

## From the Foothills to the World Stage:

### Bede Giera's Journey to the World U19 Rowing Championships

Former Mt Somers Springburn School student, Bede Giera (2012–2019), has been selected to represent New Zealand in the U19 Men's Eight at the 2025 World Rowing U19 Championships, held this August in Trakai, Lithuania.

Bede's path to the world stage has been anything but straightforward. In 2024, he made the difficult decision to turn down a New Zealand Junior Rowing trial. For Bede the choice to captain St Bede's College's 1st XV rugby team in his final year of school was a matter of loyalty and unfinished business.

"It was a tough call to turn down the trial last year," Bede reflects, "but I really wanted to play another season of 1st XV rugby in my final year of school."

That leap of faith paid off. Despite a season of mixed results, Bede was selected for the New Zealand Secondary Schools rugby team, competing against Samoa, Australia, and the NZ Māori U18 sides. He also received an offer to join the Crusaders Academy.

Following three years of rowing at St Bede's College under coach Dale Maher—highlighted by a Maadi Cup win in 2023—Bede continued his development at Avon Rowing Club in Christchurch. There, he and his crewmates achieved success at the 2025 New Zealand Rowing Championships, winning gold in both the Men's Club Four (setting a national record time of 6:19) and the Club Pair.

Bede's father rowed in St Bede's College's 1991 Maadi Cup crew, and his grandfather, Murray Giera, had a long association with the sport as a coach and was part of the legendary 1964 Head of the River-



Bede waiting to race at the National Rowing Champs

winning Eight. His siblings, Ruby and Isaac—also former students of Mt Somers Springburn School—have competed in rowing at the secondary school level.

Following the 2025 Maadi Cup, the country's top junior rowers gathered at Lake Karapiro for the U19 national trials. Team selection didn't come easily. Over the course of a week, the athletes underwent seat racing, a process in which rowers are rotated between boats to determine the strongest combinations, as well as time trials. At the end of the week, Bede secured his place in the Rowing New Zealand U19 Men's Eight.

The campaign is divided into three key phases: training in Christchurch with individual rowing clubs; six weeks of team-based training at Lake Karapiro, where Bede is currently based with the squad; and finally, travel to Lithuania for five days of competition from August 6 to 10. Representing New Zealand on the world stage is a rare achievement and comes with a significant cost. The \$20,000 campaign is entirely self-funded, with the campaign cost doubling in 2025 due to a reprioritisation of funding from High Performance Sport New Zealand.

"It's a big challenge to take on fundraising for the World Champs but it is important to my longer-term goals in sport and my plans for university education."

To support his goal, Bede has been working six hours a day on a 500-cow dairy farm, running community fundraising initiatives, including selling wine and garden soil, while training 11 to 12 times per week. He has also been reaching out to family, friends, and local businesses for fundraising opportunities and sponsorship.

"It's been incredible actually the amount of support I have had to be here, everyone's been really generous and there are so many people I could thank. I am extremely grateful, and I hope to be able to pay it back on the world stage."

The funds will be used across all stages of the campaign to cover essential costs, including accommodation, meals, transport, and training expenses during the training camp and travel to Lithuania. Bede and his Avon crewmates Luke Tompkins, Payo O'Sullivan and Ben Allan join Corben Campbell, Jack Buckley, Blake Cooper, George Marshall and coxswain Eliza



Bede holding the Maadi Cup in 2023.

*continued on page 2*

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continued from page 1

O'Meagher in the New Zealand's Junior Eight, set to compete at The World champs from August 6 to 10 on Lake Galvė in Trakai, Lithuania.

From a small rural community in the foothills of Mid Canterbury to the world stage in Trakai, Bede's journey is an example of what grit, resilience, and community support can achieve.

Event details [www.rowingtrakai.com](http://www.rowingtrakai.com)

Photos @elizabethinglisphotography @davemillsphotography

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2025 New Zealand Under 19 Rowing Squad



Bede Giera and Luke Tompkins winning the National Club Pair

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# MAYFIELD MT SOMERS ANGLICAN PARISH

At it's last meeting the Vestry (like the board of trustees) of the Parish of Mayfield-Mt. Somers made the decision to stop regular services at St. Aidan's for the next 12 months. It seems that the twice monthly traditional church service is not what the Mayfield-Mt. Somers community is looking for right now. But the parish is not closed, your minister is still available to anyone in the area, we will hold 'non-traditional' events like last month's 'Pint with a Priest' and St. Aidan's is still currently available for special services.

