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May 3, 2024

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE

**Extra-wide Narrow Neck crossing approved... p2**

**Long-time local GP bids farewell... p11**

**Interview: 89-year-old runner Des Stobbs... p26-27**

## HOP-card rorts part of ferry fare-dodging surge

Fare dodging on Devonport ferries is on the rise, says Auckland Transport.

“We have daily reports from our transport officers highlighting complete fare evasion and a high level of people using concessions that do not apply to them,” Auckland Transport (AT) customer-engagement manager

Phil Wratt said in a response to an Official Information Act request.

Figures for Devonport show that from March to April this year, evasion grew from 1.48 per cent to 2.5 per cent. Random samples were taken by transport officers using handheld devices of around 1000 people on ferries.

Checks are now being made “on a regular basis” on the route.

Supervisors also indicated fare evasion through the use of incorrect concessions, HOP cards with \$1 balances and straight fare dodging, Wratt said.

To page 2

## Play it again, Celine



Poignant notes... Nine-year-old bugler Celine Wu did the honours at the Devonport Anzac Day service last week, as she did last year. She is flanked by Chief Petty Officer Rodney Taylor (left), and Jimmy Jones of Devonport RSA. More pictures, pages 6-9.



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**Briefs**

**B'water design continues**

Final designs for the residential development at the Bayswater reclamation next to the marina will be finalised in around a year, developer Bayswater Marina Holdings Ltd says. "We are making good progress on developing the design for both the central precinct and also the mixed-use development on the southern and northern precincts at Bayswater," project manager Brady Nixon said. "The design phase will likely take another 12 months before we have anything to show the general public." No further consent applications have been lodged for the project.

**Local Voyager finalists**

Two Devonport locals are finalists in the national Voyager Media Awards. Brett Phibbs is a finalist in the Best Photography – Sport section for work published in the New Zealand Herald and elsewhere. With workmates at *Fair Go*, Gill Higgins is a finalist in the Best Editorial Campaign or Project section, for the show's 'Limitless' campaign.

**Watts in Cabinet**

North Shore MP and Climate Change Minister Simon Watts has been promoted to Cabinet following the demotion of Media and Communications Minister Melissa Lee.

**Squash junior wins big**

Belmont Park squash player Ella Lash won the Australian Junior Open in Melbourne in April, coming back from two games down in the final. In the Oceania Junior Open, also held in Melbourne, Lash was runner-up in the U-19 girls singles, while Justine Pausch from Devonport was third in the U-17 girls division.

**New \$320k crossing approved**

Construction of an extra-wide raised crossing on Old Lake Rd at Narrow Neck Beach will likely begin early next year.

Designs should be finalised by November, Auckland Transport (AT) told the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board at a meeting last week, when the board signed off on the project, estimated to cost around \$320,000.

The crossing will upgrade the existing crossing between Woodall Rd Reserve and car park and the beach-reserve playground, cafe and Wakatere Boating Club.

It will follow a Swedish speed-table model, with only one sharp ramp in each direction, producing a smoother ride. Drainage works, a refuge island, footpath upgrade and cycling bollards are included in the cost.

At board members urging, the project will add on around \$25,000 for a 'speed cushion',

pram crossing and tactile pavers at the corner of Seabreeze Rd and Old Lake Rd.

Speed cushions are raised tables with tapered edges occupying only part of the road width, allowing larger vehicles to straddle the raised area.

Board members asked AT to look at installing rocks or bollards on the traffic island at the end of Seabreeze Rd to deter illegal parking, which often occurs in busy summer times. They also wanted to know if the Narrow Neck upgrade would include adequate signage in the downhill approaches to deter speeding. AT said it would.

The work at Narrow Neck and a \$425,000 signalised crossing across busy Forrest Hill Rd are the top choices for the board's discretionary three-yearly spend from AT's Local Board Transport Capital Fund allocation.

**Two-card trick among ferry-fare rorts**

**From page 1**

Supervisors had recently observed passengers carrying two HOP cards and using one with sufficient funds when they saw transport officers (TOs) at a gate, he said. "A significant number of public transport users are trying to rort our system by either not paying or using concessions that they are not entitled to."

The Flagstaff asked about the issue after Devonport-Takapuna Local Board chair Toni van Tonder told a recent meeting between local politicians and AT and Fullers representatives that locals had approached her unimpressed with having their fare status checked onboard.

North Shore ward councillor Chris Darby, who sits on Auckland Council's transport committee, said he too had been asked about the checks. He knew evasion was an issue city-wide.

AT said that six infringement notices had been issued to people evading fares on the Devonport-Auckland ferry route from Janu-

ary until 11 April. "When a non-payment is discovered on the ferry platform, TOs require the passenger to pay before they get on the boat. When a non-payment is discovered onboard, the TOs, in most cases will issue the passenger with a fine or a warning and then require a payment when they land."

AT also revealed that schoolchildren are failing to tag on and off ferries and buses, as is required even when free fares apply. "Moving forward with the change in fare structures this will become a bigger issue," Wratt said.

AT was unapologetic about checking fares. "We see this as a small inconvenience for commuters so that we can ensure [passengers] are using the correct fares."

To combat evasion, operators were required to do random checks. "We have TOs who will stand at the gates of the Downtown Ferry Terminal and the Devonport terminals and make sure that people are tagging on. They will also be checking that the person tagging on has the right type of HOP card and is not using a concession they are not entitled to."

**The Devonport Flagstaff**  
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Authorised by Hon Simon Watts, Parliament Buildings, Wgtn.



# Frisky at 40: Bertie needs rescue after branching out



Back down to earth... Bertie with rescuer John Ellington (left), and happily reunited with Caroline Sills (right), alongside firefighter Will Mahuru

PICTURES : NORM MORRISON

A pet cockatoo's playtime in her favourite tree led to a rescue by the Devonport Volunteer Fire Brigade late last month.

The bird's owner, Caroline Sills, said Bertie had been stranded in the tree, on the corner of King Edward Pde and Buchanan St, for three days.

Her husband Lloyd called the fire brigade as heavy rain was forecast the following day.

Volunteer Firefighter John Ellington, who helped rescue the bird, said the firefighters had some time after finishing a training exercise so decided to attend the call. "We always like to help the public when we can."

The four firefighters retrieved Bertie by aiming their water cannon near where she

was perched.

Getting Bertie down was "relatively easy", Ellington said. She dropped out of the tree after a few sprays of water.

She had a hard landing, but was unharmed and happy to be picked up by Sills after she fell. The matter hadn't been treated as urgent and the firefighters would have left the scene immediately if a fire call was received, Ellington said.

Forty-year-old Bertie regularly spends time in the tree, adjacent to Sills' property, and normally finds her own way down, but on this occasion must have gone up an unfamiliar branch and become confused, Sills said.

Sills, who has owned the bird since she was six weeks old, lets her play in the tree all day, letting her out in the morning and bringing her in at night, usually without a fuss.

She said Bertie has a large personality, enjoying dancing and Thai food, her favourite cuisine. "She knows exactly what I'm cooking and what she wants."

When Sills first got Bertie she assumed the bird was a male, but a trip to the vet revealed otherwise. Her name was left unchanged.

Bertie has been stranded up the tree before but has never previously had the fire service rescue her.

Ellington said cats were the animal most often rescued by firefighters.



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# Axiome's KiwiSaver Launch – Solving the retirement equation

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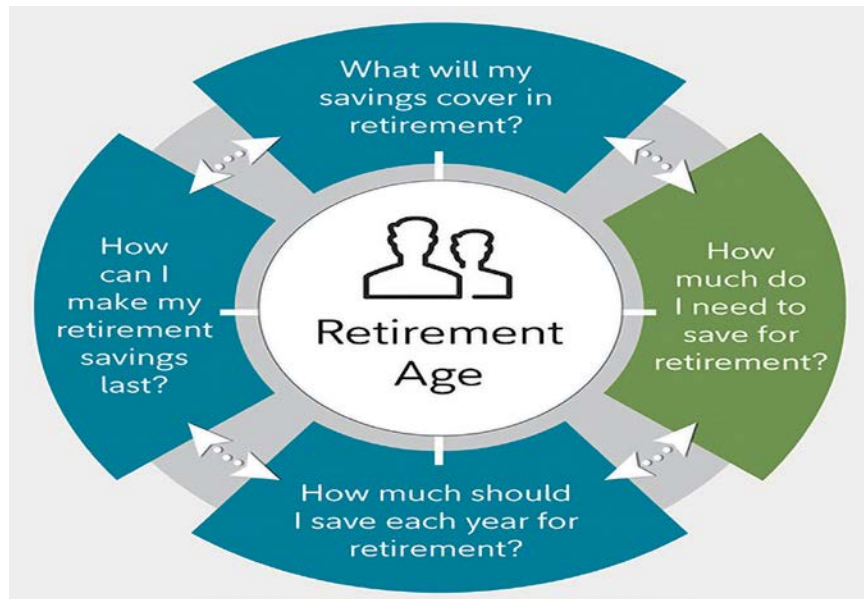
To help our clients answer these questions Axiome is excited to announce the launch of our new KiwiWRAP KiwiSaver Scheme. KiwiSaver is a core building block of many New Zealanders' retirement plans. As financial advisers we want to identify the best solutions for our clients to help them reach their financial goals. At Axiome we recognise that everyone's circumstances are different and investment decisions require more consideration than a generic off-the-shelf product can provide.

