

Kōrero

News and stories from Pukerua Bay

Vol 6, Issue 4
August 2026



New ways of seeing – a glimpse into the world of Mr J

Kia ora

This issue is loosely themed, “the silver screen.” When we think about Pukerua Bay’s association with visual media, we tend to think of the likes of Peter Jackson, born and bred here, or Jane Campion, one of our newer residents. But dig just a little further and you’ll find a lot more connections!

Many residents are familiar with the work of Mr J (aka Julian Meadows) whose digital art enthralls us at our annual Matariki events (p. 3). It’s likely you’re also familiar with the work of renowned producer Lisa Chatfield, whose credits include *Scarfies* and *The Luminaries* (pp.4–5).

Nikky and Chris Winchester first enjoyed what Lisa calls the “magic” of filmmaking as extras in *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* (pp. 6–7). In the long hours of waiting, they struck up friendships with like-minded folk who wanted to keep the magic going – and so they did!

For Jack Nightingale, the “fire was lit” by his father’s experiences in the film industry (p. 9). The diversity of Jack’s own career suggests the range of possibilities for anyone thinking of filmmaking as an option themselves.

Troy Coutts and Angus Dreaver are childhood friends whose careers in film and TV began, like Peter Jackson’s, right here in Pukerua Bay. At Broadcasting School they met Charlie, now Angus’s wife, whose own career has now taken her to TVNZ (pp. 10–15). The fact that they and their friends are still keen participants in the 48 Hour Film Challenge reinforces the intended message of this issue – we can all enjoy the magic of film, whether as makers or viewers, professionals or amateurs. Just do it!

Some notices

We’re chuffed to share that *Kōrero* is a Porirua finalist in the **Wellington Airport Regional Community Awards**. Not only that, so are the Food Forest and He Ara Pukerua. A tribute, we think, to this amazing community and the tradition of volunteering we celebrated in April.



Wellington Airport
Regional Community
Awards 2026
Porirua
Finalist

The **Residents’ Association** would like to invite you to their famous **Meet the Candidates meeting**, so much more fun than you may expect! This year’s **AGM** follows a few weeks later. Details on page 19.

Our November issue focuses on **Pukerua, the village**. We want to think about its history as two fortified pā, its development into today’s village, and what the future may hold. What does it mean to identify as a village, and can we – should we – hold onto that identity as we move into the future?

Waiho i te toipoto, kaua i te toiroa.

Let us keep close together, not wide apart.

We acknowledge mana whenua of Pukerua Bay, Ngāti Toa Rangitira.
For Ngāti Toa news, see ngatitoa.iwi.nz

Why I love VJing



Although VJing has been around for over 50 years, the craft remains poorly understood. Most people don’t realise VJs are creating their visuals live, selecting, sequencing, and manipulating video in real time, in response to the music and the energy of the crowd. Their role is to fuse sound and image into a single audiovisual experience.

Like DJs mix music, VJs mix video. They sample, crossfade, overlay, cut, and scratch visual material rhythmically. Early VJs relied on analogue technology, sourcing footage from TV channels, video stores, or their own cameras. Clips were pre-recorded onto videotapes and mixed live using multiple video players connected to a video mixer.

The arrival of digital video has transformed the art form. High-quality footage can be filmed and edited, then instantly triggered from a laptop. Digital, non-linear access removed the limitations of tape, allowing VJs to jump instantly to any clip, scratch video forwards and backwards, and create far more responsive, complex performances.

The power of VJing extends beyond technology. Its meaning lies not only within individual video clips but in the relationships between them. Audiences recognise familiar images, then connect them with other visuals in the mix, ultimately forming new meanings from the sequence as a whole. Combined with music, these visual juxtapositions encourage the brain to construct new associations and patterns.

Rather than passively entertaining, VJing stimulates active thought. Its rapid flow of images, layered narratives, and cultural references invites audiences to interpret, connect, and imagine. As media theorist Mitchell Stephens observed, through its ability to step back from scenes and jump between scenes, video mixing offers new ways of seeing, through new perspectives, and facilitates new ways of thinking.

