



Omarama Gazette

February 2020



Competition returns home for 50th

Interest has sparked across the country ahead of a significant anniversary for a popular firefighting competition to be held in Omarama, next month.

The Wajax pump competition began in Omarama and, like so many good ideas, was brewed over a beer at the Omarama pub a little over 50 years ago.

Since its inception its popularity has gone from strength to strength, so much so that when registrations for Wajax 2020 opened last year volunteer firefighters from throughout the country responded.

Unfortunately, because the entries were capped at 25 teams and Otago/Southland teams - teams south of the Waitaki - were given preference, teams from the North Island, like Hawke's Bay, who were keen to compete, had to be turned down, one of the organisers, Jack Zorab, said.

About 200 competitors, supporters judges, officials and VIPs are expected to attend.

Waitaki mayor Gary Kircher said he was "very pleased" the Wajax event's 50th anniversary was being celebrated in Omarama, where it began so many years ago.

"And I'm just as pleased to be there to help cheer on our locals as they compete once again for the title.

"It's a chance for us to celebrate our volunteer firefighters who make such a sacrifice for our communities, and to support them as they compete against their southern colleagues.

"I'm sure it will be a memorable weekend."

Initially three teams – Stewart Island and Glenorchy rural volunteer brigades plus Omarama – ran in the first unofficial Wajax pump competition, in 1970. Not long afterwards Lake Hawea joined in.

- continued over

Home for 50th, *continued.*

At the time the brigades were all using similar Forest Service equipment to fight urban fires.

The competition is named for the Wajax portable pump 'backpack', one of a rural fire-fighter's main pieces of equipment.

Teams of four complete timed runs to assemble the portable pumps and knock down standing targets with fire hoses.

The pump is still in use and all the skills needed are just as relevant today, longest serving brigade member and station officer Maurice Cowie said.

"The training for the competitions is all preparation for out on the fire ground, training 'till it becomes just second nature."

Maurice was a runner in the original Omarama team comprising John Rogers, Maurice, Graham Butt, Dave Hancox and John Pickworth.

It was the Stewart Island team that won the first competition. Although there will be visitors coming from Stewart Island, unfortunately they will not be fielding a team, Jack said. However, the other three original teams – Hawea, Glenorchy and Omarama – will be in the line-up.

The Wajax 2020 Omarama team is Jack, Maurice, Aaron Ferguson, Pete Trusler and Jacob Cook – four will run, with one reserve.

Reigning champions - Te Anau - secured their spot early on, Jack said.

Also confirmed are newcomers from Mossburn, Oamaru and the Waitaki Volunteer Fire Force, Bushfire Crew.

"There's going to be teams from brigades who haven't entered in years, as well as those who have never set foot on a Wajax track before."

He encouraged those who had run, judged or had connections to the competitions in the past to come and join in.



However, he also asked that people register so that arrangements can be made for catering and so on.

Planning for the event began in 2018. "Everything is in hand... there has been huge support from the brigade and community."

The event will be at the Countrytime Hotel and grounds from March 13 to 15.

The competition will run all day Saturday with an awards dinner in the evening.

Entertainment will be provided by Frank the Music Man.

A 'Captain's Breakfast' will be held on Sunday morning before people travel home.

Spectators are welcome.

Jack asks that businesses who would like to donate prizes for raffles

email wajax2020@outlook.com

Photos (below): The Wajax 2020 Omarama team are put through their paces at practice, this week.

(left) The original Omarama team comprising John Rogers, Maurice Cowie, Graham Butt, Dave Hancox and John Pickworth, at the fifth competition and the first they won in 1975. Photo: Supplied



Coronavirus impact, Omarama

- ◆ **Businesses hit**
- ◆ **Emergency services prepared**
- ◆ **Support available**

Omarama businesses have taken a hit after tours were pulled following the Government closure of the borders to some travellers because of the threat posed by a new coronavirus.

And preparations are already in place should the virus happen to reach Omarama.

On Sunday, the Government banned any foreign travellers, who left or transited through mainland China after February 2, from entering New Zealand.

The virus, which is believed to have emanated from Wuhan, China, has spread quickly with people affected worldwide and the death toll rising each day.

To date, there have been no cases of the disease in New Zealand.

The travel ban is to be in place for up to 14 days from February 2 and will be reviewed every 48 hours, Immigration New Zealand said.

According to an Otago Daily Times report, in February last year, 17,000 travellers came to New Zealand from China.

While the full impact cannot yet be gauged, Omarama business owners say it is already having an effect.



General manager of Omarama's Heritage Gateway and Countrytime hotels, Megan Talarico, said yesterday, about 50 tours booked for February and March had been cancelled.

Because of the evolving situation, there was general uncertainty over how future bookings would be affected.

Those who have pulled out already were mostly smaller tours of about 20 to 25 people – about 10 to 12 rooms, she said.

"It is huge, it's across the whole of the tourist industry – jet-boat operators, stargazers..."

As well as the Heritage and Countrytime it has also affected the other hotels in the chain owned by Otago Hotels Ltd, in Twizel and Tekapo, she said.

"The Chinese are huge business. It's not that they don't want to come, they can't come."

It would be the "small wholesale businesses" which would be hardest hit, she said, and she suspected the real extent of the issue was yet to be revealed.

Mrs Talarico believed it could also impact numbers of those visiting – free independent travellers - from other countries.