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## Do I have a retirement savings gap?

The savings gap in retirement planning refers to the difference between the amount of money a person has saved for retirement and the amount they will likely need to maintain their desired lifestyle during retirement. It's essentially the shortfall between



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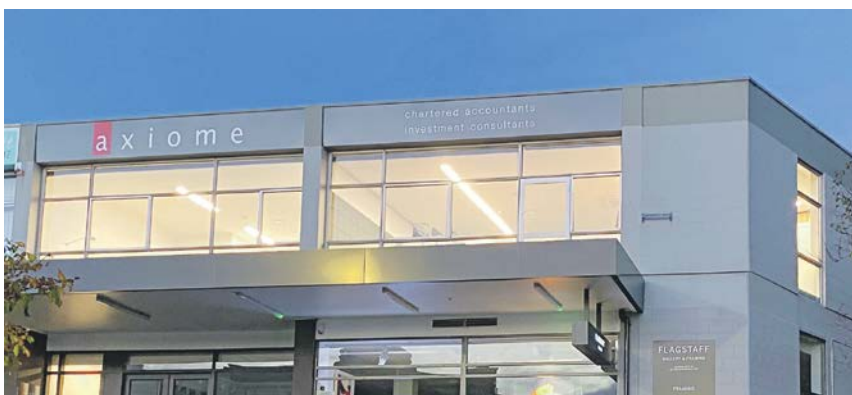
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## Long wait for Vauxhall block refit is finally over

Vauxhall School's refurbished Totara block opened last Monday – after a year's wait.

A weathertightness refit expected to take a term took more than a year after builders found major repairs were needed, school principal Gary Lawrence said.

The block has multiple teaching areas catering for 70 Year 5 and 6 pupils, along with a mezzanine and teachers' office.

Lawrence said he was proud of the students' patience during the wait and their adaptability in moving around different classrooms as the building work progressed. The original Ministry of Education budget for the project was \$200,000 but given the extra work needed the final cost was much higher, Lawrence said.



At last... Vauxhall pupils (from left) Millie White, Liv Piper, Mila Gladwell, Evie MacFarlane and Emma MacFarlane waiting for the opening of the refurbished Totara block. Left: School principal Gary Lawrence cuts the ribbon.

## Peak-hour clear way suggested for Lake Rd at Belmont

Parking restrictions or a clearway in front of Belmont centre shops on the western side of Lake Rd should be considered to help ease morning traffic-peak congestion, the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board says.

It has asked Auckland Transport (AT) to investigate the idea.

At a session held this month on AT's works-programme priorities, board member Gavin Busch suggested restricting parking before 9am might be a way to gain some "easy wins" along the stretch where traffic from Bayswater Ave and Williamson Ave enters Lake Rd, often leading to backlogs.

With a major Lake Rd upgrade shelved due to a lack of support from transport agency Waka Kotahi, board members have previously asked AT to look at smaller Lake Rd projects, but have been told there is no budget for this.

They took the opportunity to push for action on the local sore point in a response to an 'engagement' process over AT's works programme.

The board put on record the Belmont request and another seeking it be consulted over a request for improvements, possibly traffic lights, at the junction of Old Lake Rd with Lake Rd, where buses are often held up

attempting to enter Lake Rd.

The board also asked that AT's plans for Vauxhall Rd and Tainui Rd safety improvements next year come back to the board for input, given the long gap since a previous consultation.

At Bayswater, it wants its advocacy role recognised in any future discussions about the ferry terminal and marine transport upgrades.

Due to problems with large numbers of road cones repeatedly and unexpectedly disrupting traffic, AT has also been asked to better inform the board about approved traffic management plans coming up in its area.

### Waiting waiting waiting

Seems everyone is waiting for interest rate cuts from the RBNZ and justifiably so given the current and future economic outlook..... speak to anyone in business or property and things are tough and likely to get tougher.

The trouble is the RBNZ is always behind the curve as they are always waiting for the data to justify their actions and that data is invariably 3 to 6 months old so by the time they act things are too loose or as now too tight..... hence we have these boom bust cycles.

The other problem they have is that many non-discretionary expenses such as rates, rents, insurance, medical, education are pretty much immune to higher interest rates (and actually act like tax increases which are themselves a tightening), as are the half the population with no debt enjoying the higher deposit rates.

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# Pipes, poppies and tributes aplenty as crowds





# turn out to remember those who served



Anzac Day in Devonport.... This page (clockwise from above): Sophia Hay and Tyler Cox of the 1st Devonport Cubs and Scouts prepare to lay a wreath; James Kerry, Elieen Kerry and Tracy Roberts, all of Devonport; Bayswater's Laura and Henry Kozak with their children Ira (5), Casey (2) and Roman (6 months, hiding under mum's coat). Opposite page (clockwise from top): The Navy Pipes and Drums band leads the parade; Devonport RSA vice-president Ray McLaughlin (left) and president Muzz Kennett; the Belmont Intermediate School choir, 'Top Notes', conducted by Helene Piper; Navy photographer Chris Weissenborn looks on as Alec Hill lays a wreath for those who served with the Merchant Navy.











Tributes from young and old... This page: wreaths being laid by representatives of local schools (clockwise from above): Beth Rigby, Eva Delaney, Nina Craighead and (behind) Toby Porter from Stanley Bay School; Amy Jameson and Charlotte Robertson of St Leo's Catholic School; Takapuna Grammar deputy head girl Isla Sweetman and head boy Daniel Twine; Charlie Talbot and Indi Holland of Belmont Intermediate School; and Cassandra Thorne and Jasper Brant of Belmont Primary School. Opposite page: (clockwise from top) the parade included veterans of all services and a contingent of Navy personnel; North Shore MP and recently promoted Cabinet minister Simon Watts laid a wreath; Korean War veteran Jimmy Jones; Devonport-Takapuna Local Board deputy chair Terence Harpur with his wife, Felicity, and son Elliot (19 months).





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## Veteran GP's delivery service moves south

Long-time Devonport GP Erica Lauder has delivered more than 4000 babies in close to 40 years as a GP.

She officially retired from obstetrics with her last delivery in February.

However, she has a feeling she may yet deliver another child, as she is moving to a rural area in the Hawke's Bay. "We are an hour from the nearest hospital (in Hastings) and someone is bound to have a baby (early) and need help."

Lauder has been a popular local GP since moving to Devonport in 1990 and joining Devonport Family Medicine with fellow doctor Grant Smith in May 1991. She previously had a practice in Papakura.

She moved to the Shore with husband Rob to be closer to family support with their three boys under four: Robbie, William and James (daughter Sophie was born later – a home birth). The couple loved old houses and were looking to live at either Northcote Point or Devonport.

By chance, everything fell quickly into place in Devonport through Eric Merkens, an agent at Devonport Realty. He found the Lauders a house on Calliope Rd, which they bought, and then casually mentioned Dr Grant Smith of Devonport Family Medicine was looking for another doctor.

Lauder fitted the bill and for three decades walked a few hundred metres down the hill to work.

"Grant was a fantastic doctor and I spent 30 years working with him there. When he retired, I left.

"It was definitely family medicine which I loved."

She worked briefly at the Devonport Medical Centre before her final job on the Shore at The Doctors in Fred Thomas Drive. Almost all her 1500 Devonport patients followed her.

Lauder started delivering babies before cell phones and often had to stay near a land line. She recalls the freedom which came when the "brick" phones arrived.

Over the years, she has found herself treating grandparents, mothers and fathers, children and wider relatives from the same families. In many cases recently she has delivered babies to mothers she delivered 25 or 30 years before.

"Being almost part of the extended family has been the most rewarding part of the job," she says. "My best memories are looking after families and being part of their lives."

For the last few years, Lauder was believed to be the last GP in New Zealand to regularly deliver babies.

She says changes to birth funding models over the years meant GPs were virtually unpaid for delivering babies, so they stopped. Lauder carried on "because I loved it", despite the long hours.

She was commonly up all hours with a mother giving birth before heading into work



**Long-time local... Erica Lauder delivered thousands of babies in 33 years as a Devonport GP, often taking care of successive generations from the same families**

as a GP the next day.

"I felt really privileged to do my job, being part of my patients' whanau. I always wanted to get up and go to work every morning."

Patients have also been a great source of strength during tough times. Lauder gave evidence at a Coroners Court inquest after patient Amale Moore died in 1996 after giving birth to a stillborn child.

Lauder was grief-stricken from losing a patient and so devastated from the ensuing legal processes that she contemplated leaving obstetrics. "My patients took care of me," she says of the support she received at the time.

Two years ago, the Lauders bought – sight-unseen – the 150-year-old, 10-bedroom Oruawhoro Homestead, set on 40 acres in central Hawke's Bay, selling up in Calliope Rd.

