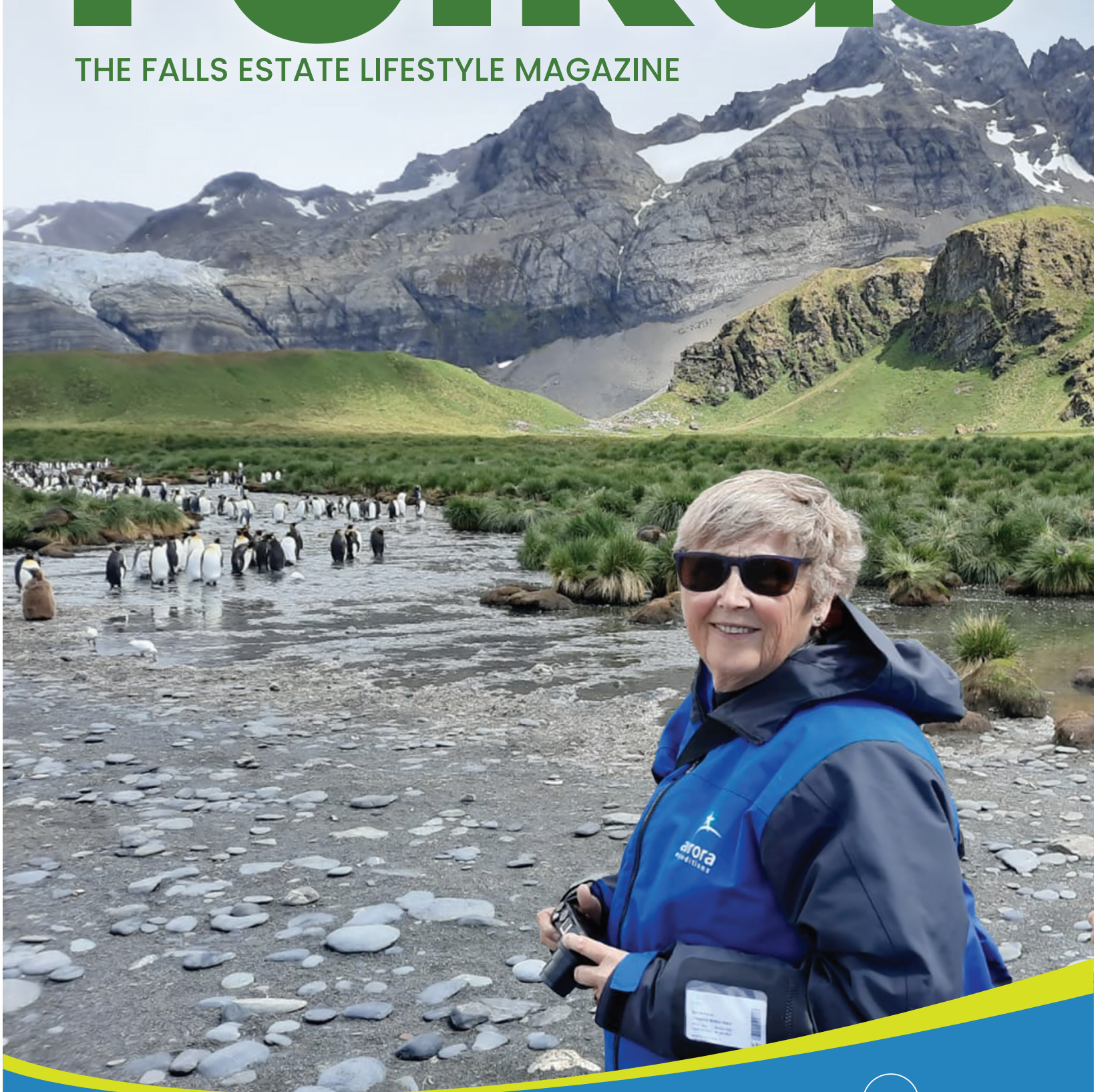


# THE FALLS Folkus

WINTER 2023 | EDITION 17

THE FALLS ESTATE LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE



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THE FALLS ESTATE  
A BEGROUP LIFESTYLE VILLAGE



## Message from Marie Annandale

Village Manager, Falls Estate

There is never a dull moment in the Village, with many more bright ones than we have room to tell you about in a few pages. Behind the scenes we see and hear of many wonderful moments where residents reach out to one another to give support and encouragement.

It is such a lovely, lively Village, full of people who engage with whatever is going on and who enjoy every day, looking forward and not backwards. Over the last three months, residents commemorated Anzac Day and a few weeks later got together to see the King being crowned.

