

# THE FALLS Folkus

THE FALLS ESTATE LIFESTYLE VILLAGE MAGAZINE

SPRING 2021  
EDITION 10

Midwinter  
Christmas  
AT THE CHATEAU

Furry  
FRIENDS  
Hairy  
COMPANIONS

THE FALLS  
EGROUP LIFESTYLE VILLAGE

Meet our  
DEDICATED  
GARDENERS



# MANAGER'S MESSAGE



Hello to *The Folkus*, our Spring Edition.

Promises of warmer weather, daffodil fields, and fresh growth have us excited to emerge from hibernation and embrace a colourful new season. Since our last edition, we continued to welcome many new residents to our Village.

With an array of resident led activities village life is interesting and filled with fun. Building new friendships and making most of every moment. It's one part of the village life that I particularly love – always seeing something new and exciting happening and residents getting involved.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

**Marie Annandale** – Village Manager

## COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Like last year, 2021 has been a roller-coaster, with Covid Delta raising its ugly head causing turmoil throughout the Country. But, as before, everyone is doing their bit to cut its head off and, hopefully, we will be back to normal soon.

In the meantime, another committee has been elected, and it is a good one, with each one of us taking responsibility for a particular aspect of Village life and welding them together has been a pleasure. Each challenge that comes along has been surmounted as we forge ahead with plans for the rest of the year and into 2022.

We have been fortunate to engage talented artists for our special evening, much to the delight of the Villagers – Midwinter Xmas, Hamburger Nights, and this trend will continue throughout 2022. We will also encourage the talents of our own folk to get involved, e.g., Fashion Show, Choir Events, Skills in Arts & Crafts, Music, Games, and so on.

The Committee is grateful to all those who, of their own accord, volunteer to help us on so many occasions, and I know you will continue to do so. To everybody, look after your “buddies”.

Best wishes,  
**Brian Atkins**





## BARRIE AND SUE HARRIS

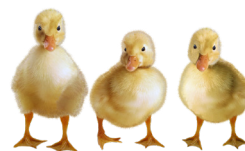


Barrie and I (Susan) met in Sydney in a suburb called Manly. A good friend set up a blind date with this Kiwi guy for me. Barrie had left Whangarei at 21 to make his fortune in Sydney and he did. He became a Gyprock Partitioner at first then became a Master Painter and started his own business. He worked very hard and discovered so much variety of restaurants and food styles. He mixed with guys who knew

the market place for properties and bought his first place, they called "the Dungeon," in Manly. But he transformed it with a lick of paint and made a nice profit, so that was his stepping stone to success in Aussie.

I was a Legal Secretary working in Sydney. Our first date went very well, and we've been together nearly 40 years. Barrie took me to our local seafood restaurant and I was hooked, pardon the pun, with our same sense of humour and love of food. We married 14 months later.

We have two sons. We moved to Whangarei with them in 1992. I loved it and still do. We have 3 grandchildren. I love New Zealand.



## CAROL BURDON AND MICHAEL SCUTT

**CAROL:** Born Auckland 1948 where I spent my childhood and teenage years. Attended Auckland Girls Grammar School and my first job was with the National Bank. Then for the *Auckland Star* as a teletypesetter. In 1968 travelled to England, worked, and travelled for 12 months, returning to Auckland, married, and moved to Bay of Plenty. On to Wanaka when it was a very small village. In 1980 moved with family to Whangarei and spent many years living at Ngunguru.

Met Michael in 2001 and we moved into Whangarei that year. Done a lot of travelling – favourite trips to Alaska in the winter for the Iditarod Dog Race and Churchill, Canada to see polar bears. Absolutely wonderful experiences. I am looking forward to getting to know more of the residents of The Falls and joining groups – petanque, indoor bowls and playing Mahjong.

**MICHAEL:** Born Calcutta, India October 1940 of English/Portugese parents. Returned to UK 1950, attended Wapole Grammar School, Ealing, London. Apprenticeship – Instrumentation Engineer with Evershed & Vignoles. Always

sports-nut – any sport but mainly football and Badminton. Migrated to NZ in 1972 with my then wife and 2 children as Instrumentation Engineer for Honeywell Controls.

First full time Badminton Coach in NZ from '85, named National Coach '87 – Oct 19th (day of stock market crash!!). Met Carol '01 and went trekking in Himalaya '02, fell in love with trekking, the Nepalese people, the Mountains and Carol (not necessarily in that order!), trekked in Everest Region 15 times – My Happy Place. Left beautiful house in Pukenui Estate to join the Falls Village Family August '21. Working hard at improving fitness, member of Writing/Photography/Gym Groups. Intend to join some Village activities.







## MEET OUR DEDIC



### LUCRETIA CHARAN

Gardening and especially growing organically, is a passion, keeping everything as natural as possible, encouraging birds and butterflies to our gardens. Making a healthy environment for us all to enjoy.

Lucretia previously worked at Metlife Care facility in Auckland, maintaining gardens around high-rise buildings, so hugely different from working at the Falls Estate. She was Head Gardener at Waitakere Gardens, not an easy job as it was huge.

Her passion for organics brought her up north and with her husband, sixteen-year-old daughter, and twelve-year-old son, they purchased seven acres of land at Opononi and moved to Whangarei, currently living in Kamo.