In partnership with son William, a chef, builder and now beekeeper, and his partner Bianca, they are running a church on the property as a function centre and wedding venue, while Rob has been working on restoring the house, currently painting the exterior. It's a mammoth task.

"We've set a goal of having it in a reasonable state by 2029," Lauder says.

Son James is a teacher in relatively nearby Napier. William is getting married at Oru-

awhoro, as will Sophie in 2026.

Lauder has been maintaining a long-distance relationship with Rob while he's been working on the house. She has headed south every second weekend: a six-hour drive, which could be eight hours with road works.

Following her move, she will work two and a half days a week as a GP at the Tuki Tuki Medical practice in Waipukurau. In rural areas, doctors are in short supply.

"It's really good to be able to put something into the community and get to know them at the same time," says Lauder. She's looking forward to "learning to work in rural medicine".

Farm- and forestry-related accidents are a long way from the ailments typically presenting in Devonport, for example.

Lauder had her last day as a North Shore GP last week.

She and Rob fly out to Canada on 6 May to see son Robbie and his two five-year-old twin boys, with four nights in New York and four nights in Hawaii along the way.

She starts in Waipukurau on 1 July. "I really hope people will come down and visit me."

• A North Shore farewell for Lauder is planned. Details will be in the Flagstaff when a date is set.

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# Mum's the word in blooming family business

**We ask the woman behind a local business for some Mother's Day inspiration**

For the team at Devonport Flowers, Mother's Day is a customer-focused marathon effort, with the family behind the business putting their own celebrations on hold until the following Sunday.

"As a family, we've adapted," says Tennille Pedersen, of her delayed indulgence.

"We love a good coffee at Manuka and then some brunch at Vondel's, then maybe a nice walk up Mt Vic, followed by a stroll down King Edward Pde – and then we head back to find Justin from Ugly's for some of the most amazing fruit."

Tennille is full of ideas for gift shopping locally, aside, of course, from ever-popular flowers.

The three days leading into Mother's Day, which this year falls on Sunday 12 May, are super-busy, she says. Husband Kris and their four teenagers all pitch in to help at the Victoria Rd store. Tennille and her mother, Anne Carter, took it over three years ago, retaining three valued florists.

"It felt like destiny," she says, of combining her passion for flowers, entrepreneurship and investing in her community.

The Pedersens fulfilled a long-held desire when they shifted to Devonport nearly 10 years ago, later buying their "dream house".

Before Tennille took on Devonport Florists she ran a property management business with Anne. Their bond has strengthened over the years through the challenges of working together and navigating life's journey.

Tennille looks after the business side of the business, including marketing and buying at auction. Anne, who has managed the gift side of the business, is about to embark on a new chapter. She recently retired, is remarrying and moving to Rotorua.



**Family friendly... Mother and daughter team Anne Carter (front) and Tennille Pedersen with next-generation Pedersens (from left): Hunter, aged 15, Charlize, 17, Wolfe, 14 and Paige, 19**

"I'll miss her presence in the shop, but her legacy and influence continue to inspire us," says Tennille. The loss is softened by the valuable business experience her teens have gained, from starting out washing buckets, to learning sales skills and picking up the beginnings of floristry. "It's been a joy to see them progress," she says.

Tennille's gift or voucher ideas from other local businesses form a long list.

"My perfect Mother's Day would include a facial from Skinsense, then a manicure at Arcade Day Spa, a new outfit from Echo Design, then lunch at Signal Hill, followed by a cocktail or two at Tiny's and then the most amazing dinner at either Danyru Japanese restaurant or Vic Road Kitchen. Then for the ideal finish, a movie and ice cream at The Vic."

• For more ideas on making the most of Mother's Day, see the next two pages.

## Pick of the bunch

Asking Tennille Pedersen to name her favourite flowers is like expecting the proud mother of four to select a favourite child. She won't commit beyond saying you can't go past a beautiful bouquet of fresh blooms.

Customers' tastes range from bright and colourful to softer tones, or classic white and green mixes, she says. Roses, sunflowers and tulips are loved by many mothers, she adds, as well as seasonal mixes – perhaps in a keepsake vase.

Dried-flower arrangements and houseplants are also options, along with gifts such as scented candles and chocolates. But the language of flowers speaks loudest, she reckons.

"Flowers have a special power that uplifts the receiver and lets them know that you are on their mind," Tennille says.

*Send some love this Mother's Day*

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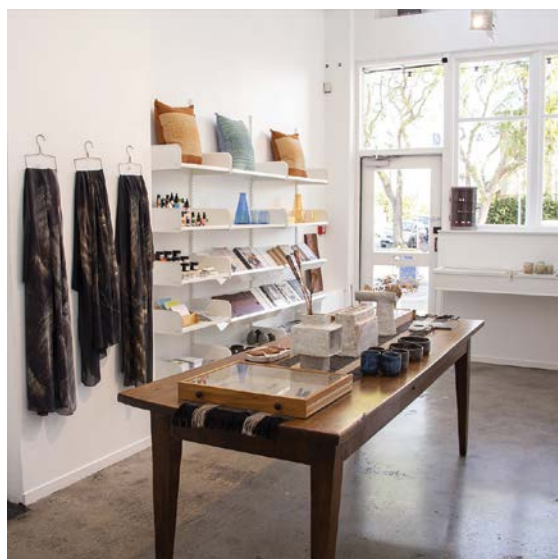
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Te Whare Toi



Sunday  
12th May



# Mother's Day

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[www.navymuseum.co.nz](http://www.navymuseum.co.nz)







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**Devonport**  
**6 Takarunga Road**

4 2 2 2

**For Sale**  
\$3,325,000

**View**

As advertised or by appointment  
harcourts.net/L25941140



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**Diana Murray**

021 911 522  
diana.murray@harcourts.co.nz



**Devonport**  
**71A Ngataringa Road**

4 3 3 2

**For Sale**  
Price by Negotiation

**View**

By appointment  
harcourts.net/L25626409



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**Holiday at Home**

Serene and private, set amidst Pohutukawa trees with captivating water and city views. Meticulously designed for modern comfort and peaceful relaxation. Master bedroom wing features a cozy living area, ensuite, and walk-in wardrobe - and stunning views from bed! Three additional double bedrooms with built-in wardrobes upstairs plus family bathroom. Office/Study with additional built-in daybed. Expansive open plan lounge/dining/kitchen area plus separate media room with fireplace (downstairs), adults own private living space (upstairs) and additional movie room heading down to the private jetty. Entertainers dream - outdoor wood-burning fireplace/BBQ area, louvre with rain sensor, heated concrete pool with hidden electric cover with fantastic lighting plus spa pool. Private water access via a jetty for enjoying the waterfront.

**Diana Murray**

021 911 522  
diana.murray@harcourts.co.nz

**Rachael Bridger**

0275 860 070  
rachael.bridger@harcourts.co.nz





## Devonport 49 Ngataringa Road

6 3 3 2

**For Sale**  
\$2,745,000

### View

By appointment  
[harcourts.net/L24195716](https://harcourts.net/L24195716)



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## Waterfront Sanctuary With Potential Income

Set back from the road and enveloped within lush, landscaped gardens, this 1366sqm property enjoys an exceptional sense of privacy and showcases expansive views of Ngataringa Bay and beyond. It has direct water access for launching your kayak, small boat or paddleboard, plus boasts a separate two-bedroom dwelling for extra income (current rental appraisal \$700-750p.w), work or extended family accommodation. The two-level weatherboard residence has been transformed with a major architectural renovation, creating a stylish, contemporary feel and a layout that works perfectly for families. Finished to the same high standard as the main home, the spacious cottage enjoys full independence and lovely water and city views. The site has been extensively planted and plus offers a double internal garage and off-street parking.

### Maria Stevens

021 979 084  
[maria.stevens@harcourts.co.nz](mailto:maria.stevens@harcourts.co.nz)

### Marissa Muirhead

021 337 222  
[marissa.muirhead@harcourts.co.nz](mailto:marissa.muirhead@harcourts.co.nz)



## Devonport 7 Huia Street

4 2 2 1

**For Sale**  
\$2,950,000

### View

By appointment  
[harcourts.net/L26104934](https://harcourts.net/L26104934)



Cooper & Co Real Estate Ltd. Licensed Agent REAA 2008

## Character Californian Bungalow

This substantial home, packed with character and offering expansive living, entertaining and work spaces, close to Devonport village and the ferry terminal is now offered for sale. If updating is your passion, then this is a house with superb bones that will richly reward your creative energies. An architect designed extension skilfully incorporated into the home, completed in 1988, offers a superb master bedroom suite with stunning views of the harbour and city skyline. On the middle level an expansive living area with floor to ceiling windows is the perfect spot for family and friends to gather. The kitchen is separate to this space yet connected and has pretty views out to the garden. Downstairs, let your imagination run riot. A huge area currently divided into different rooms that could be a gym, plus a work from home office, a rumpus room for the kids.

