

# ***-Omarama Gazette -*** **July 2018**

## **The Story-tellers' Edition**

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### **Our place, our people, our stories.**

It's mid-winter, and time to rug up for long walks in our sparkling days,  
or cosy up to the fire and enjoy a good yarn.

In celebration, this month we - and we have some generous people who have  
contributed their time to put pen to paper - bring you a special edition featuring,  
in the best of oral history tradition, some long reads about us.

Our stories become who we are, they form our collective DNA which connects us all  
and reaches through the generations.

For those of you who like their stories short, sweet and to the point please indulge us  
while we enjoy a nostalgic look back.

Normal programming resumes next month.

P.S. Corrections are welcome, feedback is welcome .

If you enjoy what we have all contributed please let us know and we'll do the same next  
winter .

Start writing your story now.

email: [omaramagazette@gmail.com](mailto:omaramagazette@gmail.com) or phone 021 294 8002 or (03)438 9766

# School days - Ginger's story

The year was 1950, and the news Australia and New Zealand would soon sign the ANZUS treaty with the US – to co-operate on military matters in the Pacific – did not filter down to a five-year-old red-head whose days were spent roaming the foothills of his family's Omarama sheep station, often with pups by his side.

The fact butter rationing, introduced in New Zealand for WW2, was finally lifted didn't make too much of a mark either since most farming families had their own house cow and hens and, of course, a ready supply of mutton.

Feeding the family and farm workers was priority for Ginger's mum, Jean (nee Hedley).

And when she rang that old ship's bell immediate attendance at the table was required - no arguments.

"You'd better get off, Dad would say."

Sometimes that meant a sprint from quite a distance, Ginger says.

Along with butter, petrol rationing was lifted and that may just have been the kind of news that this five-year-old took in, especially since Ginger's father, Ian William Anderson, of Ben Omar Station, was on the Omarama School board of governors, and providing a vehicle to get pupils to school in town was its responsibility.

Locally, farmers were faced with an unrelenting battle against rabbits.

But optimism in the region must have been high because New Zealand was on the cusp of its greatest wool boom.

US demand to fill its stockpiles because of the Korean War led to the price of wool tripling overnight and to one of this country's greatest periods of economic growth. Nonetheless, Omarama, which in 1950 boasted two rugby teams, may as well have been a universe away from the world stage.

That year, a young couple by the name of Eion and Aileen Woods took over the lease of the Omarama Hotel from Eion's parents.

On her first day, in April, a young Mrs Woods had to cook for 100 – the dog trials were on.

In October, new entrant Ginger Anderson joined his older sisters Barbara and Margaret at the new school in the centre of town.

"Barbara looked after me.

"I was most probably nervous but my mother was great at making everything an adventure.

His older brother John spent his school days at Buscot Station when the school was sited there.

John left for boarding school in 1949 and Ginger started the year afterwards.

Numbers at the school fluctuated but there were usually about 10 pupils spread in age from the primers to standard six (year one to year eight) at the one-teacher school

On the roll, along with the three Andersons, were Tony Gloag, two Munro girls and Don Munro,

Pat and Peter Patterson, Ian, Liz and Diana (Tiger) Aubrey from Berwen, the Thomas' from Killermont, Innes' of Dunstan Downs, and children of the Ministry of Works and Rabbit Board employees.

Wilfred and Molly Wardell (Annabelle Subtil's grandparents) and their family, of Omarama Station, moved to live near Oamaru for a short time not long after Ginger began school and the McKechnie family, who were managing Omarama Station were pupils. The Taylors of Tara Hills Station also attended before the farm was sold to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries for use as a research station.

The Sutherland children, of Benmore, were either older or younger than the generation that went through while Ginger was there.

Later, the Kellands from Glenburn joined the school bus run.

"There was no-one else there exactly my age."

Ginger's first teacher was David Loane and when he married and moved on Bill Brown took on the role.

In those days it was a single man's job and they were also required to drive the school bus.

Teachers were billeted with school families.

Initially, Omarama did not have a bus but an old car – brown, possibly an American Dodge - which kept breaking down, and soon was too small to carry all the pupils, Ginger says.

"So, Dad went to up Wellington to get us a school bus." – a New Zealand Education Department brown and cream Bedford.

"The bus would meet us at the bridge over the creek about a mile in from the main road.

"In winter, we would skate down the frozen creek [from the homestead] to meet it, take off our skates and change into our school shoes.

"I remember falling in, too.

"If the schoolmaster was staying with us we were last home.

But they were first dropped off at school in the mornings while he drove out to pick up the other pupils.

In winter, it was the job of those who arrived first to light kerosene heaters and the pot belly stove.

Also in winter, pupils were provided a hot mid-day meal at the pub – stew, and the like".

This was before the addition of the hexagonal extension to the western end of the hotel.

The pupils would walk through the kitchen, past the corner of the bar where men were enjoying dinner, and into the "wee dining room" for their meals.

Meanwhile, as Ginger walked past one of the labourers would sneak him a beer.

School days were not "regimented ... with only 10 of us [pupils]".

"We were taught the basics but the greatest thrill was being outside, of course.

"I liked nature study...fish, and birds' eggs."

"There was a creek that ran through the school where we caught 'bully' trout".



And there were plenty of rabbits.

One day they found a nest and smuggled baby rabbits into the schoolroom hiding them in their desks.

Predictably, one escaped with the inevitable ensuing rumpus in the classroom.

"It was my fault...I remember the rabbits running around the school quite clearly," he says laughing.

The school would make the trip to Kurow for sports' days.

Barbara enjoyed some success and he admits he was "quite fast in those days", too.

Summertime meant swimming.

It wasn't far to go – the school used a swimming hole at the Omarama Creek adjacent to Longview, and Ginger remembers a chap by the name of O'Neill, who lived there with his family in a caravan, would keep an eye on them all.

Classes were strict but not overly so.

Occasionally, he got the strap.

"But I can't for the life of me remember for what." – he says with what is surely that same look of wide-eyed innocence he flashed as a boy.

In the 1950s school routines were often arranged around seasonal work when extra hands were needed on farm.

"We'd have four-day weekends at times like lamb marking."

"The days were considered too big for a wee boy."

But he'd sneak in there and help anyway.

In the holidays or "if Mum and Dad were away at the dog trials" he'd stay at Killermont with Dick Thomas or with the Aubreys, at Berwen, often going eeling in the Omarama Stream.

"I remember Tiger and I got the hens drunk once... we got hold of a bottle of sherry and decided the hen house was the best place to hide.

"We drank enough to feel sick most probably and then poured the rest into the hen's water."

After their surprise tipple, the hens found they couldn't quite stay on their perches and Ginger is still laughing.

He learnt how to handle a gun at an early age and put it to good use hunting and shooting rabbits, which he also trapped for pocket money.

He had 20 traps which he would clear and reset before and after school, then skin the rabbits.

The meat was fed to the dogs.

Occasionally, his mother would cook up a stew although his father hated the meat.

The Andersons had developed their own breed of heading dog descended from ones his grandfather, John, brought out from Scotland to work the huge Benmore run where he was head shepherd.

Genetics also no doubt played a part in Ginger becoming a champion dog trialist, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather.

"As a boy I always had pups ... used to take two or three down to the sheep yards while dad was busy," not always to the delight of his father.

They were great days

"We made all our own fun.

"We used to play hide and seek, kick the tin, build tussock huts ..."

"I have no bad memories."

