



-Omarama Gazette -

September 2017

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Living life on the edge

Omarama sits at a crossroads close to Otago's present border with Canterbury. As many know, here-in lies the contention.

In Omarama there is one tradition to which many hold strong. That is, to resist any attempt by Canterbury to 'subsume' the town and its North Otago 'identity'.

There are others who would like to see Omarama assimilated into the Mackenzie Country. So, let's start a conversation - and a series of stories - about whether it matters, who really cares, and why. Is there really such a thing as a North Otago identity? This is all a little light-hearted - tongue-in-cheek. We do not routinely wear kilts or paint our faces with woad, nor are we planning to mass in blue and gold at the border to confront the red and blacks.

Nevertheless, there are valid points to be made.

In this issue, we hear from those who make the claim for Otago.

In the next issue, we'll address the counter claim.

Along the way we'll hear from historians, specialists, regulators, and others, and find out who does what, and where. We'll even give the politicians a chance to have their say and, in the final chapter, try to take a peek into the future.

There's no hope we'll cover every aspect of this convoluted story but, hopefully, it won't all be swords drawn and we'll have some fun along the way.

The series is a merely a 'rough draft' of a complex story.

We welcome feedback, opinions, corrections and clarifications.

Omaramagazette@gmail.com

This issue is brought to you by ...

David O'Neill Contracting

There is nothing better Dave O'Neill likes to do than to watch grass grow. He made it his business when he was 16 years old and has gone on to make it his mission here in North Otago and the Mackenzie Country for almost 20 years.

A North Islander, Dave moved here in 1999 after buying Jack Hunt's contracting business. It's where he met and married Prue and they've raised Samantha and Jack. You could say he's almost a local now.

In all seriousness, not only has business grown but with it has come the experience and expertise to fulfil that potential he could see when he took it over.

Nowadays, investment in machinery, skilled staff and an established yard with on-site workshop staffed by two mechanics means the O'Neills is one of the leading agricultural contracting firms in the region.

Services include grass-cutting (of course) - that is; mowing and fine chopped silage, balage rounds/squares, and more - cultivation, direct drilling, rut busting, mulching, grain harvesting, cartage – wool and fertiliser, weighbridge and fertiliser spreading.

Seasonal by its nature, staffing grows to meet demand – to about 22 staff who work through the four peak months, and Dave requires them all to have at least one to two years' experience. Experienced workers include Charlotte Gray on the rake, who has worked for the O'Neills for 17 years, and several overseas contractors who return each season to work in this part of the world.

It could be Omarama that draws them back but most likely it's working with a great team not to mention the bonus of great meals. Prue and good friend Krissy Jarvis make sure the workers get an evening meal each night through the season after their long day's effort.

That has to be a sign you're in good hands and that they're committed to getting the job done.

David O'Neill Contracting Ltd

Mt Cook - Lake Tekapo – Twizel – Omarama - Hakataramea Valley - Kurow

Fine chopped silage, balage rounds/squares, mowing, grain harvesting, cultivation, direct drilling, rut busting, cartage – wool and fertiliser, mulching, weighbridge and fertiliser spreading.



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Where is the sign of better things to come?

Jimmy Courtney takes great pride in his address – it's Omarama, Waitaki, North Otago. Got that? North OTAGO, not the Mackenzie and certainly not Canterbury.

Jimmy's staunch parochialism is a lot "tongue-in-cheek" and just a little serious. He gets a fair bit of good-natured ribbing for his views but then, there's a lot that share them too.

"We're losing our identity," he told a Tourism Waitaki strategy meeting in April. There should be "better and bolder" signage at the border, he said

People needed to know they were entering North Otago because people were travelling through oblivious and thinking it was Mackenzie country, he said.

"Now people want to include the Lindis Pass in the Mackenzie District.

"What happened to the 35km between the top of the pass and Ruataniwha?!

"I know where the North Otago boundary is.

"I've put fences up there, I've physically walked it."

This has been a multi-pronged debate which has been conducted for generations but what Jimmy's referring to, specifically, is more recent history when, in the early 1990s, the Canterbury Regional Council's boundaries were re-drawn to take in a large chunk of the Waitaki River catchment.

The effect was to split the Waitaki District between two provinces - 90% of the population of the Waitaki District live in Otago and 10% live in Canterbury.

"The whole top end of North Otago's been lost.

"I'd like to bang my drum and see if we can't get it looked at again."

To push home his point Jimmy lobbies at every turn and diligently corrects reportage to ensure the North Otago is not forgotten, reminding every organisation that slips up that Omarama is 'officially' still part of the Waitaki District and Otago. Anything else is "technically incorrect".

He believes until Twizel was built little reference was made to the 'Mackenzie' as such.

In 1969, those constructing the New Zealand Electricity Department's ambitious hydro scheme, dubbed - note the name - the Upper Waitaki Scheme, "turned over the first piece of dirt" to build the town.

A "'65 model" Jimmy Courtney is older than Twizel, just, and he remembers.

What he can't understand, and what he put to that April tourism strategy meeting, is why more is not being done to differentiate North Otago and market it as such.

"The Waitaki District Council website states the Waitaki district is the heart of North Otago.

"But, no-one knows where we are."

On Monday, the Ahuriri Community Board agreed to put a submission to the district's Long Term Plan to have the Ahuriri ward's signage reviewed and updated. - Ed



Living life on the edge

Just where do you draw the line?

Canterbury–Otago border disputes began before rabbits were introduced to this part of the world but these rodents have had a part to play in arguments over where lines are drawn.

In 1989, local government reform established regional councils and drew new lines across the country's landscape.

Land-wise, it determined 59.61% of the Waitaki District would be part of the Canterbury Regional Council (ECan) and 40.39% would be managed by the Otago Regional Council.

These new regional councils gathered the various duties of older entities, like pest control boards and the roads, catchment and drainage boards, under one umbrella and also took on some roles of the old county councils.

In anticipation of the 1991 Resource Management Act, reformers reasoned the new boundaries should be based largely on drainage basins.

In Omarama, that act does not only rankle with some, the anger and resentment over the process is still palpable almost three decades later.

Tony Gloag, of Buscot Station, and Ginger Anderson, of Ben Omar, are considered the two who have lived in Omarama the longest.

Their heritage stretches back generations - Ginger's grandfather was head shepherd at the Benmore Run before it was broken up for settlement, Tony descends from the Munro family.

They clearly remember those events of the early 1990s.

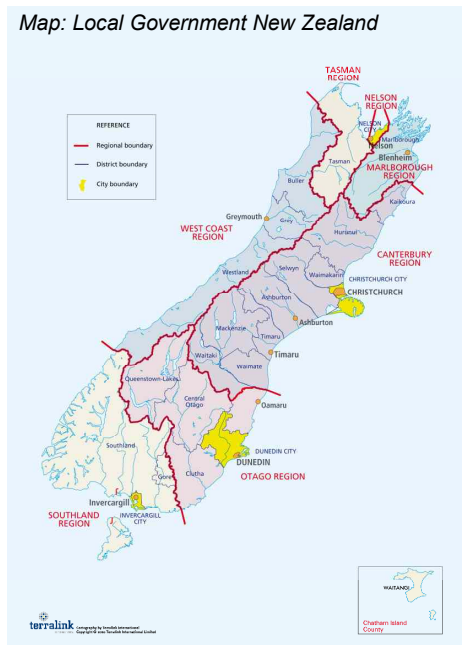
Omarama residents petitioned the Local Government Commission to reverse the boundary decision but it was rejected.