### Ian Cunliffe

027 227 9322  
[ian.cunliffe@harcourts.co.nz](mailto:ian.cunliffe@harcourts.co.nz)

### Diana Murray

021 911 522  
[diana.murray@harcourts.co.nz](mailto:diana.murray@harcourts.co.nz)





**By Rob Drent**

The Anzac Day service in Devonport was again well attended. But I couldn't help feeling it is a bit of a shame Anzac Day regularly falls within the school holidays, with lots of Devonport locals away. The service always generates a hunger and a thirst, with cafes and restaurants overflowing afterwards. A queue of people also formed outside New World prior to its 1pm opening. If the school holidays fell a week earlier, things would be even busier.

How long before we move to a cashless society? Devonport has no banks and only three ATMS. I wonder how long these will keep going, given the cost of servicing them. Last week, the Flagstaff was told the ASB machine was not giving cash out. We went along to test it and for some reason the doors were locked.

Inheriting assets from former boroughs like Devonport can carry a cost for Auckland Council. Take for example Devonport's three



public clocks (at the corner of Albert and Victoria Rds; on King Edward Pde at the corner of Church St; and in front of Devonport Wharf), which Auckland Transport (AT) has to look after and are of such an age they regularly malfunction. The one on the corner of Albert Rd and Victoria Rds has disappeared altogether (pictured). We've asked Auckland Transport what's happened to it but wonder when a bean counter at the council will decide the clocks are no longer needed.

Auckland Council's commitment to local democracy and the role of local boards is questionable. When Devonport came under North Shore City Council, the council placed ads in the Flagstaff to notify readers of things like community-board meetings, rubbish collection dates, notifications of

resource consents and the like.

Nowadays, we get none, though the council still pays for adverts in the North Shore Times, a shell newspaper which no one I know reads. Council local-board manager Oliver Roberts tells us "the vast majority of people who attend local board meetings find the details online" and that regular attendees follow the meeting schedule online, while those who are attending one-off are generally interested in a specific discussion topic, and will have picked up on the details through social media".

Council is required by law to also advertise meeting details in print media. Roberts says it has opted to publish notices in local papers that cover multiple boards. "I hope you'll appreciate that we have given widespread public notices due consideration, but have to balance this with our statutory obligations and a very limited budget.

"Should any of these circumstances change, we'd take the Devonport Flagstaff into consideration. We will also ensure if other opportunities to advertise in your publication arise, we will consider them."

Basically, council is taking the easiest option to fulfil its bureaucratic responsibilities, ignoring the fact social media pays no rates and very little tax and employs no local people.

And no wonder fewer and fewer local people attend board meetings. Numbers will drop further if the Kaipatiki and Devonport-Takapuna boards are merged.

## Welcome Dr. Nawar Mansoor to Devonport & Belmont

We are delighted to introduce Dr. Nawar Mansoor, a General Practitioner dedicated to providing empathetic and efficient patient-centred care. With an MBChB from the University of Auckland, Dr. Mansoor brings over three years of medical experience, characterised by a genuine passion for empowering patients to make informed health decisions.

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When not caring for his patients, Dr. Mansoor is a fervent football fan, and enjoys keeping active, as well as spending time with family and friends.

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## Multiple challenges overcome in local director's latest film

War, Covid, and a tight shooting window all presented production challenges for a Devonport filmmaker's latest movie.

James Napier Robertson's *Joika* tells the story of Joy Womack, an American dancer who won a contract with Russia's Bolshoi Ballet, navigating her way through a world of pain and brutal competitiveness to become a prima ballerina at the company.

When Napier Robertson (pictured on-set, above) departed in 2022 for Poland, where the film was shot, he didn't have a guaranteed way back into New Zealand as the borders were closed by Covid restrictions.

Then Talia Ryder, who plays Womack in the film, came down with Covid, keeping her out of action for 10 of the 14 days set aside to learn the choreography.

"I had some days when I'd show up and six of my head of department crew had Covid and were no longer able to work on the film."

Napier Robertson, a former Takapuna Grammar School student, said so much of the

budget had to go towards Covid-related costs that the time for filming was cut to 27 days, an extremely short window for a feature film.

This meant 12-hour shoots six days a week in the Polish winter, with temperatures as low as -15 Celsius.

On top of this, Russia invaded Ukraine three weeks into filming, to the distress of the production's many Russian and Ukrainian crew members, along with the Poles, who themselves feared invasion.

"That added a whole other layer of difficulty," Napier Robertson said. "It felt almost like every day it was a minor miracle that we got through another day without a catastrophe happening."

Napier Robertson said he was drawn to Womack's story as an opportunity to explore the question "how far is too far for pursuing your art or your craft?"

It's a topic that has been explored before in films such as *Whiplash* and *Black Swan*, but *Joika*'s point of difference is it tells a true

story. Napier Robertson said he attempted as much as possible to "reflect this real person who at 15 years old moved to Russia without speaking almost a word of Russian, with no family and without knowing anyone there."

His film showed the contrast between the beauty and elegance of ballet and the reality and hardships of trying to reach the highest levels within it, he said.

Napier Robertson was first approached about doing the film while working on another movie which had production delays. He said he was vaguely familiar with the story so decided it would be a good idea to meet Womack in person.

He was flown to Los Angeles and after spending three days with her was convinced to do the film. Womack herself choreographed the film's ballet scenes.

• *Joika* is in cinemas from 16 May, with a special screening at the Vic Theatre at 5.30pm on 19 May, which will be followed by a Q and A session with the director.



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**DEVONPORT**

38 EWEN ALISON AVENUE

4 2 2 1 1

**FOR SALE**

By Negotiation

**VIEWING**

Sat/Sun 12:00-12:30pm

This beautiful character villa sits in a well elevated position surrounded by mature gardens.

Trish Fitzgerald  
021 952 452

Tracey Lawrence  
021 1720 681

[barfoot.co.nz/865559](http://barfoot.co.nz/865559)



NEW LISTING

**DEVONPORT**

47 ROSLYN TERRACE

3 1 1 1 1

**AUCTION**

12:00pm 22 May 2024 at Devonport (Branch Office) (unless sold prior)

**VIEWING**

Sat/Sun 11:00-11:30am

**DEFINITELY DELIGHTFUL**  
Well located, being close to many amenities, is this well designed, attractive, low maintenance 3 bedroom replica cottage.

Tracey Lawrence  
021 1720 681

Trish Fitzgerald  
021 952 452

[barfoot.co.nz/891034](http://barfoot.co.nz/891034)



NEW LISTING

**DEVONPORT**

24 WILLIAM BOND STREET

7 2 3 1 2

**TENDER**

2:00pm 29 May 2024 at Devonport Branch (unless sold prior)

**VIEWING**

Sat/Sun 12:00-12:30pm

Main house has 4 bedrooms. Apartment downstairs has 2 bedrooms. Cottage has 1 bedroom. Opportunities galore, a must view!

Trish Fitzgerald  
021 952 452

Tracey Lawrence  
021 1720 681

[barfoot.co.nz/890929](http://barfoot.co.nz/890929)



FOR SALE

**DEVONPORT**

3A GARDEN TERRACE

3 2 2

**FOR SALE**

By Negotiation

**VIEWING**

Sat/Sun 12:00-12:45pm

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Patricia Hinchey  
027 222 3367

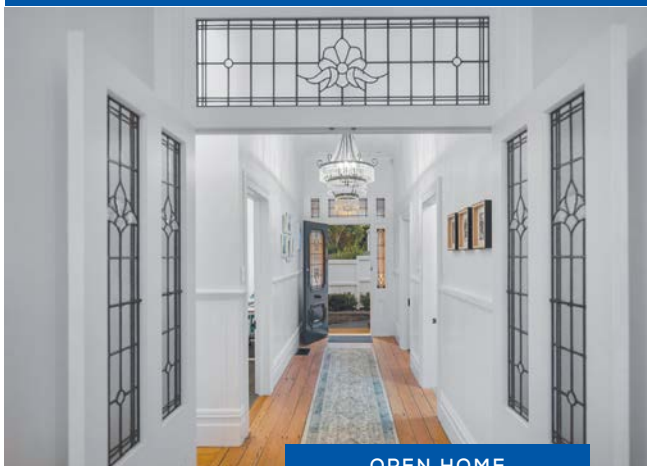
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OPEN HOME



AUCTION THIS WEEK

**DEVONPORT**  
2A WATERVIEW ROAD

5 2 3 1

**FOR SALE**  
By Negotiation

**VIEWING**  
Sat/Sun 3:00-3:45pm

Sue Harrison  
021 909 549  
Toni Gregory  
021 044 3663

Five bedrooms, three bathrooms - this outstanding villa has undergone rigorous consideration every step of its journey.

[barfoot.co.nz/864614](http://barfoot.co.nz/864614)

**MILFORD**  
1A NAPOLEON AVENUE

2 1 1 1 1

**AUCTION**  
10:00am 2 May 2024 at 8-12  
The Promenade, Takapuna  
(unless sold prior)

**VIEWING**  
Sat/Sun 12:00-12:30pm

Toni Gregory  
021 044 3663  
Alexandra Corbin  
021 643 673

What a find! What a spot to call home! Fully renovated with nothing to do but move in and enjoy this sunny, superbly located two-bdrm unit.