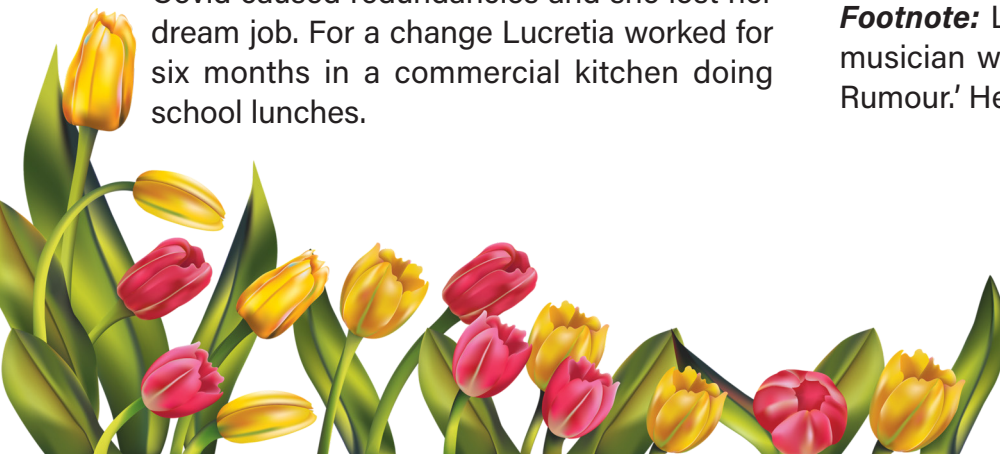
Lucretia worked full time at Helena Bay Lodge as their organic gardener. She grew all the food for this exclusive Lodge on a one-acre garden plot for the visiting tourists and for the Michelin Star Chef to prepare all the meals. Covid caused redundancies and she lost her dream job. For a change Lucretia worked for six months in a commercial kitchen doing school lunches.

Lucretia has Horticulture New Zealand qualifications and has done a lot of on the job learning up to Head Gardener experience. She viewed The Falls and liked what she saw, she loves the style of individual units and gardens, also being next to the Whangarei Falls.

Lucretia's goal for our village is more organic growing and less use of sprays.



**Footnote:** Lucretia's dad is a famous Kiwi musician who was in a group called, 'The Rumour.' He was lead singer, Gerard Smith.





# ATED GARDENERS



Bree, as she is known, was born in Sydney, and moved to Whangarei when eight years old. She attended Pompallier College and Whangarei Girls High. Bree started her working life in a Corporate, well-paying job, working in an office as Payroll Manager. This was not the future she wanted; she wanted a lifestyle change, so quit and worked in an orchid orchard – from a corporate office to the horticulture industry.

Bree's goal is towards naturopathy as a nutritionist. Besides working full time, she is studying part time through the Naturopathic College of New Zealand situated in New Plymouth. Her training is on-line, remote learning towards firstly, a Heath Science Certificate which would lead towards a level 5 and 7 diploma. Bree is finding that self-managed study is very different from school learning. 'I know I am on the right path working in horticulture which I practice each day here at the Falls. I intend to grow my own herbal medicines.'

## (BREE) BRIANNON HARDING



Bree's interest is not only in an organic lifestyle but also in 'women's wellness.' She loves cooking but can only eat, 'gluten and dairy free'.

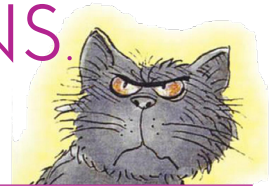
Lucretia and Bree say a big THANK YOU to the kind residents that drop off 'goodies' to our gardeners.







# INTRODUCING OUR FALLS ESTATE COMPANIONS OUR FURRY FRIENDS



*Mouse: 'keeps fit and checks security walking around the village'*

## MEET MOUSE

We got Mouse from the SPCA when he was about three months old. He got his name because he is grey and was extremely scared and would hide under anything the moment we moved. Luckily enough we also had an eight-year-old Golden Retriever who Mouse trusted within a week. They became very good friends and that helped Mouse to trust us. Mouse got into the habit of going for a walk with me and the dog. When the dog died Mouse kept asking for walks by meowing until I went for a walk with him. The move to the Falls Estate was very easy for Mouse. From day one he wanted to walk with me and now he walks three times a day through the whole village. He is also slowly getting used to other people being close by. But he doesn't like to be touched!

**Arie and Joke. (No. 33)**



## MEET MIA

When moving to the Falls Estate on my own I decided to get a cat for company. I visited the SPCA and saw Mia, the sweetest little kitten. She was from a family of five kittens and the only female. She was sitting at the back of the cage behind her brothers and when the cage was opened, she leapt over the other cats straight into my arms. She chose me. How could I leave her? She just jumped into my arms.' I couldn't walk away then and didn't look at any other cats. I took her home with me. She has been my companion for six years and I am very, very fond of her.

**Faye. (No. 50)**



*Mia: 'she has a big bum, don't photograph it!'*



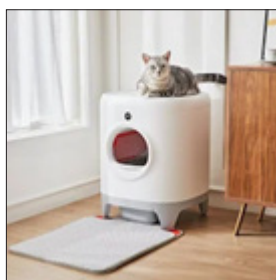
## MEET SOPHIE

Sophie is an SPCA cat who, we were told was 2 years old. She looked very small when we got her but was recovering from having kittens. In fact, she must have been only 8 months old, as she is now a good 5 kg. She is the most affectionate cat we have ever owned (?owned?), but a real sook. She is terrified by our neighbour's cat, who must weigh in at 2.5 kg. When Sophie is chased by the tiny cat, she screams and dashes indoors, hiding under the bed. We love her a lot though, and believe she deserves more respect from us. We are going to buy her this Litter-Robot, at only \$800, which will look smart on our balcony. American of course. You can google it.

