

The Oxford Observer

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The Oxford-Eyre Community Newspaper

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Raising awareness

Words & Photo: Fi Maddison

“You can’t choose what happens to you but you can have a choice about how you react,” says Jo Seagar.

Jo is referring to how we can plan our last days of life; she believes that people have the right to choose how they will make their final journey towards death. It’s been her job for the last 15 years to understand the importance of a good death.

Jo, who was recently made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to the community, is patron and ambassador of Hospice New Zealand.

“I’m just one of 1000s of volunteers and my job”, says Jo, “is to raise funds and awareness for the organisation.”

Of the national recognition for her work with Hospice, Jo says it came out of the blue was buried. It was as if she had put in a good word for me. She would have been very proud.”

However, Jo believes that the recognition is not just for her but also for the many deserving people who are connected to Hospice.

“The award is for everybody and it’s about spreading the word for Hospice,” she says.

Before Jo became a successful cook, she trained as a nurse and it was this early introduction to caring for people, and the fact that her own father was cared for by Hospice in the latter part of his life, that spurred her on towards the next stage of her



Solid support: Oxford local and business owner Jo Seagar is passionate about her voluntary work as patron and ambassador for Hospice New Zealand.

life journey - donating her time for Hospice. “Hospice is a growing organisation. There are 39 hospices around New Zealand and what people don’t realise is that the care is free. If you have a terminal illness you, your GP or a specialist can refer you. It’s a palliative care situation and 80% of it is in your own home.”

Fundraising is a huge part of Jo’s work; she has visited all the hospices, including Rainbow Place for children, and regularly attends hospice events or speaking engagements. Hospice, she says, is something she is passionate about and happy to talk about for hours to anyone who wants to listen.

Summer in Oxford



Holiday fun: Under the watchful eye of his family, Eli Doukas (2) from Australia enjoys playing in the Ashley River.

Photo: Fi Maddison

High temperatures and bubbling tarmac are sure signs that summer has finally hit North Canterbury. Temperatures over 30deg C have encouraged hundreds of visitors and holidaymakers to the Ashley Gorge Holiday Park and reserve. Holiday park manager Dave Shelton says it’s been a busy time at the camp and on hot days, there have been up to 270 cars in the reserve at any one time.

The Ashley River, beside the popular holiday park, offers a safe swimming area for adults and children, at times attracting over 1000 people a day.

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Cust Market

31 Jan

The Ultimate Direction Mt Oxford Odyssey

31 Jan-25 Feb

Art for Two Exhibition at Arts in Oxford

1 Feb

Oxford Craft Market at JC Hall Main St, Oxford

2 Feb

Back to school

14 Feb

Valentine's Day

14 Feb

Cust-West Eyreton Garden Club outing to
Banks Peninsular

14 & 15 Feb

Birch Hill Station WWI Memorial Ride

19 Feb

Official Town Hall opening at 10pm

21 Feb

Oxford Family Picnic

22 Feb

Cust Community Networks "Summer of Fun"
Family Picnic Day at the Cust Community
Centre

28 March

Christchurch City Chorus at Oxford Town Hall
Fundraiser for Arts in Oxford

The Oxford Observer

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The Oxford Observer Policy

The Oxford Observer reserves the right to edit any contribution submitted for print and acknowledge that all opinions expressed by contributing columnists are not necessarily those of the opinions of the Oxford Observer, its publisher or its staff.



Water play: Ethan Benbow (4) of Oxford enjoys a splash at the Ashley Gorge River.

Holiday Fun



Giant marshmallows: Bales of hay wrapped in pink plastic in support of Breast Cancer Awareness.



Parade watching: Enjoying the Oxford Christmas Parade are Wendy Cridge, Hari Chisholm (5), Jamie Cridge (3), Ryan Cridge (3) and Christine Chisholm.



Xmas dressups: Taking part in the parade.



Spellbound: Punch and Judy shows attract a following at the Oxford Farmers Market.



