

When Thomas the goose died he had spent the last over four years of his life at Craig Shepard's Bird Rehabilitation

Establishment where, although he had lost his sight, Craig and his helpers looked after him with loving care. Thomas had a large pond surrounded in grass with a netting fence surround so he couldn't wander off



and where he would spend his daylight hours. Each evening he would be taken into his night time quarters to be fed corn and all the goodies geese love and each morning he would be taken back to his pond. He became an iconic bird at Craig's as he had become here at the Waimanu Lagoons. When Thomas passed away we realised we had to do something to commemorate his life with Henry the black swan. How do you do this! We decided to stage a burial for the goose! I knew a piper and asked him if he would pipe at a goose's funeral. He had piped at weddings, funerals even a divorce but had never been asked to pipe at a goose's burial before. I then got permission from the local council as it's council land the commemoration stone for Henry is situated on and we wanted to bury Thomas with his long term mate. I rang Pinky Agnew as she was the person who composed the poem on Henry's plaque--she was on Holiday at Waiheke Island so I suggested she go sit on the beach and compose another poem for Thomas --this she dually did. Craig made a small coffin and with a little publicity we attracted over sixty people to his burial, including local dignitaries as everyone loved the love story.

We also attracted world wide interest as no one had ever heard of a funeral for a goose before.

Here are some of the countries who ran with the story which can be found on newsletters Numbers 37 to 50 on my web page.

As well as the usual UK based ones, Australia, Brazil, Russia, Denmark, Spain, France, Balkans (Albania), Korea and I'm sure there are more which took up the story.

So all of a sudden Waikanae and it's famous love story is world wide news!

look up Thomas the goose on the web and I am sure you will find the story



Blind Thomas at his retirement home. Eileen Thomas, Craig Shepard, Moira Peryer and Iris Robson look on.

The Love Birds



Photograph Colin M McKenzie

FUNERAL ODE TO THOMAS THE GOOSE (2018)

True love is blind, as we all know
To colour, to creed or to race
True love does not know boundaries
Just the rightness of a lover's embrace.

Here in peaceful Waimanu Lagoon
Thomas and Henry created a family
Some say a big gay rainbow arched above
I say, they just did what came naturally.

Like all great lovers, they paired for life.
And their time here on earth is now done
But above us, around us, their descendants abound
And somewhere Henry and Thomas are one.

EPITAPH

Here lies Thomas, the great-hearted goose,
Nestled near Henry, in their final roost,
Here where they raised young, and found sanctuary,
Somewhere above us, these great souls fly free.

Pinky Agnew

Hits last month—Thirteen Thousand Seven Hundred & Sixty two

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae

Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking.

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