was impressive and displayed vision, risk taking, a quest for excellence and fundamentally a very strong work ethic and focus, the judges said.

NBHS Old Boy winners were:

Silver Fern Farms Hawke's Bay Farmer of the Year – Michael (1996-2000) and his wife Karen Toulmin.

Lawson Robinson Hawke's Bay Scholarship – Guy von Dadelszen (NBHS 2017-2021).

Heretaunga Hastings District Council Primary Sector Industry Leader – John Loughlin NBHS (1972-1976).

*Farmers Weekly/Chris Geddis*



*Karen and Michael Toulmin*

## Lifesaving efforts earn national honour for NBHS Old Boy Willie Tran.

A Hawke's Bay sergeant has received national honours for his life-saving efforts to rescue a man at risk of drowning in the Wairoa River on New Year's Eve two years ago. Sergeant Willie Tran (NBHS 1996-2001) was presented with a Royal Humane Society Bravery Award by Assistant Commissioner Richard Chambers at an awards ceremony in Hastings recently.

The Royal Humane Society is a charity that grants awards for Acts of Bravery in the saving of human life. The committee considers a range of factors including the degree of risk to the nominee's life; the duration of the event; persistence; and the impact of physical surroundings such as darkness and the weather conditions.

Receiving the award reflects the recipient's dedication and willingness to save a life. Willie and a colleague were called to the Wairoa River campsite after reports of a man acting suspiciously. On their arrival, the man jumped a fence and into the river and attempted to swim to the other side. However the strong current kept him in the middle and was carrying him downstream. He was trying to tread water but became fatigued and was at real risk of drowning.

Willie entered the river and swam towards the man, who avoided contact. The man continued evasive actions and abuse for 40 minutes. Willie was eventually able to herd him towards the riverbank, but the man lashed out. Willie had to subdue him, then used a rescue tow technique to reach the riverbank. The man was taken to Wairoa Hospital for treatment and later taken into custody.



*Willie Tran with National Honours Award*

## Napier man's rise from life on a farm to putting together rockets in the US

Napier's Tim Charlton (NBHS 1999-2001) would have laughed six years ago if you'd told him his future involved working with rockets in the US. However, a career change and the rise of Rocket Lab has made that a reality.

Charlton heads for the US on Wednesday to work at Rocket Lab's two launch pads in Virginia. He will be part of the company's bold plan to launch a new 40m-tall rocket, called Neutron, into orbit, which could happen by the end of the year. He will be helping get the company's new launch pad (Launch Complex 3) up to scratch as part of that project. Charlton's now wealth of experience comes from working at the company's launch pad in Mahia, in northern Hawke's Bay, for five years mostly as a technical operations manager.

He's been involved in nearly all of the 43 rocket launches Rocket Lab has completed since its first mission in 2018. Remarkably, Charlton said his career with the company started on something of a whim.

Having grown up on a farm in Dannevirke, and later working in horticulture for 15 years, including as an engineer for Bostock NZ, he noticed an ad for a job with Rocket Lab. "I've always been interested in that field and a bit of a space enthusiast, and just happened to come across the job listing one night," he said. "I thought 'that sounds pretty interesting, I'll give it a go' and that was about it." His work has included receiving Electron rockets (the company's 18m-tall rocket) in three parts at the Mahia launch pad and putting it together, as well as running checks and modifications at the launch pad before and after launches.

He said he had loved the work and was excited to have a new opportunity to work in the US, on the company's ambitious plan for its Neutron rocket. "I'm pretty damn excited to get over there and get stuck into things." He said it was incredible the opportunities which were now available to people in New

Zealand to have a career in the space industry, following the rise of Rocket Lab, which was founded by Kiwi Peter Beck.

"If you had asked me kind of six or seven years ago whether I'd be working on a NASA base in the US in the space industry, I would have gone 'no-one from New Zealand does that'."

Rocket Lab's launch pad in Virginia includes two launch pads (including one under construction) which are located on the Nasa Wallops site, on Wallops Island.

The company has its headquarters in California, as well as its sizeable operation in Auckland, and now employs over 1600 people.

*HB Today/Chris Geddis*

Note: In Columns June 2022, we ran a story on another Old Boy, Peter Barlow (2001-2005) who also was an engineer at Rocket Lab. I have subsequently contacted Peter and he left Rocket Lab July 2023 and is currently touring USA with his family. Editor.



*Tim Charlton*

## Archie Knight wins Hawke's Bay NZ Certified Builders Apprentice Challenge

A young building apprentice who has come out on top among his regional peers will soon face off against the best of the rest of the nation. Archie Knight (NBHS 2017-2020) claimed the title of Hawke's Bay's champion at the regional heats of the annual New Zealand Certified Builders Apprentice Challenge (NZCB) at an event in Napier on Saturday 6 April 2024.