Soon after, the Whangarei Brass Band provided exhilarating entertainment for residents on Mother's Day. In this edition we introduce the MiLife Villages, which are part of the BeGroup, new residents' stories, Joke's Antarctic adventure last year, extracts from Robyn's book 'Tackling the Tanami Track', Dave's years as a paramedic, and lastly our fun table tennis activity. Until next time, happy reading.



## Message from Alison Waugh

Residents Committee Chairperson

The Committee has been very busy since I last wrote a message in Folkus Magazine. In March we hosted the Summer Olympics which was a day of fun trying our skills at various games. Thank you, Brian Atkins, for organising this event. A first for the village was a High Tea

to celebrate our 90-year-old plus residents. What a wonderful day this was with the lounge beautifully set up and yummy food served to residents. The Committee and helpers did a great job and we have been asked if we will do this again, so we look forward to hosting this event again next year.

Anzac Day on 25 April was well attended by our residents and it was a very moving service. The Committee and helpers served a lunch of pie, peas and potatoes after the service. On 6 May a Coronation Day and Variety Concert to celebrate King Charles' Coronation was held. This was very well attended by many of our residents. Thank you to Jeanette Porter and her many helpers for organising such a great day, with our caterers providing a finger food afternoon tea. Mother's Day on 14 May was well attended and the food provided by our new caterers was plentiful and delicious. Once again, thank you to the Committee and helpers for making this day a success. A lovely pamper basket was won by Lorraine Brown (a spot prize) and another basket was raffled and won by Raewyn Bennett. After lunch the Whangarei Brass Band entertained our residents.

So, you can see the Committee has been very busy and I would like to thank them all, as well as the numerous helpers who made these events successful.



# Martin Taylor

## MiLife Villages

**Martin Taylor is Chief Operations Officer for MiLife villages which recently became part of BeGroup which also owns Falls Estate and Wairarapa Villages.**

**H**e's been involved with MiLife for over a year, but prior to that was a parliamentary ministerial advisor, CEO of the NZ Aged Care Association, CEO of Fish and Game, and has also worked as an Operations Manager in a District Health Board.

"I worked in government for a number of years before taking up the advocacy role for the NZ Aged Care Association," he says. "At that stage the sector needed to be more strategically focused on political gains, and that's how I got into Aged Care."

Martin is married and has two teenage boys. When he's not trying to keep all his ducks in a row at work and at home, he enjoys fly-fishing, as well as karate, and fencing. And we think he means with foils, epees and sabres, rather than with No.8 wire.

He's got a big job with BeGroup which includes administering day to day operations across three MiLife villages and Wairarapa village, overseeing marketing, sales, maintenance, HR, and all other operational matters. The three MiLife villages are Kelvin Grove - Palmerston North, Rosewood Park - Levin, and Bell Vista and Wills Road - New Plymouth. Wairarapa Village offers the full



continuum of care from stand-alone villas, to serviced apartments right through to a sixty-bed care facility. Together, the villages he looks after have a combined 400+ residents.

"With MiLife now included in the BeGroup," says Martin, "it means all BeGroup village residents, including Falls Estate, have the advantage of preferential entry to any MiLife facility if they need to shift to a location closer to family or friends."

All BeGroup villages are part of a group focused on making sure the expectations and aspirations residents have on entry to a village, will be met.

"The aim," Martin says, "is to ensure residents can continue to live with a high quality of life in retirement."



 **New Residents**

# John and Monica Comrie



**Monica and John Comrie moved in earlier this year having decided Falls Estate was their spot after looking around for a few years.**

"I'm not a townie," said John, "and we didn't want to be looking up close at the neighbours next door. We were used to living on our Matarau farm in a house that was in the middle of 300 acres. Eighteen years ago we downsized to 75 acres at Poroti. Poroti had a deck and we could see for at least a couple of km. Here we have a deck and we can look out over the river and down the valley almost out to the Heads."

In Matarau, Monica and John farmed a thousand strong flock of sheep and exported 'fat lambs'. They were born in June and sold in November, before the Comries bought in more lambs to fatten off for autumn sale.

They began hosting international 'fly-ins' for competition model-plane aerobatics in 1963 and after they moved to Poroti, the Matarau farm continued to host the 'fly-ins' which ran until 2006. In Poroti John stuck to fattening steers, no sheep.

Monica and John each have collecting hobbies – John collects stamps, and Monica, postal history. They'd just come back from an international philatelic exhibition in Auckland at the time of writing, where Monica had won a silver-gold medal for her eight-frame exhibit.

John had asthma as a pre-schooler and his mother found a hobby for him which didn't tax his breathing in stamp collecting. He picked it up again as he grew older. "Mum came from Guernsey and when I came back from overseas, she had these stamps from all over."