Santa visit: Children enjoy some time with Santa at the Christmas Carols in the Park.

Photos taken by The Oxford Observer are available for purchase in 5 x7 full colour prints for \$12 each. To order, phone: 03 312 3587 Email: fiona@oxfordobserver.co.nz

Observer News

Happy New Year to all our readers and advertisers! The start of a new year means an exciting opportunity for The Oxford Observer to make some subtle changes. It's been a busy time behind the scenes.

Our first change is to trial colour on our front and rear covers. We feel this gives the paper a nice, attractive appearance. In fact, we can even have colour on the inside covers, great for our gallery page. We have also added a cheeky little fantail to our masthead. He's inquisitive and likes to know what is going on in the community. He will eventually morph into our little mascot so we are looking for a name that is befitting of a busy little bird sourcing news for the paper.

New 'Classifieds' Agent

These can now be dropped into Oxford Florist (entry opposite Cafe 51 on Rata Street, Oxford). For casual ads, cash sales only.

Booking Form and Pre-Pay & Save:

We now have an online booking form where new and past clients can book their advertisements - this allows us to make sure we have all your correct details right from the start.

And for a limited time we are offering a special deal for those advertisers who wish to Pre Pay their advertising - with great savings for regular advertisers at www.oxfordobserver.co.nz

New Colour Back Cover:

Check out this month's advertiser Waimak Technology. A reshuffle of pages has been made to allow for a full-page advertising colour option on the back cover. We see this as being a prime advertising space and look forward to bringing you some great colour advertisements in the future.

Online Directory:

We are in the process of creating a free online Advertiser Directory for those clients who advertise with us for six months or more. So when you are out and about and need to find an advertiser that you saw in the paper, you can head online on your mobile phone and find them on the Observer website.

Facebook:

We are working on getting our Facebook page up and running. So please remember to link up and "like us" to find out what's coming up in the paper and to share our photos and stories.



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News

Off to the movies

Words & photo: Michelle Vernal

Oxford Road resident Sam Laurenson has a passion for films both old and new.

As the newly appointed Operations Manager of the Rangiora Town Hall, Sam is back doing what she does best and says she is looking forward to the challenges her new role will bring with it throughout 2015.

Rangiora's Town Hall will be home to both films and live performances with an anticipated opening date of late February 2015. Sam's employer, Alice Cinema owner Jeremy Stewart of Christchurch is keen to get this new venture up and running. His intention is for the cinema to screen quality films combining a mix of both blockbuster and art house titles in order to satisfy a broad spectrum of the district's movie going tastes.

Sam found her niche back in 2000 when she began working for Hoyts Cinemas in Wellington.

"My position involved overseeing the general day to day running and upgrade of cinemas all over New Zealand.

It was a job that bought with it the added bonus of introducing me to my husband, Neill."

Gardens to form a trust

The Oxford Community Gardens recently received a \$500 gift voucher to purchase much needed supplies to keep the gardens growing.

The Mitre 10 voucher came from funds supplied by the Depression Support Network in conjunction with the Mental Health Foundation and Red Cross. The gardens are one of three that have been funded in North Canterbury. Taking a keen interest in the gardens, locals Robyn Lambie and Lin Fagan, along with the support of Envirotown Oxford, are keen to set up a trust to get some guidelines and ideas in place and give the gardens a positive future. Robyn would like to see the gardens further developed and for individuals and groups to be included.



Sam then took time out from her career in cinema management after the birth of the couple's daughter nine years ago. She was an arrival that also saw them swap the city life for their current more countrified, ten acre lifestyle.

When Sam saw the position of Operations Manager advertised for the revamped Rangiora Town Hall, she jumped at the chance of a close to home return to a career in her old stomping ground. This enthusiasm wasn't dampened either by having to sit a rather arduous exam in order to gain her Liquor Licence.

Sam says, "The facility will be an exciting state of the art entertainment venue that the whole community can be proud of."



