

Hauraki Plains College


Community Newsletter



Photo taken by Heather Field - Fog over the Plains

Community Newsletter

Our Community Newsletter combines news from Hauraki Plains College, The Haurakians (past pupils and teachers) and the Haurakian Charitable Trust. If you would like to sponsor our newsletter email:

 amandaf@haurakiplains.school.nz

Key Dates

- Thurs 11 March: Whānau Hui 7pm College Hall
- Thurs 18 March: Out of Zone Info Evening 7pm College Hall
- Thurs 25 - Fri 26 March: River Conferencing
- Fri 2 - Tues 6 April: Easter Weekend

HPC Students Building Tiny

Senior Hauraki Plains College students are engaged in building a “tiny house” as the year 12 & 13 Trades class project for 2021.

“The Trades course has been initiated to meet the needs of students who have an interest in “hands on learning” and are considering a trades career,” commented Shane Chivers who is teaching the course.

Both boys and girls have enrolled in the class. Students will firstly build a 7.2 x 2.4 meter galvanized tandem trailer which will carry the detachable tiny house dwelling. Construction of the trailer will involve students in MIG welding technology and component fabrication. Students will also install the trailer’s electrical wiring, light and brake circuits and fit all associated components. The trailer will be warranted and registered. The associated compliance and certification activities will be carried out by the students. Construction of the trailer is expected to run throughout terms 1 and much of term 2, known within our school structure as Semester A.

Phase two of the project will involve construction of the tiny house. In this, students will develop a wide range of skills focused on the building trades and work towards BCT (Building and Construction Trades) qualifications.

The tiny house is designed to consider such things as the sustainability of materials used, healthy and warm living, environmental impact and self sufficiency. The house will contain all of the normal housing facilities including a kitchen and a bathroom with composting toilet. Hot water will be provided by a gas califont and be plumbed to accommodate solar hot water should the owner wish to install it at a later date. Likewise, the electrical wiring will provide for future instalment of solar panels. The house will be double glazed and fully insulated.

Construction will be carried out to comply with New Zealand’s Building Code and the Building Act 2014

Students will perform all construction tasks with the exception of electrical wiring and plumbing. Both of these aspects will be carried out by registered trades personnel who will engage the students as much as possible.

Head of Department Pete Carpenter “believes this is another opportunity for students at Hauraki Plains College to immerse themselves in a real life context that will give them usable skills and knowledge in multiple industries. The hope is that by giving students access to a wider range of trades they

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**More
Than
A School**



Hauraki Plains College

can have a more informed view when choosing a pathway that suits their needs”.

We would like to acknowledge the support and guidance of Build Tiny Ltd, Katikati and Bay Engineering Solutions, Tauranga. On completion, the house will be sold and expressions of interest are welcome. Please contact Mr Shane Chivers at the College, 07 867 7029.



Principal's Comment



Welcome to new families and whānau to HPC.

Despite the disruption caused by COVID, we were really happy with our NCEA results and well done to students who worked hard to complete their qualifications.

This year, we are continuing with our three strategic goals, each with their own specific outcome:

- Engaging students in work that matters: capable learners who are engaged, learning and achieving qualifications
- Supporting learners to navigate purposeful pathways: students are learning ready, life ready, work ready and world ready
- Developing positive community partnerships: HPC provides expansive opportunities for our students and the wider community

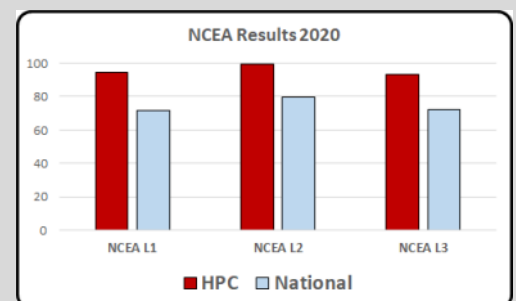
Goals without specific ways to measure them can become just high sounding words so specific achievement targets are set to measure progress. Our targets for the coming year are as follows:

1. 95% of Year 10 students have attained functional literacy and numeracy (Curriculum Level 5)
2. 95% of school leavers have completed the School Leavers Toolkit

With regard to the first achievement target, functional literacy and numeracy refers to the knowledge and skills needed to access further learning (ie can cope with NCEA Level 1 work), and meet the challenges of everyday life and work beyond the school gates. This target also looks ahead to significant changes in NCEA Level 1 which are happening in 2023 and in which functional literacy and numeracy is a pre-requirement for any NCEA qualification.

