



Omarama Gazette

Christmas 2025



Goodwill to all

Home for Christmas...

Christmas editorial 2025, by Ruth Grundy

The nor' wester tears the clouds off in strips as it boils over the mountains.

Throughout the rainy, humid spring the mountains have been so close you could touch them.

Now they recede into shadows on distant electric blue - layers in the landscape and layers in time. Summertime begins.

'Driving home for Christmas', down a dusty gravel road, through the avenue of blue and gold spires, bugloss and mullein, and *'a thousand memories'*.

The valley opens out ahead, the heat shimmers, and that familiar spicy scent of flowering briar floats in the air.

The magpies warble lazily high in the pines as the riroriro sings in that moment of stillness between the homecoming and the welcome.

Home is bustling, noisy preparations are in hand, the fun has begun.

Out the back and out from underfoot, children, sunbaked and squinting in the brightness, squeal and laugh as the water fights begin, balls and bats go flying to loud cheers as someone makes it, "Six"!

Lawn mowers hum, there's a steady thrum of planes as gliders are towed up, released they rise up and up until they are mere glimmers over Mount St Cuthbert.

Aprons flap in the kitchen. The mercury is rising as the roast is cooking – it's not Christmas without a roast and Nana's pud. The trifle is chilling in the fridge. There's pavs to be creamed. There's a cold beer at hand and bubbles on ice.

The dining table is pulled out from the wall and laid with linen tablecloths and silver, extra places are set as more gather in.

There are crackers, paper crowns and dad jokes – really bad dad jokes!

Here is happy and boisterous rowdiness, laughter and joy beyond happiness.

Grief will sit at this table, too.

Grief for family and friends lost.

Grief for hopes and dreams dashed - the lambs that didn't make it through the late snow.

Good friends see and hold close but even they cannot touch the deepest pain.

Time has softened that pain for some, but its imprint remains— the “deepest proof that love existed”.

Grief is honoured at this table for it is sacred.

Hope sits by its side – Hope that reaches out a hand to pull another up.

Hope born from the endless times fallen and endless times the last strength has been garnered and willed you to stand.

Home for Christmas, to the rock of family tradition, to the still place in a churning world, home to where I stand.

'I'm driving home for Christmas, Yeah, get my feet on holy ground'.

Meri Kirihimete me te Hape Nū Ia

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Ruth Grundy, editor.

While preparing this editorial I read these:

'Driving home for Christmas' by Chris Rea,

E.B. White's letter, 1973, 'To a man who had lost hope'.

'Grief is not just an emotion', attributed to actor Jim Carrey

Archbishop Desmond Tutu's definition of Joy.



A special request from our emergency services

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

Celebrating a successful school year

Parents, grandparents, caregivers, friends and supporters packed the house at Omarama School's final assembly for the year.

Hanging out for the holidays the pupils had only returned from the school camp at Columba the previous Friday but happily showcased their term's work, the year's highlights and farewelled their friends for whom this was their final day at Omarama School.

Board of trustees chairperson Jemma Gloag said the school was in a "great position" thanks to the dedicated and hard working team of staff. They had a "great board" which was "keen to get stuck in"

At present, it was still tackling the Ministry of Education about its plans to change school bus routes at the start of next year but there were now "some options" on the table, Jemma said. In other highlights it had been a "great camp" and the school had made a "fabulous job" of the recent production – Dusty Tales.

Principal Alison Holden said she was proud of the pupils and their "consistent hard work" and was pleased with their academic progress.

She thanked staff for their commitment, often going above and beyond their duties, and she thanked parents for always "being there when needed".

The highlights had been the school play and pet day which had brought families and the community together, she said. As well, the end of year camp had introduced a range of activities which gave opportunities to pupils to "step outside their comfort zones". The camp could not have happened without the parent helpers "making it possible".

There were six leavers this year four of whom were year 8 pupils and moving to high school. "You will be missed, we are proud of you and we wish you every success."

Looking ahead 2026 will see the introduction of the new curriculum which offered "exciting opportunities", she said.

This year's year 8 school leavers are James Mason, who goes to Twizel Area School, Liam McLeod, who goes to Cromwell College, Paige Doree, who goes to Dunstan High school, and Nicole McMurtrie who goes to Twizel Area School.

