

# ***-Omarama Gazette -***

**December 2017**

Sponsored by

**Mobil Omarama**

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## **Adventures begin in Omarama**

Alps to Ocean tour operators Trail Adventures Ltd are to begin operating from Omarama in early January.

Owner-operators Scott and Dee-Ann Fitzgerald recently bought the 'Lory block' at the corner of Prohibition Rd and SH83, at the eastern end of town, from the Waitaki District Council.

Ultimately, the couple plan to establish their cycle tour base on this site.

However, in the interim, they will work alongside Tourism Waitaki and operate out of Omarama's new i-Site premises – formerly St Thomas's Church.

"We will be going in alongside the i-Site... sharing that space.

"We're quite excited about having a presence here."

The couple owned the Oamaru Harbour Tourist Park and the Penguins Nest Café for about five years and ran these alongside the cycle trail business but sold up earlier this year to focus solely on Trail Adventures.

Scott, who spoke to the Omarama Gazette on Friday, said when the land in Prohibition Rd came up for sale they saw it as the perfect opportunity to make the move to Omarama.

As well as cycle tours they plan to provide passenger transport, for example between Oamaru and Omarama, and they hope cyclists will see Omarama as a prime location for short day trips to explore the surrounding area.

Plus there was the potential to offer vehicle tours to local sights such as the Clay Cliffs.

***...continued over***

# **This issue is brought to you by ... Mobil Omarama**

This year's five-day trip to Las Vegas left Mobil Omarama's Terry and Michelle Walsh with mixed emotions, coming as it did only a month after the US's deadliest mass shooting.

On the one hand, obviously, the community was grieving, on the other, this being the US entertainment capital the shows do go on.

As two of more than 60,000 people Terry and Michelle regularly make the trip to SEMA - an automotive specialty products' show and Las Vegas' second-largest trade show - to see what is new to the market.

This year they were booked into the Delano Hotel overlooking the Las Vegas 'strip'.

"From our bedroom window we could see where it all happened," Michelle says.

The square where 58 were killed and 546 injured at the Route 91 Harvest country music festival was still cordoned off with a heavy police presence. Plaques and photos of each of the victims - mostly American and Canadian - featured on a remembrance wall directly under the famous 'Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas' sign.

"It was very moving."

Coming so close after the shootings SEMA organisers increased security ahead of the show.

Terry says he attended primarily to look at emerging trends in electronic diagnostic equipment, "to make sure the workshop is fully-equipped with the latest gear".

"Battery charging technology, in particular that around electric cars, is evolving quickly and there were many examples of this."

But it wasn't all work and Michelle managed to earn herself the 'wife-of-the-year-trophy' by shouting Terry a race in a Ferrari on the Las Vegas speedway - how can you compete with that?!

With an instructor, Terry got to take the wheel and find out just what a super car can do on 2km of track with seven turns and a 550m straight as well as a high speed banked bowl.

He did us all proud and even managed to pass the Lamborghini - a somewhat essential training exercise for a fire chief who has just been put in charge of a new fire truck - one might say.

This year, as always Michelle and Terry are extending an invitation to customers old and new - to join them for their Christmas shout on Friday, December 22.



**Mobil Omarama  
open Christmas Day  
8am to 2pm  
Mobil Twizel  
open Christmas Day  
8am to 8pm  
Ph/fax 03 438 9834  
Email:  
[omarama.mobil@xtra.co.nz](mailto:omarama.mobil@xtra.co.nz)**

# Adventures begin in Omarama

*...continued from page one*

For the past few years they based bikes at the Countrytime and Heritage Gateway hotels but there had not been "a whole lot of uptake" because the visitors there were usually part of bus tour groups.

Scott and Dee-Ann will "share the cost" of leasing the church with Tourism Waitaki and "assist with any i-Site requirements".

They plan to stock basic bike parts and cycle maintenance equipment as well as those "extra comfort features", required at this junction in the A2O trail.

Most of the bikes will be stored in a container on the i-Site property while, for security reasons, the fleet of e-bikes will be kept inside the building.

The couple have advertised locally to employ one part-time person to assist with the running of the business.

The prospects for future growth were promising because of the growing tourism market and as operators, they planned to watch developments closely and adapt to "make it work".

As well as setting up the tour base, Scott says sometime in the future land on the block closer to Omarama will be subdivided for sale.

In the meantime, Scott plans to spend his free time "tidying up this plot" and planting it out.

"I like a project."

Dee-Ann grew up in Oamaru, Scott moved there from Christchurch and completed his school years at Waitaki Boys' High School. They have three daughters.

Trail Adventures, who has a lease agreement with Tourism Waitaki, will move into the former church building and begin operating on January 5.



# Tourism Waitaki re-opens i-Site

After almost three years of negotiations Tourism Waitaki looks set to open its new i-Site premises for business.

The council-controlled organisation has leased the former St Thomas Church building for one year from Friday, December 1.

Tourism Waitaki general manager Jason Gaskill says although he is not certain about the exact date the organisation is "very excited" about opening up in town.

"We're still working on a couple of things ...we will open before Christmas."

"The lease has been signed ...agreements are in place."

The Otago Daily Times understands Tourism Waitaki is paying \$20,000 for the year's lease.

Jason said the site would be open from 10am to 4pm seven-days-a-week.

Trail Adventures would be working alongside the i-Site but Tourism Waitaki also planned to employ its own staff, although it was not yet certain how many or where they would be sourced, Jason said.

## To re-cap:

*The contract between Tourism Waitaki and Hot Tubs Otago for information centre services officially ends in March 2016 but Hot Tubs continues to provide services on a month-by-month basis.*

*Tourism Waitaki undertakes to look for a "permanent, stand-alone site" to be set up before winter 2016.*

*Various locations are considered by the organisation but none found that are suitable.*

*As well, the Otago Business Group agrees the site must be staffed but it would put undue pressure on a business to try to run information services alongside their own business.*

*One option put forward for a site is adjacent to Hot Tubs Otago, in its carpark.*

*In October last year, Hot Tubs owner Jan Thomas tells the Gazette she understands the plan for some form of staffed information centre to remain on the Hot Tubs Otago property is about to be signed off.*

*This did not come about and in March this year Hot Tubs Otago decides to no longer provide information centre services on behalf of Tourism Waitaki.*

*Tourism Waitaki issues two i-pads, one each to Heritage Gateway and Countrytime Hotels, to provide links to its services. It also investigates options for a multi-weather electronic 'kiosk', and where best to site it.*

*Another proposal is for a mobile site to be setup adjacent to GlenCraigs, at least as a stop-gap measure.*

*Waitaki District councillor Craig Dawson said this is a non-starter and recommends Tourism Waitaki work with Waitaki District Council officers on the upcoming review of its toilets' strategy and plan a "re-vamped" building to house information services and toilets on the one site.*

*In June, Tourism Waitaki meets with the council's executive committee and is sent back to the drawing board to look at other options which were not made public. Mr Gaskill says those options are "sensitive" and need to be explored further but he would give an update by the end of July.*

*At the same time, St Thomas' Church Management committee begin consultation about the future use of the church building and Craig suggests it could be used by Tourism Waitaki for information services.*

# Further consultation planned

St Thomas's Church management committee plan to keep the conversation going with the community about the future of its church.