When Ginger says he was prepared to fire off a few rounds on his shotgun, you'd have to hope he was joking.

He's a good shot.



Map: Local Government New Zealand



"I've lived here all my life.

"Omarama is not in Canterbury – it just annoys me.

"[Ben Omar] is part of the Mackenzie Irrigation scheme but we're not in the Mackenzie country."

"I'm a born and bred North Otago-ite through and through."

"No-one wanted to be in Canterbury."

When the Omarama and Benmore rabbit boards amalgamated those rate-payers bought the assets.

ECan "confiscated the lot".

Rates on the rabbit board land went from \$300pa to \$7000pa and "we get nothing back for it".

The Commission's argument was they wanted one entity to manage the river, and that Otago had the Clutha in its district – "but they [Otago] could have had the Waitaki as well".

What Tony knows of this history could fill volumes. He doesn't mince words either "The very essence of democracy is government of the people, by the people, for the people.

"This principle has, for the people of the Waitaki District, been completely and negligently denied.

"Waitakians right to self-determination was completely ignored through the dictates of the Local Government Commission in 1989 and is an abrogation of civil rights."

At the time, Tony was Federated Farmers North Otago president and was overwhelmed by the new regulatory requirements in the early days of the untried, untested RMA. His workload doubled because he had to respond to two regional councils on matters concerning the district. It was the only district in the South Island to be split this way. Not only did the paperwork double but the resulting costs too.

"One of the first effects of the change, locally, was the inability of the regional council to control rabbits which resulted in central Government having to introduce the Rabbit Land Management Programme to bring rabbits back under control."

He feels strongly that the needs of Omarama, the Waitaki and North Otago are far more closely aligned with Dunedin and Otago than Christchurch.

This is not only because of proximity but also because of past traditions of land management and "ethnicity".

He contends "Christchurch bureaucrats" have little understanding of the "dynamic of the natural resources of the Waitaki Valley" which has more in common with the Clutha, and, that there has been what amounts to not only a land grab but "discrimination" which has its origins in the days when the provinces were first settled - Canterbury by the English and Otago by the Scots.

As evidence he cites an old regional council internal memo which was leaked and showed while \$300,000 in rates was collected from the district only \$70,000 of that was returned in services .

"The two ethnicities are absolutely different in their sense of values and aspiration.

"They have been, are, and will remain incompatible."



Living life on the edge

What's in a name?

The Scots vs the English? Otago vs Canterbury?

Is there any truth to the anecdotes those early immigrants to New Zealand brought their northern hemisphere battles with them.

The Otago Gazette put some questions to Otago University professor Tom Brooking. Prof Brooking specialises in New Zealand land settlement, rural and environmental history. Specifically, he has studied the Scots in New Zealand.

His opinion was sought when the Otago-Canterbury boundary change made under local government reform was contested.

"I have a report I wrote back in the 1990s when Canterbury swallowed up the top of North Otago, despite our best efforts."

The Gazette put the following questions to Prof Brooking:

In your opinion, is there such a thing as an Otago identity?

Yes, and its partly Scottish. (But even the southern portion of Ngai Tahu i.e. south of the Waitaki River like to think of themselves as Kai Tahu representing the different environment of the south of the south.)

As a result, the story of farming and landholding is different.

There were fewer 'gentry' here although that term overstates the case. There were a few younger sons of English gentry in Canterbury - the Aclands, Tripps, Cracroft Wilson. Robert Campbell of Otekaieke, in Otago, was really from the lesser Scottish gentry. Rather, most of our great estate owners were self-made.

Characters like Watson Sheenan were middling tenants in Scotland and the wealthiest of all the McLean brothers - Allan and John - were sons of an impecunious tacksman (rent collector for the Laird) on the Isle of Mull.

In general terms Canterbury was settled by the English and Otago by the Scots.

Otago's settlers also tended to be Scottish and Presbyterian (and occasionally Catholic) and differed in all kinds of ways.

They introduced salmon and trout to help feed poor folks rather than quail and partridges as in Anglo/ Anglican Canterbury.

Otago's land laws were also more liberal and encouraging of closer settlement.

John McKenzie from near Palmerston led the charge on the breakup of the great estates.

Mind you, the English-Canterbury thing can be overdone as there were plenty of Scots in South Canterbury like our famous former All Blacks captain's family, as well as Irish throughout.

Central Otago was the least Scottish place in Otago because of the gold rushes and Southland the most Scottish and Highland (Otago was more Lowland Scottish)

Do you believe there is any truth to the claim that rivalry and antagonism continues and that this has had, and continues to have, an impact on decision-making at local and national government level?

There was bad blood in the late 1850s over the border with Canterbury, and Captain Cargill and Robert John Godley never got on.

Dunedin was the number one city until the 1890s and protested its declining fortunes relative to Christchurch.

Sporting rivalries intensified over time too although we shouldn't confuse those with

political rivalries.

That feeling of missing out/sense of neglect might be more recent as Christchurch seemed to wrap up National Party funding post-earthquakes

But Kirk won the Commonwealth Games for Christchurch in 1974 too.

Dunedin probably lost out once Michael Cullen (former Labour MP for St Kilda) moved to Wellington, and the hospital is obviously a sore point.

Maybe Auckland has been more of a sore comparison since the 1970s as firms deserted both Christchurch and Dunedin.

We've kept the medical and dental schools while missing out on manufacturing post 1970s.

Dunedin produced its own pop sound much more than Christchurch and today there are many more writers - Dunedin is a UNESCO-designated City of Literature.

Canterbury farming has held the edge since the 1890s but closing Invermay remains a sore point.

Central Otago wine is getting the jump on Waipara in terms of numbers of wineries and the Lakes District is growing faster than anywhere in Canterbury.

Maybe the other big gripe is the number of flights coming into Dunedin Airport in comparison with Christchurch BUT Queenstown has come right up.

Living life on the edge - to be continued... In the October issue - the counter-claims

The Spade-line

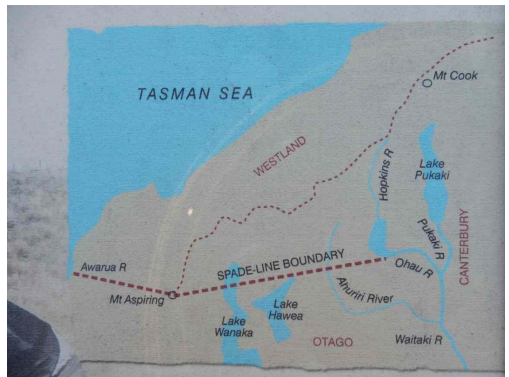
Originally the headwaters of the Waitaki River were deemed the provincial boundary between Otago and Canterbury.

But the true source of the Waitaki River was not known and the provinces could not decide which headwater river, the Ahuriri or Pukaki, should form the boundary.

Both provinces continued to issue grazing licences for the land in dispute.

In 1861 the General Assembly drew a line on the map from Lake Ohau towards Mt Aspiring, disregarding any terrain features. It was marked over long distances by a fence and a spade-turned ditch, traces of which are still evident today.

The spadeline became obsolete in 1899 when the boundary was again changed to run up the middle of Lake Ohau and the Hopkins River to the Main Divide.



