



Napier Boys' High School Association COLUMNS

VOLUME THIRTY FOUR ISSUE ONE

JUNE 2025

Editorial

You may recall an Editorial I wrote December 2021 on the occasion of our Old Boy, the Late Sir Ian Axford (NBHS 1946-50) having a mountain named after him in Fiordland National Park's Kepler Range, Mount Axford? I then told of another Old Boy, Hubert Earle Girdlestone (NBHS 1894-95) who prior to World War I, worked as a surveyor for the Lands and Survey Department Wellington Office, that led to topographical and survey expeditions through the Tararua Range in the early 1910s producing valuable maps, erecting trig stations and cutting a track from Levin to Masterton. He also took a keen interest in exploration and on numerous occasions, organised survey and guiding parties through the mountains of Tongariro National Park and Tararua Range. During World War I, Hubert Girdlestone was placed, because of his technical knowledge on 'special work' with the intelligence Department at the NZ Infantry Brigade Headquarters when he reached the front, also serving in the Wellington and Canterbury Infantry Regiments as a Sergeant. On 28th August 1918, at the Battle of Bapaume in France, 39 year old Hubert Girdlestone was killed by shell shrapnel in his sleep.

In early 1921 Girdlestone's friends from Tararua Tramping club (founded in 1919 a year after he died) met with his surveyor friends to discuss a suitable memorial. They decided on erecting a plaque on Little Matterhorn Peak on the south side of Mount Ruapehu: Girdlestone had previously named this peak himself, (after a passing resemblance to the more famous peak of the European Alps). The Government authorised a change of name to Girdlestone Peak. After several unsuccessful efforts to reach the 2658m - high peak due to weather conditions, his friends finally installed a plaque in March 1922. The blue granite plaque was inscribed: "Girdlestone Peak. To the memory of Hubert Earle Girdlestone; F.R.G.S., killed in France, 28 August, 1918. Erected 23 March 1921" – this was the date of the first attempt to reach the summit. The Gisborne Herald of 26 March 1924 reported: "On 23 March 1924 a party consisting of Messrs. T. Blyth of Ohakune, A.W. Gordon and M. Galvin, of Taumarunui, made the ascent of Girdlestone Peak for the purpose of ascertaining the condition of the marble slab erected two years ago in memory of the Late Hugh Girdlestone F.R.G.S. Despite the powerful disintegrating forces which are continually acting against this precipitous pinnacle the monument displays no sign of deterioration and the party is of the opinion that its permanency is now assured."

Fast-forward to 2025: A new book: "Fire & Ice: Secrets, histories, treasures and mysteries of Tongariro National Park by Hazel Phillips has come out, where the very first story, finds Phillips in 2023 an accessory

while participating in a literal heist, accompanying an angry local man dubbed 'Henry', on his mission to destroy and remove a memorial plaque dedicated to explorer and Tongariro National Park Surveyor, Hugh Girdlestone... Despite Girdlestone's passion for the land, 'Henry' found the plaque an affront to the landscape and local iwi. According to the story 'Henry' had been up in early 2021 and told her what he'd done, "That plaque on Girdlestone, I went up and smashed it. It took many blows to smash the granite tablet, with a large rock, pinned as it was to the large, smooth face of the rock by its four thick copper pins." "Then he cast the shattered pieces around the peak."

At Easter, April 2021, a group of trampers reported on Facebook: "They had a successful day on Girdlestone Peak in perfect autumnal conditions. It was initially a shock to discover the granite plaque to Girdlestone had been shattered fairly recently by the ravages of time and nature — frost and thaw. Yes, man passes but the land endures. It was sad seeing the broken plaque but we spent a fun hour in perfect conditions collecting bits and doing a high altitude (2658m) jigsaw puzzle. One of the party was very enthusiastic and found many pieces on a steep slope below the peak." (Unbeknown to the Trampers it was a cultural vandal with a hammer, not Mother Nature that was the destroyer.) Editor.

Later, after discovering on Facebook, that the plaque had been jigsawed back together. 'Henry' went back in 2023 in the company of Phillips to finish the job. "He wanted to chuck the broken tablet off the peak again, but Phillips felt that would convert it from history into rubbish." Phillips ends up taking the fragments of the memorial home for preservation, it is now, in a box in the back off a dark cupboard.

The memorial that took a group of mountaineers, surveyors and friend's three attempts to install over 100 years ago, has been destroyed unashamedly with a hammer. The War Memorial commemorating the life, achievements and supreme-sacrifice of Hubert Earle Girdlestone, has been desecrated. Lest We Forget.

Chris Geddis, Editor.

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Kevin Callinicos (Chairman)

Chris Geddis (Editor), Phillip Rankin (Archivist) Alan Day (Minute Secretary)

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Maurice Gunnell, Peter Kellond, Stephen Perfect, Geoff Pyott.



Sergeant Hubert Earle Girdlestone



Installation of memorial March 1922



Girdlestone Peak Memorial, jigsawed prior to final destruction. Far right pink handled hammer. Hazel Phillips photo

NBHS & NGHS PRESENTS

Footloose
THE MUSICAL

16TH, 17TH & 18 JULY
MUNICIPAL THEATRE NAPIER



Stage Adaptation by DEAN PITCHFORD and WALTER BOBBIE Based on the Original Screenplay by Dean Pitchford

From the Headmaster

As we mark the halfway point of the school calendar it is timely that we look back and take stock of work completed by staff and students alike and forward as we prepare for the next half where all the teaching and learnings of terms 1 and 2 will ensure that the targets set both personally and academically are reached.

It is a similar approach as we take the past 153 years of the school and use our history and heritage to help map out the future of Napier Boys' High School. As Old Boys, you are part of this ongoing story—a living connection between the past, the present, and the future. Together, we support the school's journey as it honours its distinguished history while embracing the promise of what lies ahead.

Our school has always been a place where tradition meets progress. While the world around us changes rapidly, the core values and legacy established over a century and a half remain steadfast. It is this unique blend of honouring our history while embracing innovation that defines the resilience and spirit of our community. This spirit and resilience never more so evident as we supported our community through the recent tragic loss of one of our students. This tragedy has left a profound impact on not only our school, but our wider community but has also reminded us of the spirit of compassion, unity and strength that comes from standing together and emulates the values of Napier Boys' High School.

The school landscape is changing as we move through the refurbishment and we welcome you to re connect with us as we become a contemporary learning environment with strong traditional values while adapting to modern educational needs, integrating new technologies, and supporting an environment for today's students. Yet, through every change, there is a deep commitment to preserving the traditions, stories, and principles that have shaped generations of NBHS Old Boys. Matariki weekend is upon us, and we are proud to bring more awareness and inclusiveness to our school through education and celebration.

The heritage of 153 years serves as a powerful foundation—a reminder of the countless alumni who have contributed to our school's reputation and spirit. It's a legacy we carry forward with pride, ensuring that the values of integrity, perseverance, and camaraderie continue to inspire future leaders.

Exciting opportunities await in the future, and it is a privilege to be part of writing the next chapters of NBHS with you.

Simon Coe, Headmaster



Simon Coe, Headmaster

The school website is

www.nbhs.school.nz

Ties & Cufflinks

Association / Old Boys

Ties - \$27 & School Crest Cufflinks - \$25

Are available from the School

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

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FUJIFILM

From the Archives

I would like to begin this column by paying tribute on the passing of two of the greatest benefactors of our historic collection, entrusting to the School magnificent items of family mementoes.

Derek Weber, while not an Old Boy himself, his earlier and later family members are. His father was Herman Edward Weber (1903-09), the 'Germanic' Herman was discarded for obvious reasons. In 2003, I contributed an Anzac Day article to the local newspaper in which I quoted from Captain Ernest Harston's (1905-09) letter to the Scindian from Gallipoli: "Young Herman Weber is here, a grown man now." After reading this, Derek got in touch with me, which led to the loan of Edward's war memorabilia, including the gloriously engraved 'Weber Bugle' which accompanied him throughout the war and is inscribed with his 'battle honours': camps, troopships, campaigns and hospitals (he was wounded on Gallipoli and again on the Somme). As well as the bugle which I count as our greatest artefact, we have on display in the foyer his photographs, postcards, a copy of his diary, various badges, bullets removed from his leg and a German forage cap and tobacco pouch. (Derek was especially proud that it still contained some of its original tobacco). Before his death, Derek and his family decided that the artefacts should remain in the School where they are accessible to the public. We will be eternally grateful.