# A Day in the Park - Kevyn Webb's Story

## - by Lex Perriam and Jimmy Courtney

### Here's Lex:

*I first got to know Kev in 1976 when he, John Fleming and myself walked into the upper Hopkins to Erceg Hut.*

*Above Maori Creek, we found three 'duffa duffa' beetles and decided to race them. Talk about laugh. I'm not sure whose beetle won or who had to cook tea but that's where we first got to know each other.*

*Kevyn, his wife Bev and the boys – Gary, and twins Roger and Paul - came to Omarama in 1973.*

*Kev and his boys became well-known throughout the district for their outdoor pursuits and work skills.*

*He would put his hand to anything.*

*As well Kevyn's artistry took him everywhere and his paintings of the mountains and backcountry can be found in every corner of the world.*

*In 1958, he was among the first to start shooting deer to sell as venison to the export market.*

*At one time, Kev was a salesman-traveller for Corbans Wines.*

*He was never short of a good idea and quite often just a bit ahead of his time.*

*Nobody quite believed it when he said he was bringing Lear jets into Omarama until the Pan Am executives arrived in town.*

*It had seemed like the perfect business opportunity. The jets would arrive with visitors and Kevyn and his business partners would take them on helicopter flights, big game fishing and hunting in the backcountry.*

*The deal ran into trouble when it was revealed the Americans wanted to bring in about 300 people at a time and the young men were not quite set up for that.*

*Kevyn's main love was the Ahuriri River Valley. He was taking his family there from the early 1970s.*

*He would take everything up by pack from Canyon Creek to Shamrock Hut and then walk back for Bev and piggy-back the twins across the creek and take them up. Gary had probably already gone off hunting.*

*When Kevyn got the job working for the Williamson Family at Birchwood words could not express his joy.*

*[Under tenure review the property passed into the hands of the Department of Conservation.]*

*Kevyn made it his mission to return often to make sure Doc was keeping up the management of the property.*

*As part of that, he and Jimmy Courtney 'adopted' Shamrock Hut.*



## **Here's Jimmy:**

I got to know Kevyn Webb when we shared a common interest in Shamrock Hut in the Ahuriri Valley.

I was in my early 20s and Kevyn must have been in his 50s.

I would take two weeks annual leave from my job as farm technician at Tara Hills and spend the time with Kevyn maintaining huts, tracks and especially repairing washouts caused by the many tributaries crossing the 4WD road.

Lex, who was employed by the New Zealand Forest Service loaned us the tractor with a bucket and back blade along with the tip-truck.

At the time cars could make it to Shamrock Hut but today some would be lucky to make it Base Hut.

Rainy days at the hut, I would sleep in and Kevyn would cook breakfast normally around 6.30am to 7am.

One night after work sipping on a stubbie and cooking dinner over the open fire we agreed the hut was too small especially with our packs in there, so we came up with the idea of building a balcony

Doc had created an 'adopt a hut' scheme as they weren't spending any time or money on the Ahuriri

So, with this, the Omarama Rural Fire adopted Shamrock Hut and building commenced.

We begged, borrowed and bartered for building materials.

The decking came from Bill Rankin in exchange for some painting.

Louvre windows came courtesy of the Otematata dump, and the rest was 'acquired' from Tara Hills - we saw it as one Government department 'helping' another.

While digging the holes for the piles we came across quite a few Tiparillo plastic tips - Ron Williamson tells me he started early as a smoker.

On completion, we had a 'balcony' party and an open invitation went out to the locals. Much to our surprise Don and Mary Lou Blue arrived to help christen the balcony.

(Lex says; Kevyn was a resident of Ahuriri Heights for some time and became very close to the Blue family. He and Don would spend quite some time sorting out the world's problems.)

Camp oven food, baking, wild venison and of course, beverages were in plentiful supply.

Our 'fridge' was always filled with stubbies, real handy having a flowing stream that never ran dry.

The next day we were a bit 'second-hand' except for Kevyn - as 'Doctor Ahuriri' fixed him.

When Kevyn needed his batteries charged or was not feeling well a trip to see Dr Ahuriri fixed everything.

Kevyn was our local sign-writer and decorator but he was most famous for his brilliant artwork.

It was Kevyn who pushed for all local streets to be named after surrounding landscape features and for Keanes place to be named for Robert Keane buried in Omarama's first cemetery in Black Peak Rd.

It was his boys - Gary, Roger and Paul - that named Ladybird Hill.

Kevyn also liked to walk. It would be nothing for him to walk from Ahuriri Base Hut to

Shamrock or from Shamrock to Top Hut and back.

The day after Kevyn arrived at Whalan Lodge (Kurow) he set off on a walk to the Waitaki River and back. The staff were gobsmacked he had walked so far but for Kevyn, this was the norm.

One time we planned to go to Shamrock Hut and decided to invite Mary-beth Petrie (Prue O'Neill's sister) and Jason Rogers. Mary-beth had not experienced backcountry living.

As usual, Jason ( Jimmy's nephew) was running late. When they finally turned up it had started raining and was getting quite heavy.

We had sunk a few beers.

We debated about going but Kevyn was hell-bent on going, regardless.

In slurred speech, he told Jason more than once not to drive in the wheel ruts at Canyon Creek or he would be certain to get stuck.

He began to sound like a broken record.

We left the pub worse for the wear and headed for Shamrock.

It took a long time to get to Ben Avon, as those who know Kev know he had to stop every 5km for a pee.

The fords at Birchwood were swollen which raised an eyebrow.

The first slip past Birchwood was on the move but we carried on.

We got to Canyon Creek and it didn't look good but we proceeded.

Just as he was saying for the \*\*\*\*\* time not to drive into the wheel ruts Kev drove into the wheel rut. There was no way out. We were bellied.

As I sat in the landrover I looked out the window to see the river had broken its channel and a six-inch wave of water was crossing the river bed.

"Well, we're here for the night," Kevyn said. So we had another beer - though you could cut the air with a knife. I made a bed, somehow, in the back among the packs and food, and Kev had the front seats. After hours of pondering, at about 1am, we heard the sound of a vehicle. Jason and Mary-beth arrived and towed us out.

Jason had much pleasure in telling Kevyn he should always keep out of those ruts.

Kevyn passed away in Oamaru, in October, 2017.

*Captions: Lex and Kevyn spend time after Kev's move to Whalan Lodge, Kurow; Hut volunteers (from left) Jan Perriam with Steelo, Lyn Partridge, Kevyn Webb, Jimmy Courtney, Paul Martin and Don Elphinstone toast the success of their balcony-building efforts at Shamrock Hut in the Ahuriri Conservation Park.*

*Photos Lex Perriam*



# Learning days with 'Little Red'

## - Ross' Story

*Some history of the Omarama Volunteer Firebrigade  
by Ross Menzies, former Station Officer.*

About 1970, the call went out that additional persons were required as firemen in our village. I didn't know anything about being a fireman but when you are asked to lend a hand you step up and so I volunteered and joined the Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade.

The Brigade, then, was rather like a country committee full of enthusiasm and willing to, at a moment's notice, go out and help others in their moment of need. I remember very distinctly that we had no training and that nobody in the Brigade had ever been in a fire brigade before so it was like the blind leading the blind.

We had a "K" Bedford truck with cupboards on the back to hold hoses and tools and a fire extinguisher, and we had a water trailer supplied by New Zealand Forest Service (now the Department of Conservation) that carried some 200 gals of water, a pump and loads of hoses.

But best of all we had a purpose-built new fire station.