**Sue and Ank (No. 88)**



*Sophie: 'Scaredy cat' but oh, what beautiful eyes you have!*



*Advertisement only  
(cat not included)*



## MEET MINDY

My cat best friend found me when I visited the SPCA. We looked at each other, she approached me and that was it. I named her Mindy. She is the most affectionate cat I've ever had. After a big day of checking out the paddocks and bush behind my unit she comes home. She sits on my knee and wants to kiss noses and head bump. Mindy loves to deliver gifts. So far, I've had nine rats and countless mice. My only complaint is she loves to sharpen claws on my lounge suite, not the special pole provided. Mindy was born on the day my husband Leo died. She is six years old.

**Kathy (No. 42)**



*Mindy: 'Falls Village Top Ratter and, oh so affectionate!'*





## MEET FLORENCE

Florence was about eighteen months old when we both moved to the Falls Estate. She had been picked up off the streets in Kaitia (the Hussey!). I visited the SPCA in Whangarei and stood in front of the cages waiting for one of the many cats, hopefully, to choose to come home with me. Florence – named by the SPCA staff, rubbed herself around my legs (is this part of her past profession?) She chose me. Florence very quickly established herself and 'protection of HER property'. She had a few squabbles with the four-legged neighbours including taking on a dog running loose that entered the house. She leapt on him, me cowering in the corner. Florence won that battle too. She approaches strangers for a pat, is very inquisitive and one day even made herself comfortable inside an ambulance parked next door. I hear of Florence's exploits around the village through others telling me where she has been and what she has done.



*Florence – nothing she does ever surprises me.*

**Trudy (No. 1B)**







# FALLS ESTATE HAIRY COMPANIONS

## MEET TOODLE (THE VILLAGE MATRIARCH)

My next-door neighbour had two pedigree poodles, both female. One day an eager Fox Terrier came visiting. The poodles were apparently very safe behind their high fence, but the Terrier would not be put off. He explored around the back of my house, found a hedge and in his excited state managed to climb it, walk along the top and jump into my neighbour's back yard. He must have had considerable charm because he was intimate with both poodles before my neighbour saw what was happening and responded with a lot of shouting. The result was a litter of five pups. The irresponsible father was never seen again! I had the choice of the litter and called her -TOODLE - half terrier and half poodle. She was a charming pup. Very intelligent when she wanted to be, but still has a mind of her own. Toodle was twelve years old when I came to the village, and she continues to be my lovely, little friend. In July she was twenty years old. Toodle sleeps a lot and can no longer run and jump. She is quite active and enjoys life, especially Happy Hour when she eats any snacks available, then curls up in her basket and sleeps it off.



*Toodle 6 months*



**Gerald (No. 48)**

*Toodle: 'I am voting for a care facility to be built at this village.'*



## MEET SPRING

If you have resided at the Falls Estate during the last couple of years you may have noticed, some mornings, the youngish Ian walking with a beige and white dog. This little dog was a Father's Day gift over ten years ago and is much loved. Spring was from a litter of three produced by our grand-daughter's canine parents. When not being taken for a walk, Spring spends a lot of her day sitting behind the glass door watching passers-by. For some she gives a muffled growl, but if there is another dog, Spring goes into a frenzy of barking and dashes out through the side door onto a fenced patio to announce her agitation more stridently. We just hope that she is not too vociferous and annoying. We love her dearly and do not want her to cause any trouble.



**Phillip and Kathryn (No. 8)**

*Spring: 'I am so cute but can be oh so noisy!'*





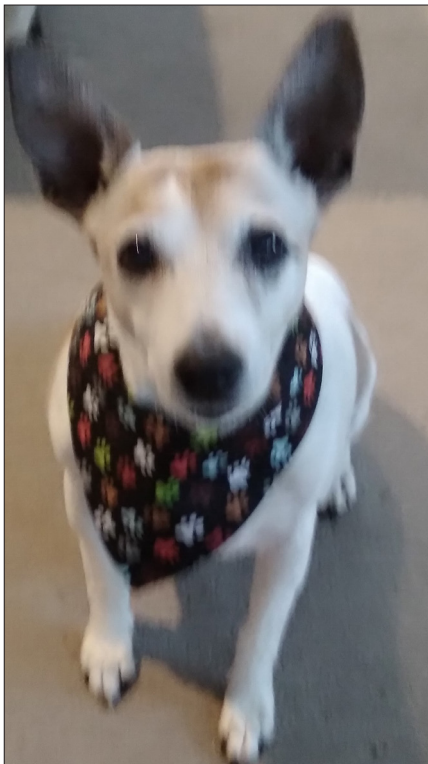


## MEET TITAN

I found Titan on the Humane Society website and picked him up from the foster home in August 2017. He was nine years old. He nearly drowned in the first month. He disappeared in the river and luckily some other dog walkers found him, wet, muddy, and cold trying to get out of the water. He is very sociable and sometimes takes off to visit Lynne, Jillian, or Kathy. The first time Diana took him walking, he bolted for home from the sports field, but now he loves walking with her and Cath, Tui, and others. Kathy and Mary also helped whilst I was out of action. Titan loves his toys and food and his daily walks. Now he is thirteen years old, and he just loves lying in the sun watching people go by. I think I was lucky as with an older dog you are not aware of history or behaviour. His only bad trait is that he is not too keen on big dogs and can get a little grumpy with them. He is right beside me on the couch every night and knows it's time to get on the end of my bed when the telly goes off! I think he is a very good retirement village resident.

