

# HB freezing works exhibit opens

A BLOODY Business — an exhibition of the history of five Hawke's Bay freezing works — includes Wairoa which is the only one of the group still operating.

Once the lifeblood of the region and still critical to Wairoa, the meat works are celebrated in an exhibition at Taonga Maori, MTG Hawke's Bay, Napier until July 24.

Te Hira Henderson, curator Taonga Maori, MTG Hawke's Bay says A Bloody Business explores the effect the frozen meat processing industry had on Hawke's Bay, with Tomoana (established in 1884), Hawke's Bay and North British (est 1887), Thomas Borthwick and Sons Limited, Pakipaki (est 1906), Wairoa (est 1909) and Whakatu (est 1913).

"The freezing works employed a great cross-section of people, including servicemen from both world wars.

It was "a bloody business" and freezing workers contributed to life economically, politically, socially, and religiously — positively participating in life and building capacity in the communities of Hawke's Bay.

Each of the freezing works were a big whanau — any differences were left outside the gate, and there were big differences.

Freezing workers reflected the United Nations inherent in Hawke's Bay's community, in both race and religion.

There were Maori, Pakeha, as well as Pasifika, Chinese, Dutch, Arabs, Muslims, Irish, Italian, Christians, Protestants, Rastas, atheists along with others.

For women, entering the freezing works was absolutely a man's world, staunch with prejudice.

A place where physical prowess, with a language of its own, was threatened by the



**STILL THRIVING:** Affco Wairoa is the last remaining meat works in Hawke's Bay. Five freezing works are explored in MTG Hawke's Bay exhibition, A Bloody Business.

presence of a woman venturing out of her "station".

Although they were the homekeepers of the whanau — the wives, mothers, sisters, aunts and nieces — women were the victims of male backlash.

Intimidation was relentless and not for the faint-hearted. Treatment by the men was demeaning and the point was further rammed home by being paid lower wages.

Women were treated as second-class citizens, often without facilities such as toilets or a place to eat.

In the late 19th century some women were employed as "bag room girls" and during WW2 in canning departments.

In the 1970s, women were restricted to jobs in departments such as casings, lamb cuts and offal.

In 1978 three women laid a discrimination complaint with the Human Rights Commission against the leadership at Whakatu, who refused to allow women to become butchers.

The Human Rights Commission ruled in their favour, changing the lay of the land, and

ensuring women were considered purely on their ability to do the job.

Financially the freezing works gave families the opportunity to participate in life to the full.

With their families and children, freezing workers travelled the country socially, playing sports under the banner of their freezing works name.

They also travelled the country to bury each other in their places of origin and regardless of religion they prayed for each other and with each other — a lot.

They supported each other on big occasions such as birthdays, weddings, christenings, or to simply just party with each other.

A number of freezing works across the lower North Island closed — signalling the decline of rural towns for many.

Hawke's Bay and North British Freezing Works collapsed under stiff competition from other works.

Thomas Borthwick and Sons Limited was destroyed in the 1931 earthquake. Whakatu and Tomoana closed following rationalisation and downsizing that began in 1984.

Whakatu Freezing Works closed October 10, 1986, followed on August 19, 1994, by Tomoana Freezing Works.

Thousands of jobs were lost, which had a significant economic impact on Hawke's Bay.

The effects were all-encompassing and gut-wrenching — the loss of income, a workplace, community and identity.

Today, of the five in the exhibition, only Affco NZ Ltd, Wairoa, remains in operation.

A Bloody Business closes July 24. Don't miss a moving insight into Hawke's Bay's history.

## Gardening with George

### TIP OF THE MONTH:

Using Derris Dust, make sure you water plants at the base, so you don't wash the dust off. TIP 2: Unless you are a 'trained Biological Gardener' and you understand the complex strategy behind replenishing your soil organically, do not plant your brassicas in the same soil as you did last season. This could put your soil at risk of developing the debilitating disease, Clubroot and believe me you don't want that in your soil, ever!!

### Protect your winter plantings

**Protecting My Vegetables:** At a time when Kiwis need easy access to fresh, high-nutrient veges at the drop of a hat, I feel for gardeners when insects decimate their backyard food sources. After all the money and labour, we invest in our vegetable gardens each season, it's important we keep those sucking, chomping, chewing critters away. Here's how I do it.

**No 8 Wire & Mesh:** I cut wire pieces to size, from a roll of No.8 wire and arch each one over my wooden container gardens and secure them with staples or nails. I then stretch a store-bought length of 'white insect mesh' over the hoops, securing it on one side with staples and the other with clothes pegs so I can lift the mesh when I need to get access. This insect mesh keeps white butterflies, aphids, and UV rays out of your garden (and possibly frosts) and if slugs and snails manage to find their way in, I apply a light shake of Quash (pet friendly) pellets to the ground once a week.

**Other 'Pest Freeing' Options:** If you have an open-ground garden, check out the ready-made range of 'insect protection tunnels' and 'vege cloches' available in garden supply stores.

One range of vege cloches comes with copper strips around the base and the directions say it repels snails and slugs. I haven't trialed these strips but some gardeners I know, swear by them.

Alternatively, you can smother brassicas with Derris Dust regularly (needs to be reapplied after rain) or apply Pyrethrum Spray or quality Neem oil over those 'vulnerable' veges, every week or when needed.

**Masses of Marigolds:** I plant masses of low-growing French and Calendula Marigolds around my tunnels and through-out my gardens as aphid-detering companion plants.

**Healthy, Every time:** For gardeners who need a less labour-intensive way of gardening or don't have space for an in-ground or container one, the easy access, space-saving, self-watering, insect protected 'VegePod' range of portable gardens has proven to be a great favourite with many NZ gardeners.



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Life is good aye!  
Regards GEORGE

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