"People won't want to travel anyway."

The Australian bushfires seemed to have had a similar effect, she said.

"People are staying put. If they're not affected [by the fires] themselves, they are staying home to support those who are."

That there were no cases of the virus in New Zealand "is good".

However, all precautions were being taken.

The hotels were "being vigilant" particularly over sanitising, and staff were being supported, she said.

Working with Omarama First Response, she had a plan in place in the event of a suspected case.

"If it was a busload affected, then they would need to be quarantined here," she said. The general outlook for business was still positive, she said. She did not envisage laying off staff because staffing at the hotel was seasonal anyway.

In March, the Countrytime would host Wajax 2020 which was bringing about 180 to town and the Aon Maadi Cup rowing regatta was at Lake Ruataniwha this year, which would bring good numbers into the district.

Merino Country Café manager Sue Gray said lunch groups had cancelled through February and she understood business could be down by as much as 40%.

The lunch groups were busloads of between 10 and 30 people.

At present, the café was still seeing groups who had arrived in the country before the travel ban.

She believed the true impact, especially on the numbers of independent travellers would not be known for about a fortnight.



Fenz Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade chief fire officer Greg Harper said the brigade and first response, who would be first on the scene in an emergency, had yesterday received instructions to treat anyone presenting with respiratory or flu-like symptoms as if they had the virus.

This would mean "rugging up a bit more", making sure crews were outfitted in the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment gear.

They would also be liaising closely with St John and follow their instructions and procedures, he said.



Tourism Waitaki general manager Margaret Munro said, in a statement, yesterday, there were "many unknowns" about the effect the virus would ultimately have in the region - "the scale, timeline and impact".

"This is naturally a very distressing situation for everyone especially the Chinese people, those visiting or who have travelled through China recently, our thoughts are with all those affected.

"It goes without saying, that everyone in our industry, and the general public, continue to be respectful, show empathy

and the kindness, and manakitanga that we're famous for, be prepared to support our guests during their stay here in New Zealand.

"Tourism Waitaki are keeping local operators up to date via their digital operators' newsletter with information as it comes to hand via Tourism New Zealand and other government agencies.

"Any businesses currently not receiving this newsletter are urged to contact Tourism Waitaki to have their business added", Ms Munro said.

Public health physicians said they were receiving regular updates and the south was well-prepared should the virus arrive, the Otago Daily Times reported, this morning (Wednesday, February 5, 2020).

Key to preventing the spread of any flu-like illness is hand hygiene and cough and sneeze etiquette, they said.

Photos: Heritage Gateway and Countrytime hotel general manager Megan Talarico and Fenz Omarama chief fire officer Greg Harper (by Kevin Grant) and Tourism Waitaki general manager Margaret Munro (Supplied).

Fire risk on reserve land to be assessed

Concerns have been raised with rural fire authorities about the fire risk posed by dry vegetation on council-owned reserves in Omarama.

Fire and Emergency New Zealand deputy principal rural fire officer Michael Harrison confirmed a hazard assessment request had been lodged with Fenz asking them to look at two specific sites and assess the risks.

The sites in question are recreation reserve land between the campervan dump station and the airfield, and the area between the Omarama Stream and the golf course road. The council has let grazing leases to both these areas.

Waitaki District Council recreation officer Lucianne White said she would be coming to Omarama today, Wednesday, to inspect the sites and "assess the best course of action. The lessees of these two areas have been informed that there is excessive growth that needs to be rectified immediately."

Mr Harrison said both Omarama and Otematata townships were at the "rural/urban interface". Landowners do have the right to "retire" land so long as they do not do anything to cause a fire, he said.

Various factors are considered as part of a hazard assessment.

"How much vegetation? What type? How dry? What are the risks of it igniting?"

The assessment is "weighted towards that. How likely or unlikely is it that it would ignite?"

The outcome of that assessment would determine whether Fenz would approach the landowner, he said. In most instances Fenz would provide advice to the landowner as to how to remedy the situation. A request to take appropriate action could be enforced in a court of law, although that is extremely rare, Mr Harrison said.

"I'm not aware of any [in his rural fire district] we have had to take that far."

Mr Harrison said if someone did have a section they had concerns about they should talk to the landowner first and if they have no luck, should complete the appropriate report on the website or call 0800 673 473 and staff at the Otago Rural Fire District office would assist.

Fenz Omarama fire chief Greg Harper said it was "very dry" and recent rain was not enough to remove the risk. "The rain will be here and gone."

He said concern was such members of the brigade had taken it upon themselves to mow the former rabbit board land beside the fire station where despite all the appropriate precautions a grass fire ignited two years ago.

"Tremendous spring growth" had only exacerbated the risk, he said.

"We've dodged a bullet so far when you see what happened in Canterbury yesterday."



Familiar face fronts new business

A familiar valley face fronts Omarama's newest business.

Paddy Galvin, son of Sally and the late Mike Galvin, of Otematata, has moved his Red Hand Scaffolding business to Omarama.

Based adjacent to the Omarama Sheep Sale yards, Paddy officially set up his yard in Ahuriri Drive last week.

He has spent 21 years in the business, the past seven on his own account.

Until recently he was based in Hakataramea, working out of Kurow.

As well as Omarama, Red Hand Scaffolding services Tekapo, Mt Cook, Twizel, Ohau, Otematata and Kurow.

