

UK students head for hills

DELWYN DICKEY

Dodging squalls on a hillside while wrestling bamboo poles into the ground may seem an unlikely way to spend your precious time after travelling from the other side of the world.

But a group of students from one of England's oldest schools were happy to oblige in the CUE Haven farm revegetation project at Glorit.

The 45 under-16 and under-17 rugby squad members from Abingdon School in Oxfordshire are here for a sports tour, combined with a bit of community service.

They spent the previous day competing against Mahurangi College in Warkworth, winning both 1st XV and 2nd XV games before being billeted by staff and students. Mahurangi best players received Abingdon School ties, while gifts were also made to the visitors who also gained an insight into Maori culture.

Many of the Abingdon students have been here before. Harry Anderson's father is a Kiwi but he has lived in the United Kingdom for 35 years. The family returns to New Zealand every few years. His grandparents, who live in Mt Eden, watched some of his games.

Toby Collins was here for an uncle's wedding 10 years ago, and Rory Parsons holidayed here with his parents a couple of years ago.

Planting had largely finished for the year, so CUE Haven owners Mahrukh and Tom Stazyk



Abingdon School rugby tour students from left, Adam Lilley, Dom Machlachlan, Christian Kirk, and James Knight, with Abingdon staff member Raj Ghosh, spent a day at the CUE Haven restoration project in Glorit.

had the lads putting in the last few plants and staking others.

The 24 hectare former dairy farm is being returned to native bush, with more than 70,000 trees planted since 2008. The Stazyks plan to apply for a QEII covenant to protect the land from development.

Abingdon School has an

environmental club encouraging respect for nature, which includes growing vegetables, but it doesn't really deal with conservation, students say. So this has been the first time many have been involved with a conservation project.

The visitors spent three days in Rodney and visited Paihia in

the Bay of Islands. A highlight was Rotorua's luge, and they also played at Avondale on Saturday before heading home after nearly three weeks.

Abingdon School rugby director Peter Coke says they tour was a year in the planning and it was the school's biggest overseas rugby trip.

in brief

CHANCE TO WIN

The *Rodney Times* and Farmers have partnered to give readers a chance to win \$5000 worth of Farmers products. Readers have just 48 hours from this morning to go online and enter to be in with a chance to win. Go to stuff.co.nz/bagaprizet to enter.

FASTEST GROWING CITY

Auckland remains New Zealand's fastest-growing city in the latest ASB/Main Report Regional Economic Scoreboard. Having scooped the title from Canterbury in the previous March quarter, Auckland hung on to the lead in June as the city's house price inflation puts it in a league of its own. But before the city's residents get too comfortable with the pace of growth, ASB chief economist Nick Tuffley points out Auckland was not a top performer across all categories, and the construction outlook is one area which needs to lift higher.

LIVEABILITY RATINGS

Mayor Len Brown is hailing the latest lift in Auckland's liveability ratings as an indication the city is on the right track, but also a reminder more has to be done. The Economist Intelligence Unit rates Auckland as the world's ninth most liveable city, up one place on last year. Auckland was praised by the report authors for its high standard of education and for stability, but the city was marked down for infrastructure quality, including transport and health care.

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