



-Omarama Gazette -

May 2018

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Omarama Airfield Ltd**

He'll be flying our flag in wild west US

The stakes are high but he will be giving it his very best shot.

Later this month Charles "Lindis Ranger" Innes, of Dunstan Downs, sets off on a five-week tour of North America's 'wild west' and, more importantly, will be one of the team representing New Zealand at the world championship cowboy action shooting competition in Edgewood, New Mexico, in June.

It is the second time he has taken part in the world championship after taking up the sport about five years ago.

In 2016, he finished 10th out of 23 competitors in the duellist category (unaided, right or left-handed shooting).

This time, for the first time, he and his fellow Kiwi competitors, with the backing of Pistol New Zealand, will go to the competitions as the official New Zealand team complete with travel uniforms - hats and t-shirts.

Before the week-long worlds Charles will take part in two state championship shoots - the Utah state champs in Salt Lake City and the Colorado state champs in Cortez.

He follows up the worlds shooting at the Wyoming state championships.

Part of the reason for venturing over early is to acclimatise, he says.

Not only will he be competing at 2,042 m (about 7,000 ft), but it will also be "stinking hot" - about 45C – "hotter than an oven".

He will again be competing in the duellist category and he says this time he is aiming for the top.

"I would like the buckle for that ...last time was a trial run for me."

...Continued over

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Omarama Airfield Ltd

As well as being home to one of New Zealand's busiest commercial glider operations Omarama Airfield Ltd plays host to various events for the aircraft enthusiast throughout the year.

This year for the fourth time it hosted the popular Omarama Model Aircraft Club Anzac Aerotow, a national event – international - if you count the Aussie who comes over to it on a regular basis. The Aerotow is specifically for model tow airplanes and gliders, and has included Alex Hewson, former world champion discus launch glider pilot, in its field.

Bevan Allan, spokesperson for three-day event, says the numbers attending this year – 33 model fliers with more than 40 gliders - was on a par with other years, and, although high winds meant the cancellation of the first day's flying, two out of the three days were "perfect". "It's quite special for us hosting a model aerotow in the home of gliding in New Zealand." And it is the "perfect venue for spectators".

Omarama can offer some of the best flying conditions of any model airplane club because it is not influenced by the vagaries of coastal weather patterns, he says.

Instead of flying on the first day the visitors were treated to a talk by Glide Omarama's Gavin Wills on the history of gliding in the area and he spoke about the skills needed to fly full-sized gliders. The principles are similar, Bevan says. Model gliders also chase the thermals but are also controlled remotely from the ground.

This year there was a "good turnout" of model tow planes to take the gliders up which reduced the work load normally carried by one or two. There was a wide range of gliders represented including models of vintage gliders dating from the 1930s. Bevan, himself, has a 1930s gullwing Sperber Junior modelled on the one built especially for Hanna Reitsch in Germany, in 1936. The German aviator and test pilot set more than 40 flight altitude records and women's endurance records in gliding before and after World War II.

For a model pilot to fly at this event they need to be a member of Model Flying NZ and have the appropriate qualification. It is not unlike full-size, where a pilot will have various types of ratings to operate the aircraft they are flying. Each day commences with a pilots' briefing and a safety talk. The CAA grants the model fliers a height extension to operate to 2000ft above the airfield.

The airfield is not closed as such during the event rather the full-sized and model craft co-ordinate activities. The full-size operations take priority so organisers will clear the skies of all models, if necessary.

Glide Omarama donated a half hour glider flight which was presented to Jonathan Gardner of Dunedin.



Omarama Airfield Ltd

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He'll be flying our flag in wild west US ...continues

He is setting off in good form having won the duellist category and come 10th overall in the South Island Cowboy Action Shooting Competitions in Galloway, near Alexandra, in March, and he came third in the national championships in Whanganui late last year.

This time wife Tania will be travelling to the US with him as chief photographer and "gun mule" ...carting the gear". The "gun bag is full" – with competition revolvers and guns accompanied, of course, by all the necessary paperwork. By the time they reach the worlds the kiwi contingent will number 19 travelling in seven RVs – motorhomes. "We'll be flying the flag every chance we get...wherever we go ... it'll be on all the RVs." "Everyone knows we're Kiwis." Except for the few who do make the mistake and think the group are Aussies, "but they soon get put right".

In between shoots the group will be seeing the sights, travelling the old cowboy trails and exploring the history of the wild west. They will take a horse trek along trails in Cody, Wyoming near Yellowstone National Park - Buffalo Bill country, and will follow the Billy the Kid trail in New Mexico. "There's plenty of history."

In Cowboy Action Shooting shooters compete in various categories, using two pistols, a lever-action or pump-action rifle, and a shotgun, moving through 12 different sequences. Speed and accuracy are critical to the result.

The competitions set out to recreate the vibe of the old west with western scenes recreated as targets. Competitors dress cowboy or cowgirl -style and are known by their aliases. "[We're just] kids that didn't grow up."

Charles, is a member of the Central Otago Pistol Club.

The sport, which has a big following in the US was created in California in 1982, is run under international rules set by The Single Action Shooting Society of the US.

Charles Innes - aka Lindis Ranger, of Dunstan Downs, competes at the South Island Cowboy Action Shooting Competitions in Galloway, near Alexandra, in March. Photo: Tania Innes



Catching up with Ed,

Red had the garage, and Stan and Pat Cotter had the pub when Ed Mumm first called Omarama home. Casso and Gloria took over not long after that.

Ed worked as a casual musterer in and around Omarama from 1988 to 1992, first at Killermont for Mike and Jane Thomas, then at Berwen for Patsy and the late Dick Croft, and he worked at Ben Omar for Ginger and Sylvia Anderson.

"I still keep in touch with people ...I love the place.

"It's a time I'll never forget ...a bloody awesome era of my life."

His jobs took him from the Lindis to Glen Lyon and east to Otematata.

"Everyone was welcoming. I felt like part of the family ...everybody was very passionate about their home and their places.

"I never had a bad day... well, I had a dog break once, but ..."

And it might pay not to mention rugby.

He played for Kurow and for three seasons they never won a game.

"I blamed Gundy because he kept laughing in the line-out."

But when Murray Taylor visited he told him the week Ed left Kurow won their first game.

Apart from rugby his 'best days outside the office' were spent escaping further into the back country, to the Dalrachney hut and beyond.