A former blade shearer, his first step on the career ladder to scaffolding success was made when he was 28.

He signed up for a job at Benmore Power Station and was hooked.

"It was cool."

The job took him to Western Australia – Karatha and Port Hedland – and work on the oil rigs.

That required a quite different approach and skills to those of regular scaffolding operations, he said.

On his return to New Zealand he moved to Christchurch.

Being a major centre, scaffolders were in constant demand "and it only got bigger after the earthquakes".

In all, those years gave him good all-round experience, he said.

But he always aimed to get "back to the valley", ultimately to Otematata or Omarama and set up a yard of his own.

It has taken Paddy no time at all to settle in - he is already a firefighter with Fenz Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade and is a keen member of the Omarama Golf Club.

His local knowledge has also stood him in good stead, workwise.

"I know all the builders. I grew up with them."

And the business is contracted to work on seven of the eight Upper Waitaki Hydro system dams.

For which he has the help of two good men - Dave Johnston, of Oamaru, and Justin Diack, of Kurow.

Photo: The team from Red Hand Scaffolding (from left) Paddy Galvin, Justin Diack and Dave Johnston set up shop in Omarama.



'Ambassadors' not authorised to issue fines

Waitaki's newly-appointed 'Responsible Freedom Camping Ambassadors' do not have the issuing of infringement notices on their list of duties. Regardless, they are also powerless to do so.

The council has appointed two 'ambassadors' – one in December and a second in January - to patrol freedom camping areas in the Ohau, Ahuriri and Waitaki valleys, and around Oamaru, to ensure campers are complying with freedom camping regulations.

The appointments are funded from a \$40,000 grant from the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment.

The council has chosen a "carrot-rather-than-stick methodology" aimed primarily at educating visitors about the rules, Waitaki District Council regulatory manager Andrew Bardsley said in a press release in December.

"Fines will be issued if the carrot doesn't succeed, but we're hoping that that won't be necessary."

This stance and the fact that, as of mid-January, no fines had been issued in the district has been widely covered by various media.

In November, the Oamaru Gazette asked Mr Bardsley if the ambassadors would be required to issue infringement notices as part of their duties.

He said their duties would include providing advice to campers on where they can and cannot camp, monitoring the length of stay of campers, gathering feedback and "issuing of infringements if required".

However, this week, in an email in response to further questions from the Oamaru Gazette, Mr Bardsley confirmed neither ambassador had been granted a warrant of appointment by the council.

A warrant of appointment is required before they can issue fines.

"They are not warranted officers. They do not issue infringements.

"Our regulatory team or our after-hours contractor have the authority to issue infringements. The ambassadors make a judgement on what if any enforcement action is needed and are supported by our regulatory team.

"Their schedule of duties does not include the issuing of infringements."

"If they feel an infringement is warranted we will issue one based on their assessment.

"The whole point of having the ambassadors was to provide education and provide a point of contact and they are not just another enforcement tool.

"When they identify a camper who is in breach of the freedom camping bylaws they engage with them and if need be, they move them on.

"The response from the campers has been positive, to the point where we have had no refusals to follow our ambassadors instructions.

"Our ambassadors have gone out of their way to ensure the campers are compliant, even to the point of allowing them to park in their own driveways, on one occasion, before moving on in the morning.

"Another instance was when an ambassador came across an uncertified campervan.

"Finding the campervan may actually be compliant, he arranged a local garage to inspect and then certify the vehicle.

"I think you would agree those approaches are much better than just issuing a blanket infringement on every occasion."

Mr Bardsley said he believed there were at least eight, possibly more, staff with the appropriate warrants to issue fines.

Asked why the issuing of infringement notices was not included in the list of duties despite his previous statement that they would be Mr Bardsley said, “nothing has changed”.

“We have the capacity to issue infringements based on the ambassadors’ assessments. It has always been our intention to educate and gain cooperation rather than infringe. As I have already stated if we need to issue an infringement based on our ambassadors’ assessment of the situation then we will. We just haven’t found it necessary to do so yet.”

Mr Bardsley said the council had received three complaints from the Oamaru area, only one of which proved to be freedom-camping related.

“We have received no official complaints from the Ahuriri/Waitaki Valley area.

“However, our local ambassador has been made aware of some areas of concern in and around Kurow and Omarama.

“He has reported that some of these complaints relate to freedom campers and he is monitoring these sites.”

Last month, the Timaru Herald reported in neighbouring Mackenzie District it’s ambassadors had also been well-received by campers and, in December, 15 tickets were issued compared to 17 in December 2018.

Mr Bardsley rejected claims that posts (see screenshots below) on the council’s social media pages could appear misleading – one specifically states - “Cheers to our Responsible Freedom Camping Ambassadors, who haven’t had to issue a single fine!”

“I really don’t see how this is misleading.

“The ambassadors work for the WDC and as such it is the council who issue the infringements.

“As indicated above, we have more than enough staff who are warranted to issue infringement notices.”

However, in response to the same question council communication specialist Lisa Scott agreed it could be misleading.

“I don’t believe we said not a single fine had been issued by the ambassadors.

“I think we said there had been no fines issued this season. But I agree its misleading. I thought they were authorised to do so too,” Ms Scott said.



Antonieta lectures at national conference

How does a woman born in Venezuela, living in Omarama wind up in Auckland discussing the existence of holes?

That, in itself, could be a subject worthy of great philosophical debate.

