

# Motueka Valley Association Newsletter

The River, The Land, The People

August 2025

Here-turi-kōkā 2025

## News

### The Flood

We have, quite deliberately, not focussed on the flood in this issue. For many of us it has dominated our thoughts, conversations and work over recent weeks and...well... enough's enough! We share the trauma and loss many have suffered and wish all a speedy recovery. Our sincere thanks and appreciation to all those who have helped in the recovery so far. It's an overused term but you are all truly, awesome. Please stay safe and keep looking out for each other.

### Meet the Candidates

Local body elections are due to be held on 11th October 2025. The MVA will host a 'Meet the Candidates' evening at the Ngātimoti Memorial Hall on Wednesday, 20th August, at 7PM.

### Community Pot Luck

The usual midwinter/Matariki social had to be postponed due to weather. In its place the MVA will host a 'Welcome Spring' get together and Pot Luck from 6PM on Friday 5th September at the Memorial Hall. Everyone welcome! Please bring something to share, a plate to eat off and any utensils you may need.

### Motueka Valley Association AGM

The MVA will hold its Annual General Meeting at 7PM on Thursday 11th September at the Community Rooms, Ngātimoti Reserve. Please forward agenda items and nominations to join the Committee to the Secretary: [info@mva.org.nz](mailto:info@mva.org.nz) by Sunday 8th September 2025.

## Recipe

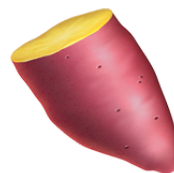
### Kūmara Gratin (cheesy kūmara bake)

#### Ingredients

800 grams kūmara  
1 cup cream  
1 cup vegetable stock  
2 cloves garlic, chopped



4 or 5 sprigs of thyme (or other fresh herb)  
salt and pepper  
75 grams grated cheddar cheese  
75 grams grated gruyere cheese



## Method

- Peel and thinly slice kūmara. Place half in shallow ovenproof dish, covering bottom. Season with salt and pepper.
- Place cream, vegetable stock, garlic, and thyme in small saucepan. Heat until almost boiling. Pour half the liquid over kūmara in dish.
- Layer remaining kūmara slices over top. Pour remaining liquid over. Season with salt and pepper.
- Mix cheeses together and sprinkle over top.
- Bake at 170°C for about 40 minutes until kūmara is cooked and top is golden.



## Quiz



1. What do you call a triangle with 3 different length sides?
2. What is the longest river in Europe?
3. Where would you be if you were in the Karoo?
4. What sort of animal is a quokka?
5. In the upper North Island it is Known is a Kakapu, what do we call it?
6. How many vertebrae are there in a giraffe's neck?
7. If you were using a mnemonic what would you be doing?
8. Erebus and Terror are mountains in Antarctica named after two Ships. What tragic event were the ships involved in?
9. The license for the Moutere Inn dates from which year?
10. What would you be doing if you were gurning?

### LOCAL COMMUNITY HALLS AND AEDs

#### Ngātimoti Community Rooms - AED

Next to Fire Station  
Sarah Bradshaw 526 8026

#### Ngātimoti Memorial Hall – no AED

Corner of Valley Highway and Waiwhero Rd  
Bex Douglas 021 173 1279 / ngatimoti.hall@gmail.com

#### Pokororo Hall – AED

Corner of West Bank Road and Graham Valley  
Sylvia Arnold 526 8282

#### Woodstock Automotive - AED

982 Dovedale Road Woodstock Junction  
Kerry Hall 543 3884

# ST. JAMES CHURCH

## NGĀTIMOTI

Family services are held on the 3rd Sunday each month and everyone is welcome.

Next services:

Sunday 17th August at 10:30 a.m.

Sunday 21st September at 10:30 a.m.

Both services include Children's SundaySchool.  
Morning tea and social time to follow.



## People - Kieran Mckay

I am a caver and I live in Ngātimoti, on the door step of the best caving areas in Aotearoa. From my property I can look out to marble mountains of Pikikirunga to the north, Tu ao Wharepapa to the west and down to the south, the Marino mountains. In all, lie the longest and deepest caves in the country. Gazing upon those high mountains gives me a thrill of being one of the few who know what lies within them; in the land of Hinemoa o Te Po, the land of the unborn atua Rauaumoko, the lands within the belly of Papatūānuku. Thanks to Papatūānuku I have memories of incredible adventures,



Kieran in the Black Dwarf, the largest chamber in Stormy Pot

memories of some of the hardest times of my life and some of the most amazing times of my life and memories of friendships made and friends lost.