But being fortunate enough to take part in what was once the annual calf muster from Glen Lyon to the Temuka Saleyards had to be the pinnacle of that career.

"I was there when the traditional musters were ending.

"I was incredibly lucky to have been part of that scene ...the horses and big blocks ... that era has ended."

Ed is talking, without a shadow of an American accent, from Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Steamboat Springs, a ski resort town, is just coming out of winter and Ed is looking forward to seeing green grass.

It has been his home for the past 26 years. So how did he end up there?

He helped run rodeo in Omarama and, after hearing from friends who went to the US to compete, he and a mate decided they would also make the trip.

Within six months of being in Colorado he "met a girl" – Carla – and settled down.

They have two adult children, a son and daughter, both with New Zealand citizenship, both have visited regularly through their childhood, and still do.

What he does nowadays is literally ground-breaking.

And, while we all know everything's bigger over there, Ed Mumm's sandpit has got to be the biggest.

More on that later.

The way things turned out does have a distinct flavour of Kiwi ingenuity about it.

"I wasn't planning on becoming an entrepreneur."

It came as a complete surprise to him as it does to a lot of people, he says laughing.

Settled in Steamboat Springs and working as a fencing contractor he decided to build the family home.

"Building the house...I was excavating for the first time on a digger.

"I'd driven a dozer before but not a digger.

he's breaking new ground

"I was having the best time of my life and thought if I love it other people would love it too."

And so, in 2007, Dig This was born.

What Ed did was to open a huge sandpit where anyone could get behind the controls of real-life heavy equipment and have a play in a safe and fun environment.

No-one else had come up with such an idea.

After a few successful years in Colorado Springs he moved the venture to a bigger market, Las Vegas.

In 2011, Trip Advisor ranked it as the No.1 attraction in Las Vegas out of almost 400 things to do.

It has remained in the top five of that list since.

Last year, in October, Dig This opened at Transport World, Invercargill.

Franchise operations in other parts of the world are planned.

Even though New Zealand will always be home Ed says he has the best of both worlds living where he does.

"I grew up on Gunsmoke and Bonanza.

"Outside of politics, it's great country, [they're] good people, we share a lot of the same interests especially east of the Mississippi."

And they even play rugby.

These days Ed spends his time between Steamboat Springs and Las Vegas.

And he visits Omarama every two or three years and stays at Bog Roy with Gundy and Lisa Anderson.

Ultimately, he wants to come back to live in New Zealand, hopefully Otago.

In the meantime, "There's always a bed here for anyone from Omarama."

Former Omarama musterer Ed Mumm is breaking new ground across the world.

Photo: supplied.



Groups raise concern about

More tourists heading our way plus councils in every district clamping down on freedom camping has created a “perfect storm” for free camp grounds like the Department of Conservation's Ahuriri Bridge campsite.

Freedom camping in general and the Ahuriri Bridge campsite, in particular, was a hot topic of discussion at the Omarama town visioning meeting in March.

It has also been raised at Environment Canterbury's Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee meetings three months running, and at the Omarama Residents' and Ratepayers' Association meetings.

The association has included its concerns in its submission about freedom camping to the Waitaki District Council's Long Term Plan.

Concerns centre around the sheer numbers using the site, the amount of rubbish and human waste left, and the lack of toilet facilities. People are concerned that because visitor numbers to the region are predicted to rise over the next 10 years unless some solution is found problems will only get worse.

On its website, Doc says it provides 30 non-powered tent sites for campers with a maximum stay of four nights. There is one toilet. There is no charge to use the site but campers may make donations into an honesty box. In the past two years it has not been uncommon to see 50 plus vehicles and tents camped at the site, not only through the summer but also now into the shoulder seasons.

Doc's Te Manahuna Twizel Office manages the site which is supervised by Recreation and Community senior ranger Ian Guthrie. Mr Guthrie was asked to speak to the March meeting of the water zone committee about the campground.

He told the committee it had become a “campground with too many campers”.

A fence had been put up to restrict the area people could camp in and this had been partly successful. Doc wanted to build another toilet at the site but did not have the funding. He said rubbish was picked up and people exaggerated the amount of human waste on the ground.

Last month, the matter was raised again at the zone committee's meeting (*see report over*). Committee members expressed disappointment at the way Doc and the Waitaki District Council seemed to be shelving responsibility. At that meeting Doc water management co-ordinator John Benn told the committee he understood Ahuriri Bridge was the most profitable camping ground under Doc Twizel's jurisdiction and that the money collected was being used to subsidise the Lake Middleton camping ground.

In an interview Mr Guthrie said that information was not strictly correct. The donations that were collected from Ahuriri were put together in the one account with those from the other sites he managed and so there was no way to ascertain exactly how much was collected there. Only the donations from the Lake Middleton campsite were separated out because it was being monitored to determine how much was being lost at that site. “All of them [the camping grounds] are losing money, the ones we are charging for [lose even more] money.”

The Omarama Gazette asked Mr Guthrie for the amount of money collected.

He said it would be difficult but he could possibly provide those details but would not be doing so immediately.

Ahuriri Bridge campsite

He said he thought the amount donated at the Ahuriri site could be about \$1500.

"We don't monitor the numbers, we don't count or register campers."

Although the site is Doc-owned, the Waitaki District Council, ECan, Tourism Waitaki and Alps to Ocean, each have a stake in how it operates.

Tourism Waitaki says on its website that there are 45 sites at Ahuriri and a \$3.00 to \$6.00 fee.

Doc Twizel manages six camping grounds in all, five of which are free.

Two are "oversubscribed", there are too many people for the facilities.

Those are Ahuriri and Poaka near Lake Pukaki, Mr Guthrie said.

"Lake Middleton is almost there."

At Ahuriri there had been an increase in the numbers using the campground of about 40 % in two years,

"The problem is everyone has got an opinion but most people don't know anything about how to manage a campsite," he said.

"People see the immediate solution is building more facilities... another toilet block.

"Does that mean I'm going to have 200 tourists there?"

Some were of the view that introducing charges would remove the problem but if people were made to pay then they expected to have more in the way of facilities, he said.

To police the numbers using the site would mean staffing it "virtually all the time" and he did not have staff available to do that.

He did not think Doc would be interested in managing things differently.

"It is not Doc's 'usual' business to be running camp grounds."

A contributing factor to the camp ground being "over-subscribed" has been Government and councils clamp-down on freedom camping, Mr Guthrie said.