Since the closing service many have approached the Omarama Gazette to say, although they understand the reasons, they are sad, dismayed and angry about the decision which they believed had occurred with little consultation and had been imposed on the community by people from outside the district.

Many said they could not bring themselves to attend the final service.

Some said they believed the community could have come up with an alternative solution had it been more involved in the consultation process.

They hoped something could be done in the year ahead to reverse the situation.

In an interview, Tony Gloag, who was on the church building committee said he believed it was possible for the community to take over the running of the church.

Other small towns like Tekapo and Tarras had done just that.

"We need to look at how they administer their churches and put that to the authorities."

He believed it was vital, from a community welfare perspective – particularly considering the rising rates of suicide in rural areas – that the building continued to be used as a church and include a community welfare element.

The state was failing to provide the necessary direction required.

"If we had a presence [like this] in the community we could avoid such tragedies," Tony said.

John Gillies, the former St Thomas' Church treasurer, said he believed a trust could be formed which could take over the running of the church from the present owners' – the Presbyterian Church's Otago Foundation Trust Board, and continue to run it on behalf of the community.

The important question was whether or not there was the interest and the will in the community to take such a step, John said.

The building was of sound construction, was up to the earthquake-proof standards and had comparatively little in the way of running costs.

The biggest expense had been paying clergy and their travel costs to Omarama.

In the past, volunteers had maintained the grounds.

He and wife Noeline, long-serving church members – said they had been too saddened by the news of its closure to attend the final service.

"We both think the church should remain part of the special character of our village.

"The idea of losing it is untenable to us."

Ann Patterson told the Omarama Gazette, she sincerely hoped the situation was only temporary.

"I will be very happy to help carry those items [the Cross, the Bible, the font and the hymn board] back into the church."

Church officer Kay Verheul said, while it was an extremely sad occasion, numbers attending services as well as volunteers available to help with maintenance had dropped to the point where it was no longer viable or practical to continue in the same way.

Leasing the building meant there would now be funds to carry out other work in the community.

She planned to organise a "Christmas in the Park" event in Omarama next year.

*...continued over*

# Further consultation planned ... *continued*

Former Omarama resident Robbie Perriam, who owned the Omarama Motor Lodge now the Heritage Gateway Hotel, and was also on the original church building committee, was at the final service. He said he was "really unsure" what to think.

Many churches were closing for similar reasons as those which had caused Omarama's to shut. "It's a fact of life and Omarama has been caught up in that."

On the other hand Queenstown was planning two new churches.

The building of St Thomas's had been "a wonderful effort for the whole area".

He was "shocked" to learn of the cost of bringing clergy to Omarama and the upkeep of the grounds had always required effort from volunteers.

While the idea of forming a trust had merit he wondered if the Omarama community had "left its run a little too late". It would need the younger generation to be willing to take on the commitment and they might not be motivated to do so.

The next 12 months would be the decider, he said.

Rev Light said, initially, the management committee had feared the worst and thought the church might have to be sold. Then matters moved quite quickly.

"Waitaki District councillor Craig Dawson with the came up with the idea [the building could be used as an i-Site] and suddenly it happened."

Three public meetings were held, including the annual meeting, and these were advertised in the Omarama Gazette.

Rev Light, based in Hawea, said the committee planned further consultation in the next 12 months and another annual meeting will be held next year.

"We would welcome Omarama people on to the committee."

Although he could not speak for the Otago Foundation Trust Board he believed any move to establish a trust would mean the church would have to be sold - something the committee did not want to do.

He said, in the past week, the Anglican Church had agreed to provide funding to make it possible for him to continue to minister in Omarama for one year - to hold services in the hall, to offer pastoral care and visit parishioners of all denominations. He said those who wanted to contribute to discussion should contact himself or the church management committee secretary by email.

**Chairman: Reverend Ken Light [ken@lighteffect.net](mailto:ken@lighteffect.net)**

**Secretary: Lee Kearon 021 250 1060 [lee.kearon@gmail.com](mailto:lee.kearon@gmail.com)**



# Have your say about our heritage

The Waitaki District Council wants to hear which historic or heritage buildings or items should be included in its District Plan.

The District Plan is under review and at present more than 200 items have various forms of protection under the plan rules.

"Without protection, heritage resources within the district are likely to continue to be subject to degradation or loss as a result of alteration or removal.

"With that comes a loss of character and historical understanding of the district.

"The review of the Waitaki District Plan is a chance to reassess some of the listed items and to add new ones worthy of protection," planning manager Hamish Barrell says.

The Omarama sites included in the present District Plan and affected by the review are: the 'Benmore Station Complex' which includes the head shepherd's cottage, the woolshed and the stone stables and various other buildings which are in category A of the Schedule of Heritage Places, Items and Archaeological Sites; the old cemetery on Black Peak Rd, the Omarama Hotel, and a building on Omarama Station, all of which are at present included in category B of the schedule.

Any person or organisation can nominate an item for evaluation by completing and submitting the nomination form.

That will not necessarily guarantee it will be included.

"Priority will be given to nominations that clearly identify the values associated with a place and the community to which it is significant and are supported by relevant background information," Hamish says.

The deadline for nominations is midnight Wednesday 20 December 2017.

To find out more: <http://www.waitaki.govt.nz/our-services/planning-and-resource-consents/districtplan/Pages/districtplan.aspx>

To make a nomination go to: <http://www.waitaki.govt.nz/our-services/planning-and-resource-consents/districtplan/districtplanreview/heritagenomination/Pages/default.aspx>

For further information contact Mike Searle at Waitaki District Council on 03 433 300 or email [districtplan@waitaki.govt.nz](mailto:districtplan@waitaki.govt.nz)





# St Thomas's Church - A service

The final church service was held at Thomas's Church last month, 30 years after the building, funded and built by the Omarama community, was first opened.

