

# Is the sky really falling?

**CHEERS**  
MARK WILSON



banking redundancies in the United States. It was on the upcoming summer season of weddings, concerts, barbecues and boating.

As the 24 teams adorned in their weird and wonderful costumes put on a very entertaining and at times somewhat skilful display of bowls, the sun beat down across Invercargill and the mood was chipper!

This year we had the privilege of Tim Shadbolt kicking off proceedings down at the Waihopai and as Tim tends to do he put on a thoroughly entertaining and uplifting speech that set the tone for a great day.

I don't know if it was the council's Christmas eve tradition of the councillors and mayor cooking breakfast for the council staff and the smattering of champagne that was possibly involved, or that fact Tim was amused by our foolish attire, but he seemed to be in exceptionally high spirits.

He told us we don't know how lucky we are down here and after a great albeit slightly hung-over Christmas day in a sun-soaked Invercargill, two days boating on the stunning Lake Manapouri and judging a wet T-shirt competition at the Hawea Pub on Tuesday I tend to agree.

This is a great time of the year, not only down south but throughout the whole of New Zealand. We have a great country. I hope we don't become caught up too much in the global doom and gloom and get out and enjoy it because if the world is really ending we better cram as much in as we can before it's game over!

AS Chicken Little once said, the sky is falling!  
Global financial meltdown, subprime mortgages, war on terror, war and conflict in the middle east and Africa, food shortages, disease on and on the list of scourges ravaging the globe in 2008 in long and distinguished.

You would think it was time to roll over and die if you listened to the news or read the papers.

Is it really that bad? Is the world really ending?

If we didn't have access to the global news network would we even know the world seems to be hurtling towards oblivion?

While the world may be ending I think at least down south things will roll on.

This year, just like every other - global financial crisis or not - hundreds of castalways from all corners of the globe made their way back home to the Deep South for Christmas.

While there was the odd tale of woe muttered, the focus of the conversation was on how good it was to be back home and catch up with family and friends, how well the Stags played this season and how good it was that petrol was now cheaper per litre than Coke again.

The talk over the greens at the Christmas eve bowls tournament was not on ebola in Africa or

# Out and about in the south

**TODAY**

**INVERCARGILL**  
Sandy Point Visitor Centre: Sandy Point Rd, open every weekend, 1pm to 5pm.  
Southland MCC Recaps run to Northern Southland leaving Feldwick gates 1.30pm.

**ALEXANDRA**  
Alexandra Visitor Information Centre: 21 Centennial Ave, open 7 days, 9am to 5pm.  
Art in the Garden, tickets available at Alexandra Info Centre and Budegs Pharmacy.

**CROMWELL**  
Cromwell and Districts Visitor Information Centre, 47 The Mall, open 7 days 9am.  
Vino and Victuals food and wine festival at Old Cromwell historic precinct from 3pm to 8pm.

**MANIOTOTO**  
Maniototo Information Centre, Charlemont St, Ranfurly, open 7 days, 9am to 5pm.

**NASEBY**  
Naseby Information Centre will be open as follows: up to January 17, daily 10am to 4.30pm; January 18 to January 31, daily 11am to 2pm.

**OWAKA**  
Owaka Museum, 10 Campbell St, open Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1pm and 1.30pm to 4.30pm and weekends 9am to 4pm.

**RIVERTON**  
Riverton Information Centre and Te Hiko Riverton

Heritage Museum, 172 Palmerston St, open seven days, 11am to 3.30pm.

**ROXBURGH**  
Roxburgh Valley Information Centre, 120 Scotland St, open seven days, 10am to 4pm.

**TE ANAU**  
Te Anau Rodeo starts at Te Anau Domain at 2pm.

**WANAKA**  
Wanaka Information Centre, 100 Ardmore St, open seven days, 8.30am to 5pm.

**WYNDHAM**  
Wyndham Museum and Information Centre, open Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday 2pm to 4pm; also open on request.

**TOMORROW**

Information Centres: Open as for Saturday unless otherwise stated.

**Sunday markets:**

Bluff Sunday market, 33 Barrow St, 10am to 3pm.

Cromwell Farmers market at Old Cromwell precinct from 9am to 1pm.

Underwood Sunday market, 10am to 2pm.

Riverton Sunday market, Primary School Hall, Princess St, first Sunday in every month, 10am to 2pm.

Windsor market, North Hall, last Sunday in every month, 10am to 3pm.

Centre, Barry Ave, 2pm to 4pm.

**January 6:** Wyndham Harness Racing at Cromwell racecourse, starting at noon.

**Until January 6:** Artisan's exhibition at Goldfields Heritage Trust Building corner of Erris and Donegal streets from 10am to 4pm daily.

**Until January 9:** Book sale at the Cromwell Public Library.

**MANIOTOTO**  
**January 5:** Art on the Green, outside the Railway Station Info Centre, Charlemont St East, 9am to 1pm.