*Titan: 'People just love taking me for walks - I've been there, I've been everywhere.'*

**Raewyn (No. 26A)**



## MEET GUCCI

Our 'slightly' overweight Jack Russell, Gucci, joined our family in May 2009 as a sprightly young two-year-old. She arrived complete with her own toothbrush, toothpaste, grooming aids, large continental pillow and wearing a beautiful, jewelled collar inscribed with her name, when her previous owners emigrated to New Zealand. Little did she know that she would follow them four years later. We quickly found out that the way to Gucci's heart was via her stomach. She is always looking for morsels and will eat just about anything that is put in front of her including carrots, apples, bananas, and of course doggy treats. We are sure that she has a built-in alarm system that wakes her up at mealtimes.

'The Lump' as she is affectionately known, is also a dog of set habits. Every evening at the same set time she will jump off my lap and sit and stare at us to let us know that it is her bedtime. In the morning she plonks herself down in front of the fridge waiting for her morning treat. Only then will she go outside for a nature call. Gucci is a wonderful pet and a great pal to have around and there will be many broken hearts when it is her time to drift off to doggy Heaven.

*Gucci: 'Gosh, I am just so, so cute and good looking, and I have a diamond studded collar.'*

**Janette & Dave (No. 26F)**

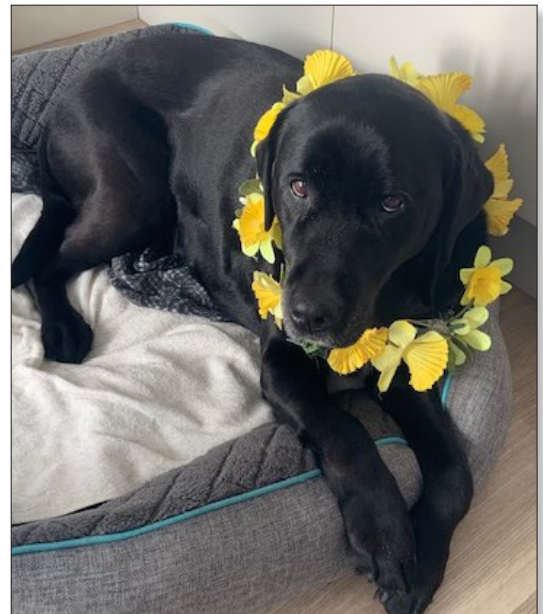


## MEET LEAH

Leah is no ordinary dog. She is a \$23,000 (Twenty-three thousand dollar) trained working Guiding Dog as her Whangarei City collar attachment testifies. She was trained to never lose physical touch with her owner in the home, car or elsewhere. Dougie agreed she will never be left alone in the house unless the Radio or TV is giving sound to her ears. A special name was given to her by the Blind Dog Training Kennels for her talent: Halti - gentle leader. Dougie was seriously required to sign that he would never use a white walking stick. Leah and Dougie are inseparable - a conscious agreed commitment by each. Please respect that. Leah was viciously attacked and crippled by a non-dog lover, who with one blow from his hand, damaged her 13, 14 and 15th vertebrae. Confirmed Paralysis after a Carrington Hospital, Special Vets Unit MRI. She soon learned to walk again assisted by holding a towel under her tummy taking her body weight. Today she still drags her back left leg. Leah is well remembered by her trainer and the staff in Manukau. She is also still quite at home on an escalator at the Airport, enjoys walking around shops and in town and is a regular feature collecting for Cancer with yellow daffodils around her neck. She often wears a special Golden Oldie retired Guide Dog coat. She continues to travel in the car as if with a blind person sitting still on the floor in the front of the car. She has a very strict, highly expensive, dry diet food of strict amounts, but is nonetheless a total gut if given the chance ... She is very gentle and loveable.



*Little Leah*



*Leah collecting for Cancer Society*

*Leah: 'Don't forget I am very, very valuable and so Smart.'*



**Dogie (No. 140)**







# A RESIDENT'S STORY BY MICHAEL SCUTT

## CHASE YOUR DREAMS! OR 3 NIGHTS AND 2 INCREDIBLE DAYS!

Back in 2007 whilst doing research for a second trek to the Gokyo Valley of the Everest Region, I came upon the following text from my Trekking Bible: *Gokyo 5th Lake: "Climbing the dusty moraine at the 5th Lake to overlook the Ngozumpa Glacier offers a view of Everest that **is more extensive** than from both Gokyo Ri and Kallapattar."*

So that extra day was factored into my plans for my November 2007 trek. Day 7 of the 19-day trek was 7 hard hours, Macchermo to Gokyo (3rd Lake), from 4410m to 4985m altitude. This was - Night 1- summit Gokyo Peak (5465m) next morning, come down and rest (Night 2), attempt the 5th Lake the next day a 19.8kms round trip at over 5000m - so 3 nights at Gokyo! A hard ask to be over 5000m altitude for nearly 4 days!