Garden interest: From left - Oxford local Robyn Lambie, Depression Support Network Facilitator Bryon Cope, Lin Fagan, and Menz Shed trustee Max Maddison contemplate the future of the Oxford Community Gardens. Missing: Envirotown Oxford co-ordinator Justin Fletcher.

She has organised a special meeting to discuss the trust on Wednesday 11 February 7pm at the Menz Shed, beside the gardens. All are welcome.

Donations of gardening tools, implements, and any seeds, even if they are past their use by date, are also gratefully accepted, phone Robyn on 027 2060 743.

www.oxfordobserver.co.nz

In Touch



**With Matt Doocey
Waimakariri MP**

As schools around Waimakariri open their doors for another year, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you all the best for the year ahead.

Hopefully, you have enjoyed taking time out to spend with family. However, for many businesses, especially those relying on tourism, it's their busiest season.

New Zealand is lucky to have unique natural features and it's understandable these are a drawcard for international tourists. The latest figures show us more than twice as many people go walking or trekking than visit museums and galleries.

It's rewarding that New Zealand was voted the top country in the 2014 Telegraph Travel Awards, for the third year in a row. With 97 per cent of international visitors saying they would be very or quite likely to recommend New Zealand, it's easy to see why.

North Canterbury enjoys a sizeable portion of tourist spend, confirming itself as a destination of choice. Over the year to March 2014, international tourists spent \$90 million and domestic tourists spent \$220 million in our region. And that can only be good for our local businesses.

On a national scale, tourism is our second biggest export earner - and it is a major employer. That's why the National-led Government has invested an unprecedented \$600 million in tourism and tourism promotion since 2008.

This investment is paying off.

Approximately 2.8 million people visited New Zealand during the past year, spending over \$7 billion. Tourism directly employs 4.7 per cent of the New Zealand workforce and indirectly employs another 3.6 per cent.

We need to keep promoting the Waimakariri as a destination of choice. This will be a focus of mine over the next year. If you have any ideas on this, please make contact with me.

**Authorised by Matt Doocey MP
130A Percival St, Rangiora.**



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Opportunity to celebrate upgraded town hall

Words & Photo:
Fi Maddison

A date has been set for the opening of the Oxford Town Hall.



Councillor Wendy Doody, says the Waimakariri Council is planning an official opening on 19 February at 10pm. Locals will be advised of the details closer to the time.

The newly painted hall recently underwent considerable strengthening, refurbishment, and the addition of a new meeting room, kitchen, and toilets.

Funding for celebration events

Through the Creative Communities Scheme, funding is available for communities to celebrate the opening of the Kaiapoi, Rangiora, and Oxford town halls.

“It’s an opportunity to plan for a special event or events to take place in our newly refurbished Oxford Town Hall,” says Wendy.

The Oxford Promotions Action Committee (OPAC) is keen to celebrate the re-opening of the refurbished town hall by organising a community event/s. OPAC event co-ordinator Dave Trayner says: “We are looking for input from

other interested groups and people who would like to assist, and also any ideas for an event or separate events that would include all ages of the community.”

Activities can include crafts, art, dance, theatre, literature, music, and heritage. Dave adds that interested parties are welcome to form a discussion group to help plan for the celebration.

Applications for funding close 27 February, so Dave is keen to hear from anyone with ideas for an event. You can email your thoughts and ideas to Dave on davetrayner@clear.net.nz or you can drop them into the Oxford Service Centre by 5 February.

Artwork for permanent display

The funding, says Wendy Doody, could also be utilised for works of art or craft, that depict Oxford, to go on permanent display in the hall. If anyone is interested in this idea, they can contact Wendy on 03 312 1330 or email ian.wendy@xtra.co.nz

Local centenarians remembered

Six plaques commemorating Oxford locals who lived to 100 years plus have now been brought together in one place at the Pearson Park reserve.