Our other loss was Joy, Lady Axford, the widow of our greatest academic, astrophysicist and New Zealander of the Year (1995), Sir Ian Axford (1946-50). In my early years as a very novice archivist, Joy was always ready with advice, (she had been archivist at the Hawke's Bay Museum) and to share her inexhaustible knowledge of local history, Napier's businesses, institutions and families. She was an active member of the Napier Girls' High School Old Girls Association, the HB Knowledge Bank and the Genealogy Society. After Sir Ian's death in 2010 she entrusted us with his many international scientific awards, medals and diplomas, book prizes from both NBHS and University. A portrait of Sir Ian and his medals are the feature of our 'Axford Meeting Room', where they are on public display, as Joy was adamant they should be.



Joy, Lady Axford

Our collection has grown this half year from donated items from three daughters, a nephew and widow of Old Boys. Thora Taylor of Auckland, the daughter of John Hamilton Malcolm QSM (1925-29) sent us her father's copy of 'The Centennial Historical Survey' and a copy of 'The Story of Napier 1974-1974'. Margaret Bullen daughter of Mervyn Thomas Baird Hall (1908-10) has sent us the front page of the Taranaki Daily News (12/04/2025) with the story of the presentation of one of her uncle's, Vincent John Baird Hall (1904-08) medals to New Plymouth Boys' High School where he taught, a very popular Master, for the year before enlisting. He was our Dux in 1908. You may recall that we received from Matthew Hawkins (1985-89) winner of the Lionel and Vincent Hall Memorial Prize for History, Lionel William Baird Hall's (1906-09) War Service Medal. Both were found up for public auction. Vincent died in

Egypt 1915 of wounds received on Gallipoli and Lionel died in 1917 in Belgium of wounds.

The recent passing of Robert Barry (Barry) Milburn (1946-49) son of the legendary Master and 1st XV coach Bert (1921-62) has seen his daughter Robyn Smale of Whangarei pass on to us some of Barry's memorabilia. These include a very amusing 1950 Scinde v Day Boys rugby programme and another of the 1950 Lions v Wairarapa- Bush match for which NBHS played Wairarapa College in the curtain raiser. Barry played in neither of the games having left school but was obviously a keen follower of School Rugby and of course his father, Bert coached both teams. We do now have a photograph of him playing for the 'Lily Whites' (NHSOBs) Another package arrived from D Paxie- presumably Dennis Costa Paxie (1980-84), the nephew of the late Dennis Andrew Paxie (1958-62 and Staff 1970-75). This contained a photograph of the Swimming Champions of 1971 and the 1973 D Grade, A, rugby team which Dennis coached. There was also a mounted photograph of the Napier Intermediate hockey team with a very young Dennis in it, it is either 1956 or 1957. I shall pass it on to that School.

Bronnie Farquharson called by the office and dropped off mementoes of her late husband Bryan (1967-71) including a well- worn School cap, (rather puzzlingly this baseball-style, was not the style when Bryan was a boarder, it may have been part of his softball uniform) – we already have his 1st XV cap. Photographs included the 1968 Scinde 4th Grade rugby team, the staff (1971) and the Maori Cultural Group: fifty five boys, two masters, Jack Young (1956-79) and Fred Smart (1959, 1963-72 and an Old Boy 1921-22). Bryan is sitting next to Mrs Coulter, "a hard worker for the club". Centre front are the waka and kiwi trophies and the group is seated outside the now departed brick administration block. Especially impressive is Bryan's copy of 'Forty years on' the commemorative publication of the 2009 reunion of the 1969 1st XV tour of Australia. This was compiled by our very own editor, Chris Geddis – who manages to get his own photograph in an Adelaide shot. It is profusely illustrated and has a match report for every game. The Foreword is written by coach, Derek Brebner (1957-69). The team photograph (repeated on postcards and the Reunion Dinner at the Mission Estate), includes many well-known School characters including: Hugh Blair, Bryan and Chris, Murray Ashcroft (Capt.), Peter Jane (Vice Capt.), Dennis Mills, Mark Oldershaw et al. At the bottom, front row right is a very young (looking almost like a mascot) Mark Romans who was Head Prefect in 1973, my second year in the School. Bryan's Scinde House leaving certificate lists his attainments; rugby, softball, athletics, harriers, basketball and prefect 1970-71. Some leavers are known to have been presented with 'works of fiction' but in this case I am sure this is a true record of achievements of a top athlete. In my few weeks here as a student teacher in 1971, I remember him as a very imposing figure around the hostel and later as a keen supporter of SOBA (the regrettably defunct Scinde Old Boys Association) which had 673 registered members spanning the years from 1919-1992.

Just recently I have received from Ralph Lane (Senior Master 1991-95) his father's (Alban Eric Verdun Lane 1930-32) memoir of the School during the 1931 Earthquake. We have quite a few of these now, both from students at NBHS and Napier Technical College. Perhaps we should compile them for a Centenary publication in 2031?

I am going to end on a very upsetting note: You may recall Chris's editorial in the December 2021 'Columns' about the NZ Geographic Board naming two mountains Mt Axford in the Kepler range and in the Ruapehu range Mt Girdlestone. The latter has carried a memorial plaque to surveyor and keen tramper, Hubert Girdlestone (1894-95) placed there in 1922 by his tramping companions. Girdlestone had been killed at Achiet-le-petit, in France in 1918. A recently published book 'Ice and Fire' by Hazel Phillips details the destruction and desecration of this hundred year old memorial. Also see Editorial page 1 this Issue.

Phillip Rankin, Archivist.

Captain Leslie Somers McLernon

(NBHS 1905-1910)

For this Anzac Service I've chosen to tell the story of two schoolmates who went off to war together. Leslie Somers McLernon and Ernest Sirdefield Harston were the sons of local businessmen – one a Jeweller-Clockmaker, the other proprietor of a Music Store. They started School in 1905 – a very different Napier Boys' High School that you attend, situated on the Hill where Napier Girls' High School is now located. The roll was 127 of whom 18 were in the Junior School (standards 4, 5 and 6). They became great friends, with parallel careers at School and beyond. Both played 1st XV Rugby (McLernon was Captain in 1910), 1st X1 Cricket (McLernon was Captain for two years 1909-10). Both were promoted to Lieutenant in the Cadets and both were Prefects (McLernon Head Boy in 1909 and 1910).

Harston left at the end of 1909 to study Law and after another year at School, McLernon joined his father's Jewellery business. Two years earlier, his father had donated a splendid trophy to the School. An ornate clock with a wooden base and surrounded by brass bats, ball and stumps. It was awarded "To the boy who contributed most to cricket" (now the Captain of the 1st X1). Leslie won the McLernon Clock in 1909 and 1910. Out of School, both joined the Territorials, retaining their Cadet rank of Lieutenant. When War broke out in 1914, they were signed up for the Hawke's Bay Company of the Wellington Infantry Regiment, and still as Lieutenants sailed with the Main Body for Egypt and the Gallipoli. There, they both received their Captaincies - McLernon first when the Wellingtons lost their Captain in the disastrous side-show of the 'Daisy Patch'. McLernon was evacuated to Egypt after stepping on a bayonet and in his absence Harston was promoted to Captain. He was also adjutant to the Wellington's Commander Colonel Malone. A month after McLernon's return the Wellingtons went into the horrendous attack on the high point Chunuk Bair. In three days of savage fighting, the Wellingtons were decimated. One of those killed was Captain Leslie McLernon. In a letter to the Scindian, Harston reported, "A shell got poor old Mac, I am now the Last of the Mohicans." Colonel Malone was also killed, reportedly by a Royal Navy shell and died in Harston's arms. As the highest ranked survivor, Captain Harston took command of what was left of the Wellingtons in resistance to wave after wave of Turkish counter-attacks and then the evacuation of the few survivors from the blood-soaked hilltop. Like all those killed there, McLernon has no known grave – the

bodies stayed where they fell until remains were recovered by an Allied Commission in 1919. His name appears on the New Zealand Memorial on the now peaceful hill, looking down on Anzac Cove. Harston had several months in hospital with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (then known as 'Shell Shock'). His bravery on Chunuk Bair was recognised with a 'Mentioned in Despatches', he was promoted to Major serving briefly as the first New Zealand Officer in the Grenadier Guards, held positions in England and France and New Zealand after being invalided home with T.B (having time in the Waipukurau Sanatorium). Returning to England he was admitted to the Bar, served on the Secretariat of the League of Nations (1926-30) and on the Marylebone (London) Borough Council (1944-50) He was Secretary and then Chairman of the British Empire Service League, amassing awards: OBE (1947) CBE (1953) and Knighted in 1958. In the 1930s he was ADC to Lord Louis Mountbatten and a sailing buddy – having his own yacht the 'Amokura'. He died in 1975 – aged 84. Leslie McLernon was 24 when he fell on Chunuk Bair. What would his life have been like if he had survived, and would his friendship with Sir Ernest Harston have become a life-long one? We will remember him.