After arriving at Gokyo, I treated myself to a hot shower (Rs 450 - NZ \$5), Milek Coffee (White coffee to us!) and one of my favourite "up high" meals - macaroni/cauli smothered in yak cheese sauce - Yum!! Gokyo Ri or Peak was our aim

- my Guide Krishna, Porter Nanda, and myself - for early next morning. Our climb would be 480m vertical rise. Krishna estimated with the fitness I had shown up till then (better than last year!!) I could possibly get to the top in 3 hours. Putting this in perspective: Parahaki

263m vertical rise, I could jog/walk **up and down** in a tad over 30 minutes in 2007. Gokyo Ri, although only about 1.8 times as high, was going to take me **6 times** the time just to the top!! I did it in 2 hours 48mins!! Showed how good K was in gauging my fitness level! **Everest over my right shoulder!**

Sitting in the dining room after "washee" and into night attire (at 3pm!!) with a hot lemon or mango, we had a team meeting! Krishna complimented me on my day's work. With no feelings/symptoms of AMS, we decided to keep planning and attempt 5th Lake early next day. So that evening, after dinner I ordered 6



thick slices bread, (with yak butter!), 6 boiled eggs, a big flask of black char (tea) with burra chinny (lots of sugar!) and biscuits for the 3 of us. As we were leaving before dawn next day, we had to write in the Lodge book where we were going in case of trouble. The Lodge owner



said "Only Stupid people go there! Do you know its 9.5kms each way? There is no trail, plenty rock falls every week so track changes, and streams, very dangerous and 20kms in one day at over 5000m – you are crazy but bring me back a picture of Sagamanthar - Goddess Mother of the Earth!!!" (Mt Everest in Nepalese)

So, we left at 4.30am. It was a pitch black, clear night, magical star-studded heavens, but no moon. First stop and suck on my water tube after 15mins of intense concentration on where to place my feet, gave an indication of the temperature! The water in the tube to my mouthpiece was frozen! As the sun came up the ice melted. Krishna reckoned it was -5 to -10 Deg C as we left the Lodge!!



It was quite scary walking over rocks, some icy, in pitch black in starlight and our 3 headlights darting around. I followed surefooted Nanda trying to use the rocks he used. Easiest route was picking one's way thru' the rocks on the ridge/edge of the Ngozumpa (pronounced Nozumpa) Glacier – the longest in Nepal. The downside was the steepness and continual rockslides down into the glacier as we disturbed rocks on the ridge. In the eerie quiet, the noise of rolling rocks was quite loud and scary.

As the pre-dawn light grew, almost every few steps new views appeared all round us. I only found out as we walked, that the boys hadn't been to the 5th Lake before, (remember it was only the Stupid who went there!) so it was into the unknown for all 3 of us! We were carefully walking in silence, or standing in awe at the scenes unfolding, as if a supernatural hand was slowly pulling the curtain of night away.

The mountains were staggering in size and proximity. High on the left huge 8 – 10 or more

double storey house-size boulders, perched on the side of Gokyo Ri 5465m which we had climbed the previous day. There were 1 or 2 of these monsters in the valley as we walked! We kept looking up on the left as they looked, they could come down any second! All along this walk, the Glacier groaned, moaned, with the odd rifle shot-like cracks – eerie!

Rounding a rocky outcrop, I stopped and stood gazing in awe at **my favourite Mountain** - Cho Oyu 8188m (means "Turquoise Goddess" in Tibetan) dead ahead, the source of the Ngozumpa Glacier. Krishna knew what I felt about Cho Oyu, so left me alone.

Eventually, as we walked on with eyes down picking the places to step, Krishna stopped me and turned me 90 degrees to my right. I didn't want to take my eyes off "my" Mountain, but there, stark, clear, monstrous in beautiful sunshine, towering above me (and remember I was at 5465m!!), a huge black/white triangle - was Everest! Exactly as the Trekking Guidebook had said, this was the spot to see more of Everest with no intervening mountains blocking the view!! I was now past the Nuptse Ridge, and so there was massive Lhotse too, sitting at The Goddess' left hand!

We found a spot on the Glacier's edge and now with a hug, a laugh, we attacked our packed Breakfast. You could clearly see the Glacier directly behind me, just over the lip





with brief stops for a drink, pretty stamina sapping with joints aching. Got back to Lodge 2pm, over 9hrs since we left. Had a brief kip dirty as I was, then a "washee water" (Bowl of warmish water, and generous use of Wet 'n Wipes!) swab down, changed into night attire. Then to the dining room for hot Mango and fried buff momos. None of the 50-60 trekkers in that room had been where we had walked today – our day was OUR day!! Quite amazing!!!!

of rocks pushed up by its movement. It was soooo special we spent maybe an hour just absorbing the silence with just the odd chee-ow from the Himalayan Chough, like a crow but more compact. I found out, as we shared our drinks and food, how special this day really was. These 2 young men, brought up in these mountains, were sharing a **first time on this extension of the "Normal Gokyo trek"** with **little ol' me**. You see – it took a Stupid person like Michael Baje (my nickname – Grandad) to go to 5th Lake! Lots of hugs and tears from all, as I think they seemed to share in my emotions! Then Krishna assumed control and with his "we have 4 hours back at easy pace Baje, so we go now" we started back to Gokyo.

With excitement, adrenalin in abundance I walked home, almost in a trance. A jot under 20kms on Krishna's watch, and 95% of the walk over 5000m – a pretty tired and emotionally spent trio returned to our Lodge.

***Little did I realise then that this special day was to have a 2nd climax!!!!!!***

Walking over, on, and between rocks for 3.5 hours return,

At about 3.30pm Krishna came to my table and whispered, "How are your legs Baje?" Why I asked. "There is now low cloud base and could be good for Sunset on Everest if we climb Gokyo Ri (the Peak I had summited the day before!!) through storm clouds, maybe 2hrs for you. Stay quiet we don't want a rush". So I went quietly to my room, changed back into my dust covered trekking clothes I had worn all day, and we got some more boiled water, a packet of ginger nuts – always take some food in case we get caught up the mountain and cameras of course - we set off. Sunset on Everest – nothing would stop me even as tired (really exhausted) as I was!! I knew my two boys would look after me.