[barfoot.co.nz/865423](http://barfoot.co.nz/865423)



NEW LISTING



NEW LISTING

**BROWNS BAY**  
3J/9 BUTE ROAD

2 1 1 4

**FOR SALE**  
\$979,000

**VIEWING**  
Phone For Viewing Times

Ron Sadler  
021 613 546

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- Close to beach & shops
- A lock up and leave beach lifestyle.

[barfoot.co.nz/890502](http://barfoot.co.nz/890502)

**TAKAPUNA**  
44 KILLARNEY STREET

3 1 1 3

**FOR SALE**  
By Negotiation

**VIEWING**  
Phone For Viewing Times

Alex Kou  
021 885 918

This remarkable investment property is a great opportunity for those looking to invest in a lucrative venture.

[barfoot.co.nz/890755](http://barfoot.co.nz/890755)



## Old Devonport: at the museum and in the Flagstaff

Historic local photographs – including some that haven't been seen in decades – are coming in for renewed attention at Devonport Museum and the Flagstaff.

Retired photographer Chris Miller has processed and restored more than 4000 images in the museum collection, removing stains, and other blemishes before saving them in a digital format which can be displayed on-screen.

The Flagstaff plans to feature one an issue to help publicise what the museum has to offer.

Miller, who worked at the *Auckland Star* and the *New Zealand Herald*, has greatly enjoyed the work, though is mindful of the pitfalls of making the photos too clean.

“You've got to be careful – in one photo I cleaned up some horse dung off Victoria Rd, which was a key component of the shot.”

Miller's relationship with the museum began when he worked on *The Hundred of Devonport: A Centennial History*, commemorating Devonport Borough Council's centenary in 1986.

Miller photographed buildings around Devonport and local personalities for the volume, and scanned some of the museum's historic images. He's delighted that the copyright for the photographs have passed through to the museum, a “safe pair of hands”.

Concerns had existed that the book may have become the property of North Shore City Council and then later Auckland Council by way of the amalgamations.

• Devonport museum is open weekends 2pm-4pm, and Tuesday to Thursday 10am-noon. Other times by appointment.



Window on the past... former press photographer Chris Miller touches up some old Devonport images at home.

Below: A photo from 1910 (photographer unknown) looking north from the Victoria Wharf towards the Esplanade Hotel. In the foreground, ladies on the wharf shade themselves with parasols. In the background, horse-drawn wagonettes are lined up on the waterfront. On the far side of the wharf can be seen the two posts and pulleys of a floating cargo pontoon.







Cleaned up... Another waterfront shot by an unknown photographer, showing the Flagstaff Hotel around 1880, shortly before its relocation along Queens Pde – before restoration (above) and after





# New roof and drainage on way for Fort Takapuna

Drainage and roofing work has begun to protect heritage buildings and prevent future flooding at Fort Takapuna

The roof of the brick fort, built in 1880, will be replaced, as will guttering across the wider complex.

An in-ground drainage system is also part of the works, which cost around \$175,000.

Sections of Fort Takapuna will be fenced or cordoned off during the six weeks it will take to complete the work. The wider reserve

will remain open to the public.

The works will help prevent a repeat of the flooding last year due to Cyclone Gabrielle, said Department of Conservation (DOC) senior heritage and visitors ranger Stefan Sebregts.

The engine room, searchlight emplacement and connecting tunnel at Fort Takapuna were all flooded, with the searchlight emplacement filling with 600mm of water due to blocked drains.

Sebregts said the work will address most of the flooding issues but that DOC is also planning minor works with the mushroom vents to restore them and “make sure no water ingress is possible”.

Cyclone Gabrielle also caused a slip on the cliff face in front of a Colchester Gun emplacement

While it didn't directly impact the emplacement, it has led DOC to question the long-term viability of the structure.

## Timetable change under fire

A five-minute change to the 814 bus timetable which was not notified to the public has caused commuters to be late for work and miss connecting buses in Takapuna.

A Devonport woman who catches the bus into Takapuna for work said she was blindsided by the change.

She said a delay in the bus departure means she usually only just makes it for her 7am start, and has sometimes been a few minutes late.

Auckland Transport (AT) admitted it didn't inform the public of the five-minute changes.

“Normally our teams notify all customers of changes and unfortunately this change was missed from the usual customer comms,” a spokesperson said.

The passenger interviewed by the Flagstaff, who didn't want to be named, said timetables at stops had not been updated so, unless people used the AT app, they wouldn't know when their bus was due. “AT serve the public. How can you forget to inform the public?”

The change to the 814 timetable, and to the

805, 806 and 807 schedules, were to allow for better connection to ferries at Devonport.

The new timetable gives passengers around seven minutes to make their connections, compared with three minutes previously.

The passenger told the Flagstaff too much priority had been placed on ferry users without considering those who bus north out of the village. She said she knows people who have missed connecting buses at Takapuna and Akoranga stations due to the new schedule.

Auckland Transport did not consider how the changes would affect connecting buses in Takapuna and Akoranga, the spokesperson said. “When responding to complaints and addressing issues there is always the possibility of intended or unintended consequences. We can't make all passengers' travel movements seamless and it wasn't our intent to cause any inconvenience to anyone.”

The spokesperson said that there was potential for some of the issues to resolve themselves as drivers became used to the new timetables.

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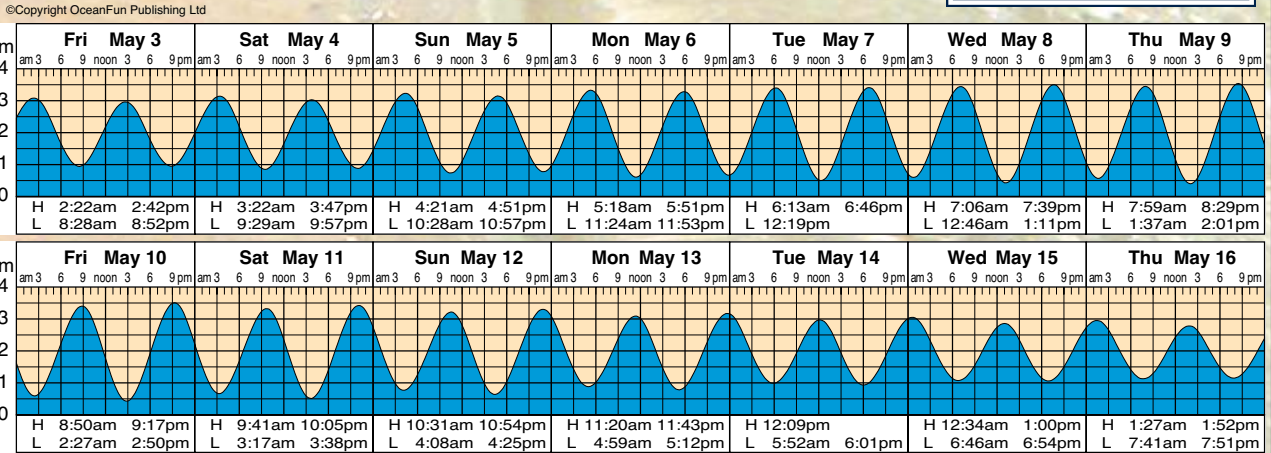
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# Late-life runner takes time to enjoy the flowers

After a career of challenging jobs and stints of service with the church and Grey Power, 89-year-old Des Stobbs has time to enjoy his long runs and gardening. Helen Vause reports.

When Des Stobbs gets to Narrow Neck Beach on his 10km running circuit, he might stop to watch the children out in their dinghies, or he might pause his run somewhere else if something catches his eye. And why not? Next birthday he'll be 90 and not every run needs to be to the clock.

Stobbs does long circuits around the beaches and headlands before he bounces back through the doors to the William Sanders Ryman village – past incredulous buddies – and up in the lift to the two bedroom apartment that's been home to him and his wife for the last couple of years.

Home yes, but for Stobbs with his busy mind and vigorous lifestyle it hasn't been easy to settle into a more leisurely style of living. He still has things to do – lots of things.

"I can do what I like now, and running on my own these days on two mornings of the week I can stop whenever I want to."

He usually completes his 10km in around an hour and a half. "I love it."

Stobbs has written eight self-published books about his varied life and achievements, and given them to family and friends.

The latest of them he calls the Sunset Years. With a chuckle he says it's the one he never wants to see a last chapter for.

In his late teens, Stobbs was a typographer for a newspaper in his home town of Southport in the UK. But he was already restless, having taken long trips around the UK and France on a pushbike, when he saw a television story about a traveller to New Zealand.

In short order, he'd found a passage on a ship and a job in the printing industry here. He had to park the plan for a while when he was called up for military service, but soon made the journey to the other side of the world.

Working in the printing industry in Wellington, he met his wife-to-be Val, a cartographer. The couple went on to raise three children together.

Very early in his working life in New Zealand, Stobbs set his sights on management positions.

That ambition saw him study at different institutions throughout a career that morphed from one sector to another and to increasingly senior roles.