John's 'gone off' collecting stamps from different countries, and now collects the ones depicting world airlines.

Monica, who also likes to grow flowers, has three children and six grandchildren between Western Australia, Christchurch (uni now), and one in Whangarei whose Dad's property they can see from the back of Falls Estate. Their three pets don't move very much. Falls Estate residents have on more than one occasion come up close to pat them before realising the cat and her two kittens are made out of concrete.



## New Residents

# Ivan and Yvonne Yovich

Our new residents, Ivan and Yvonne Yovich might be hard to keep up with.

As a sports person all her life Yvonne isn't about to change, but she has changed the sports she plays. She played tennis until she was seventy-three and realised that after playing the men she'd have to go home and lie down for the rest of the day. She decided she'd have to try something tamer. Now in her mid-eighties she's tackling table tennis at Falls Estate and also at Onerahi. She loves it. "It's a good fast game and I can still get around the table. I like the social side of it too."

"I was a runner," says Yvonne. "I won the first female harrier race in Whangarei around 1956. My sister was a championship runner at Girls High – she came second."

The top runner at Titoki High School (now Mangakahia Area School), Yvonne was also a sprinter and hurdler. Later she did long distance running. She played interclub badminton and represented Whangarei dozens of times as well as playing for Northland, but really loved tennis – it was outside, and growing up on a farm had taught her to love the outdoors. Yvonne was the first baby born at Whangarei Hospital on 12 May 1937 – King George's coronation day. She



grew up the eldest of five (who are all still living) on a farm at Kokopu.

Ivan and Yvonne lived for thirty-three years in a two storey house at Waikaraka. The views and the neighbours were fantastic but the stairs were becoming difficult and there was no bus service so it was time to move.

"We used to do Halloween and the neighbourhood kids would come. I'd make them do something for their treat. Even three year old little Sophie did a twirl, so she got chocolate too. The neighbours have been to see us here and have approved. We were lucky to get my friend's house after she died."

Ivan was a structural engineer in his professional life. He plays indoor and outdoor bowls at Falls Estate and Onerahi. He also grows a good vegetable garden and Yvonne likes to grow flowers. Ivan is prone to unpopularity with Yvonne when he prunes something almost to the ground, or her lovely camellia which was just about to burst into flower. Both are avid readers - Yvonne, non-fiction, and Ivan, almost everything.

The couple have two girls and a boy and four grandchildren.



**Table tennis not just for youngsters**  
By ALEXANDRA NEWLOVE  
This year's New Zealand Open Table Tennis Championships proved table tennis is not just a young person's game.  
Table Tennis Northland hosted the 2018 event during Easter Weekend at ASB Stadium, Manurewa. Yvonne Yovich, 81, was the first woman to win the gold medal in the women's singles category, defeating Australian Jim Furness and Case de Bruijn in the final.  
They went on to finish a credible third in the over-70 men's team, and made the final of the men's doubles.  
Another standout performer was Alan Webster. Having his first tournament, Webster reached the final of the over-70 men's singles, defeating some experienced players along the way.  
Several Northland women, among them Edna Alison, Julie Buhl, Yvonne Yovich and Elizabeth McBeth, played in the tournament for the first time, saying it was a "great experience".  
Webster says the event was a "great success" for the club, and that he had a great time.  
"I was interested to see how it went and enjoy the 'go go go'!"  
Social table tennis played on Mondays and Fridays from 12.30pm to 2.30pm at ASB Stadium on West Hill Drive. More news please play on Wednesday at 4.30pm.  
Contact Don Webster on 434 1722 for more info.  
Photo credit: Don Webster



## New Resident

# Ali McKeeman

**We have the pleasure of Ali McKeeman's company at Falls Estate because Lachie, her black Labrador boy needed more space than was available anywhere else she looked.**

**S**he preferred the curved roads too instead of rows of identical units and likes the individual gardens where residents can have input in the planting.

Ali moved to Falls Estate after a forty-two-year stint in Kensington. She worked as a registered nurse on the surgical wards at Whangarei Hospital for years and then began work in Aged Care at a rest home. It was a huge change and brought pleasant surprises. Having expected a monotonous working environment, she was surprised to find the rest home interesting and personable. She befriended people and was able to tailor their individual care.

"You got to see residents," she says, "and go through their ups and down with them."

Ali also delivered education including a weekly training session for all staff, carried out audits, made sure staff were competent, and wrote 'care plans'.

She's been a keen traveller in her time, having been born in England and moving to Jaipur, India for two years when she was sixteen. She's also done some serious backpacking including to Indonesia before the tourists really arrived, 'Burma as it used to be', and Bangladesh. She went back to India a couple of times.