Took us 70 minutes to get back to the Lodge. Ironically, we had started the day with headlights on, now we were finishing in the same manner. Darkness and cloud, a dangerous combination. "Don't let the euphoria distract you Michael", I said over and over to myself. Krishna's altimeter read we had reached 5300m.

So, for virtually 13 hours we had been on our feet today, starting at 4am when we woke, and 7.30pm by the time we got home!! And possibly 11 of those hours over 5000m - not good for the body,

dehydration, extreme tiredness, aching joints for this old man, and a ravenous hunger! **But what a Buzz!!**

Took ages to get to sleep, the three incredible and different views of Sagamanthar, Mt Everest, I'd experienced in the last 36 hours, flashing through my mind like no photos could record.

We had another 7-hour day tomorrow, but with my pictures in my camera, my memories in my mind, and thoughts of 2 of the most faithful young men who gave me the opportunity for an amazing time, I must have eventually fallen asleep!!

It had taken a fresh Michael to reach the peak in just under 3 hours the previous day!! From the lodge we were walking in grey/black clouds, with barely 1m visibility. Thoughts these could be thunder clouds, therefore maybe lightning as we go up, certainly a freezing wind, and steady rain for about 30 minutes!!!! Frightening thoughts but kept submersed by the adrenalin coursing thru' my veins!!

As we climbed, slower and slower for me, glancing over my shoulder where Everest would be, thinking maybe the cloud level was higher than the boys had estimated. Suddenly, after about 100 minutes, the clouds got wispy and then, as I once more stopped and looked, we were clear, and there was Everest, Nuptse to the right, then Makalu and all the lesser mountains I knew soooo well and had walked past in early treks and even earlier that week. This time they were all floating on a sea of white clouds!

For about 10 minutes there was just another Sherpa, his Trekker, and my team (the 3 of us) on our own with this staggering sight, then more people arrived! We stayed for about 15 minutes. The light fading quickly and suddenly blackness where we were, but still some faint and fading light on Everest!



Everest, just sitting there!



# EXPLORING OUR OWN BACKYARD

## MIDWINTER CHRISTMAS AT THE CHATEAU

Tuesday 20th July eight residents from the Falls Estate gathered at the unearthly hour of 7am to meet the shuttle bus and begin our three nights and four days adventure.

We travelled to Auckland and met our tour leader, Liz Gillette of Seemore Tours, and bus driver Margaret Edwards. We collected five other passengers, one from a high-rise building of apartments for retirees in Remuera where it costs one million dollars to purchase the right to reside in an apartment. We headed to Tongariro National Park, arriving mid-afternoon, all hoping for plenty of snow. We were disappointed – it was showery and cold. The Chateau was cosy and warm and no shortage of drinks and food to go with this!

The next day was a drive to the Top of the Bruce – still cold, raining, and sleety snow. Riding the 'Sky waka' was a highlight with coffee at the restaurant at the top. Disappointingly, views were minimal with the poor weather. But that was quickly forgotten when, back at the Chateau, we had a luxurious 'high tea' and champagne served while seated in the large bay window looking directly out towards Mount Ngauruhoe – not that we could see the mountain through mist and rain. That evening we indulged in pre-dinner drinks with our Mid-winter Christmas dinner including a visit from Santa and gifts for all.



The next day we visited the National Trout Centre operated by the Department of Conservation. Being the school holidays, we watched children being taught how to fly fish and the trout they caught were smoked and given to them to enjoy. Lunch was at the Creel Tackle House and café in Turangi. Our last evening at the Chateau was a farewell dinner followed by a quiz – and by some of us – a few double shots of Baileys and a very interesting game of pool, with constantly changing rules.

We left to head home via the train station at National Park and travelled to Auckland on the Northern Explorer. What a great trip – modern, excellent facilities, including food and drink. Wonderful to just sit back and enjoy the great views of our countryside. We arrived at Auckland at 7pm where our shuttle bus was waiting to take us home – a door to door service. Great trip, great company.







'Top of the Bruce' (can you find the 8 Falls' residents?)



Falls glamour girls. Drinks time at the Chateau.  
Can you guess who?



National Trout Centre – measuring trout for release



Kate and Fred inside the Sky Waka



Chateau 'High Tea'

Glamour Girls: Trudy McKnight, Jillian Comer, Gail Martin, Jocelyn Allen



# EXPLORING OUR OWN BACKYARD

## WALKING THE TREETOPS

Just inland from Hokitika you can journey on a 1.2km loop track where you experience a walk in the bush elevated twenty metres above the forest floor. This walk is not just to admire the great views but is also an informative wander discovering the biodiversity of the forest.

This West Coast Forest contains plants related to some of the earliest species to colonise the earth. This forest is dominated by the giant Podocarp trees. Under the forest canopy are ferns, mosses, liverworts, and hornworts all being very ancient in origin. The podocarp trees start with a conical shape and as they get older, they shed the lower branches and have long straight trunks with a crown of greenery emerging out of the canopy of the forest. These forest giants

were a bonanza for loggers with their long lengths of timber and no lower branches. Many wooden buildings before the 1970s was built from this wood, especially Rimu. This walkway offers a unique opportunity to see the Easter Orchid, a rare species not usually seen and unknown to many Kiwis. It flowers in the treetops in autumn and has a rich perfume that lies thickly in the air around. In the trees are Epiphytes, the hangers on, using larger trees as a ladder to the sunlight in the canopy. Seen through the trees are perching lilies, supplejack, mosses, orchids, and many other plants. On the forest floor the old rotting trees provide food sources for insects, birds plus bacteria in the ever-continuing process of life and death. The forest floor has probably more diversity than the canopy above.