Practice nights would consist of sweeping out the fire station, dusting off the fire truck, checking the oil and petrol, and maybe a briefing on how to use the equipment by one or two persons that had actually used the equipment. We didn't use the pump or hoses on practice nights because that would mean having to dry the hoses before putting them back into their packs. So we stumbled on.

I was at the time about 24 years old, single and without much purpose in life, except to have a nice car, some nice duds and be able to play the guitar, which helped to introduce me to some nice girls. Well, we had just come out of the 60's and life was rather sweet. I would be able to handle this fireman thing with one hand tied behind my back.

We would get a call out and those who turned up would organise themselves into a crew and go out and do the best that we could do.

A crisis point was reached when our nominated Fire Chief left town to pursue work elsewhere and the brigade was left with no internal structure in place that would allow the brigade to function.

Eventually one man stepped up and took the reins.

Fred Hondalink was a scientist assistant from the local Government Agricultural farm of Tara Hills, someone trained to doing things in an organised manner. He came in and organised us to join the United Fire Brigades' Association and follow their structure of Chief, Deputy Chief, Station Officer and firemen. Suddenly we were feeling like a real Brigade with uniforms thrown in, not only dress uniforms but work uniforms as well.

Fred came to see me and told me what his plans were and if the firemen would agree he would allow his name to go forward for the position of CFO. That sounded really good to me, I knew we needed some leaders to tell us fireman how to do things and where to squirt the water. He then went on to explain that he wanted me to take on the role of Station Officer.



"Whoa up there" - I hadn't seen that one coming. But Fred was very persuasive and he beat me into a corner.

"Well," I said, "I will need some training on how to do the job."

"No problem, you are already booked into Dunedin Station in 15 days time."

And that's how it came about.

At the start of his term he arranged for the CFO, Deputy CFO and Station Officer to attend a week of training at fire school in Wellington, Christchurch or Dunedin.

It also helped immensely that within a few days of Fred being appointed CFO we had a call out to our local County Councillor's property to a fire in a hay barn.

The Council were the fire authority for the district and supplier of fire equipment. With the equipment we had we never stood a chance of saving the barn or the hay within, although we gave it a good try. In a very short time the Council issued us with a brand new Nissan truck cab and chassis which made it's way to the Ministry of Works fabrication workshop in Twizel where it was turned into a fully working fire appliance with, as we thought, all the bells and whistles in working order.

More about that later.

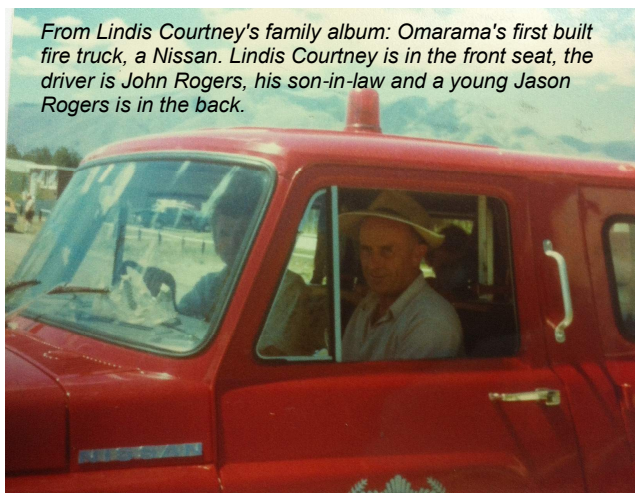
In the shuffling I was appointed Station Officer and attended training in Dunedin. We would sit in the class room for half the day and the afternoons would be out in the yard learning how to work the equipment. We could play with as many hoses that we wanted to, we used hook ladders to climb up five floors of the tower, hooking in the ladder one floor at a time, we used the 35 ft ladder to put the whole class onto the top of the tower, we learnt how to use breathing equipment in the smoke-filled tower and above all we learnt how to play it safe.

There were 15 of us in training and on the final day we were split into three crews. Each crew was to plan an exercise that consisted of three items of drill and perform the exercise in front of the rest of the class. Much to my embarrassment I was nominated by the tutor to be the fire officer of our group. Now they were going to find out that I was an impostor, I may have had a Station Officer's hat but I didn't know how to be a fireman. However, no argument would be considered.

So, our group settled down to create our exercise consisting of the required three elements, which we did and wrote up and handed in to the tutor who approved it. On the day, the other two crews went through their exercises and I thought performed very well.

Then last of all it was our turn, the dreaded moment had arrived, I wanted to crawl away and hide somewhere but that wasn't to be. Our crew assembled in the appliance and drove around the block and arrived back into the yard from the back street and on the command "As per briefing, get to work" the whole crew set about with the first element, with me standing to one side to supervise the operation.

When the second element was



*From Lindis Courtney's family album: Omarama's first built fire truck, a Nissan. Lindis Courtney is in the front seat, the driver is John Rogers, his son-in-law and a young Jason Rogers is in the back.*

to start I gave the order to commence that part of the operation, and the third element the same.

I was watching the operation and marvelling at the professional work being performed by the other members of our crew, not a mistake anywhere, it just all happened as planned. I was starting to feel rather proud of our group who at this point were just completing the third element. Although I knew I was just standing around and not assisting the crew I was still pretty proud to be part of this professional group. Then all hell broke loose.

There was water every where, I immediately realised that we had broken hoses mixed up with the hoses from the appliances and these broken hoses were stuffing up a perfectly good exercise. If I could figure out who was responsible for loading broken hoses into the appliance they were going to get it, and I mean get it! I couldn't figure out why Dunedin Fire Station would have crappy old broken hoses in their appliance and it really was stuffing up our exercise.

I noticed the tutor had sided up to me so I turned to him and said very diplomatically "I suppose, perhaps we should change those hoses" and he just shrugged his shoulders and said "Depends....!" and then turned to walk away. This left me with my mouth open thinking...'Depends, depends, it's your damn equipment --- what do you mean, depends?'

He immediately turned back and finished the sentence by saying,

"Depends whether you want the water to go on the fire or to wash down the yard"

Damn! I realised that I had diverted my thinking away from putting the fire out to who it was I going to blame for stuffing up my exercise. Damn!

I turned to the firemen at my elbow and gave the order to change the offending hoses and in a flash he was gone and within some seconds all the excess water disappeared and was redirected onto the fire. I noted right away that he knew what to do, he was just waiting for me to give the order to "Change the hoses".

The tutor had put an extra problem into the exercise to test our skills, and even with my bumbling leadership skills, we got away with it.

I had learnt a number of lessons.

If you are the leader, don't be diverted from the true task at hand.

If you are the leader, give direction clearly and simply. Your trained personnel will figure out or will already know how to do it.

If volunteer firemen turn up to practice night, train them, turn them into fully trained firemen, that's why they continue to turn out, and that is how they are able to solve complicated problems from clear and simple instructions.

If you have fully trained firemen at your disposal, empower them to do what they are trained to do.

And the big one, do not get involved with equipment. The equipment belongs to the firemen, the officer has no business touching any gear. Always ask a fireman to handle the gear.

On returning to Omarama, almost by accident, I took on the role of training and had much pleasure of training our firemen to high level. We suddenly had volunteer firemen who were empowered to perform the duties of fully trained firemen. In no time at all they all knew what to do and how to do it and they were allowed to use what ever equipment was required.

Over the next period of time until I, in turn, left Omarama in search of work, I per-

formed the duty of Fire Officer on thirty-six call outs. The fire officer is the senior person in charge at a fire and in all that time I never once touched any equipment. I would always ask a fireman to handle this or that equipment, after all it was their job and what they trained for.