People from throughout the Waitaki Valley, and Otago and South Canterbury gathered in Omarama for the service, the last to be held before the building was handed over to Tourism Waitaki who have leased it for one year to run its i-Site services.

Church Services will continue in Omarama at the Memorial Hall.

More than 60 people – the majority from out of town - took part in the inter-denominational service representing the three congregations – Presbyterian, Anglican and Roman Catholic - that have used the building over the years.

"We have struggled here at St Thomas' over the last few years," Anglican minister Reverend Ken Light told the congregation.

Maintenance and upkeep had become a problem for an aging and dwindling congregation.

The matter was taken to the "parent bodies" of each of the three denominations.

At the same time, it became apparent there was a need in the community for an information centre and the church building was an ideal site, he said.

The decision was made to close and decommission the church "for this moment in time, at least".

St Patrick's Catholic parish priest Father Wayne Healey reflected on the past three decades and said the church had "touched many hearts".

While it was a sad occasion and a had been a difficult decision, it had been "reflected on, debated, and prayed about".

In her address, former Presbyterian minister in Omarama, Reverend Libby Smith





# of thanksgiving and farewell

said in her 10 years tenure she could not remember many occasions when the church was full except for Christmas services which she recalled as being great community occasions.

In her time, she had fond recollections of baptising many Omarama children, officiating at weddings and funerals.

Tony Gloag, the only member of the original church building committee still living in Omarama, told the congregation many donations and contributions, and great effort and hard work went into building the church on land donated by Arthur and Helen Munro

He said he was “deeply saddened” that the move to close the church was deemed “necessary” and hoped it would be of “brief duration” and the building soon returned to its original purpose.

At the end of the service the cross, the Bible, font and hymn board were carried from the building and, symbolically, the main door closed and locked.

Kay Verheul carried the cross, Evelyn Sinclair, of Otematata, carried the bible, Sam Patterson, of Longslip Station, who was baptised in the church, carried the font, and Ann Patterson, his grandmother, carried the hymn board. The stone for the building came from Longslip station.

All of the furniture has been stored. Some will be stored at the Hall for use in services



# A stunning Omarama day

There was speed, there was skill, sheer cunning, somewhat awesome feats of deriding do, no.8 wire ingenuity and a few, shall we say, dodgy moves at play as 12 teams of four took to the town in a race against the clock as part of a Friends of Omarama School fundraiser – The Amazing Five.

On Friday, the teams competed in challenges at locations around Omarama and at the golf club grounds.

Volunteers from Rabobank, Aon Insurance, school parents, grandparents and other supporters were on hand to help out at the various stations.

People came from as far away as Hawea, Christchurch, Kurow, Ohau and Twizel to compete.

Making the podium were: in first place – wearing black, “The Ben Omar Bandits”.

The silver went to team royal blue “Farmbuild South’s Cunning Stunts” and in third place was the green party (?) - “We will destroy you and burn your village”

(The Omarama Gazette was reliably informed this was the team’s name and not one of the challenges.)

In breaking news, organisers believe they have made a profit of about \$15,000.

Special thanks to: Lake Ohau Quarters, Aon Insurance, Rabobank, the Omarama Golf Club , David O'Neill Contracting, and auctioneer Madison Taylor of Peter Walsh Associates.

For more photos: [https://www.facebook.com/pg/omaramagazette/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=1973721809323664](https://www.facebook.com/pg/omaramagazette/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1973721809323664)





# for a scorcher of a competition



# Family at the heart of new venture

The morning Omarama Gazette calls up to Ohau Downs the family is already hard at work.

Kathryn, who has just come in after an early start in the garden, takes time out to talk before being called on to make the breakfast pancakes which are to be topped with fresh strawberries which Grandad-Opa Kees and young grandson Arlo have just picked. Opa and Arlo been out doing the rounds feeding the 650 calves which Kees is rearing.

Steve makes us all a coffee while his son, Finn, a regular visitor because of rowing competitions at Ruataniwha, and home from St Bede's College for the weekend, makes his breakfast in the kitchen.

Kathryn Ryan and Kees Zeestraten, who have owned the sheep and beef farm for the past 13 years, and close family friends Steve and Nuala Taylor, of Tauranga, are collaborating on a new venture, an Ohau-based 'on-line' winery, and one that will keep them closer to home and family.

The new venture will be an online business as opposed an onsite business, "embracing the modern way but with the personal touch," Steve says.

Kathryn and Kees owned Mountford estate in Waipara North Canterbury and sold the business and brand earlier this year but retained rights to some product which they are able to continue to market with the new owners' blessing.

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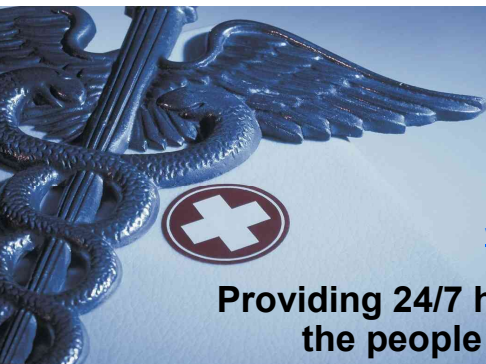
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On Fridays you can contact us by phoning 027 434 7464

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Open Tuesdays, 8.30am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm

Twizel Satellite Clinic – 3a Benmore Place, Twizel  
Open Monday and Friday, 8.30am to 1pm  
and 2pm to 5pm

Twizel Nurse-only clinic - Open Wednesday 8.30am to 1pm



## Kurow Medical Centre

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**Providing 24/7 health care and support to  
the people of the Upper Waitaki**

A fifth generation Southland farmer's daughter, Kathryn ran Mountford Estate for what was 10 "amazing" years.

The new partnership will trade as Pure NZ Wine Ltd.

Kathryn says the plan is to introduce new labels with strong links to the Omarama/ Ohau region.

"We have a passion for the area - how could you not love this? - and of course Kees' grandchildren are here."

Kathryn and Steve recently ran a stall at Omarama's High Country Garden tour. she says they have begun offering "in-home" wine tastings where groups of friends can get together, relax, enjoy a fun night with friends and learn about wine in a "non-threatening" way.