Since our last report - An update on i-Site services

The possibility St Thomas' Church property could be used in some way as a location for visitor information services continues to be discussed, despite some setbacks. Last month, Waitaki District councillor Craig Dawson, in his regular Omarama Gazette column, reported Tourism Waitaki were interested in the idea and were to meet with its joint management committee to discuss the proposal.

At present, church managers are talking to its members and the wider community about its future because a dwindling congregation is threatening its viability.

They were to have met with Tourism Waitaki general manager Jason Gaskill on Friday, August 11, to discuss ideas. However, Mr Gaskill failed to attend the pre-arranged meeting.

In a phone interview on Tuesday, Mr Gaskill told the Omarama Gazette he had hoped to attend the meeting but it had conflicted with a board meeting he also needed to go to.

"We have been in correspondence since."

Another meeting has been arranged for the end of this week to "discuss various options", he said.

"It's a wonderful location, a great building, there's plenty of parking.

"The actual aesthetic of the building fits the type of image we want to portray of the region.

"We're really excited about it."

Mr Gaskill said the centre would be staffed but details of how many and what hours, along with necessary funding, were yet to be worked out.

"We're working through that, we're pretty confident we're going to be able to work something out."

On Monday, the Ahuriri Community Board was asked by the council to endorse a proposal to have Tourism Waitaki change – both in the short and long term - the level of visitor information services it provided in the ward.

As part of this Tourism Waitaki has agreed to fund the Waitaki Valley Society for the provision of its services through the Kurow Museum and Information Centre. This is to begin this month.

In the same report Mr Gaskill said he hoped the Omarama service could be in place by summer.

To be continued...



New faces in Omarama town

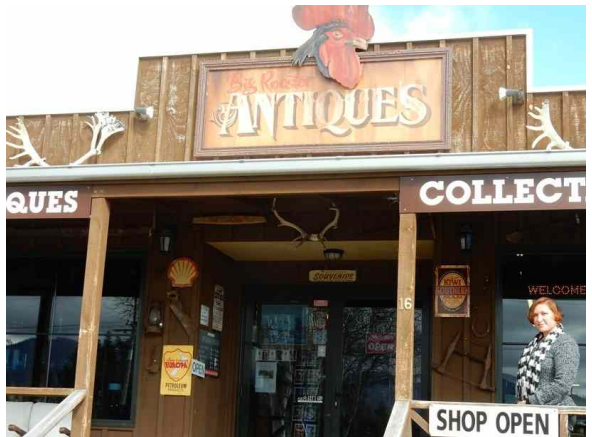


Bev and Lindsay Purvis congratulate new Merino Country Cafe and Gifts manager June Zhu together with her assistant manager Summer McDougall, on the new venture.

Twenty-five years to the day - September 1 - since Lindsay and Bev Purvis took over Merino Country Café and Gifts they have handed the keys on to new owners and their manager June Zhu. The complex has been bought by Otago Tourism Centre Ltd, based in Auckland but will continue to trade under its present name and with all its present staff. June, husband Joe Gao and daughter Amy have moved to Omarama so she can take up the position.

Bev says she and Lindsay are looking forward to escaping the seven-day-a-week work lifestyle to spend more time at home in Omarama. She says she will finally have time to spend in the garden and plans to take up golf. Lindsay has plenty of projects to tackle in the 'man cave' and they're both looking forward to travelling overseas. "For the first time in 31 years all the kids [Anita, Melanie and Lauren, and their families] are coming for Christmas...we'll have some real family time," Bev says.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the road, the Big Rooster has set up shop. Jamie Wright officially opened the doors to what was formerly Tōtara Peak Gallery, last week. (See last month's feature)



Election 2017 Waitaki/Te Tai Tonga

Meet your candidates

Decisions, decisions

The 2017 New Zealand general election is on Saturday, September 23, 2017
Dare I say it, by this stage in the campaign trail most of us are over politics?
So, let's make it easy

Last month I set our politicians a task so we wouldn't have to do the work.
I gave each of the candidates running in the Waitaki and Te Tai Tonga electorates a chance to have their say - to us.

The danger of opening that conversation is things are apt to get a little wordy.
So, I set them all the same challenge, here it is:

"As candidates for the Waitaki/Te Tai Tonga Electorate I hope you will contribute to our next issue ahead of the election. Space is at a premium but I would like each of you to be able to have an equal say and so I invite you to answer the question below in 140 characters or less (we will not count the spaces) – the email equivalent of a tweet.

Hey, if it's good enough for the leader of the free world to campaign this way then it's the only way to go for our chaps!



@Labour

Access to health support, educational opportunities, warm housing and a clean environment and an MP (myself) who will take up your issues to get a positive result for you #ZelieAllan



@National

To establish Omarama and the Mackenzie as a top tourism destination in NZ, while maintaining the growth of small businesses and preserving this unique environment. #JacquiDean



@NewZealandFirst

EMPOWERMENT of rural people to DEVELOP water, land, roads, tourism AND education justice and health, LOCALLY. Centralisation destroys COMMUNITIES. #AlexFAMILTON



@TheConservativeParty

I understand the small community mindset. I intend to take the time to listen to members of the community and communicate their concerns with our elected MPs. #RaymondLum

The answers from the candidates, are in alphabetical order, Waitaki followed by Te Tai Tonga.

Before you judge you might also like to know:

- Two candidates did not respond. They were Green Party candidate for the Waitaki electorate Pat Wall and Emma-Jane Mihaere Kingi, Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis Party candidate for the Te Tai Tonga Maori seat.
- Not every 'tweet' was hammered out on the candidate's personal keyboard. Some have their 'people' to do the thinking for them.

Regardless of the cut and thrust of robust political debate in this country we have here what the people of North Korea do not have - democracy.

So, if you make only one decision on Saturday 23, 2017 let it be to get out there and vote. The Omarama polling station is at the Omarama School.

<http://www.elections.org.nz/events/2017-general-election/elektorate-info/information-voters-waitaki>



@TheOpportunitiesParty

Everyone that is living in Omarama that is earning a salary or wage every year, will be many thousands of dollars better off under The Opportunity Party's policies #KevinNeill



@DemocratsforSocialCredit

Monetary reform is urgent. E.g. Reserve Bank credit could clear Govt debt so about \$10m a day interest could be spent on roads, land use, water and rural health issues. #HesselVanWierren



@MāoriParty - Te Tai Tonga

It is about Whanau Ora. To be a voice for mental health; protecting our waterways, creating quality job opportunities, advocating for a living wage and growing our nationhood. #MeiReedy-Taare



@Labour - Te Tai Tonga

Fix the housing crisis, properly fund health & education, clean up our rivers, a growing economy that delivers for all NZers. Party vote Labour. Let's do this! #RinoTirikatene



@GreenParty - Te Tai Tonga

Communities who rely on nature matter. A Green party vote delivers a Tourism levy of \$20m for tourist facilities & \$50m for conservation per year. #MetiriaTurei

Our juniors collect rugby awards

Omarama junior rugby players picked up several significant awards at this year's Kurow JAB end of season ceremony.

After being awarded most dedicated player for the 11/12 year-old team, Charlie Mathias went on to receive the Murray Pearson trophy for the most dedicated player across the club.