Tree Top Walkway 1.2 kilometre loop



The tree top walkway structure began in July 2012 and opened in December of that year. The steel structure was prefabricated in Australia in two months and brought to Hokitika where it was assembled in only six weeks. Huge amounts of concrete were poured so the structure can withstand the wildest West Coast weather. Over 13,500 bolts put the structure together. This engineering masterpiece was designed to move with the wind. The circular tower built on the structure has 107 steps to reach 47

metres. I admit I didn't venture forth to climb the tower – I felt I was high enough up in the trees anyway, and I would not be willing to be up there in a strong wind!

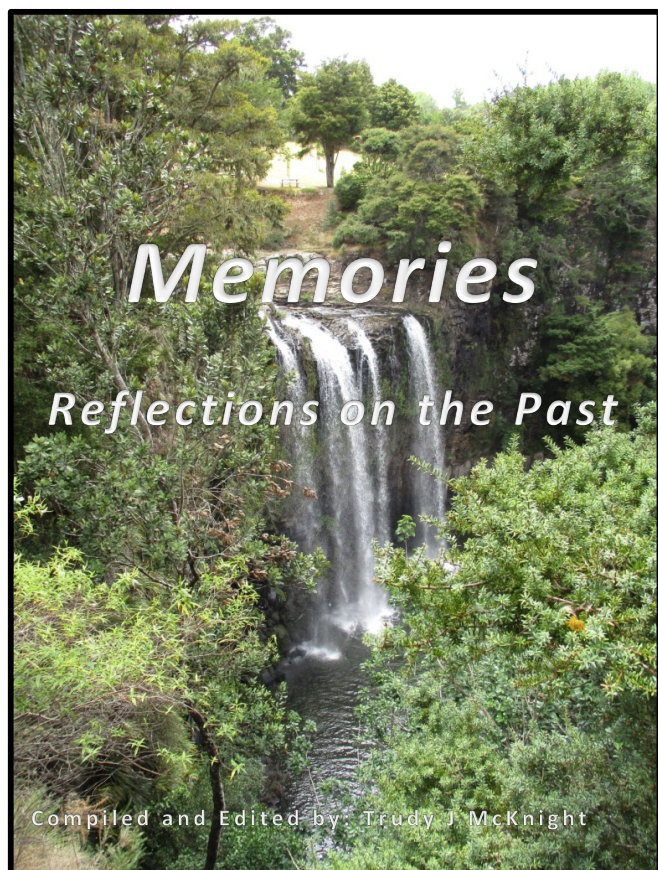
If you are travelling in this area, do go further inland, about twenty kilometres and explore the Hokitika Gorge – well worth the trip. And – there is a café at the Tree Top Walk.

By: Falls Roving Reporter.



The Tree Top Tower – 47 metres





## **Book Preview**

**History of days gone by.  
Memories and Life stories  
written and recorded by  
residents living at  
The Falls Estate Lifestyle  
Village  
Whangarei**

Extracts from personal stories reflecting on the past – of times gone by:

'No electricity, black wood stoves, hurricane lamps and no hot water with the privy down the garden and ornate potties under the beds.'

'My grandma said my dad was a heathen, uneducated and not good enough for their only daughter. He was a stern, grumpy old bugger who called me, 'a bloody nuisance.'

'School also meant whacks on the knuckles and legs, boxed ears and flying chalk at selected targets.'

'I feel guilty as I was one of the very few babies that survived in a Prisoner of War camp.'

'The whole district was our playground where we roamed unfettered and unafraid.'

'We three kids had one bike between us. My sister sat on the back carrier, my brother on the seat and I stood up and pedalled.'

'The train was packed with troops on leave and the kids were put up on the luggage racks to sleep as there was little sitting room in the carriages.'

**This publication is expected to be available early November 2021. Cost \$35 per copy.**

**Order prepaid copies through: Trudy McKnight – email – [mcknight.trudy@gmail.com](mailto:mcknight.trudy@gmail.com)  
or - Falls Estate office, 94 Boundary Road, Tikipunga, Whangarei.  
[mary.williams@thebegroup.co.nz](mailto:mary.williams@thebegroup.co.nz)**





# FALLS QUIZ

## GUESS WHO THE HORSE RIDERS ARE

Photographs are from the soon to be released publication:  
**'MEMORIES - REFLECTIONS OF THE PAST'**



**Rider No. 1** (Hint - Show jumper at Bloemfontein, South Africa) swims and knits.



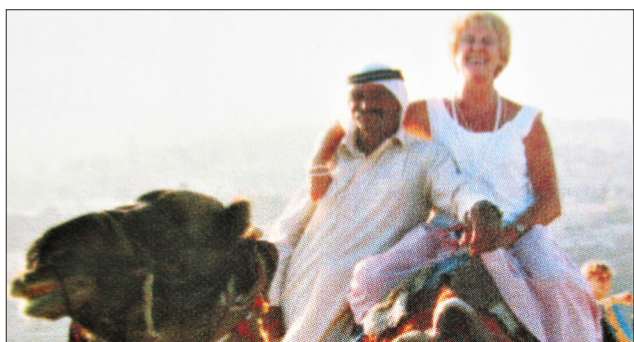
**Rider No. 2** (Went to school at Morrinsville College.) Is a winner of many activities at the Falls, will give anything a go!