The problems with freedom camping had become a national issue.

On top of that councils were under pressure from their communities to stop freedom camping in their districts and that created a "perfect storm" for the dwindling number of free sites like Ahuriri.

Doc Twizel did have a few options and would probably need to consult on those options, he said.

...Continued over



Omarama Remembers

Remembrance service; led by Upper Waitaki Returned and Services Association president Kieran Walsh; address, NZDF Royal New Zealand Navy Lt Nic Hobbs; bugler, John Sturgeon; wreath laying, Waitaki District councillor Craig Dawson; The Ode, John Rogers; flag raising, Bill Wallace.





Making the journey to Waitaki

It's about "the journey", and it's about spreading the word about that journey, Waitaki's new tourism manager says.

Margaret Munro, formerly the general manager at Earth and Sky in Lake Tekapo, took up the role of Tourism Waitaki general manager in March, replacing Jason Gas-kill, as head of the council-controlled organisation.

Mrs Munro was in Omarama for the Omarama i-Site opening event last week when she spoke to the Omarama Gazette about some of her plans to market the district.

Waitaki had "massive" tourism potential, she said.

Her goal would be to focus on realising that potential for the whole region rather than selecting a "singular unique point" to market.

More can be done to promote the "journey", building on the Alps to Ocean concept and doing more to draw travellers down SH83 and through the district, she said.

Waitaki's bid to become a Unesco Global Geopark "makes so much sense for the whole region" and that concept would "tie in the whole".

She was already "actively talking" to inbound operators to promote SH83 as an alternative route for groups and free independent travellers, "taking the pressure off the SH8 route to Queenstown".

Operators could assure visitors they would still see something of "the interior" and they would also see something of the coast.

When building itineraries tourism operators look at the connection points to airports.

In Waitaki's case it is a "triangular circuit" - the three points being Dunedin, Christchurch and Queenstown airports, and Tourism Waitaki would be encouraging them to build new routes around that, she said. The trick was to inform people before they got to a point of destination because once travellers reached a place they had usually

already decided what they wanted to see and do.

"It's about putting the destination in minds."

Any signage needs to be striking, along the lines of the whitestone arches at the entrances to Oamaru, "you don't want it to blend in".

There had already been some discussion about that, she said.

Tourism New Zealand reported there were 3.82 million visitors to the country in the year to March and in another year it expected numbers would reach the four million mark, she said.

Tourists were coming regardless so it was important to be "proactive rather than reactive" about planning ahead and managing infrastructure.



The Waitaki District Council are onboard with this... with conversations about an overarching plan for the Waitaki Valley so the infrastructure put in place will match the demands.”

Tourism Waitaki is one of the three regional tourism operators hosting this year's Tourism Rendezvous New Zealand - Trenz - conference in Dunedin.

The annual trade show will run from May 7 to 10 and is expected to attract about 1500 tourism leaders and professionals.

At Trenz Tourism Waitaki would be focused on “telling our own story” about the Alps to Ocean journey.

“...not just the cycle journey but the journey through landscapes, the lakes to the ocean and down the coast.”

Cycling, ski-ing, gliding and agri/viticulture in the Waitaki Valley will be highlighted.

Mrs Munro grew up on a farm at Ikawai. Her husband Peter taught at Mackenzie College in Fairlie for 31 years. The couple have four adult children.

i-Site opens its doors

A steady stream of people took the opportunity to visit Omarama's new Information Centre during its official opening event on Friday.

The i-Site which is shared with cycle tour company Trail Adventures Ltd is in the former St Thomas's Church.

Those visiting had the chance to meet new Tourism Waitaki general manager Margaret Munro, Caitlan Brown and Philip Jannink, who staff the centre, and Scott and Dee-Ann Fitzgerald owner-operators of Trail Adventures, as well as other Tourism Waitaki staff.

Friends of Omarama School catered for the event with a sausage sizzle and also ran a cake stall.

Children enjoyed face painting and a treasure hunt organized by i-Site staff.



Employee of the month...

Megan Talarico

*Heritage Gateway and Countrytime hotels
general manager*

We're a small town with so much talent. Together we do so much.

Each month we feature our 'Employee of the Month' - to learn a little more about how our people spend their day.

It is not an exaggeration to say Megan Talarico is most likely Omarama's top ambassador – and with all the diplomatic skills that go with the role.

You do get the impression nothing much fazes her.

"Yeah, I'm pretty chilled," she says laughing.

Which is just as well because in her job she does field some interesting questions like; "Where is the nearest night club?", or, "How far is it to the city center?".

And then there are those who end up stranded and ask her to order a taxi – it's been done.

One imagines she has fielded much curlier questions than those in her line of work - but as always she is ever the diplomat and that info is staying in-house.

Megan is Heritage Gateway and Countrytime hotels' general manger, a role she has held for the past four tourist seasons, since former general manger Guy Sanders moved to Glide Omarama.

Married to chef Claudio, with adult daughter Carla, the Talarico's have made Omarama their home for the past 18 years, nowadays complete with black labrador-retriever cross Alfie.

"Omarama is a good place to raise a family."

They love making the most of Omarama's big "outdoors" and it's "really central" for a quick trip to Queenstown or Christchurch.

Megan began work at what is Omarama's biggest accommodation complex as receptionist and then was reservations manager before moving up to the general manager position.

"I love it...meeting different nationalities, every day is a different day."

Both Heritage Gateway and the Countrytime cater for groups and conferences as well as the independent traveller.

Through the years Megan has established a "good rapport" with the regular coach drivers and tour leaders.

A good tour leader can help smooth out any language and culture differences, she says.

Plus, she has always enjoyed travelling and experiencing other cultures.

Most recently she has toured Vietnam and Thailand. It's given her a greater understanding of those cultures and the expectations of guests from those countries.

You may think pleasing guests would be the most difficult part of this job but Megan says it is finding staff, especially for key positions. Accommodation is part of the problem.

While the company does have some staff accommodation, finding housing in town for families can be difficult.

Attracting young people to town or keeping them here is a challenge.

The move by the Omarama Residents' Association to set up a sports facility is a great start, she says.

As more independent travellers arrive there is a demand for more night-time dining in the town, and developing a night sky-stargazing attraction would be "awesome".

Many visitors just like walking and "enjoying the clean, fresh air".

As our town's unofficial ambassador Megan will be, once again, promoting Omarama at this year's Tourism Rendezvous New Zealand - Trenz conference.