As well, year 7 pupil Lleyton McLeod will move to Cromwell College and year 6 pupil Toby Gloag will go to Waihi School.

LIGHT Awards

Ahuriri Class – Bailey Duncan

Leadership: Louis Aubrey; Inclusivity: Zophie Hall; Growth mindset: Liam Lord;

Honesty: Lucy Newfield; Teamwork: Brooklyn Lord.

Clay Cliffs – Jacob Hannagan

Leadership: James Hunter; Inclusivity: Liam McLeod; Growth Mindset: Emilia

Newfield; Honesty: Wyatt French; Teamwork: Tom Aubrey.

Academic awards

Year 1 and 2: Numeracy, Thorin Leopold; Literacy, Deanna

Year 3 and 4: Numeracy, Leona Leopold; Literacy, Gray Warnock.

Year 5 and 6: Numeracy, Toby Gloag; Literacy, Toni Hales.

Year 7 and 8: Numeracy, James Mason; Literacy, Charlotte Hales.

The Omarama Gazette award for diligence in literacy: Charlotte Hales.

The William Pike Challenge award winners are: Paige Doree, Charlotte Hales, Liam McLeod, Lleyton McLeod, Nicole McMurtrie, and James Mason.

Production recounts familiar stories

Omarama School played to a full house as parents and the community packed the Memorial Hall to hear tales from our past seen through their eyes.

Earlier this month the pupils (and teachers) presented the school production 'Dusty Tales'.

The productions showcased not only their learnings about the history of the town but also musical skills as the 'orchestra' of stringed instruments – as taught by Twizel Music teacher Anne Sweeney – accompanied singers and skits. There was even that old favourite – Fred Dagg's Gumboot song.

Throughout the term pupils had been learning about the history of Omarama, beginning with early Māori and the story of Waitaha tōhuka Te Maiharoa's great pilgrimage through to the place of light, and ending their research closer to present day by hearing the recollections of visitors to the school, among them Peter Casserly, Lex Parriam and Annabelle Subtil.

The audience was treated to skits recounting the characters, the exploration and adventure, goldmining times, shearing life, school days and times at the pub, set against backdrops depicting the changing timeline.

Principal Alison Holden and teacher Jacob Hannagan worked together on the engaging and lively script, which the pupils had worked diligently to learn.

The school company performed to the accompaniment of a small stringed orchestra tutored by Twizel musician Anne Sweeney.



They've all been so very good, Santa!

Ho, ho, ho!

The loud sonic boom which rattled the town Tuesday night created quite a conversation point at the Omarama MenzShed Christmas do.

Meanwhile the rest of us just assumed it was Hank cranking up the barbeque.

MenzShed regulars enjoyed a quiet one— possibly the last chance before Christmas and wives, kids and rellies are around – and a barbeque at the Community Den while getting the world straight.

Didn't you notice the world looked a better place Wednesday morning?

Coordinator Malcolm – that's two 'L's (think about it!) – Cameron said he would like to thank the group for its work through the year, especially Ken Rogers and Hank "for turning up"..... to cook the barbeque, that is.

He also wanted to thank Ann Patterson for her baking, Resene's for paint, and Georgie and Tim Robertson for their generous donation following the successful Simon Gault event.

Thankfully, when the photographer showed up (early) there was nary a Santa Hat or mankini in sight and neither had the inevitable carol singing began – Casso!



The Omarama Gazette
Omarama's news delivered to your inbox
the first Wednesday of each month
To subscribe email:
omaramagazette@gmail.com

Christmas fun is number 1!

Christmas fun was number one and the name of the game at the merry little housie session, the last for the year, at the Omarama Community Centre, on Monday.

About 30 gathered from Omarama and Otematata to enjoy a shared lunch – the Omarama ladies were on savouries and the Ote ladies on desserts - followed by housie.

Guest caller Barbara Hutton assured them they had continued the fine tradition showcasing the high country's high standard of hospitality.

There were 20 houses – reindeer poo was number two - followed by a super house. Line winners were treated to beautifully crafted Christmas biscuits designed and baked by Hannah and Tara Parsons, of the Biscuit Barn.

Santa's alive was number five, and a box laden with secret Santa gifts was distributed in alphabetical order of names throughout the afternoon.

A special birthday treat of decorated mini chocolate velvet cakes was presented to birthday girl Sharon Stuart.