The 20-year-old, currently undertaking his apprenticeship at Grant Linnell Building, and his fellow competitors were given eight hours to build a picnic table that followed specific design plans and met minimum safety standards. Criteria examined and scored by judges included technical aspects such as the quality of workmanship, measuring, cutting and assembly, as well as other essential skills while working against the clock, and included the apprentices' ability to follow a detailed plan and use safe working techniques.

Knight nailed the brief and sawed through the competition, winning a \$500 ITM gift voucher to redeem on trade tools and earned a place in the national final representing Hawke's Bay, where he will compete against 19 other regional winners from across New Zealand for the Ken Read Memorial Trophy and \$50,000 worth of prizes.

The national final will be held at the NZCB National Conference and Expo in Wellington in June.

*HB Today/Chris Geddis*



*Archie Knight*

## Engineer Sub-Lieutenant Errol Tom Tylee

You may recall that last year I told the story of Pilot Officer John James Drummond, (School Anzac Service April 2023/Columns June 2023), our first Old Boy to die in WW2. This year my subject is Engineer Sub-Lieutenant Errol Tom Tylee, our last Old Boy to die in WW1. He was at Napier Boys' High School, then on the Hill, from 1903 to 1906. He left to take up an apprenticeship with J.J. Niven & Co. In 1909 he sailed for England, working his passage in the engine room of a liner keeping the main engines and auxiliaries turning and five huge boilers, with fifteen fires supplied with 80 tons of coal a day. In an article he wrote for the 1909 Scindian he describes how he saw little on the 45 day voyage until they entered the English Channel.

There was one incident he recalled, in mid-Atlantic, to break the tedium of throbbing engines. Coming off watch he saw that they were lying close to a large sailing ship which had lost its wheel and chart house, which had been swept into the sea. For five weeks the mate had suffered a crushed leg which the liner's surgeon had to amputate. In the Bay of Biscay they found themselves amongst scores of Biscay Fishers, which without steam power they work hundreds of miles from land and ride out the greatest hurricanes.

In the English Channel, Errol was amazed at the volume of shipping "and at night the thousands of twinkling lights, standing out like stars are the lightships and glorious flash lights on the English and French coasts. Further up the Channel the millions of lights from Hastings, Dover and other ports remind one of fairyland." Having talked himself into a position with a Glasgow works he completed his Second Engineer's certificate and spent two years at sea. When war broke out in 1914 he joined the Royal Navy Reserve first serving on oil tankers from Mexico, consistently in danger from German U-boats.

He then transferred to warships, in the English Channel (no fairyland then) and the North Sea on HMS City of Oxford and HMS Avenger. The Avenger was an auxiliary cruiser which was being built for the Union Steam Ship Co. to be named 'Ao Te Roa' but was requisitioned by the Navy and converted into a ship-of-war. Errol was serving on it when it was torpedoed in the North Sea, North of Scotland – he was rescued by a destroyer.

His last ship was HMS Nairana, a mothership for seaplanes. They

were in the Baltic when the Armistice was signed in November 1918. But his war didn't end there. The Nairana sailed for the White Sea as part of the ill-fated War of Intervention against Russia's revolutionary Bolsheviks. They were involved in action at Murmansk and Archangel where they bombed the Bolsheviks out of town. However mutiny amongst the British regiments (which included another Old Boy) ended the campaign. In January 1919 he was back in Scotland, having gained his Chief Engineer's certificate, the Navy gave him leave to visit his family in Napier. It was not to be, in Edinburgh he contracted the Spanish Flu and died 26 January 1919, aged 28, buried in the Morningside Cemetery. In his obituary in the local paper and reprinted in the April 1919 Scindian, he was described as "A young man of high character and of great strength of will." In letters home he explained "that he had many stories to tell which he could not tell owing to the Censorship." They will never now be told.

In October 1919 his parents donated money for a prize in his memory, originally for "neatness and tidiness in Scinde House", now awarded for "Efficiency" with a cup that I donated. Five of you boarders sitting here will win this in your last year in Scinde House. We will remember them. (An expansion of an address given at the School's Anzac Service on 30 April 2024)

*Phillip Rankin Archivist.*



*HMS Avenger Sinking*

## Luke Dee on Gangster WW wins at Horse of the Year

Local Hastings rider Luke Dee (NBHS Year 11 2009-2012) picked up his first-ever 4Cylte Premier Stakes victory on Saturday 9 March 2024 with the only double clear aboard Fiona Hall's Gangster WW at the Land-Rover Horse of the Year competition at Tomoana Showgrounds, Hastings.