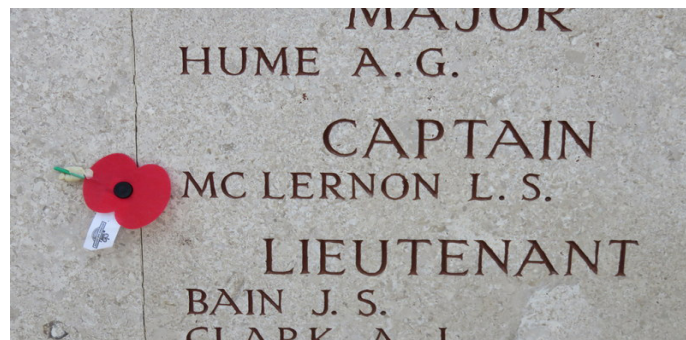
*Speech by Archivist Phillip Rankin at
NBHS Anzac Service 11 April 2025.*



Captain L.S. McLernon



Left: Captains L.S. McLernon & E.S. Harston. Right: Captain L.S. McLernon



Memorial at Chunuk Bair, Gallipoli

History Students Honour Our Heroic Old Boy

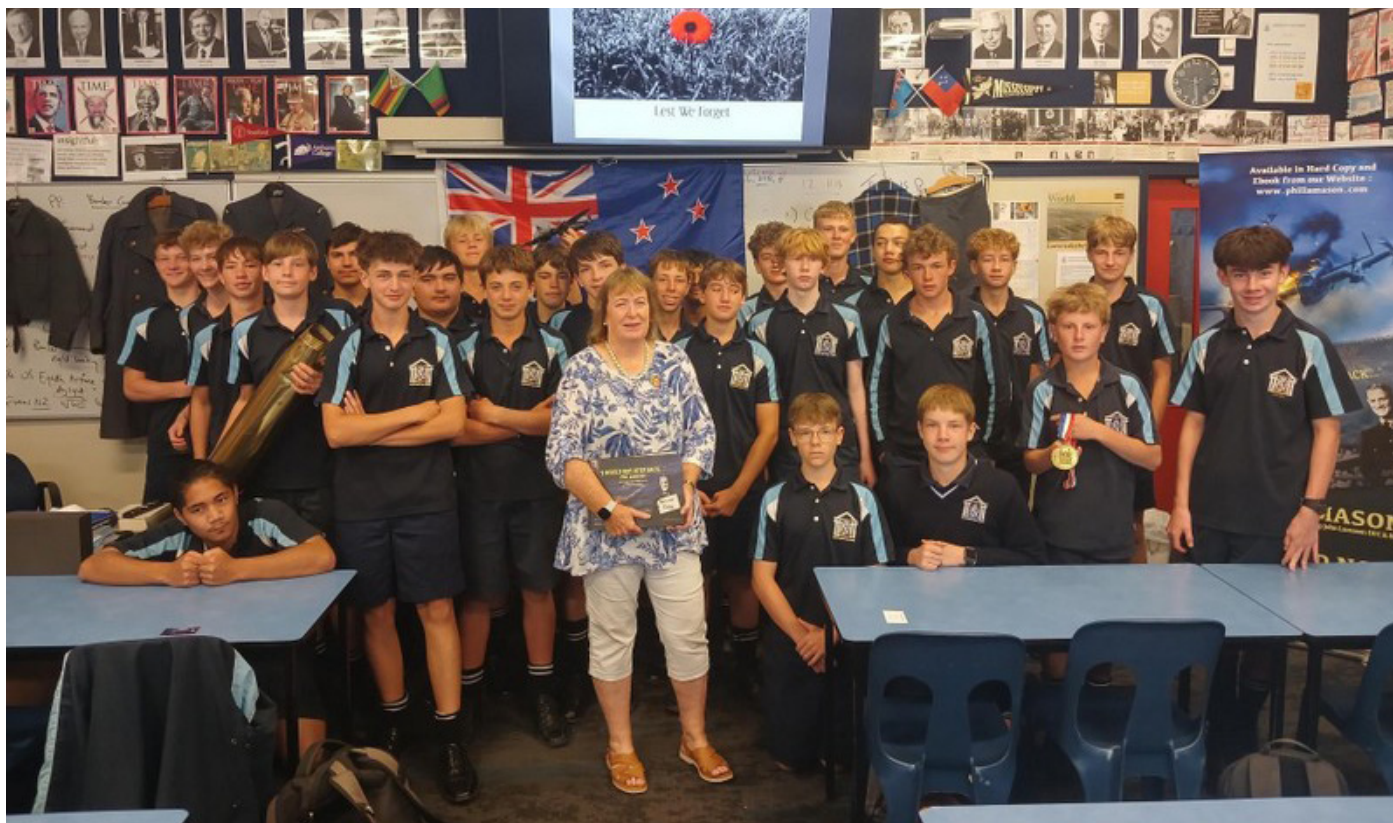
In March 2024 several members of our committee were privileged to attend the Duart House Society Speaker Series, to hear Glenys Mulligan's address on Squadron Leader Phillip John Lamason's brilliant, but until recently virtually untold, wartime career. (DFC & bar). Phil Lamason was an Old Boy (1932-33), he was boxing champion – an early expression of his pugnacious determination, also seen in his challenge to authority, and returned as a housemaster and farm manager in 1939 before joining the RNZAF in 1940.

In 1944, while on his 45th mission, his Lancaster bomber was shot down over France. Parachuting from the burning plane, he was taken into the care of the French Resistance and was in Paris, awaiting escape to Britain when he was betrayed to the Gestapo. Instead of being interned as a Prisoner of War, Phil and 167 other Allied airmen were sent to the notorious Buchenwald Concentration Camp. As senior officer, Squadron Leader Lamason kept the group's morale up, saved them from the worst privations by following his philosophy 'I would not step back' (the title of his biography published in 2017, five years after his death). Learning that they were to be executed Phil managed to get word to the local Luftwaffe who demanded their release – to the relative safety of Stalag Luft 111. His actions are credited for the saving of the lives of his group of airmen, a story relatively unknown until a Canadian film, an American documentary and finally in New Zealand by the release of 'The Hero of Buchenwald'. I arranged that Glenys Mulligan should share the story with students at Phil's Old School and in March 2025 Head of History Sam Englebrechtsen invited her to speak to four history classes. Her address was illustrated with a large display of books, model planes, uniforms and other artefacts. The boys were enthralled to learn about our very own 'Super Hero' and Sam will invite Glenys back again so the story will continue to be told to future students.

Phillip Rankin, Archivist.



Phil Lamason (DFC & BAR)



Glenys Mulligan & History Students

New Year's Honours 2025 - John Oliver

John Oliver (NBHS 1966-1968) still remembers driving past the old Waipukurau Hospital and noticing smoke coming from the premises, before raising the alarm.

That enormous blaze in 2010 - which destroyed large sections of the closed hospital - is just one of countless jobs Oliver has attended over the years as a member of the Ōtāne Volunteer Fire Brigade.

