

Motueka Valley Association Newsletter

The River, The Land, The People

April 2026

Paenga-whāwhā 2026

Out and About

The MVA hosted a Community BBQ at the Ngātīmoti Recreation Reserve at the end of February. A good time was had by all, with a feast of delicious food and great music courtesy of the Zambuko marimba band, and the MVA will organise a similar event next Summer.



Brain teasers



1. What do the numbers 11, 69 and 88 have in common?
2. If 2 is company and 3 is a crowd, what is 4 and 5?
3. What is 3/7 chicken, 2/3 cat and 2/4 goat?
4. Forward I am heavy, but backwards I am not. What am I?
5. How can you drop a raw egg on a concrete floor without cracking it?
6. You see a boat filled with people. It has not sunk, but when you look back, you don't see a single person on board. Why?
7. I am an odd number. Take away a letter and I become even. What number am I?
8. I add 5 to 9 and the answer is 2. The answer is correct. What am I?
9. What's at the end of the rainbow?
10. A bus driver goes the wrong way down a one way street, but he isn't stopped by the police. Why not?

MVA MEETINGS ARE AT 7PM ON THE 2nd THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH (Excl. January)
PLEASE COME ALONG - 14th May, 11th June, 9 July

Private William Arthur Ham

Extracted from a story by Ann McFadgen and available at theprow.org.nz.

Although the ANZACs are often associated with Gallipoli where they first fought as a unit, the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was created several months earlier in Egypt, where a short, fiercely contested battle between the Allies and Turkish forces for control of the Suez Canal gave the New Zealanders their first taste of war. Several men from Ngātīmoti had joined up straight after war was declared with Germany and in October 1914 Private William Ham and Major Cyprian Bridge Brereton, battalion commander of the 12th (Nelson) Company, were among those who sailed from Wellington. Joined by members of the Australian Imperial Force they arrived in Alexandria in December and began training as a joint contingent, dubbed the ANZACs. Off duty, they took in the sights, with Cairo's fleshpots proving a particular eye-opener for the country boys.



Suez Canal, February 1915 (NZETC)

The 12th Company was assigned to defend the Ismailia canal against a Turkish attack. Early in the morning of 3 February 1915 thirty men from 10 Platoon were sent to assist at an undefended gap where they discovered several pontoons full of Turkish soldiers heading across the Canal towards them. The handful of Nelsonians immediately opened fire and drove back the boats. Soon supported by enfilading fire from 9 Platoon, they kept the entrenched Turkish infantry on the opposite side at bay with a steady close-range fusillade. They were later commended for their efforts, especially given that they had only rifles at their disposal; due to an operational oversight, their machine guns had been left at camp, 10 miles away.



William Ham. Photo by Wm Bridle, Motueka, courtesy Auckland War Museum

However, that afternoon the 12th Company was exposed to enemy and William Ham was hit; a chance bullet ricocheted off his rifle and struck his neck, breaking his spine. He died of his wounds at Ismailia Hospital on the evening of the February 5 1915. His funeral took place on the morning of Sunday 7th, with the whole Company in attendance. Major Brereton and the 12th Company did William Ham proud. Rather than the mass grave accorded other casualties of the battle, he was buried with full military honours at a plot in the Ismailia European cemetery. Today he lies at the Ismailia War Memorial Cemetery

William Arthur Ham was described by Major Brereton in a letter of condolence to his mother as "an ideal soldier... in action splendid, happy and cool" and was remembered as quiet, capable and possessed of great physical strength. He emigrated from Ireland in 1903 with his parents and two brothers, and lived in Gisborne and Wanganui before moving to Ngātīmoti. William enrolled at Orinoco School in May that year and no doubt the family attended St James Anglican Church, hub of community life in the Motueka Valley. Mr Ham took work at a sawmill. He later drove a horse-drawn grocery van servicing the area for Rankin & Sons of Motueka, and the Hams possibly ran a general store themselves at some point. They moved about the district as they followed work, living variously in Ngātīmoti, Pokororo and Motueka township, but settled for some time at two Waiwhero properties; near White Pine Swamp and also at the converted creamery by the foot of Church Hill, next to the Orinoco Stream, where William taught his younger brothers to swim.

Throughout the war, over forty local men set off on their big adventure from the Motueka Valley. Of those, twenty-eight returned home to New Zealand, leaving behind a score of brothers, cousins and friends who had been killed in action, or died of wounds and sickness along the way. A memorial erected by friends and relatives at St James Church, Ngātīmoti, honours the sacrifice of fifteen of these men; still others are commemorated on a brass tablet inside the church itself. Upon receiving the news of the Suez Canal victory and William Ham's death, New Zealand's Minister for Defence, James Allen, hoped that it would be of some consolation to Ham's parents that their son was "the first upon the roll of honour of the New Zealanders to die in action for their King and country in upholding justice and right."