And as a final surprise for the day Karen Bishop-Everett of Four Square Omarama donated fresh jam rolls to the group.

This year's event was organised by Sharon Herd and Shona Smith.

Throughout the winter months housie is co-ordinated by Ann Patterson and receives some funding from Age Concern Housie resumes in June.



Sar won! Sar won! Sar won!

This year's Emergency Services golf tournament continued the fine traditions of the event – no one can really remember, really, what really happened, or who did what or who won, really, or so they say?!

The annual stableford tournament which is a contest between Police, Search and Rescue and the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Omarama crews, was won this year by Search and Rescue after a "quick round" of nine holes in four to five hours – or something like that.

The SAR team – led by Senior Constable Nayland (Bean) Smith – (Gawd help us all!) was crowned fashionistas of the year for their colourful and creative tropical styles featuring grass skirts which some had difficulty managing with the other choreography required on such a walk – nudge, nudge, wink, wink... and seriously, say no more!

This year the tournament was renamed 'Bruce's Bash' to remember Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade first responder Bruce Dyson who died in May. Bruce had a great sense of fun and strove to ensure all were included, Bean said.

With thanks to Omarama Golf Club, Boots & Jandals Hotel Omarama, and all who worked behind the scenes to make the afternoon a load of fun.



A prompt to prepare

This week a group of volunteers from the newly-formed Omarama Emergency Hub group have been hard at work copying, cutting and stapling to make a different kind of card for you to display prominently.

The group has produced and are distributing 400 fridge-magnetised 'prompt' cards to the community.

You can also print yours out here.

The cards give concise points about what and how to prepare, and what to do in a disaster with a link to where to find more information.

If you have a post box there should be a card show up shortly.

Keep it handy as your prompt to prepare.

REMEMBER

- In an emergency call 111 and ask for the service required; police, fire or ambulance.
- If asked to evacuate follow the instructions of emergency services personnel. (In a civil defence emergency, evacuation orders are activated by Civil Defence and the council.)
- Have your emergency home kit ready in case you need to shelter in place.
- Have your grab bag ready in case you must leave quickly.

As you leave, write 'Evacuated' on the back of your card and place prominently for first responders to see.

PREPARE: Major crisis events DO happen here

Your town may be isolated. Work out now what supplies you need.

Basic supplies to have at home

- Water – at least 9 litres per person (for drinking and basic hygiene)
- Long-lasting food that doesn't need cooking (include babies and pets)
- Toilet paper and large plastic buckets (emergency toilets)
- A First Aid Kit and any prescription medicine back-up
- Work gloves and a properly fitted P2 or N95 face mask

Basic supplies to have in a bag in case you have to evacuate

- Torches and batteries
- Radio - wind-up or with batteries
- Cash
- Copies of important documents and photo ID
- Walking shoes, warm clothes, raincoat and hat
- A First Aid Kit and any prescription medicine back-up
- Water and snack food (include babies and pets)

These locations may become an Emergency Hub (look for the Hub flags):

Omarama Community Hall (35 Chain Hills Highway) OR Omarama School (2 Omarama Ave)

More info: NEMA website or <https://www.consumer.org.nz/articles/diy-emergency-grab-bags>

From our 2025 album ...

January

We welcomed the Barbour's and Cosgriff's, and Omarama Lodge opened its doors and park-like setting to guests.

The work of the town's volunteers, who make this a better place to work, live and play got underway.

The Omarama Fire Brigade held its annual golf tournament fundraiser and young firefighter Gemma Patterson began her fundraising bid to take on the Firefighter's Sky Tower Challenge later in the year.



February

With the holidays behind us the year's round of activities began.

School pupils returned to their gardens and summer-time work of weeding and watering got underway. This year lamb and sheep sales saw a general air of confidence as prices lifted spirits. And young people gathered at Omarama Station for their 'Growing Future Farmers' orientation.

In environmental news the nationally endangered Lowland Longjaw Galaxias enjoyed a boost in population and the Ahuriri Catchment Community Group arranged a visit to Corbies Creek for a group to be introduced to the rare and threatened native fish.

In the first of many - too many- occasions this past year, we acknowledged the loss of former community stalwarts Neville Orford, Zeta Gard, and Nicola Whearty, nee Weatherall, formerly of Lake Ohau Station.