**Rider No. 3** (Hint- perhaps a 'bare-foot' rider!)



**Rider No. 4** (Hint- exchanged horse for a red car!)



**Rider No. 5**  
 (Hint – lives in the Boundary apartments)



**Quiz answers:** 1. Jeanette Firman; 2. Betty Harding; 3. Russell Porter; 4. Kathy Hay; 5. Maureen Boud.

# PETUNIAS



Pretty, prolific, powerful, productive... the list goes on and on about the tremendous merits of the Petunia. Over the years Petunias have cemented themselves as a popular summer flower. Petunias provide the garden with a marathon of colour for months on end. Once established Petunias take very little to maintain their flowering carpet of colour. The colour mix for Petunias seems endless – from pastel and subtle tones through to the bold colours of the primary colour wheel. Flower shape and size varies from small to large, double and frilly, the choice is yours.

With Petunias full sun is mandatory, along with a moist, fertile soil. Petunias will cope with dry periods, but this seriously compromises flowering ability and potential, hence its always best to ensure plants are well watered through long dry periods. Petunias are perfect pot and basket plants.

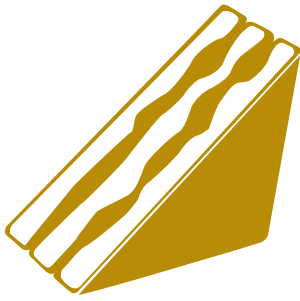
The list of Petunia categories is very long, but some favourite varieties to look out for are listed below. Annuals; Debonair Dusky Rose, Frilly double flowering, Pepe Petunias, Ramblin series and Storm series. Perennials include Million Bells and Sunbells, Raspberry Blast, SuperCal Petchoa and Thumbelina.

Like building a house a good foundation is the key to success in your garden. The better the soil, the better your plants will grow. If you are starting with an existing garden bed dig in organic matter like Sheep Pellets and Compost to your soil.

The best times to plant are early in the morning, or late in the day so the plants aren't exposed to the hot sun straight away. Always water plants well before and after planting.







# AVOCADO ON RYE

## WITH FETA AND TOASTED PUMPKIN SEEDS

SERVES 4



*Avocado on rye with feta and toasted pumpkin seeds. Picture / Babiche Martens*

Avocados make the perfect topping. Ask your local greengrocer for the best avocados — they will often ripen them out the back and only put them on the shelf table-ready. Luckily for me my local Balmoral vegetable shop does just that. For a gourmet twist, top your avocado with salty feta and toasted pumpkin seeds for extra crunch. A squeeze of lime is essential.

### INGREDIENTS

- 8 slices rye bread
- olive oil to brush
- 2 Tbsp pesto
- 2 avocado, chopped roughly
- ½ red onion, sliced
- 100g feta, crumbled
- ½ cup toasted pumpkin seeds
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 limes to squeeze

### METHOD

1. Heat a griddle or frying pan to a high heat. Brush the rye bread with olive oil on both sides. Toast in your pan until golden.
2. Spread each piece of toast with pesto, add some chopped avocado, red onion and feta. Sprinkle over some pumpkin seeds and season with salt and pepper.
3. Serve with a squeeze of lime juice.

# CONGRATULATIONS



Bloom Black Magic



Bloom Man Size

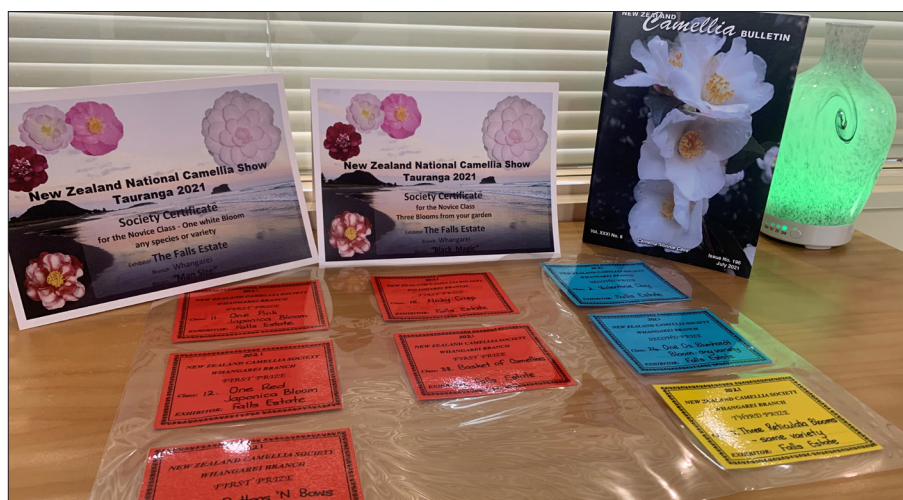


This year, Jocelyn Allen represented the Falls Estate at the New Zealand Camellia Society's Whangarei Branch competition and brought home 5 First Prizes, 2 Second Prizes and 1 Third Prize.

Jocelyn then went to Tauranga to represent the Falls Estate once again, where we were

awarded the Society Certificate for the Novice Class – Three Blooms from your Garden (Bloom Black Magic) and the Society Certificate for Novice Class – One White Bloom any Species or Variety (Bloom Man Size).

Thank you, Jocelyn, and well-done Falls Estate!



Any comments & feedback are welcome!  
Send them to: [marie.annandale@thebegroup.co.nz](mailto:marie.annandale@thebegroup.co.nz)