And with so many possibilities right on their doorstep they were also looking at other ideas.

Although those plans do not include grape-growing given the location because although it was possible it would require considerable effort to be a success, Kees says.

Plans are likely to focus on the "changing face of tourism", and the Alps to Ocean trail, and New Zealand and international tourists who want to "get a taste" of local New Zealand.

"We have a beautiful QE II block running down to the lake," Kathryn says.

Steve, who got to know the couple when he worked for Kees in Southland, commutes regularly from Tauranga to attend to other business interests He is also managing director of NZ Vet Direct.

To find out more: <https://www.purenzwine.co.nz/>

*Photo: Steve Taylor, Kathryn Ryan and Kees Zeestraten relax in the afternoon sun at Ohau Downs Station and toast their new on-line winery, Pure NZ Wines.*





# 100 years on - We remember two who served

*This month marks 100 years since two of three Omarama men serving in WW1 were killed in action at Ypres, Belgium. One of those deaths was on Christmas Eve, 1917. Last month we remembered the first of the three whose names appear on the plaque on the Memorial stone and in the Memorial Hall - Private Alan Philip O'Neill.*

*Former Upper Waitaki Returned and Services Association president and new life member Michael Blackstock tells the stories of two other servicemen who died for their country Rifleman Lindly Tasman Harper and Private Arnold Spain Waldron. (These stories have previously appeared in Anzac issues of the Omarama Gazette)*

Rifleman Lindly Tasman Harper, Service No. 49895, 3rd New Zealand Rifle Brigade, 2nd Battalion, C Company was killed December 11, 1917 at Ypres, Belgium, aged 42. DOB: February 21, 1875.

Surfaceman for the Waitaki County Council. Next of kin: brother Mr JE Harper, Omaramu; parents Mr and Mrs Alexander Harper of Enfield. Religion: Presbyterian. Height: 5ft 10in, weight 144lbs, complexion brown, blue eyes and light brown hair. He is buried in Bedford House Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium.

Private Arnold Spain Waldron, Service No. 32599, New Zealand Machine Gun Corps, No.4 Company was killed in action at Ypres, Belgium December 24, 1917, Aged 22. DOB: June 22, 1895 at Blacks, Central Otago. Shepherd. Next of kin: brother Leonard (Len) Waldron of Twinburn Station, Omarama. Religion: Catholic. At the time of his death, he was survived by his four other brothers (two of which were serving in the armed services) and two sisters. Height: 5ft 9in, weight: 131lbs. His complexion was fair with blue eyes and fair hair. He is buried at Buttes New British Cemetery, Polygon Wood, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

On a personal note Arnold's brother, Len, was my grandfather Leslie Emile Shirres' best friend and best man at his wedding. Leslie was a WW1 veteran of the Otago Regiment who took up Riverside Station, Omarama in 1924. Waldron's farmed Twinburn until the early 80s before selling up to take up farming near Rakaia. Nephew, Brian Waldron is buried in the Omarama Cemetery, his three sons, Mark, Guy and Ben attended Omarama Primary School. Mother Odell was at one time teacher at the school.



# 'Rekindling' wins the Melbourne Cup

Celebrations in Omarama were all about 'Rekindling', not only watching the Melbourne Cup winner but catching up with old friends and making new ones. Here's a look at the Melbourne Cup celebrations and our own winners at Boots and Jandals Hotel Omarama, Tuesday, November 7, 2017, with thanks to Bruce and Julie Dyson.

Best dressed lady – Debs Wilson, of the Love Shack.

Best dressed gentleman - Peter 'Casso' Casserly

Best dressed couple – Alona and Blair Shaw.





# The Noticeboard



To have your community notice included here email: [omaramagazette@gmail.com](mailto:omaramagazette@gmail.com)

**There are a flurry of end-of-year notices throughout this issue - be sure not to miss the ones meant for you.**

**The final Omarama Gazette for the year** will be the Christmas issue published Saturday, December 16, and filled with Christmas greetings and notices about the hours businesses will be open over the break. Close-off for this is Tuesday, December 12. The first issue for 2018 will be Wednesday, February 7. There is no January issue.

**Congratulations to Michael Blackstock**, former Upper Waitaki RSA president who was awarded a life membership of the organisation this month.

**Toot for Tucker** - Listen out for the sirens and have your non-perishable food or household items ready for the volunteer collectors Wednesday, December 13 from 6pm. All food goes to the Food bank in Oamaru which also services our area. You are welcome to leave donations at Farmlands Kurow or the Kurow Information Centre.

**If you would like to take part in a survey** about internet broadband speed during the peak visitor months in Omarama, please contact Stew Dovey [STEWDOVEY@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:STEWDOVEY@hotmail.co.uk)

**Omarama Playgroup:** The last day of playgroup for this year is Wednesday, December 13.

It 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 Carla Hunter 03 976 0504

**Omarama School final assembly for 2017** is 11am Thursday, December 14, followed by a shared lunch. All welcome.

**The 2017 South Island Regional Gliding championships** were on November 18 to 25 at the Omarama Airfield.

Results are here: [https://www.soaringspot.com/en\\_gb/south-island-gliding-championships-omarama-2017/](https://www.soaringspot.com/en_gb/south-island-gliding-championships-omarama-2017/)  
<https://www.facebook.com/omaramagazette/posts/1954299201265925>

**The Omarama Golf Club annual meeting** is at 12.30pm, Saturday, December 9, at the club rooms. All welcome.

**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 has begun its summer hours.** It is open 7pm to 8pm Tuesdays, and 9am to 10am Wednesdays and Saturdays, at the Omarama Community Centre. Contact Glenys: 027 611 8880

**The Kurow Medical Centre** holds a clinic 8.30am to 1pm, and 2pm to 5pm, on Tuesdays at the Omarama Community Centre. Please phone Kurow Medical Centre, 03 436 0760, for appointments. On Fridays phone 0274 347 464 because the Kurow Centre is closed.