## CHURCH SERVICES

### St Aidan's, Mt Somers

August 24 10.30am 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service,  
followed by lunch at Mt. Somers Tavern

## PARISH CONTACTS

Phone: 302 8254

Email: [midcanterburyanglican@gmail.com](mailto:midcanterburyanglican@gmail.com)

Web: [www.midcanterbury.org](http://www.midcanterbury.org)

Social: [facebook.com/MidCanterburyAnglican](https://facebook.com/MidCanterburyAnglican)



## Mount Somers Staveley Playcentre

Another month has flown by and we are now in Term 3 here at Mount Somers Staveley Playcentre.

The tamariki have been letting their imagination run wild making delicious baking goodies in the mud kitchen and racing each other on the bikes. We have new swings up and running (swinging?) which is exciting as these are a firm favourite for the kids.

Great examples of sharing and taking turns have been shown over the last couple of weeks, particularly by our bigger kids, and it is a delight to see.

Another big part of playcentre is kai time and this often involves one of the parents reading a seemingly endless number of books to the children. This is very rewarding for all involved as the kids truly love it.

We're still planning on having a morning ice skating with other playcentres in the area, just deciding on the date.

If anyone is wanting to join in at Mount Somers Staveley Playcentre, we are always happy to see new faces. We're open every Tuesday and Thursday 9am-12pm.



## DEADLINE DATE FOR SEPTEMBER ISSUE 2025

ISSUE	DEADLINE	DELIVERY
September 2025	25 August	31 August



Nor'Wester Newsletter  
is published by the  
Mt Somers District  
Citizens Association.

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# The Old Post Office Library



Another month seems to have rolled around quickly and this month it is my turn to do our blurb as Anne is having a well needed break in Nelson. She left our dismal dampness here to head into the horrible weather that has wrecked a lot of the Tasman district. Very reminiscent of our May 2019 rain event so we can understand some of their pain especially the farming community.

Our plea for power funding of the line charges that was in our last newsletter has created no takers but then we forgot to add any phone numbers in case you don't know Anne or Pam!! Will include them at end of this report. We are still working on this dilemma.

A HUGE THANKYOU goes to our local MAYFIELD LIONS group for their extremely generous donation of money to the library for replacement and extra lighting within our building. This will be done by ElectraServe in the near future. The money also allowed us to replace a rotten barge board on the NW side of the building. Thankyou to our local builder Fletcher from Red Arrow Builds for completing this job so promptly.

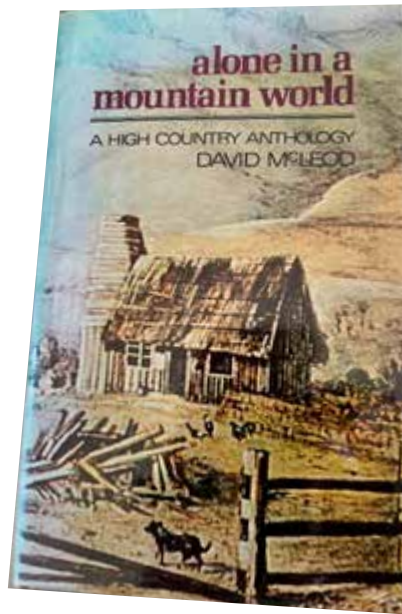
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Our new layout in the library seems quite popular. Don't forget that Crime books (denoted with a silver dot on the top of the spine) have been integrated with the fiction books in the main room. It is much easier to find the books based on fact, all of which are proving great reads, under the small window behind the counter. We have groups of authors dotted around the whole library so ensure you walk around it all.

The Mt Somers/Springburn school recently hosted an evening with Matt Chisholm which was a great success. In

the library we have at least one of Matt's books if not two if anyone wants to borrow them.

The John Boyne element series are proving to be very popular and we have two sets. Water, Earth, Fire and Air. They are only 166 pages long so a fairly quick read but intensely written by a master of storytelling. One set we will keep altogether so you can read all in one go. They ultimately all unite in their characters which is cleverly done or can be read in any order individually.