Fred, our CFO, would turn up at the fire and he never once took over the role from me of fire officer, much to my annoyance. He would tell me later that he wouldn't do anything different than I was doing so wouldn't interrupted the flow of work. I would have loved handling a branch or running some hose rather than supervising with hands off. But one thing Fred was good at and that was getting the best out of his crew, and that included me.

I took that training into my work life and have never forgotten that leadership is to empowering others to perform.

I have been asked from time to time if I ever had a really bad fire with loss of life. I was very lucky not to have been in that position except for one night attending a house fire when roll call was done there was one young lady missing, causing a full search of the burning building, still not accounted for, until she was spotted in the assembled crowd much to my delight.

That was close enough. The feeling I had that night stayed with me for a long time.

Another one of life's lessons. "Life can throw you a curve ball at times."

During my time on the brigade there were some persons who stood out as being major contributors to the community through the brigade. I have already mentioned Fred Hondalink, but another couple that contributed immensely at that time in our little town were Rob and Jan Perriam. There was a number of years that they were the employers of three fireman, who were on call, and when the call went out they would drop their tools and turn out for however long the callout took. To my knowledge these people didn't get any acknowledgement at all. There is a lot of volunteering in all communities that goes unacknowledged which is a flaw in our system of local participation in community service.

Final word goes to the Nissan fire appliance. As mentioned earlier the Waitaki County issued us with a brand new cab and chassis which made it's way to the Ministry of Works workshop at Twizel. There it was put to good use in their training schedule and officially used for the training of MOW apprentices in the repair depot. Those apprentices made a very good job.

They added length to the cab with another row of seats turning the cab into a double cab, they also added storage compartments down each side of the rear and a large water tank down the centre, plus installed a pump at the rear complete with a high pressure hose and reel attached. Then completed it off with a cradle to hold our 20ft ladder, flashing lights, siren and over all red paint.

The unit was delivered to us with much fan fare, and very quickly the 1947 K Bedford disappeared. We now had what appeared to all, a new fire appliance. The next training night we had a good turnout and off we went with a full crew, hooked up to the town supply, "Water on", and we had a stream of water that went out about 15 ft. Hello, something is wrong here. Our motorman was working at a run, backwards and forward to the cab, revving the motor to high revs etc, "OK, Try that". So, "Water on" again. Aha, this time with a lot more noise we got the water out to about 16ft. That's not good.

Off down to the river and connected the pump to open water and this time we got about 8ft to 10ft at full noise. We returned to the station and with heavy heart reported

our disappointment to Fred. So, the investigation started and seemed to last for weeks and weeks. Why wasn't the pump working as expected. We sent the Appliance back to Twizel, they looked at it, tried it out and sent it back saying "It's working just fine"

After what seemed to be a long frustrating time, like weeks, some bright spark suggested that maybe the pump was being turned backwards?

Who would have thought?! Well, it was.

Eventually we got our Appliance back from MOW Twizel complete with a working pump.

Remembering that we had come from a 1947 K Bedford, the new Nissan served our community for a number of years and served it well, and provided lots of light-hearted stories around the country, I even heard the Minister from Wellington, who was at the 50th celebrations, make a crack about the Nissan Appliance in his speech. Seems the Nissan saga was known even in the North Island.

Over the years I have been waiting for a kid's book to be written about our Nissan, titled maybe "The Little Red that was". I'm sure there is one out there somewhere, maybe its held up at the printers.

I enjoyed my time in the Brigade, it was a time not to be missed. I enjoyed the training, well that was easy, because the crews members just wanted more and more, the trouble I had was keeping up with them. The byproduct of my time was the training I got in the role of leadership. In leadership roles that I have taken on later in life, I have from time to time noted to myself that I know how to do such'n'such because I learned that as a fireman at Omarama.



# Holidays - Noeline and John's story

*Omarama finds the Gillies, by Noeline and John Gillies*

In 1984 we were living in Southland.

Southwest storms with horizontal rain and gale-force winds were dominating our lives continually.

Night-times were the worst when we lay awake wondering when the steep roof on our house was going to blow off.

In the midst of this, we were given a bunch of keys which as it turned out opened up a new world for us. The keys belonged to Caroline and John Williamson of Black Peak Road.

They owned a crib there and had been teachers at Omarama School.

We had never been to Omarama as Stewart Island was our usual holiday destination.

It was the holidays, late autumn and we set off in our red Holden station-wagon with five children in the back, looking for better weather.

Seat belts were not compulsory back then, and the children would take turns on the



big mattress we had at the back.

Major roadworks between Kingston and Queenstown slowed us right down to a crawl but gave us time to enjoy views of spectacular scenery as we negotiated places such as the Devil's Staircase.

The Lindis Pass was a new surprise with only a strip of tar-seal in the middle of the road. If another vehicle came along we moved over onto rough gravel to pass. The system worked.

Our family played a guessing game. How many vehicles would we pass from Tarras to Omarama?

One or perhaps two. No more. We were truly heading for sparsely populated territory.

Our next event was to get a blow-out puncture on the new road across the river from the old Lindis hotel. Pitch dark by now. Pre-dated the cellphone. No coverage there anyway even today.

We were so grateful to have a man drive by on road maintenance duty. He helped us change the back tyre, which had been sliced on the side by a piece of metal and then he obligingly escorted us to the top of what we now know as the Lindis Pass.

"I could have hugged that man who found us, his strobe light lit up the whole valley," [Noeline]

At last, we came to Omarama and had no difficulty finding Black Peak Road. Great excitement. But what happened next seemed like the "last straw". The set of keys we were given did not belong to the crib. 10 pm. Cold temperatures. What do we do now? We knew no one. Lights were gradually going off. People were going off to bed. Then for the second time that night we were to be rescued.

An unknown man spotted us standing outside and asked us if we needed some help. Unbelievable!

This man had the right tools and skills to remove the ranch-slider door and we were able to collapse inside. He instructed us to leave the door ajar and it was only locked again when we left to return home to the south.

In the 34 years since the day of our eventful trip, we have met so many people with their unique stories. Many had lived in the back-country all their lives and could be described as second generation identities. Betsy Anderson our neighbour from Teal Crescent was one of these. She was the first paid New Zealand woman alpine guide in the Mount Cook area. Betsy had also been the cook on the Wairua a boat which serviced the lighthouse keepers and their families stationed in Foveaux Strait.

Changes to the business area of our village have taken place over our time here.

Every business has been modernised with additions. Only our post office has disappeared

Then there are organisations such as the Omarama Fire Brigade which epitomises the wonderful spirit of the people of our village.

They help us keep safe and secure here.

Omarama continues to be our place of light.

*After spending many holidays here, the Gillies took up residence in Omarama in the summer of 2010-2011.*



# Back in the day

## - Ruth and Stephen's story

*"It seems to me that the South Island is there for the use of the all-powerful New Zealand Electricity Department, and its minion the Ministry of Works which is re-creating the whole island in its own image... in the national good, of course." – photographer Robin Morrison, 1978, South Island from the Road.*

Omarama must have wondered what it had done to deserve it.

Almost overnight it was transformed from a quiet rural servicing town with tourists dropping in through the summer, and doubled in size to accommodate the Ministry of Energy's NZED-base to house workers needed to staff its Upper Waitaki Power Scheme.

You see houses were needed here because Twizel was just supposed to quietly roll over and disappear back into the landscape from whence it had sprung once the construction of the scheme was completed.