Ōmārama rower Sadie Mason began her successful year with placings in the New Zealand Rowing Championships at Lake Ruataniwha.

And it wouldn't be February without 'Spud in the bucket'!

This year scandal – the first ever disqualification - was narrowly averted when judges strategically avoided the move. It was the fastest way to a quiet beer. Rumour has it that Casso is already planning to comeback stronger than ever for the 2026 season.



From the 2025 album ... continued

March

It would be impossible to know just how many lives she touched. In fact, many of those she helped would have not even known her name. Ōmārama's Georgie Robertson died on March 8.

Entry numbers were good in the 110th Ōmārama Collie Dog Club two-day trials which were held at the club grounds on Dalrachney Station.

Sadly, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) Autumn fly-in ended in tragedy when former Gore man Ivan Van de Water died and friend Don Grant was critically injured following a light plane crash in the Dingleburn Valley.

Chief Fire officer Greg Harper and wife Adrienne stepped back from their roles and Jack Zorab was appointed Omarama's new fire chief.



April

In April, Omarama lost an icon. Pat Leopold (Wingy) passed away at Strathallan Rest Home, Timaru, aged 90 years. And former Omarama resident Rob Perriam, who laid the foundations for much of our business centre today, died at Cashmere View Care Home in Christchurch.

Age Concern Waitaki coordinator Kathryn Bennett held coffee afternoons at the 'Pop-up café' at the community centre throughout the year with a variety of speakers and activities – including rock painting.

Omarama School honoured the Anzacs at assembly. Young bagpiper Jack Boon, one of the intake of the Growing Future Farmers' programme took a leading role in Ōmārama's Anzac Day parade and service.

The Omarama Golf Club staged yet another successful fundraising tournament with 12 crockpots filled to the brimming waiting for players at the 19th hole.

There was a warm welcome to 'Jenni the Generator' from her new home when about 40 people gathered at the Ōmārama Community Centre for a sausage sizzle prepared by Ōmārama MenzShed, and the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the community's latest asset.

An AF8 roadshow came to town and initiated what has become the newest group of volunteers in town – the Omarama Emergency Hub group which will help the



From the 2025 album ... continued

May

Bruce Dyson passed away peacefully on the morning of Saturday, May 17, at home, surrounded by his family – after a cancer diagnosis 18 previously. Much more than the publican, he was a man devoted to family and this community.

That month the community also officially farewelled 'Wingy' from his 'Dunny Door table' at Bruce and Julie's Boots and Jandals Hotel.

Ōmārama School year seven pupil Charlotte Hales' butter fundraiser raised the final \$4000 needed to get friend and rower Sadie Mason to the 2025 U19 World Championship Regatta in Trakai, Lithuania, in August. The butter sales were the last push needed after an all-out effort in Twizel and Ōmārama to raise the estimated \$20K needed for her training and the trip.

This year's was a poignant Pink Ribbon event when about 60 ladies and a couple of gents from Ōmārama and Otematata enjoyed an afternoon celebrating great memories of friends recently lost to cancer, and raised a record amount for a cause that touches so many.

Omarama School ran its 2025 speech competitions. Pupils were tested over a variety of skills – from reciting, recounting and public speaking depending on their age. And she did it! Despite recovering from a back injury firefighter Gemma Patterson raised almost \$4K for Leukaemia and Blood Cancer New Zealand by tackling the Firefighter Sky Tower Challenge.

And Michelle and Terry Walsh handed over the keys of Mobil Twizel to another Omarama couple, Richard and Nicola McKerchar, heading for retirement in Marlborough.

The first of several workshops to discuss the management plan for the Ōmārama Stream reserve was help resolving to prioritise clearing the slash and waste from the



June 2025

In June we lost Ōmārama Gliding Club manager Brian Sharpe, gardening maven Marylou Blue, and legend John Rogers (JR).

Our hearts were breaking as we gathered to share the grief, and hold friends and family close.

The Ōmārama School Board of Trustees began its fight against a proposal to change school bus routes saying it could negatively impact its rural pupils' access to



From the 2025 album ... continued

July

Omarama Rodeo Club staged yet another successful Quiz Night and HillBilly Hunt, this year, with the added incentive to eliminate as many possums as possible – doing its part for TB eradication.

About 70 landowners, stock agents and other affected parties, met at the Ōmārama Hall to hear from National bovine TB eradication agency OsPRI about remedial plans after discovery of a TB infection in calves brought into the area.