Other award winners were:
5-year-old Rams - most Improved player 2017 – Robbie Anderson
6-year-old- most improved player 2017 – Yvie Moore
7/8-year-olds - most dedicated player 2017 – Cameron Innes

Photo: Emma Moore, courtesy of Kurow JAB Rugby



Bringing a little sunshine

To all who gave so generously of their time and money on Daffodil Day to support the Cancer Society of New Zealand's work

Our own Liz Cowie collected for the society at Four Square Omarama.

She collected almost \$280. Every gift counts.

Funds raised go towards scientific research into the causes and treatment of all types of cancer, as well as providing a wide range of support services, education and awareness campaigns / programmes for people affected by cancer in our area.

www.daffodilday.org.nz



Omarama's straight shooters placed second

The Boots & Jandals Bar team was one of four to play darts and pool in the Waitaki Challenge at the Otematata Hotel - Otematata Eatery Bar and Lodging. (Sunday, July 30) Our team came in a close second to Top Hut Bar and Bistro - losing by only one point to the Mackenzie District team. *Photo: Boots & Jandals*



Congratulations, Glenys

Omarama's Glenys Dawson was one of 12 from the Waitaki district to receive a 2017

Citizens Award for volunteer services to the community.

Waitaki Mayor Gary Kircher made the presentations at a ceremony at the Opera House in Oamaru.

In the citation read out at the awards Glenys was recognised for her various contributions to Omarama; her past editorship of the Omarama Gazette, as the Omarama Residents' Association treasurer, a fundraiser for the redevelopment of the Omarama Memorial Hall, and as an Omarama Community Library volunteer.

"All of the recipients are very deserving of recognition for their voluntary work across the district that positively affects so many others," Mr Kircher said. "It is a great privilege to be able to honour those who have given so much to our community."



Omarama hosts inter-school cross country

More than 200 year one to year eight pupils from Omarama, Waitaki Valley, Duntroun and Twizel primary schools competed in the annual inter-school cross country, hosted by Omarama, last month. Omarama School principal Kim McKenzie congratulated all who took part in the races. And also thanked the Omarama Golf Club, the Volunteer Fire Brigade First Response, Friends of Omarama School (who ran the food stall) and the school community, for helping to stage the event.

For more photos go to: https://www.facebook.com/pg/omaramagazette/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1857144160981430





The Noticeboard



To have your community notice included here email: omaramagazette@gmail.com

Do you like to play tennis? Are you planning on practicing your netball or basketball shots for next season? Maybe some outdoor soccer? Then the Omarama High Country Garden Tour is something you should be getting involved with... and that's lucky because we could use some volunteers. We're raising funds for a sports facility. If you would like to help out please call Jemma on 4389626.

The next meeting of the Omarama Residents' Association is Thursday, September 21 at the Omarama Community Centre. Contact: Chairman Ross Gold 027 443 4149, secretary Craig Dawson 0274389132

As the Omarama Gazette was going to print **the Waitaki Valley Medical Trust** was holding its annual meeting at which at which Dr Tim and Juliet Gardner's offer to buy the Kurow Medical Centre will be discussed. More about this in the October Issue.

Otematata Chronicle editor and author Kate Frost is putting together a 2018 Otematata calendar and is also reprinting her book "Otematata - Memories of That Dam Town". For more information contact: kateandlen@xnet.co.nz

St Thomas' Combined Church Services are not being held at present. Clergy Contacts: Anglican: Reverend Ken Light 027 211 1501, Kurow Presbyterian Church 03 436 0773

Downer NZ supervisor Bill Knox has advised Lake Ohau residents that Excell Biosecurity will be commencing possum control using Vertebrate Toxic Agents near Lake Ohau for TBfree. Please direct any questions about this operation directly to: Bill Knox, 922A Luggate-Cromwell Rd, Mt Pisa, New Zealand. Email William.Knox@downer.co.nz, Mobile 021 229 8060, Telephone 03 441 8233 For more information contact: editorohauvillage@gmail.com

In case of emergency: to prevent any confusion about the location of Lake Ohau Alpine Village in an emergency, the following points should be noted:

When phoning 111, advise that Lake Ohau is in South Island and the nearest cross road is State Highway 8 and Lake Ohau Road. Also mention that Lake Ohau Alpine Village is on the shore of Lake Ohau, and is 20 mins (40 km) from both Twizel and Omarama. This will assist the operator to find the required information to enter location in the system and allowing the call to progress to the next screen in the system.

Bridge Club - The Omarama Bridge Club meets on a regular basis and would welcome new members. If you are interested please phone Sylvia Anderson 438 9784 or Ann Patterson 438 9493.

The Omarama Community Library is open 9am to 10am 8.30am to 9.30am Wednesdays and 9am to 10am Saturdays, at the Omarama Community Centre. Contact Glenys: 027 611 8880

Dr Tim Gardner of the Kurow Medical Centre runs two clinics a week in Omarama, on Tuesdays and Fridays, at the Omarama Community Centre. Please phone Kurow Medical Centre, 03 436 0760, for appointments. On Fridays, to book an appointment in Omarama, phone 0274 347 464 or 027 534 5214 because the Kurow Centre is closed.

The Omarama Playgroup meets at 9.30am each Wednesday during the primary school term at the Omarama Community Centre. For more information phone Petrina Paton 027 345 6192 or Jess Toole 021 020 53242

Plunket Line: 0800 933 922

Omarama Plunket Committee: Lisa Crawford, phone 021 126 3113

Car Seat Rentals: Christine, phone: 03 435 0557 or 027 208 0362

Breastfeeding Works: Claire Hargest-Slade 03 684 3625, 021 493 863
clairhs@me.com

The Omarama Model Aircraft Club meets 9.30am to 12 noon Wednesdays and Sundays at its fly-ground at the Omarama airfield. All welcome. Phone Graham McLean 03 438 9832.

The Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade meets 7pm each Wednesday and has its meeting at 7:30pm on the third Wednesday of the month. New members welcome.

The Omarama Golf Club - Saturdays tee-off 12.30pm, all welcome. Club captain Adrian Tuffley, phone 027 347 8276. <http://www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz/>

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email omaramagazette@gmail.com

**The October issue of the
Omarama Gazette
is Wednesday, October 4, 2017.
Please submit copy by
Friday, September 29.**

The Community Reports

Omarama Rodeo Club

By Wendy Parsons

The Omarama Rodeo Club is bringing 'The Other Mrs Brownz Boys' to Omarama, next month.

This fundraiser is a dinner theatre "Feck'n Tribute Show" at the Omarama Community Centre on Saturday 14th October. (See advert) Tickets available at Glencairgs, or purchase online <https://www.dkcm.co.nz/the-other-mrs-brownz-boys>

The club committee decided it needed to run more than its usual fundraisers to help meet the rising costs of running the rodeo, due to only breaking even last year.

A core group of about 15 volunteers have run the Omarama Rodeo in the past along with the input of the younger generations who keep us refreshed with their new ideas.

The rodeo is required to meet stringent rules under the rodeo animal welfare code and this year see's us upgrading facilities to provide shade shelter for animals. As well as some maintenance work on the secretary's office.

In the wonderful PC world we live in today it requires more \$\$\$ to comply with rules and regulations, therefore this fundraising evening seemed most appropriate as its as NON PC as you can get!!!!

There is only 100 tickets available, so don't delay get your Feck'n tickets today!!!

The Omarama rodeo club is painting secretary office inside and out! If you have any unwanted paint suitable it would be greatly appreciated.