## NEW BOOKS

The River is Waiting by Wally Lamb. I have just started this book but already can't put it down! A bit of a tear jerker but written of a broken family facing tragedy then prison life. Not sure where the river comes into it but loving the read.....

Alone in a Mountain World by David McLeod. This book was published in 1972 and Anne has found a well preserved secondhand copy and purchased it for the library. This book should appeal to our farming stock and is an anthology of South Island high country life. Has quirky pen and ink drawings, poems, diary musings and stories from lots of different men. Look out for it on our coffee table then it will join our extensive range of high country and rural themed books on the counter.

Here's hoping winter continues as it is now (sunny and frosty as

I write this) and do come into our wee library in Mt Somers. We welcome a new volunteer, Richard who lives in Staveley and starts in August. If you would like to join us please phone Anne or Pam. I was on duty last Sunday and sat outside on the deck chair and managed to score a free ice cream so it's not all hard work!!

Don't forget to begin clearing out your old books at home for Bookarama coming up later in September in Ashburton. Pop your books into the mobile bins dotted around town. Always one at New World and Allenton garage.

Thankyou for your continued support.

Pam Annand 021 126 4310  
Anne Chapman 027 436 3736

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# A Comment

Fleur Sullivan's wonderful soup recipes! Sounds good and it would have been had I been more careful and followed the recipe more carefully. Fleur Sullivan was the brains behind the legendary restaurant Fleurs Place at Moeraki. The restaurant unfortunately is now closed, fortunately the Christchurch Press saw fit to publish two of her soup recipes labeled Keep Warm this Winter soups. Certainly, they keep you warm as you bend over a hot stove preparing these easy to prepare winter soups.

The recipe for carrot soup looked to me to be quite straight forward.

1kg carrots, skin on

1 onion, finely diced

2 cloves garlic, chopped

Olive oil or butter

1 litre vegetable stock

½ cup - crunchy peanut butter

handful of basil leaves chopped

2 tbsp chilli sauce plus extra to taste

400 ml can coconut cream

This all appeared quite straight forward as I headed to the supermarket to buy the necessary ingredients.

I thought I had done well, it all looked so easy!

The result was what I describe as a moderate success. I prepared these ingredients and cooked as instructed, the carrots roasted in the oven for approx. an hour and a half the onion and garlic cooked in oil until clear, the coconut cream stirred in finally before serving. coconut cream I found to be a very likable product I may use it more. I mixed it well with the stick blender, then sampled this delightful product! Flavour very good but this mixture was almost not edible! Why, it was full of stringy sort of stuff, the flavour good when more coconut cream was added, but it was full of a mass of stringy almost spiky nonedible matter.

Back to the drawing board just what was wrong, Fleur would hardly have served up soup like that. It took a moment to find the fault, what I had bought at the supermarket was not basil but bay leaves, dry bay leaves at that. I note for some recipes using bay leaves they are tied together and then removed after the cooking process is complete, I certainly

*continued on page 9*

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**Who can get their biography written?**

Anyone who has received a terminal diagnosis can become a client of Hospice Mid Canterbury, and biographies – peoples' life stories – are one of the many free services on offer.

**Who are the biographers?**

The biographers, all living in Mid Canterbury, come from a wide variety of backgrounds and undertake training before they begin their work. Clients are carefully matched with biographers to make it a successful and enjoyable experience.

*I've agreed to get my life story down.*

**What happens now?**

A biographer will arrange to visit at a suitable time for the client. Usually a session takes 45 minutes to an hour, depending on how well the client is feeling. This takes the form of an informal chat with the biographer, recorded on a phone, where the client recalls stories and events from the past. While dates and events are important, it is the stories that bring the biography to life.

The biographer then goes home and types up the notes from the recording, and returns the following week to present the stories from the previous session and then work on the next part of the biography. Photos are a key part of the process and these can be added once the stories have been recorded.

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See also our website [www.hospicemc.nz](http://www.hospicemc.nz) and look for Hospice Mid Canterbury on our facebook and Instagram pages.



*Volunteer Sue heading out for a biography session.*



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### *A Comment continued from page 5*

won't mix up bay into a product again, a lesson learnt and I'll buy the right product when shopping – pay attention to detail in future.