Needless to say, Twizel had other ideas. You have to hand it to them not many in that era challenged that mighty power and won.

*(Chapter 51 of Dam Dwellers, by Marion Sheridan, available at the Omarama Library, details the process.)*

Reportedly, the Omarama community was consulted about its proposed change in size, shape and culture at a meeting on March 7, 1983. The Waitaki County Council,



at least, welcomed the move with open arms.

After living here for about 10 years I said out loud to a 'local' that I really hoped Omarama would stay small and quiet. She snapped back; "We had hoped it would, too." That put me back in my box, and smartly.

Meetings were called in both Twizel and Omarama as the tussle over possession ensued. Eventually, a compromise was reached. Those workers who wanted to continue to live in Twizel would. Those who wanted to live in Omarama could. The union – the PSA – would see to it that all parties were treated equally.

The NZED needed up to 70 developed sections and in November 1982 4.8ha of land to the east of Omarama was purchased. You will note this was some time before the community consultation meeting was held.

It was the age of hoisting buildings up and trucking them to wherever they were needed next, no problem. Towns like Cromwell - the last to be reshaped by the NZED, for the building of the Clyde Dam - can boast more than one or two old Twizel or Otematata houses. The Department's first plan was to move existing houses to Omarama and refurbish them. But after doing-up the first few it became obvious the costs to the taxpayer would be prohibitive.

So, it was decided new houses would be built and the NZED Omarama sub-division was born.

"Yes," I would tell those who felt the need to know, "we live in the subdivision". – it still happens.

Although some families - the Rogers, Williams, Bateman, Orford, and Armstrong families - had already moved into existing housing in Omarama, in December 1985, it was Steve Dolan who was first to move into a new house in the subdivision, to Benmore Place.

We moved to Quailburn Drive, January 21, 1986. It was a Tuesday.

1986 proved to be a year of some significance. David Lange was Prime Minister, Winston Peters was MP for Tauranga - National MP for Tauranga.

On January 28, on its 10th mission, the Space Shuttle Challenger was filmed live as it broke apart 73 seconds after take-off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, US, killing all seven crew members.

Those scenes were replayed over and over on our 22in Phillips cathode ray tube console cabinet TV.

Back then, there were two TV channels but transmission into Omarama was such we could only get TV One and a very 'snowy' TV Two for which we paid a broadcasting licence fee. We had no radio reception.

In April, the world stood still as a catastrophic nuclear accident unfolded in the northern hemisphere and the account of a disaster in a town we had never heard of entered our common history. Chernobyl.



It was the year Halley's Comet paid its second visit of the 20th century to our sun and Omarama was touted globally as being one of the best sites from which to enjoy the promised spectacle.

Busloads of night-sky watchers from around the world were taken in the early hours of the morning from the Omarama Motor Lodge and Stagecoach Inn to Colin and Gwenda Mackay's woolshed at Ribbonwood Station to view what proved to be a bit of a damp squib.

Nonetheless, the trips raised considerable funds which the Mackays donated to pay for the completion of St Thomas Church which opened and celebrated its first service that year.

And 1986 was the year New Zealand was suspended from the ANZUS treaty because we had declared our waters nuclear-free. No-one could quite decide what the treaty should be called after that.

In Omarama, Stan and Pat Cotter had the pub.

Next door, on SH8, Eion Woods had his contracting business.

Down Chain Hills Highway his wife, Aileen, ran Country Crafts (now Merino Country Café and Gifts).

Across the road Red and Bronwyn Stevenson had one garage and Blackie - W. A (Allan) Blackie - had the other.

Four Square Omarama was owned by Joan and Peter Wytenberg, and Joan's brother, Ian Crichton.

The Post Office (now GlenCraig's) was still a post office with a savings bank where



Careful entries were made by hand into passport-sized post office savings bank books by Post-mistress Denise Tamati and her assistants.

The Oasis was owned by Gary Chang.

The Omarama Motor Lodge – now Heritage Gateway - was owned by Rob and Jan Perriam (now Jan Wright).

The Countrytime - called the Stagecoach Inn - was lost in its paddock on the far outskirts of town beside the small airfield.

It was not just Kevyn Webb who had big dreams.

Geoff Pywell, former station manager of Ruataniwha Station, a large chunk of which was swallowed by Twizel township, also proved to be ahead of his time. He set up his fledgeling gliding business that year but despite showing so much promise it never did quite take off.

The camping ground was owned by the McDuffs, who later sold to Norman and Lynda Chamberlain.

Each summer, by the stream, the McDuffs would host the social club hangi, supervised by Tom Tamati, followed by a community cricket match. The whole town - everyone - would go.

A doctor from Twizel held clinics in the Plunket Rooms at the Memorial Hall, fortnightly, I think.

Church was in the supper room, as was playgroup.

When the stock sales and dog trials were on the large kitchen with its spacious wooden cupboards stacked full of mismatched crockery and cavernous aluminium pots, with its yard-long cutlery drawers with never a teaspoon to be found, with its ovens – second hand but not quite so ancient back then – and its electric Zips put on early to heat water, would fill with ladies organized with military precision preparing hot dinners to serve to the men lined up at the counter.

The money raised funded community groups.

That year, Ginger Anderson and Clyde were fifth in the Long Head in the North Island Dog Championship Trials in Te Aute, Hawke's Bay.

Stephen was employed as 'engineering technician – communications', a comms tech.

Like him, many of those who took up the NZED house purchase scheme and moved to the subdivision were single or newly hooked-up men in their mid-twenties, many of whom had been living in the Ministry of Works hostel in Twizel until being let loose on the world and Omarama.

For a while, there was one lawnmower and one vacuum cleaner which regularly did the rounds, particularly if parents were coming to visit.

Of the approximately 35 new houses set around various cul-de-sacs interspersed with empty sections in what was an otherwise barren landscape, there were 11 houses built in the same style as ours.

Apparently, the NZED had instructed the three building firms who won the contracts that no more than four houses could be built to look the same.

To fill that requirement they merely flicked the plans around 180 degrees for one third and built the remaining third as a mirror image.

Visiting someone in a house the mirror image of your own can make you feel quite seasick.

Rumour had it workers on site competed with each other to see who could get

through different building stages first.

The morning after 'ceilings' day one crew arrived to find theirs on the floor. Oops. As far as street layout was concerned the subdivision was considered to have incorporated the very latest in urban design to avoid the 'issues' supposedly associated with 'hydro villages'.

The cul-de-sacs were to encourage small nurturing groups of neighbours.

Firm and life-long friendships were made regardless.

The vacant lots meant those not branded NZED could move in, build homes of their own design and mix things up a little.

Those lots sat empty for the best part of a decade.

It was a barren landscape.

Few trees grew in the grey-brown stony silt left from the time old braids of the Ahuriri River had washed to the foothills. A tree planted here took twice as long to grow as any tree on the coast, the softwoods that persisted grew as hardwoods.

NZED issued each homeowner with a tree allowance - \$70 - to buy and plant trees.

Only a couple of nurseries were chosen to accept the purchase orders, tree lists were not extensive and challenging growing conditions meant silver birches, chest-nuts, sycamore maples, bright yellow conifers and flowering cherry plums were pretty ubiquitous.

It was not quite like scenes from 'Stepford Wives' but homogenous would have been a good overall description of the subdivision.

