

Hauraki now officially home



PUTTING DOWN ROOTS: Colin and Emma Green at their Waihi home, where they'll plant the kowhai trees they received to mark their New Zealand citizenship.

New Zealand has been home for Colin and Emma Green for 10 years. But last month the UK-born couple officially became Kiwis in a citizenship ceremony led by Mayor John Tregidga.

Being sworn in has brought a sense of even greater belonging and permanency, they say – and means they are now the same nationality as their daughter Millie, who was born here and will start school at Waimata next month.

The Greens were first inspired to emigrate through a work colleague of Colin's, who had come from Christchurch for a stint in the UK. Before making the decision they visited New Zealand three times, the first in 2001, and have since travelled around most of the North Island. But instead of being typical tourists, their focus was "Could we live here?"

Colin, an intensive care paramedic, needed to secure a job before he and Emma could stay. A position with St John in Auckland decided where they would first live, and Emma was employed as a northern region ambulance dispatcher, having worked in police dispatch in the UK. "However we always intended to move to somewhere smaller," she says.

That opportunity came four years ago, when Colin was appointed to a Waihi area St John role. He worked in Paeroa for six months, and now manages Waihi's St John ambulance station. Ironically though, when the couple arrived in Waihi it was Emma who was known to local ambulance personnel – at least through her voice. Colin was introduced as "the husband of the English dispatcher".

As well as their involvement in the community through St John, Emma set up a home-based massage therapy business in 2012 after "going back to school" to re-train. That has provided a flexible alternative to shift work as family needs have become a priority; and has also enabled her and Colin to be host parents to three successive Waihi College exchange students, from Brazil and Germany. "The girls specifically wanted to come to Waihi, especially for the outdoor education and opportunities," says Colin. "They've all fitted in happily, and as part of showing them around we have finally experienced the tourist things, too."

The Greens consider they've fallen on their feet in New Zealand, especially with the support of St John and of an "adopted family" – the proprietors of a motel where the couple stayed on their first Kiwi trip. Former District councillor Harry Shepherd literally provided the Greens with their Waihi home. He was the previous owner.

"We'll always be British, but this is home," says Emma. This place is special. It's like where we grew up [in rural Kent] yet in the middle of everywhere. We have everything here. We have a life."

For Colin, their resolve to become citizens was cemented when he travelled to Christchurch as a member of the emergency response team after the February 2011 earthquake. He was overwhelmed by the way that people from all round the country pulled together to help in physically and emotionally distressing circumstances. "People care about each other."

Seven other Hauraki residents were also welcomed as citizens at the January 28 ceremony in the Council chambers: Rosebeth Malapad from the Philippines, Mukeshkumar from India, Garth Smith from South Africa, and Sophie Cartmer, Carl Davies, and Carol and Duncan Cook from Great Britain.

Public Notice

Council and Committee Meetings

Pursuant to Section 46 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, public notice is hereby given that the following meetings will be held in the Council Office, William Street, Paeroa during the month of February 2015.

Ward Committee Meetings

Tuesday, 10 February 2015
 Plains Ward - 9.00am, Paeroa Ward - 12.30pm, Waihi Ward - 2.30pm

Operations Committee

Wednesday, 11 February 2015 - 9.00am

Judicial Committee

Monday, 16 February 2015 - 9.00am

Audit and Risk Committee

Tuesday, 17 February 2015 (Hauraki Room) - 9.00am

Western Plains District Drainage Committee

Tuesday, 24 February 2015 - 10.30am

Eastern Plains District Drainage Committee

Tuesday, 24 February 2015 - 1.30pm

Ordinary Meeting of Council

Wednesday, 25 February 2015 - 9.00am

LD Cavers
 Chief Executive
 Hauraki District Council

Roadworks complete

Rehabilitation of about 3km of Kaihere and Rountree Roads near Ngatea has been finished, completing the Council's Area Wide Treatments roading contract for the 2014/15 year. The job included earthworks, drainage construction, road construction and stabilisation, sealing, and marking.

Shyla scoops challenge prize



Shyla Ganderton of Paeroa, aged 8, was the happy winner of the major spot prize after the recent Hauraki District Libraries school holiday challenge and was presented with a Samsung Galaxy tablet by Councillor Paul Milner.

To be in the prize draw, children had to complete two reading challenges and four creative challenges between December 22 and January 23.

Councillor Paul Milner, who performed the draws, and our librarians congratulate Shyla, and commend everyone from Ngatea, Paeroa and Waihi who participated in the holiday programme.

Games-goers encouraged to dress to the kilt



Photo courtesy of Paeroa Highland Games and Tattoo

'Tartan in the Park'

will be a feature event at Paeroa's 22nd Highland Games and Tattoo tomorrow, with guest judge Maria Tutaia joining thousands of people at the Scottish celebration that began as a small pipe bands competition.

Male and female contestants of all ages are invited to don fun and fashionable tartanwear – homemade or bought – and vie for some great prizes including a sewing machine. Entries will be accepted at the Paeroa Domain venue, with Mini-Tartans for children aged seven and under beginning in the main arena at 12.00pm. Parades for 8 to 15-year-olds and adults (16 and over) will be staged in the main arena at 4.00pm.

"Having Maria to decide the winners will be a real buzz," says secretary of the organising committee Margarete Ford. The 1.87m Silver Ferns shooter is renowned for her own fashion flair and personality, "and she is a great role model for young and old."

'Tartan in the Park' is also a special category in this year's

Highland Games photographic competition, along with 'Spirit of the Games', 'Action', and Evening Tattoo'. So bring a camera to capture the atmosphere!

Pipes and drums are still the heartbeat of the occasion, from the strains of solo pipers to the stirring clans march and massed band displays. Solo drummers will be back after a popular competition debut last year; and Auckland-based three-piece Celtic band Twisty Willow will provide rousing entertainment with plenty of audience participation. Clan Celtica, a Scottish tribal six-piece group of drummers and bagpiper likewise from Auckland, promise dramatic rhythms alongside emotive Celtic melodies – with both originals and rearrangements of Scottish classics such as Braveheart and Rob Roy.

The heavyweight field events are always crowd favourites, especially tossing the caber and the evening Anzac caber challenge. The Junior Highland Games will showcase the skills of local and visiting athletes aged 9 to 16.

Two giant stadium screens, very successfully introduced last year, will again be erected on either side of the arena where the evening tattoo will take place. These will be used in conjunction with roving cameras throughout the day, allowing games-goers to keep an eye on the many different slices of action simultaneously.

"At the large Domain venue we can hold solo piping at the same time as solo drumming, Highland dancing, and the axemen's chopping carnival," says organising committee chairman Alistair Buchanan. "The screens give people a close-up appreciation of what's happening, and a chance to enjoy replayed highlights such as the street march."

The Council has pitched in to ensure that all Domain facilities are top-notch for the big day and night: from perfectly mown lawns to trimmed trees and spick and span toilets. "Councillors and staff give huge support to our crew of 50 to 60 volunteers," says Alistair. It all helps make this a real community event, from which the proceeds go back into the community."