I sieved this mixture through a calinda and now have what is left in an almost edible state. I had a good serving for lunch with the very necessary coconut cream. The winning point, I have learnt something, perhaps I'm a little wiser, We learn by trying or are we just trying – nothing was ever discovered without attempting the unknown. My carrot soup was almost a failure, so what, the next attempt is sure to succeed, it will be pumpkin soup next week.

U3A Lifelong Learning: is a monthly lecture lasting about one hour from 10.00am, this happens in Ashburton on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month (usually). This month the lecture came from a person by the name of Mark Webster a pharmacist with many letters after his name, Mark's topic was: Integrative Medicine to stay Well. He founded a stay well clinic in Christchurch to be a place that focused on 'curing or preventing' disease, instead of just managing.

This was a well presented and illustrated lecture, and there tended to be some perhaps slight criticism of the medical profession. I guess there is room for some criticism, should your doctor or specialist have prescribed 'Atorvastatin' tablets this man was quick to recommend that you cease to take such medication. No doubt he is correct, a lot of medication may have undesirable side effects. I have been subscribed these statin tablets for many years as I guess many others have also. They are, if required, a very important and worthwhile medication. In short statins can lower bad cholesterol and increase good cholesterol, further to that they may prevent heart attacks and strokes by keeping your arteries clear. I will continue as recommended by my specialist and doctor have one 40ml tablet per day, originally one 80ml per day, side effects so far, appear to be nil.

Cheers Denis keep well.

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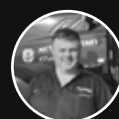


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## Neighbourhood Support

### Ashburton District



July 2025,

Hello and welcome to further news from Neighbourhood Support. I hope everyone is keeping warm over this winter period.

Looking back over June 60 crimes relating to burglary, theft and others were committed within the Ashburton District. In the Foothills and Methven this included 4 counts of crime – burglary Camrose Avenue, theft, Mt Hutt Access Skifield Road, Mt Hutt Station Road, Mt Sommers. Home security cameras offer an ability to sight what is happening on your premises. Anyone with security cameras can register with CommunityCam which is a not for profit initiative to help solve neighbourhood crime.

Latest scams to be aware of are imposter scams. You may receive a txt or email from what looks like the IRD, postal service, bank, Spark. If you receive anything like this and you are not sure do not reply. Ring the organisation independently with a number from their registered site and check in person. We also suggest that you check your bank statements regularly. Some people are finding that they have purchased things online and are suddenly having regular amounts deducted from their bank accounts they did not request. Anything to do with banking – phone your bank immediately. In the meantime please keep safe and warm.

Sue Abel Ashburton District Neighbourhood Support

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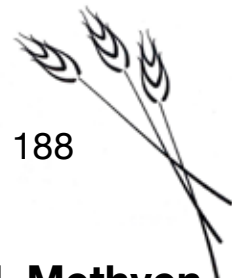
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## Mt Somers Springburn School

### Board of Trustees Elections 2025

Here are the key dates for the Mt Somers Springburn School Board Elections.

Parents and Caregivers on the school role will have received their nomination forms by email on the first week of the school holidays.

The Mt Somers Springburn School are calling for nominations for three **(3) parent representatives**.

Being a school trustee is a vital and rewarding role. It calls for people with diverse skills and life experiences, people who are ready to make a meaningful positive difference in the learning and lives of our children.

Event	Date
Select Returning Officer	Wednesday, 9 <sup>th</sup> July 2025
Close Main Roll	Wednesday, 16 July 2025
Call for Nominations by	Friday, 18 <sup>th</sup> July 2025
Close Supplementary Roll	Monday, 4 <sup>th</sup> August 2025
Nominations Close (at 12pm)	Wednesday, 6 <sup>th</sup> August 2025
Voting Papers Issued by	Wednesday, 13 <sup>th</sup> August 2025
<b>Election Day</b>	<b>September 10, 2025</b>
Close Poll	4pm Election Day
Accept Postal Votes	Monday, 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
Count Votes	Tuesday, 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2025
Board Takes Office	Wednesday, 17 <sup>th</sup> September 2025

Rebecca Taylor  
Returning Officer

## Walk Methven Walkway 2 July



Contact Rob Palmer  
Telephone 027 217 5577







All photos supplied by Sanae Hydes



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## Book of the Month – Mt Somers Library