Visit youtube.com/@mr-j/videos for some examples.

Nā Mr J (aka Julian Meadow)

Short films are magic!

I've worked on all sorts of screen stories over the last 35 years, but short films remain my absolute favorite. Lasting anywhere from two to 20 minutes, a great short will stay with you forever. Right here in Aotearoa, we've been making some of the best short films in the world for decades.

Shorts are where many iconic filmmakers start – Jane Campion and Taika Waititi, for example – and there is a film for every occasion. At its heart, a short film lifts up a single theme for the audience to enjoy and carry with them.

Before producing the feature film *Scarflies* (where five Dunedin students find themselves in a free flat – and a dark place – after taking a criminal captive), I was a runner on Peter Jackson's *Heavenly Creatures* and had produced two shorts.



I worked on my first short at 19, a case of 'ignorance is bliss'. Writer and director Rob Sarkies and I asked our boss, "Can we borrow the work van? We'll be back in a week." We were gone for three.

Our next short, *Signing Off*, is a fun family watch. It's a high-stakes action film about a radio announcer's last day



at work – complete with explosions and craziness! It travelled the world and actually made some money, which enabled us to fund the scriptwriting for *Scarflies*. You can watch *Signing Off*, at nzonscreen.com/videos/signing-off-1996

The world has changed and it's unlikely a short film will make cash today. But what hasn't changed is how much audiences love a short screen story. It remains the best way to connect with people and have fun. The strongest films are still just a simple, smart idea, cleverly executed.

There are plenty of places to watch shorts and great opportunities to make them. Even better news this year: short films from Aotearoa are now much easier to find. With the redesign of the New Zealand on Screen website nzonscreen.com and their new on-demand platform, NZOS+, you can stream local shorts easily and for free.

Short films on NZ On Screen

Stream these local masterpieces for free right now at nzonscreen.com

Fizz: Directed by Jason Stutter and starring Jemaine Clement. A simple,

smart, and funny watch for the whole family.

Careful with that Axe: Another highly recommended Stutter gem. A masterclass in doing a lot with very little using smart shooting, editing, and sound. You'll gasp, cringe, and laugh—but it is not for a young family audience!

Fire in Cardboard City: A hilarious, family-friendly animation from Phil Brough. The title says it all.

The Singing Trophy: A brilliant early-90s masterpiece by Grant Lahood. It is generally a family-friendly watch, but always good to double-check!

Night Shift: A powerful film by Zia Mandviwalla, starring the wonderful Anapela Polataivao from the hit film *Tinā*.

Hurtle: A subversive dancing-nuns film from Shona McCullagh that I've always loved. It actually screened at Sundance right before *Scarflies*! I don't remember the screening itself because someone slammed my finger in a car door on the way to the theatre. I spent the entire film wondering if it was broken and whether I could afford to find out in the US healthcare system.

Give it a go!

If you are thinking about creating your own short masterpiece, look into these local film collections and initiatives:

Day One Hāpai te Haeata: dofilm.co.nz

48Hours Film Festival: 48hours.co.nz

Loading Docs: loadingdocs.net

Nā Lisa Chatfield

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Hurry up and wait!

“Hurry up and wait” is probably the simplest explanation of life as a film extra – something my husband Chris and I found out when we worked on the second Hobbit film, *The Desolation of Smaug*, back in 2012 and 2013.

Fans of Tolkein since childhood, we loved Peter Jackson’s Lord of the Rings trilogy and, when moving to New Zealand in 2009, we joked that we were coming to live in Middle Earth. It never occurred to us that we might experience Jackson’s Middle Earth. Then an open casting call was announced for people living in Wellington who had “character faces”. We weren’t sure if we should bother, but a friend pointed out that this was the chance of a lifetime. So we filled out the application form. A few days later, we were called in for costume fittings and, a week after that, we had our first day in front of the cameras, along with some 500 other Laketowners.