Oliver, 72, has notched up 52 years with the brigade, the last 34 as the chief fire officer. The proud Ōtāne resident has now been recognised for his service with an accolade in the New Year Honours.

Oliver said he was "very honoured and humbled" to receive a King's Service Medal (KSM) for services to Fire and Emergency NZ and the community. His father was a firefighter and his father-in-law was one of the founders of the Ōtāne Volunteer Fire Brigade. He joined the brigade at the age of 20.

He said the most rewarding part of his time with the brigade had been helping people. "When people call us they are in trouble, in crisis, so you just get on and help them.

"And I have met a lot of good people and [have] friends in the brigade who are still good mates." Another memorable job was saving the old Ōtāne school during a blaze, he said. It has now been converted into an arts centre.

Oliver, a retired painter and plasterer, is something of a jack of all trades and has built four tankers for the brigade over the years - converting them from trucks and other vehicles. Oliver has just stepped down from his role

of chief of the Ōtāne brigade but will continue as a senior station officer. Oliver's son has also served as a volunteer firefighter.

He said he had thoroughly enjoyed serving the community over the past 50-plus years.

"When I reached my 50th [with the brigade] I actually said 'if there were another 50 years of my life I'd do it again'."

Oliver has also been a main driver behind the development of Ōtāne's new tennis courts, as a member of the Ōtāne Sports Club.

HB Today/Chris Geddis



John Oliver - KSM

New Year's Honours 2025 - Ian Reid

An integral part of Napier theatre productions for more than half a century, Ian Reid remembers the day he was spotted.

Ian Reid (NBHS 1960-1962) has been made a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) for service to musical theatre after 57 years behind the scenes with the Napier Operatic Society.

It was 1967 and he was simply walking on the streets of the city when someone asked if he would like to become involved - more specifically "lend a hand" because of his skills as an electrician. It started at the Little Theatre in McGrath Street Napier.

Reid has had something to do with almost every Napier Operatic Society production since and, although he never considered himself likely to be an actor, regularly picked up roles as an extra.

Much has happened in the years since, and he now finds himself made a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) in the New Year 2025 Honours for services to musical theatre. He became the long-term production manager for the society's annual seasons - shows such as Oliver and many others. He was secretary for 20 years and is a life member. He was the manager of the Napier Municipal Theatre for 20 years.

In 2003 he received a national merit award from Musical Theatre New Zealand (MTNZ) for his service to community theatre, and became vice-president in 2004 and president from 2009 to 2014. He is now a life member and patron. While on the MTNZ board, he formed strong relationships with other organisations including Entertainment Technology New Zealand and Entertainment Venues Association of New Zealand, which recently also made him a life member.

For eight years he was a member of the MTNZ Consortium committee, which was instrumental in bringing major big-budget musicals, such as Les Misérables, Miss Saigon and Phantom of the Opera to be staged in New Zealand. His continued interest is highlighted in his support for youth through the national Nola Speir Youth in Theatre Award at the MTNZ annual conference and sponsoring youth to attend MTNZ training workshops. He has five grandchildren following their own paths in theatre roles. His past hints that maybe he could have graced the stage in roles of

profile: coming to New Zealand as a Glasgow-born 12-year-old, he landed at Napier Boys' High School and needed to quickly drop the Scottish accent. "They couldn't understand a word I was saying," he recalls.

HB Today/Chris Geddis



Ian Reid - MNZM

2024/2025 School Sailing Overview

It has been a successful year for the Napier Boys' High School A Sailing team. We started the year off strong, with a convincing win at the secondary schools teams sailing Central North Island Champs, in Taupo. This was a very crucial regatta as it guaranteed our place for the nationals. We were proud to win again as it meant we held on to the NBHS seven-year winning streak at this regatta. It was great sailing conditions all weekend long with quite a few tough races. It came down to the last race, with a lot of pressure on all of us. However, we pulled through and won the event, which meant we qualified for gold fleet at nationals.

We were pretty confident going into nationals with a win behind us, and the same three skippers as last year, me (Jed Potbury), Blake Duncan, and Ekhi de Jager. However, our first day was super tough, and we lost all of our races. This meant we were dropped down to silver fleet in the repechage after the first round-robin. The team did well to pull it back together, with a convincing performance in silver fleet and going back up to gold fleet for the rest of the regatta. This was a confidence boost for us, and after winning a couple of races in gold fleet, we finished up in 7th place, out of 29 teams from around NZ. We were the first team from outside of Auckland, thanks to a win against Christs College on the last day. New Plymouth put on an amazing week of racing, with only one of the days getting called off due to too much wind.

It has been a great final year for me as captain, and I'm looking forward to seeing how our team can improve in the future. Special thanks to Mr Englebrechtsen for all the hard work he has put in coordinating and managing our team, and to our coach Noah Hengst for all his support. On another note, I had an amazing opportunity earlier this year, as I was

selected to go on the BLAKE Expedition to the Sub-Antarctic Islands. I was one of 7 students selected from around New Zealand, and we spent 2 weeks on the HMNZS Canterbury visiting the Auckland Islands and Campbell Island. We got to work alongside world-class scientists and environmental leaders, studying many different things. The Sub-Antarctic Islands have very unique and diverse wildlife, and they are quite susceptible to climate change, meaning it is easier to see and study change that has happened in the past. We also got to experience some amazing wildlife: Albatrosses, Sea Lions, Elephant Seals, Penguins, and also some amazing flora, mainly mega herbs.

Jed Potbury



Photo of NBHS Sailing Team: L-R: Jed Potbury (Capt.), Oscar Prescott, Rylan Clark, Terry Fowler, Ekhi de Jager, Blake Duncan, Harry Jameson.

Hawke's Bay pilot winging way to dream job with RNZAF

Hawke's Bay's Khan Coleman (NBHS 2007-2010) was bitten by the flying bug while working with helicopters on ski fields and after earning top marks in his Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) pilot training course is on track to realise his dream career of flying them. Pilot Officer Coleman was one of seven students who gained their "wings" at a graduation ceremony held at RNZAF Base Ohakea recently. He was awarded the Wigram Trophy for gaining the highest academic mark on the course. He now hopes to be posted to No.3 Squadron learning to fly helicopters.

On leaving Napier Boys' High, Pilot Officer Coleman "chased winter" - working at ski fields overseas and in New Zealand.

"I have a passion for mountains and worked for a number of years over winters in ski patrol and search and rescue, and as a summer glacier guide in the South Island. "The part of these jobs that I loved more than anything was flying around in helicopters.

"I started learning to fly in Wanaka before starting the application process to join the Air Force."

Pilot Officer Coleman was accepted into the RNZAF Pilot Training Course as a Student Pilot in 2022, with 20 hours' flying under his belt.

During the course he sat 14 ground exams and flew 139 sorties, and was assessed and marked on each of them.

"I clearly remember my first solo flight as I had to do a 'go around' after not getting the landing approach quite right. I was aware my instructor was watching me from the control tower and assessing me, but the next landing was perfect."

In the tradition of pilots successfully navigating their first solo flight, Pilot Officer Coleman had his tie cut - an aviation tradition that symbolises the instructor releasing the student from his control. The T-6C Texan II aircraft are purpose-built for military training and 11 are used at Base Ohakea to train student pilots on their wings course.

They initially train exclusively in a 'military designated airspace' which allows the students to train without having to worry about civilian aircraft.

Course Commander and Instructor, Flight Lieutenant Tom McDowell says

the main training difference between earning an RNZAF Wings brevet and a commercial pilot's licence is training.

Military pilots train in aerobatics, low-level navigation down to 250 feet, and formation flying (which includes aerobatic tail chasing) and close formation flying in cloud.

"Operating at low level is a basic defence measure in a threat environment and something our pilots must be confident and competent in," he said.

Texans are often seen flying lower in and around the lower North Island particularly around Ohakea and Whanganui.