Title: 'The Last Secret Agent:

The untold story of my life as a spy  
behind Nazi enemy lines'

Author: Pippa Latour with Jude Dobson

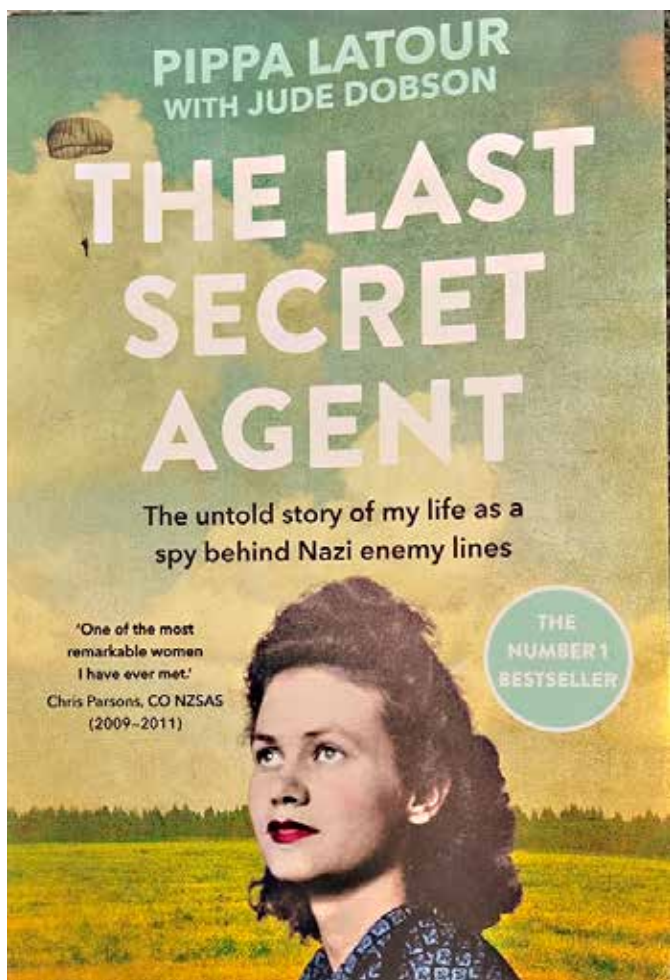
Publication year: 2024

A review by Elles Smallegoor

When Pippa Latour's son was reading online about intelligence work during World War II and spotted his mother's quite unique official name Phyllis Latour, he wondered whether there was more to her story of having been a balloon operator for the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. There certainly was. She reluctantly confessed to him and his brother that she had actually been a Special Operations Executive (SOE) for Winston Churchill in the 1940s. Having signed an official oath, being a private person and strongly wishing never to go back mentally to "that hellish existence" of living and working in a time of war (p. 21), Pippa had never told anyone about her SOE assignment. After the war, she started a new life in New Zealand and wanted to look forward, not back. Now the truth was out, however. And she listened with indignation to some of the nonsense, or, in her words, "poppycock" (p. 14), that was written about her, her family and former war colleagues on the internet. Encouraged by others and realising, being a 101, that she was "the last living female operative of the F (France) section" (p. 22), she agreed to share her wartime experiences with author Jude Dobson, who helped her write down her extraordinary story. Written in the first-person, "The Last Secret Agent" is a truthful, informative and unsentimental memoir about Pippa's first 25 years of life. The book is a pageturner pur sang; it was impossible for me to put it down.

The book's first chapters deal with Pippa's "unusual childhood in Africa" (p. 26), the series of losses that she had to deal with (one of them being orphaned as a four-year-old), the "mix of nationalities and cultures" (p. 35) that she was exposed to and the multiple skills that she learned along the way. As she looks back on her younger years, in which she learned to fly a plane, hunt animals and communicate in Morse code, amongst others, Pippa concedes how her early life seemed to follow a certain trajectory that offered her "the perfect training for my SOE" (p. 46). The following chapters reveal how Pippa ended up working for the Admiralty in Scotland during the early war years, and, having lost loved ones as a direct result of the German occupation in France, decided to actively join the war effort, which led to her being recruited to





become one of Churchill's secret spies: "I had morals that I lived by, and would even die by, to secure a freedom I desperately wanted to protect" (p. 87).

