



JULY 2018



It's mid-winter but as an optimist I'm already thinking how much closer we are to summer. Marlborough Police have had another busy few months – in this newsletter we have a snapshot of what we have been up to, along with a guide to the changes to firearms licensing, a note about the recent dog trials held in Marlborough, and an 'inside story' from a budding apiarist.

Drug Crime

The Crime Prevention Team have assisted with operations and search warrants targeting our methamphetamine dealers. A number of people are facing dozens of charges relating to the supply of methamphetamine and other drugs.

The most disturbing thing is finding young children, and in one case an infant, at a dealer's house. Some people will go to great depths to be involved in this dealing activity. It's sad to see their lack of care when drugs become their priority over family.

Disputes

As part of our core business, we have also been busy attending and mediating in neighbourly disputes. Complaints relating to neighbours often keep us busy. The intervention of the Crime Prevention Team usually de-escalates the situation and often stops Police from being involved repeatedly. Unfortunately some of the disputes we have been drawn into have been going on for years and we know of some that have been intergenerational. In a perfect world it wouldn't happen but we don't live in that environment.

If you find yourself embroiled in a disagreement, our advice is that you talk with the other party if you can.

Often disputes start because of misconceptions and a reasonable conversation often iron out the issue. If that is not possible, try asking a mutual friend or neighbour to make the approach. Based on our experience, our advice is - communication, communication, communication and a healthy dose of tolerance.

Burglary

A burglary was reported at a Seddon Vineyard recently. An air compressor, welder, petrol, weed trimmer, tool-set and other items were taken overnight. In the early hours of the

following morning Police stopped a suspicious vehicle in Blenheim and found it full of the stolen property. Those in the vehicle are helping Police with their enquiries!

Flooded Roads

It's been an interesting winter so far with strong winds and heavy rain at times interspersed with fine spells.

**Please take care when you come across flooded areas – if in doubt don't enter the water.
Please warn others approaching and let the authorities know.**

The weekend of 7-8 July, saw a number of roads in our area shut for short periods after the heavy rains and high winds.

In Wairau Bar Road, near Blenheim, Police helped rescue a woman stranded in her vehicle in flood waters. She was successfully removed from the flooded area. In the process our aging Police 4x4 had water to just below the seats in the vehicle. It is currently being dried out. But the best outcome is the woman was safe – we can replace vehicles.

After the 'weather bomb' a slip was reported in the Port Underwood area – not as a result of more rain but most likely the result of saturated earth moving as a result of the earlier deluge.

Local Pig Hunt

Police monitored hunting activity again during this period. We are happy to say that no incidents were reported. It is always great to see families and friends getting out to participate in hunting, and doing it responsibly. Respecting the land-owner's rules and property boundaries is paramount.

If this occurs all are happy. Especially the Police.

'Race Track' Damage

Two young rural men, neither of whom had been in trouble with the Police before, were found in their vehicles in a paddock at the front of the Pine Valley Outdoor Centre (on the Northbank near Blenheim). They were using the paddock as a race track and were heard by nearby vineyard workers. Police followed up and after discussions with the caretaker and trustees of the centre, it was agreed that both would be warned for their offending as long as they paid reparation towards repair of the damaged grass area.

Winter Conditions

If you're cycling or walking prior to sunrise you'll know that the icy bite of winter is in the air. This means that vehicles parked outside overnight may have their windows obscured by condensation or frost, and road conditions may be hazardous.

ALWAYS clear your vehicle windows before driving. Your risk of crashing is far greater if you can't see out of the vehicle properly.

Police have attended several crashes in the last couple of weeks that have been attributed to ice on the road, with the majority of these occurring on bridges. Please be cautious when driving across any bridge earlier in the day when temperatures have been below zero overnight. What tends to happen is that water doesn't cool as rapidly as air and when air

temperatures become very low, water vapour rises off the stream or river under the bridge and settles on the colder road surface forming ice.

If you're about to drive across a bridge earlier in the day after a cold night, slow down as you approach, keep your steering wheel straight and avoid sudden movements. Avoid applying the brakes suddenly.

If you do begin to slide, take your foot off the accelerator gently and don't apply the brakes. Keep the wheels pointed as close to the orientation of the road as possible. If your vehicle starts to slide clockwise, you can turn your steering wheel counter-clockwise to correct (and vice-versa), but turning it too far will create an over-correction that is harder to recover from. Straighten the steering as the vehicle comes back in line.

Heavy rain and flooding has also been an issue of late. Please make good choices around your actions if the way in front of you is flooded. It is too late to change your mind once you've entered flood-water on a road or rural track and your vehicle stalls or gets pushed by the water flow. You are far safer turning around and waiting for the water to subside.

If conditions are overcast and dull, drive with your headlights on. It's about being seen by other road users who can then make good choices before your paths cross.

Firearm Licences



Changes are occurring in the way firearms licensing is being done - hopefully this will make access to training and licensing easier for our rural community.