For the first time the Trenz event, which is from May 7 to 10, is to be in Dunedin.

The annual trade show will attract about 1500 tourism leaders and professionals and will be jointly hosted by the Dunedin, Waitaki and Southland regional tourism organisations.

Cycling, ski-ing, gliding and agri/viticulture in the Waitaki Valley will be highlighted.

Megan, along with representatives of the others in the hotels' group – the Mackenzie Country and Godley hotels - under the South Canterbury tourism organisation umbrella, will meet and greet key wholesalers and operators from around the globe, 15 minutes at a time, throughout the three days.

It is the prime opportunity to enjoy a one-on-one with those bringing visitors to the region and "put a name to a face".

Despite the intense scheduling it is "quite social", she says.

This year, following the conference, Heritage Gateway will host a familiarisation tour group - a special tour offered to agents to help them get to know the products they are selling - organised by Tourism Waitaki which will showcase what the region has to offer.

It will be busy – but Megan enjoys that and the hard work.

"I enjoy being here ...we're a big happy family."



Groups raise concerns about campsite ...continued

"Should we close it? That's on the list of possibilities from my point of view.

"We have only two of them [camping grounds in the Waitaki] and we need 10 of them.

"Close it and they go where they go and it becomes the council's problem.

"They don't provide enough sites."

(The Omarama Gazette understand the Waitaki district has no designated free camp sites west of Duntroon.)

Another option might be to have the camping ground vested in the Ahuriri Community Board and be council-managed, he said.

"[Then the] community would have more immediate control over how things are managed."

In the case of Poako, Land Information New Zealand approached the Mackenzie District Council and it agreed to take a greater role in management.

"I'm reasonably sure that could work for the Ahuriri Board.

"The council would have the option to charge for campsites more easily than I would."

In his view, tourism managed well was great for the country, but New Zealanders needed a "change of mind-set".

The "type of tourist" had changed.

While it used to be the majority were on coach tours and travelled mostly to tourist towns like Rotorua there were now more free independent travellers and these had a "bigger impact".

And what most did not want to acknowledge was the biggest group freedom camping are New Zealanders, Mr Guthrie said.

At its meeting last month the Omarama Residents' Association decided to arrange a community forum where the various tax and rate payer-funded agencies charged with overseeing the Ahuriri Bridge site will be invited to have their say and explain their positions on its future management.



meridian



Open Day - Twizel Medical Centre

5th May -10.00am to 1.00pm

Meridian Energy is pleased to sponsor an open day at the Twizel Medical Centre, your community funded facility and team welcomes everyone on the 5th May 2018.

Two years on from opening, it's a chance to bring the family and friends along hear about the services, check out the incredible facilities with a walk through the premises and meet the team.

The TMC staff, St John, Twizel Fire Brigade and Police will all be there doing demonstrations on accident and emergency care. A morning tea will be provided following the walk through.

We look forward to seeing you there.

The O.G. investigates

Are our high country highways different?

The O. G. Investigates – delving into those little things that perplex and maybe vex us. This month: overseas drivers on our high country roads - are we imagining there's a problem, or is it real?

In March O.G. Investigates began the process to try to obtain a snapshot of some traffic statistics which could help us understand a bit more about driving incidents on our high country highways.

Several people had questioned Mid-South Canterbury area commander Inspector Dave Gaskin's statement to the New Zealand Herald at the end of last year that "claims by officers patrolling the region's roads that foreign drivers were causing the bulk of driving incidents on South Island highways were not correct".

So, we decide to test that theory.

The first step:

The OG contacted the Police media centre on March 21 to ask Inspector Gaskin about his comments.

His spokesperson said that information would have to be requested under the Official Information (OIA) Act.

The OIA request was duly filed and received by New Zealand Police at 13.41, Wednesday, March 21, 2018.

On April 17 the Gazette received this reply:

"Dear Ms Grundy

I have been asked to let you know that Police requires an extension of time in which to respond to your request, pursuant to section 15A(1) of the Official Information Act 1982, because the request necessitates a search through a large quantity of information and consultations such that a proper response to the request cannot reasonably be made within the original time limit.

Police require until 8 May 2018 to provide a substantive response to your request. You have the right to complain to the Office of the Ombudsman about this extension."

Depending on what the answers are to the Omarama Gazette's request we also have several more questions to ask.

Will keep you posted...



The Noticeboard



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

We would like to express our sincere condolences to the Cochrane and Leopold families on the loss of Tania. She was a great friend of many, a true daughter of the Valley.

All the very best to Guy and Murray as they leave on their overseas adventure.

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.

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 has changed to winter hours 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/

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

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.

To read more, enjoy more photos and watch our place 'come to life' check out our Facebook page and website.
www.facebook.com/omaramagazette/
omaramagazette.nz

To receive email alerts between monthly editions of the Omarama Gazette sign up to our 'Local List'. Email omaramagazette@gmail.com and put 'Local List' in the subject line.

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**The June issue of the Omarama Gazette
is Wednesday, June 6, 2018.**

**Please submit copy
by Friday, June 1.**

The Community Reports



Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade

There were five calls for the month of April. With the cooler months coming it's a great time to get your chimney cleaned.

Please remember to dispose your hot ashes correctly.

- *Stay safe. Omarama Chief Fire Officer Terry Walsh.*

Firefighters take up the challenge

By Jack Zorab. Photos: supplied

Omarama Fire Brigade have had a successful competition season after entering teams for the first time in the Waterways and Combat challenges. The competitions are run by the United Fire Brigades Association and are designed to put real world skills to the test in a fun and competitive environment.

Chief Fire Office Terry Walsh and Rural Firefighter Jack Zorab started the season down in Queenstown competing in a regional Waterways event as a team of two. This involves 8 runs with different objectives such as establishing a water source and knocking down targets in the quickest time possible. All the skills and equipment used are the same as those that are used when out on a call so it's great practise for everyone that takes part. The guys learned a lot from the weekend and even came away with a trophy, hopefully with their new knowledge they will get even better for next year!

The brigade also entered a team in to the Combat challenge for the first time this year. Known as 'the toughest 2 minutes in sport', competitors have to climb a six story tower carrying a 19kg hose pack, haul another 19kg hose to the top of the tower, run back down the tower, hit a 71kg steel beam 1 ½m using a small hammer, run a 42m slalom, pull a 50kg charged hose 22m and, finally, drag an 82kg dummy for 30m. Oh, and all that is done while wearing full firefighting kit weighing approx. 30kg. Those that compete as individuals also have the added pleasure of wearing their breathing apparatus mask which is like having to breathe through a straw.