However, reality is a little more pragmatic.

About a year ago, like plenty before her, Antonieta (Tieta) Moreno Casañas arrived in Omarama as a backpacker, fell in love, not only with the natural landscape, and decided to stay.

At present, she works at Heritage Gateway Hotel.

Although, Venezuelan-born Tieta spent seven years living in Madrid, Spain, because of the political turmoil in her home country.

Before deciding to travel she spent four years completing her philosophy degree at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and working in rural areas with an organisation she helped to found called Alfresco.

"I also had for two years, a beautiful and picturesque second-hand bookshop."

After deciding to settle in Omarama, she began to look at ways she could put that background to good use - not quite as easy as it sounds when English is not your first language, she said.

Swapping her tourist visa for a work visa and on her return to town she discovered the New Zealand Association of Philosophers was taking abstracts to select speakers for its 2019 conference.

Despite applications closing she applied, was accepted, and, in December, travelled to Auckland to give a lecture at the conference.

That was where the side discussion took place with a fellow attendee about the existential significance of the words on a sign on the wall on which they were leaning. The sign read; 'Do not make penetrations or holes in this wall.'

They laughed as her colleague asked out loud the same question she had been asking herself.

"Is there any real difference between a penetration and a hole?"

About 100 from throughout the world attended the three-day conference which was staged like a series of 30-minute TED talks – with time afterwards for questions from the audience.

Tieta's topic was 'Epistemology and ontology as fundamental concepts for dealing with political problems. An approach to the idea of "framed" lives in Judith Butler' – which can be very loosely translated as; How and why we come to believe what we do, and how does that shapes our judgment about others and the decisions we make, particularly in a political context.

Judith Butler is a modern American philosopher and gender theorist, who Tieta greatly admires, and has just published her latest offering – 'The Force of Non-violence'.

About 20 people listened to Tieta's dissertation and the audience feedback was good with some "healthy debate" on the topic, she said.

From this month, Tieta writes a monthly column (over) for the Omarama Gazette exploring the ways our community interacts, and looking at our arts and culture through the eyes of a newcomer.

Through Antonieta's eyes

This is the first in a series of columns by Venezuela-born Antonieta Moreno-Casañas - usually known as Tieta - who lives and works in Omarama. She plans to explore the culture of Omarama and the Waitaki, and tell us about her day-to-day experiences and interactions - we'll see ourselves through her eyes.

"In the middle of my travels around New Zealand, just thinking that it will be another place among many in this island, I found a very special town, Omarama. In just a few months, the curious contrast and variety between the people, the healthy community vibes and the beautiful landscapes around make me stay and turn this place into my new home.

My name is Antonieta, I am from Venezuela but I have lived in Spain for quite a long time before coming here. I studied philosophy and cultural management. I am also in love with many sports such as swimming, rock climbing, hiking and football. As you already know, New Zealand is perfect for all that.

For the next year I plan to get more involved in cultural activities.

Two months ago I had the honour of giving a lecture in the Annual Congress of Philosophers of New Zealand and I am working on new submissions for other activities around.

But, what it would be the most refreshing project is writing a cultural column for Omarama Gazette where I can show all the wonderful diverse things people are creating in this community.

So happy to be writing for you. Please, don't be shy to tell me about the hidden talents you find in this town.

See you around and best wishes for this year, Tieta.

Antonieta Casañas email: antonietaipc92@gmail.com



The Noticeboard



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

Our sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Connie Crichton (formerly Orford), who died in Timaru last week.

Youth Glide New Zealand will host Winching Over Waitangi (WOW) from tomorrow, February 6 to Sunday, February 9, at Omarama Airfield

Boots & Jandals Hotel Social Club holds its annual 'spud in a bucket' judging and barbecue at the hotel on Sunday, February 16 from 4pm.

Stage one of the Alps 2 Ocean Ultra adventure race begins at Aoraki Mt Cook on Sunday, February 23 and finishes in Oamaru on Saturday, February 29.

The Omarama Collie Dog Club trials will be at the grounds on Dalrachney Station from Sunday, March 1 to Monday, March 2.

Rowing: The South Island Secondary School rowing championships will be at Lake Ruataniwha from Friday March 13 to Sunday March 15. The 2020 Aon Maadi Cup regatta will be at Lake Ruataniwha from March 30 to April 4.

The Omarama Community Library is open 9am to 10am Wednesdays and Saturdays, Library hours can change. Contact Yvonne: 027 476 7473.

The Omarama Golf Club Saturdays tee-off 1pm. Club Captain Adrian Tuffley, 027 347 8276. www.omaramagolfclub.co.nz

Omarama Playgroup meets at 9.30am each Wednesday during the primary school term at the Omarama Community Centre.

For more information phone president Andrea Aubrey, 03 438 9863; vice president Ruby Milestone, 03 438 9401, secretary Carla Hunter, 03 976 0504

St Thomas' Community church services: contact: Kay Verheul 03 438 9538 or Rev Ken Light 027 211 1501.

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

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 on Saturdays from 9.00 am to 12.00 noon at its flying ground at the Omarama airfield. All welcome - Contact Don Selbie on 027 435 5516.

FENZ 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.

Plunket Line: 0800 933 922

Omarama Plunket Committee: Petrina Paton 027 345 6192

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.