Here is some information from the Police website:

From 1 July firearms safety training is changing.

Police has been working with the firearms community to improve safety outcomes by delivering an enhanced firearms safety training programme for first-time firearms licence applicants.

"Much like the process for obtaining a driver licence, first-time applicants will need to pass a theory test and undergo practical training to obtain a firearms licence," says Acting Superintendent Mike McIlraith.

"For many years the current theory-only programme has provided new firearms users with a solid start. But over recent years Police and the firearms community identified the opportunity to build on this and provide first-time applicants with a practical hands-on component to complement the theoretical."

The theory test is a computer-based multi-choice test which will be delivered by Police using the same system used for computerised driver licence theory tests. Firearm licence applicants will be able to sit the firearms theory test at all Automobile Association (AA) driver licensing outlets; including all AA Centres, AA Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agents and the AA's Rural Mobile Units, as well as all Vehicle Testing New Zealand branches that offer driver licensing throughout the country.

Applicants must pass the theory test before they can attend the firearms practical training course.

The practical course and training on safe-handling of firearms will be delivered by firearms instructors from the Mountain Safety Council across the country.

Police is also working with Fire and Emergency New Zealand around the potential use of volunteer fire stations in some locations. In addition, the Whakatupato course will continue to provide firearms safety training in remote and isolated communities.

The firearms theory test and practical training require applicants to show that they have a strong understanding of the Arms Code and how to stay safe with firearms.

"As pleased as Police is to deliver the new firearms safety programme, new firearms users will still need to gain experience using firearms safely in a variety of settings.

"Tapping into clubs with experienced firearms users who can pass on that valuable knowledge and experience is a vital part of being a responsible firearms user.

"We want the firearms community to continue to support new firearms users. Police is seeking help from firearms clubs, and the volunteer instructors from the programme ending 30 June, to provide community-based mentoring and to partner with new firearms users.

"Imagine a person getting their firearms licence because they want to go hunting but they don't know any hunters. Clubs play a vital role in bringing new firearms users together with experienced users.

"Having a new practical component and a community of people keen to coach and mentor new firearms users will contribute significantly to improved safety outcomes. And that is what Police wants."

Process for Obtaining a New Zealand Firearms Licence (New Licence – First Time Applicant)

The Mountain Safety Council has updated their Firearms Safety Test model. The Firearms Safety Test now consists of both theory and practical components. The updated model has been in place from 01 July 2018.

The application process is outlined below:

1. Apply for your licence.
 - a. Download an application form from the Police Website or pick one up at your nearest station.
 - b. Please include:
 - 2 x passport size photos (must be taken within last 12 months)

- the receipt for the non-refundable application fee of \$126.50 (Paid at your nearest NZ Post Shop)
2. Await an approval letter from the Police Firearms Office.
 3. Take your approval letter to the AA and sit the exam.

****The Theory component must be passed before sitting the Practical component****

4. Book for the Practical component via the Mountain Safety Council website.
5. Police Vetting (Interviews, Security Check etc) will take place once both the Theory and Practical Tests have been completed.

You can find an application form at this link:

<http://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/firearms-application-form.pdf>

And here is a link in regards to all the firearms news and updates:

<http://www.police.govt.nz/advice/firearms-and-safety/news-and-updates>

South Island and New Zealand Championship Sheep Dog Trials

Between 28 May and 2 June this year the trials were held at the Griggs farm property, "Meadowbank", on the outskirts of Blenheim.

The Steve Pilcher led team that organised the event did a fantastic job again. It was a very well run event and certainly was a showcase for Marlborough. I spoke to many dog trial men and women, they were all so pleased with the event and the location – and the 'all you could eat' breakfast came highly recommended.

'Meadowbank' lends itself to great spectator viewing and is easily accessible, that is, apart from day one after the deluge of rain the night before. The wet certainly tested the 4 x 4's in the mud and driving through the area chopped up the lanes and paddocks. Next day with some standard great Marlborough weather it was all good again. Mud, cold and early mornings did not deter the entrants and the show went on.

I caught up with many at the trials and was glad to see people from all over our province.

Great participation from Marlborough dog trialists as well. However there were a couple I spoke to that threatened to leave the event and leave their dogs chained to the fence for whoever wanted them – I'm sure they were joking.

Bee Keeping

I've been invited to speak at the Apiculture New Zealand Conference and Trade Exhibition 2018 being held 22 – 24 July at the Convention Centre at Blenheim.

I will be sharing some of what Police have been doing in the area of targeted crime against New Zealand's apiarists.

So far most of the offending has been in the North Island and apiarists' livelihoods have been put in jeopardy because of the theft of hives and honey. We are not naive enough to think it won't happen here. It's not a matter of if, but when.

It's a growth industry and people are taking the opportunity to enter it – unfortunately at the expense of the established operators.