The original project was undertaken by the Pearson Park Advisory Group, which placed and cemented a large rock near the main entrance to the park five years ago. Funding finally came through from the Waimakariri District Council to get the plaques made. Committee member Colin Bush (pictured) secured the plaques in place in December and says it’s finally good to have them all together.



Local News, Events, Stories & Business

At Home

**With Christine Rivers
Interiors Guru**



Makeover Ideas

When it comes to interiors we all like to think we know a thing or two and summer is a good time to review our domestic surroundings regardless of budget restraints.

Luxe for less or the new word out there “chicconomy” is the new trend buzz word, encouraging us all to renovate or makeover the home décor without blowing the budget.

Curtains drab and lack lustre? Or for colours just not so trendy anymore, then it is definitely time to replace. Fresh, modern trendy curtains can make or break a room’s overall decor and you do not have to break the bank to achieve brilliant results. Mobile, free measure and quote sampling services with all the latest fabrics and designs can make this such an affordable but easy process.

Got a couch, squab, chair, bedhead or maybe a cushion that needs a new spin on life? Re-upholster and think in terms of contrasting textures, geometric or retro modern, large scale florals or bold colour. These ideas will give you up to the minute statement soft furnishings, contemporary and confident.

If something is worth doing it is worth doing well, we have all heard it before; and there is no point commissioning the reupholster of an item with totally unsuitable fabric. Talk to the professionals first. Quality over quantity will win every time.

Find somewhere, in fact anywhere, to wallpaper. It is so difficult to explain the visual impact that the new generation of wallcoverings will add to the ambience of your home. Leftover wallpaper can be used for lampshades also and a feature wall may only take two to three rolls to get the wow factor going.

Neutral pale, and often white surfaces highlight the beauty of all other colours used in the home, and prevent that cluttered look. Colour is addictive and emotive so get out that paint brush and ‘tart’ up some items or a wall or two. The results can be so uplifting.

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Reader's Recipe



Because good food is worth sharing

Dairy & grain free cookies

This month, Observer reader Marina Locke shares a biscuit recipe. She says: "I am dairy free and moving towards grain free cooking. This is a simple recipe liked by all."

You will need:

- 2 cups pumpkin seeds (*I use half raw sunflower seeds*)
- 1 cup coconut or other sugar
- 1 Tbs cinnamon
- 1 Tbs ginger aliquam turpis
- 1 Tbs cardamon (*I sometimes change these to change flavour. Any sweet spice is good, great for Xmas!*)
- 3 egg whites

Method:

- Put dry ingredients in food processor until bread crumb texture then add egg whites.
- Mix really well.
- Drop onto baking paper on cookie sheet and bake for 10-12 minutes at 180 C.

Grain-free diets (sometimes known as Paleo or Primal diets) have been found to be beneficial for both physical and emotional well being...



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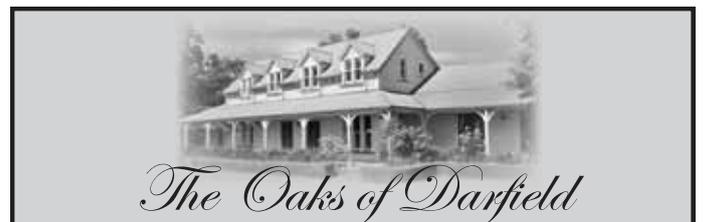
With the opening of the new motels in Oxford, a glaring gap opened up in the market to offer the travelling public somewhere to dine in the evenings through the week.

Under the Oaks Cafe owner David Goodfellow has decided to take a lead and open his cafe until 8pm from Tuesday to Saturday.

"We had always planned to open later in the evenings when we opened the cafe and now is the right time to do it. We're offering casual dining to the public with our usual blackboard menu available. You don't have to come dressed up."

The menu includes an all day breakfast, steak sammie, nachos, vege burger, salad and fries.

With a good staff on board and chef Adam Fridd prepared to share the workload, David is sure that his longer cafe hours will fill the gap.