Logan Adams ran as an individual and then entered as a tandem team with Jack Zorab, where one completes half of the course and then hands the baton to the other to complete the remainder. They travelled down to Mossburn in February, Blenheim in March and then up to Wellington in April to take part in the National finals. Over the season, Logan recorded a personal best of 2 minutes 37 seconds, a real solid effort for a first time competitor. The tandem team set a time of 2:24 in Blenheim before heading to the nationals and getting a time of 2:07, smashing their personal best by 17 seconds.

Overall it's been a fantastic summer for our brigade teams and we're aiming to increase our silverware next season!





By Ruth Grundy

Omarama School treated caregivers and friends to an end-of-term assembly featuring waiata, drama and a celebration of learning, last month.

The junior class presented their cubist and impressionist artwork channelling Pablo Picasso and Vincent van Gogh.

The senior class, who had spent the term studying inventors, demonstrated the various board games they had designed to showcase that learning.

The Wednesday afternoon Guitar Club which is run by Peter Schasching gave an accomplished rendition of Pharrell Williams' Happy.

During the term, thanks to the initiative of Gemma Patterson and efforts of mum Michele Patterson, the school entered and won the Genesis Energy School-Gen – What Now competition to explain the power of the sun. The prize package includes a 3D printer, a chromebook, a Mechanoid robot and a Skywalker quadcopter drone, and Omarama Gazette understands it will be presented this week.

Principal Kim McKenzie thanked teachers and staff; Peter, Kris, Ange, Helen, Pam, Ann, Michele and Andy, the Board of Trustees, and Friends of the School for their work throughout the term.

End of term awards went to:

Senior class; Susie Smith, Tara Parsons, Toby Courtney, Madison Innes and Dom Walsh.

Junior class; Jacob Moore, Sam Hay, Samantha Roulston, Jack Bochel, and Saedy Zeestraten.

Friends of Omarama School

Friends of Omarama School held their annual meeting and election of officers last month.

Emma Moore is chairperson, Lisa Anderson vice-chairperson, Fiona Bochel is secretary and Tania Innes was elected treasurer.

Committee members include Kerry Thomas, Pene Radford and Kirsten Mathias.

The group plan to host another Amazing Five contest at the end of the year and will also combine a fundraiser with the annual school cross country.

To raise funds pupils will enlist sponsors to support them when they take part in the races, Emma says.



Omarama School Calf Project

Update 8 April 2018

The school has 5 two-year-old cattle that were all donated.

They should all be processed by the end of 2018, and money donated to the school.



Richard and Wendy Parsons - Twinburn Ltd - supply free grazing and manage this project as a fundraiser for the school. To continue this project on behalf of the school we have purchased 4 Angus Heifer Calves from Longslip, at the discounted price of \$400 each.

Thank You - Bryan and Michelle for supporting this project.

THANK YOU

Vetlife
for supplying
drench.



THANK YOU

Omarama Vet
for supplying
tags.

Omarama Residents' Association

From the last meeting...

The report from the Omarama Town Visioning Session was circulated prior to the meeting and most of the discussion centred on organising submissions to the Waitaki District Council's Long Term Plan based on those recommendations. Ahuriri Community Board chairman Graham Sullivan and member Vicky Munro were present and were able to give feedback about what the board's plans were.

The association has coordinated submissions about the Community Centre's proposed sports facility, building more toilets, improving parking, cycle and pedestrian access in the town centre, improving provisions for waste collection and disposal, 'Night Sky' accreditation and better management of freedom camping, as well as recommending the council develop a town concept plan to cater for expected growth.

Vicky Munro, who delivered Census forms in the town, said she noticed a high number of Omarama residents did not have a number at their gate. She pointed out this was a real problem with potentially serious consequences if emergency services could not find the right house quickly. Further reminder notices to have visible signs will be put in the Gazette.

Ruth agreed to co-ordinate a community meeting, on behalf of the association, with the agencies involved in the oversight of the Department of Conservation's Ahuriri Bridge Camp site.

Topics for discussion at the next meeting:

- Progress towards the building of the sports courts
- The working bee for centre maintenance.
- Planning for the meeting with various agencies re camping issues at the Ahuriri Bridge.

Next meeting: 7.30 pm, Thursday, May 10, at the Omarama Community Centre.

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



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

Omarama Golf Club

By: Christine Bowman. Photos Brian and Michele Patterson

It's going into the quiet time of year for the Golf Club, there are 6 to 8 regulars playing Saturdays

The Golf Club has had many compliments paid over the last few months as to the condition of the greens and the course overall, many long-time players are saying they have never seen the course so green.

Thanks to all members that have helped with the course maintenance, and the weather has been a great help with regular showers of rain

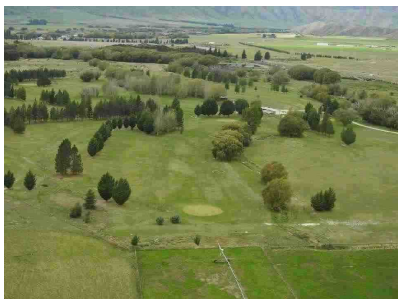
Check out a couple of aerial photos thanks to Brian and Michele Patterson

Remember winter tee off time is 12.30, all welcome

Welcome to new member Dan Van Der Salm

Tee off time Saturday is 12.30 p.m. Club captain Adrian Tuffley 027 3478276.

www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz/

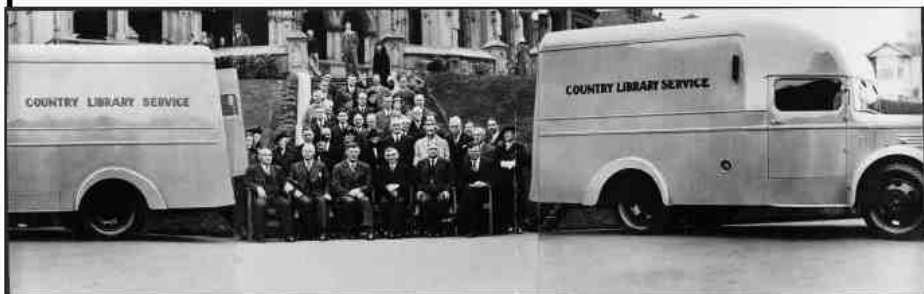


Omarama Community Library

Winter Hours

The Omarama Community Library will be open
9am to 10am Wednesdays and Saturdays,
at the Omarama Community Centre