"It fascinates me," she says. "Last time was in 1985. We ate from the street stalls and never got sick. As long as the food was cooked on the stall anything that could make you sick would be killed during the cooking."

Ali has two sons, one grand-daughter of whom she's particularly fond, and three grandsons.

She'd just finished reading *Down the Darkest Road*, a psychological thriller at the time of writing. It's a genre she enjoys.

"I like the suspense - not lots of shooting and killing. She also likes beating her computer at playing scrabble and succeeds often enough to keep her at it. Seven-year-old Lachie the lab has had more pats in the couple of months they've lived here than in the last two years.





## New Resident

# Marcia Judd

**Marcia was such a new resident when we caught up with her that we could still see the dew on her.**

**S**he was bought up in Te Puke in the Bay of Plenty on a sheep and cattle farm in the Roydon Downs area. Roydon Downs would today be regarded as being 'in the sticks', so growing up on the 550 acre farm during the 60s was really 'Stickville'.

"I had a twenty minute walk to the bus stop followed by an hour long ride on the bus to attend Paengaroa Primary School and with a bus driver named Tarzan, we had to really BEHAVE," says Marcia. "I really loved living there and the country life. I loved all the animals except the two year old bulls that bellowed at me on the way to school and home again as I walked along the road. I had two pet lambs, one of which lived until she was sixteen, and when I was a bit older I had an old horse which I tried to get to go up the hills. She did in the end."

"Those were the days. The freedom to roam the land was wonderful. It was the type of a farm on which you could go into various valleys and there was always something different to look at. I'd go wandering over the farm by myself way



out the back paddocks where there was bush and come across streams and walk up them.

"I helped with feeding out, docking lambs, rousing, skirting fleeces, and getting ready for processing in the manual press. The original farm and house is now in forestry which is sad."

Marcia moved to Peria inland from Taipa in the Far North for a while then later moved to Nelson area. My childhood days in the woolshed came in handy when I managed an eight-acre Angora goat farm near Mapua. Although the fleeces were different to class, the basic principle was the same.

Marcia moved to Falls Estate from Whangarei District. She sews when she's inspired and enjoys adult colouring-in and a bit of gardening as well. She is a mother, and a Nana, and a Great Nana to a one year old.



1980's Marcia Judd - Urguhart Castle at Loch Ness



1980's Marcia Judd - Small Goat Farm in Nelson



# Coronation<sup>👑</sup> in the lounge



Tony & Ada Fleet

**W**e haven't had a King crowned in our lounge ever before and lots of us got together to see it happen on 6 May. In fact a hundred and two people came to join company and watch the crowning of King Charles III.

And what an event it was. Everyone attending the actual pomp and circumstance event dressed up, and so did all of us, which made it that much nicer. BOB Café came in to take care of the delicious catering we enjoyed, and the Village Lads Men's choir graciously sang some lovely harmonies to celebrate.



Ray & Elaine Bradley





*Harry Hextall & Dougie Chowns*

In between the long bits of the actual coronation, we had some fun, some dancing, and exchanged a raft of hilarious jokes. Thanks to everyone who helped make this historic event an absolute delight. Here are some photos from the day.



*Brian Atkins & Pat May*



*Mel & Lynne are an integral part of the Village Lads, who entertained the residents on the day.*





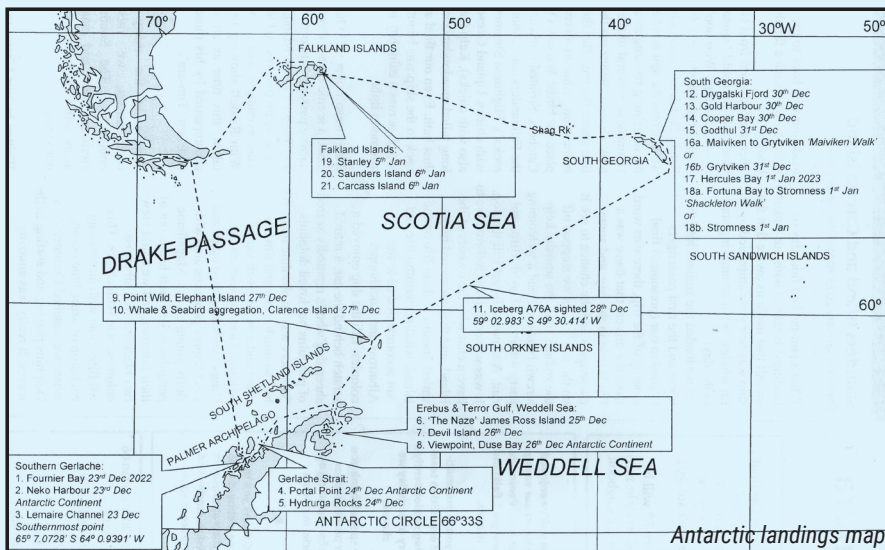
# Joke Reek Antarctic Traveller

**When her daughter's friend pulled out of a booked trip to the Antarctic, she invited her mother instead, and Joke accepted.**

**T**he trip was on a small cruise-liner with just 105 passengers for the adventure. As a smaller ship it had the advantage of being able to navigate smaller channels as well as being able to make landfall. Huge cruise-liners with thousands of passengers are denied landfall in Antarctica because of environmental effects.