Story & Photo NZ Defence Force/Chris Geddis



Pilot Officer Khan Coleman

Blake Duncan, Sailor off to World Champs in Slovenia

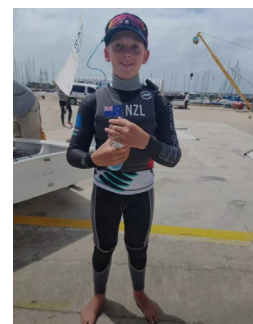
I am 14yrs old, in year 10 (4th form) at NBHS. I started sailing at the Napier Sailing Club learn to sail program held over the 2021/22 summer holidays. I loved the sport and progressed into buying my own boat and competing in the 2022 Optimist Nationals that were held in Napier. I started in the green fleet and quickly progressed through the white fleet and into the open fleet in my first year. The following year I placed 21st at Nationals in Wakatere, Auckland. This qualified me to travel to New Caledonia as part of the New Zealand junior development team. That was an amazing experience with 6 junior boys (under 13), 6 senior boys and 10 girls. We learned a lot about racing in different conditions and sailing against international fleets. I had a great regatta, finishing the first kiwi and 3rd overall.

That really got me interested in training hard and the confidence to compete against the best junior sailors in NZ. The following year, 2023, I placed 4th at the Nationals in Picton and qualified for the NZ Optimist World Champs in Argentina. With the four other selected junior sailors all from the Murrays Bay Sailing Club in Auckland, we had a busy winter training schedule and lots of travel to Auckland.

The World Champs was an amazing experience with 225 competitors from 51 countries. Mar del Plata in Argentina is famous for its rough sea and strong wind and it did not disappoint. We had very challenging conditions and I was proud to qualify in the top third of the regatta (gold fleet) and finish 66th overall and second placed kiwi.

This year I have qualified 5th in NZ and made the NZ Optimist World Champs Team to travel to Slovenia in June. We are expecting much lighter winds and I can't wait to test myself against the best in the world again. My goal is to place in the top 40 sailors.

For the past two years I have been part of the Napier Boys' High School Sailing team. We are building a very strong team with an experienced group of my Napier Sailing club mates. The last two years we have won Central North Island 420 teams racing regatta to continue the winning run of eight years straight. Recently we placed seventh overall at the Schools Nationals in New Plymouth. Teams racing is a very different skill set with two teams of three boats sailing short races, where tactics and group decision making will win over speed. We have a keen young group of experienced sailors, and we look forward to building better results in the coming years and really appreciate the opportunities we have been offered at NBHS.



Blake Duncan

Blake Duncan. If any NBHS Old Boys would like to get onboard with some sponsorship please contact Aaron Duncan (father of Blake)
Mob: 021 375 013.

16-year-old Jackson Ball named in NZ Tall Blacks Basketball Squad.

Hawke's Bay secondary school student Jackson Ball is set to become the third youngest to play for national men's basketball side the Tall Blacks after being named in a squad for two Asia Cup qualifiers in February 2025. The round-two games are an away match against Hong Kong on February 20 and a return to Auckland to play the Philippines on February 23. Ball, is currently a student at Napier Boys' High School who played for the Taylor Hawks in the Sal's NBL last season, is 16, and doesn't turn 17 until March 10.

Tall Blacks coach Judd Flavell has taken the opportunity to test one of New Zealand's brightest prospects in the game, New Zealand having secured a place in the Fiba Asia Cup in Saudi Arabia in August with two games to play.

The three wins and a loss in four games last year include an 88-49 win over Hong Kong in Auckland and an 89-93 loss to the Philippines in Manila.

Ball made an All-Star top four at a 3x3 tournament at which the Hawks team were seventh in late 2023, was a part of the New Zealand Under-17s' fairy-tale run at the 2024 Fiba U17 World Cup in Turkey where the team placed fourth, and was named in the New Zealand Secondary Schools All-Star five in 2024 after Napier Boys' finished runners-up.

Given a similar opportunity in the 12-strong squad is 18-year-old Canterbury Rams player Tama Isaac. "Both these guys have been dominant players in their junior environments and both have been unfazed by the step-up of the Sal's NBL," Flavell said. "Seeing these guys perform at this level has given me great confidence that they are ready for this challenge."

Also in the squad is Tai Wynyard, who in 2014 became the youngest Tall Black at 16 years and 160 days.

Hawks general manager Jarrod Kenny, who played in 70 matches for New Zealand, said the selection was a big step, but Ball had put in the hard work to develop the skills, fitness and commitment to make him "one of the sharpest" young players he had seen. Kenny said there was a lot of young basketball talent in Hawke's Bay, a "difficulty" being to get them

into the commitment needed to get them to the top.

In addition to his athletic achievements, Ball continues to demonstrate leadership off the court. He was recently appointed Deputy Head Boy at Napier Boys' High School, reflecting his commitment to excellence in all areas of life.

Note: "Indoor Basketball as it was first named came to NBHS for the first time in 1949 when they entered a team in the C Grade competition of the Hawke's Bay Men's basketball Association. As this was the first time the game was played in the School, there was not very much enthusiasm amongst the boys at the beginning of the season... Now that the game has made a start in the School, we hope it will grow to greater height in the future." (Scindian 1949). [These lofty ambitions have certainly been fulfilled with Jackson Ball's selection for the NZ Tall Blacks 76 years later.] Editor.

HB Today/Chris Geddis



Jackson Ball

'Trip of a Lifetime' for Gangster and Dee

Luke Dee (NBHS Year 11 2009-2012) is relishing in the opportunity to compete against the very best in the world at the Longines FEI World Cup Final in Switzerland.

When FEI World Cup New Zealand League Series winner Julie Davey turned down the golden ticket, Luke grabbed the opportunity with both hands. "It is very exciting," said the 31-year-old real estate agent from Hawke's Bay, "but it's very daunting at the same time. I am well aware of the step up it will be there. This isn't an opportunity that comes along every day and I plan to make the most of it."

But one of the toughest parts for Luke about heading off on the trip of a lifetime is missing his three-year-old daughter Freya.

Gangster WW, who he jointly owns with Fiona Hall, will fly out next week, with Luke following shortly after. The horse will fly to Amsterdam and then head to Holger Hetzel's base in northern Germany. The Kiwi combo have a show in Denmark the same weekend as the Defender Horse of the Year Show in New Zealand, and Luke is currently trying to get into the 5* in Paris a few weeks later.

"It is a bit of a longshot but I have my fingers crossed," he says. The horse is on a one-way ticket with Luke staying in Europe until after the April final before coming home for a month and then returning to the Northern Hemisphere to compete again.

German-bred Gangster is an Oldenburger Springfard by Grand Slam VDL out of Korsika who is by Kannan. He started his international career in 2022 with Samantha McIntosh who was riding at Cian O'Connor's barn then. Luke and Fiona bought the horse through Cian who will play an integral part in their European campaign.

Luke and Gangster had their first international start together in a CSI1* at Taupo in late 2023 notching a top seven finish. In September last year they crossed the Tasman to have their first World Cup start at Willinga Park for a top 10. Their four New Zealand World Cup efforts have resulted in a win at Taupo in November, a second in the series final at Waitemata, and a third and fourth in the earlier rounds.

"Gangster has improved in leaps and bounds this year. I think it is a maturity and age thing. He wasn't easy when I tried him but had all the right qualities we were looking for and was certainly the type we wanted to buy. We knew it would take time so didn't rush him in the first two seasons," says Luke.

This is their third season together. "I think going to Australia was a real good thing for him. It allowed us to get into the season a lot earlier and it came with all that travel and experience. He really came into his own there."

Luke says the plan was always to head to Europe after HOY and base there until the 2026 World Championships but he and Fiona didn't need too long to decide to go early when the opportunity arose to head to the final, which is an indoor event.

The horse won New Zealand's only indoor World Cup qualifier and Luke says it seems to suit his temperament. "He stays a little calmer and there's a bit more for him to concentrate on without such a big open space where he can get strong and rushed."

It's been challenging to organise everything in such a tight timeframe but they are ready and amped.

"If I wasn't confident in Gangster's ability we wouldn't be going. Ideally it would be good to have another year under our belts but that's not happening now. We have a lot of confidence in each other. I believe he is careful and scopey enough to do well. He may lack a little experience at that level but I think he will handle it fine."

The horse is "quirky and a handful", and Luke's biggest challenge is keeping him calm when he jumps. "Sometimes you can't so you have to manage it as best you can without him getting frazzled but he is so brave and confident it makes it worth putting up with it."