No doubt many have walked up to the source of the Pearse, the powerful spring called the Pearse resurgence. For decades cavers been trying to find where the water comes from and how it gets through the mountain. The search has uncovered huge cave systems. In the Ellis Basin, under the twins lies the Ellis system. In 2010, Troy Watson, Aaron Gillespie and I made a

connection between a cave high on the twins and the 33-kilometre-long Ellis system underneath and created the first cave in the country to break 1000 metres in depth. Near the Pearse resurgence a cave, cavers called Nettlebed was discovered in the late 60s and explored uphill for 600 metres height and over 25 kms in length. More recently my friends and I found and explored a cave located in a basin high on the northwest side of Wharepapa. After several years of hard exploration, we eventually found a link to Nettlebed creating a system 42 kilometres long and almost 1200 metres deep. You can now enter the cave which is located high up above the bush line in tussock and rocky tops and over 3 days abseil many big shafts, walk down huge dry tunnels, swim through deep pools, wriggle through small spaces and eventually after traversing nearly 10 kilometres of underground passages emerge back in daylight in subtropical tropical rain forest 1200 metres below



where you entered. It is the second deepest through trip in the southern hemisphere and apparently it is the deepest through trip you can do in the world without having to put diving gear on and dive through sections that are completely flooded. For a bit of context, next time you walk up the Mount Arthur track, stop for a moment at the Gordons Pyramid turnoff. There could be cavers traversing the cave which is located 500 metres beneath your feet. From these discoveries we have found out where most of the water from the Pearse comes from and as yet no human has made the link between the discovered caves and the



Pip Rees negotiating the hinkle horn honking hole squeezes

resurgence. The main reason for this is that the water rises up and out of one of the deepest underwater caves in the world, the Pearse resurgence. The Pearse will be forever etched into my heart. Many years ago, I led a team of cave divers to try and follow the deep underwater passages to see if we could find a way through. Unfortunately, 75 metres below the surface my diving partner drowned and I had to leave him behind after chasing him to a depth of 85 metres. If you understand the physics around diving and deep diving you will understand the issues. Basically, the deeper you go, the pressure increases the concentration of the gases in air. The nitrogen becomes a narcotic and the oxygen becomes poisonous. Also, CO<sub>2</sub> can become dangerous. 75 metres down my friend, Dave made a mistake and right in front of me he started swimming hard, the CO<sub>2</sub> in his body spiked causing him to black out and drown. We were pushing the limits with the tools available to us at the time. Deep cave diving has come a long way since our misadventure. Different gas mixtures that are safe to breathe at depth are now used in units that recycle the breathed-out gas through a scrubber device that takes out all the CO<sub>2</sub>. This increases the time that can be spent at depth. Using this high-tech equipment cave divers from Australia have now explored the resurgence to a depth of 245 metres and the tunnel is still going down.

No other adventure on this planet is more isolated. Take for example the exploration of Stormy Pot. We eventually connected this cave to Nettlebed creating the second deepest cave in the southern hemisphere. In the early days of the caves exploration, Troy, Neil, Aaron and I were deep down in the system. We had been underground for 5 days and over 6 kilometres from the entrance and 700 metres below it. We had negotiated thundering waterfalls, roaring rapids, chambers so vast the roof and walls disappeared into the blackness. We had swum down a cold river, squirmed through tight and gnarly little holes and abseiled down what felt like an endless series of ropes. We stopped for a break and a cup of tea. Troy, while drinking his steaming hot cup of tea, remarked, that no one in the whole world knew where we were. No one! Initially we were all really concerned then concern turned to excitement. How often on this planet can you be so isolated and completely cut off from everything. The closest point to call for help was back on the surface, kilometres away. The isolation was intense, however this landscape that we were mapping was so exciting, the boundary of the known and unknown lay right at the edge of our lights and that unknown in darkness just drew us on and on.

**MVA MEETINGS ARE AT 7PM ON THE 2nd THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH (Excl. January)  
PLEASE COME ALONG - 14th August, 11th September, 9th October 2025**



For many this is true exploration, a real adventure. For us this is just our world; full of fear, cold and exhaustion and also beauty and awe-inspiring underground structures. There is also the camaraderie created while sitting around camp, deep underground with friends; listening to music, eating, resting and telling tall tales about the day. We also get comfort by getting away for a time from the busy and crazy world of the civilisation that is on the surface.

I gaze up onto those mountains from my home and my heart fills with emotions that are hard to explain. I feel a connection to Papatuanuku that is different to many peoples' connection and I also know that up there in those mountains, more adventures await.