Pitcairn Island in a nutshell

We like to think of the Valley as a small isolated community. We asked one of the many doctors who live among us what it was like to spend six months on a remote Pacific island with no airstrip and only 30 or 40 residents.



This was my first view of Pitcairn Island. I set off from Auckland with a 5 hour flight to Tahiti. I had a bonus 2 day's holiday in Tahiti, as one cannot miss the next connection, which was a 4 hour flight to Gambier Island, where I met Pitcairn's ship, the Silver Supporter. Two days of vomiting later I arrived.

This tropical island is a British Overseas Territory, whose Governor is the High Commissioner for NZ. It is run by The Administrator who is a diplomat from the UK Foreign Office. Other ex-pats are the policeman (from NZ) and the doctor.

Pitcairn is famous for The Bounty and its Mutineers and infamous for its history of systematic sexual abuse of children. There are many books telling the story of the Bounty. For the other, listen to The Pitcairn Trials by Luke Jones or read Paradise Lost by Kathy Marks.

The island is beautiful and there is abundant tropical fruit (bananas, passion fruit, papaya, star apple, avocado and citrus), which I was allowed to help myself to. The islanders grow vegetables which they give or sell to the ex-pats. Dry and frozen goods are brought to the island by ship every 3 months.

Despite its small size (1.6km x 3.2 km) there are many paths and tracks for hiking and few places for swimming, but no beaches.



The week is shaped by the opening hours of the Store (8-10am on 3 mornings a week) and the coming and going of the ship. The Store is where one meets people and The Landing is where it all happens.

Tourists and other visitors are collected in the longboat. Most tourists are Bounty fanatics or there to tick off another country. Everyone on the island goes down to meet new arrivals and again to wave them goodbye. The Landing is one of the swimming places and where fishing boats come in.



A catch prepared for selling to a passing cruise ship. Islanders were generous to the ex-pats and I received many gifts of fresh fish.

One special thing was the annual arrival of the humpback whales, which we observed offshore for several months. Other wildlife was a few sea birds, one land bird (the Pitcairn Warbler), turtles, sharks and sting rays in the harbour, feral cats, rather cute Polynesian rats, some goats, amazing hermit crabs and one Galapagos Tortoise, Mizz T.

My medical work was sparse. I held clinics three mornings a week and also did house visits as needed. Patient confidentiality is always important, especially in a tiny community where everyone knows everyone else, but I was the last person on the Island to know when a man chopped his thumb off.

The most challenging aspect was determining the validity of people's medical claims as the Health Centre also used to be called the Travel Centre, as patients get free passage and accommodation/allowances if they need to be in Tahiti or NZ for medical care. I spent a lot of time reading, doing jigsaw puzzles, knitting, learning French and watching films, documentaries and tennis on line, as well as keeping fit running and walking the tracks.

Most of the islanders have government jobs such as Store Manager, Tourism Officer, Biosecurity Officer, Longboat Crew and Maintenance Pool. Like all people in remote places they are resourceful mechanics, plumbers, builders and electricians. The island runs on solar power but buys in petrol and diesel for tractors and quad bikes. However, their main income is from selling souvenirs and honey to tourists, especially cruise ship passengers.



Heidi Mayer, Pitcairn Island, June 2025 to January 2026

Local roads update

GRAHAM VALLEY ROAD

In February DOC reported that they had "a tentative start date of early April for the repair work to begin on the Graham Valley road by the contractors. This date is providing for the time needed to quarry the specific large rock required for the repair project and for roading issues farther down the road, which includes a damaged section near the Pokororo Hall and another area within the lower reaches of the Graham Valley River edges, to be fixed so the heavy construction vehicles can safely access the upper section of the Graham Valley Road."

And in March they reported "the DOC Project Manager has confirmed that the programme of works to repair the Graham Valley Road is now complete and confirmed. The start date for the road repairs is early May and the work will be completed by late July. To help inform the general public, staff are looking at putting together a video of the damage on the road with the view to sharing it on the DOC website and on DOC social media channels, included with the video will be the start and finish dates of the road repairs."

The MVA will let you know as soon as a link to the video is available.

MOTUEKA VALLEY HIGHWAY OUTSIDE RIVERHAVEN

The road and cycle trail have been restored, and we hope the rock wall will withstand any future flood events more successfully than the last one.