We got used to driving down the highway in the pitch black, getting to Miramar for start times that could be as early as 5am. After getting into costume, then waiting for the hair and make-up team to make us look like tired dirty peasants (arguably, they didn’t have to try very hard!), we’d pile into the catering tent for a hearty breakfast.

And then.

If we were lucky, it was straight onto the set of Laketown where we would spend the day pretending to gut some (rubber) fish, carrying baskets around the narrow walkways over the water, screaming and

running away from a dragon attack, or poking orcs with a pointy (rubber) stick, over and over again to Peter Jackson’s quickly familiar refrain of, “Let’s have one more take, for luck.”

And then.

There were also innumerable hours of sitting and waiting to be called onto set. Some people brought their musical instruments for an extended jam; others played party games, had a nap, or worked on various crafts; and, of course, some people discussed the relative merits or otherwise of trying to recreate Tolkein’s world on the silver screen. As a result, we created friendships with a wide range of people who we would otherwise never have met, but with whom we shared one thing – the love of dressing up and playing pretend in front of a film camera.

And then.

Once filming was over, we realised that we needed to create some more opportunities to have fun together. Thus was born a series of spoof music videos, which we filmed around Pukerua Bay, under the moniker, “The Esgaroth Three”.

The first song, “Who the ’Ell is Tauriel?” was filmed over the course of a weekend in Raroa Reserve with the help of friends behind the cameras and about a dozen Laketowners. A year later, the even sillier “Dwarf on a Pig” was shot at Pukerua Bay Beach (with a brief cameo from Plimmerton Beach). For this, we had a couple of special guest stars, including a



The team behind “Who the ’Ell is Tauriel?” Photo credit: Dianne Smith

little baby kindly loaned to us for a few hours by one of our neighbours. (Thanks again, Lucy!)

And finally, in 2015, came our biggest and last production. Two weekends of filming at the School and Community Hall and on the school field, with nearly 70 people involved both behind and in front of the cameras, led to two separate music videos – the mammoth “Rescued by Eagles” and the much smaller “Appendix (Extras’ Lament) (The eagles



Filming the dwarf family on Pukerua Bay Beach. Photo credit: Dianne Smith

have gone)”. Sadly, “Rescued by Eagles” is stuck in post-production hell, but you can enjoy a rough mix, along with all the other Esgaroth Three videos, at tinyurl.com/Esgaroth-Three.

So if you ever get the chance to be a film extra, go for it – who knows what you might end up doing? If you’re as lucky as the Winchesters, you could end up with a whole new set of friends to have fun with for years to come!

Nā Nikky Winchester



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Hooked

Imagine exploring the back corners of your garage as a child, discovering old film props that let your imagination run wild! Add in stories from your Dad about his fun times working on films like *Smash Palace*, and you're hooked! These early experiences lit a fire of interest and shaped the life of local man Jack Nightingale.

After studying and working as a quantity surveyor, Jack felt a strong pull toward the film industry. When an opportunity arose, he took it to get his foot in the door. He started – cliché as it sounds – making coffee on a film set. Turns out, he made a good coffee, and things went from there!

Jack has since worked on a number of films, including *Poppy*, *Time Bandits*, *After the Party*, two of the *Avatar* films, and *Red Rocks*. He reckons the saying, “A jack of all trades and a master of none is oftentimes better than a master of one,” is very true for thriving in this industry. Being able to diversify your skill set is a real strength, and that is exactly what Jack has done.

Jack started in craft services as a general entry point, providing snacks and beverages on set. Next, he moved into organising seating and shelter, driving

trucks, and transporting gear. His role as production assistant saw him directing pedestrians, traffic, and general logistics to keep things flowing smoothly.

Jack currently works as a grip on the set of *The Hunt for Gollum*. This is a camera assistant role that involves setting up screens, stands, rigging, scaffolding, and building decks.

While the more traditional way to enter the industry is going to film school – where tutors have established industry contacts – the other option is to get that first job and work your way up. To start out, Jack helped friends at film school make short films. If you're interested, local productions often post callouts for crew or casting for extras. You never know until you try!