**January 10:** Burn 729am Pool Party Ranfurly Pool, John St, Ranfurly, 11am onward.

**January 11:** St Bathans village fete on the village green, 10am to 3pm.

**February 7:** Waipiata Country Ute Muster, Motor bike trail ride and family day.

**ROXBURGH**  
**January 9 and 10:** Book Fair at the Teviot Union Hall, starts 9am.

**TE ANAU**  
**January 10:** Foveaux Masters Swimming Club Across the Lake Swim

**January 10-11:** Marakura Yacht Club open dinghy regatta, briefing 12 noon Saturday.

**January 12-14:** SDC-Venture Southland Holiday Programme at Fiordland College, 10am to 3pm.

**January 25:** Market day outside Te Anau Club 11am to 4pm.

**BOOKMARKS**

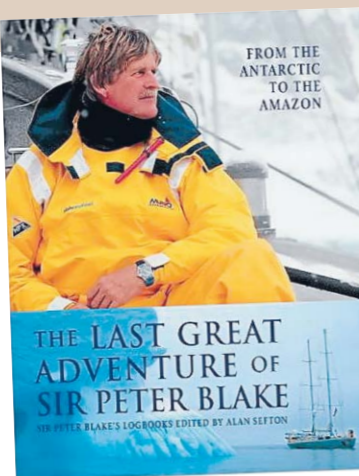
**THE LAST GREAT ADVENTURE OF SIR PETER BLAKE**

Edited by Alan Sefton  
Published by Penguin  
RRP \$30  
Reviewed by Jillian Allison-Aitken  
Genuine, true blue adventurers aren't exactly a dime a dozen but here in New Zealand we seem to have more than our fair share.

There was Sir Ed with his mountaineering and tractor-driving escapades, Charles Upham's bravery and grit. And, of course, Peter Blake - a good Kiwi bloke who much like Sir Ed before him, took his fame and tried to use it to make a difference in the world.

Sir Peter and his team were on their exploration vessel Seamaster, travelling the world to raise awareness of the need to look after our environment. It was during this trip, at the end of 2001, that Sir Peter was murdered by pirates on the Amazon.

This book has been put together from the Seamaster's logbooks that had been kept by Sir Peter and offer a fascinating insight into just what made this great Kiwi tick. It also shows how much he cared about our fragile planet. Careful editing and a selection of stunning photos put you right there on the boat with Sir Peter and his crew. His death was a huge loss but his message about looking after our planet is still alive.



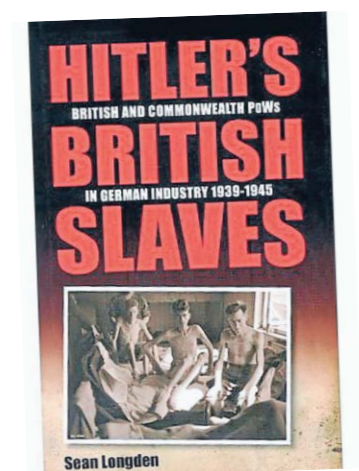
**HITLER'S BRITISH SLAVES**

by Sean Longden  
Published by Constable and Robinson  
RRP \$32.99

Reviewed by John Hicks  
*Hitler's British Slaves* is subtitled "Allied POWs in Germany 1939-45" which better reflects the content which encompasses POWs of many nationalities, including New Zealanders.

Sean Longden effectively explodes the "Great Escape" myths perpetuated by post-war films and television dramas: "middle-class officers staging escapes with 'devil-may-care' bravery, anxious to get home ready to have another 'crack at the Hun'." The fate of the rank and file was, for the most part, very different from that of the officers, and for them the Nazi propensity to resort to group punishments made persistent escapers "very unpopular people, trouble-makers who caused very considerable inconvenience to others". The Nazis regularly flouted the Geneva Convention. Men were pushed to the verge of starvation, assaulted, degraded and humiliated. Many were forced (often at gunpoint) to work long hours in dangerous and unhealthy conditions down mines, in factories and clearing bomb sites. They emerged, some after five years of captivity, to a "public which wanted heroes, not victims" and many of them "could not help but feel they had contributed little to the eventual victory". Adjusting back to civilian life was frequently traumatic.

*Hitler's British Slaves* is a moving tribute to the POWs who were used as slave labour under the Nazi regime, yet whose sufferings have never been officially recognised. In the words of Leslie Allen, General-Secretary of the National Ex-Prisoner of War Association: "These were the men who fought the rearguard so that the evacuation of Dunkirk could take place, the men who took on Rommel's Afrika Korps in the Western Desert, or who parachuted into Arnhem or fought their way ashore at Normandy. Crimes against prisoners of war were endless, but for political expediency a conspiracy of silence has been the policy of the UK. To date not one UK POW held by the Nazis has been compensated. Not one". The book is marred by repetition of some of the outrages, which risks them being read as part of a litany, and calls for tighter editing. Disregarding this, and far more importantly, the author has done a great job of exposing a shamefully neglected aspect of World War 2.



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