The ship left Ushuaia at the lower extremity of Argentina on 20 December 2022 and the adventure ended on 8 January. Their first landfall was at Neko Harbour on Antarctica. Joke says, "It was mind-boggling sailing towards it with big icebergs floating around you. We got into Zodiacs – eight people in each (the ship carried 20 Zodiacs) and went in-between all the icebergs and when we actually landed, we were walking deep in snow. My daughter snorkelled but I wasn't game."





Grytviken

"We wore three layers of clothing so it wasn't too cold but we were lucky with the weather and it was sunny so we could walk around with the expedition leaders. On board ship we were told the rules – where to walk, how far, that you may not approach penguins, of which there were lots. Some of them came close to us but you couldn't avoid that. You definitely mustn't stand on penguin walkways.

"We saw Fur Seals, Weddell Seals and young Elephant Seals. The male Elephant Seals disappear once they have mated, while the females wait three weeks after giving birth before leaving their babies.



Whilst in South Georgia, we walked part of the track Ernest Shackleton made to rescue his people when they were stranded on Elephant Island, and visited Shackleton's resting place, Grytviken on South Georgia.

"We had one day of snow and ice and couldn't land, but most of the time we managed to get ashore. We were especially lucky to get into the Weddell Sea which is normally frozen but because of climate warming it is now more accessible. Our expedition leader had only made one other continental landing from the Weddell Sea in 25 years."



Fur seal



Baby fur seal



Feeding fur seal





Adelie penguins



Joke saw a lot of penguins. Adelie Penguins are small and cute and live 15 to 25 years. She also saw Magellanic Penguins, Macaroni (“the ‘best’ with little yellow hair spikes”), Gentus, Rockhoppers, and Chinstrap Penguins which have a black line underneath their chins. All the penguins were cute, she said, except the Kings which were majestic.

Their cruise took them to the Falklands Islands and the very English-looking main village of Stanley where they landed. There they visited a large colony of the smaller Black-Browed Albatross, but they had also seen the huge Wandering Albatross at sea. The Falklands landscape consisted mostly of hills while South Georgia was mountainous.





*Black-browed albatross*



*Chinstrap*



*Adelie penguins*



*Rockhoper*



*Weddell seals*

Antarctica’s landscape, with its snow, and ice peaks was the major attraction with its vastness emphasising just exactly how small we are. Joke said, “In the sea, icebergs take on amazing forms. We saw A76A, a 135km long by 26km wide ice-shelf with 50m showing above sea level which had broken off the Ronne ice-shelf. We also saw Humpback whales, Fin Whales and someone saw a Blue Whale in the South Scotia Sea.

“We were in Antarctica on the longest day – it got dark for half an hour – with 23 hours of daylight.”

Having been lucky enough with weather to get fifteen landings between Antarctica, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands, Joke was still grinning about the trip in late May.



*Elephant seals*



*South Georgia*





# Tackling the Tanami Track

By Robyn Boswell

**In 1987, my sister was moving back to NZ with her husband who was Melbourne born and bred.**

**A**fter a year of planning, Dad and I joined them before they came back for our 'Aussie Safari'. They sold their house, bought a landcruiser, a box trailer which was quickly christened 'Little Blue' and all the gear we needed and we set off on a 3-month camping trip through the Outback and down the Queensland coast. All up we covered more than 20,000 kms. My latest book 'Blue Came Too' will be about our adventure.

Our biggest achievement was crossing the Tanami Desert on the Tanami Track. We'd debated for days as to whether we'd tackle the desert crossing and had listened to advice that mostly said "No, don't do it, especially with a trailer", then strangely we met a guy from Northland who ran tours across the Tanami. He asked us if we'd driven the back road from Whangarei and Russell, which was unsealed those days. We'd done it dozens of times towing boats and caravans. He said "Well you won't have a problem!"



So there we were, part way through the journey, loaded with water, diesel and two weeks of supplies in case of a breakdown. The signpost said it all – Hall's Creek 1028kms – that was it – the next town and in between was the Tanami Desert.