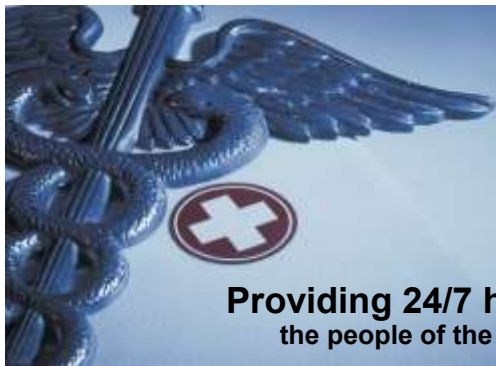
Thank you to all who share your stories and contribute in other way to the Gazette. We all really appreciate what you do.

**The March issue of the
Omarama Gazette
is Wednesday, March 4, 2020.**

**Please submit copy
by Friday, February 28.**

**Advertising pays for
production and distribution.**

To find out about publication and close-off dates, and how much it costs to place your advertisement, please phone 021 294 8002, 03 438 9766 or email omaramagazette@gmail.com



Kurow Medical Centre

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

E: info@kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz

W: www.kurowmedicalcentre.org.nz

www.facebook.com/kurowmedicalcentre

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

**Kurow Medical Centre and its satellite clinics
in Twizel (Mackenzie Health Centre Private Clinic)
and Omarama (Community Hall)**

are proud to offer our registered and casual patients the following services

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

And much more!

**GP consult fees: Under 14yrs Free; Adult \$40.00
Care Plus – Free to eligible patients only**

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

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

Opening hours

Kurow: Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm; Omarama: Tuesday 8.30am to 5pm

Twizel: Monday and Friday 8.30 to 5pm; Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9am to 3pm
and Saturday 10am to 1pm

Please note: We provide 24/7 on call after hours cover by our doctors and PRIME nurses for all our registered and casual patients!

**If you require further information or an appointment, please contact us on:
For Kurow 03 436 0760 or for Twizel 03 976 0503**

Anyone for mixed doubles?!

**The Omarama Sports Courts
will be officially opened
4.30pm Friday, February 7, 2020**

**We made it!!!
It's game, set and match
and time for the official celebration**

Dust off the old racquet.

Haul out those tennis whites and plimsolls.
Dress for the occasion and head over for a game.
Don't forget the headband!!

- There will be rounds of 'Fast 4' mixed-doubles
Registration 5pm, followed by team selection.
- Demo match at 6pm - this is how it's done!
- Barbecue provided (with thanks to Silver Fern Farms
and Hungry Hydro, Otematata.)
- Bouncy castle
- Please bring your own refreshments.

(Hope someone remembers the oranges.)

**Fill the thermos, the chilly bin, the hamper.
Throw in a rug and the sunscreen, see you there!**



The Community Reports

FENZ Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade



Happy New Year to you all. I hope you all had a nice relaxing break. We have started the year with some very dry conditions and a total fire ban is in place. This means all permits are on hold until the fire season changes back. Please be careful when using mowers, grinders, welders etc. on hot days. Try to do these tasks early if you have to, before the temperature rises. This also means no BBQs unless gas, no braziers or camp fires.

We have had a quiet time over the summer season so far. Let's hope we can keep it that way.

There was a large Police presence on the roads which was great. I'm sure this helped with our call numbers. Please stay safe as the tourist season rolls on.

Keep yourselves safe, Chief Fire Officer Greg Harper

Omarama Collie Dog Club

There will be a meeting
of the Omarama Collie Dog Club
7pm, Thursday, February 13, 2020
at the Pink Gilder.

- secretary, Prue O'Neill, 03 438 9883



Omarama Community Library



Contact: Yvonne Jones 027 476 7473.

**The Omarama Community Library
is open 9am to 10am,
Wednesdays and Saturdays at the
Omarama Community Centre.**

Omarama Golf Club

By David Bruce

A record breaking 106 golfers teed it up for the 2020 annual Omarama Golf Club New Year Tournament, easily surpassing previous years' entries.

The field of 84 men and 22 women on Saturday, January 4, compared to the last two year's 70 golfers and 50 three years ago.

"This tournament has grown beyond our wildest dreams. We celebrated when we broke 50 entries and now it is more than double that," club president Greg Harper said.

This had not happened without a lot of work both on the course and in the back-ground by a number the club's dedicated members.

The course was in fantastic order with a team of volunteer ground staff and some well timed rain.

"Businesses, both local and from outside the area, are hugely supportive with sponsorship for prizes which is really appreciated and adds in no small way to the prize table," Mr Harper said.

Golfers came from as far away as Lawrence, Alexandra, Tarras, Tokarahi, Kurow, Mayfield, Otematata, Ben Ohau, Methven, Tai Tapu, Gleniti, Taieri Lakes, Geraldine, Lower Waitaki, North Otago, St Clair, Pleasant Point, Tinwald, Ashburton and Waimate.

Because of the large entry, the field was split into morning and afternoon tee off times.

The overall winner, who won a round for four people in electric carts at Millbrook Golf Club, donated by Millbrook Resort, was Brad Stalker (Tokarahi), gross 89, minus a handicap of 29, for a nett 60 with 48 stableford points.

First three winners in each grade were:-

Senior men: Richard Nehoff (Kurow) 42 points, 1; Bob Burgess (Omarama) and Ali McLeod (Mayfield) 40, equal 2.