The winner of the class also receives the Tom Gadsby Memorial Trophy which was donated by Tom's family in honour of the eventer and showjumper who died while competing in the United Kingdom in 2013. "It is a real honour to have my name on that trophy," said 30-year-old Luke who is the head rider for Mana Stables in Hawke's Bay, who bagged the only double clear of the class.

"I couldn't be happier with this win. I knew there was a lot of jumping to do out there and with Emma (Gaze, who was runner-up aboard Kowhai Bug) in the mix, I had to be fast enough but quick enough in case I had a rail."

really finding our rhythm now. It feels like the switch has just flicked and he is far more relaxed and calmer."

Luke was chuffed to get the win for owner Fiona Hall. "She puts a lot into this. We are really excited for the future of Gangster. It's been a slow burn but he is coming along really well now." He's found Roger Laplanche's course "pretty tough" but has enjoyed the show a lot.

Twenty-five started the class with three clears and three four-faulters coming back for the second round over another challenging Roger Laplanche-designed course. Emma and her homebred Kowhai Bug laid the challenge mid-round. Coming in with four she knew she needed to leave everything up in a speedy time to push the clear rounders who would follow her. She's known for her speed and didn't disappoint, and when you add tight turns to the mix, she certainly put the acid on those to follow.

Matt Dickey and Fernando CSNZ looked to be going for the steady clear when a rail at number nine and another at the last

*Continued on Page 11*

**10** He's had Gangster for 18 months now. The German bred horse was bought through Irish showjumper Cian O'Connor. "We are

meant eight faults in their 62.33 second round. Last to go was Luke who knew he had to cover himself with time but leave everything up. He nudged the second-to-last right in front of the crowds at the VIP and bar ringside, but luck was on his side and he came home all clear in 57.99 for the win.

Emma was second, Matt third and Geordie Bull aboard the speedy Marius fourth.

Horses feature in the life of the Dee family, Luke's brother Michael Dee (NBHS 2010-2012) is a successful jockey on both sides of the Tasman, winning the 2022 Caulfield Cup on Durston, he currently rides in Melbourne, Australia.

*Diana Dobson HOY/Photo Kerry Marshall/Chris Geddis*



*Luke Dee on Gangster WW*

## Napier Boys' High School Old Boys and New Boys, Sailing Waka through Cook Strait

During April 2024, the crew of the local sailing Waka Te Matau a Māui sailed to Kaiteiteri near Nelson for the National Waka Hourua (sailing waka) festival.

Te Matau a Māui is a 22 metre sailing waka that is berthed at Ahuriri, Napier. The waka is owned by Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi and operated by the Ātea a Rangi Educational Trust. The waka sailed all around the Pacific in the last 13 years using traditional navigation to find Island destinations. This form of navigation has been passed down the generations for thousands of years and uses the stars, sun, moon, swells and birds to determine an Island's location.

One of the main objectives of the Ātea Trust is to pass the knowledge on, to future generations. With the recent sail to Kaiteiteri there were several young crew members experiencing their first coastal sail, most got to do this with one of their parents being an experienced crew member. A NBHS Old Boy and current student was one of the father/son pairings on the voyage.

All crew members including the new recruits had to prove themselves over a number of Wānanga weekend learning sails during the summer. The waka has 16 berths and it's important to have a good mix of experienced crew, male/female and new crew. The two Kaihautū (leaders) of the waka are NBHS Old Boys Phillip Smith and Te Kaha Hawaikirangi. Amongst others, the navigator of the waka Phillip Smith was able to complete a coastal sail with his son Tainga Smith who is a Year 10 Student (form four) at NBHS for the first time.

Phillip Smith said, "The highlight for me was to see our young crew members being able to handle the moana. We had seven rangatahi (youth) do their first sails over the two legs." "Being able to sail with my son was awesome, giving him and the other young ones these opportunities at such a young age builds their character, there are no mobile phones or TV's out there, just the ocean environment and pressure situations to learn from." "The weather turned a bit while entering Cook Strait, the wind picked up and clouds came in, so visibility was next to nothing with a rocky coastline not far away, but all the crew handled the pressure of steering and quickly reefing the sails well, they had been trained for these situations over the months leading up, apart from those first couple of hours when entering the Strait the four day trip down, went well."