Contact Anna: 021 132 5586



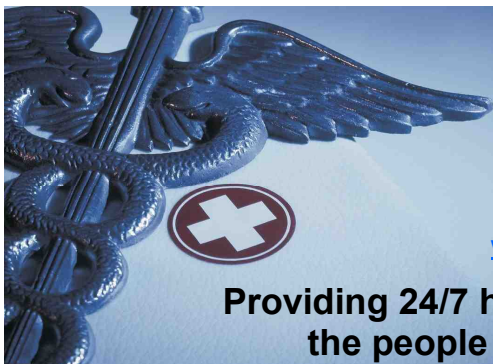
“Get Well, Keep Well” with the Kurow Medical Centre

As the leaves change and days start to grow colder, we're reminded that autumn has arrived, and winter won't be far behind. But with autumn comes all the health problems the colder weather brings, which none of us enjoy!

So, here are seven tips to help you stay healthy this autumn.

- 1. Get Active Early** – as the days start to get shorter, make the effort to get your exercise done early in the day. This means you are more likely to do it and you can feel great you've done it for the rest of the day!
- 2. Eat Enough Seasonal Foods** – eat fruit and vegetables which are in season, such as apples, broccoli and pumpkin. Seasonal food is the best way to get the right nutrients, vitamins and minerals into your diet, helping your body stay healthy in autumn.
- 3. Get Plenty of Rest** – so often people catch colds and viruses more frequently if they are run down and tired. By sleeping well, not only are you unlikely to get as sick as often, but you also reduce the chance of spreading the bugs to your friends and family too.
- 4. Get immunised!** By protecting yourself against the flu and other diseases you are also helping to protect others who are at risk!
- 5. Get Outside** – it's so easy to feel depressed and mopey being cooped up inside. Make a point of going outside in the sun for some vitamin D. There is nothing like breathing fresh air to make you feel better to improve your mood and your mindset.
- 6. Live Aligned with the Season** – adapt to the cooler temperatures. This means staying warm and dry, wearing warm clothing and having a well-heated house.
- 7. Try to drink less alcohol and avoid or cut down tobacco smoke** - there are many ways you can be helped to kick the habit altogether!

From Kurow Medical Centre!



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Waitaki District Council - news in brief

Consultation on the council's draft Long Term Plan closed on April 30. The council will begin hearing submissions on May 14 and this is expected to continue for several days. It will adopt the final plan at its meeting on June 26.

Consultation on its Waste Management and Minimisation Plan, Revenue and Financing Plan and Development Contributions Policy has also closed.

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

www.waitaki.govt.nz

A word from our councillor - Craig Dawson

Ahuriri Issues – April 2018

1. A lot has been happening since my last article. We had some great responses from our three town visioning sessions. Currently the Ahuriri Community Board and the ratepayer committees are working hard to get their submissions in to Council's long term plan, which closes on 30 April. Some of the items highlighted are as follows;

- Available housing in Omarama and Otematata is very low, need to plan for expansion.
 - Traffic Management needs to be addressed, with huge rise in tourist numbers.
 - Better supervision of Council Contractors, with some substandard work being carried out in recent times.
 - Urgent need for more parking for trucks/cars.
 - Traffic quietening systems to slow traffic down whilst moving through towns.
 - Upgrade toilets to better cope with visitor flows (pardon the pun).
 - Concept Plans for the towns are a high priority to enable good planning while helping ratepayers have a say on what the towns should look like in the future.
 - Apply to formally register the towns as "Night Sky" compliant. The installation of new LED light filaments should enable us to receive this accreditation.
 - Freedom camping issues need to be addressed.
 - Waste management options and the operation of our Resource Recovery Parks.
- The need for extended hours and better handling of green waste.

2. A lot of work and upgrades have been underway with our IT systems. The goal is to have Council services/information available on line 24/7, this will help customers access property records, pay rates and fees remotely, complete submissions on line etc.

3. A big thank you goes out to our Editor Ruth Grundy for her great work in keeping readers up to date with Council committee meetings, topics of concern and deadline dates etc.

Craig Dawson – Councillor

027 438 9132 cdawson@waitaki.govt.nz

Ahuriri Community Board questions oversight of contracts

Ahuriri Community Board members from across the ward raised concerns about the standard of work being carried out by various contractors employed by the Waitaki District Council.

The subject was discussed at length at last month's meeting of the board in Omarama. There had been a series of issues in the ward where it appeared work was sub-standard and remedial work had to be carried out which had added to the cost of projects. Board members and Councillor Craig Dawson, the council's representative on the board, had fielded complaints from the public and wanted to know what quality control measures were in place. "The ratepayers pay for a service.

"It is a basic requirement for all works to be carried out to a standard... a shabby job can cost the ratepayer a lot of money," Mr Dawson said. He wanted to recommend the council investigate the quality of oversight of contractors. Mayor Gary Kircher said board members, rather than fielding enquiries themselves should "train the public" to use the Customer Request Management system – the system the council has in place to record complaints and follow-up actions. It was not appropriate to use the CRM system in every case, Mr Dawson said. "If a contract has gone wrong people have the right to come to their elected member." Mr Kircher disagreed and said the system should still be used. However, he suggested the board ask for a "session" from council staff on "contract oversight and monitoring", which might help to identify any "shortfalls in the system".

Chairperson Graham Sullivan said the board had received the report on the town visioning meetings, briefly discussed its recommendations and would be forwarding it to participants as promised. "It will give the board something to put their teeth into for a year or two." The board would be making submissions to the Long Term Plan on some of the recommendations, he said. Mr Dawson said ratepayer groups would have to move quickly to get their submissions in before the closing date of April 30.

There was considerable discussion about the difficulties using the Kurow boat ramp during low river flows. Talk centered on who owned the ramp, whether or not it should be fixed, who should be liable for fixing it, who would pay to fix it, who should maintain it and police any user-pays system which may be required to fund it into the future.

Board members asked the council's financial services unit for clearer guidelines on the criteria for the spending of its separate funds - the targeted rates, and the funds allocated to the board for spending on community projects and community groups.