Tania Innes followed the proud tradition of great women leaders in our community when she was appointed Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade deputy brigade leader — the first woman to hold a leadership role in the brigade's nearly 60-year history.

In another significant change, Craig and Glenys Dawson announce their imminent retirement with GlenCraigs on the market.

In July, another familiar face left us when Barry Sagggers passed away at Timaru Hospital.



August

We collectively held our breath as we watched from this side of the world as Sadie Mason competed as part of the Rowing New Zealand's Under 19 women's quad to win the B Final in the World Rowing Under 19 Championships in Lithuania.

Two uninhabitable former Rabbit Board houses on Crown land, 40 and 48 Chain Hills Highway, now owned by Te Rūnanga o Waihao were demolished to make way for a new development of affordable housing and worker accommodation.

And Omarama joined the craze with Charlotte Newfield setting a new weekly group Knit Night, Omarama.

Daffodil Day sales once again raised funds for the cause.



From the 2025 album ... continued

September

Much-loved Leopold family matriarch, Doreen, passed away in her sleep at the age of 86 years with family by her side, less than five months after husband Pat (Wingy) passed.

After several years in the planning involving a multitude of agencies permissions were finally put in place so slash piles and debris from the 2022 Omarama Stream floods could be torched and grazing returned as part of the maintenance programme for the reserve.

The ever-popular weekly Winter Housie sessions were extended in to Spring this year.

Charlie and her angels – Amy Smith, Felix Harper and Tuulianna Laukkanen are back for the whole Omarama gliding season and they're off to a flying start. That's Charlie Irvin (24) that is, Omarama Gliding Club's newly appointed manager.

The Omarama Golf Club claimed the Proctor Rose Bowl, last held in 2006. The four teams from Kurow, Otematata, Ben Ōhau and Omarama competed for the honour. A strong women's membership meant Omarama could field a team for the mixed competitions.



October

It would not be oversteating it to say the weather dominated the news, in October. Wind, rain and snow, we had it all. And the rivers rose.

October 23 was also when the Ahuriri River reached 356.24 cubic metres a second at the SH8 Bridge making the leap from around 60 cumecs within hours.

Five days later thick snow covered the landscape, breaking branches and felling trees.

Inevitably there were road closures leaving motorists stranded and on October 28 roads into Omarama were closed in all directions.

The rain caused washouts on Lake Ohau Rd, Quailburn, Henburn, Shortcut and Birchwood roads.

Congratulations were the order of the day for Natalie Beiboer and the team at Top 10 Holiday Park. Natalie was awarded Emerging Leader at the TOP10 annual awards held in Christchurch.

After a 'soft launch', the Glider Café is got off to a flying start.

The work to seal the Omarama Memorial Hall carpark began.

It was that time again - time to vote in the local government elections.

And a ghoulish gang of beasts made their way around the streets for Halloween.



From the 2025 album ... continued

November

New owner-operators of Four Square Ōmārama Craig and Karen Bishop-Everett officially took over from Dave and Kim Mackenzie, who moved to Four Square Fairlie. There was stunning fashion in the field and stunning fashion at the pub as Omarama marked the 165th running of the Melbourne Cup.

Omarama School pupils proudly showed off their pets at a successful and fun pet day at the Omarama reserve.

The South Island Regional Gliding Competition were held at the Omarama Airfield over a week but the weather limited competition days.



December

Ōmārama's skies proved the ultimate racetrack for glider pilot Dane Dickinsen, who looks to have set a new 100 km FAI triangle world record riding the Ben Ōhau wave. The Omarama Fire Brigade's First Response unit are the winners of this year's 'operational efficiency' award in Fire and Emergency Otago/Southland Te Kei region Ngā Tohu Raukura celebrating success awards.

Craig and Glenys Dawson officially handed over the keys of their successful retail business, GlenCraigs, to established Central South Island retailer Maureen Van Tiel. The rain may have come down but it was all so merry and bright with loads of bubbly fun for Santa's visit to Ōmārama's littlest people Playgroup, for their Christmas Party at the Glider Café.