The second achievement target is around ensuring that our students are ready for life beyond the school gates. The School Leavers Toolkit covers a number of key skills such as having a career plan, knowing how to communicate well in the workplace, developing a CV, financial management, basic First Aid, drivers licence, appropriate social media use and personal wellbeing strategies. The toolkit has been drawn up after conversations with local employers and ex students who have contributed ideas from their own experiences.

Ngaire Harris
PRINCIPAL



Board of Trustees Update



Welcome to a new school year. The Christmas holidays were a hive of activity around the school starting with the repainting program of the whole school, a redesign of a fit for purpose office area for our PE staff, new LED lighting fitted throughout the school, the BCT house was moved off to its new owner, the garden outside the Centennial Centre was redesigned and upgraded and the purchase of stationery and uniform went online.

Behind the scenes we are working at engaging a new project management company to assist us with the next five year maintenance funding from the Government. We are waiting on the supply of some air conditioning units to arrive in the country for upgrading some areas. An upgrade of the Gateway vehicle and some

ground maintenance equipment was also undertaken. A very busy six week period.

This year as part of its ongoing triennial review cycle, the Board is reviewing the Personnel and the Property / Financial policies. Copies of these policies and procedures are available from the school office by contacting - studentservices@haurakiplains.school.nz or phone 07 867 7029.

Next year (2022) brings about elections for our schools parents representatives on the school Board. If you are interested in the inner workings of the school feel free to come along and sit in on one or more of our monthly meetings. To find out more please make contact with the school.

Andrew Gordon
BOT CHAIR

Purnell Lawyers
Phone: 07 868 8680

Purnell
LAWYERS

Insight Legal
Phone: 07 867 7014



Parent Page



We all live busy lives but sometimes we need to stop and breathe. The Five Ways to Wellbeing is a set of five simple actions from the Mental Health Foundation that have proven to improve wellbeing. Use the Five

Ways to Wellbeing tool to build and support good mental wellbeing in your everyday lives. The five actions are **Connect, Be Active, Keep learning, Give and Take notice**. Follow the link to learn more about Five Ways to Wellbeing.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/ways-to-wellbeing/>

If any parents are struggling to control your kids' phone usage, **Qustodio** is worth a look. This gives parents the ability to balance their kids' phone time with family life / school and other activities and eliminates all those arguments that some families have each night trying to get kids off their phones.

It costs \$54 per year per family and offer free trials.

Check out <https://www.qustodio.com/>



Excellence Endorsements

Congratulations to the following students who achieved NCEA endorsed with Excellence:

Level 1: Rowan Wathen, Reuben Claridge, Anthony Barker, Kezia Harrison, Kayley Gibberd, Hunter Crowe, Sarah Jamieson, Ania Ballantine, Molly Maitland, Hayley Gibbons, Reema Arsilan, Hannah Corbett, Alesha De Penning, Rosanne Fernandes, Niamh Hill, Ryan Courtney, Elaina Beagley, Samantha Whittington-Slater, Sean Ea, Rose Macready, Ella Ashford-Beck, Rhian Ball, Michael Ellis, Maggie Morrison, Chloe Biddles, Alysha Read, Aleisha Charteris, Hayley Mackay, Brooke Barker, Emma Reid, Alyson Hood.

Level 2: Maggie Downes, Nicholas Hutt, Samantha Jennings, Morgan Harris, Lucy Barrier, Bree McCowatt, Joseph Goudie, Molly Burge, Emma Gordon, Memphis McClelland, Jameena Aralar, Ava Heaven, Alexander Veldsman, Imogen Bjerring, Haley Munro, Daniella Van Vilet, Sophie Scott, Irene Irvine, Caitlin Burczak, Sarah Blake, Jared Sewell.