Tainga was very pleased he didn't have to attend school for two weeks, the only requirement was he had to write an essay to his form teacher about the experience. "Some of the highlights for me was seeing all the dolphins alongside the waka, playing and

jumping in the moana, also the fresh fish." "I had been waiting for two days to catch a fish. On the waka we had a line and lure off the back of the waka, the person fishing keeps an eye on the line to see if something has been caught. Someone shouted out "Fish!!" I was closest to the line, so pulled it in. According to my father and some of the crew, it was tradition for any new crew member on a waka to eat its heart.... It tasted bloody and salty." For Tainga his future goals are "to sail on the Open Ocean to the Islands, and to sail on other waka."

Phillip Smith said, "Open Ocean voyaging is like the test match of sailing waka, voyaging for 3-4 weeks at a time, the pressure of navigating and finding Islands is immense and is done with limited sleep. Giving the young ones the ability to see the Pacific Islands the traditional way, will give them a life changing experience they will never forget." The crew of the waka are planning the next couple of Open Ocean voyages up to Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Tahiti and Rarotonga over the next few years. With experiences like the recent sail, and some NBHS boys leading the way, and new ones coming through, they should be in good hands.

Sailing with Tainga Smith were his father Phillip Smith (1987-91), the Celestial Navigator and designer of the Star Compass at the Colenso Reserve, Waitangi Clive HB, Te Kaha Hawaikirangi (2000-03) the Skipper and crewman Jordan Cherrington (2003-07)

*Michelle Smith*



*Tainga Smith and father Phillip Smith*

## Pieter Zwart (NBHS 2003-2005) wins NZ PGA Championship

Pieter Zwart has won both the Wallace Development NZPGA Championship and the Cello NZPGA Club Professional Championship in emphatic fashion, on 10 March 2024, capturing the biggest title of his career.

NBHS Old Boy (2003-2005) Pieter Zwart, now the Waitangi Golf Club professional, who used to be a member at Hastings Golf Club, played his final four holes in five-under-par to leap ahead of the overnight leader Mason Lee, finishing the tournament at 15-under-par and win by a stroke.

He stood on the 15th tee at two-over-par for the day and seemingly out of contention before his history-making heater. After making birdies on 15 and 16, he chipped in for an eagle on the par 5 17th and rolled in a 15-foot birdie putt on the last, meaning Lee and Kobori needed to birdie the last to force extra holes.

When their putts slid by, Zwart was in disbelief that he'd just won the biggest title of his career. "I didn't really prepare for this. I came here with no expectations. I've played here countless times so I knew where I needed to hit it, and I just stayed incredibly patient." His finish was similar to his club championship victory in 2009 when he beat club stalwart and former New Zealand Seniors champion Stuart Duff, where he finished birdie, par, eagle, and birdie.

After losing his ball on the short par 4 12th today, Zwart remained optimistic that a finish similar to his one in 2009 would get him close to winning the title. "I knew there were a few opportunities coming in, and I hit some quality shots. "I played a club champs here against Stu Duff who caddied for me. I beat him by finishing birdie, par, eagle, birdie, and I thought about that after the 12th, and I knew I was capable of a finish like that.

"I've spent countless hours here. I made sure the lights were on the practice putting green when we were here late at night. I've hit thousands of balls on the range and played many games here. I'm thrilled to win here." He not only lifted the trophy for

beating the 91 other professionals in the field, he also lifted the trophy awarded to the leading club professional, a title he won by a mammoth 10 strokes. Peter was born and raised in Zimbabwe until he was 16 years old and moved with his parents New Zealand 2003. The family lived in Maraenui (in Napier) for four years where he first played golf in New Zealand.

*HB Today/ Photo Golf NZ/Chris Geddis*



*Pieter Zwart*

## Obituaries

### CLIFFORD HENRY (CLIFF) COUCH

**27 September 1925 to 8 April 2024 (Age 98)**

Cliff Couch was born 1925, and was the youngest of 3 sons of George and Florence who emigrated from London 1911. His father George was a Printer (Rotary Press) at the former Daily Telegraph, in Napier. Cliff married Doris Rowe of Levin in 1952 and they had one son, Warrick who lives in Napier.

Cliff attended Te Awa Primary School, Napier Intermediate, then Napier Boys' High School, (1938-1941) gaining University Entrance and Higher School Certificate before heading off to Victoria University for a Bachelor of Science Degree.

On completing his formal education he joined Public Service/ Social Security Department in 1941, then gained a draughting cadetship in Lands and Survey Department in Napier in 1942. He spent many years in specialized computing work in the Dept at Head Office. Cliff was seconded to Govt Representation Commission as Secretary for the re-adjustment of electoral boundaries. Then to the former Dept. Scientific and Industrial

Research (DSIR) for a year as an astronomical observer at Kelburn seismological observatory (Wellington) during the International Geophysical Year in 1958. Cliff was just a bit too young for Military Service but he did do two years as a Home Guard, signaler, and three months in Territorial AA Battery when called up as an 18 year old.