**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](mailto: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 1pm,

**Please note twilight nine-hole golf now Thursdays**, tee-off 6pm, all welcome. Club Captain Adrian Tuffley 027 3478276. [www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz/](http://www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz/)

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**The Christmas issue of the Omarama Gazette  
is Saturday, December 16, 2017.**

**Please submit copy  
by Tuesday, December 12.**

**NB There is no January issue.**

**The first issue for 2018 is Wednesday, February 7.  
Please submit copy for this by Friday, February 2.**

# # POTM Pets of the Moment

Thunder and Lightening, they're not at all frightening. In fact, with their kinda' spiffy black and white patches they're as cute as two pigs in a pod could be. The pair of young saddleback boars moved into the Moore family pigpen a few months ago and they stole the show at the recent Omarama High Country Garden Tour. The two love their greens and pig nuts, Emma says. Their speciality is growing fast - which considering the ultimate outcome may not actually be regarded by the porcine fraternity as a positive attribute. Salutations to you Thunder and Lightening, and to steal another quote from E B White's Charlotte's Web; "Never hurry and never worry!" little guys.



## Justices of the Peace

**JPs are available by appointment to:**

- \* Witness documents such as applications for citizenship
- \* Certify copies
- \* Take declarations, affidavits and affirmations

**The service is free of charge**

**To make your visit quick and easy:**

- \* Do not sign anything beforehand
- \* Do take photo identification
- \* Remember to take the original as well as the copy to be certified
- \* Check that a New Zealand Justice of the Peace can complete your documentation



**Malcolm McMillan, Lake Ohau Village**  
438 9798 027 438 9798



**Georgie Robertson, Omarama**  
438 9554 027 4861 525



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**7pm until late**

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JANDALS HOTEL**

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# The Community Reports

## Omarama Search and Rescue

Omarama Land Search and Rescue enjoyed an incident-free assignment last month. That is unless you count chairman Mike King getting his Toyota Hilux into a spot of bother, and making national news.

Last month the team were asked by Toyota New Zealand to provide support and lunch for a media event - an off-road test drive of the company's latest SUVs staged for various motoring columnists.

The trip took them from Omarama to St Bathans, through the Oteake Conservation area to the western branch of the Manuherikia River and onto St Bathans.

Our team acquitted themselves well and largely managed to stay behind the scenes. Photos and write-ups have since featured in motoring columns throughout the country.

However, Fairfax reporter Rob Maetzig broke the golden rule of "what goes on tour stays on tour" and just happened to mention the only 'bugger' moment when a certain Toyota Hilux ute support vehicle struck some difficulties.

Reportedly, the six new toys that made the trip came through the numerous stream crossing, steep and rutted tracks with flying colours.

Mike says the day was organised by Tony Groome of New Zealand Land Search and Rescue and was such a success the Toyota executives responded with a generous donation to the work of Omarama Sar.

About 20 made the trip and that included eight media.

Lex Perriam provided background commentary for the tour.

The visitors were treated to lunch at Doc's "Top Hut" which included Mike's smoked 'canal' salmon, Ahuriri River trout, venison bulgogi, rabbit drumsticks, Merino lamb chops, Boots and Jandals Hotel sausages and Michelle Patterson's chocolate eclairs - the ones Bryan didn't eat.

Read Fairfax reporter Rob Maetzig's story here:

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/motoring/99389466/toyotas-upgraded-prado-suv-rides-through-the-tough-drives>

*Photo: Lex Perriam*





# Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade



We have had 12 calls in November. It was a mixture of motor vehicle accidents, medicals, fires and personal fire alarms. Our new truck has finally arrived and we are very proud of it. The truck is 30 years newer and a lot better for us to work with. You would be more than welcome to come and have a look at any stage. Pop down on a Wednesday night and have a look. With the drier days, please be careful with fires. If you're not sure - don't light it - get advice. Have a safe and enjoyable Xmas, check those smoke alarms in your caravans and be safe.

*Chief fire officer Terry Walsh*

## **A special request from our emergency services**

**Would all residents please make sure their house number or rural rapid number is clearly visible at the entrance to their property so services can find you quickly and easily in an emergency - day or night.**

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## Omarama Playgroup

The make-up of the Omarama Playgroup committee has remained largely the same after its recent annual meeting. Petrina Paton was re-elected president, Andrea Aubrey re-elected as vice-president and Jemma Gloag was re-elected as treasurer. Jeessie Toole stepped down as secretary and Carla Hunter was voted into the role.

The last day of playgroup for the year is Wednesday, December 13.

It 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 Carla Hunter 03 976 0504

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**'The Community Reports' is dedicated to news from clubs, groups and sports teams. Contributions are welcome. [omaramagazette@gmail.com](mailto:omaramagazette@gmail.com)**

# **OMARAMA GOLF CLUB**



## **NEW YEAR'S TOURNAMENT**

**Saturday 6th January 2018**

**Cost \$30.00 pp**

**Two's \$2.00**

**Cards in by 12.30 p.m Tee Off 1.00 p.m.**

**BBQ on course & Meal afterwards**

**Great Prizes, Raffles**

**Great Company**

## **EVERYONE WELCOME**

**Contact Adrian Tuffley 0273478276 for information**



# Omarama Golf Club

*By Christine Bowman*

The last month the final of our shoot-out competition was played, with Paul Bowman taking the honours from a very tight contest with Tom Moore. Both played outstanding golf on the day.

Congratulations to James McIlraith who won the men's section at Kurow Golf Club at a fund-raising event for Masonic Lodge.

Planning for our New Year tournament on Saturday, January 6, 2018 is well under-way. Cost is \$30.00 per person which includes BBQ on course and meal afterwards. Cards in by 12.30 pm with tee-off 1 pm. Great prizes and company. Contact Adrian Tuffley for more information 027 347 8276. Everyone is welcome.

The Golf Club annual general meeting is being held on Saturday, December 9, at 12.30 p.m. at the club rooms. All welcome.

We again have had people dumping rubbish at the golf club, including garden waste. Please do not dump ANY rubbish at the golf course, as it is a cost to our golf club to remove it.

The Omarama Golf Club: Saturdays, cards in 12.30pm, tee-off 1pm; twilight nine-hole golf Thursday tee-off 6pm. All welcome. Club Captain Adrian Tuffley 027 3478276. [www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz](http://www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz)

## Omarama Library

*By Glenys Dawson*

Thanks to all of our great volunteers who contributed so much to the running of our Community Library during 2017.

It's been a busy year, and we have expanded both our fiction and non-fiction collections considerably during this time. We now also have DVDs for hire, and jigsaws are available to borrow for free, plus a charming collection of very recent children's books. All residents and ratepayers can join for free, including holiday makers and seasonal workers.

As a member you can also access the collection of E-books held by the Waitaki District Library at any time, or order online from any books held at any library throughout the Waitaki region and the books will be transferred to our library for you the following week.