Before moving on from the printing industry, he'd been president of the New Zealand Institute of Printing and represented the trade at international conferences.

*"Now, my choice is to compete against myself through Garmin technology," he says, referring to the high-tech watch on his wrist. "It records all running and pats me on the back for any improvements."*

He went on to hold roles in business administration, marketing and sales, manufacturing, purchasing, financial management, human resources, commercial and industrial law, finance and banking and technology.

Later in his career, he moved into consulting, solutions development and education within the business community.

Alongside his working life, Stobbs was active in leadership in the Methodist Church. On the western side of the North Shore, from Beachhaven to Albany, he often took church services as a lay preacher.

His involvement with the church extended

to financial advice and overseeing some social services, though he gave up his commitments when his day job required him to commute to Wellington Monday to Friday.

Stobbs eventually retired from his working life at 60, and started looking for things that would fuel the next stages of his life – and add to the chapters of those books that had chronicled his life since he became a Kiwi.

He and Val came to Devonport 30 years ago, setting about major renovations to the tired villa they had bought in Garden Terrace.

Stobbs had plenty of energy left for something else.

"I needed to fill the hole that was left when I had moved on from the church." It didn't take long to find that something.

In 2002, he found himself upgrading his computer and was asked by a shop assistant if he had a Grey Power card. It was the first he'd heard of an organisation he'd later be at the centre of.

"Following research, I joined for the princely sum of \$7.50 without any real understanding of its purpose."

Then in the Grey Power newsletter he spotted the call for helping hands. Someone with computer experience was needed to run a database and sort out over 3000 memberships.

From then on, he was up to his elbows, with Val in support, working voluntarily for his peers.

"I learned a lot about older people," he grins.

In August 2022, when he and Val were farewelled into retirement, he was celebrated in the Grey Power newsletter as "a great multitasker" – a backbone of the organisation who managed multiple roles, including being its IT expert.

He'd be missed, but at 87 years old it was time to move on.

By this stage of their lives, Des and Val had discovered the benefits of fitness and become fixtures at the local gym they'd first joined in 1993.

Des had long since discovered he was fitter

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Copies of Disclosure Statements on website.



**Happy place...** Des Stobbs was last year named 'Gardener of the Year' at the the Ngataringa community gardens, close to the William Sanders Ryman apartment where he lives with his wife, Val

and potentially faster than many blokes his age and had taken to running, discovering the joys of running up and around the local maunga with his new running friends, who were often half his age.

"My new-found fitness level gave me the confidence to complete my first half-marathon at the age of 70."

He completed 20 before surgery intervened two years ago.

"Now my choice is to compete against myself through Garmin technology," he says, referring to the high-tech watch on his wrist. "It records all running and pats me on the

back for any improvements. So patronising, this technology."

Not long after the couple moved to their Ryman apartment, Stobbs found himself out on foot exploring his new environment along Lake Rd.

He spotted the Ngataringa community gardens, with people working in plots beyond the fences. He liked the look of that and was soon lucky enough to get a plot, then a second adjoining it.

As a six-year-old in wartime Britain, he'd helped on his dad's two big allotments and was proud of the memories of raising

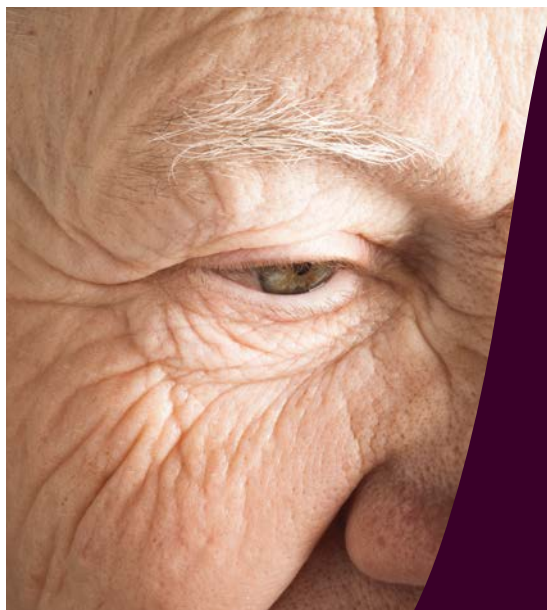
enough produce to supply many others with fresh veg.

At the Ngataringa garden, his skills were soon evident. Last year, he was named 'Gardener of the Year' by his peers there.

Working amongst the abundant growth has become a new 'happy place' for him, with marigolds blooming at the border of the plots.

"When people ask why I have the flowers, I tell them the veggies are for the belly and the flowers are for the soul."

"Sometimes I go down to the garden twice a day if I feel bored – I like to be busy."



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Kia ora DCH Whānau!

Welcome to Term Two- we have a very busy and exciting term ahead!

Kicking off all the events is our annual **Swap Shop this Sunday 11 am-2 pm**. You still have time to drop in your clothing donations and get tokens for the event. This year we will also have arts and crafts available for the children to do, giving you space to have a good look around.

Further info is below and as always please check out our **website** for all up-to-date information.

Ngā mihi nui.

Devonport Community House Team

## WHAT'S NEW?

### DEVONPORT SWAP SHOP 2024 SUNDAY 5TH MAY 11 AM-2 PM

We are open from 9AM - 2.30PM this week and also this **SATURDAY (04/05) from 10AM - 1PM** for donation drop-offs. We will take donations on the day but because of the nature of the event, we do ask if you can, please drop off previously at the times above.

Check through your wardrobes and drawers, and head on down to the house to get your tokens ready to swap for new goodies!

### DEVONPORT COMMUNITY HOUSE YOUTH SPACE OPENING!

After almost a year of planning, restoring and speaking with local youth, our designated Youth Space will be opening on Tuesday 21st May in time for Youth Week. The Youth Space will be open from 4PM-7PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays during term time. Keep an eye out for details and info plus special youth events on our social pages and website

For more info go to  
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## 'World in Union' lays on ripper time



Allez les Bleus... Members of the under-13 France team (from left) Taylor Travers, Scarlett Westgate, Leni Williams, Indi Holland and Millie Ison

'International' rugby came to Devonport again in the first week of the school holidays, with the annual Rippa Rugby World Cup fundraiser held at the North Shore Rugby Club.

In its fourth year, the event hosted a record number of players from the peninsula and further afield – 198 7-to-12-year-olds taking to the fields for two action-packed days of play. While the focus was on participation, fun and sportsmanship, competition was close and the country pride was fierce, culminating in a medal ceremony. South Africa narrowly beat France to win the under-13 division, while England won the under-11s and South Africa the under-9s. Funds raised will support the 'Leavers' Tour' by North Shore year-8 players before they head to secondary school.



Nearly... Damian Wylie is set to score for Australia as New Zealand's Micah McClintock attempts a try-saving rip



# during school holiday tournament at Shore rugby club



Blighty brigade... England under-13 players (from left) Milla Holland, Sadie van Tonder, Nella Jones, Francesca Dykes, Isla Smith, and Dom McGill and Toby McGregor



Sweet success... Under-13 winners South Africa (from left) Belle Newman, Kenzie Wagon, Florence Beauchamp, Katie Conroy, Charlie Richardson, Henry Wigram, Gus Gillies, Jayden Still, Chase Lovett and Ben Hindle.



## Top athletes the pride of TGS

Three of the 15 athletes named in the initial New Zealand team for the Paris Olympics are former Takapuna Grammar students and current members of the Takapuna Athletics Club.

Polevaulter Eliza McCartney, who claimed a bronze medal in Rio de Janeiro in 2016, will head to Paris in late July with a season of strong form behind her. Shotputter Jacko Gill has also been competing well and will be at his third Olympics.

For polevaulter Imogen Ayris, Paris presents a first opportunity to compete on athletics' biggest stage, two years after she secured a bronze medal at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

For her, and a third North Shore jumper, Olivia McTaggart, from the Harbour Bays Club, attendance is conditional on achieving a qualifying height in the next six weeks, with both heading to Europe for competition soon.

The athletics team is one of the strongest assembled in years. New Zealand finished third on the medal table at the World Athletics Indoor Championship in Glasgow last month, with two gold and two silver medals. High-jumper Hamish Kerr and steeplechaser George Beamish won indoor titles and both will carry high hopes into the Olympics. (All selections are conditional on confirmation of an Olympic quota place which should be received in early July.)

The next generation of aspiring athletes still at TGS are also shaping up well, with several having competed at the Australian Junior Athletics Championships over the school holidays.

All-rounder Connor Brady, in his first big heptathlon competition, was fourth overall in the under-16 competition, coming second in the javelin, third in both the 100m hurdles and the shotput and recording places within the top 10 in all other events.

Year-13 thrower Kate Hallie was sixth in the under-18 girls discus and seventh in the shotput, for which she holds age-group titles in New Zealand. Hallie is coached by Gill's father, Walter Gill, at the Takapuna club.