The first 125kms were on twelve-foot-wide seal, comfortable to drive on, but when a car came towards you it was a game of chicken to see who would lose their nerve first and pull off into the red dust on the side. Fortunately we only saw three cars all morning and by day's end had seen all six cars that we would meet on the whole track.



Leaving the seal behind we drove on red gravel as wide as a 6-lane highway. As the road became too

corrugated, the grader simply graded new lanes on the sides of the existing road. We had to keep our speed up to skim across the top of the corrugations, but at the same time the spotter in the passenger seat had to keep their eyes peeled for bulldust, lighter than the rest of the road, which filled deep holes that would break an axle or the towbar if we crashed into them. There was a great cacophony as everything in the cruiser crashed, rattled and rolled.

We stopped for a picnic lunch right on the road; no need to pull over – there was room for everyone. The hours rolled by and the spinifex and dust went on and on. Late in the afternoon we encountered a small, green building and a petrol pump. This was our destination for the night, Rabbit Flat, the most remote roadhouse in Australia, 640 kms from Alice Springs and 456 kms from Halls Creek. We erected our tents out the back beside a billabong and lit a campfire to cook our steaks for dinner, marveling at the fact that we were alone in the majesty of the Australian desert. Suddenly we heard the unmistakable growl of a diesel engine and a bus rolled into the camp, full of scouts from Melbourne on a grand adventure. So much for solitude!

The next morning, as we sat in the cool of a desert sunrise eating breakfast, a green and gold cloud of thousands upon thousands of budgerigars billowed over the billabong. We watched, fascinated, as they swooped and dipped, ensuring that every member of the flock got a sip of water as they passed by.

We chatted to the proprietor for a while. It turned out there were some mines not too far away and some aboriginal settlements deep in the desert. We'd wondered why he had a bar in the roadhouse. He showed us the loaded rifle he kept under the counter 'just in case things get out of hand'. He only had to pull it out and place it on the counter for things to calm down.



The road over the Western Australian border deteriorated markedly becoming very narrow, sandy, heavily corrugated and lined by yellow grasses almost as tall as the Landcruiser, which made it virtually impossible to spot oncoming traffic. Luckily there was none. Termite mounds got taller and taller and we stopped by one that towered over our vehicle.

We overnighed at Carranya Station, an isolated cattle station with a very dusty campsite. My airbed went down so I spent the night in one of our deckchairs, mesmerised by the stars strung across the sky and the golden glow of sunrise in the Australian bush. At Wolf Creek Meteorite Crater we climbed the walls, marveled at the 800m wide perfect circle formed by an ancient meteorite and pondered on the impact such an event must have had on the entire planet.

As we traversed the last 100 or so kilometres of dust and corrugations we discovered Little Blue was worse for wear. The towbar had bent with the constant banging and crashing. We held on with a wing and a prayer until we found ourselves back on a smooth tarmac road with a few kilometres to go to Halls Creek.

The four of us cheered as we hit the bitumen. We'd not only made it, we'd had an incredible adventure that would stay with us forever. We'd conquered the Tanami Desert!



# Dave Dobson

## A 1960s and 70s Paramedic

**In 1967 when Dave Dobson was a watersider on the Whangarei waterfront, he joined St John's Ambulance Brigade so someone would be on hand in case of wharfside injuries. He saw quite a few accidents, some bad, which he had to patch up and get the ambulance down for.**

Over time he encouraged other watersiders to join St John's and eventually they decided to run their own brigade as part of St John's.

"We studied at St John's which was good. It took the responsibility off me as the only one on the waterfront," he says.

Watersiders were 'retired' at 60, but Dave continued as a St John Ambulance officer from 5pm until 8am one night of every weekend (Fri/Sat/Sun).

"My wife, Vivienne, was in the nursing division of St John's," he said. "We'd stay up until 12pm then sleep in separate rooms. She'd have the



Dave Dobson

gear and I'd have the paperwork. As soon as the phone rang, I answered and she'd get up to get the ambulance running and have the doors up and ready by the time I'd finished getting all the info. I'd ring the head of St John's and switch the phone through to his place and he'd take over until we got back."

Dave was based at the current Western Hills Drive station but earlier, the station was at Alexander Street until Western Hills was built. St John's acquired a helicopter service around the same time as the new station although the early chopper was a top-dressing machine. In a life-or-death situation the chopper picked the patient up to save valuable time in transportation. The hospital would be waiting when the helicopter got there.



Dave & Viv Dobson



1980 - Casualty Unit





1980 - Christmas Parade Winning Float

As a paramedic for 24 years Dave has seen a lot – everything from road accidents, especially in the middle of the night, to old people getting sick and having to be hospitalised. After fatal accidents he would sit up with his wife and a cup of tea and run it all through to determine what they could have done differently. Dave says of his nurse wife and ambulance partner, “She was good to me. She stayed in St John’s longer than I did. She died five years ago.”

