

## BRIEFLY

### Time to get dressed

Te Awamutu retailers have just one day left to complete their shop windows and enter the Big Little Town Retail Window Dressing Competition as part of National Fieldays.

Participating Te Awamutu retailers have a chance to win a share of \$800 prizemoney.

The displays will be judged tomorrow on how strongly they reflect Fieldays and links with rural industries, with particular focus on this year's Fieldays Premier Feature theme 'The Changing Face of Farming'.

Bonus points will be awarded to businesses where staff are also dressed in theme.

Contact Te Awamutu i-Site Visitor Centre (871 3259) for more information about the Big Little Town Retail Window Dressing Competition.

### Music recital

Waikato University music students are presenting a concert at The Woolshed on Saturday, June 9.

In all 12 students, including six Hillary Scholars, will be presenting a programme of dramatic and moving music.

Among them will be tenor Chase Douglas, cellist Santiago Canon Valencia, pianist Andrew Leathwick and cellist Tim Carpenter who have featured in previous concerts.

Tickets (adults \$20, students & seniors \$15, under 16 free) are available at the door for the 7.30pm concert.

### Book a date

Rotary's Book Fair and garage sale takes place this Friday until Sunday in the former Farmlands building, Churchill Street. The fair opens Friday evening from 5 - 8 pm and continues Saturday (9am - 5pm) and Sunday (9am - 2pm).

Items can be dropped at the following collection points: Shell Service Station Sloane St, Mitre 10, Paper Plus until the end of Thursday.

Items for garage sale can be brought along to the Book Fair or dropped off at Farmlands between 9 - 11am.

# Venus on the move Stay safe viewing Transit of Venus



HAMILTON Astronomical Society president Dave Owen in his Te Awamutu office with his 60mm hydrogen-alpha solar telescope that is specially designed for viewing the Sun.

A very rare astronomical event takes place tomorrow, and the best place to see it will be at Te Awamutu College.

The transit of Venus is when the planet Venus passes in front of the Sun, and it won't happen again until 2117, so this is the only chance to see it.

The only way to see the transit is with approved safety equipment.

Sunglasses, photographic filters and even welding visors are insufficient and dangerous.

Fortunately, Te Awamutu residents are invited to a special viewing session using telescopes equipped to safely observe the Sun.

The transit takes place from 10:30am to 4:30pm.

Te Awamutu College principal Tony Mernery has kindly offered to host the event on the college field next to O-Tawhao Marae.

The event is being organised by physics teacher Julian Pescud and Hamilton Astronomical Society president Dave Owen.

As well as being a fascinating astronomical phenomenon, the transit is of historic interest.

Captain Cook's 1768 expedition to Tahiti was launched for the purpose of observing the 1769 transit. This was a major scientific accomplishment that provided data

needed to measure the size of the solar system.

While he was in this part of the world, Cook was given the secondary task of searching for 'a continent or Land of great extent' — which of course resulted in his visit to our shores.

The College transit event is weather-dependent.

If the day is cloudy the session will be cancelled and Mr Owen says he will most likely take a telescope to the nearest sunny location.

For more information and cloudy-weather plans, see [www.teawamutu.co.nz](http://www.teawamutu.co.nz).

The Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind (RNZFB) is urging people to protect their eyes if they plan to observe the historic transit of Venus tomorrow.

RNZFB chief executive Sandra Budd says what a lot of people don't realise is that over 80 per cent of eye injuries are avoidable.

"We recommend people not only take care of their eyes when viewing the transit of Venus, but also place importance on their ongoing eye health," she says.

Vice-president of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists Dr Stephen Best says direct solar radiation from looking at the Sun can harm your eyes.

"Exposing the eye to intense visible light from the Sun will cause severe retinal burns.

"As the retina has no pain receptors the effects will not be felt before serious irreparable damage occurs," he says.

"Viewing the Sun through binoculars or a telescope without proper protective filters can result in immediate thermal retinal injury because of the high radiation levels in the magnified image," Dr Best says.

Recommended options for viewing the transit safely:

■ **Projection:** A pinhole or small opening is used to form an image of the Sun on a screen placed about a metre behind the opening. Binoculars or a small telescope mounted on a tripod can also be used to project a magnified image of the Sun on a white card.

■ **Filters:** You can view the Sun directly with filters to protect your eyes. Remember sunglasses are not safe. Special filters usually have a thin layer of aluminium on their surfaces that attenuate radiation.

■ **Visit an observatory, planetarium or organised event** to view the transit through a safe solar telescope.

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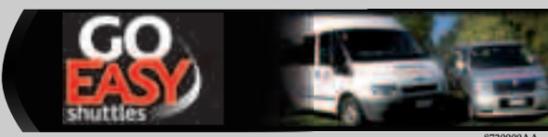
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