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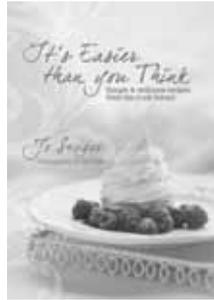
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Roast Chicken Breasts With Tomato, Pesto, & Mozzarella



This month Jo Seagar shares a favourite recipe from her book: **It's Easier Than You Think: Simple & Delicious Recipes from the Cook School.**



"The mozzarella mixed with the cream cheese helps the filling stay together and not ooze out of the chicken breasts."

You will need:

- 6 green olives
- 1 small clove of garlic, crushed
- 2 tsp basil pesto
- 250g cream cheese (not softened or light)
- 1 cup grated mozzarella
- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 tomatoes, thinly sliced
- 2tbs olive oil

Method

1. Preheat oven to 220°C
2. Mix the chopped olives, crushed garlic, pesto, cream cheese, and mozzarella together in a bowl until well combined.
3. Cut a pocket in the side of each chicken breast. Stuff the cream cheese mixture into the pockets, pressing down firmly to close each pocket.

Season with salt and pepper. Place chicken breasts in a roasting dish and lay the tomato slices on top. Drizzle with olive oil and an extra grind of pepper.

4. Roast for 20-25 minutes until the chicken breasts are cooked through, and the tomato is roasted and a little shrivelled looking .

5. Serve with a crisp green salad.



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Feature

Oxford Family Picnic

The Oxford Early Learning Centre is thrilled to continue the annual "Oxford Family Picnic" held in February, 2015.

The picnic gives Oxford services and providers an opportunity to have interactive stands, and for family/whānau to have a bit of fun and perhaps create something special. The day is a great opportunity for new families to meet some of the community staff, volunteers, and other families.

The Oxford Family Picnic is a free event, (this is not a usual aspect to life any more), organised by the Oxford Early Learning Centre, which underwrites the day to give a little back to the community.

A story teller, pirates, a clown, pony rides and train rides, all set up in a safe environment, are just part of the entertainment for the day. Look out for our free sausage sizzle, plus Supervalu owners Mike and Nicky, are supporting the day by supplying ice blocks for all as well.

The Oxford Early Learning Centre's vision is to see all families welcomed to our community, feeling supported by all the amazing providers and services available to them.

The day starts at 10am, ready with all the interactive stands, and on stage is our great story teller 'Liz Weir'.

We look forward to seeing you there.

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- Pony rides
- Train Rides



'Different for a reason'

Rescue, rehab and release

Words & Photo: Fi Maddison

Tiny, featherless creatures, noisy, hungry, mouths wide open... Yes, it's feeding time at Oxford Bird Rescue.

It takes time and commitment to look after little fledglings, baby birds that have fallen from their nest.



Calendar bird: Plucky, the plover, takes a good look at the Oxford Bird Rescue calendar available to order on 021 292 7861. Inset: Plucky when he arrived at the centre. Photos supplied.

For Tracey and Scott Bowman, it was their combined love of birds that got them into helping and saving wildlife. Oxford Bird Rescue is now in its third year and is busier than ever.

"It's been a huge learning process," says Tracey, who has successfully learnt how, what and when to feed fledglings to help them survive.

Ducks - mallards and paradise are common patients at the rescue centre. Canadian geese, magpies, a heron and a plover have also sought refuge with the caring couple. Starlings, sparrows, thrushes, blackbirds and even a tiny featherless fantail have been handed into the centre for care and rehabilitation.

While ducklings are often reared successfully by hand and released back into the wild, smaller birds are more fragile and take more care.

Tracey says the fledglings take up a lot of time, as they need to be fed hourly depending on how small they are when they arrive.

"Sometimes, if we have to go into the city, we'll even take them with us in their cages just so we can keep to their feeding programme."

Success comes in the form of releases and naked fledglings morphing into fully feathered birds such as the cheeky starling currently residing at the centre and Plucky, the plover, who is also 'plucky' in courage.