The brick houses, with their modern brown aluminium frames, were fitted-out with the same kitchens and bathrooms complete with pink or green marbled Seratone walls,



Government Stores Board Linoleum in mushroom or avocado, and sported the same wallpaper and paint jobs, just in different rooms. Although you provided your own curtains most of us bought our drapes from the limited selection offered by the visiting 'curtain van', from Oamaru.

Sometimes you had to remind yourself whose house you were in.

The hold the NZED and its union, the PSA, had over its workers led to some quirky outcomes.

Managers had front fences built for them by the company.

Those who rented were supplied with letterboxes despite the fact there was no mail delivery.

Staff lobbied for milk boxes to be built in each street so milk deliveries could be made.

There was quite a lengthy battle for that. Eventually, the boxes went up, only to have milk deliveries phased out shortly afterwards.

We were not ungrateful. The houses were modern, well-insulated and warm. Not only was each fitted with a log burner but NZED employees were entitled to generously subsidised electricity.

On weekdays town would empty out at 7 am when the convoy of vans set off from the garages (where Verheul's new motels are) for Twizel and it would begin to fill up again from about 4.30 pm.

The shift workers would head out about midnight.

The journey to work was a slow one but there was always a race to get home - because travel time was paid time.

While 'the men' - there was one woman station operator for a short time - were employed in Twizel, there were few employment choices in Omarama for the wives and girlfriends, some of whom arrived in town with teaching or other professional qualifications.

Legend has it the pub had only six bottles of Speights in the fridge when the guys paid their first after work visit.

Dave Hutton, who was barman, said; "By the end of the week we'll have you all drinking DB."

"By the end of the week that fridge will be full of Speights," was the retort, and it was. But it was a small fridge and so once that was dry they would adjourn to the restaurant where a keg of Speights was hiding.

It wasn't too long before there was Speights on tap, which was something of an accomplishment at the time for a DB pub.

It was quite some time before Omarama had its own policeman. You could say it was a bit of a frontier town at times but people looked out for each, as it has always been.

Bad behaviour has always been bad behaviour, no excuses.

Otherwise, there was general acceptance of some practices which nowadays would seem odd or even intolerable - that's simply the way it was back then.

It could get a bit rowdy after the rodeo and when the shearers got paid - cash or cheque, no direct credit back then.

And sometimes our lads and lasses at this end of town got a bit carried away.

More than one late Friday night saw cars racing down the alleyways.

Not saying, but Stephen's mini was a perfect fit.



Fashion crime was the worst - big hair and shoulder pads. Yes, I had a perm and, later, a spiral perm – Google that! But hey, I wasn't the one wearing stubbies!

The weather was always something to write home about, and we wrote letters. I'm sure it was colder. Old people always say that.

In winter I walked to work through snow drifts up to my thighs - because I had managed to lose the road and walked into the borrow pit. The windows froze on the inside. I watched picks 'ping' and shovels bounce off the frozen tundra. Washing froze on the line as did the freshly-washed head of spiral perm carrying the basket. I quickly learnt to shovel snow off the drive and paths before it froze.

But, if the sun was out I drank my coffee outside on the porch.

In summer, there was the wonderful, searing heat and walks to the river to cool off. Yep, in Omarama it's either too hot or too cold to work - ain't that a bonus.

It was a bit of a culture shock moving from Dunedin city life to 'the middle of nowhere' - before marketing people invented kinder terms like 'the heartland'.

"We'll be here six months at the most," he said. "Then I'll get a job in Christchurch."

Six months grew to a year, and eighteen months into two years.

I wondered why the jobs weren't being applied for, resumes were not being sent, and why the subject always got changed when I brought it up.

"I don't think I want to move," he said, eventually.

I had to go for a really long walk.

But Omarama had won my heart.

I turned and walked HOME.



# Aileen Woods story - by Lynley Eade

Aileen Woods remembers starting out at the Omarama Hotel.

“Eion and I took the Omarama Hotel over from Eion’s parents in 1950. I got the biggest shock of my life when I found out. I didn’t want to become a publicans’ wife. I hadn’t cooked for more than 10 people in my life, so didn’t think I could manage making meals for bus tours and shearers and so on. Eion and his parents convinced me by saying that all I would have to do was the books. But I wasn’t so sure about that.

Well, on the first day of April 1950 we took over the Omarama Hotel, and I had to cook for one hundred - so much for just doing the accounts. The Dog Trials were on and there were men coming in and out all day. Eion was busy in the bar serving drinks and I ended up in there too in the afternoons when he had a rest. Now I had never served a drink in my life before – what an education and a fast one too.

As I got better at things I could relax a bit more. A lot of the truckies I had worked with during my time as Book-keeper with The Kurow Motor Company would come in for a drink and I remember them giving me such a hard time if I was in the bar. They’d have me on knowing I wouldn’t be too sure if they were for real or not. I’ll never forget Skin Russell this day! He came in and said “I’ll have a Dagg-shandy Aileen!” I looked at him and said “you’ve got to be kidding! What on earth is that?” He just burst out laughing, he couldn’t help himself.

We worked hard at that pub. In fact we had a staff of nine there in the end because it was that busy and you know there wasn’t even all that much there at Omarama back then. There was our Hotel and the General Store and the Tearooms over there on the corner where the Oasis is. The original Tearooms burnt down actually and had to be rebuilt.

We had buses coming and going all of the time. We never knew exactly when they would turn up and often two buses would pull in at the same time. We supplied them with morning and afternoon tea which we had to bake for and we had to have it there, ready and available because you couldn’t say just wait while we got organised. We had to have whatever they wanted ready for them because they would all be on a set schedule. The buses had to leave right on time. I’d be up early making sandwiches and cakes and scones and things to be ready for however many turned up. It was pretty full on, I’d be lucky if I had four hours sleep some nights. You know I don’t know how we did it looking back.

Eion was running his contracting business as well and was often away working. It was E.F. Woods Contractors and most of his work was at Lake Pukaki carting beams and gravel and whatever else they wanted for the dam.

My mother used to come up from Kurow and give us a hand occasionally, especially when Eion was away, because we had children by then as well. Dad would come up with her and he would do the bar while my mother helped out with the kids. It suited them because they were retired. James and Annie Gordon, my parents, were so good to us, they really were. And between them and the wonderful staff we had – we managed. You know I’m still in touch with all of those people who worked for me.

In fact I invited them all to my 80th birthday.

In the 1950s I remember it was quite common for planes to land in the main street of Omarama and come into the Pub and have a drink. There was plenty of space - the roads were so wide, and a lot of the high country farmers would come to town that way. Anyone driving a car just simply gave way to the planes as they came in. In fact the first one that ever landed on the road was a top-dressing plane from Civil Aviation. It was just before Eion and I took over the Omarama Hotel, actually.

We held the licence for The Omarama Hotel for 22 years. It was in 1972 that we decided we'd had enough and so sold our Hotel to the Dominion Breweries".

Eion and Aileen Woods added the 'new' bar in 1963/64.

They had decided they needed a larger area for entertaining. With the extra space they were often able to have bands playing on Saturday nights.

Apparently there used to be a small stream running across the main road between the tree and this side of the Omarama Hotel. It had been diverted off the road and the council had just filled it in when Aileen arrived at Omarama to live. The roof of the Hotel was painted red and it had a white exterior. The original Omarama Town Hall is to the right of the Hotel.