Contact Wendy 03 4389 568



When circumstances beyond your control lead to a rural business crisis be it financial, climatic or personal the Rural Support Trust is ready to assist. Services are free and confidential.

0800 RURAL HELP (0800 787 254)

'The Community Reports' is dedicated to news from clubs, groups and sports teams. Contributions are welcome. omaramagazette@gmail.com

From the producer of the No.1 selling **FAULTY TOWERS** Dinner Theatre Show comes

Mrs Brownz Boys THE FECK'N TRIBUTE SHOW

**"THE BEST
FECK'N SHOW IN
TOWN!"**

AGNES BROWN

**ONCE YOU'VE SEEN IT
YOU CAN'T UN-SEE IT!**

WINNIE McGOOGAN

**"WHAT MAMMY
SAID!"**

RORY BROWN

**"STEAL A TICKET
I DID!"**

BUSTER BRADY

**Show includes scrumptious dinner,
2 hours of non-stop interactive comedy &
a denim-clad DJ to shake your groove thing to!**

Omarama Community Centre

7.30pm, Saturday, October 14
(Doors open 6.30pm – feck'n Happy Hour)

Tickets \$70 (show and 3-course meal)

CASH bar

Raffles

Auction

Purchase tickets online

<https://www.dkcm.co.nz/the-other-mrs-brownz-boys>
or from Glenbraids Omarama (cash sales)

Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade



Omarama Fire brigade has had a quieter month to date. We have attended a couple of major calls this month with a member of the public being burnt and a garage fire which also spread to a car. It is a timely reminder to mention that Hot Ashes need to be disposed of correctly. They need to be disposed of in a proper container and place the container away from any item that may ignite and then completely cooled prior to any form of disposal. You will shortly see our new "Cascaded" fire appliance in town. We will finally be getting our new appliance at some stage in September and once our crews are comfortable with the truck the reliable, but old, International will be removed from service. We are all really excited to have something that we all can be really proud of. If anyone is looking at wanting to join - Come along, we welcome everyone with open arms and it is a great way to become part of an amazing family group. Be Safe, and remember - Smoke Alarms saves lives.

- Chief fire officer Terry Walsh

Omarama's Community Library



August has been a quiet month for the library. There has been a steady number of people visiting through the month with the total "scores on the doors" being 26. Volunteer hours totalled 8.5hrs, with many thanks to those who staffed the library for the August sessions. New books are still arriving regularly, and soon we are going to have to do a reorganisation so we can still fit them all in. Donations that don't meet the selection criteria for the Waitaki Libraries (too old, too tatty etc) are on a sale table in the surgery waiting room area. Come along and grab a bargain for that late winter read by the fire! If reading's not your thing, we also have dozens of jigsaw puzzles which are free just to take away, or if you prefer, swap with your old familiar ones. Great for the last burst of winter which has turned up recently. The library is open 9am to 10am Wednesdays and Saturdays at the Omarama Community Centre. - By Anna Howard

Omarama Search and Rescue

Omarama Landsar assisted with two rescue events in the past month. Last week, Police and the Sar team were called to assist 75 skiers who were trapped on a chairlift at Ohau Snowfields. However, by the time they arrived snowfield staff had successfully evacuated about 60 of those stranded. Sar volunteers had recently been trained in chairlift evacuation at the Snowfields. A 24-year-old woman was helped after becoming trapped overnight at the South Temple Hut after heavy rain caused rivers to rise rapidly. Six Omarama Landsar volunteers travelled to Oamaru to help with the fourth annual North Otago Boar 'n' Stag Muster. Funds raised from this event will this year be split between North Otago and Omarama Sar. Final figures for the amount raised were not yet known but last year the total donated to the Sar groups was about \$13,000. Chairman: Mike King 027 434 2760

Omarama Golf Club

By Christine Bowman

Spring is here, which signals a busy time for the club, with irrigation tested and spraying started to ensure we have a quality course for our peak summer season. Our weekly club day numbers continue to increase and it has been exciting to see some previous members returning. Last Saturday it was good to see Ginger Anderson and Peter Casserly back at the club, and Ginger parred a hole, well done!! Being a typical kiwi (Number 8 wire) Peter has created a mini driving range, with ice cream lids pinned down for distance markers, which will come in handy for practicing. Another exciting development is two local ladies, who are learning to play golf, complete 9 holes on Saturday's, when they are free. Gin shots, laughter and smiles are all part of their game, so if you want to learn golf and have a bit of fun contact either Anna Howard (0211325586) or Yvonne Jones (0274767473). Currently winter players are completing in a singles knock out competition, with sledging, big hits and hard fought games being played. Watch this space next month for results. Club day continues to be Saturday with 12.30 tee off until the start of day light saving.

NB Thank you to the people who removed the colour steel and timber from the Golf Club gateway recently. It was there to build a new fence and enhance the entrance way. Please return it. Remember the golf club is purely voluntary and the theft of such items adds to our cost of replacing them

The Omarama Golf Club - Saturdays tee-off 12.30pm, all welcome. Club captain Adrian Tuffley, phone 027 347 8276. <http://www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz/>



The Waitaki Valley Vehicle Trust

What is the community car all about?

The Waitaki Valley Vehicle Trust was established to provide affordable travel on an as needed basis for the people of the Waitaki Valley. Thanks to community support and a rate drawn by ECAN we are able to offer this at a noticeably reduced figure from the .72c stated by the IRD for personal use of a vehicle. There is a charge for most trips.

We have a car based in Kurow and a car based in Otematata but can be flexible in terms of their use. We travel to where ever the passenger needs to go. As yet we have not managed overnight travel, but we do attempt to meet needs as they arise. Twenty one drivers are available to chauffeur people—all volunteers.

Carron at the Kurow Information Centre acts as the Coordinator, taking bookings and matching passengers with drivers. Phone 4360 950 or 027 282 0615

Many of the uses of the car are to Hospital or similar appointments however we are happy to take people to meet up with friends or to concerts. Our goal is that members of our community should not be disadvantaged by a lack of public transport



. Omarama .

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**28th
October
2017**

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or Ross 0274434149

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Omarama Residents' Association

Omarama High Country Garden Tour

- by Jemma Gloag

In the past week the grass has really start to grow, and plants and bulbs are poking their heads up out of the ground. The on-coming of Spring is a very exciting time and we are getting very excited about the up coming Omarama High Country Garden Tour. Everyone has been getting stuck into their gardens to have them looking at their best for Saturday, October 28, to raise as much money as we can for the new Sports Facility. We have had some fantastic and generous prizes donated for the raffles, to be sold through out the day, and at the auction at 3:30 pm at Omarama Station.

Some of the great things on offer are:

A premier scenic flight for two around Aoraki/Mt Cook and the glaciers, donated by Helicopter Line

A nights accommodation for two at The Hermitage, including cooked breakfast

A gliding voucher from Glide Omarama

Plants and plant products from Supplymoore

Accommodation at The Merino Lodge

Luxury Farm Stay at Omarama Station

Hot tubs Omarama voucher for two and wellness pod voucher for two

Other prizes include products from: Ostler, Mrs Robinson's, Merino Country Café, Glencraigs plus gardening hampers.

It should be a great day so please encourage out of town friends and relatives, who might enjoy a day out in our very special part of the world (who wouldn't!), to come and stay and participate in this event.