The plover arrived as a tiny, gangly little bird rescued from its mother, who had been killed by a car.

Tracey is keen to hear from anyone locally who can be on call to look after birds in their own home or help out at the centre. Donations of food for the birds, jellimeat and cat biscuits, are also gratefully accepted. Plans are being laid for future development of the centre with the excavation of a new duck pond, a new habitat area, an aviary and an incubator on their list of things to do or needed.

If you can help with a donation of time or services, please contact Tracey or Scott on 021 292 7861. You can also follow Oxford Bird Rescue on Facebook.



Sparrow love: Tracey Bowman with a young sparrow that she raised from a featherless fledgling.

Property Market Report



With Vicki Driver

Fencing your swimming pool/spa
With swimming weather here, it's a timely reminder of your obligations as a responsible property owner regarding the fencing of your pool.

It's common sense really. Safety is an attitude! The "Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987" is responsible for administering the safety regulations and you are responsible for compliance of the following:

1. Notify council with your intent to construct a pool.
2. Fences must be 1.2m in height and constructed of durable material making it impossible to climb. Fences constructed of "potentially" climbable material (ie: perforated material, mesh) must be 1.8m in height.
3. Fences must not contain gaps wider than 100mm so children cannot squeeze through.
4. All gates must be self-closing/latching. The latch must be 1.5m from the ground. If a house wall forms part of the fence then any doors that open onto the pool area must be self-locking.
5. The fence must enclose the swimming pool/spa area only and will not comply if you fence the whole back garden.

Most importantly, whether owner occupied or rented, if the pool is not fenced adequately then the pool must remain completely empty of water at all times. The tenant needs to be advised accordingly.

It's not complicated, just simple water safety. Happy swimming!

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Feature

Welcome Back to School

CUST SCHOOL

Welcome back and a special welcome to new families to Cust. We are looking forward to a very busy and productive year, with lots of exciting learning experiences.

The children, as always, have started the year ready to learn and full of enthusiasm.

Our theme for this year is Piko's People – Belonging / Whanaungatanga. Classes will explore, through a variety of contexts, understandings based around identity, culture and organisation.

A special topic the senior children are able to research is the Field of Remembrance Project (<http://www.fieldsofremembrance.org.nz>)

The beginning of the year is always busy, with teachers establishing routines and lots of outdoor activities.

Teachers will send out a newsletter within the first few weeks to their classes, outlining class goals, expectations and detail on what is going to be taught.

We look forward to a thoroughly enjoyable year. If you would like further information, please visit our website:

www.cust.school.nz



OXFORD AREA SCHOOL



School gets underway this week with all students starting into timetabled classes on Monday 2 February. There will be a welcome to all new students, staff and parents in the GP Hall at 11:30 am on Monday. We look forward to working with all new members of our school community.

We welcome Maree Harris from Auckland as our new Assistant Principal and Yr 7/8 teacher. We also welcome Deborah Covert-Oliver teaching in Yr1/2, Katie Owens teaching Science and Crisana Nel teaching Te Reo part time.

2015 will see the commencement of our major building project (a new 10 teaching spaces block) and the appointment of a new Principal to start at the beginning of Term 3.

Collaborative teaching will continue to be a development priority for our staff. The provision of a variety of pathways for our senior students will see some innovative changes in this area of our school. Highlights of the year will include our school production of "The Wizard of Oz" in May and the initial Oxford Future Farmers competition on the 11th March.

To our whole school community, welcome to 2015 and we look forward to working in the interests of all our students throughout the year. At Oxford Area School we are ...

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OFF TO SCHOOL



**FUN,
LEARNING,
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www.oxfordobserver.co.nz

Starting Dates for 2015



Monday 2nd February

All students start (Years 1-13)

Year 7-13: 8.45am to 3.00pm

Year 1-6: 9.00am to 3.00pm

11.20am: Mihi Whakatau

A welcome to the new school and parents (all parents welcome).