Level 3: Shannon Aislabie, Shontelle Aitchison, Faith Ball, Ceilidh Brown, Zoe Craggs, Jenna Doherty, Levi Dyer, Matthew Flooks, Zac Hemmings, Kaylah Hood, Lewis Horder, Connor Howard, Gabby Hughes, Tristin Hull, Evana Main, Lily Maitland, Eleanor Merchant, Dominic Merz, Libby Morton, Daniel Mounsey, Holly Murray, Abby Reader, Monique Shirley, Adam Starkey, Donelle Steer, Jaimee Stevens.

Congratulations also to last year's Dux **Kaylah Hood** who achieved a **scholarship** in Biology.

Welcome to New Staff 2021

With a staff of over 80, there are always people coming and going on the HPC staff list. 2021 brings both new staff and former staff returning.

Jordana van Vliet (Music teacher) rejoins us having been a student at HPC and has since completed a Bachelor of Music at Vision College Hamilton before undertaking teacher training last year. Leo McMenamin joins Jordana in the Music department. Mr McMenamin graduated recently from the New Zealand School of Music at Victoria University.

Two former staff are also returning: Famke van Laren teaching Food Technology while Ann Leuthart is on study leave and Bronwyn Dyer resuming a teaching position in Primary Industries (Agriculture and Horticulture).

New to HPC is Whaea Rawena Rangitairua (School Counsellor), Sophia Wang (Teacher Mathematics) Megan Sargent (Teacher Aide) and Toni Ross (Lab Technician).



Jordana van Vliet



Leo McMenamin



Ann Leuthart



Famke van Laren



Bronwyn Dyer



Rawena Rangitairua



Sophia Wang



Megan Sargent



Toni Ross

Student Leaders for 2021



Bree McCowatt - Head Girl

My interests include sport, the ocean and learning new things whilst pursuing my passions and striving to achieve my goals. This year I hope to achieve my NCEA Level three with an Excellence endorsement while leading the school as head girl to achieve its fullest potential in all areas of school life. I am keeping my options open for a range of career pathways including, radiology, medicine, marine biology, navy or full time surf sport/lifeguard. It is important to me that I push myself to my fullest potential and achieve the most that I can while staying true to who I am.



Joseph Goudie - Head Boy

I enjoy sports, running track and keeping fit, but can't beat quality time with mates and family. The Student Leadership Team have projects set out for the year that we want to complete for a positive impact on the school to be remembered for years to come. As head boy I also aim to help work with the junior students to help them develop their confidence and become their best selves. Bree and I both want to aim on being real positive ambassadors for the school and making the most of our time in the role over the year. After graduating from Hauraki, I am currently looking at studying for a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Psychology and perhaps specialising in Industrial Health, or Neurological Psychology.



Morgan Harris - Deputy Head Girl

I am interested in human rights protection, environmental sustainability, hockey and helping others. In my role as academic leader, I hope to run a tutoring program that kids are using and feel comfortable coming to for support. I want students to know it is okay to ask for help. I also hope to show students that being themselves is beautiful, through shining my own unique light and embracing all that makes up me. I hope that I can be an example to our students of someone who is really 'them to a T' and inspire them to be themselves too, pursuing what they love and what makes them happy. I plan to go to university to study in the environmental science field.



Reece Benny - Deputy Head Boy

My interests include all things sporting but particularly Cricket, Rugby, Badminton, and Umpiring. This year I'm hoping to achieve my rank score for university entry both personally and as a goal for my role as Deputy Head Boy and Junior Academic Leader. I am hoping to positively influence juniors to strive for their best in everything they do. My career pathway of health science has been a goal for as long as I can remember and I know it's going to be a challenge but one that I am very excited to take up. Continuing to learn from every experience is important to me.