Waitaki District Council chief information officer Bill Chou told board members about work being carried out to update the council's systems and to move away from "paper-based" to more online systems, particularly in the area of building consents.

The next Ahuriri Community Board meeting is 3.15pm to 5.15pm Monday, May 28, 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](http://www.waitaki.govt.nz/our-council/council-meetings/agendas-and-minutes/Pages/default.aspx)

Environment Canterbury news in brief

With duck shooting season starting on Saturday May 5, Environment Canterbury and the Ministry for Primary Industries are reminding everyone in the region to clean their equipment between waterways, to avoid the spread of unwanted freshwater pests including the invasive alga didymo.

Land, Air, Water Aotearoa (LAWA) has released its report – National River Water Quality Trends – which it says shows that for all river water quality parameters monitored over a 10-year period, more sites were improving than deteriorating.

ECan monitors the water quality of more than 100 freshwater sites across the region. The results are reported on the LAWA website.

Of rivers, rabbits and representation

A variety of issues – from rivers and rabbits to representation - were discussed at last month's meeting of the committee charged with improving the quality of waterways and ground water in the upper Waitaki.

Environment Canterbury's Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee met in Twizel and ECan staff reported on progress made within the zone and received feedback about community concerns through the appointed zone committee members.

For the third successive month concerns about the Department of Conservation's Ahuriri River campsite were raised.

Following on from discussions at previous meetings chairperson Simon Cameron said he thought there could be value in talking to campers about their expectations and to find out if they might be prepared to pay to visit.

"We may be over thinking it."

It had been reported at the previous meeting that an ecoli test had come back clear but he cautioned against giving too much weight to a single test as ecoli levels "move up and down".

Mr Cameron and community member Barry Shepherd expressed disappointment in the responses to letters from the committee to the Waitaki District Council, asking it to provide more toilets in Omarama, and to Doc, asking for better toilet facilities and policing of the the Ahuriri camp ground at busy times.

In his reply council recreation manager Erik van der Spek wrote a replacement toilet for Omarama would be considered as part of the council's Long Term Plan process.

"It's a bit of a push-off," Mr Shepherd said.

Waitaki District councillor Craig Dawson pointed out ultimately it was the Doc's responsibility to provide better facilities at the camp ground.

Community member Lisa Anderson said surely it became a "point of law" when there were not sufficient toilets provided for the numbers camping at the site.

ECan councillor John Sunckell said it should be possible to get better cooperation between agencies on issues like this now the Mackenzie Basin Agency Alignment agreement was in place.

"When we send a letter it should go to all partners so it can't be pushed off to another agency, so we don't have the disconnect."

Doc water management coordinator John Benn, who was at the meeting to give a presentation about Doc's management of waste in Aoraki Mt Cook National Park, said it was his understanding the Ahuriri campsite was the "most profitable" camping ground under the management of Doc Twizel's office and that funds from there were being used to subsidise the losses at the Lake Middleton camping ground.

The committee discussed the need to redress the balance of representation on the committee since the departure of community member Jay Graybill, who is also Central South Island Fish and Game manager.

Achieving a good balance of representation helped to lessen the potential for conflict, Mrs Anderson said.

Mr Dawson reminded the committee there was also no representative from Te Rūnanga o Moeraki.

Community member Richard Subtil said he welcomed people putting themselves forward. Mr Shepherd suggested a letter be written to Forest and Bird, Fish and Game, the Ohau Conservation Trust and others inviting them to apply.

"If they put their hands up right now, we'd take them," Mr Subtil said.

Mr Sunckell told the group farmers had expressed concern the introduction of the new strain of rabbit haemorrhagic virus in March had "not been done properly" and he was urging them to be patient.

Of concern was that the carrot drop intended to spread the virus control had occurred when there was an abundance of grass, and rabbits tended to prefer eating that to carrots, he said.

A lesson in statistics and how comparing data which does not report on the same things can give misleading results was the main topic of discussion at the recent meeting of the Omarama Stream users group, Mr Subtil said.

The group had been looking for a "reliable base-line to see what is going on" but there was "frustration" with working "inside a dysfunctional structure".

ECan requires the users to comply with certain nutrient limits because of the effect the stream has on Lake Benmore.

"It is classified as an alpine stream but appears to be behaving more like a lowland stream," Mr Subtil said.

ECan's Waitaki Zone manager Chris Eccelston said the Omarama Stream was not the only place in the region where there was confusion about the data.

"We're in a pragmatic space... we don't know what exactly is going on."

It appeared there had been a change in what data was being collected and how.

There was a need to try to standardise the statistics and get better definitions around the data, he said.

"It's not a dirty stream by any stretch," he said.

Mr Subtil said it was "not a crisis" and the group was actively seeking a solution. It wanted to work towards the long-term goal.

"The water quality is really good but have to know what is going on."

It was important to get this right because the outcome affected other properties, Mrs Anderson said.

Nevertheless, the committee needed to hear about progress "month-by-month", community member Mat Bayliss said.

"We need to chase down some credibility. We have limits and must try to meet them," he said.

The next meeting of ECan's Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee is scheduled for 9.30am, Friday, May 18, 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



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**Flu vaccines are now available at our Medical Centre
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Please call 03 4360 760 to book an appointment
with the nurse if you would like a flu shot.**

The good news is that if you are over 65yrs, pregnant or have a chronic condition you are eligible to have the flu shot for free! It's important to remember that the more people having the vaccine the less the disease will spread in our communities. This will in turn have a much better outcome for the health and well-being of the elderly, those at risk and young children.

We also have the shingles vaccines (Zostavax) in stock and is fully funded for anyone's over 65yrs. Almost everyone is at risk of shingles because they are likely to have been exposed to chickenpox, even if they have no history of clinical chickenpox, or have had a chickenpox vaccine. Following chickenpox infection the virus lies dormant in the nerves near the spine and may re-emerge many years later as shingles. Shingles most commonly affects older adults or people of any age with a weakened immune system.

Signs and symptoms: Shingles, also known as herpes zoster, can occur at any age but usually occurs in adults over the age of 50 years. Females appear to be more frequently affected than males. Groups at an increased risk of developing shingles include people whose immune systems have been impaired due to ill health, medications or diseases that lower the immunity. The initial tingling, sharp, burning pain under the skin can occur anywhere on the body but usually affects the face, upper abdomen or back and almost always occurs on one side of the body only. The pain can be mild or it can be quite severe. In general, the older the person is, the more severe the pain is likely to be. It can be accompanied by other symptoms including; a feeling of being generally unwell, mild chills and fever, headache, an upset stomach, enlarged lymph nodes.