**Community Involvement:** He went up the ranks to become a King Scout, completing his Wood badge Scout training qualification then served in the Scout movement at: Local, District Area, National levels as an adult. He received a Silver Tiki Award in 1993. He was a member of the Wellington Ostomy Association and the Kapiti Retirement Trust Residents Association. He was involved in Bible Class Leadership both at the local and District Church Committees levels.

A member of the Methodist Christian Education Board then he took time away from work, a decade to be a National Youth Director for the Methodist Church. He also served on the Wellington Methodist Synod Secretary for thirteen years

Masonic Record: Proposed in Lodge by another Scout Leader, he was initiated in Lodge Kennedy No 329 in 1948 and raised and in between was passed in Ponsonby Lodge No 54 in 1948. A foundation member of The United Lodge of Napier No 21, and as these previous lodges handed in their Charters he joined Scinde Lodge No 5. Transferred around NZ, Auckland to Wellington in 1949, but maintained his membership as a country member for Lodge Kennedy, The United Lodge of Napier and Scinde Lodge for 76 years.

Cliff visited around the greater Wellington area never joined another Lodge in the Wellington area where he had lived for many years. Cliff received his 50 year Badge from the Prov GM, and 60 year Badge at Tawera-o-Kapiti Lodge in Paraparaumu and then his 70 year badge in his own Lodge. In reflection Cliff added that his bucket list was to come back to his own Lodge for his 70 year badge and then wanted to know if there was an 80 year badge available.

Cliff Couch was a Freemason for 76 Years.

*Gary Severinsen/ Chris Geddis*



*Cliff Couch*

## JOHN HASTIE

**19 March 1938 – 4 October 2021 (Age 83)**

John Hastie was a New Zealand shooter and gunsmith. He competed at two Commonwealth Games, and won the Ballinger Belt in 1982 for the Okawa Rifle Club. John Hastie passed away suddenly at Wellington hospital on Monday 4th October 2021. John was 83 and a Life Member of NRANZ. John was lovingly referred to as "H", one of the famed H&H duo responsible for many target shooting innovations including the H&H Millennium actions and rifles used so successfully in New Zealand and indeed around the world.

John was born in Hastings and was brought up on a local sheep station where he had to shoot rabbits for food and his dad challenged him to hit them in the eye so as to not spoil the meat. His dad was a long time shooter in the Hawkes Bay, was a good shot as well and indeed was shooting on the range at the exact time of John's birth - so shooting really was in the blood! John attended Napier Boys' High School (1952-1954). In 1952 in athletics he was 2nd junior in 440 yards. In 1954 he was the Junior Shooting Champion at NBHS. John started long range target shooting for Okawa Rifle Club in 1966 and was quickly recognised as a talent, particularly by Commonwealth Games Gold medalist Morrie Gordon, his early mentor.

He went on to represent New Zealand on many occasions, most notably the Commonwealth Games, as a competitor at Edmonton 1978 and Brisbane 1982 and was also the shooting team manager at the Commonwealth Games in Auckland 1990 and Victoria Canada in 1994. On both occasions he finished 19th in the open full-bore individual events, and in 1982 he was sixth, with John Whiteman, in the open full-bore pairs. John was a member of many NZ World Long Range Championship (Palma) teams, firstly at Camp Perry USA in 1976 as a shooter and finally 31 years later at Ottawa Canada, as the gunsmith.

In between these two events he was either a shooter, coach or gunsmith in many NZ teams and Palma teams and took extreme pride in having built the rifles, along with his good mate Tony Halberg, that the entire NZ team used - to win the 1999 world championship Bronze medal at Bloemfontein South Africa. The New Zealand championship was his in 1982 when he won the coveted Ballinger Belt at Trentham.

Always the innovator and craftsman, he was a pilot, an engineer of extraordinary skills, a mentor to many, always helpful, overly

generous, tireless - if he was doing something for others, passionate for target shooting, and a good friend to so many. Many target shooters the world over have benefited from his selflessness and dedication to his chosen sport where he had a passion for helping others improve. He was awarded huge respect by all who knew him, both as a shooter, a gunsmith and as a person, but was always very modest and humble. Instrumental in helping develop and then importing the Silver Mountain electronic target system, which he first investigated in 2007, he always had the mindset that E Targets would be a long term vehicle to help keep the sport of long range target shooting afloat. Most fullbore clubs in NZ now use these targets and they have allowed greater safety and easier range operation, not to mention better accuracy and enjoyment. John was the first (and only) Life member of the Hawkes Bay Rifle Club.