Dave became a St John Sergeant in 1990. He received Service Medals in 1979 and again in 1984 and qualified as a St John instructor in 1986. He and Vivienne were nominated, and awarded the Brian Maunsell Trophy for Services to Sport in 1989. The trophy recognised their ‘long and involved participation in various sporting codes in Northland’.

In 2010 David was awarded a Citation in that year’s Civic Honours. An extract from the Citation states: ‘David has devoted his life to the care and well-being of many in his community. He has been

a leading light in many fields, including sports, and has sought nothing in return. So many people in Northland have been touched and reassured by David’s caring and compassionate role as a St John Ambulance Officer, and his involvement in enriching the lives of others in so many ways, either through sport or always giving a helping hand where needed. For this, we honour him.’

Today’s training would be well past Dave’s 1960s experience although he’d know enough to keep going until a medical professional arrived but the changes are significant. It’s a natural progression, he says – years ago cars rumbled around but today they can almost fly.

Dave always drove while the nurse sat in the back with the patient. “Driving was nerve-wracking with some of the critically injured people we picked up. It’s definitely not a job for the faint-hearted. The vehicles weren’t fast but if you got on a good straight stretch you could get up to around 120kmh which definitely wasn’t safe. The vans didn’t handle too good.”



St John Mobile Training



Dave Dobson with St Johns colleagues



1980 - Mobile Casualty Room



1980 - Dave Dobson with colleague Margaret



1981 - St John Ambulance Brigadesman Dave Dobson Northland Rugby



1990- View from lighthouse to competitors

Almost 96 now, Dave has no interest in talking about the horror he has seen, but recalls being called out around 11pm one night to a car which had rolled in Parua Bay and was leaning up against the bank. The driver had clambered out and was sitting under the half-upturned car in driving rain trying to stay dry.

"In the ambulance I asked, 'Have you got the keys to the car. He hadn't. So I went back to fish the keys out of the ignition and gave the car a bit of a shake. It fell back on its wheels suddenly and could have landed on top of me; and the driver had been sheltering under it!"



Once, when travelling privately, there was an accident on the Poroti road. The car was over the bank and we stopped to help. I always carry a first aid kit with me. Quite a few cars had pulled up. I told the chap, my wife and I'll get you out of the car and check you out. If you want an ambulance I'll get you one. Then a woman says, 'Where is my little baby? She was in the back.' After a little while someone said they'd got the child. I would have liked to have heard that a lot sooner."

Is being an 'ambo' something Dave would recommend? "If you can handle blood, because there's a lot of it, yes. I met a lot of good people."



1981 - Boarding the Rental Truck at Whangarei Station



# TABLE TENNIS

## A Fun Activity in the Village

**On Wednesdays from 1:30 – 2:30pm the Falls Estate Table Tennis is held on the dance floor area next to the dining room.**

**S**usan Harris is the Table Tennis Co-Ordinator, and now that two new light and manoeuvrable tables to play on have been supplied, it's much easier to set up. Bats are available for use and everyone helps to pack away.

A lady from Table Tennis Northland offered tips last year, and one that stuck with Susan is actually a rule. When you serve you must ensure your opponent can see the ball in your hand. Understanding that good table tennis depends on your capacity to keep your eye on the ball, it makes sense that you should be able to see it from the serve.

Susan has only been playing for a year herself. "I moved to the Village two years ago and they were playing table tennis and it looked like fun. I'm an active person, and the people were friendly, with lots of laughs," she says.

"We have two tables. In the first two rounds, losers play the losers then move onto winners playing winners. Eight players are great because you can get two tables playing doubles at once. When there are six players, two can play singles which is more active. Otherwise you can sit out and watch and chat to each other until we sub you in. We play until one side has 21 points or if there's a draw. We play out until one side is two points ahead. If the pace is too fast and you need a break – let us know and we'll sub someone in for you. Everything is do-able in the fun casual games we play.





“We’re all differently skilled,” says Susan. “The most experienced ones can put a spin on the ball and bat low over the net. I’m getting better but I’m also quite agile so can get to quite a few of the balls.”

You don’t need to be especially fit to play table tennis but you do need to be able to stand and move on two feet without any assistance. You don’t need great eyesight either because most of the skill is in learning to watch the ball. Susan says it takes less skill than tennis, but if you’ve been a tennis player it certainly helps with your eye-ball coordination. It’s a quick game – quite fast, but eminently do-able. We have good players ranging from 65 to over 90 who regularly play.

