



Eltham Newsletter

Eltham Business & Professional Association

September 2024

Eltham's Innovator Brings Global Recognition with TrackGrip Success



DIRECTOR - JOHN BURLING

Eltham, a town with a proud history of cheese-making and the first to export butter, has now added a remarkable new achievement to its legacy. Carac Group, led by local innovator John Burling, has won the prestigious Exporter Award to the USA for Manufactured Innovation. This recognition comes for their groundbreaking product, TrackGrip, a revolutionary steel attachment for excavators that enhances stability and safety, transforming how earth-moving equipment operates.

John Burling, a lifelong Eltham resident and entrepreneur, invented TrackGrip after a close call while operating a digger on a slippery slope. Determined to improve safety, he

designed a solution in his workshop that has since gained worldwide demand, ensuring superior traction, productivity, and operator safety, particularly in hazardous conditions like ice, water, or steep terrain.

John's journey started in Eltham, where he would watch trains and tinker with mechanics as a child. That curiosity has now translated into creating a product protected by over 100 patents and used across the globe, including by major manufacturers like Caterpillar. TrackGrip's simplicity and effectiveness have earned it praise, even being showcased on the Discovery Channel's 'Hoffman Family Gold' series.

Beyond its global success, TrackGrip is a source of pride for the Eltham community. "It's a proud moment to be from Eltham and export to the world," John says. His story of innovation is intertwined with his deep roots in the town, from helping build the world's biggest scone oven to developing gadgets used in power poles across New Zealand.

Carac Group's success is a true family affair. John's daughter, Sonia Kiser, serves as the CEO, and his youngest daughter, Heather, helps manage the business alongside her mother, Yvonne. The company, which employs 14 welding robots, exports products worldwide and continues to innovate under John's guidance.



JOHN AND YVONNE WITH CHILDREN (MARK, HEATHER AND SONIA)

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Local resident Colin Smith aptly captures John’s resilience and determination: “This man has been down more times than he would like to remember, but NEVER did he stay down. He climbed his way back to the top every time. A genius entrepreneur, inventor, and motocross champ—John Burling embodies Eltham Pride.”

Eltham may be small, but with innovators like John Burling, it continues to make a significant mark on the world stage, showing the power of Kiwi ingenuity.

Smith & Sons Eltham AFC Crowned Division 2 Champions

Eltham AFC delivered a thrilling finish to claim the Division 2 title in a dramatic 2-1 victory against Webber Building Kaitake FC at Corbett Park. With the final match of the season holding everything on the line, Eltham needed a win to secure the championship, as they trailed the league leaders by one point.

The game saw tough conditions, and in the 74th minute, Kaitake took the lead through a free kick by Dave Kurth. Despite the setback, Eltham fought back with determination. In the

89th minute, Ezekiel Oliver found the equalizer after being set up by Ryk Ferguson, keeping the team's hopes alive.

In a tense finish, Eltham was awarded a corner in the 93rd minute. Ryk Ferguson rose above the defense to head the ball into the net, sealing a 2-1 victory and the Division 2 title for Eltham AFC. Celebrations erupted as the team’s efforts paid off in spectacular fashion, marking an unforgettable end to the season.



Photo by Eltham AFC

Eltham Businesses Celebrate Daffodil Day

In Eltham, local businesses are showing strong support for Daffodil Day, raising cancer awareness.

Carac hosted a special Yellow Day morning tea, with the team dressed in bright yellow. CEO Sonia baked 50 yellow-iced cupcakes, sharing, "At Carac, we're more than just a business; we're a community that cares."





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Carac team

Decodence, a vintage and retro fashion store, created a yellow-themed window display. This vibrant display not only catches the eye of passersby but also serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of Daffodil Day and the collective effort to fight cancer.



Photo by Candy Hopson, Decodence

Andrew's Kitchen: A New Local Venture Nourishing the Eltham Community

Eltham is known for its strong community ties, where neighbors help each other out, and local businesses play a crucial role in the town's fabric. Recently, a new venture has joined the ranks, bringing with it not only delicious food but also a story of kindness and connection. Andrew's Kitchen, a home-based food business run by Andrew, is quickly becoming a beloved part of the Eltham community.

Andrew's journey to starting his kitchen is deeply rooted in his lifelong passion for cooking, which began when he was just eight years old. One day, young Andrew discovered a recipe hidden under his dad's pillow—a moment that sparked his curiosity and set him on the path to becoming the skilled cook he is today. Over the years, Andrew has honed his culinary skills, mastering a variety of cuisines.

Soon after moving to town, Andrew experienced firsthand the supportive nature of the Eltham community. One day, a neighbor from blocks away, who he later learned was Pauline Kennedy, noticed that one of Andrew's sheep seemed underfed and, recognising that he was new to sheep farming, she stepped in to help.

She not only offered invaluable advice but also brought drench for the sheep, ensuring it received the care it needed. This simple act of kindness left a lasting impression on Andrew, making him feel truly welcomed and supported in his new home.



Andrew with sheep

Inspired by this generosity, Andrew decided to give back to the community in his own way. Caring deeply for the elderly, Andrew offers discount and provide more value to those who have given so much to the community. Understanding that some may



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find it difficult to leave their homes, he also offers free delivery to ensure that everyone, regardless of mobility, can enjoy a fresh, homemade meal. Through Andrew's Kitchen, he aims to repay the kindness shown to him by making life just a bit easier and more delicious for the people of Eltham.

Andrew's dedication to quality is evident in every meal he prepares. Each day, he creates a different dish, ensuring that all food is freshly made and free from leftovers. This approach not only guarantees freshness but also allows Andrew to offer

a diverse menu that keeps his customers excited about what's next. His commitment to variety and good value means that there's always something new to try. With Andrew's Kitchen, you can count on meals that are not only delicious but also made with care and respect for the community he serves.

Andrew's Kitchen is more than just a place to get a meal—it's a reflection of the community values that make Eltham special.



Andrew in the Kitchen

The Town of Firsts

Eltham was settled in 1884. By the end of that year there were 25 residents. The town has been known as "the town of firsts". Here are a few:

- 1885 Chew Chong shipped the first export of butter successfully to England.
- 1887 Chew Chong built the first commercial Butter factory.
- 1901 The first World Axeman's carnival was held in Eltham.
- 1906 Bridge Street became the first tar sealed road in New Zealand, made possible by C A Wilkinson.
- Eltham was also the first town to have concrete power poles.



Special thanks to Jenny Mack for sharing this wonderful piece of Eltham's history with us. If you're interested in learning more about Eltham's rich history, feel free to visit the Eltham & Districts Historical Society at the corner of Bridge Street & York Street. They're open on Thursdays and Fridays from 1pm to 3:30pm.

What's On

"Art by Dimphy & Arno" – exhibition
by Dimphy and Arno de Vaan
28/8/2024 – 21/09/2024 10am – 3pm
Eltham Art Gallery
Free Admission

"This exhibition will showcase an eclectic collection of art by Arno and Dimphy de Vaan. Arno's creations are marked by planning, measuring, and precision, while Dimphy starts with a plan and lets intuition guide her work. Featured pieces include hand-pulled original prints, some made with a chainsaw, sculptures from andesite and clay, and other unique – art forms."