Amongst many other achievements within and for the club, he was instrumental in designing and installing their new 1000 yard range over the past few years, an added improvement to the clubs no danger range that uses Electronic Targets.

*Daryl Crow NRANZ/Chris Geddis*



*John Hastie*

# GRAEME GORDON LEADBETTER

**7 March 1939-11 December 2023 (Age 84)**

Graeme Gordon Leadbetter, also known at Napier Boys High School (NBHS 1953-1957)) as 'Barney', was born on 7 March 1939 in Napier and grew up in Taradale. He started at NBHS in 1953.

Academically Graeme was a solid all-round student, receiving average grades but excelled in PE. Socially, he was very outgoing, was a natural leader, enjoyed people's company and loved telling stories. However, it was athletically that Graeme really excelled:

- He was a prefect in 1956/57, house captain and head prefect in 1957.
- He was in the 1st XV Rugby Team 1955-57 and captain in 1956/57.
- HB junior rugby rep in 1956/57 and vice-captain in 1957.
- He was the NBHS top shooter and captain of the shooting team in 1957.
- He was the NBHS triple jump champion and represented HB at nationals in 1957 in the long jump, triple jump and relay.
- He was the senior champion for NBHS in gymnastics 1955 and 1957.

Graeme always looked back at his time at NBHS as one of his happiest and proudest times in his life. His most precious memory was when he was the captain for NBHS at the curtain raiser vs HBHS at McLean Park when HB played the Springboks in 1956. The assistant manager of the Springbok team refereed the game, and Graeme is pictured shaking hands with D. De Villiers in a newspaper article from the time.

Graeme decided that teaching was his passion and after getting UE went to teachers' training college in Wellington in 1958/59. His sporting prowess continued, playing for the Wellington junior rugby side. Post qualification, he moved back to HB playing for Taradale and then Napier High School Old Boys in 1961, a team that included Kel Tremain. But tragically his rugby career was ended with a fractured skull after being kicked in the head during a game at McLean Park in 1961. This was the last injury after of a string of concussions dating back to 1954. An issue that is coming to the fore in the current generation of rugby players.

Now not able to play, he changed his focus to coaching sport, and in 1961 started coaching Ross Shield which included his brother Derek, 9 years after captaining the team in 1952. Graeme continued coaching athletics, rugby and basketball for the rest of his teaching career.

Graeme found great purpose and meaning in his teaching career, which led him around the world, travelling and working. He moved to the UK 1962-64 teaching in the East End of London then onto Canada teaching in Toronto 1964-1974 and finally back to NZ (Taradale) in 1975 where he started at the newly

established Taradale Intermediate and finished his career 20 years later.

Graeme met and married a nurse from England called Bernadette (Bernie) Georgeson after he moved to Toronto. They had their son Mark in Toronto before moving back to Taradale to settle down, build a house and then had their daughter Sharon. Graeme died on 11 December 2023, aged 84, at Elmwood Home and Hospital Napier after living with Alzheimer's disease since being diagnosed in November 2012. His love of people was evident throughout his Alzheimer's journey, and he was smiling and laughing until the end.

As a result of his rugby concussions and Alzheimer's disease, Graeme bravely decided to donate his brain to the Neurological Foundation Brain Bank to further research into brain injuries.

Graeme maintained many friendships throughout his life and loved running into old friends from NBHS when out and about. He thoroughly enjoyed attending any reunions that were held and stories of the past were recalled with great fondness and hilarity. If anyone would like to get in touch to share their stories of Graeme with his family, they can be reached via the editor of the Columns newsletter.

*Sharon Leadbetter (Daughter) / NBHS Research unit*



*Graeme Leadbetter*

# PETER CHARLES OLSEN

**9 August 1936 - 20 May 2024 (Age 87)**

Hawke's Bay farmer Peter Olsen (NBHS 1950-1952) had an exciting and varied career as a fencing contractor, a professional rodeo rider, a horse trainer and a sheep and beef farmer.

Peter and his three siblings had a rural upbringing, with his father Jack Olsen owning a small farm in Bay View of 90 acres purchased in 1935 and later adding another 150 acres while still working as a shearing contractor. Peter went to school at Eskdale and then to Napier Boys' High School, developing an early love for the land just helping his father with day-to-day chores. In 1945, the family acquired a 2,000-acre property called Titiokura in Te Pōhue that cost Jack Olsen one pound per acre – which is hard to fathom these days. When Peter's father decided to retire, Peter bought the farm off him and they continued to farm there till 1989.