Junior men: Neil Cunningham (Ben Ohau) 41 points, 1; Keith Murray (Tokarahi) 40, 2; Ant Ford (Omarama) and Richard French (Ben Ohau) 39, equal 3.

Women: Angela Mowbray (Methven) 39 points 1; Amy Zhang (Tokarahi) 38, 2; Liz Gunatunga (Geraldine) 37, 3.

PHOTO: Omarama New Year golf tournament winner Brad Stalker (Tokarahi) relaxes after his round. Supplied.



Omarama Residents' Association

From the December meeting ...There were 12 people present.

Steve Grundy is to enquire about the number of rateable dwellings in Omarama. According to Waitaki District Council records only three new dwellings have been built in the past two years. A hall rate is levied for each dwelling and paid into the Omarama Hall account to be used by the Residents' Association for the Hall and community centre's upkeep and development.

Town Maps - there will be further discussion about a more efficient way to manage this process.

A new sandpit cover has been fitted, thanks to funding from the Ahuriri Community Board.

The condition of the footpaths around town and the tidiness of the roadside especially heading out of Omarama towards Twizel, needs work. Ross Menzies will look into who is responsible for handling this and will report back to the meeting.

Sports Complex – The work is nearly finished even with a weather hold up. The asphalt is to go down and turf will be applied early in the New Year. Hopefully nets can go up so the courts can be used over Christmas. The committee thanked those involved for all their hard work in getting it up and going.

Toilets still need to be fitted. The drinking fountain is fixed but needs frost protection. The meeting was followed by an informal Christmas function.

The next meeting is 7.30pm Thursday, February 20, 2019

An invitation is extended to all

Contacts: Tony Chapman, chairperson, 0272 428 605.

Yvonne Jones, secretary, 0274 767 473.

THE ASSOCIATION HAS ITS OWN POST OFFICE BOX

Could all those who want to contact the association by mail, send accounts to be paid, or have correspondence considered at the monthly meetings ensure it is addressed to:

The Secretary, P O Box 93, Omarama 9448.

**The association's email address
is omarama.committee@gmail.com**

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Keys and fobs are collected from Charlotte



Omarama Rodeo Club

By Marcia Green, secretary. Photos: supplied.

The Omarama Rodeo club had a wonderful end to 2019.

We had an incredibly successful Bark Up which was sponsored as always by Dave and Prue O'Neil from Dave O'Neil Contracting and hosted by Bruce and Julie from Boots and Jandals Hotel. We had a great turnout of individuals for the event which was pleasing for all involved. A great number of laughs, banter and friendly rivalry is always to be had on the night and this night proved to be no exception. There was strong contention for the top place but in the end Caleb Jenson and his dog Rock took out the title for the evening and won \$500 from Rock's efforts up in the Dave O'Neil truck. This year we also added in a whistling competition where contenders had to whistle two different types of tunes – the "Wallago" which is the whistle used on all dogs for them to come back and the "wolf whistle" commonly used by shepherds to attract the attention of a good looking person. Nic Blanchard won this fun challenge beating out a strong field of whistlers. Well done to all who competed in these fundraising events, we loved having you and enjoyed dancing the night away amongst you all. Special thanks to the team who were an integral part of the process setting things up. Rodeo day on the 28th dawned fresh and still and we had a great number of people through the gates. We managed to put on a great day for all our competitors. We had a strong field of competitors for the day with a large number of barrel racers. We also had a large number of young competitors which was wonderful to see, it's also terrific to see the more seasoned athletes helping the younger generation out in the chutes, making sure all is well and that they are set up correctly for their ride.

Many thanks again to all our competitors, spectators and all those who help on the day and make it what it is.

The club wishes you all a safe, prosperous and happy 2020.



Waitaki District Council - news in brief

The Waitaki District Council has signed a memorandum of understanding with Dawn Aerospace which will allow the company to begin test launches of its unmanned rocket-propelled space plane from Oamaru Airport.

The agreement will allow a more detailed feasibility study to take place, Waitaki Mayor Gary Kircher said.

The Waitaki District Council has confirmed Council Controlled Organisations directors. Steve Grave has been reappointed to the Whitestone Contracting Ltd board for a second term. George Kelcher has been appointed as a new director to the board, also for a term of three years. Glenn Claridge has been reappointed to the Omarama Airfield Ltd board for a second term of three years. Mike McElhinney and Janine Tulloch have been reappointed to the Tourism Waitaki Ltd board, each for their second three-year terms. Dr Andrew Wilson has been reappointed to the Waitaki District Health Services board for three years.

The fifth WDHSL director position has been left unfilled, with councillors instead agreeing to appoint Mr Keith Marshall as an advisor to the board for one year in what Waitaki Mayor Gary Kircher described as a time of change.

Opening of the Aviemore to Kurow Section of Alps to Ocean trail.

The Aviemore to Kurow Section of Alps 2 Ocean trail will be opened at a function at 2pm, Saturday, (February 8, 2020) at the Waitaki Dam Lookout. The newly built 19km off-road trail will link the Aviemore and Kurow sections.

There will be an official ribbon cutting ceremony where local historians will share stories, and attendees will be invited to ride the new section. Shuttles will be available from Waitaki Village for those who would like to cycle from Aviemore to Waitaki Village/Kurow. Alternatively, people may like to do the full Kurow/Waitaki Village to Aviemore return trip. Hire bikes will also be available at Waitaki Village.