Hui-ā-Whānau 2021 - Te Kāreti o Hauraki

Haere mai e nga iwi huihui tātou
E piki ki runga ki te waka matauranga
hāpainga nga hoe ko te pono ko te tika ko te
rangimārie te tata ko te aroha te puna ko te toko i werohia e mohi te
here tāngata e

Maahanga whakarere kai, whakarere waka
Ko wai ahau?

Ko Taupiri Kuao te maunga Ko Waikato te awa Ko Te Papa o Rotu me
Waingaro nga marae Ko Ngaati Maahanga Ngaati Tamainupoo Ngaati Te
Huaki Ngaati Hourua nga hapuu Ko Te Oneparepare tōku tūrangawaewae Ko
Maahanga te rangatira Ko Tainui te waka tupuna

Ko Normie Tautoru Te Whanake Rehtai Anderson ahau

Kia ora, te whānau

Apologise for the delay in holding our Hui-ā-Whānau for 2021. We have postponed our hui until Thursday 11 March 7pm and are still in the process of organising things so we are prepared for that evening. Thank you for your patience and understanding and hope our meeting is productive and our goals are set for the future. Hopefully COVID will not disrupt this.

Tukuna te paehiringa ka topa - Let Excellence Strive

This year has been the first time for a while since we have introduced Te Reo at NCEA. It has been awesome to see a number of our students wanting to learn the language and being proud to do so.

It is early days but we have noticed a positive change it has made to the students' learning. We are proud of our Rangatira who have achieved their first set of credits for this year and the number of juniors taking NCEA in Year 9 and 10.

I hope that this will set the trend for others who are wanting also to learn the language and culture to take up Te Reo. I am proud of these students and really focused to making this work for them.

If you have any queries please ring the school and ask for Matua Normie. I look forward to the hui and discussions.

Matua Normie



Matua Normie

The Great Barrier Camp Experience

Prior to the start of the school year, nineteen Year 13 students had the opportunity to attend the Hillary Outdoors Leadership Camp on Great Barrier Island.

Dhana Wiggins recalls the experience. "When hearing about the opportunity, we were told it was a leadership camp and we were going to go through experiences we've never gone through before. This started on the very first day when we were split up into three groups of people we weren't too familiar with, and we quickly realised that they will be our mini family for the next five days.

Every day was a mixture of interacting with new people and many new experiences in an environment that pushed us out of our comfort zone and enabled us to grow in confidence and in ourselves. The whole week easily holds many of the best memories I've made throughout my High School years. Along with challenging you, the Hillary Outdoors Camp has an enjoyable experience for every person, whether it's high ropes, abseiling or just the everyday swim and team building."

Along with Dhana, Daniella van Vliet remembers the Great Barrier's experience as one of the best opportunities she has taken up at HPC. "It was amazing to push myself so far out of my comfort zone and to realise that I am much stronger than I thought. If you had told me that I would wake up at 3 o'clock in the morning, and go on a 25km hike all before 11 am I probably would have laughed at you. Yet that is exactly what we did. It is a humbling experience looking back at it all and realising that I would not have been able to do any of that without the amazing team behind me. Throughout the whole time we were encouraging each other and making sure that everyone was okay. I learnt a lot about what it is to be a leader and what my style of leadership is. Leadership is more than just standing at the top telling people what to do, it is listening, communicating, being willing to look like a fool and making sure that everyone's voice is heard. I would definitely recommend this camp to anyone who wants to make amazing memories, discover who they are as a leader and be challenged mentally and physically."

Dhana Wiggins and Daniella van Vliet



Ecoquest Camp

Over the past few years at HPC I have found my thing: looking after our earth mother Papatuanuku and being the best kaitiaki I can be. So when the opportunity of going to Kaiaua to spend five days learning from people who also care deeply about our environment with the Ecoquest Experience Ecology in Action Camp, I quickly jumped on it. Ecoquest is an education foundation that offers educational opportunities to promote sustainability, based just out of Kaiaua in Whakatiwai. For many years they have hosted international undergraduate students, for three month learning experiences. This year was the first ever time they have hosted kiwi youth in an overnight five day camp to learn what it is like to be an environmental scientist. With the help of funding from the Snow Douglas Trust, a trust formed by a past pupil to support students in developing and pursuing their area of interest, I was able to go.