Jack thoroughly enjoys the variety and scope of his work. Being able to give things a go, learn new skills, and problem-solve along the way makes his days highly interesting. Jack says a ‘can-do’ attitude and a willingness to do the hard mahi are all part of the job, because when it's on, it's full on! Yet, at the end of a long day or week away filming, Jack always appreciates coming home to the tranquillity of Pukerua Bay.

Nā Fiona Sutton

A ‘thank you’ from Electrify Porirua

Electrify Porirua would like to say a big thank you to the Climate Action Rōpū and Crop Swap for having us. We had a full room of people engaging with great questions after we gave a run-down of some of the key considerations about electrification – solar, batteries, EVs. To find out more about how you could be part of the move to electrification, check out [RewiringAotearoa.com](https://rewiringaotearoa.com) or [ElectrifyPorirua.nz](https://electrifyporirua.nz), or email the team through admin@electrifyporirua.nz.

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Moira Lawler

Pukerua Bay resident and
Porirua City Councillor.

Kia ora!

In October 2025 I was elected to Porirua City Council. Thank you for your support. Get in touch if you need help to navigate a Council issue or have questions about Council matters.

Download the Antenno App to get Council notifications and to place service requests.

Hear my updates at the Residents Association meetings – second Tuesday of every month, 7.30pm at the RSA.

CONTACT ME ON:

✉ Moira.lawler@porirua.city.govt.nz

☎ 0211955330

and for my blog on what's happening at Council and in our City, follow me on Facebook

📘 **MoiraLawler4Council**



From chaos to connection

Reflecting back, Pukerua Bay – both the place and its people – was uniquely integral in starting me on the path of a broadcasting and filmmaking career. At the time, I thought that chaotically roaming around town with a camcorder, alongside a tight-knit group of like-minded film nerds, was normal youth behaviour. Normal it was not, but it did normalise the concept of creating something from nothing. We were not a group of gifted artists, but we had a shared interest. When we weren't talking about TV and films, we found pure enjoyment in 'giving it a go' and recording something of our own.

With countless amateur films under my belt, I had an unwarranted drive to continue my education, perhaps to justify the time and effort spent filmmaking in Pukerua Bay. My Kāpiti College years in film clubs and media classes fed the flame. The experience earned me a highly contested spot at the New Zealand Broadcasting School in Christchurch, where the promise of a paid industry internship secured my interest.

After completing my studies, I returned to Wellington to work as an Editor in a small production house. Joining a company with just four to five staff meant opportunities to try plenty of roles. I was thankful to test my mettle creating entertaining videos for our primary client, Rugby NZ. Fun fact: we produced *Small Blacks TV*, a show I watched as a kid, so seeing my name in the credits was incredibly rewarding.



I spent five enjoyable years creating rugby-themed productions, then proudly watching them broadcast on Sky.

After the production house, I dabbled with freelancing. However, I grew tired of the money-focused nature of commercial production, and the unstable lifestyle did not suit me. Feeling briefly discouraged, I re-entered the industry as an editor for Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision (ngataonga.org.nz), the audiovisual archive of New Zealand, where I have been for seven-and-a-half years. Landing my current role unexpectedly ticked off a number of

work preferences I didn't even know I had. I feel privileged to work within the heritage sector, where my work is judged by the connection it makes with people rather than profitability. Every day, I get to watch and work with a range of stunning films, from feature-length productions to low-budget amateur footage from throughout the country.

Things come full circle when I help reconnect a community with a piece of history, like a home movie showcasing their heritage or culture. I know how deeply it would affect me to be reconnected with the short films my friends and I made in Pukerua Bay all those years ago. I have a forever connection to the bay and remember my early filmmaking years fondly. My hope is that more talent will emerge from our coastal community to join legacy alumni

like Sir Peter Jackson. I am confident Pukerua Bay's list of star-studded filmmakers will continue to grow.

Nā Troy Coutts



Pukerua Bay inspiration

Kia ora everyone!

I cannot think of a better place to grow up than Pukerua Bay, where you are backed by an encouraging community and inspired by an incredible environment. Chasing a creative career, you know you come from a place of immense success. Growing up with Sir Peter Jackson down the road making *The Lord of the Rings*, small-town life never felt like a barrier.