The remainder of the book is a detailed personal account of Pippa's work on the ground behind enemy lines in the northwest of France, where she, as a 20-something-year-old, had to pretend to be a French teenager selling soap on a bike traversing the entire region, while in the meantime actually being a wireless operator for the British government. In collaboration with colleagues and French resistance fighters, she had to locate several hidden radios which she then used regularly to inform her superiors of German army locations, provide general intelligence and help sabotage the work of the Nazis. Every day, she could be discovered, arrested and tortured, raped or killed. Or make a mistake that would lead to the arrest or death of others. A hellish existence indeed.

Jude Dobson does an excellent job in giving Pippa her (emphatically female) voice, and revealing her unbelievable courage, intelligence and moral compass. She also cleverly weaves relevant background information about the war into the narrative and, as she herself indicates, adds dialogue "in the interest of the story" (p. 13). The memoir sucks the reader back in time and brings home in vivid detail what it was like to operate as a secret agent in the twentieth century, when internet, cell phones and drones were still a lifetime away. It also leaves the reader with a renewed sense of awe for people such as Pippa, who endured and sacrificed so much to ensure the surrender of a brutal regime. A truly awesome read.

ISSUE ONE HUNDRED

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AUGUST 2025



# MAYFIELD RURAL FIRE UNIT

**Annual General Meeting**  
**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2025**  
**at 7.30pm**  
**at the Mayfield Fire Station**

**Members and New Members welcome**  
**Jan Clucas Secretary**  
**0274730892**

## Grazing Wanted

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## Rakaia Village Walkway 16 July

Had a wonderful walk along the Rakaia River Terraces from the village. Lunch at the Bakehouse.



*All photos supplied  
by Sanae Hydes*



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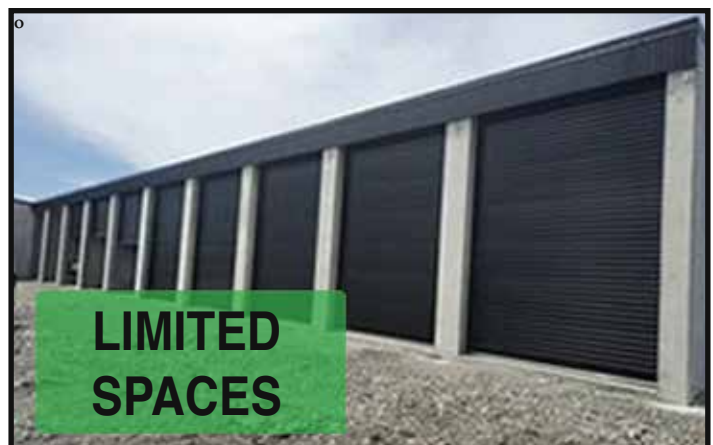


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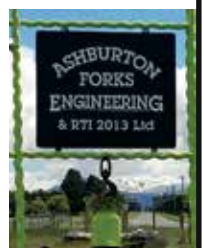
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## Mayfield and Districts Lions Report

On July 1, the Mayfield Lions had their formal dinner and changeover in the Mayfield Hall. We had a beautiful meal supplied by Maddy Brown from the Catering Co. It was the last function for the last President, Roger Baxter and the first for the incoming President Alistair Morrison.

We celebrated the achievements of the last year, toasted everyone in sight, had good and bad speeches, inducted the new President and his board, did the raffles then last of all had a fine session. This was done by Ron Cross and John Harrison; they never let the truth get in the way of a good story.

We had another good year with fundraising and distributing money. We raised \$98,875.00. Three of the main beneficiaries were, Canterbury & West Coast Air Rescue \$40,000.00, Mayfield A&P Association \$30,000.00, Ronald McDonald \$2,000.00.

Robert Schikker



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The driving programme is still going strong with no shortage of newcomers requesting help to get their license. We have started group sixteen on the road code course. Once again it's a full class of twelve wonderful women from four different countries. We also have seven children coming into class with their mums. Our wonderful volunteers Neroli and Claire help me bring them in and keep the children occupied, along with the lovely Asiya helping us. I love it when past programme participants put their hand up to volunteer. Claire and Asiya got their licenses after completing the programme, and there is five driving mentors who are also past participants. It shows how much they appreciate the opportunities this programme gives them.