OMARAMA GOLF CLUB

NEW YEARS TOURNAMENT

ALL WELCOME

Saturday, 10th January 2026

Numbers will be limited per session

Morning Session: Report 8.00 a.m. for 8.30 a.m. tee off
(Lunchtime meal supplied)

Afternoon Session: Report 12.30 for 1.00 p.m. tee-off
(Evening meal supplied)

Prize Giving will be held at the conclusion of afternoon session

Stableford prizes

Entry fee: \$45.00

On-course BBQ - Great Prizes - Raffles - Great company

Entries to be received by Thursday 08th January 2026
CAMPervans WELCOME TO STAY OVERNIGHT

EFTPOS Available for Bar and Entries

Entries (including morning or afternoon session, club/player ID) to:

Greg Stuart email gregstuart10@gmail.com or TXT 0274389018

OMARAMA FIRE BRIGADE

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Saturday the 24th January, 2026

Stableford Tournament



Proceeds to Omarama Fire Brigade

EVERYONE WELCOME – Golfers and Non-Golfers

Come and throw some water about as well as balls!

ENTRY \$45 Per.Person

Cards in by 12.30pm Tee Off 1.00pm

BBQ on-course and Meal afterwards

Great Prizes and Raffles

Entries and Enquiries to:

Arron Chambers

arronandyema@xtra.co.nz

0272032340

The Noticeboard

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

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

!! Turn the pages for Christmas and New Year hours for our businesses and community services - these could be different to those listed here.

Happy Birthday to Sharon Stuart from all of us Xxx

Kurow Medical Centre Ōmārama Clinic at the Ōmārama Community Centre, is on Tuesdays. Appointments are available 9am to 4.30pm.

To make appointments for all clinics, order repeat scripts or make enquiries please contact Kurow Medical Centre 03 436 0760 or Mackenzie Health Clinic 03 976 0503 .
www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz

The Ōmārama Community Library is open 9.30am to 11am, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Library hours can change. Email: omaramalibrary@gmail.com

Ōmārama MenzShed meets each Saturday at 10am and at other times too.
For further information please contact Malcolm Cameron 022 476 2225

St Thomas' Ōmārama Church Community:

Kurow Presbyterian Parish: Rev Eymbert Johannes Schoneveld, Interim Moderator, Kurow Presbyterian Parish, Waiareka-Weston Community Presbyterian Church, 48 Main Street, Weston. Phone: 022 683 5117
email: westonminister@gmail.com

The Ōmārama Golf Club Saturdays cards in 12 noon, tee-off 12.30 pm. Club captain: Greg Stuart 027 438 9018, secretary: Arron Chambers 027 203 2340. www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz

The Ahuriri Community Catchment Group meets once a month. For time and place contact facilitator Bridget Pringle, 021 072 2113 or bridget@irricon.co.nz

The Upper Waitaki Young Farmers Club meets at 7.30pm on the first Monday of each month at the Kurow Hotel. All welcome. Join the Facebook group.

Ōmārama Playgroup meets at 9.30am each Wednesday during the primary school term at the Ōmārama Community Centre. For more information phone or email president Olivia Black 027 833 0869, vice-president Jess Townsend and secretary Bridie Brosnahan 027 341 3010 omaramaplaygroup@gmail.com
Bridge Club - The Ōmārama 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 Ōmārama Model Aircraft Club meets regularly at its flying ground at the Ōmārama airfield. All welcome - Contact Bevan Allan bjallan@xtra.co.nz

FENZ Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade meets at 7pm each Wednesday at the Ōmārama Fire Station and has its meeting on the third Wednesday of the month. If anyone would like more information about the various volunteer roles available within the fire brigade please get in touch. Email omarama@fireandemergency.nz or contact Jack on 020 4045 0909. You can follow us on Facebook (Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade)

A gentle exercises and social afternoon group meets at the Otematata District Club at 1.30pm Thursday afternoons. Gold coin donation and a cuppa after the exercises. Contact Ethel Gray 03 438 7764.

Waitaki Newcomers Network: For more information about this group and to subscribe to regular updates send contact details to E: waitaki@newcomers.co.nz

W: www.newcomers.co.nz F: facebook.com/WaitakiNewcomersNetwork/

Plunket Line: 0800 933 922

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.

Thank you to all who share your stories and contribute in other ways to the Gazette.
We all really appreciate what you do.