Do you like to play tennis? Are you planning on practicing your netball or basketball shots for next season? Maybe some outdoor soccer? Then this project is something you should be getting involved with... and that's lucky because we could use some volunteers. If you would like to help out please call Jemma on 4389626.

OMARAMA COMMUNITY CENTRE HALL HIRE

To make a booking for an upcoming event or for more information about hall hire and availability please contact Charlotte Cook, 027 940 1648, or email charlotte.omarama@gmail.com. Keys and fobs are collected from GlenCraigs



“Get Well, Keep Well” with the Kurow Medical Centre

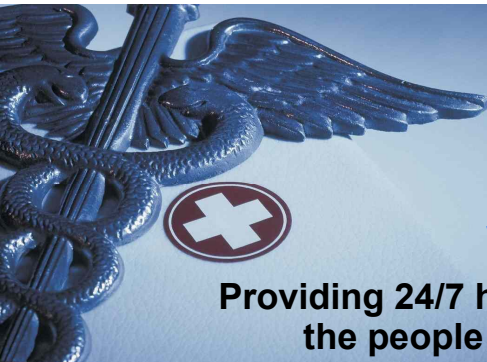
I'm sure you have all had a busy winter, if not fighting off offending viruses and cold toes but with work and home life. It's been a busy time in the rural sector with calving starting and shearing in full swing. Not to mention trying to get kids to far off towns for sports in amongst the madness.

When we get busy like this it can be very easy to let our internal health slip a bit, and so here are a few pointers to encourage you to take care of yourselves on the inside, both physically and mentally. Spring is getting closer, and the burden of the cold, fog, icy conditions and that layer of gloom that can envelop some when vitamin D levels start to decline will soon lift.

Have a think about how you can change a few of these key factors to make sure you are on top of your health.

- ◇ Good diet filled with lots of leafy greens, good balance of vegetables and fruit and not too much of the processed and heavily altered food
- ◇ Get out in the fresh air, and take time to have a walk, bike ride or just being out in amongst our gorgeous scenery
- ◇ Sleep well, and make sure you are getting enough. When this is out of balance, it can impact on our health, attitudes and hormone levels crucial for good health.
- ◇ Notice what might be a stressor for you, and try to limit its impact on you. If it builds up it is a bit like a dam, it will overflow and start to affect your loved ones. Chat to someone if you are worried, or give us a call to vent a little and help keep on track.
- ◇ Have an annual check-up with the GP, just to go over your existing health concerns or touch base on new symptoms. Even if you feel well, there is no harm in a good medical once over, a bit like a WOF for your vehicle, it should be a priority. We are no good to anyone without our health.
- ◇ Set a goal to achieve before the end of the year, have something to distract and motivate you from the daily grind.

Good luck, and here's to a beautiful spring



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Waitaki District Council news in brief



Indoor Recreation Centre Feasibility Report includes Omarama's needs

The plans by the Omarama Residents' Association to fundraise for a sports facility adjacent to the Community Centre plus an idea to develop an regional athletics' centre in Omarama are mentioned as potential projects for the district in Sport Otago's Indoor Recreation Centre Feasibility Report, presented last month.

Last year, the council commissioned Sport Otago to prepare a report to identify future district-wide sports and

recreational needs, and prepare a feasibility study for a possible indoor recreation centre in Oamaru. Sport Otago talked to sporting codes and stakeholders throughout and conducted a survey to gather information on what sport and recreation facilities the district has and what changes the community would like to see.

Omarama was included in the study. An athletics centre here would allow athletes from Central Otago, Lakes District, Mackenzie Country, South Canterbury, and North Otago to compete at a central location, the report says . Read more here: <http://www.waitaki.govt.nz/our-council/news-and-public-notice/news/Pages/indoorrecreation.aspx>

Waitaki Residents' Survey

More than 400 residents took part in this year's Waitaki district Residents' Survey. The survey, conducted by Key Research, is one way the council gets feedback from the community about the services it provides like water, roading and libraries. The survey asked for feedback on the level of satisfaction across a ten point scale being; Dissatisfied (1-4), Indifferent (5-6), and Satisfied (7-10).

Overall, people were satisfied with libraries, public toilets, and the community boards. The survey recorded less satisfaction with archive services, the performance of elected officials, camping grounds, parks and reserves, waste services, and cemeteries. Results about residents' satisfaction with unsealed roads were mixed. Read more here: <https://www.odt.co.nz/regions/north-otago/mayor-questions-annual-survey%E2%80%99s-value>

And here: <http://www.waitaki.govt.nz/our-council/plans-reports-strategies/residentsurvey/Pages/waitakiresidentssurvey.aspx>

Safer Waitaki, Age Concern Waitaki and Grey Power North Otago are conducting a survey to find out what people think might improve the lives of those in the district aged 65 and over. The survey asks where people live and what they do, and questions about well-being, health and safety. The information collected will be used to review the services provided and improve them where necessary. The survey can be completed online by emailing Helen Algar at halgar@waitaki.govt.nz and paper copies can be collected from libraries, Iona Rest Home, Age Concern, Safer Waitaki Network, Grey Power and the Northside New World and Countdown supermarkets. The survey closes Friday September 8.

Fergus Power, the former chief executive of Wairoa District Council has been appointed as the Waitaki District Council's new chief executive and takes up the role on September 18.

www.waitaki.govt.nz

A word from our councillor

In late July, Waitaki mayor Gary Kircher and Ahuriri Ward councillor Craig Dawson attended the Local Government New Zealand Conference in Auckland.

Here are extracts from Craig's report:

"A lot of attention was paid to environmental challenges facing NZ, when taking into account the huge growth in tourism, migration, intensification of farming, urban sprawl, global warming and challenges cities and towns are facing with the provision of affordable housing. Technology as a tool to help us deal with these issues, was well covered. Of the many speakers, two really struck a chord with me.

Robert Doyle (Lord Mayor – Melbourne) spoke about the challenges of bringing people back into the centre of the city. Building inner city congregation areas and excluding vehicles created an environment that would allow the inner city to thrive. Business turnover rose sharply as people could relax and take in the ambient nature of these new spaces without the noise and pollution of vehicles. The initial move met with a good deal of scepticism, however time has shown this to be a good move for the wealth of the city and its people. Planting trees in these inner-city areas was shown to cool the temperature by up to 4 degrees Celsius in mid-summer. These initiatives also encouraged people into apartment living, with many not needing vehicles due to the close proximity of their work.

Waikere Komene The theme of Waikere's presentation was "Social Entrepreneurship – Building Communities Sustainably". Brought up in Otara, with no father figure, he was the recipient of good mentoring, which enabled him to qualify with a Masters Degree in Architecture. After qualifying, he was determined to help young people in his community to develop their skills whilst helping the environment deal with the problems of modern day living which creates huge waste streams. One example he gave was that Auckland produces one rugby field of rubbish, (stacked to the height of the rugby posts) each week and 50% of this could be processed into usable compost. His first project involved bringing together 40 students from 16 schools, who used 8000 plastic bottles - rubbish - to create structures for a local art event. He then decided to create school gardens, where children would learn the value of growing their own food and at the same time learn how to make structures with waste materials, such as bamboo, tyres, plastic bottles and compost. Another idea - the "Garden of Rosebank School", was to have the children study the food value of their newly grown produce and the importance of these foods in their diets. Any produce left over was then distributed to those struggling to make ends meet. Young students became adept at producing commercially viable sculptures, some fetching high prices at local auctions. One sculpture was LED lightshades made from different coloured plastic bottles pop-riveted together to create ambient light. I found this a particularly inspirational presentation, which demonstrated that waste could be used to develop local communities in a variety of practical ways, some of which are detailed below;

- Teaching children the importance of including vegetables in their diet.
- Helping youth to develop practical skills such as using tools to help them develop carpentry skills.
- Developing creative skills to design and make works of art.
- Creating an income from waste.
- Helping those in need in the community, with good produce.