He believes Gangster is definitely the best horse he has ever sat on. "He is still young and I think he has plenty more in him. I may be biased but I think he is pretty incredible doing what he is doing now. We are very excited about his future and I am fortunate I am the one who gets to ride him."

Luke has previously competed in Europe and the United States where he rode in a New Zealand Nations Cup team.

Gangster's co-owner Fiona Hall can barely contain her excitement. "Just talking about it makes me shiver," she says. "This is what dreams are made of. For me it is all about the team we have, the fun that comes with it and the journey we have been on . . . that just keeps going on. Who knows which way the page will turn?"

She said it was an honour to be representing New Zealand at the final. "I am so fortunate to have Luke, Amelia (Clark) and Gangster on my team and so grateful – I couldn't do it without them. It warms my heart watching them."

Fiona said she knows they'll be "a tiny tadpole in a big pond" in Europe. "It's quite scary but we take one step at a time," she said.

Story Courtesy/Diana Dobson. Photos Courtesy/ Libby Law



New Zealand Indoor World Cup. Luke Dee on Gangster



Gangster and Dee

Letter from Gordon Tronson (NBHS 1967-1969)

[Gordon Tronson who describes himself as a hot rod, show car and race car builder, is originally from Napier but now lives in Las Vegas in the US, recently (March 2025) made a visit to his old school, Napier Boys' High School.]

Here is a brief summary of what I have been doing for the last 50 years.

After Napier Boys' High School in 1969, I worked for the Post Office as a telephone lineman.

In 1974 I immigrated to Canada where I spent 1 year in Saskatchewan then 13 years in Calgary Alberta. I worked for the local phone company where I learned so much as the electronic age progressed from analog phones to digital and all this high tech stuff.

At the age of 24 I owned and operated along with my cousin John Oliver (also NBHS 1966-1968) a 6 second 200mph Funny Car on blown alcohol, at the time I was the youngest driver for such a car in the world. (A very expensive hobby). During this time I did start a Jet boat tour company where I ran a New Zealand built jet boat from Hamilton Boats out of Christchurch, this did not turn out to be profitable due to the fact that Canadian summers were too short.

I soon found myself back at the phone company and as a hobby began to build my dream car a Lamborghini Countach. This including building a wooden buck then molds then final product. The car was featured in an American Magazine and with so much response my new partner and I decided to move down to the USA to build them. We settled in Las Vegas late 1989, I did consider Kansas, glad I did not. We started building cars about ten in all when I was served with a law suit to the tune of 5 million US dollars for copyright infringement Trade Dress to be exact. Had to stop. Well it was back to what I know best and that is telephones.

I have now had my phone company for 30 odd years we install phone systems and tons of computer cable as well CCTV we are an NEC dealer. The population here in Las Vegas started at 400,000 when I arrived it is now over 2.5million fastest growing city in the USA. We now have traffic jams and I believe I qualify as a local now. Needless to say tons of work, oh by the way I did buy property on Breckenridge by the Napier Golf Course Waiohiki, still own it.

Meanwhile it is a lot of fun living in Las Vegas being a 24/7 town never a dull moment, I do not gamble. I am fortunate enough to have two acres with a 1500 sq ft. work shop (not big enough). I then started collecting cars and got into building crazy things like my 1932 Ford Roadster It has two Ford V8 engines with four supercharges all of my own design especially the coupling of the two engines to the single transmission (this is not actually new as back in the fifties drag racers had all kinds of twin engine stuff). They said Hot Rod has become very world famous having been shown on TV in 52 countries.

Hot Rod was invited to Essen Germany as a feature vehicle for probably the biggest auto show in the world, 9 days long 16 hrs a day, 600,000 attendee's. A French film crew came to Las Vegas just to film my Hot Rod, also Big Kenny who is a huge country and western song writer and entertainer came all the way from Nashville Tennessee to film my Hot Rod. He tours around the USA looking for DIY building crazy things while he is not entertaining. I have also built a 1962 Ford Econoline pickup truck that has four super charged engines in back making about 4000 HP (trouble is it destroys transmissions). My next creation was a motor cycle with four Harley-Davidson V Twin engines, this is an engineering marvel as the two engines on the left run backwards and to this day no one has figured out the four major items to be addressed to accomplish this. The total length of the motor cycle is only 12 inches more than my stock Harley Road King.

The motor cycle and Pickup were also shipped to Essen Germany for the same show. The day before the opening was press day and there were TV

film crews from all over Europe were present and of course I had to start the pickup, much appreciated.

My latest is what I call the world's first Super Super Car it started out as a 2002 Corvette which I completely modified making my own moulds to build a mid engine Super Car. It now has two brand new 2022 LT4 super charged fuel injected Chevrolet engines making combined 1300 HP and 1300 ft pounds of torque, once again Trans is a weak link. I also have just finished restoring a 1958 Corvette (was owned by a gentleman who worked at area 51) to this day his wife has no idea what he did. Of course I could not just have a stock Corvette so it now has a super-charged small block Chevy engine. I am now building a 1932 Ford 3 window coupe, with one engine and of course super charged with 3 carbs on my home built manifold.

I still have my communications business and will retire soon but enjoy being out there meeting new people and of course making money to fund my hobby. Some of the other cars in my collection include an original 1956 Ford Thunderbird, 1960 Cadillac Coup-Deville, 1960 Chevrolet Impala with a 348 V8 with triple carbs, 1960 Chevrolet Elcomino, 1969 Mustang Convertible, and a 1972 Plymouth Cuda with 440 six pack V8 engine, 1973 Dodge Challenger, eight Corvettes, two 57 Chevrolets, 1996 Ferrari F355, 1985 Ferrari Testarossa, first one in the USA and a 1992 200mph Lamborghini Diablo.

You can always catch up on a bunch of articles of my builds by going onto You-Tube and put in my name:

Gordon Tronson in the search bar.

*Gordon Tronson 1215 San Eduardo Ave,
Henderson, NV 89001 | (702) 521- 5786
Email: GCT53@earthlink.net*



Motor Cycle with four Harley-Davidson V twin engines.



Double Trouble now with four Supercharges

Obituaries

JOHN ROBERT MCMILLIN

17 October 1935 – 18 December 2024 Aged 89

John McMillin (NBHS 1949-1950) passed away on Wednesday 18th December 2024.

In late 1973 John McMillin decided that working on the waterfront was not for him. He decided his future lay in the printing industry where he had worked previously. McMillin had met Bob Craig, a compositor two years previously while working at Whitcoulls in Napier. After inspecting the plant of the North Waikato times printing business in Ngaruawahia that was soon up for sale due to the partners retiring, they bought it and transported it to Napier on two truck and trailer units. McMillin Craig Ltd was formed first operating out of a tin shed in Mersey Street, Pandora Napier, and after alterations the business opened in June 1974. The plant was completely letterpress, as little was known at the time about offset printing. There was a downward trend in the economy after a recent boom and it was not a good time to set up business. McMillin and Craig found they were faced with long hours and a lot of hard work and worry. Eventually a client base was established, an increase in staff followed. With the purchase of new plant, the company slowly switched to offset printing but still retaining some letterpress machines for die-cutting. In 1984 the business moved to Thackeray Street Napier, closer to the city. A stationery outlet was established a year after the move. Staff now 20. McMillin Craig became the first commercial printing company in Hawke's Bay to install a computer typesetting machine (ITEK) and provided typesetting for advertising agencies and other print companies. With the stationery shop booming an increase in staff was needed, a move was made to Carlyle Street in December 1994. At the same time it joined nation-wide Office Products Group allowing it to trade more favourably with its larger competitors. At the end of 1996 John McMillin and Bob Craig sold the business to five Hastings businessmen. John McMillin retired as Manager in March 1999.

The Father of Napier City Rovers.

A life time love of football, John and his mates would have to smuggle their footballs into Napier Boys' High School to avoid teachers and school mates scorn. (Napier City Rovers Newsletter) John was in NBHS 1st XI Soccer team 1949-1950.