## Spiritual guidance for women.

Fiona Nelson

A yogic nun from Ananda Magda tradition is currently visiting in Motueka Valley at Vistara Yoga and Meditation Centre. Avadhutika Ananda Citisudha Acarya, or Didi meaning Sister in Bengali, has been based in Dunedin for over two years, and regularly comes to stay at Vistara.

Didi has led a spiritual life of yoga and meditation since childhood. She left home when she was 20 years old to live in retreat for two years and trained for 10 years to become a yogic nun. Since then she has dedicated her life for social and spiritual service. She also has an Honors degree in Geography.

"I want to do more and more studies for humanity, train people on their spiritual path and share with my sisters," Didi says.

In the Ananda Marga tradition, yogic nuns (Didis) are trained to provide counselling, instruction and personal guidance for women to safely advance along the yoga path. Spiritual practitioners are encouraged to lead a sentient life – smoke, drug and alcohol free and have a vegetarian sentient diet.



Didi with Dhara Dyer at Vistara



Didi and Dhara sitting in meditation

With other teachers, Didi has led the women's spiritual lifestyle retreat, held annually at Vistara with participants coming from New Zealand and overseas. The retreat is for two weeks and involves Yoga asana classes, meditation and philosophy. Each teacher has a speciality, and different philosophies are explored including the principles of Maori and Yoga which are similar in essence.

A variety of activities are held over the course of the retreats such as flax weaving with a harekeke artist, learning karakia, and with support from Waka Abel Tasman, experiencing a Sunrise Waka Ama trip including a chanting and meditation out on the water. The retreats also offer the daily

chanting practice of Kiirtan, meditation, kaoshikii - a meditative yogic dance and music classes. Cooking classes of vegetarian Indian food are also held. These classes are for a sentient diet with no onion, garlic, mushrooms or eggs which is considered good for meditation, and supporting the lifestyle. The next retreat is in January next year with three teachers from Australia and New Zealand. Vistara Yoga and Meditation Centre is a seven acre organic property adjacent to Motueka River which seeks to incorporate the principles of PROUT, a spiritually-based social and economic philosophy. Weekly Yoga classes, events and workshops are held throughout the year.

Didi attends the weekly Yoga classes at Vistara and she is happy and available to give personal meditation guidance with channelling of a personal mantra. For anyone interested please contact Dhara +64 22 136 8438 Whats app or email [dhara.sanctuary@gmail.com](mailto:dhara.sanctuary@gmail.com), and for more information visit please visit [Vistara.co.nz](http://Vistara.co.nz)



## St John Health Shuttle

The St John Health Shuttle is a little-known, little-used, free local transport service for anyone with medical needs which is available to Motueka Valley residents.

**St John Health Shuttle**  
South Island

**0800 103 046**  
Bookings essential, at least 24 hours prior to appointment  
In an emergency dial 111

St John Here for Life

It's easy... Telephone 0800 103 046 to book the shuttle the day before you require a pick-up then be ready at your door at the agreed time. You will be brought home again after your appointment.

This Monday to Friday service extends as far as Mārahau and Riuwaka Valley in the north, to Māpua in the south and west up the Motueka Valley as far as McLeans Reserve. The Shuttle is based at Motueka Jack Inglis hospital and a St Johns administrator in Richmond organises the roster. The drivers are

all local volunteers, well trained, friendly and wear a uniform!

The definition of a "medical need" is broad and includes doctors / dentists appointments, picking up prescriptions, blood tests, attending fitness / exercise classes, social and recreational gatherings. The van has capacity for 6 passengers and is also set up for wheelchair access. The Health Shuttle is funded by grants and donations, however, a koha is appreciated.

I have been driving for St Johns for 5 years and have witnessed how valuable this service is to some in our community. I know you rural folk are very independent but USE IT OR LOSE IT.

Maybe I'll see you on The Shuttle one day.

Paul Wielandt,  
driver

Quiz answers

1. Scalene
2. Volga
3. South Africa
4. A small kangaroo-like marsupial
5. Kererū
6. 7
7. Remembering a sequence of words
8. They were trapped in the ice in the Arctic, where all crew perished.
9. 1853
10. Contorting your face



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**MOTUEKA VALLEY ASSOCIATION**

Meetings are in the Ngātīmoti Community Rooms at 7pm on the 2nd Thursday of the month and all Valley residents are very welcome to attend.

The Association is managed by an elected Committee which can be contacted on **info@mva.org.nz**.

**Current members are:**

Pat Shortley	Maria Ware
Daniel Bulman	Linda Sillery
Nelly Willetts	Trevor Knowles

We publish a newsletter (bi-monthly) and encourage residents to submit any stories, photos, recipes, feedback, and advertisements (at \$3 per column cm) to **newsletter@mva.org.nz**