The five days were so enjoyable. I got to be around a fantastic bunch of university lecturers, who were passionate and caring, to learn about our beautiful local species and how to protect them best. Each day had a different focus: endemic bats, insects, shorebirds and the impact of climate change on coastal wetlands. The area I found most interesting was learning about using insects as identifications for water health. With a net and a couple of minutes of stomping to turn up the water, we took a sample of the insects in a local creek. What species were present gave us an indication of the quality of the water. We

found that the water had many species sensitive to pollution and therefore worked out the water was relatively healthy. I also enjoyed listening to the nationally critical long-tail bats on bat monitors deep in the Hunua ranges, which I sadly didn't even know existed before the camp. This native species is endangered due to habitat destruction by humans, cutting down the big old trees that the bats roost in and predation from introduced species to New Zealand. This encounter made me think about how hard it is to protect our native species and the environment when little of the general public even know of the issues.

I now not only have reinforced my ideas about the importance of looking after our environment and spreading awareness of the environmental issues in our communities but have seen that I can study and work in this field in the future. All-round it was a wonderful experience that I won't be forgetting any time soon.

Morgan Harris



Sports @ HPC

Congratulations to the following students:**Off-Road Racing:**

Lincoln Whiddett competed at the Mickey Thompson NZ Stadium Off-Road Championship. He was awarded a special dispensation for his age which permitted him to compete in the Super 450 class racing against the men, where he placed 1st. At 13 he was the youngest amongst a field of pro's and veterans and made a dream debut now leading his class in the championship standings.

Emma Mckinstry also placed 2nd in class 7 superbuggy.

Rowing:

Rowers competed at the recent North Island Club Championships regatta. The following gained placings at the regatta:

Maggie Morrison and Rebecca Adams gained gold in the Girls U17 double sculls.

Lucas Dowty, Ethan Claridge, Hamish Bean, Matthew Simpson and Emma Austen gained silver in the Boys U16 quadruple sculls.

We would also like to congratulate all the medal winners at the Lake Pupuke Regatta held last Saturday, where Hauraki came away with 4 gold, 2 silver and 2 bronze medals. Congratulations rowers.

Shooting:

Nicholas Hutt won the Junior North Island Olympic Trench title. Ayshia Hull was selected to be a part of the North Island Ladies DTL team. Ashling Welch picked up a title in NZ Sporting Shoot (Ladies section)

Surf Life Saving: Well done to Bree Mccowatt, who came away with two silvers and a bronze at the Bay of Plenty Champs for surf life saving.

Cricket:

Lastly, well done to the First XI cricket team who are in the running for the Waikato Dave Hoskin Challenge Trophy. If they win one more game, their names go on the trophy, the first Thames Valley side to do this.



The annual Head of Harbour Regatta was held on Saturday 13 February in Takapuna, Auckland, where Hauraki competed against other Auckland crews in a 1000m sprint race. Ours crews battled hard, coming away with 4 golds, 2 silvers and 2 bronzes. Well done to everyone who competed, bring on the AON Junior Regatta!



HPC Swimming Sports was held at the Ngatea Public Pools on Monday 22 February. Well done to Piako who received the most Hapu points!

	CHAMPIONS	RUNNERS UP
JUNIOR GIRLS	Holly Timmins	Elise Floan
JUNIOR BOYS	Allan Barriball	Jayden Kuter
INTERMEDIATE GIRLS	Sophie Perry	Ruby Forsman Emily Logan
INTERMEDIATE BOYS	Lucas Dowty	Miles Sargent
SENIOR GIRLS	Bree McCowatt	Fairven Harris
SENIOR BOYS	Logan Wenzlick	Hamish Hart



Don (Daff) Neil Looks Back and Forward



Early Days

I was born in Paeroa in 1953. At a very young age I moved with my mother and father to Pio Pio in the King Country. My mother was from Pio Pio and my dad was from Paeroa. I spent about four years living in Pio Pio. When I was five years old I moved with my father up to Ngatea to live with Andrew and Belle Courtney. Belle Courtney was my dad's eldest sister. My father was a butcher, he worked for Courtney Meats. I spent the next 12 years living with the Courtney family. My mum and dad had separated, so I would go and stay with my mother during the school holidays.