After 1-14 days a red rash appears over the painful area of skin followed quickly by the development of small, fluid filled blisters. The rash can be quite itchy. Within a few days of appearing the blisters dry and crust over. It is possible for the blisters to cause mild scarring.

Because shingles affects the nerve cells it is common for the rash to appear as a band across the body or down the leg along the path of a nerve. Occasionally the rash does not eventuate after the initial pain has developed. The pain and other symptoms of shingles gradually resolve as the skin rash and blisters disappear. Full recovery from the condition usually occurs within 2-3 weeks, or up to 4 weeks in older adults.

If you would like to receive the vaccine you can have it at the same time as your flu shot.

So if you're over 65 yrs please call us for an appointment or to speak to the nurse for more information. - *Juliet and Tim*

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The weather that was @ 44°29'29.4"S 169°58'19.7"E April, 2018

Highest temperature: April 26, 26.9C

Lowest temperature: April 12, -0.8C

Most rainfall: April 28, 35mm

Total rainfall for April: 93.5mm

(Total rainfall April 2017: 69mm

Total rainfall April 2016: 20.5mm)



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The tenancy of the Kahu Café located on the Omarama airfield has become vacant and the airfield company is seeking expressions of interest from parties who wish to take up this opportunity.

The cafe has been operated on a summer seasonal basis but represents an opportunity for a year-round business as the airfield operations now continue throughout the year. Prospective tenants will receive an information pack on the airfield, the premise and the lease and should obtain that by registering their interest with:

Clive Geddes
Chairperson, Omarama Airfield Ltd
clivegeddes@xtra.co.nz, 027 229 4860

Kahu Cafe



Situation Vacant

We are looking for a person to provide maternity leave cover over the next few months on a fixed term basis for our Omarama Clinic.

Hours: 8.30am - 4pm, Monday to Friday
Approximate start - June 2018

For more details please contact Neil at



OMARAMA COMMUNITY CENTRE HALL HIRE

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

Keys and fobs are collected from GlenCraigs

The FAQs - Those Five Awkward Questions with...



Zara, Alexia, Thomas, Peter and Sonya Trusler

The Trusler family have recently moved from Papakaio-Pukeuri and made Chain Hills Station, Omarama home-base.

Peter is Drystock manager for Adri and Francee Verbakel.

And he is a volunteer fire fighter and North Otago Golf Association president. Sonya has recently finished working as a support worker for the McGlynn Home, Oamaru

Alexia is a dry-stock worker at Tara Hills Station.

Zara is bartender at Boots and Jandals Hotel and Tom works at Alliance Group Pukeuri Plant.

What is the best piece of advice you have been given?

Don't listen to Mum and Dad - Zara, Alexia, Thomas

Shut up and listen - Peter and Sonya

Tell us something about Omarama we might not know?

How easy it is to get lost in Omarama.

When you live here you discover how "very, very lucky" you are.

It's a great community, with old-fashioned country values. Everyone looks out for everyone else

Everything you could want is on your-doorstep.

Who would you invite to your dream dinner party?

Someone that could cook - Heston Blumenthal

Best day outside the office?

*Watching the gliders take off and come in
The view*

What is one thing that would make the world a better place?

*If everyone spoke the same language
and had the same currency*

The View from the Chook House



Have you heard the news?

It's so egg-citing!!!

*'Chicken Run movie sequel to
hatch after 18-year wait.'*

The Garden Diary - Legacy

John Brookes died in March at age 84.

Late in life the British garden designer told a reporter he would leave no heir but a legacy of gardens. Some say he turned traditional British design on its head. But it's like that adage, 'There is no such thing as a new idea'. It was something Pakeha gardeners in the antipodes achieved almost by default. Early British migrants to this country felt quite topsy-turvy. They clung to the notion their world was upside down and those memories of 'home' dimmed only in recent generations. In 1929, New Zealand's gardener-poet Mary Ursula Bethell put it simply in her poem Response.

*'When you wrote your letter it was April,
And you were glad that it was spring weather...
I write in waning May and it is autumn,
And I am glad that my chrysanthemums
Are tied up fast to strong posts...'*

I like to think Brookes, who began designing gardens in the 1950s and 60s, created his gardens the way any Kiwi would. That is not to demean the master craftsman's lifetime of achievement, rather to say he elevated the notion of using what you have, in the space available, for those who live there. He designed 'outdoor rooms' – that phrase is attributed to him – because he recognised families wanted a place outside to gather, play and just live. He also knew they needed somewhere to hang the washing, put the bins, the wheelbarrow, grow the vegetables, and throw a ball, but not near the glasshouse, please.

Gardens had moved away from some exclusive exotic fantasy to be visited on your days off from servitude. Gardens were a place for people, inspired by natural surroundings but also a retreat.

When we built our garden the view both inside and outside the fence, and to the horizon and hills was silty, stony and scrubby, dry river flats shimmering with the metallic-blue of prickly bugloss until it hurt your eyes, as well as your bare hands and bare legs.

Although it was the place we fell in love with, we also needed respite – we always want what we do not have until what we have disappears.

Brookes established the 'grid' method as the basis of his designs, and he didn't mind sharing his skills – he wrote many 'how to' books. We loved its simplicity and how it could bring order to our many, often conflicting (...oooh yes!) ideas and needs. It's interesting that although we have changed through the years there has been no need to change that underlying plan. Each plant that comes home finds its rightful place.

Although, Brookes did not count himself plantsman. He saw plants as merely accessories to the structure. But what plants he did use were the plants naturally at home in the surroundings like verbascum with its wide grey-green rosette and spires of flowers and seed heads which he planted along his carefully crafted dry stony riverbeds. Because I always wanted a water feature but for obvious reasons this was 'unsustainable' I thought his solution was nothing short of genius, so our plan features just such a dry riverbed. We have some beautiful huge felted grey-green rosettes of woolly mullein (verbascum) and mounds of stones unearthed from our patch ready to go but alas still no feature. Which brings to mind another piece of sage advice he gave to his students and quoted in his obituary in the Financial Times.

"Just... get out there and get on with it."

Ruth Grundy

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



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7.30pm, Friday, May 18

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