My friends – including Troy who you've already heard from – were equally creative. When I found a camera at Te Motu, we started making short films

about killer chickens or zombies in the local hills. Having limited entertainment forced us to get creative just to keep busy!

This passion continued through high school with the help of really supportive teachers, leading Troy and me to the New Zealand Broadcasting School in Christchurch. The degree was immensely hands-on. We made music videos and documentaries, collaborating with journalism students for a CTV news show – which is how I met my now-wife, Charlie Dreaver.

I finished with a six-month internship



Angus, Mason Packer, and Clarrie Macklin pictured after winning the school division of the Wellington 48 Hour Film Festival (Kāpiti Observer, June 18 2012). Ten years later, Angus and Clarrie were part of a similar crew that won the Viva La Dirt League Comedy Award for their film, *Mime Hunter*. [youtube.com/watch?v=tfq8WuGZ6jo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfq8WuGZ6jo)

for Warner Brothers in Auckland. Reality TV taught me that I didn't want to work in reality TV. It was an immense amount of work for content I wasn't invested in, but the crews were awesome.

After a year, Charlie and I returned to Christchurch. I started as a production assistant for Whitebait Media, makers of children's television. They gave young creators the opportunity to make a massive amount of television. Within a few months, I was directing segments. By the second season, I was shooting and directing full-time.

I spent six years working across various children's shows, travelling the country and directing mini-documentaries. I profiled inspiring people, making them the hero of their own story. Kiwi-made kids' television serves as a window into the wider country, and it felt rewarding to contribute to that legacy.

Eventually, I became a visual journalist at Radio New Zealand. I was thrown straight into the deep end, covering the

2022 Wellington Parliament occupation. It felt bizarre to suddenly face so much hostility after years of kindness in children's television. After that it kept coming: the vaccine rollout, storms, Election 2023, and the Loafers Lodge fire.... One day consisted of mundane announcements, and the next I was racing to cover Cyclone Gabrielle. I loved it.

Charlie and I finally left for London where Charlie immediately got a great job at CNN, while I got a less great job processing weight loss injection applications. I guess UK employers didn't know much about *What Now*. Eventually, I secured a role as Office Manager at Biscuit Filmworks, an advertising production company. They



Filming in Fiji with the *What Now* crew



were a tight-knit team of passionate film lovers. I learned that even in commercial advertising, producers look for directors with a distinct, unique voice.

Ultimately, we decided it was time to come home. I've picked up a great job at the Porirua City Council as their photographer and videographer (just please, don't ask me about your rates!). It has been incredibly fulfilling to use my skills to support my home city.

Nā Angus Dreaver

A love of storytelling

Unlike my husband, Angus, I didn't grow up in Pukerua Bay. I spent my early childhood in Crawley, Southern England, before my family emigrated to Kaiapoi when I was 11. Safety had been a major concern for my parents in the UK. Arriving in New Zealand, I was thrilled to finally walk myself to school, seeing children much younger than me doing the exact same thing!

When Angus and I met at Broadcasting School, he described an idyllic childhood: a network of friends' houses just a stroll away, making outdoor fun, and long afternoons at the beach. I

thought he was exaggerating. My first trip to Pukerua Bay proved me wrong. Aside from how lovely my now-in-laws were – and no, Kate didn't edit this in – I was blown away by the peace of the bay and its tight-knit community. The rolling green hills literally took my breath away, mostly because that goat track is steep!

Although we had very different childhoods, Angus and I connected over our love for Kiwi storytelling. While Angus's family has deep roots in the media industry, I'm not entirely sure where my love for the news began. I just remember reading the paper with my grandparents and sneaking downstairs for early-morning tea and biscuits with my dad before he left for the building site. My mum even remembers me creating my own newspapers at age seven. Looking back, my career path was set early on.