The February issue of the Ōmārama Gazette
is Wednesday, February 11, 2026
Please submit copy
by Thursday, February 5, 2026

To advertise in the Omarama Gazette

for rates and guidelines

Phone -021 294 8002

Or email omaramagazette@gmail.com

Thank you, your generosity pay for printing and distribution and means our not-for-profit groups can advertise for free.



DAVID O'NEILL
CONTRACTING LTD

*Dave, Prue, Samantha, Jack and the team would like to wish all
our clients and community a very*

Merry Christmas with family and friends

We hope you have a happy and safe New Year over the holidays.

*We thank you for all your support and business
throughout the past year*




JAMIESON
CONSTRUCTION LTD

► OMARAMA RODEO ◀

20 25



DEC 28TH

10.00 AM

GATES OPEN 9AM

NO GLASS

NO BYO

NO DOGS

ROAR

EFTPOS AVAIL

ADULTS \$20
YOUTH \$5
UNDER 5 FREE



BEN OMAR ROAD-TURN RIGHT AFTER AHURIRI BRIDGE HEADING NORTH

The Community Reports

Fenz Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade



*Jack Zorab
Chief Fire Officer*

The Ōmārama Volunteer Fire Brigade meets at 7pm each Wednesday at the Ōmārama Fire Station and has its meeting on the third Wednesday of the month.

If anyone would like more information about the various volunteer roles available within the fire brigade please get in touch. Email omarama@fireandemergency.nz or contact Jack on 020 4045 0909. You can follow us on Facebook (Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade)

Thank you from Oamaru churches' foodbank

- from Jill Wilson

Special thanks once again to all the residents and collectors of Omarama, Lake Ohau, Otematata, Kurow and Duntroon for your generosity.

We were overwhelmed with the amount of goods and cash we received. Our shelves are now well stocked for the coming year and will provide our much needed service in the Waitaki Community.

The Oamaru Churches Foodbank is open every Friday from 10am to 12 noon {closed public holidays} at 4 France St, Oamaru.

We wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas.

THANK YOU FROM THE FOODBANK TEAM.

*The Lake Ōhau Alpine Village's contribution to Oamaru Churches Foodbank was collected by the Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade earlier this month.
Photo: Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade Facebook page.*



Ōmārama Community Library

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR HOURS

Wednesday, December 24 - Christmas Eve -
open 9.30am to 11am

Saturday, December 27, open 9.30am to 11am

Wednesday, December 31 - New Year's Eve - CLOSED

Saturday, January 3, open 9.30am to 11am

Normal hours: Wednesdays and Saturdays,
9.30am to 11am

at the Ōmārama Community Centre.

omaramalibrary@gmail.com

Ōmārama Community Garden

Open All Hours!

We are a group of gardeners who work together to create something for everyone in our community

The group receives sponsorship from Age Concern.

Anyone is welcome to pop along to the Community Centre and have a potter, and also to pop in any plants they may have ready to go in.

Join the Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/742877880594146>

And watch this growing space.

Contact: Jennie Hales, jenniehollows@hotmail.com





The home of South Canterbury Traction Engine & Transport Museum

New Potatoes For Xmas

Omarama/Twizel/Otematata

delivery afternoon/early evening – collections welcome

**Tuesday 23rd or Wednesday 24th
December 2025**



5Kg \$23.00

To order contact:

Jo Golder 0274 584828

Direct Debit to: SCTETM 03-0887-0246596-02

Surname in Reference

Thank you for supporting our club!! Merry Xmas



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)

CAN I SWIM HERE?

We monitor water quality at popular river, lakes and beaches over summer.

Check the water quality at

lawa.org.nz/swim



 **Environment
Canterbury**
Regional Council
Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri

LAWA
LAND AIR WATER AOTEAROA



LOVE OUR LAKES

Simple steps can reduce your impact.



**POO IN
THE LOO**



**CHECK CLEAN DRY
YOUR BOATING GEAR**



**WASH CLOTHES /
DISHES AWAY
FROM WATERWAYS**



**BIN YOUR
RUBBISH**



ecan.govt.nz/loveourlakes





**Merry Christmas from Craig,
Karen & the Team at your local
Fresh Grocer, Four Square
Omarama.**



Ahuriri Community Catchment Group

Annual Summary - by ACCG facilitator Bridget Pringle

This past year has been a year of progress and collaboration for the Ahuriri Catchment Community Group.

Our focus remains on improving water quality, protecting biodiversity, and fostering strong farmer engagement across the catchment.