Here is a yarn from one of our officers who is an active beekeeper:



Senior Constable Andrew WATSON, Blenheim Police

Budding Apiarist

About 10 years ago while living and working in Kaikoura for the Police, former Police colleagues who I had worked with in the Wairarapa passed through, and they were now commercial beekeeping throughout Tasman. Based on their contagious love of what they were doing, and because I like a bit of honey on my toast, my own interest in bees began.

Jumping forward a few years, I returned to Blenheim Police and began to wonder what life after policing was going to be like. I decided last year (was given permission by the boss) to invest in hives and bees as a test for one possible future.

Currently I have 70 hives and will level off and hold at around 100 at the end of next season and for the next few years to give myself a little time to decide whether I'm suited to beekeeping, its viability and whether there is room enough in the industry for one more.

I'm very fortunate to have access to a multi floral bush site in the Pelorus valley and last December excitedly moved my newly established hives out there. A little after that the honey flow had started. Surprisingly the flower only lasted for about one week out of its usual four or five and at the end of the season I was feeding them sugar syrup to ensure they get through the winter. I have put that down to the highs and lows of farming (which is essentially what bee keeping is) due to climatic influences.



Last summer was a busy time for me. As a hobby beekeeper time pressures are not the same, you can muddle along without too much planning, you are also more likely to discover any issues in a hive sooner and can take steps to correct it with little impact on the health of your bees. So while juggling shift work, family and bees, I learnt quickly about logistics and the importance of good timing.

One thing I am trying, which is a bit different from the rest, are imported Finnish polystyrene hives. These are used with success in getting bees through the harsh European winters. Being a bit more expensive than wooden I'm keen to see how our bees will do in them here. Early indications are good. The polystyrene is dense and hardened, not at all like the packing polystyrene which crumbles. Internally their dimensions are the same as the traditional wooden boxes but are 10mm thicker so while being lighter and warmer they are a little more bulkier.



I've had some lessons in how truly nasty the German wasp is towards bees, particularly while in its protein gathering phase, and the damage they do to the food chain, particularly in the beech forests. If you are having trouble with them I can recommend Vespex, a protein based poison. In my case I saw a substantial overnight reduction in wasp numbers.

Most of you will probably know about the well documented plight of bees overseas and to a lesser degree here which has led to a surge in hobby beekeepers interested in their survival for obvious reasons. For some reason huge numbers of bees are dying unexpectedly or disappearing overnight without known cause, this being given the name of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). I'm not sure of its incidence in NZ but we have several diseases which affect bees. If caught in time most can be managed effectively enough but

excluding however, American Foul Brood (AFB) which due to its contagiousness requires infected hives to be destroyed and burnt immediately. This particular disease is a beekeeper's nightmare followed by Parasitic Mite Syndrome (PMS) or the varroa mite. Gone are the days of the wild hives, the varroa mite particularly putting an end to them. However good things appear to be on the horizon with biological weapons being developed and Queen breeders looking to breed from Queens that have strong hygienic (grooming) traits that see their progeny removing the mites from themselves.

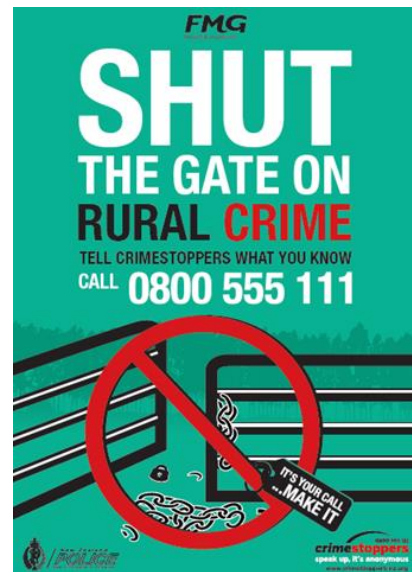
I would like to finish with a small plug for your local beekeepers and with policing also in mind. Recently I was made aware that a number of North Island commercial operators are looking for apiary sites and perhaps to bring in substantial numbers of hives to Marlborough. Bees, like any animal, can be overstocked. They generally forage one to two kilometres from their hive, and more bees does not necessarily equate to more production. The rule of thumb is hives shouldn't be placed any closer than two kilometres from established apiaries. Should you be approached and have already generously opened your land to a beekeeper, consider them and the relationship that you already have. The pressure for space in the North Island has seen issues develop between beekeepers and some under-handed tactics such as hives

being stolen and killed. (My mind jumps back to a Stuff article earlier this year when hundreds of hives of an established Murchison beekeeper were, it appears deliberately, poisoned.

I wish you all well for your upcoming season in whatever it is that you do. For good weather, good rain at the right time, healthy harvests, no disease and good markets.

That's it for this newsletter. Be safe out there, and have a great month.

Crime Prevention Team, Marlborough Police



For useful information on rural crime prevention see the Rural Crime Prevention Advice Guide found here: <https://www.fmg.co.nz/advice/advice/rural-theft/>