It's not just about driving. Its about making connections, new friends, learning new skills, gaining independence, opening doors to new opportunities and most importantly kicking isolation into touch, and breaking down barriers to living your best life here in New Zealand. There nothing more fulfilling than seeing the smiles on their faces when they pass their test. It's a new beginning, the start of a whole new life and a celebration of achieving something most thought was unachievable.

The success of the programme is easily measured in licenses passed, but what is unmeasurable is the flow on effect once a license is achieved. I see it when I go to the supermarket and see my ladies enjoying their job and interacting with customers. I see it in restaurants with waitresses and chefs who have been through our



Wendy catching up with Anjana Pokhrel at work.

## Rifleman Pest Control

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2-3 hares eat the equivalent of 1 stock unit and reproduce up to 10 young each year. Night shooting is the most effective method of control.



Kia ora koutou,

It's been a vibrant and productive term here at Mayfield School, filled with hands-on learning, rich cultural experiences, and growing connections with our local community.

Our students have been thriving in a wide variety of clubs that have kicked off this term—including clay and crafts, science, cooking, coding, woodwork and squash. These clubs offer opportunities for tamariki to explore new interests, make friends and new connections, and develop leadership skills. Extracurricular activities are integral to children's growth, offering benefits that extend into academic achievement, personal development, and future success. At Mayfield School, these programs enrich the educational experience, promote a positive culture, and support students' diverse needs. It's been heartening to see students stepping up to lead and participate with such enthusiasm.

The board would like to acknowledge Kees from the RDR that has donated a set of stairs to our fort. He has organised Grant Hood Contracting builders to install the stairs. They have given the fort and upgrade that the children will continue to enjoy!



Mihi Whakatau – what an amazing morning we shared on last week celebrating new whānau to our school. New families to our community brought along their family and extended

family as we officially welcomed them as they started their Mayfield School learning journey. It was special to see whānau that have been at our school for a while attend, as connections were made between families.

A recent highlight was our first Learning Community Migrant Hub evening held this week. It was a fantastic evening as Mayfield School connection with Mt Somers Springburn School, and we welcomed whānau from diverse backgrounds to connect over kai and kōrero. With several new English as Second Language (ESOL) students joining us at Mayfield School this year, the evening gave us a chance to share stories, build relationships, and showcase the incredible cultures represented at our kura. Thank you to everyone who contributed to making this such a warm and successful event. These evenings will continue to run throughout the year.

We were also proud to host our annual Matariki hāngī, prepared with the support of our whānau and local helpers. This special event gives students a chance to learn the tikanga behind hāngī preparation and celebrate the Matariki - Māori New Year together as a school. The kai was delicious, and the respect and enthusiasm on show was inspiring.

In the classroom, learning has been rich and purposeful. Our junior classes were recently treated to a visit from Debbie from Environment Canterbury (ECAN), who is helping the Teacher's led our inquiry about our local rivers. Through hands-on activities and thoughtful discussion, our tamariki are learning how to care for our waterways, what we use water for and why our rivers are so important to our environment and future.



The Mid Canterbury Rural Driver Licensing Scheme is a partnership with the Mid Canterbury Rural Support Trust and is proudly sponsored by NZTA Waka Kotahi, Advance Ashburton Community Foundation, Ashburton District Council, The Lion Foundation, COGs and Community Trust Mid & South Canterbury.

Wendy Hewitt  
Rural Licensing Co-Ordinator  
Safer Mid Canterbury  
255 Moore Street, Ashburton 7700  
Ph: 027 611 3301  
[wendy.hewitt@safer.org.nz](mailto:wendy.hewitt@safer.org.nz)  
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programme. I see it in the rest homes looking after the elderly with such compassion, and I see it in the packhouses, factories and food processors. These women relish the opportunity to get out into the work force and feel like a valued member of society. One day they might even get the chance to work in the profession they had in their own country. Who knows where a driver's license can take you?? If you would like to be part of this amazing programme, as a student, driving mentor or to volunteer in other ways, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Wendy Hewitt on 027 611 3301 or [wendy.hewitt@safer.org.nz](mailto:wendy.hewitt@safer.org.nz). We are also on Facebook, just search for the Mid Canterbury Rural Driver Licensing Scheme.

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