POKORORO SWING BRIDGE

Due to staff sickness works did not begin until March. Two new anchor points for the wind cables have been installed on the true right of the river and will be installed on the true left. The delayed start date suggests that the repair may not be completed until July, more than 12 months after the bridge's closure.

WEST BANK ROAD BETWEEN BATON BRIDGE AND HAYCOCK'S BUSH

Different sections of this road have been subject to stop/go restraints and works will continue for some time.

Motueka Catchment Collective

The MVA supports the Motueka Catchment Collective and encourages readers to sign up for their Newsletter which is available from coordinator@motuekacatchment.org.nz. They have recently released a new Catchment Plan which is on their website motuekacatchment.org.nz and provides a living framework for revitalising our rivers & deepening community connection and resilience.

Life of Nova Davey in the Motueka Valley

Nova moved to the Motueka Valley after marrying Ian Davey in 1970. Ian, along with his parents, had earlier moved to "The Gap" farm at Pokororo in 1957.

Originally from Westport, Nova was raised in a very different environment, so adapting to farming life was a new experience. She embraced her role as a farmer's wife with resilience and grace, supported by the strong network of women in the valley who helped her settle into the community.

At the time, the picturesque valley was a thriving farming district centred around the tobacco industry. Through seasons of floods, droughts, and fluctuating sheep and cattle prices, Nova's teaching and Ian's additional shearing and contracting work provided valuable income to support both the farm and their family.

Nova became deeply involved in community life, contributing to numerous groups, committees, and events over the years. Her involvement included Plunket, playgroup, the local school, scouts, sports, music groups, the Pokororo Women's Club, St James Church, Motueka Brass Band and the many dances and social functions held in country halls throughout the area.

She worked as a relief teacher at Ngātīmoti School until her retirement and also taught at several other local schools in the district. In addition, she tutored both children and adults outside the classroom. Although Nova and Ian moved off the farm nearly nine years ago, they have remained closely connected to the Motueka Valley community, continuing their involvement in local groups and the St James Church.



TDC draft annual plan and rates 2026/27

The Draft Annual Plan, with an average rates increases of 9.9%, is available on the TDC website <https://shape.tasman.govt.nz/annual-plan> and you are encouraged to respond before the closing date of 3 May 2026. The Council is particularly interested in your feedback on different options for

- a) a new rate to pay for recovery from weather events,
- b) adjustments to operating budgets,

LOCAL COMMUNITY HALLS AND AEDs

Ngātīmoti Community Rooms - AED

Next to Fire Station
Sarah Bradshaw 526 8026

Ngātīmoti 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

1982 Dovedale Road Woodstock Junction
Kerry Hall 543 3884

AED also available at Four Foot Lodge

1216 Motueka River Westbank Road, Krista & Wilfred de Blauw 526 8776

- c) changes in the capital programme for water supply, waste water, community facilities including the Motueka pool, waste management and riverbanks,
- d) the funding of depreciation for the replacement of our roading network, and
- e) increasing most fees and charges by 7%.

The Annual Plan will affect us all and the MVA encourages all residents to review these and voice their opinions – it isn't difficult to do!

Future events

April 26th – MCC Pest Control at Motueka Sunday Market 8am-1pm - If you are already a keen trapper or pest plant destroyer, or just starting out on, join this celebration of Conservation Week!

April 30th and May 1st – Weathering the Storm – Two 2-hour sessions online to help manage the stress and heightened emotions associated with severe weather. Participants will discover the emotional phases of a disaster, how to manage anxiety and distress, and ways to build resilience. <https://www.blueprint.co.nz/workshops/weathering-the-storm>

May 3rd – Old Man's Beard Working Bee at Haycock's Bush 9.30-12.30 – Help us to eliminate OMB so that new native plants can thrive in this beautiful riverside corridor.

St. James Church

Ngātīmoti

Family Services including Sunday School

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

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

Sunday 19th July at 10:30 a.m.

Morning tea and social time will follow all services.

We welcome everyone.



**MOTUEKA VALLEY
ASSOCIATION**

mva.org.nz

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.

Pat Shortley	Linda Sillery
Daniel Bulman	Trevor Knowles
Nelly Willetts	Sue Lancaster

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

Found!

Childs bike, 20 inch wheels, Waiwhero Road.
Phone 0212900636

Brain teaser answers

1. They all read the same when placed upside down.
2. 9
3. Chicago
4. Ton
5. Concrete floors are very hard to crack
6. They are all married
7. Seven
8. Clock
9. W
10. He was walking

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