Who was Dave Hume

1973 was a big year for New Zealand. The population reached three million, colour television arrived, Tama Umaga was born and Waitangi Day was made an official public holiday. In Katikati there was another significant event. The Dave Hume Heated Pool was opened.

But who was Dave Hume and why was the heated pool named after him?

Back in the 1970s, New Zealand was a very different place than it is today. There was a “get on with it and use what resources were at hand” attitude when any job needed to be done. These characteristics were alive and well in Katikati and Dave Hume was one of many people in the area who did just that.

Dave always had community in mind. He left home when he was 14, walking over the Kaimai Ranges to Te Aroha. He then travelled to Wellington, where he joined the Fire Service. In 1940, Dave joined the army and went to Europe to fight in the Second World War. Before he left, he planted a kauri tree on Matahui Road. He vowed to plant a second one when he came back from the war. The two kauri trees still stand on Matahui Road. When he returned to Katikati, he became very active in the community and was affectionately known as the Mayor of Katikati. He was associated with Rotary and Federated Farmers and was the Chairman of the Community Committee.

In 1971, the population of Katikati was a quarter of what it is now but it was increasing. Student numbers were also increasing at the primary school and the college. The idea of a swimming pool was raised. Dave was given the task of pushing this project along. He was just the man for the job.

There was a small budget for the pool. Dave worked hard to get the community on board and the money was raised in various ways. The land was donated, the local Council and the College chipped in. It was a huge community project.

Dave had a mate in Temuka, who had been involved with building their town pool. In order to save money, Dave requested the plans for the Temuka Pool and got them. He then used his gentle, persuasive manner to get the Community involved in building the pool. Taylor Brothers donated equipment and labour to dig the hole. Other locals worked on the plumbing, building, fencing and painting of the pool. Dave's family were also roped in. It was of little consequence that Owen was supposed to be studying for his University Entrance (UE) exam, Dave convinced Owen that he would probably be accredited UE and would not have to sit the exam. Owen was shocked when he learnt that he did have to sit the exam! He studied relentlessly over the next few days and fortunately passed.

The then Prime Minister, Norman Kirk was invited to open the pool. He emphasised in his speech that every child should learn to swim and this facility enabled that. The pool is still used daily from late September until early March. Locals can learn to swim, train, relax and even have their birthday party at the heated facility.

So the heated Katikati pool was named after Dave Hume, reflecting not only the work Dave did for the Pool but also the work Dave did for the whole community. Dave Hume was fair-minded, honest and very well respected in the community. He had a great sense of right and wrong, was multi skilled, hard-working and, most of all, community focussed. His work, alongside many other well-known local identities, has been integral to the development of Katikati as we know it today.