Buses will run from Monday 2nd February 2015

Phone: 03 312 4197

Horses honoured

Okuku resident Thereza Rosanowski woke up one day with a great vision. Her vision was to commemorate the horses that served in the 8th regiment of the South Canterbury Mounted Rifles in WWI.

When she discovered that Timaru, which had a replica of the Birch Hill Cemetery horse memorial plaque, ran an event to remember the horses, she knew she had to do something locally.

From the smallest of ideas came a great plan - a memorial ride across farmland that finished with a service at the Birch Hill Cemetery.

“Not many people know about the memorial at the cemetery or just haven't been to see it, so it's a great opportunity to make history and educate people about the horses' plight.” Of the 10,000 horses that went overseas in the war, only four came home. “Conditions for the horses were so horrendous, they would not have survived the trip back to New Zealand.” Thereza gathered around her a group of enthusiastic people who could help make it all happen.



On a mission: Event organiser Thereza Rosanowski with Darvel Amy

Longstanding resident Ian Summerfield planned two treks - a 6km and 10 km ride/walk, and local farmers gave permission to cross their land. Derrick Milton, great-great nephew of Lieutenant Colonel Edward Milton, and trustee of the EB Milton Charitable Trust also came on board. “Planning has been huge,” says Thereza, who wants the day to be special.

“The feedback and positive response has just fueled my enthusiasm. There is so much love and emotion connected to this event.” She wants the event accessible to all, old or young, anyone with a past connection to WWI or those wanting to learn more.

Two-day event

The event runs over the weekend with a Speaker Evening on Saturday 14 February 7pm at Ashgrove School in Rangiora. The evening includes various speakers, singers, a display, and an auction of Amy Shepperd's painting of Staff Sergeant John William O'Brien on his horse.

The Memorial Ride on Sunday 15 February leaves at 11am and will arrive in time for the Memorial Service at 1pm at the Birch Hill Station Cemetery.

The service is open to the public - gold coin entry; coffee, BBQ food and displays will be available.

If you can help on the day or offer sponsorship for the event, please contact the event secretary Sarah Flint: Ph 3128456 or email sarah.flint@xtra.co.nz Speaker Evening tickets available from Oxford Florist or visit: <http://birchhillmemorial.wix.com/ww1-ride>

Church celebrates 135 years of Holy Mass

Words: Deborah O'Neill & Graeme Wilson Photo: Fi Maddison

A celebration Mass, held in November at the The Sacred Heart Catholic Church, was followed by the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate 135 years in Oxford, North Canterbury. The commemoration was officiated by Bishop Barry and Fr Denis.

The church has stood at its present address in Oxford since 1879. The Roman Catholic community first held services in the Road Board office from 1875, and afterwards the West Oxford Town Hall. It soon became clear to all that a church was needed. Harry Bell Johnstone - an early Christchurch solicitor and land speculator donated a plot in the centre of town.

In 1859, he applied for two rural sections in Oxford at the junction of Harewood Road and Main Street. It was subdivided into sections and sold with the area becoming known as Johnstone's Township.

He is said to have donated, to the Catholic Church, the section on which they built the current church in 1879. The church was dedicated by Archbishop Redwood in November 1879.

The cost of the building was seven hundred pounds. John O'Halloran was one of the prime movers in the establishment of the church and with the help of the hardy bushman and labourers of Oxford a Gothic-styled church was built, with foundations of concrete and iron belt reinforcements to protect from nor'westers. The wooden structure has since been stuccoed. Beautiful features of the church are the many stained-glass windows, which are now under refurbishment and strengthening.



Holy celebration: Four members of the congregation, who took part in the unveiling of the plaque were Ngaire Barrett, Zara Frahm, Pat McGloin (who has been coming to Mass in Oxford for 91 Years), and Helen Edh (her Grandfather helped build the church).