## 20 years ago from the Flagstaff files

- Devonport Tours investigates the possibility of running feeder buses to the Devonport and Bayswater ferry terminals.
- North Shore number 8 Courtney Ireland is stretchered from the Vauxhall Rd fields after being knocked out in the side's 23-22 win over Glenfield, which cemented fourth spot on the North Harbour premiers table.
- Devonport Heritage takes issue with a partial demolition of a Buchanan St house which it said would set a dangerous precedent for further renovations.
- Work has begun on exhibitions for the new navy museum at Torpedo Bay, but a construction date for the building has still to be set.
- Two junior naval ratings who drag-raced along Queens Pde and destroyed part of a historic Garden Tce wall have been fined close to \$5000 and disqualified from driving.
- Belmont artist Mikki Buckland exhibits at the Depot.
- The Torpedo Bay beach sand-replenishment project is held up due to delays obtaining a coastal permit from the Auckland Regional Council.
- Around 300 people follow a wooden cross to the top of Mt Victoria to mark Good Friday.
- Commodore David Ledson takes over the Chief of the Navy role from Rear Admiral Peter McHaffie.
- Mrs T – Valda Tokona – a long-time Devonport Primary teacher is the Flagstaff interview subject.

## Rotary picks up signage duties

Devonport Rotary is taking over the running of the community signage sited opposite the fire station on Lake Rd.

The signs allow peninsula groups to promote upcoming community events.

Rotary will manage bookings and maintenance for the two signs, between Allenby Ave and Ariho Tce, under a memorandum of understanding with the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board.

The Devonport Peninsula Trust, which previously managed the signs, last year had its board funding withdrawn.

Rotary volunteered to manage the signs on behalf of the board and to take over the hiring out at minimal cost of several large gazebos used for community events.

The arrangements, to be finalised with Auckland Council staff, were approved by the board at its April monthly meeting. Promotion

of the signs is free.

Guidelines for the signs date to 1996, when they were drawn up by the then Devonport Community Board.

Signs for events should be up for no more than 14 days and removed within 24 hours after an event. No solely commercial or political advertising is allowed.

Naming of sponsors should be allowed, the board agreed, as many events would not take place without them.

Advertising community events is given precedence, but if none is booked community groups can apply for a two-week promotion slot.

Among those who use the signs are: Devonport Community House, the Rose Centre and the Devonport Business Association, with events such as Matariki, Devonport Santa Parade and the Jets Fun Run being promoted.

## Write to the Devonport Flagstaff

We welcome letters. Please limit to 300 words on local topics.

Noms de plume or unnamed letters will not be printed.

Email [news@devonportflagstaff.co.nz](mailto:news@devonportflagstaff.co.nz) or write to Letters, PO Box 32 275, Devonport.



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Nathan Hale





### Rugby Development Tour Shapes Future Stars in Rotorua



TGS Rugby embarked on a transformative development tour to Rotorua during the school holidays. The tour comprised exhilarating matches against Western Heights College and Taupo-nui-a-Tia College. With 34 players actively engaged across both encounters, the tour provided a fertile ground for talent cultivation and team cohesion with players living and breathing rugby 24/7. Under the expert guidance of our experienced coaching staff, most days were structured around three intensive sessions. Two field sessions, designed to refine core skills, positional play, and team strategies, were complemented by classroom-based sessions focusing on mental fortitude, tactical astuteness, and goal setting—both personal and collective. “The chance for the players to be fully immersed in rugby, both on and off the field, was a major boon for their development”, remarked Coach Tim Ryder. “The holistic approach of blending on-field practice with classroom sessions allowed us to nurture not just skilled athletes, but resilient and strategic thinkers”.

For the players, the tour offered a glimpse into the demands and nuances of high-level competition.

“It was an eye-opening experience”, shared Max Murray, “Playing against different teams in unfamiliar conditions pushed us to adapt and grow as players”.

With an unwavering focus on player development, the tour underscored TGS Rugby’s commitment to shaping well-rounded athletes capable of thriving in the ever-evolving landscape of rugby. As the young talents return home, their journey in Rotorua will undoubtedly serve as a catalyst for future triumphs on the rugby field.

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## Congratulations TGS Alumni

**Imogen Ayris**     **Jacko Gill**     **Eliza McCartney**

*Named in the initial New Zealand team selection announcement for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games*

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## Call out for all women interested in playing squash

Women interested in learning how to play squash, and women wanting to return to playing, will find much more at the Devonport Squash Club this May. Squash Squad, a Squash New Zealand Poipātū Aotearoa initiative, encourages women to embark on a journey of fun, fitness, and friendship at their local club.

Club coach Ben Edwards and club representatives will run the fun and fitness side of the programme, after which the Club will open its bar for the fun and friends aspect.

Squash Squad follows the Club's recent successful Women's Programme. The Club has seen an upsurge of women participating in squash programmes and competitions, which reflects its inclusive and welcoming atmosphere, where it encourages all women, regardless of ability or skills to give squash a try.

Beginners, ex-players, and social players can sign up for four free introductory sessions, which will take place throughout May on Wednesday May 8, 15, 22, and 29, running from 5:45pm to 6:45pm. Scan the QR code below to register.

Men will have a chance to participate in a similar programme later in the year.

**For more information on the Squash Squad at Devonport Squash Club, please email [squash@beast.gen.nz](mailto:squash@beast.gen.nz)**



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\*T&C Apply

\*\* Four sessions is exclusive to Devonport Squash Club

*Sign up now*





## TGS sports teams score roles in school musical



Ready to rock... *We Will Rock You* cast members (from left) Gavin Wu, Māui Hitchens and Violet Castle during rehearsals. Māui plays the Killer Queen while Gavin and Violet share the role of Commander Khashoggi.

Takapuna Grammar School's latest musical production incorporates school sports teams into the show.

*We Will Rock You*, based on the songs of Queen, follows a group of rebel teens who rediscover rock'n'roll in an Orwellian world 300 years in the future, where all music is computer generated and commercial conformity reigns supreme.

The school's cricket, basketball and first XV rugby teams all wanted to be involved in the show, so head of performing arts Lauren Raby came up with ideas to incorporate them.

Director Bruce De Grut said unlike a professional theatre audience, almost all of the people coming along to the shows will know the performers, so the production has to play into that.

"People know who they are, they want to see what they can do."

The first XI cricket team have been cast as the policemen who try to stop the rebels on their journey, but discover cricket in a scene where they hit balls being thrown at them with their batons.

"They've come alive as well, not to rock'n'roll but to cricket."

The premier basketball team are learning a basketball-themed dance routine for their scene while the first XV are tasked with becoming line dancers for a scene.

The playful tone of the musical gives the production leeway to have fun with the story and not take itself too seriously, De Grut said.

Around 120 students are involved in all elements of the production.

The school's dance crews have choreographed their own routines while other students are playing key backstage roles such as the stage manager, members of a live band and those who have made all the props.

The production has gone down a DIY route of producing props out of plywood and painting them.

This budget-related approach is referenced in jokes during the show, De Grut said.

To make up for the lack of a set, the stage will either be filled with the cast or left in darkness. This put more pressure on the performers, which they could handle, he said. "We did auditions last year and when these kids got up and sang – wow."

• *We Will Rock You*, Bruce Mason Centre, 6-8 May, tickets at ticketmaster.co.nz.

## Former nursing-home site clarified as true-crime book launched

Almost 100 years after murderer Nurse Elspeth Kerr was convicted for poisoning a foster child in Devonport, locals have helped clarify the exact location of her rest home.

Author Scott Bainbridge is speaking about his book *The Trials of Nurse Kerr: The anatomy of a secret poisoner* at Devonport Library at 2.30 pm on 5 May.

Kerr's rest home was believed to have been located at 2 Matai Rd, so Bainbridge

invited the current owners of the property at that address to the launch. However, they told him that number 11 on the other side of the road was the site of Kerr's home.

Though records show her home was at number 2, the street has apparently been renumbered since then.

Bainbridge has reassured the occupants of both addresses that while his book gives number 2 as the address he would make clear

in any publicity that the property is today at number 11.

The Kerr saga made it back into the news in 1992, when a skeleton was unearthed during construction work in Matai Rd.

Kerr, who was in 1933 found guilty of attempted murder, was also suspected of murdering her husband and another Devonport resident. Bainbridge's book looks at whether there might have been other victims.



# Hall roof-repair campaign still needs public support



**Kilting it... Piper Chris Lucas rehearsing at Harmony Hall last Friday night**

More than \$50,000 is still needed for Harmony Hall's new roof.

Over the last few weeks several hundred dollars of donations have come in, but the exact amount raised from last Saturday's Scottish music concert has yet to be calculated.

An estimated \$60,000 is needed to replace the hall's roof, gutters and downpipes.