### HOURS:

**We hope to be open right through Christmas and New Year (excluding Boxing Day) on the following days:**  
**Wednesday Mornings 9-10 am**  
**Saturday Mornings 9-10 am**  
**Tuesday Evenings 7-8 pm (excluding the 26th of December).**

New members and volunteers always welcome!!



# Omarama Residents' Association

*From the minutes of the last meeting...*

A huge vote of thanks and congratulations was proffered to Jemma Gloag and her team for the great effort in raising a net total of \$28,900, from the Omarama High Country Garden Tour, to go toward the funding of the sports courts. Jemma advised that the sport courts subcommittee were in the process of thanking all sponsors and donors to the Garden Tour.

Craig circulated a copy of the North Otago Lawn Tennis Association funding application document, which detailed the type of court surface that is the current national standard. A decision will have to be made before funding can be sort. Another point was raised that, if we are to attract tournaments, we will need a standard that is familiar to competition players.

Toilets were deemed to be an important addition to the establishment of the courts, especially for those with small children.

The Waitaki District Council toilet strategy is coming up for review and this may bring about an opportunity for funding. Each member was encouraged to make a public submission in support of new toilets.

Judy Piner confirmed she would be interested in investigating the toilet option further and reporting back to the committee at the next meeting.

Kay Verheul confirmed that the St Thomas church building is to be opened as an information centre by December.

**A Christmas Eve service will be held at the hall, starting at 7:00pm.**

**Next meeting: 7.30 pm, Thursday, December 14, at the Omarama Community Centre.**

## **Contacts:**

**Ann Patterson, chairperson, 03 438 9493, Craig Dawson, secretary, 0274389132**

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## **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](mailto:charlotte.omarama@gmail.com). Keys and fobs are collected from GlenCraigs**



# THE CHRISTMAS STORY



A Service of  
Lessons and Carols  
will be held  
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### Kia ora Omarama Community

This term at Omarama school we have been busy working on “Keeping Ourselves Safe”. We have been learning about our bodies, ways to stay safe and about how people can use tricks, bribes and secrets to attempt to keep unsafe behaviour hidden from others.

The senior room has researched and created some amazing instruments and the junior room is working hard on learning our Christmas play in preparation for our end of year assembly.

Congratulations to Charlie Mathias, Cameron Smith, Balin Sole, Elise Mathias and Jessica Smith for qualifying for the North Otago Athletics. At the event Balin and Elise strived to do their best but did not obtain a placing. Charlie obtained first place in discus and second place in shot-put 12 year boys. Jessica was first in high jump and second in sprints, third in long jump and long distance in year 12 girls and supported Waitaki Valley's relay to gain first place. Cameron gained a second place in discus in the 10 year boys. We are so proud of you all! You did Omarama School proud!

Congratulations to Ryan Scobie for making the finals in the NZ Kiwi Christmas Art competition.

If you would like to use our newly renovated pool over the holiday period please contact school before the 14th of December. The cost is \$90.00 for a season's pass this year.

**We would like to invite you all to our end of term assembly to be held on Thursday the 14th of December starting at 11am followed by a shared lunch.**

Thank you all for your ongoing support and donations to our wee school. Your

continued support has helped to subsidise many events for the children

including skiing and both our camps. I'd like to wish you all a wonderful

Christmas and New Year break with your families and friends, have a safe fun time!

School opens again on Tuesday the 30th of January 2018 at 8:30 am.

*Nga Mihi - Kim McKenzie, Principal.*





# Hāngī by the stream

*By Kate Doran, Environment Canterbury.*

Talking about tuna, learning about local water management and enjoying a delicious hāngī were part of a spring day out for Omarama School students. The whole school (39 kids) were invited to Omarama Station landowners Richard and Annabelle Subtil and rūnanga, to learn about its native tuna relocation programme and to join in the Upper Waitaki Zone Committee hāngī after its November meeting.

John Wilkie, rūnanga representative on the zone committee, explained the importance of relocating tuna – native longfin eel - which are considered a taonga (treasure) having lived in our lakes, swamps, rivers and streams for more than 23 million years. Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua, Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, and Te Rūnanga o Waihao are the kaitiaki rūnanga for the Waitaki catchment and have been working for 15 years to preserve the tuna by relocating selected fish to waters below local hydroelectric dams.

The project, which has also been supported by Meridian Energy, has been trapping and moving the migrating adult tuna back downstream below the dams, to help increase their numbers and allow them to breed at sea.

The pupils also got to see the Upper Waitaki Zone Committee hold a meeting - albeit a little less formal than usual, held in the field beside the hāngī pit and stream

The committee discussed ongoing biodiversity projects in its Immediate Steps Programme – a partnership programme with landowners and other organisations - and also granted funding for a new project to erect a fish barrier on Fork River to protect vulnerable native species.

Waitaki Irrigators Collective policy manager Elizabeth Soal also talked to committee members about her Otago University PhD research looking into the effectiveness of catchments boards and collaborative governance for water management.

Zone Committee member Richard Subtil said the hāngī was turning into an annual event.

“It started off as a celebration with the rūnanga around the eel project and now



it's still a good chance to get everyone together, including the zone committee, and to make the most of living here."

After a waiata from school pupils it was time for kai. Members of the water zone committee, along with rūnanga and Omarama Station and ECan staff worked together to raise the hāngī. The meal included wild pork, mutton, chicken, lamb, potatoes, kūmara and pumpkin.

Omarama School Principal Kim McKenzie said the outing complemented the work the pupils were doing in the classroom and at their school camp about eels and their ecosystems.

"It's becoming a tradition for us now to come down and enjoy the hāngī and learn more about our local waterway life."

*Photos By Kate Doran*

*Omarama School pupils (left to right) Robbie Anderson, Arabella Thomas and Archie Bochel with their plates of kai.*

*Elise Mathias (at back) with Carlisle Maniego, Jacob Moore and Jack Bochel.*

*A less formal setting for this month's Upper Waitaki Zone Committee meeting.*

*Kai time; The meat is carved by Peter Te Rangihiroa Ramsden, Tangata Whenua Facilitator at Environment Canterbury, and landowner and Upper Waitaki Zone Committee Member Richard Subtil while John Wilkie, also an Upper Waitaki Zone Committee Member looks on.*





# Omarama School Board of Trustees

*By Jan Thomas, Omarama School Board of Trustees*

Kia ora Omarama community,

What a great year we have had, good things are happening in our little School.