John Played for Napier High School Old Boys which became Napier City. John was a key driver in negotiating the merger of Napier City and Napier Rovers in 1972/3. It wasn't until 1985, under chairman John McMillin, that the amalgamated Napier City Rovers found Chatham Cup glory but also had to come to terms with their relegation from the then National League.

John led the introduction of football into Primary schools and subsequently the formation of the suburban junior football clubs.

John's work in this area was recognised by NZ Football and by Sport HB.

As a Foundation member of Napier City Rovers, and life member John attended every home game up to the last few seasons but avidly followed the games that were streamed.

Napier City Rovers awards annually the McMillin Cup for Most Conscientious Club Member. The game in the Hawke's Bay region owes a lot to John's vision and drive and would not be the success it is today without his massive contribution.

Napier City Rovers/First Impressions (History of Printing in Hawke's Bay)/ Chris Geddis



John McMillin.



1949 First Soccer team John McMillan sitting front left foreground

ROBERT BARRY MILBURN

1933-2025 Age 92

Barry Milburn (NBHS 1946-1949) has passed away in Whangarei on 21 March 2025. Barry was the son of long-time legendary Napier Boys High School Master, Robert (Bert) Milburn (Master at NBHS 1921-1962, 41 years with 31 years as coach of the first XV). Like his father Bert, Barry was also a gifted Tennis player and was NBHS Senior Tennis Champion in 1949. Barry Milburn spent some time working in Napier once he finished school, Barry was a first choice lock for Napier High School Old Boys senior rugby team 1956-61, before packing up his motorbike and moving to Auckland where he worked hard making tennis rackets, amongst other things. He was still passionate about his tennis and played competitively through until his 50's and even a bit after.

After some time he followed his gut and bought a ticket to the United Kingdom. He was curious about the "home land" as he called it, even though he was a 4th generation Kiwi. He loved living in England and made lifelong friends with the family he boarded with. He worked for a while at the Ship Hotel in Weybridge and then at Vickers Aviation also based in Weybridge, Surrey. He returned to New Zealand on a motorbike, with another man - 2 to the one bike! They rode overland through Europe, Middle East, Pakistan and India before taking jobs on a ship to Darwin, Australia. Barry decided to take a bus on to Sydney as I think after so long sharing one motor bike the relationship may have been challenged!

Growing up Barry spent much of the holidays at his grandparent's farm in Kaiwaka, north of Napier which lead to him always wanting to be a farmer. Via family connections he worked hard in various shepherd positions in Central Hawkes Bay before taking the Stock Managers role at Akitio Station where he remained, happily, for around 10 years, personally managing the Angus Stud arm as well as the rest of the Station. He married Annette Hyde and they had 2 daughters - Sherilyn and Robyn - while managing a farm in Waimarama. The girls boarded at NGHS while the family lived at Akitio. Barry was successful with a then Lands and Survey Ballot farm, sheep and beef - on the Kaipara Harbour.

Retirement took them to Taupo where after a stint owning and running Taupo Luggage they bought 60 acres on Palmer Mill Road Taupo, where Barry was able to run some sheep and cattle, keep chooks and grow his usual extensive vegetable garden.

Annette passed away in 2010 in Whakatane and Dad opted to move to Whangarei where Sherilyn and her family were settled. Against odds he beat bladder cancer at 80 and non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma at 87 and after the latter he miraculously (he always had a stubborn side!) recovered from repeated infections from chemotherapy emerging cancer free and fighting fit. He passed away peacefully with his daughters beside him on 21 March 2025.

Robyn Smale (Daughter).



Barry Milburn (Player in White) for NHSOB.



Barry Milburn

SENIOR SERGEANT (RETIRED) TERENCE ROSS (MORT) MORTENSEN

28 September 1944 - 8 December 2024 Age 80

British Empire Medal for Gallantry, New Zealand Police Long Service & Good Conduct Medal and one of the Heroes of the 1964 Khandallah (Wellington) Tunnel tragedy has died on 8 December 2024 age 80 at Hastings Hospital after a major stroke.

In 1964 Terence Mortensen embarked on a successful career with the New Zealand Police. By 1969, he had attained the rank of Sergeant and on transferring to Kawerau, he became the youngest Sergeant in New Zealand to have charge of his own station. Mortensen was promoted to Senior Sergeant in 1976, and two years later, was appointed to the position of National Crime Prevention Coordinator at Police National Headquarters. In this role, Mortensen was distinguished, first, for being the only Non-Commissioned Officer to hold a national role at Headquarters, and second, for introducing neighbourhood watch to New Zealand.

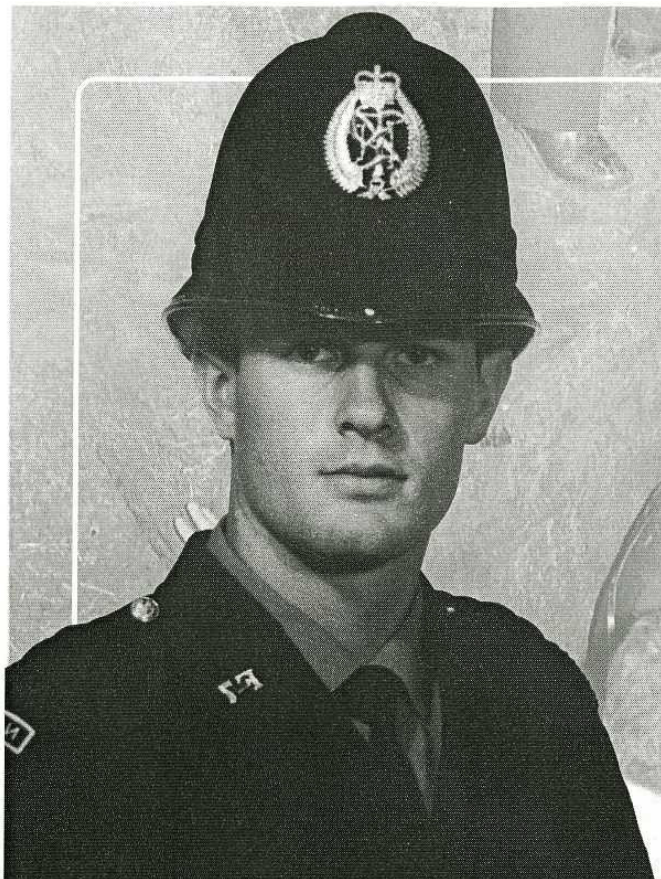
On the evening 14 June 1964, Wellington's emergency services were alerted to three young boys trapped inside a Khandallah utilities tunnel. The tunnel was filled with pockets of gas, some of which were later identified as methane. Quickly overcome, the boys' adventure had become life threatening. Time was of the essence. The rescue was made both difficult and treacherous by the tunnel's small entrance and crawl space and a large water pipe with couplings that ran along its middle. Progress was so difficult that it took firemen in respirators approximately half an hour to negotiate the first 457 metres of the tunnel. What no-one knew was that a nearby coal gas pipe was leaking carbon monoxide into the water tunnel. The gas was odourless, colourless and deadly. Between 5 and 6pm that night, Warren Voss was asked by his mother to find his brother. He went to the tunnel entrance and heard cries. "He went into the tunnel but could not see anything." The Dominion reported. Others tried and police were soon at the scene. A police officer went in and found one boy, about 200 metres in. 'Constable Painter staggered and collapsed as he was helped to fresh air.' Other helpers collapsed inside the tunnel.

Constables Terence Mortensen (NBHS 1958-61) and Dave Painter (NBHS 1955-56) were both Old Boys of Napier Boys' High School, had not hesitated to enter the tunnel in hope of rescuing the children. Due to the efforts of the two constables, one child, Peter Ryan aged 13, was saved from certain death. Both Painter and Mortensen collapsed as a result of being exposed to the gas and were admitted to hospital after inhaling the toxic fumes from the tunnel.

Two boys, Lance Richard Voss aged 13 and Wayne Niven, 14, and an ambulance officer, Ernest Barlow, were killed in this tragic accident. Barlow had served for 21 years and was the first New Zealand ambulance officer to die on active duty. For their heroism, both Painter and Mortensen were awarded the British Empire Med BEM (Gall) in the civil division for gallantry in the 1965 Queen's Birthday Honours. "In recognition of his great courage and tenacious devotion to duty during rescue operations at a tunnel at Khandallah on the evening of Sunday the 14th day of June 1964." Syd Barlow, would posthumously join a handful of people to receive a Queen's commendation for brave conduct in the 1965 Queen's Birthday Honours. Of the fire, ambulance, police and members of the public, Barlow and the two children were, remarkably, the only ones to die.

