

COLUMN FROM MAYOR TIM SHADBOLT

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First of all, a huge warm southern welcome for all the cyclists, the supporters and officials who have spent the week in our city. This is the third year running that we have hosted the New Zealand Track Cycling Championships and always these great athletes provide us with colour, drama, excitement, great victories and pride. You could almost see the glints of gold in their futures.

A big welcome also to all those visiting Southland for the SBS Golf Invitational being hosted at the Invercargill Golf Club and the Clubs New Zealand National Men's Golf Tournament being hosted by the Invercargill Workingmen's Club.

My biggest challenge at the moment is getting the Dan Davin House ready in time for the launch of the New Zealand Literary Heritage Trail. Unfortunately my partner in the project, Ernest New, died so it's all fallen on me to complete. The only other community house I've seen restored was Yule House spearheaded by my Deputy Mayor and it cost \$750,000.

The Dan Davin House was purchased by Sam Neill and myself with 20 or so others and over 50 volunteers have worked on the house over last 5 years. It was purchased for \$20,000 and is now worth \$100,000 and is freehold, so compared with other arts projects it has been quite successful but as with any renovation project it has been a struggle. This week I've visited a few houses that have spectacular vegetable gardens and based on my 'share the love - support the foodbank' project I can see our fertile soils feeding plenty of locals. New Zealand's 4 million people provide food for 5.5 million people so no-one in the country should go hungry.