Key Highlights from 2025:

- Environmental Monitoring

ACCG was one of only ten groups nationwide to receive eDNA kits through the Environmental Protection Authority's Revitalising Our Rivers project. These kits allow us to expand monitoring beyond traditional water quality parameters and better understand the unique species in our waterways. A range of other stream monitoring is also being undertaken on a regular basis by the members.

- Events

We hosted a Fish Celebration Day in February, bringing together locals to learn about and celebrate the specialist fish species that call the Ahuriri catchment home, also a Stream Health Assessment training day, a two-day Wetland Workshop, and interesting talks from experts about soils, irrigation, dung beetles and resource management law.

- Workshops and Representation

ACCG was represented at the Environment Canterbury Catchment Conversations workshop in Timaru, ensuring our voice is heard in regional water management discussions.

- Water Quality

Members continue to monitor hundreds of water quality sites around the catchment informing decision making about where to target on farm efforts. *Continued over*



Understanding natural influences, changing weather patterns and how land use affects the Trophic Lake Index in the Ahuriri Arm is one of our key work streams.

• **Funding and Support:**

We are grateful to the (ex) Zone Committee, ECan and EOS Ecology for funding and support that helps us progress actions throughout the year. Additional support from experts and partners has enabled wetland projects, planting initiatives, water quality analysis, pest and weed control and technical advice for landowners.

• **Innovation and Free Services**

Through Wai Connection support, members have received expert guidance in ecological science across the catchment.

Looking Ahead:

Our goals for 2026 are to achieve a coordinated approach to strengthen environmental stewardship and contribute to the long-term ecological health and cultural values of the Ahuriri catchment for future generations.

- David Anderson, Dave Ellis, Nicola McKerchar, Bridget Pringle (ACCG 2025 Officers)



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



Vicky Munro

Otematata

03 438 7855 021 438745



Alona Shaw

Omarama

027 773 4214

'Twas the night before Christmas... continued

The sleigh had malfunctioned early that night,
Could he make the deliveries by first morning light?
Would our own local heroes avert the scenes of dismay,
If there were no presents to open, come Christmas day.
Back-up plans were in action – they could save the moment
Omarama's Operation Santa was put into motion.
They lined up the vehicles along the grass runway
And turned on the lights to shine a clear pathway.
Rudolph guided them down through the night sky in silence,
The sleigh came to rest on the grass without hindrance.
While Santa was treated to cinnamon oysters and rum,
More helpers were called on to help finish his run.
Come Lexie, come Malcolm, come Ross and Rebecca,
Bring mailbags and boxes to sort parcels and letters.
Soon all was in order, everything done in succession
No-one would know Santa could not finish his mission.
Tired but recharged, the reindeer stuffed full of cherries,
The team from the North Pole were now at the ready.
Santa sprang to his feet, to his team gave a whistle,
A wink from the Ram and the sleigh bells did jingle.
I heard him exclaim, 'ere he flew out of sight,
Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night.

Thank you

Thank you to all who share your stories and contribute in other ways to the Gazette.
You are the motivation I need to make sure I never settle for less than my best.
Not only that, you make all of this possible.
It is a privilege to put the Gazette together.

Because of family commitments the Gazette will be back a week later next year, February 11, 2026.
A world of good wishes to you all.

- Ruth Grundy, editor.

'Twas the night before Christmas...

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the district
Not a creature was stirring not even our Patrick.

The baches and motels were full to the brimming,
With the rellies and visitors all soundly sleeping.

The kitchen hands were not yet up to start prep,
The newspapers were not yet on the shop doorstep.

The skies over Totara were twinkling with starlight
And the moon rose behind it with the brightness of daylight.

When down at the station there arose a commotion,
And the lights at the cop shop flicked on with brisk motion.

A rare silent alarm and alerts had been triggered,
All hands were required – a plan needs configured.

An urgent delivery was due to arrive,
Down at the airfield, from the north, through the skies.

Come Jack, come Tania, now Zane, and now Greg,
Geva, Maddie and Vicky, forgo your warm beds.

On Bean, on Hank, on Mike, Josh and Maurice
To the airfield, the airfield, now dash away each!

Coming over Chain Hills, gliding in overhead
was Santa, nine reindeer, Rudolph's nose flashing red.

- continued over