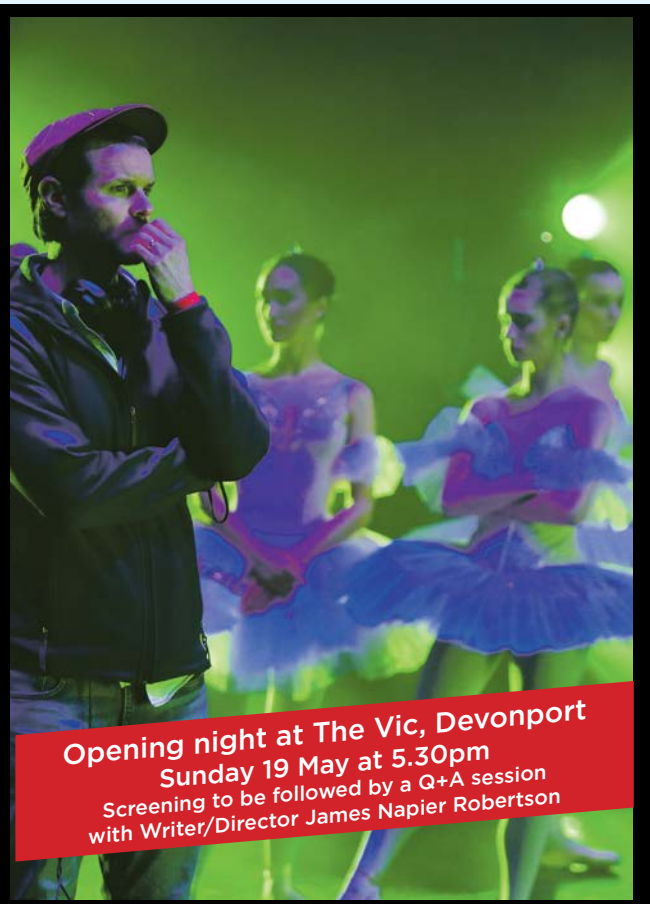
The hall has been having a boom in usage, but a leaky guttering system on one side of the building is putting sound and musical equipment at risk.

## What's on at Harmony Hall

- Friday Night Live open-mic evening, 7 pm. Hear and play music and singing. Bring a plate and BYO.
- Ukulele Monday Nights at 7pm. Chord charts and lyrics provided.
- Sunday singing from 4 pm. Lyrics on the large screen. Email dellgraham@gmail.com for song lists each week. Wine and cheese at 5 pm.
- U3A has guest speakers on the second Wednesday of each month at 10am. Join for \$30 a year. Contact: Sam Luxemburg 027 802 3766.

## How you can help

Join the Devonport Senior Citizens Association for \$30 or donate to the Raise The Roof campaign. To join and/or donate to the Devonport Senior Citizens account: 12-3015-0574457-01



**Opening night at The Vic, Devonport  
Sunday 19 May at 5.30pm  
Screening to be followed by a Q+A session  
with Writer/Director James Napier Robertson**



# Company Theatre captures *Curious Incident*

Suzu Sampson has been waiting years to get her hands on the script for *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*. When rights finally became available, the experienced director secured them for Company Theatre, which will be the first community theatre group in New Zealand to stage the adaptation of the popular novel by Mark Haddon.

She is now in the final stages of readying her mostly local cast for a season at the Rose Centre in Belmont opening next week.

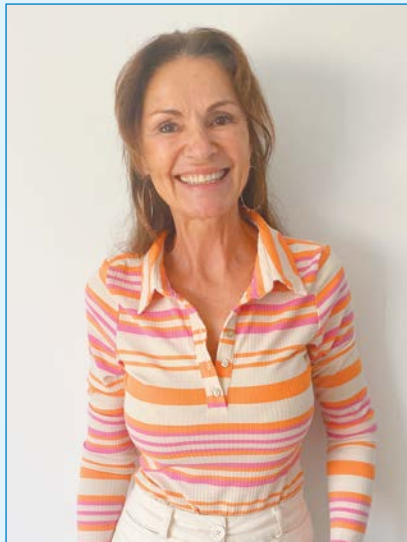
The award-winning novel – first published in 2003, in versions for both adults and young adults – centres on a teenager on the autism spectrum who sets out to solve the mystery behind the death of a neighbour’s dog. In doing so, the mathematical savant ends up grappling with family secrets, while other characters grapple with how he and they look at the world.

Playing the lead role of Christopher Boone is 21-year-old Ben Wickers, a creative writing and journalism student at AUT.

Like Sampson, he sees the play, adapted by Simon Stephens, as an opportunity to shine a light on neuro-diverse conditions. But he says it also offers wider insights into perseverance and strength of character

His approach to the play was partly informed by growing up with a cousin who was autistic. He also researched neuro-diverse conditions and traits, aiming at authenticity.

He did not want the complex character he



Director Suzu Sampson

plays to be infantilised. “He is a teenage boy, but he has not got the mind of a child.”

Sampson says there is plenty of humour in the script, but it doesn’t make jokes at Christopher’s expense. “He’s so matter of fact in the way he sees the world. He’s so different. If everyone else can see it like that, difference can be fun.”

Her own now-adult daughter was given the book by her godfather when she was aged

around 10. The first page did not interest her, but when she tried reading it again at 16 she found she loved it.

“This is an absolute passion project for me,” Sampson says.

She had hoped to direct the play several years ago, but instead helmed Alan Bennett’s *The History Boys* for Company Theatre last year. Before that, she put on a production at the PumpHouse in Takapuna of *Skylight* by David Hare.

She says having also worked as a teen acting tutor at Tim Bray Productions – a company which stages shows accessible to children of all needs – was a tipping point to wanting to stage the play, as were other personal connections to people dealing with neuro-diversity.

Company Theatre has included a sensory-relaxed matinee in its run and has given the show a parental-guidance rating.

Interest in the production from young people has been strong, says Sampson. The book is studied at some high schools.

The show is staged without a set and has rapid transitions of scenes. A striking starlit sky reflects Christopher’s interest in being an astronaut and his mathematical way of seeing the world. The play’s wordy title comes from Sherlock Holmes, who is another inspiration in Christopher’s quest.

Sampson says directing *The Curious Incident* has been an even more collaborative process than usual. Its abstract content required extra engagement from the cast of 10.

Company stalwart Kathy Gent spotted South Auckland-raised Wickers in a production in Onehunga and recommended he audition. Sampson says she knew “straight away” he was right for the part of Christopher. “He’s absolutely spectacular.”

Wickers says working with experienced theatre hands has been a boon. “I’ve picked up so much being there.” From the first reading, it had come a “fantastically long way”.

The process has further ignited his passion for acting. “At the moment, it’s a hobby, but I’d love it to be a realised dream.”

Sampson has been involved with Company Theatre for seven years, variously on its committee, acting and directing, after returning to New Zealand from long stints overseas. She lived in Devonport initially, before a shift to a new art-filled townhouse in Belmont.

She comes from a theatrical background in Wellington, with a forebear having acted in an early talkie movie and her mother and aunt having acted on the stage. Her own plans to study drama in the UK were postponed by the “really exciting time” she had working in the music industry, with EMI which then represented bands including the Spice Girls. At age 35, and herself then a mother, she followed her heart and auditioned for drama school, becoming the “mum” of the group she trained with.

After 17 years in London, the family had



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Acting on wheels... Ben Wickers rehearses his challenging lead part as a neuro-divergent teen who dreams of being an astronaut in Company Theatre's production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*, while other cast members (from left) Trudy Thumath, Marissa Willson and Trudy Price look on.

a spell in Sydney, where she started a theatre company. Then came 10 years in Hong Kong, where her son and daughter attended school, before heading to university in the UK. Both are now settled in London.

Sampson has further developed her theatre skills over the years. She attending a Chekhov course at the renowned Stella Adler school in New York in 2013.

"I'd probably still choose acting over directing, but I'm that age that I like to impart things to the next generation," she says.

Travel to see her children is now a regular part of Sampson's semi-retirement. After her siblings and a close friend endured health issues in the last few years, she has become even more determined to live in the moment.

She will head overseas again later this year, having volunteered to help Team New Zealand at the America's Cup in Barcelona. When the cup was previously held here, she helped with media and audience engagement.

But before turning her thoughts to Spain she has a play to see through its season.

"I just hope that Company Theatre regulars will take a chance on this," she says.

The play has been a success in the West End in London. Auckland Theatre Company staged it pre-Covid, but now locals can see it without crossing the bridge.

• *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*, the Rose Centre, Belmont, 11-25 May, with a sensory-relaxed matinee on 18 May at 2pm. Tickets through iTicket.

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<b>The Moon is Upside Down</b> (R16) 100min		<b>NEW</b>
<b>Robot Dreams</b> (G) 103min		<b>NEW</b>
<b>The Fall Guy</b> (M) 127min		<b>NEW</b>
<b>Star Wars Original Trilogy IV, V, VI</b> (PG) 383min		<b>4 MAY</b>
<b>Star Wars Prequel Trilogy I, II, III</b> (PG/M) 413min		<b>5 MAY</b>
<b>The Big Bike Night 2024</b> (E) 180min		<b>6 MAY</b>
<b>Cinema Italiano Festival 2024</b>		<b>7-19 MAY</b>
COMING SOON		
<b>Kingdom Of The Planet Of The Apes</b> (TBA) 145min		<b>9 MAY</b>
<b>IF: Imaginary Friends</b> (TBA) 108min		<b>16 MAY</b>
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