After Broadcasting School, I completed a six-month internship at Newstalk ZB in Whangārei. I then landed a role in Auckland as a producer for the Mike Hosking Breakfast, allowing Angus and me to live together. Working long hours at opposite ends of the clock left us tired,



Charlie and Angus at the 2024 Voyager Media Awards. The documentary *Boiling Point*, directed by Angus, was nominated for an award. tinyurl.com/y6chsp69

but the experience made us stronger as a couple. Next, we moved to Christchurch – where we married – before a role came up in Wellington at RNZ.

We had moved constantly for our careers. I expected to stay in Wellington for two years before our London OE. Instead, two years turned into seven. I started in RNZ's general newsroom, moved to the Press Gallery, worked as a senior producer for *Afternoons*, and became a presenter for *Worldwatch*.

My spare time was filled with Pukerua School gala visits, beach swims, and bonding with Angus's childhood friends.

Two years ago, we finally left for London. I landed a role at CNN, helping produce and host a news podcast, while we squeezed in European trips. Working alongside TV reporters at CNN reignited my aspirations for television. I loved visual storytelling during my time at RNZ and knew it was something I wanted to pursue back home.

We moved back to New Zealand in February, using Pukerua Bay as our safe landing spot while we resettled. I recently started as a news reporter at TVNZ. While Angus and I are currently enjoying apartment life in central Wellington, our ultimate goal is to save for a home back in the bay. It is exactly where we want to continue to grow, both professionally and as a family.

Mā te mahi tahi, ka ora mātou.

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Aroha mai, aroha atu – caring for one another

Next issue

The theme for the next issue is “Pukerua: from pā to village.” We welcome your contributions of stories, photos, poems, articles, or community notices. Copy deadline: 4 October Email: newsletter@pukeruabay.org.nz or kate@dreaver.name



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Our team

Kōrero is brought to you by Kate Dreaver, Gill England, Jen Erceg, Jonathan Harker, Anne Johnston, Moira Lawler, Kelly McClean, Kay Shapland, Fiona Sutton, and Nikky Winchester. It is supported by the Pukerua Bay Residents’ Association and a valued team of contributors, sponsors, and advertisers.

Advertising and sponsorship

Kōrero comes out approximately every eight weeks. Advertising rates for five issues are: \$50 for a local listing (see opposite); \$80 for a card-sized ad; \$160 for a half-page ad; and \$220 for a full-page ad.

Advertising rates for one issue are: \$20 for a card-sized ad; \$40 for a half-page ad; and \$60 for a full-page ad.

Community notices are very welcome. To help with printing costs, we ask that you pay at least half the regular advertising rate. Email: newsletter@pukeruabay.org.nz or moiralawlernz@gmail.com

Upcoming themes and deadlines

Month	Theme	Copy deadline
November	Pukerua: from pā to village	4 October
February	Pukerua Bay wildlife	15 January

Pukerua Bay Community website and directory

The Pukerua Bay community website pukeruabay.org.nz holds lots of useful information, including a local directory and updates on what is going on in Pukerua Bay. You can download a PDF of this and past issues of *Kōrero* from the website at pkb.nz/korero.



What’s On pkbhub.org.nz/whatson is a space for you to learn about and promote local events. You can register events through this QR code.

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Michael Beaumont	Mowing and gardening	021 0239 4689 michaelfbeaumont@hotmail.com

Events calendar

Every second Tuesday	Residents’ Association meeting, 7.30–9pm, RSA, Wairaka Rd
Every third Saturday	Crop swap and recycling hub, 3–4pm, RSA, Wairaka Rd
Every fourth Wednesday	Plimmerton Climate Café, 7.30pm, St Andrews Church, Steyne Ave, Plimmerton
Tuesdays and Thursdays (2–4pm) and Saturdays (10am–1pm):	Pukerua Bay Library open
Special events	
7 October:	Meet the Candidates meeting, 7.30–9pm, venue to be confirmed
21 October:	Pukerua Bay Residents Association AGM, 7.30–9pm, RSA, Wairaka Rd
To list an event in the November issue, email by 4 October newsletter@pukeruabay.org.nz or kate@dreaver.name	



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