**Extract reprinted with permission from It's Our Valley. The Second Collection by Lynley Eade 03 436 0936 [lynleyirv@gmail.com](mailto:lynleyirv@gmail.com)**

(Aileen died age 88, in Oamaru, in 2016)

*Photo: Flying in for a quick drink in style. From the left Dick Schneebeli (pilot), Eion and Aileen Woods (proprietors), Lyn Bennison (staff). This picture was taken in the 1950s. The plane is from the North Otago Flying Club.*



# The Noticeboard



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

**The Upper Waitaki Young Farmers Club** meets at 7.30pm on the first Monday of each month at the 'Top Pub' - the Blue and Gold pub, in Kurow. All welcome. Join the Facebook group.

[www.facebook.com/groups/300929013444437/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/300929013444437/)

**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 Carla Hunter 03 976 0504

**The Omarama Community Library** is open 9am to 10am Wednesdays and Saturdays, at the Omarama Community Centre. Contact Anna: 021 132 5586

**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 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.

**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 . Club Captain Adrian Tuffley 027 3478276. [www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz/](http://www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz/)

**The Omarama Residents' and Ratepayers' Association** next meeting is 7.30 pm, Thursday, July 12, at the Omarama Community Centre.  
Contacts: Ann Patterson, chairperson, 03 438 9493, Craig Dawson, secretary, 027 438 9132



**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)

**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)

To read more, enjoy more photos and watch our place 'come to life' check out our Facebook page and website.

[www.facebook.com/omaramagazette/](https://www.facebook.com/omaramagazette/)  
[omaramagazette.nz](http://omaramagazette.nz)

**To receive email alerts between monthly editions of the Omarama Gazette sign up to our 'Local List'.**

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**The August issue of the Omarama Gazette  
is Wednesday, August 1, 2018.**

**Please submit copy  
by Friday, July 27.**

## The Classifieds

To advertise in this section please email [omaramagazette@gmail.com](mailto:omaramagazette@gmail.com).

Cost: Up to 25 words \$8 paid in advance. Copy must be received and payment made by the Friday before publication. Payment details will be forwarded on receipt of copy. Publication is the first Wednesday of each month.

## Annual Meeting

LAKE OHAU ALPINE VILLAGE

RESIDENTS AND RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION INC

The AGM and election of office bearers and committee members will be held 10.30am, Sunday, July 29  
at the Lake Ohau Lodge.

Further information to come.

*Please note the later date than our previous AGMs.*

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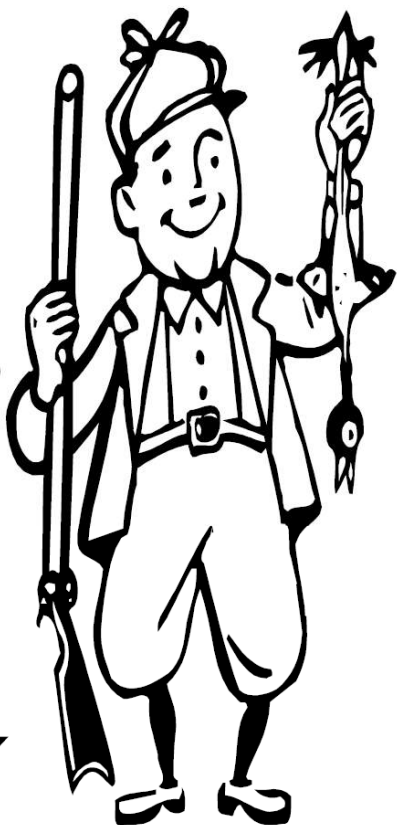
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# HUNT HILLBILLY



## **Shooting Competition**

**Friday 6th to 8th July**

Teams of 2-4 people  
Entry Fee: \$40

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Register Friday night 7pm at  
Omarama Hotel.

Teams will receive a list of  
Animals they are to hunt for in the  
weekend.

Teams **must** report back by 3pm Sunday  
for Weigh in, Judging,  
Prize Giving and Dinner

Sponsored by  
**Hunting & Fishing**  
**Omarama Hotel**

*Fundraiser for Omarama Rodeo*

# Quick Quiz Night

Friday 6th July following the hillbilly hunt registration  
8pm, Omarama Hotel  
Fundraiser for Omarama Rodeo — Fun Evening — Raffles — Auction

# Kurow Medical Centre

8 Wynyard St, Kurow  
P: 03 4360760 F: 03 4360780

E: [info@kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz](mailto:info@kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz)

W: [www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz](http://www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz)  
[www.facebook.com/kurowmedicalcentre](https://www.facebook.com/kurowmedicalcentre)

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

**Kurow Medical Centre Tel: 03 436 0760 Fax: 03 436 0780**

**Office hours: Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 5pm.** Closed 1pm to 2pm for lunch.

Doctor or PRIME nurse on call 24/7 Monday to Sunday.

**Mackenzie Health Centre - Twizel Satellite Clinic, 3A Benmore Place, Twizel**

Tel: 03 976 0503 Fax: 03 436 0780

**Office hours: Monday, Wednesday (nurse only) and Friday, 8.30am to 5pm.**

Closed 1pm to 2pm for lunch. **Saturday mornings 10am to 1pm.**

Doctor or PRIME nurse on call 24/7 Monday to Sunday.

**Omarama Clinic, Omarama Community Centre, Chain Hills Hwy, Omarama.**

Tel: 03 436 0760. Cell: 027 434 7464

**Office hours: Tuesdays 9am to 5pm** Closed 1pm to 2pm for lunch.

## 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



# Kurow Medical Centre

8 Wynyard St, Kurow  
P: 03 4360760 F: 03 4360780

E: [info@kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz](mailto:info@kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz)

W: [www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz](http://www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz)  
[www.facebook.com/kurowmedicalcentre](https://www.facebook.com/kurowmedicalcentre)

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

**Kurow Medical Centre and its satellite clinics in  
Twizel (Mackenzie Health Centre)  
and Omarama (Community Hall)  
are proud to offer our registered  
and casual patients the following services**

- \* Ultrasound performed by a qualified clinician (great for minor fractures, gall stones, kidney stones, heart and lung problems, foreign bodies, blood clots, detecting early pregnancy and much more!)
- \* Minor surgery
- \* Mole mapping and removal
- \* Steroid injections
- \* Vasectomies
- \* Venesection
- \* Aviation, workplace and driving medicals
- \* Workplace health screening
- \* Counselling
- \* Spirometry to diagnose asthma and COPD
- \* ECG
- \* Hearing and sight tests for adults and children
- \* Ear syringing
- \* Liquid nitrogen for warts, verruca's and skin lesions
- \* Cardiovascular risk assessment and diabetic checks (funded for eligible patients)
- \* Travel advice and vaccination
- \* Cervical smears (funded for eligible patients)
- \* Seasonal flu shots and shingles vaccine (funded for eligible patients)
- \* Childhood immunisation
- \* Before School checks
- \* Postnatal and six-week baby health check

**And much more!**

We also offer the following services from external Health Care Providers:

- \*Podiatry and Ear Health (Kurow only)
- \*Physiotherapy, Acupuncture and Massage (Kurow and Twizel)
- \*Reiki and Reflexology (Twizel only)

**If you require further information or an appointment, please contact us on:**

**For Kurow 03 436 0760 or For Twizel 09 976 0503**

*- Dr Tim and Juliet Gardner*

# Waitaki District Council

Phone: 03 433 0300 Freephone: 0800 108 081 - Automated options after hours  
Email: [service@waitaki.govt.nz](mailto:service@waitaki.govt.nz)

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

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## **The Ahuriri Community Board meeting that was scheduled to take place Monday, July 9 has been CANCELLED.**

The next meeting of the Board will be  
3.15pm to 5.15pm Monday, August 20  
at the Memorial Hall, Kurow

**Minutes and agendas can be found here:**

<http://www.waitaki.govt.nz/our-council/council-meetings/agendas-and-minutes/Pages/default.aspx>

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## Environment Canterbury

**The next Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee meeting is  
9.30am Friday, August 17, 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](http://www.ecan.govt.nz)**

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**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)**



15 Mackenzie Drive PH: (03) 435 0777

### **OPENING HOURS**

We are now open for appointments Monday to Saturday

9.30am – 6pm	Monday and Friday
8:30 am – 5pm	Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday
9:45 am - 11:45 am	Saturdays:

### **AFTER HOURS**

On call after hours services are also offered 24/7 for urgent care on the After Hours number.