Safer Waitaki is holding a Famili Fiefia at St Kevins College on Saturday and Sunday. Saturday will be a day of fun for families, featuring face-painting, a bouncy castle and a lolly scramble. This will be followed by a combined Church Service at the College on Sunday and will be the first in what is hoped to be a series of events bringing people together to build a strong, safe and resilient Waitaki.

Waitaki Mayor Gary Kircher has said the council would be taking up Keep New Zealand Beautiful's offer to help organise a community and council-led clean up event to tackle litter issues, provide clean-up resources and find ways to better educate people after the district scored poorly in a litter survey, significantly higher than other districts in terms of the number of items collected per 1,000 m2 surveyed (185) compared to say Hurunui (61) or Selwyn district, (65).

A Waitaki District Council commissioned Greenhouse Gas emissions report for 2018/19 shows the organisation at significantly negative net emissions, with the organisation removing more greenhouse gases than it emits.

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Ahuriri Community Board news

Ahuriri Community Board by-election result

A fifth person will be sworn in as a member of the Ahuriri Community Board at a meeting, in Oamaru, next week, following a by-election in December.

Kurow man Peter Ellis was elected unopposed to the vacant seat.

The by-election was necessary because only four people stood for the five positions on the board at the local body elections in October.

Mr Ellis is curator of the refurbished Kurow Museum and a committed Waitaki Valley volunteer. He has previous community board experience.

More from the December 16 board meeting, in Otematata.

The board has voted in favour of naming private right of way into a subdivision off SH83, Omarama, Piner Lane, after developers Chris and Judy Piner.

At the public forum, Omarama resident Chris Howes, who lives in the recently subdivided block, told the board about his difficulties getting a rapid number because the road was unnamed.

Mr Howes said six suggestions for names had been put forward and he would like the issue resolved as soon as possible as he was still without a rapid number.

The process “needs to be simpler”, he said.

Council heritage, environment and regulatory group manager Lichelle Guyan said she would look at what could be done to “speed it up”.

He was in support of naming the road Piner Ln.

Mr Menzies said there was precedent for this as Sutherland Rd. and TA Munro Ln had been named for individuals who had worked towards the development of Omarama. This was supported by the board.

Other names put forward were Cloud Watch Ln, Blue Sky Ln, Turnstone Plc, Paradise Way and Tussock Ln.

Final drafts of Omarama and Otematata town masterplans to be discussed at March meeting.

Final drafts of the design work by Baxter Design will be presented to the board at its March 9 meeting before final approval of the masterplans is sought from the council at its March 31 meeting.

Once the masterplans have been approved by the council, they will feed into the Long-Term Plan and District Plan Review consultation processes.

The full report and copies of the preferred masterplan options and landscape designs can be found on the website.

Right: Peter Ellis, new board member

The next
Ahuriri Community
Board meeting
is 3.15 Monday,
March 9, 2020.
at the Community
Centre, Omarama.



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Omarama
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Vicky Munro
Otematata
03 438 7855 021 438745



Malcolm McMillan
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Environment Canterbury

Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee news

From the Summer Update January, 2020

The first meeting will be held at the Omarama Community Centre at 9.30am on 21 February 2020. All are welcome.

The full agenda will be on the ECan website here.

Some topics for discussion are:

- an update on the investigation into what might have caused high bacteria levels Lake Ruataniwha in January.
- a biodiversity proposal for funding to reduce rowan on the banks of Lake Ohau.
- The ongoing response to a water quality decline at the Ahuriri Arm of Lake Benmore.

For more information:

Zone committee facilitator Tami Woods, 027 529 7761 or tami.woods@ecan.govt.nz.

Where's best to swim in Upper Waitaki?

'Can I swim here?' is on the LAWA website shows up-to-date water quality information. Summer community posters have been put up around the Upper Waitaki.

They have news and information specific to each of five locations - Tekapō/Takapō, Aoraki, Ōmarāma, Ōtematata and Twizel. The PDF versions are on the website.

'**Love Our Lakes**' articles have been featured in local papers highlighting what's so special about our lakes. The features can be found on the website.

There's a team of people from partner organisations working over summer to reduce our human impact on the environment - Responsible Freedom Camping Ambassadors from the local councils, water quality scientists monitoring swimming sites, as well as the Check Clean Dry team advising on how to stop the spread of aquatic pest weeds.

The next meeting of

Environment Canterbury's

Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee will be

9.30am, Friday, February, 21, at the Omarama Community Centre.

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





Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee

Take your own picnic and leave the stunning view.

Use a picnic set and reusable containers to enjoy a low-waste lunch without leaving any rubbish behind. Don't let waste get into our lakes and rivers – it can impact water quality.

Here's a few tips for a low-waste picnic:

- Pack your sandwiches rather than buying them in wrapping.
- Use beeswax wraps or reusable containers for carrying food.
- Fruit is a great low-waste option.
- Pack a reusable water bottle and flask for waste-free drinks.
- Use a face cloth for wiping hands and faces.
- Take home any waste – including bottles, packaging and food waste – or use provided rubbish bins.

Remember to use the toilet facilities provided as well!

www.ecan.govt.nz/upperwaitaki



The Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee is a community led committee supported by councils.

 fb.com/canterburywater

E19/7002

Those FAQs - the Five Awkward Questions with ... Airi and Charles

Airi is a Japanese interpreter for Wrinkly Rams and you will find Charles at the front desk at the Omarama Information Centre three days a week. He is also a free-lance graphic designer. The couple made Omarama their home just over a year ago.