Having arrived in Ngatea 63 years ago, I have seen so many changes to the place. I remember lots of macrocarpa trees all along Pipiroa Road. The tennis courts used to be up Pipiroa Road where Graham and Sue Hughes now live. The tennis courts were asphalt. I think there were around four courts there, they were surrounded by trees. My good mate Doug Hodgson and I used to cut the trees down for Guy Fawkes as we would make a huge bomb fire. I'm sure we wouldn't be able to do that now. Guy Fawkes was always a great night. Most of the youngsters who lived in Ngatea would attend. The night would finish off with a sausage sizzle and a cup of cocoa kindly put on by my Auntie Belle Courtney.

Ngatea consisted of the main road (SH2) which followed the Great South Road from Auckland to turn off onto SH2 at the bottom of the Bombay hills just before Pokeno. SH2 went through Waitakaruru township then turning right onto Pipiroa Road up the Ngatea main street over the Ngatea bridge to Paeroa. There were a few houses around Factory Lane and up Haywards Road. So guess the population of Ngatea 60 years ago was around 350 people. Compare that today to Ngatea population of around 1600 to 1700 people.

Memories of growing up in Ngatea

Growing up in Ngatea was pretty damn good. My friends and I used to jump off the Ngatea bridge and swim in the river. Eeling was another great past time, some huge eels were caught in the blood hole at the back of Courtney's abattoirs.

The pictures or movies was another great drawcard. Movies were shown on a Friday and Saturday night at the movie

theatre which was where the Ngatea hotel carpark is now. Some nights the movie theatre was so packed people would be sitting in the isles.

Sport played a big part in my younger years in Ngatea, as it does now. Rugby games were played at the Hugh Hayward domain. My mate Doug Hodgson and I were often ball boys for the Ngatea Senior Team. I remember the great All Black fullback of the late 1950's and early 1960's playing rugby in Ngatea. Could he kick the ball such long distances! The game of rugby I remember most was a game played at the Ngatea Domain in 1963. Ngatea played Waihou. Waihou had not been beaten for 3 years. I remember a huge crowd was at the domain for the game. Waihou was of course favourites to win the game. At half time the score was 5-3 to Waihou. The second half of the game sea-sawed up and down the field. With five minutes to go, Waihou were leading by 8-6. Ross Dalgety drop kicked a goal in the last minute to give Ngatea the win. The Ngatea crowd went berserk at the end of the game.

Cricket too was most popular during the summer months with 3 cricket pitches on the Ngatea Domain. I used to go over to the domain to watch cricket at a very young age. Most Saturdays I would get called upon to field for either Ngatea, Kaihere or Turua. I have a huge love of cricket. So yes growing up in Ngatea was fun.

Memories of my school days in Ngatea

I started primary school at Ngatea District High School in 1958. My first day at school I was asked by the teacher Miss Brown what my name was. I replied to the teacher that my name was Donald Daffy Duck. The teacher burst into laughter. So that is where I got my nickname Daff from. The nickname Daff has been round with me for 63 years. I have to say I prefer now to be called Don my given name.

In 1960 the new primary school was built. I remember the school opening by the then Minister of Education Mr Skoglund.

My days at primary school were enjoyable as I made many friends; many of which I still keep in contact with to this very day. One of my great memories of my days at school was going to see and listen to Sir Edmund Hillary give a speech at the Ngatea War Memorial Hall in 1966. I was totally captivated by Sir Edmund. What a great man he was.

Sport, I loved playing sport at school particularly rugby. How proud I was to be picked to play for the Hauraki Plains Team to play in the Shaw Cup Tournament. I was aged 11. The following year I was picked again to play for the Hauraki Plains Rep Team, this time as captain. The Hauraki Plains

Shaw Cup Team that year won the Shaw Cup winning all 6 games and not a point scored against us.