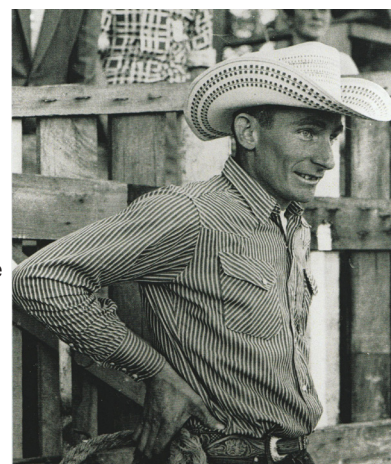
Horses were obviously in his blood and Peter was involved in rodeos since the age of 13, winning his first calf ride at the Meeanee Rodeo. The winning streak continued when Peter won a few other youth riding events which led him to become "indoctrinated with the rodeo scene" as he progressed through to the New Zealand adult divisions. Peter then went to Queensland, Australia when he was 18 to become a professional rodeo rider for seven months, travelling far and wide throughout Australia and doing well. When he came back to New Zealand after becoming NZ Saddle Bronc Champion he quickly realised that he wanted to go back for another rodeo season. "When a sport is easy for you, you do it and that sport was easy for me," Peter reminisced. From there, he went over to Canada and competed in the Calgary Stampede as the first-ever New Zealand participant which was a rewarding and hospitable experience.

After his stint in rodeo, Peter wanted to work on ranches with horses. He met a shareholder and partner of OH Ranch – a well-known ranch that has been involved in movies for the Canadian Broadcasting Commission (CBC). Peter ended up getting a job there training horses. "I did take to drinking whisky after that experience to calm my nerves," Peter laughed. "I had one case where one horse bucked me off three times. He would buck me off whenever he felt like it. The first time he bucked me off, I went down by the side of the road and every time a car went past, I hid in the long grass so they didn't see who was bucked off – my ego wouldn't handle that at all."

Peter worked at a couple of other ranches in Canada before returning to New Zealand when he was 21. He went back to Titiokura and started working as a fencing contractor for seven years. Titiokura's 200 acres was completely undeveloped and in just two paddocks, no roads and only a shack to live in, all sheep had to be driven to the King's property at Te Pōhue for shearing.

It was during this period that Peter met and later married Lois Pedlow, who was doing her teacher's country service at the time. Peter finished up rodeo riding at the age of 32 as all of his friends started retiring, so he thought he would do the same. He still kept in touch with the families that he worked for in Canada and has enjoyed travelling with Lois to see them again over the years, with some of them having also come to New Zealand to visit. "I had worked on a Hereford stud in Alberta, Canada so I was leaning that way. I went to a sale and bought quite a few Herefords – my dad had Angus cattle, so we made the change. We also went into registered cattle because that gave us a bigger dimension. We have a much longer history of the Hereford cows on record than we have got me, you or anybody else," Peter explained. Peter and Lois started a Hereford Stud at Titiokura in 1967.

After 27 years at Titiokura, Peter realised that it was time to move on as he noted that he was getting older and it was becoming a "young person's country". Whilst farming there, with the longest fine spell being 17 consecutive days without rain, Peter mentioned that he could grow grass even in the driest of summers. "We measured the rain for the meteorological office for 27 years, averaging rain every second day (186

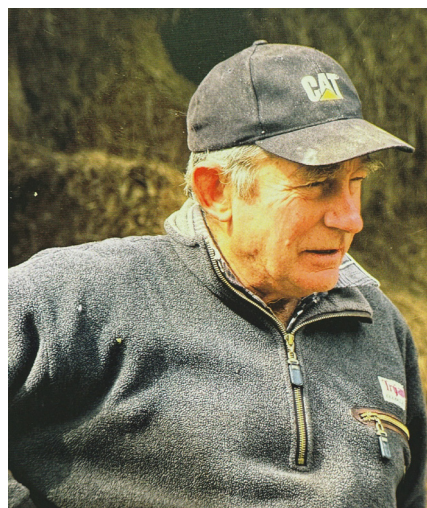


*Peter Olsen (in Rodeo days)*

days a year). Our annual rainfall was 91 inches, so we knew what a raincoat was," Peter said. "Our Te Pōhue farm was a fantastic place; the only thing that Lois and I regret is leaving it, because it was rather special."