Kim McKenzie has nearly completed her first year and has been given a really good report from her appraiser, Dave McWhinnie.

We would like to share a snapshot from Kim's appraisal.

"It is very clear that Kim has made a successful start as principal of Omarama School. She is respected by all the school's stakeholders. Kim has brought much needed stability to the school with an environment now providing effective teaching and learning. When staff report they enjoy coming to school each day, Kim can reflect on a job well done."

The board would also like to thank and congratulate Kim and all the staff on a very good year as we see a very settled school with children achieving success in their learning and in the way they relate to others. The classrooms are always busy with many different activities happening on a daily basis.

The new accessible shower unit is nearly complete making Omarama School a very modern learning environment. The pool has been repaired and repainted with all the correct stuff. Andy Moore has stepped up and will be taking care of the pool.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees all the best for the festive season and safe holidays.

---

## Waitaki District Council - news in brief



**Fire and Emergency New Zealand** has declared a prohibited fire season in its Central and Coastal zones.

At this time the council will not be issuing fire permits and present permits issued in the Central Zone under the Waitaki District Urban Fire Prevention Bylaw do not allow a permit holder to light a fire in the open air during a prohibited fire season.

Applicants can establish which zone the permit is required for by using the fire season map at [www.otagoruralfire.org.nz/fire-season/fire-season/](http://www.otagoruralfire.org.nz/fire-season/fire-season/)

**A digital map has been produced** to provide tourists with information about camping grounds, public toilets and dump stations throughout the Waitaki District, in Otago. The map is at [www.waitaki.govt.nz](http://www.waitaki.govt.nz) (under Maps) and has 'pins' showing where these amenities - including private and council-owned camping grounds – are sited as well as clearly showing areas where freedom camping is prohibited.

### **From the minutes and agenda of the council meeting today, Wednesday December 6**

In October, Omarama Airfield Ltd director Glen Claridge presented the council-controlled organisation's annual report to the Waitaki District Council. The minutes of the meeting state matters discussed included taxation, finding revenue opportunities outside of aviation and better use of the 90ha of prime real estate it owns – rezoning or selling land to fund other ideas.

## **Costs to fix campervan dump station exceed \$10,000**

Some of the remedial work required to rectify design and plumbing issues with the Omarama Campervan Dump Station site has been completed and the remainder of the work is expected to be finished before Christmas.

The topic was discussed for a second time at the Ahuriri Community Board meeting in Omarama last week, Monday, November 27.

In October, at its meeting in Otematata, board chairman Graham Sullivan said house buses and large campervans were struggling to empty waste tanks because the camber of the car park and concrete pad was set at the wrong angle to the sump.

As well, there had been issues with the plumbing design and another contractor had been brought in to fix this.

At that meeting he and community board member Calum Reid said there should be an investigation into how the situation had come about.

In an email, in answer to questions put to him by the Omarama Gazette, Waitaki District Council recreation manager Erik van der Spek said "modifications" were needed to the plumbing to make it easier to "rectify blockages".

"Most of the cost to date has been associated with blockages which are frequent issues in most dump-stations with people putting bottles and stones in.

"The concrete pad is expected to be completed before Christmas at a cost of \$11,000.

"This is from our toilet maintenance budgets.

"The contractor completed the install according to the specifications provided by the [New Zealand] Motor Caravan Association which only dealt with ground level beside the sump and did not provide specifications for a sized or gradient of a pad."

Erik said he did not have the cost of the remedial plumbing work "readily available". Installation of the dump station was completed in November last year after the council agreed to re-examine its initial budget and approve an extra \$10,000 on top of the \$20,000 already budgeted for the project.

The NZMCA gave \$10,000 to the project on the condition potable water was provided at the site to allow camper van users to wash out tanks.

The dump station is on council-owned recreation reserve opposite the intersection of Ahuriri Dr and Chain Hills Highway.

**Date, time and venue of the first  
Ahuriri Community Board meeting  
in 2018 are yet to be confirmed.**

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

**[www.waitaki.govt.nz](http://www.waitaki.govt.nz)**

# Environment Canterbury news in brief

**ECan has elected Steve Lowndes as its chairperson.** Steve was the deputy chair and has been acting chairperson since 20 July when David Bedford stepped down from the role because of ill health. The new deputy chair person is Peter Scott. The council consists of 12 councillors. At present seven of those are elected and five are Government appointees. The new Government has not appointed a replacement for David.

**ECan is one of nine regional councils** taking part in a Maritime New Zealand safety campaign this summer. Navigation Safety Officer Gary Manch said the harbourmaster's office would take enforcement action against boaties who break lifejacket and speed rules. They could face fines of up to \$300.

Boaties are responding well to Environment Canterbury's new rules on vessel identification. As part of the Navigation Safety Bylaw 2016, all vessels who go boating on the region's waterways must have an identifying name or number displayed on each side. To read more: <https://www.ecan.govt.nz/get-involved/news-and-events/2017/positive-response-to-new-boat-id-system/>

**Recreational river users are reminded to be vigilant** over the warmer months because heavy rainfall in the main divide can cause rivers to rise rapidly. ECan advises those planning to visit any of these rivers, or camp nearby to check the latest weather forecast and its website to see rainfall data and river flow data before heading out.

**The Wallaby Geomap is live.** This tool allows people to report sightings of wallabies (dead or alive) while out in the bush. Users simply enter their contact information and the GPS location of the sighting. ECan then uses the data to help eliminate small populations before they become established.

## **There is no December meeting of ECan's Upper Waitaki Zone Committee**

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](http://www.ecan.govt.nz)**



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# SPRAYING FOR PLANT PEST CONTROL – LAKE TEKAPO/ TWIZEL AREA

Environment Canterbury will be carrying out their annual spraying programme in targeted riverbeds and lakes around Lake Tekapo and Twizel over summer to help control woody weeds, including gorse, broom, lupin, briar, willow and wilding trees.

Property owners, recreational and other users of the riverbeds and lakes in the area are advised that herbicide spraying (glyphosate and triclopyr, along with added surfactant compounds) is scheduled to be undertaken at:

- Tekapo River, Control Gate to Lake Benmore
- Pukaki River, Tekapo confluence to 5km upstream
- Upper Ohau River, Lake Ruataniwha to Lake Ohau

The work will continue intermittently as weather permits until 30 April 2018 and will be clearly signposted. The control works will be carried out by ground spraying by either gun and hose or knapsack.