I started secondary school at Hauraki Plains College in 1967. I remember being totally overwhelmed by so many students at school, around 400. I enjoyed my time at HPC. Particularly the fifth form years, the teachers there I thought were very good. I was never a great scholar. I loved Social Studies, History and Music. I remember going to Auckland on a school trip. What an adventure that was going up Queens Street and going to the Museum.

Sport at HPC was really good. I was lucky enough to make the 1st XI cricket team. One game I remember for all the wrong reasons was a game HPC played against Huntly College. HPC were bowled out for about 50 runs. Huntly batted on and on and on and made around 200 runs. Unfortunately HPC dropped about 20 catches. Our Coach was the Principal of HPC, Mr O'Brien. He was not impressed with our fielding effort. At Monday morning assembly, Mr O'Brien said he had witnessed the worst fielding effort from a team he had ever seen. Mr O'Brien had been a cricket fan for 40 years. The cricket team was the joke of the school for some time.

I loved winter time as that meant it was rugby season. I was lucky enough to be named Captain of the 3rd XV rugby team when I was in the fourth form or year 10. Our coach was an Irishman whose name was Pat Brannigan, Mr "Brain" nagan as the team called him. He was an excellent coach. In 1968, the HPC 3rd XV played 11 games and won all of them. The team scored 366 points and had 37 points scored against them. In that team, 4 players went on to play representative rugby.

I think my greatest memory of my time at HPC was being selected for the 1st XV rugby team in 1970. Our coach the then Principal of HPC Mr O'Brien organized a trip to the South Island. In those days going to the South Island was like travelling to Australia. The team left Ngatea on a Monday and we travelled by bus to Wellington where we stayed the night. Got the Cook Strait ferry across to the South Island then bused to Hokitika on the West Coast where we played



Don (Daff) Neil Looks Back and Forward

Westland College. We then bused to Christchurch and played against Hillmorton College. Both games were won by HPC. All this was done in one week, we travelled by bus the whole way. A fantastic time was had by all of the team. Thanks to Mr O'Brien who was without doubt the finest rugby coach I ever had.

I am very pleased to write that I passed my school certificate at the end of the year. Many thanks to HPC for my time at secondary school.

Major events since leaving school

I left school at the end of 1970. I really did not have too much idea of what I wanted to do. My grandfather got me a job at Hellaby's Freezing Works in Auckland. As I had never really ventured too far out of Ngatea, going to live in Auckland was an adventure for me. I enjoyed working at the freezing works as it gave me a great cultural understanding of multi culturalism. In particular Maoridom and Island Culture. I had so much fun as the people I worked with would sing and laugh so much. I also gained insight into the trade union movement which at that time was very militant. My time at the freezing works was in so many ways a huge education for me.

I left the freezing works at the end of 1974 and came back to live in Ngatea. I worked for the Hauraki Plains County Council as a Surveying Chairman. I really enjoyed my time working for the Council.

I was lucky enough to go to the Commonwealth Games which were held in Christchurch. What a great time I had. I watched the great John Walker and the even greater Filbert Bayi battle it out for the gold medal in the 1500m. Both runners breaking the then world record for that race. Filbert Bayi winning the gold medal.

At this stage of my life I got the urge to do some travel as a few of my mates went to live and work in Australia. So off to Australia I went to travel up to Darwin in the Northern Territory where I lived and worked. I decided to travel over land on the Indian Pacific train to Adelaide. Then travelling on the Ghan train to Alice Springs, then by bus to Darwin arriving there on New Years Eve of 1976. As Darwin had been pretty much totally blown away by Cyclone Tracey the year before, I worked as a laborer helping to build the Darwin Hospital. It was very hard work working in such incredible heat temperatures, constantly in the late 30's. However I had a great time and played rugby and met many wonderful people.

When I was working up in Darwin, I witnessed and heard the worst words of racism that I have ever heard in my life. Those racist words spoken by a white

Australian man to a young Aboriginal man have stayed with me. I hold racism as the worst form of hatred that humans can do to each other. Never ever again would I stand back and let a person talk to another person like what I heard that day 44 years ago.