Craig Dawson – Ahuriri Ward councillor
027 438 9132, cdawson@waitaki.govt.nz

Report from the Ahuriri Community Board meeting, in Otematata, Monday, September 4.

It seems highly likely the Waitaki District Council will retain management of its Waitaki Lakes Camping grounds into the future.

On Monday, council community services group manager Dr Thunes Cloete told the Ahuriri Community Board, although the decision still had to go through the committee stages and be approved by the council, a workshop to discuss any changes to the present arrangement had recommended it retain the status quo.

A three-year moratorium on reviewing its previous decision was up allowing the topic to be considered again.

The last time it was discussed the council proposed it withdraw from managing the camps it operated on Lakes Aviemore, Benmore and Ohau because of costs.

It wanted to lease the camps long-term to private providers but that proposal proved highly contentious and so it decided not to go ahead.

Ahuriri Ward Councillor Craig Dawson said there was "a strong appetite to maintain the status quo" and the camps were of benefit to the whole of the community.

The camping grounds open this month for the season.

In a report, recreation manager Erik van der Spek informed the board the council were required to remove a row of pines trees outside the camping ground at Sailors Cutting to protect transmission lines.

LINZ would also be asked to remove the willow trees on the roadside adjacent to the boat ramp.

"These are on Crown land and will have a much larger visual impact. "

Removal is at the lines company's cost and they would need to negotiate with LINZ as Crown land managers.

If the council decided to keep the trees it would have to pay to maintain the 20-odd willows and also accept any liability, Mr van der Spek said.

The full report with photos of the trees under discussion is attached to the agenda (link is below)

Tree planting at Parsons Rock, to replace those removed earlier in the year has been carried out and the board was pleased with the result. The mulch was still to be removed but progress had been made, community board member Vicky Munro said.

Board chairman Graham Sullivan said plans were underway to schedule "town visioning" meetings so communities could have their say ahead of the reviews of the District and Long Term Plans

**The next Ahuriri Community Board meeting is
3.15pm to 5.15pm, Monday, October 16 at the
Otematata Community Centre**

**Minutes and agendas can be found here
[http://www.waitaki.govt.nz/our-council/council-meetings/
agendas-and-minutes/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.waitaki.govt.nz/our-council/council-meetings/agendas-and-minutes/Pages/default.aspx)**

St Thomas' Church

A "good discussion" about the church's future was held at last month's meeting of its joint management committee. However, no decisions were made, Reverend Ken Light said.

The committee had arranged to meet with a Tourism Waitaki representative, however, that person did not come to the meeting. That was "disappointing" but matters had "moved on". As well, the conversation with members was not yet over, Rev Light said. Another meeting is to be held this month.

Contact: Rev Ken Light, email: ken@lighteffect.net



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Malcolm McMillan, Lake Ohau Village
438 9798 027 438 9798



Georgie Robertson, Omarama
438 9554 027 4861 525

Environment Canterbury news

Last month, ECan's upper and lower Waitaki water management zone committees met together in Otematata to discuss matters in common.

It was intended they would discuss the proposed regional changes to how land and water is to be managed in their zones under Plan Change Five.

Plan Change Five to Canterbury's Land and Water Regional Plan was adopted by the Canterbury Regional Council, ECan, in June.

It included the amendments made after submissions were presented to a hearing by independent commissioners.

However, eight appeals to the plan change, on points of law, were made.

ECan councillor Peter Scott told the meeting that legal advice was the subject could not be discussed because the process was now before the courts – it was sub judice.

Upper Waitaki water zone committee member Barry Shepherd asked if, and when, the community might have some input into any changes made because of appeals. He said he understood some appeals had been made on material contained in the appendices to the proposed plan change and this material had not been put in front of the public.

So, there was potential for key changes to be made which had only been “discussed between lawyers”.

Mr Scott, Lower Waitaki water zone committee chairperson Kate White and ECan zone manager Chris Eccleston reiterated the subject could not be discussed.

“But the point has to be made,” Waitaki District councillor Craig Dawson said.

The meeting was told the appeals process could take up to two years.

Read more here:

<https://www.ecan.govt.nz/your-region/plans-strategies-and-bylaws/canterbury-land-and-water-regional-plan/change-5-nutrient-management-and-waitaki/>

The Canterbury Water Management Strategy project's Dr Brett Painter gave a presentation about various scenarios which could play out in the Waitaki catchment if climate change occurred as scientists now predicted.

He said the science had improved greatly in the past decade and it was now possible to more accurately predict the effects changes to temperature, rainfall, snowpack, wind could have regionally and how they could be affected by extreme weather events and sea level rise.

ECan's Upper Waitaki senior land management advisor Ian Lyttle discussed the N-Check electronic tool and demonstrated the Farm Portal software – tools which ECan has introduced so landowners can estimate and monitor the effects different farm management practices may have on soils and water, and also help determine the levels of consents required.

Mr Eccleston discussed the introduction and layout of quarterly reports which are intended to keep committees informed of progress made by ECan staff in the previous three months and set direction for the next three months.

Zone facilitator Nic Newman and Ecan programme manager Caroline Hart gave a presentation reflecting on progress made since the Canterbury Water Management Strategy was introduced in 2009.

The afternoon session was a field trip to the Otematata Wetlands Walkway so the committees could see where their recent grant of \$15,000 will be spent.

In other news...

ECan is working closely with the Otago Regional Council to stop the spread of wallabies across the boundary. A Ministry for Primary Industries report released last year predicted that if wallabies were not controlled in the South Island it could cost the economy \$67 million within 10 years. ECan has a 900,000 ha containment area for the pest but wallaby populations are now established in Mount Cook, south of the Waitaki River and on the Benmore range. There have been sightings as far afield as Marlborough and odd individuals destroyed in Naseby and Ranfurly.

There is also concern people may be helping to spread the pest.

ECan Biosecurity team leader Brent Glentworth said people should be aware that capturing, holding or removing wallaby from the containment area was illegal, with high fines imposed on those prosecuted.

The management of wallabies is part of the Canterbury Regional Pest Management Plan.

The next meeting of ECan's Upper Waitaki Zone Committee is scheduled for 9.30am Friday, September 22, at the Mackenzie Country Inn, Twizel.

Minutes and agendas are posted at:

<https://ecan.govt.nz/your-region/your-environment/water/whats-happening-in-my-water-zone/upper-waitaki-water-zone/>

www.ecan.govt.nz





Meridian Power Up Community Fund

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Meridian's Power Up gives your community a say on what local initiatives are supported by Meridian. The Fund, managed by a panel of community members and Meridian staff, is about working together to build strong communities.

Power Up is for the communities around the Waitaki Hydro Scheme from Aoraki Mount Cook to Waitaki Bridge, including Twizel, Omarama, Otematata, Kurow, Hakataramea, Duntroon, Ikawai, Papakaio, and Glenavy.