David Painter was awarded a QSM in the 1998 New Year Honours List, "For Public Service in the NZ Police" and died November 3 2020.

Columns Dec 2020 / Chris Geddis



Constable Terence Mortensen, 1965. NZ Police museum



The British Empire Medal for Gallantry & the NZ Police Long Service and Good Conduct Medal Awarded to Senior Sergeant Terence Mortensen. NZ Police Museum.

PATRICK IVAN (PAT) PARSONS

November 1, 1942 — December 21, 2024 Age 82

Hawke's Bay researcher Pat Parsons, (NBHS 1956-1960) who was revered for protecting Ngāti Kahungunu whakapapa and gathering history crucial to numerous Treaty of Waitangi claims in Hawke's Bay, died on December 21 2024.

Parsons was born in Napier, son of Jack and Wever (nee Lopdell) Parsons, and turned 82 the previous month. He had 42 years in teaching and education.

He is the subject of numerous online tributes, commonly saying that while he was Pākehā he was held in as high esteem among Māori as any kaumātua or rangatira, particularly for his ability to recite the names of any person in a whakapapa without need for written reference. He had in-depth knowledge of the history, genealogy and early occupation of Māori in the Ahuriri and Heretaunga regions of Te Matau-a-Māui, Hawke's Bay.

He was taken into the confidence of kaumātua, who once told him, when he was considering further university studies, that he would learn more by staying back in Hawke's Bay, where they would pass on the knowledge. He traipsed the rohe of Ngāti Kahungunu pinpointing historical urupā (cemeteries) and other sites, and read thousands of pages of history, including Native Land Court minute books.

In the mid-1990s hapū of Moteo, Tangoio and Petane honoured him as a kaumātua, presenting him with a korowai and a greenstone pendant. He was made an honorary member of the collective seven hapū of Te Whanganui Ā Orotū, the once expansive inland waterway that stretched across the area now known as Napier City. In September 2024, Parsons was accorded the Meritorious Achievements honour in the Napier City Council Civic Awards.

Dame Claudia Orange, winner of the Goodman Fielder Wattie Book of the Year for her 1987 book *The Treaty of Waitangi*, has in the past also acknowledged Parsons' long-time involvement with the Waitangi Tribunal hearings in Hawke's Bay.

Mainly held in the 1990s, the hearings involved huge amounts of research beforehand and afterwards as claims accepted by the Tribunal were not settled by the Crown for several more decades.

Notable was one of the earliest lodged before the Tribunal, WAI55 (Te Whanganui Ā Orotū, Napier Inner Harbour). It was lodged in 1988, and subject of both findings and remedies reports in the 1990s, yet not settled until after the passing of the Ahuriri Hapū Claims Settlement Act in 2021.

There was also what Taiwhenua o Te Whanganui Ā Orotū chief executive Matt Mullany calls his "towering contribution" to the tribunal's 2004 Mohaka Ki Ahuriri report — covering 20 historical claims heard between November 1996 and February 2000, and concerning loss of land as a result of pre-1865 Crown purchases, the functions of the Native Land Court, the 1867 Mohaka-Waikare confiscation, and later Crown purchasing, and barriers to use of remaining land.

It was an interest developed from grandfather Leo Lopdell, a fluent speaker of Māori, who farmed leased Māori land at Bay View. He took Parsons on horseback to visit friends, among them a connection with te ao Māori, and Bob Mokopuna Toki Cotterell, kaumātua, renowned whakapapa expert of Wharerangi, and foundational mentor.

Another influence was James Waitaringa Mapu, a Ngāti Hinepare kaumātua and statesman, who married Ārepa (Alpha) Hineiaia Tareha.

He was a published author of "In the shadow of Te Waka (The history of the Te Pohue District) in 1997. He also contributed as one of the authors to the multi-authored *West to the Annie: Renata Kawepo's Hawke's Bay Legacy*, covering the area of Hawke's Bay bounded by the Ngaurororo and

Tutaekuri rivers, Fernhill and the Kaweka Ranges, and published by the RD9 Historical Trust in 2002.

In 2006 Pat Parsons tirelessly searched and found some of the works of artist Gottfried Lindauer, famous for his depiction of Maori chief and wāhine of early Kahungunu and Hawke's Bay territory.

He was extensively consulted by iwi, hapū and councils, and regarded as an authority on issues, including the 1824 Battle of Pakake and the 1866 tragedy of Omarunui.

Most of his life story was told in a four-and-a-half-hour interview with the Hawke's Bay Knowledge Bank in 2017.

He related enormous details of history, including the death of his father in a car crash in 1954, how the family was held together by his mother "through thick and thin" and his days at Taradale School and Napier Boys' High School (1956-1960), where he started in 1956. At school, he was the senior champion tennis player in 1959 and later became a Hawke's Bay senior representative player and selector.

Parsons went to teachers' college and, after teaching at several schools in Hawke's Bay as far south as Porangahau, spent five years in Paris and London working for the Berlitz Language Schools teaching English as a foreign language. He then taught the staff of an influential industrialist in Italy.

In 1974, he was hired by Hereworth School in Havelock North and also taught for 10 years at Hastings Boys' High School. He is survived by his sister Kerry Smart and brother Michael.

HB Today/Chris Geddis



Patrick Parsons

Last Roll Call

The following Old Boys and teachers passed away recently:

ATKINS, John Frederick – 1952
BERRY, Dr Paul Randolph - 1952-1956
BIBBY, James Hutchinson (Jim) – 1951-1954
BROWNLIE, John Denis – 1954-1957
BURNETT, Bryan Millner James (Puk) – 1956-1957
COKER, Ivan Frederick - 1947
COTTER, Rief – 2005-2007
CRANSWICK, Roy Lowson – 1951-1952
DEMPSEY, Peter Joseph – 1948-1950
ELKINS, Jeffrey Alan (Jeffy) - 1962
EXETER, PAUL Anthony – 1952-1953
FINCH, Brian Alexander – 1953-1955
FRATER, Ian Murray (Murray) – 1956-1957
GAHAGAN, John Mackie – 1958-1962
GOOD, Graham David – F4 1957
GRIFFITHS, Melvyn George (Mel) Staff – 1980-1986
GROVES, Stephen James – 1971-1974
HARRIS, John Ewart - 1954-1957
HARRISON, Colin Arthur- 1947-1949
HAWKE, Gregory Stephen (Greg) – 1949-1952
HELLYER, Lyall Carl – 1951-1952
HERBERT, Malcolm Andrew – 1978-1981

HOLLYMAN, Douglas Brian (Doug) – 1952-1953
JACKSON, Raymond Frank (Ray) – 1954-1955
KARAURIA, Kaea Loughlin - 2024-2025
KING, Brian William – 1952-1953
LE COMTE, Travis Ben – 1991-1995
MCMILLIN, John Robert - 1949-1950
MEAR, Richard Stephen – 1985-1990
MILBURN, Robert Barry (Barry) – 1946-1949
MORTENSEN, Terence Ross (Terry) – 1958-1961
NORTHCOTT, Peter James – 1952-1955
PARKES, Alan James (Parksey) – 1968-1969
PARSONS, Patrick Ivan (Pat) – 1956-1960
PEDERSEN, Roger – 1965-1968
PHILLIPS, Douglas John (Doug) – 1953-1958
PRITCHARD, Michael Bruce (Mick) – 1955
SCOTT, John William (Bill) – 1952-1954
SHAPLAND, Brian Vernon – 1949-1951
SIMS, David John (Daisy) – 1962
WAGG, Nowell Alvin – 1949-1951
WAKEMAN, Peter Denis (Pete) – 1953-1956
WICKEN, Jonathon Rhett - 1988-1993

*“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
Giving full name of the Old Boy or Teacher (as per death notice), who
has passed away and approximate dates at school.}