One of my flatmates was a guy by the name of Warren Snowden. Warren was very much a political man, I learnt so much about politics from him. Warren Snowden went on to become Minister of Indigenous Affairs for the Australian Government during the reign of Kevin Rudd. I got to talk with the Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawk when I was President of the Australian Council for Trade Unions. I thought at the time I had talked with Bob that he would one day be Prime Minister of Australia. He sure did and for 13 years.

I returned to Ngatea in 1978. I took up painting and worked for the late Pat Hughes. Pat was a tradesman of the finest kind and I learnt so much from him. I had no hesitation in coming back to live in Ngatea as it was my home.

Towards the end of winter of 1978 I was asked if I would give a farming friend of mine a hand to milk his cows. I had not milked a cow before in my life but I am always up for a challenge so at the age of 25 I milked my first cow. I milked the cows for my friend all of that weekend. After that, my friend offered me a job to be his farm worker. I knew very little about farming however I thought "yes I will give it ago." I loved farming so much and I learnt so much about it and about myself as I was left to work out many problems that arise with farming. I stayed working for my friend for the whole season. Another farming job came up the following year, so I took the job. Farming was the life for me. In 1982 I had the opportunity and bought 130 cows and some young stock. I became a sharemilker aged 29.

Not long after buying the herd, I met and fell in love with the love of my life, Andrea. We married on the farm at Orongo on the 27 November 1982. Andrea and I share milked for 13 years. We sold the cows in 1995 and bought a block of land at Dickey Flat near Waihi. A beautiful spot is Dickey Flat. I started up our painting business and am still painting houses at this very time.

Sadley Andrea passed away in 2010. The saddest and hardest time ever in my life. Andrea and I have 2 beautiful daughters and 4 wonderful grandchildren. We were married for close to 30 years. After Andrea's passing I went to live in Australia for 2 years. I did a lot of travel while I was there with my dog Grace who came to Australia with me. I made many friends during my time there working and travelling. In 2013 I returned to NZ and back to Hauraki Plains, my home, back

painting again.

In 2015 I decided to do my overseas experience and travel to the UK and Europe. That journey was something I will never ever forget. I was away for 3 months with just a backpack. Being a cricket lover, I went to the home of cricket at Lords in London to watch the NZ Black Caps play England. I was there for 5 days. I travelled to Wales, Ireland, England, France, the Netherlands and Italy. All on my own, the experience of a lifetime. Glad to say I arrived home safely. I have to say also how lucky we are to live in this great country of ours Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Since returning home from Europe I have had a couple of health scares. However those scares have made me more determined to live my life to the full. I have recently enrolled and been accepted to study for a Bachelor of Arts Degree at Waikato University, majoring in New Zealand history. So at the age of 67 I am going back to school. Just another journey for me to do, I set myself a goal of graduating in 2024. I will be 71 by then. Then who knows I may do a Masters Degree.

As I have gotten older I have come to appreciate the beauty of nature and the environment. I have also come to appreciate the beauty that surrounds me living on the Hauraki Plains, the magnificent mountains that we are surrounded by, the rivers that flow through and around our towns. I am proud to have been born in Paeroa with our beautiful Maunga — Mt Karangahake looking down upon me.

Over the past few years my life has changed so much due to my appreciation of the environment and the great friends I have made in my efforts to protect our mountains and our rivers from exploitation. I am very proud to be part of that group of people.

My Philosophy on Life

I have many philosophies on life. For me life is for living. You only get one life so you have to make the most of it. I have been so lucky in so many ways as I married a lady whom I totally worshipped and loved so much. I love to listen to music and to sing and dance. I love to action stage. I love to laugh lots and to talk to people from all walks of life. I love my whānau and my friends so much. At the end of the day life is to be enjoyed. Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone and to try new things. Always give life your best shot and always respect people. My dad would always say to me "Always say please and thank you", those words will get you a long way in life.

Enjoy life. Life is great!
Don (Daff) Neil