TO APPLY FOR FUNDING

The next closing date for applications is 27 September, 2017.

For more information on Power Up or for an application form, please visit meridian.co.nz/powerup or email community.fund@meridianenergy.co.nz

You can also call us on 03 435 9393.

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Omarama

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Greased small brownie tin

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1C almond (or any other) nut butter of choice

1 egg

1 generous capful vanilla

1/4C liquid sweetener of choice (maple syrup, honey, rice syrup, agave or nectar etc.)

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1/4 tsp ground nutmeg

1 tsp Baking Soda

1/4 C cocoa or carob

100g dark chocolate, (1 bar) - at least 70% cacao to make it dairy free—it can be either melted and poured into the mix or chopped and mixed through

Blend everything together in a processor, or baking bowl, pour into greased tin, and bake on a medium heat (not too hot or it will burn on top) - about 170 Celsius ideally—for about 30 minutes. Put a piece of tin foil on top if you feel it is going to burn. I used a fan oven, no grill.



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POTM Pet of the Moment - Steelo

Steelo Perriam is one of those old dudes who's lived a little. A little man with a big heart, he's given his all to his extended family, especially Lexie, Jannie and Ollie, and his community. This is not yet his obituary but, rather, a celebration of his life. Steelo is seeing out his last days at home and enjoying the procession of visitors who are calling in for a last quiet word of farewell. Lex and Jan are not sure of his exact age but think it is about 20 human years. Steelo was originally son Gareth's pup. He was the runt of the last litter out of Bill Rankin's bitch, whose pedigree links back to Willie Wong's (Bill Cowie, of Tarras) dogs.

"The kids always wanted a puppy and we just fell in love with Steelo," Jan says.

Loyal to a fault, anyone who so much as raised an eyebrow against his family would get a "nip on the bum", Jan says. He would not even permit them to growl at the kids without a 'sharp' reminder of who was really in charge of discipline.

In the past, this man about town has worked up somewhat of a reputation. He has an eye for the ladies - and a penchant for any pretty Bichon Frise who passes by. His social 'circuit' for treats and tidbits takes him to all quarters of the town.

"I don't know how he's survived all these year crossing those roads. [The state highways]" Somewhat of a party animal he's been a regular gatecrasher at Fire Brigade Christmas parties and takes to popping balloons with such gusto you'd never guess his age. Enjoy those memories Steelo.

Rest easy, boy. You will be missed.



The View from the Chook House



Politics just has that way of rubbing you up the wrong way.

The Garden Diary - Cutting Remarks

Keeping in shape is always a little painful. 'It's no pain, no gain if you want that glowing summer body,' I tell my roses in my best PE teacher's voice.

I think pruning is best done when you're feeling a little crabby. (No comments from the side-lines, please.)

And it's good most pruning needs to be at this time of the year because it's when I'm least in love with my garden - everything looks seriously messy, scrappy and rather 'meh'. Spring cleaning is the order of the day.

When I say crabby, it's not the 'Alice-in-Wonderland-Queen-of-Hearts-off-with-their-heads sort of grumpy'. It's more the slightly tetchy 'who-ate-that-last-piece-of-chocolate' end of the spectrum. It's just that then it seems easier to adopt a take charge stance and make some snap decisions. You don't want to be so fired-up all dragons blazing that you go in there and lop off limbs left right and centre Game of Thrones-style. (So who, spotted the mixed metaphor there?!) Three things you can never get back - time once it's gone, words once they're spoken, and bits you've lopped off plants! Thankfully, nature is most forgiving and cutting too deeply is usually rewarded with fresh, lush new growth, though not always in the right place. Advice on how to best prune anything is free and abundant on the 'net. It's guaranteed to turn you into an armchair expert and is a marvellous distraction from getting the job done. The way I look at it, if you cut out the dead wood and anything toxic (diseased), anything that's just noise – i.e. twiggy stuff, and anything that rubs together, or you up the wrong way you pretty much cover all the bases for creating a healthy, shapely specimen.

Timing can be important. If you have an important summer date, prune roses six to eight weeks before you want them in flower. With my roses, because of the high country's late, hard frosts, I try restrain myself to just a wee tidy-up early spring. I save the hardest cuts for after the first main flowering when the mid-summer heat in Omarama sends roses into dormancy. After that, a good watering and mulch of compost has them back to looking their blooming best in autumn. And, unless it's time for a major renovation - I save that for a real grump - I limit myself to cutting back by only a third.

Then there's the fun stuff about pruning. Since we, as gardeners, domesticate that which is wild, it can be quite practical to sculpture topiary or to artfully espalier to confine a large tree or shrub within walls and fences. I'd had so much fun and thought I had almost mastered 'cloud' pruning until I learned the kids had christened my woolly-coated, blue-grey conifer 'Mr Blobby'.

One last lesson I can pass on: it pays to have sharp tools and more than one set.

Somewhere there is a place which provides refuge to all my run-away secateurs. Somewhere, out there, please come home, all is forgiven.

Ruth Grundy

*(I garden a small space under a big sky
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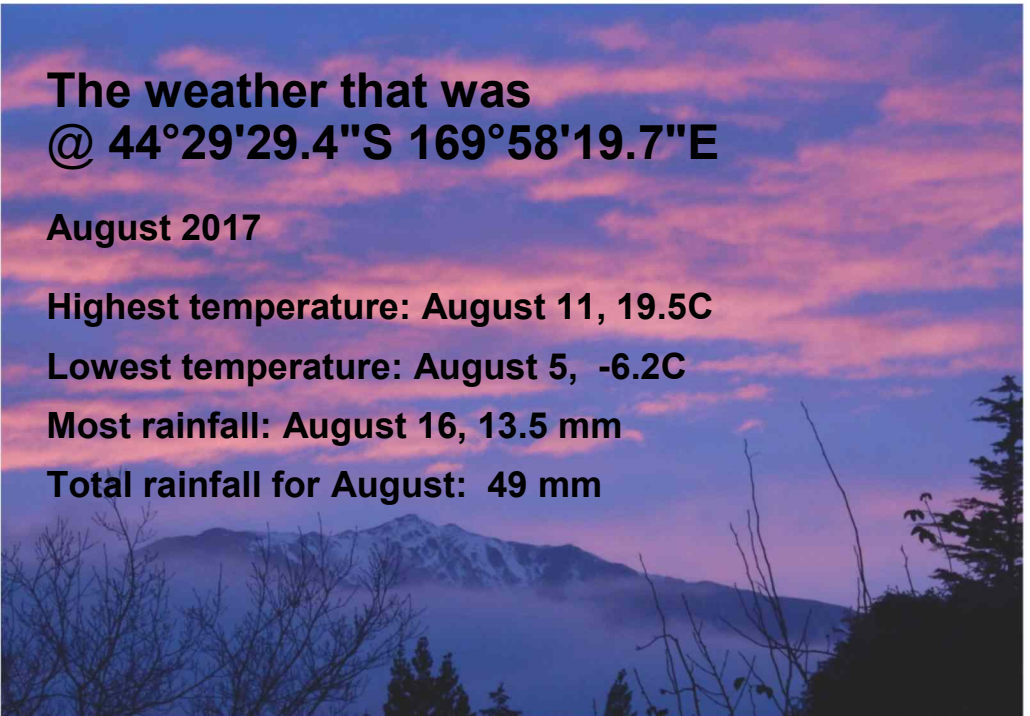
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