### **Other Health and Wellbeing Services**

Diabetes, Cardiovascular Risk Assessment, Minor Surgical Procedures such as Skin Lesion removal, Smears and Physio, Podiatry, Dentures and Mole Map are also offered at Twizel Medical Centre.

Please make inquiries with our reception. We will be also be advertising other services as these come on stream.

### **Enroll With Us**

Twizel Medical Centre is an enrolling practice. When you are an enrolled patient your fees are reduced. Please feel free to come in see our Centre and talk to the team about our services and enrolling.

Because our Centre is community owned and has charitable status, so any surplus can be reinvested into improving access to services for our community.

Come and join us and be part of growing services for our community.



# The Directory

## For advertising rates and guidelines

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or email  
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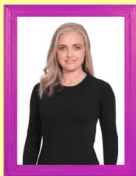
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**Facebook: /Total-Interiors-Shop-Showroom**

**Instagram: [totalinteriorsnz](https://www.instagram.com/totalinteriorsnz)**

# Waitaki Valley Phone Directory

## *Dear Omarama Residents*

The Kurow Information Centre has decided to create a Waitaki Valley Phone Directory that can be printed on demand.

Entry in this is free, however there will be a small charge for the book once it is produced.

If you would like to be part of this email: [info@kurow.org.nz](mailto:info@kurow.org.nz)  
Or phone Carron, Nikki or Seanne on (03) 436 0950 and pass on your details at a time that suits you, or to ask any questions.

The entry in the directory will include:

- Your name
- Physical address (can include postal address)
- Phone number and mobile phone number
- Email address (optional)

Businesses are also encouraged to give their details.

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## **Create new memories these holidays**

Book a cosy cabin or motel at  
Omarama TOP 10 Holiday Park  
and explore our winter wonderland.

Ohau Snow Fields are 45 minutes away  
and we are mid-way between  
the Wanaka and Queenstown,  
and Mt Hutt fields.

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

**June 2018**

**Highest temperature: June 9, 16.6C**

**Lowest temperature: June 30, -5.7C**

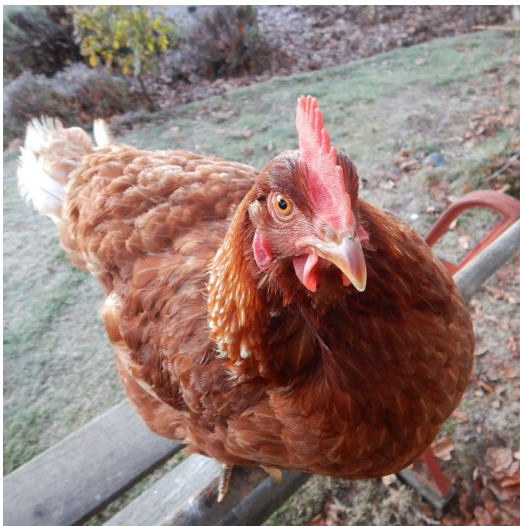
**Most rainfall: June 10 and 24, 6mm**

**Total rainfall for June: 26.5mm**



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## **The View from the Chook House**



**Cold???**

Tell those  
northerners  
to pull up their  
big girl panties  
and get on with it.



# The Garden Diary - Containing it

At my front door at the moment is a large trough with three bronze tussocks whose sandy-coloured 'hair' sweeps up and over the brim. I am not in love with them at all – they look for all the world as if Trump triplets have dumped their toupees at the door after some ghastly Halloween trick gone wrong. The only plus is it will be hard to ever know if they're dead or alive.

I'm far from an expert at growing container plants but I do have heaps of fun.

I love just messing about with pots. There's choosing the pots. Many a distracted hour has been spent looking for the perfect pot - just ask my long-suffering husband and children.

Sigh, I have never been good at making a 'snap' life-long decision.

The truth is if it's anything too precious it ends up on the top shelf looking down on me with that 'don't touch me you'll only break me' glare. Plain and robust suits me quite well. I love my terracotta pots filled with bright red or fuchsia pink pelargoniums filling the whole terrace with sunny Mediterranean vibes. An old wooden crate overflowing with a delicate, lacy daisy takes on a misty, ethereal quality in a dark green corner. And there's nothing to match clear orange calendula popping up from a squat, dime-a-dozen blue-glazed pot.

If I'm planting up a large pot or groups of pots then there are more hours spent mixing and matching plant varieties, coordinating colours and leaf textures, size, height and what will flower when - deciding how three dimensions will move through the fourth dimension - time.

Some years I'm organised and can whisk out something fresh and new at just the right time. This year I planted up lilies and dahlias in planter bags and got them off to a great start in the glasshouse. Then once the bulbs were looking neglected, tired, and 'just over this heat' I whisked them out and plopped those bright girls in.

The extra lining provided by the inner pot or planter bag also means the potting mix doesn't dry out quite so quickly and stops the roots getting too hot.

Last summer, I almost boiled my sweet peas alive in their trough. They looked so sad in the heat, I applied water only to hear it sizzle and watch it steam.

My favourites for pots have to be:

- bulbs – because it can be a long wait for spring and those grown in pots come on earlier even if they're grown outside.
- pansies and violas for their cheery faces in spring and then again in autumn,
- gaudy can-can petticoat petunias, lifting up or tumbling down, for their sheer resilience in the heat.

And last but by no means least those 'ol reliable sedums.

Their solid and sedate sculptural forms emerge from underground in spring and gradually change shape and colour through the seasons, their honey-scented flowers attracting bees and butterflies. Sedums can look like as different from each other as sculpted marble and delicate grass. No matter what their appearance, they are tough as.

I have two which have been in the same pot for 15 years.

I love their 'don't-mind-us, we're-just-getting-on-with-it' attitude.

Because, no matter where you put it, a pot will draw the eye.

The pressure is on to look at their very best. Sedum 'Purple Emperor' is one with star power all on its own but it also shines with any of the jewel colours.

Mixed in with those dahlias and lilies it created just that moment of pause.

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



# SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, July 21

11am to 1pm at the Omarama Memorial Hall

A public community forum will be held to discuss the management of the Ahuriri River Bridge Campsite.

Come and listen to the agencies who have a stake in the river

- share relevant information with our community.
- create an action plan to remedy identified issues before the start of the next holiday season.
- establish a working party to develop a strategic plan for the management of the camping area into the future.

**Those invited to speak are:**

**Department of Conservation, Waitaki District Council, Environment Canterbury, Land Information New Zealand, Te Runanga o Arowhenua and Waihao Upoko Te Wera King, Te Runanga o Moeraki Upoko David Higgins, Tourism Minister Kelvin Davis and Member of Parliament for Waitaki, Jacqui Dean.**

The meeting will be independently facilitated by Neil Gillespie, of the Central Otago District Council.

The hall is heated

## Plan to be there