For any enquiries, please contact Customer Services on 0800 324 636.



**Environment  
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*Kaunihera Taiao ki Waitaha*



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**Waste Management** has advised it will no longer provide the yellow pre-paid rubbish bags as part of its service in the Waitaki district. The bags will not be on sale after December 31 and it will stop collecting bags after February 28.

Instead it is offering wheelie bin services the cost of which begin at \$6.20 a week for an annual subscription for a 140l bin to be collected and emptied fortnightly. For more information: [www.wastemanagement.co.nz](http://www.wastemanagement.co.nz) or phone 088 101010

At present Waitaki District Council resource recovery parks charge a 'drop-off' fee of \$4 per 65l bag for general rubbish. There is no rate-payer funded collection. <http://www.waitaki.govt.nz/our-services/rubbish-and-recycling/Pages/default.aspx>

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NOW OPEN**



You get 30 free hours if your  
child is 3 or 4 years old like me.

The teachers are all  
qualified and registered.



There are spaces here for  
children aged 2-5 years.

We are a not for profit organisation and  
registered charity which means all the money  
received goes back to support your child's learning.



**Contact Head Teacher Carol Sinclair**

**Phone 03 435 0433**

**or call in to the kindergarten**

**135 Mackenzie Drive, Twizel**

# YOUR CARPET GUY

**CONTACT  
DETAILS**

Wouter Smit  
03 - 435 0116  
027- 931 4207  
[wjcsmit@xtra.co.nz](mailto:wjcsmit@xtra.co.nz)  
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We are looking for trained teachers to join our team.

Our kindergarten Moemoeā/Vision;

*"A unique place where tamariki learning is enriched through diverse learning pathways".*

If you are a trained ECE or Primary teacher interested in relieving and/or part-time work, please contact;

**Carol Sinclair**

**Head teacher**

**Twizel kindergarten**

**Ph 034350433**

**twizel.kindergarten@xtra.co.nz**

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We are looking to employ a forecourt  
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Spend your Christmas in the park,  
by the river, by the lake ...  
Omarama is the place to be!

Book a cabin or motel  
or come camping  
and explore our big backyard.

**Omarama TOP 10 Holiday Park**

**The weather that was  
@ 44°29'29.4"S 169°58'19.7"E**

**November 2017**

**Highest temperature: November 23, 30.9C**

**Lowest temperature: November 6, 2.7C**

**Most rainfall: November 7, 28 mm**

**Total rainfall for November: 57 mm**

# The FAQs - Those Five Awkward Questions with...

Louisa Proctor - front of house, Oasis Cafe-Bar-Grill



*From Kaitaia, Northland, Louisa came to Omarama about nine years ago for work. She is Te Rarawa, Ngāpuhi.*

**What is one of your favourite things?**

*Just travellin', cruising in my house bus*

**What is one lesson you learned at school that you have never used?**

*Science*

**Tell us something about Omarama we might not know?**

*In Te Reo, Omarama is Te Omarama - place of light.*

**If you could time travel where would you go?**

*Back to 2006, travelling and working in Marble Bar, Western Australia. I love hot places.*

*(During December and January, temperatures in excess of 45 °C are common.)*

**What is one thing you would tell your 16-year-old-self?**

---

## The View from the Chook House

Wishing you a Christmas that is  
one big box of fluffy clucks!



# The Garden Diary - The unconditional gift

These December days are weighted down and heavy with it.

The humid air stacks into pillows of dense cloud before toppling and bursting with the strain. In a flash of light with a clap of thunder heavy pats of rain smack the silty, silky dust splashing molecules of fragrant atoms into the super-charged air.

That earthy scent mingles with the newly-opened shell-pink briar roses and the fused spicy-earthly mix drifts across the storm-cleaned Omarama high country – our tūrangawaewae. The place we stand.

As the gate swings closed behind me my domesticated hybrid-musk roses, leaning forward from their tidy row, welcome me home and wrap me in their distinctive honey -musk fragrance.

Many of these roses owe their existence to the Edwardian rose breeder and man of letters, the Reverend Joseph Pemberton, who christened his pastel-toned, free flowering, sweetly-scented beauties classical names like Clytemnestra, Cornelia, Danae and Penelope.

Scent marks a place, marks a time, brings back a moment, sometimes so vividly it can stop me in my tracks.

So it seems unsurprising scientists believe loss of smell and loss of memory are linked.

Theories as to why flowers have scent tend to destroy romantic notions and reduce all to pragmatism. Flowers emit different chemicals to emit different scents to attract pollinators. And it's all about timing and precision.

On a hot, moonlit summer night there is nothing more entrancing or intoxicating than the heady and 'luminous' perfume of night-scented stock, Nicotiana glauca or lilies planted under the window.

But that Romeo and Juliet moment is just to attract the night flying insects.

Once the job is done the flower flicks the switch - nothing more to look at here, and shuts down or changes its scent so pollinators move on to the flowers which still need to be serviced.

I wonder if this is why – to my 'nose' the perfume of lilac and daffodils which open so beautifully seem to really 'go off' after a day or so.

Science applies a similar clinical assessments to bird song.

But it's so hard to be all 'scienc-y' and 'reasonable' in this heat.

I'm certain that thrush at the top of the tallest tree is singing its heart out for pure joy.

Fat bumble bees who remember the cold of winter revel in sunshine and lie back 'drunk' among the pollen, cushioned deep within petals.

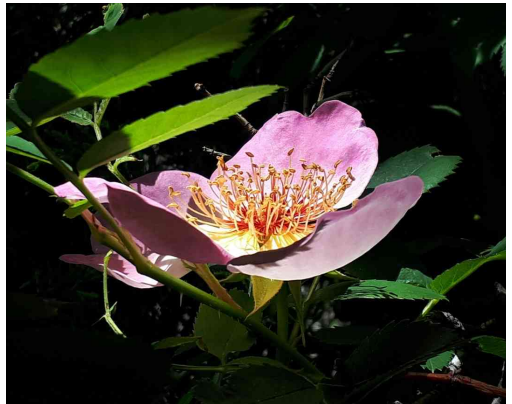
Blackbirds join magpies to lazily warble their summer song, taking a long lunch after their morning's work.

The newest bellbird takes time-out to practice his notes for the first time, and the hens swathe themselves in warm deep dust talcum for an afternoon snooze.

A time to be still and take time to breathe in the moment

Ruth Grundy

*(I garden a small space under a big sky  
in Omarama)*





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