Table Tennis provides a few physical benefits. It helps your breathing and also your mental acuity when keeping score. There’s a nice social side once a month with drinks and nibbles over a catch up to keep everyone in contact with one another, and there’s often a bit of socialising after the game.

Susan wears trainers for flexibility, and probably that’s the most comfortable footwear in which to play, but one player prefers the added agility of going barefoot. Be comfortable in shoes which are not going to slip on a smooth floor.



Table tennis players are always happy to teach you if you feel a bit out of touch after years of not playing. There’s always a tip or two on offer, how





to hold your bat for maximum efficiency, and how close to stand to the table, and how to tackle a sharp serve from your opponent.

There's no need to book and you're welcome just to turn up. Each game runs for between seven and ten minutes so there's not much time to wait for a spot on a table.

Susan says, "If you have a query, ring me and find out, and I'm always there on a Wednesday. We're very accommodating. Essentially it's casual and fun. We always shake hands afterwards."





## Childhood Days

By Margaret White

*I dream of the days of my childhood  
The happy days now that are o'er  
When we played on the beach in the sunshine  
And watched the waves break on the shore  
When we climbed the rough rocks  
While the breakers would leave the white foam at  
our feet, then dash back again with the seaweed  
The next rolling wave for to meet  
The waves they kept rolling towards us.  
We laughed for we thought it such fun  
To see the waves chasing each other  
Then back to the sea again run  
We would climb to the edge of the high cliff  
To see the seagulls on their nests  
Their mates they were flying above them  
They never seemed for to rest  
Then back to the bush we would wander  
To play for a while neath the trees  
And listen to the little birds singing and flitting  
amongst the green leaves  
My youthful days now they are over  
Most of my old friends have gone  
Some to move about, round the country  
Some to seek settled homes of their own  
But most of them have gone to their long rest  
On earth we shall see them no more  
But I trust we may meet all together  
On that beautiful Heavenly Shore.*



Thomas, Margaret and Peter White

**Margaret White** was a Great, Great, Grand mother of one of our residents. She wrote this poem in the late 1800's early 1900's.

# POEM



# HERB

## \* Thyme

Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) is a well-known aromatic herb of the Origanum species which includes oregano and marjoram and is part of the mint family (Lamiaceae). It is native to the Mediterranean and western Asia but is cultivated around the world.



In the thick of winter, some herbs manage to weather gruelling cold and thyme is one of them. It is a particularly useful herb because it has low toxicity, so is suitable for young children as well as elderly people, to alleviate coughing and other respiratory discomforts including laryngitis and pleurisy. It is also reputed to reduce blood pressure, boost immunity, lift mood, and a host of other uses, not the least of which is to enhance the flavour of food. It contains antimicrobial properties and makes an excellent disinfectant.



## \* Growing Thyme

If it had its own way, thyme would position itself in full sun in free-draining soil. In the high rainfall we've been having over the last year, soil might be made more suitable by mixing it with pumice or horticultural grit.

Thyme is a very hardy herb sustaining both drought and cold and it grows very happily in pots. It doesn't do so well in luxury, so if you're potting it, use a soil mix which is spartan when it comes to nutrients.



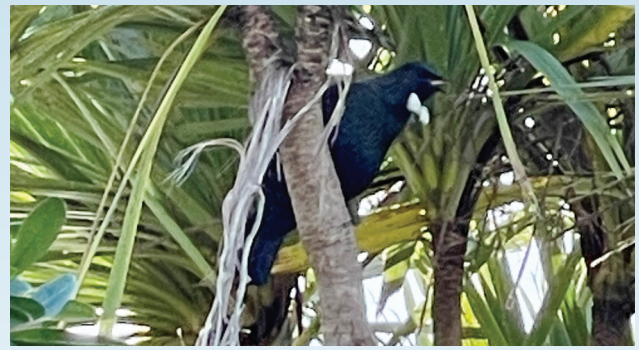
A rich mix won't kill it but the growth will be much softer which results in less robust flavour and perhaps less robust benefits. Harvest all year round and in late winter prune your thyme right back to encourage new spring growth.



## \* Using Thyme

To make a medicinal decoction for coughs and lung problems, steep a good handful of thyme (including the twiggly bits) in a teapot with hot water. Allow to cool and pour the liquid through a strainer into a jug and refrigerate. Use about an inch of liquid per cup, top with hot water and sip all day.

Thyme is a wonderful herb in food. Use in salads, tomato dishes, pasta dishes, and stuffing, and reap the benefits of added nutrition in your food. It pairs well with eggs, cheeses, lentils, and many other savoury dishes too.



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**Any comments & feedback are welcome!**  
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