Peter received numerous offers for Titiokura and in 1989 they sold up and left for Argyll, Central Hawke's Bay. Down a quiet tar-sealed road, just 40 kilometres south of Hastings, you'll find the Olsen farm that they call Titirangi. Their Argyll-based Titirangi farm consists of 750 acres of long, narrow fields with a laneway passing through the middle. Through his involvement with Herefords, Peter has been able to connect with a wide range of people from all over the world. He held multiple roles for The New Zealand Hereford Association (NZ Herefords), including a year of presidency from 1984 to 1985, being on the council for 15 years from 1978 to 1993, and editing the NZ Herefords' magazine for another two years. "We've met some wonderful people. I ended up being a delegate to conferences and places all over the world," Peter said. Going back to the Herefords, we showed cattle for five years. We went to Hawke's Bay, Gisborne, Manawatū and sometimes Hamilton Shows. Our greatest moment was winning the Junior Meat and Wool Cup at the Royal Show in Hamilton. Over the last six decades, Peter and Lois Olsen met some exceptional people being involved with Herefords and the rodeo industry. Sharing some memorable experiences, there never seemed to be a dull moment in Peter's varied career. Herefords have always been very good to Peter and his family. Lois Olsen predeceased Peter on 18 January 2024.

*Excerpts from Garth McVicar, Eulogy/ Chris Geddis, Research.*



*Peter Olsen*

# Last Roll Call

The following Old Boys and teachers passed away recently:

BAKER, Caleb Kirk – 2015-2018  
BANGS, Brian Robert – 1956-1957  
BARCLAY, Stephen John (Steve) – 1965-1966  
BECKETT, Allister Jonathan – 1994-1997  
BROWN, Allan Matthew – 1945-1950  
BULFORD, Brian Derek – 1950-1951  
CHALMERS, David Roy – 1954-1955  
CHRYSTAL, John Livingstone – 1950-1951,  
(NBHS Assn 2007-2018)  
COTTER, James Tawa (Jimmy) - 1960-1961  
COUCH, Clifford Henry (Cliff) – 1938-1941  
DEVINE, Michael John (Mike) – 1972-1975  
EDDY, Raymond Denis – 1963-1965  
FERGUSON, Thomas Arnold – 1962-1963  
GRIFFITHS, Edward Owen (Ted) – 1950-1954  
HARRIS, Ernest Muir (Ernie) – 1952-1953  
HART, Graeme John - 1964  
HASKELL, Donald George William (Bill) – 1958-1961  
HASTIE, John – 1952-1954  
HUNT, Barry Ian – 1971-1975  
KURLUK, Wally – 1978-1981  
LEADBETTER, Graeme Gordon – 1953-1957  
LE COMTE, Geoffrey Clifford (Geoff) – 1969-1972  
LEE, Robert Geoffrey Fleming (Rob) – 1955-1956  
LETT, Selwyn Garth – 1964-1965  
LOVE, Colin Bert John - 1963-1965  
LUM, James (Jim) QSM – 1944-1948  
MACDONALD, John Roland – 1953-1956  
MOODY, Colin Bray – 1949

MORONEY, Douglas John (Doug) – 1964-1968  
NEWTON, Ronald Harry (Ron) – 1949-1950  
NICOL, Ronald Owen (Ron) – 1944-1947  
OLSEN, Peter Charles – 1950-1952  
O'ROURKE, Kevin Phillip – 1962-1963  
OTTON, James Sydney – 1954-1955  
PALMER, Robert Job - 1955  
PATTERSON, Donald William (Don) – 1943-1945  
PENNALL, Thomas William (Tom) - 1959  
PETERSEN, Eric Montagu – 1948-1950  
PIERSON, John Charles – 1950-1953  
POPE, Ivan Frederick – 1947-1949  
READ, Ronald Mark (Mark) – 1952-1955  
REED, John Scott – 1962-1965  
RICHARDS, Graeme Warwick – F5 1955-1956  
SAUNDERS, Albert Ralph (Alby) – 1980-1984  
SCARROTT, Ian James – 1962-1965  
SHERRIFF, David Neil – 1955-1958  
SMITH, Anthony Signal (Tony) – 1955-1956  
SMITH, Selwyn Herries – 1964-1966  
SUTTON, Geoffrey Ernest Harry – 1969-1971  
TURNER, Russell William – 1955-1957  
TURVEY, Paul Reuben (Shorts) – 1968-1969  
WALLIS, Kevin Stanwin (Sparrow) – 1959-1960  
WEST, John William – 1950-1951  
WHITCHELO, Guy Francis (Staff) – 2008-2016  
WILSON, Alan Leslie (Willy) – 1956-1957  
WILSON, Anthony Frederick (Tony) – 1951-1955  
YOUNG, Daniel (Danny) – 1962-1964

*"Columns" expresses sincere condolences to the families of these Old Boys and Staff Members  
Chris Geddis*

If you know of an Old Boy or Teacher, who has recently passed away please email: [oldboys@nbhs.school.nz](mailto:oldboys@nbhs.school.nz) giving full name of the Old Boy or Teacher (as per death notice), who has passed away and approximate dates at school.}

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