1. What is the best advice you have ever been given?

"Don't be afraid to choose your own path." - Airi

"Drink lots of water." - Charles

2. Tell us something about Omarama we might not know.

"Of the all South Island tourist spots, the Wrinkly Rams merino sheep shearing show is the second most visited by Japanese tourists after Lake Tekapo, most popular for it's night sky viewing." - Airi

"Everyone should see James' [Wrinkly Rams] shearing show," - Charles

3. What was your best impulse buy?

"A full snowboarding outfit complete with snowboard." - Airi

Airi has been snowboarding since she was seven years-of-age, in Hokkaido in Japan and last year at Coronet Peak.

"Owning my first car [a Hyundai Fit] - just having a car of my own made such a difference." - Charles

4. What is your best day outside the office?

"Sports, anything outdoors, golf." - Airi

"Road trips - Mt Cook and Lake Tekapo" - Charles

5. What is your wish for the world?

"For there to be no natural disasters." - Airi

Airi grew up in Tokushima, Shikoku Island, Japan, where the threat of tsunami is real and communities constantly trains to respond to such an event.

"For everyone to just get along." - Charles



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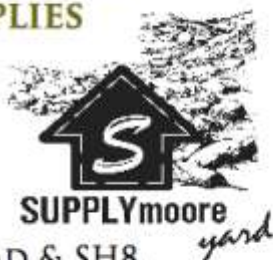
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Lowest temperature: January 10, 5C

Most rainfall: January 2, 15.2mm

Total rainfall for January: 19.6mm

The Garden Diary - Some like it hot.

*"Some like it hot and some sweat when the heat is on." **

The path is ouchy-hot under bare feet.

The leaves of the evergreen magnolia gleam like a hot tin roof.

It is stressing and the nor' wester is tears at its yellowing leaves and tosses them in a hard bounce onto the brown that was lawn.

The sun is scorching, searing, and it's sweltering even in the shade.

The magenta phlox has gone full-blown fluro, enough to make your eyes water.

I love it but it's so much easier on the eye at dusk. The sunshine-yellow conifer scalds the retina. It was planted to cheer up dreary winter days. I am itchy and scratchy just looking at it. The roses are desiccated and have retreated into summer hibernation. Tomatoes? It's not been a good season and now the fruit will not ripen if temperatures stay too high.

Some like it hot; the sedums squat in their corner in pure contentment.

The blue globes of echinops and the fearsome collars on Miss Wilmott's Ghost - *Eryngium giganteum* - shine like stainless steel.

The rock roses – both *cistus* and *helleniums* – are spreading out to sun themselves, and the daylilies are exulting in their one precious day under earth's fiery star.

As that sun sets and the day slowly cools into the long evening the exotic perfumes from those luminous night-scented beauties - stock and nicotiana - mingle with phlox and honey-suckle and lavender to bring sleep.

They love summer and so do I.

But things feel a little weird out there this season and we all have fires on our minds.

The deep orange on the soil moisture maps is spreading like spilt ink across the mainland and fast darkening to hot red. Records are breaking records.

The skies have the alien cold-heat of a Salvador Dali landscape.

If a melting clock face appeared over Benmore I'd hardly bat an eye, especially if it was on one of those smoky days. Time and change.

It's 'light-no-fires', make-no-sparks, hot, hot, hot. And turned my thoughts to fire resistant plantings. My garden would not pass the test, I think. But it does bear thinking about. Fire authorities have done the research for us and there's great info on the Fenz website - Landscaping with fire-resistant plants.

It's not just what you plant but where, how plants are spaced and ongoing maintenance, they say.

They go on to list helpful traits to look for in plants and include the list of the flammability of native plants prepared by Scion Rural Fire Research

A new year also brings change and resolutions. As I spend more time writing than time in the garden I've come to a decision. I look up from writing and find the garden steadily fall into a tangle. It's distressing. I need help! Gardener Jodie McKnight has come to my rescue. Within such a short time she has worked miracles. It's already back to being the garden I once knew and she's going to help me keep things in shape.

Ruth Grundy

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

* Lyrics -The Power Station



The Last Page is Classifieds

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Thank you from all of us!

This is a heartfelt thank you to Omarama's Secret Santa and elves.

This past Christmas, once again, you have wrapped, be-ribboned and delivered little gifts for your entire neighbourhood.

This kind gesture has been appreciated by all.

The Omarama Gazette has received many 'thanks yous' to pass on.

It must take so many hours of your time.

Plus while it may not have been the traditional snow storm during deliveries it was pretty darn wet this year!!!

Thank you so much – you make a world of difference to our place.

Here are a couple of the many thank you messages:

"A special thank you to the thoughtful person(s) who wish us a Happy Christmas with a small bag of candy on our gate. The last few years we have arrived up to Omarama over Christmas to this kind gesture. We hope the 'giver(s)' had a nice Christmas and we wish you a Happy New Year. Your kindness is appreciated not just by us but by a number of other 'Cribbies' as well." *Pete and Adrienne Borrie*

"Who is the very kind neighbour who delivers a lovely card and a candy cane each year at Christmas?...What a very kind gesture." *Bruce Dow*

To read more of the messages go to:<https://www.facebook.com/omaramagazette/posts/3302748143087684>

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