Oxford has always been part of the Rangiora Catholic Parish, now known as the Waimakariri Parish, with the priest travelling to Oxford, by horse, gig or car over the years. In the early days the paddock at the back was very handy for the priest's horse and those of the faithful who used horse and gigs to attend mass.

News

Funding allows upgrade on mountain track

Funding from Trail Fund has facilitated the upgrading of a 2.5km section of the Wharfedale Track, says a report put out by North Canterbury Cycling Club president Ian MacDonald.



The upgrade addressed several issues including: repair damage to the track from the 2013 winter snow fall where areas of the track needed to be reformed; create rideable angles over five creeks where previously riders needed to carry their bikes across; repair and clear 1970s drains originally created by the Forest Service; and widen the track to 600mm where it has eroded from water, foot, and tyre damage.

Work carried out in November by Scott Walker, of T5 Contracting Ltd,

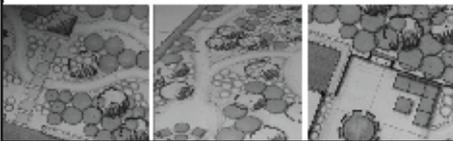
was supported by Jim Henderson from the Department of Conservation. A one-ton YANMAR excavator supported by a power carrier with a petrol powered rock breaker, hand winch and chainsaw was used for the majority of the work. The excavator was flown into site using Garden City Helicopters' B3 Squirrel helicopter. Mr McDonald thanked the Trail Fund for their generous financial support on behalf of North Canterbury Cycling Club and the many thousands of people who will enjoy the improvements on this particular section of the Wharfedale Track. He also noted the outstanding dedication and commitment by Jim Henderson and Scott Walker to make the project happen.



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Cust-West Eyreton Garden Club

Our final gathering for 2014 was a tour of four member's gardens along Tram Road, followed by shared Festive Cheer and the judging of the Prize Rose, via gold coin vote, for the Sheat Challenge Cup.

A successful evening, with hearty carol singing and a sumptuous repast, was enjoyed by all. Congratulations to Pam Sundstrum for her prize rose, all 'votes' were again donated to the Christchurch City Mission.

Our next gathering will be a coach outing to the Banks Peninsula on Saturday the 14th February.

If you would like more information re your local Garden Club, please contact either the President or Secretary on 310-2274 or 312-5171 respectively or email custwegardenclub@yahoo.co.nz.

Cust Village Market With Kate Powell

Cust Village Market wishes all a Happy New Year and thanks you for your support in 2014. We hope you have enjoyed a peaceful Christmas, a restful holiday and have made a refreshing start to 2015 with routines/work/school/and new opportunities/possibilities! This month's market on Sunday February 22nd will be held at the Cust Community Centre, in conjunction with the Cust Community Network's "Summer of Fun" Family Picnic Day.

We always welcome your interest, value your support, and appreciate your presence. Consider our community market: to have a stall yourself, to promote your small business or service, to share local information and skills, and to connect with others.

P.S... we have coffee!!

If your garden is brimming with seasonal goodness consider selling, sharing or swapping the surplus bounty with others.

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Cust Village Market

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Community jewel

Arts in Oxford manager Rachel McRobb is keen to let everyone know what an amazing asset the arts centre is for the town of Oxford - a veritable community jewel set in the heart of the township.

"Not every small town is lucky enough to have a gallery like ours where locals and visitors alike can view amazing works of art."

While the gallery does show local artists' work from time to time, it also exhibits a wide variety of art from throughout New Zealand, giving people the opportunity to view works that they might not normally get to see in a small rural town.

Five years after first opening its doors in February 2010, the art centre boasts over 80,000 visitors to 58 exhibitions featuring hundreds of artists.

"Some of our highlights include the Oxford Art Fair, a local Children's Art exhibition in July 2014, and the addition of the workshop facility in 2013," says Rachel.



Visual feast: Volunteer June Inch helps Arts in Oxford manager Rachel McRobb hang an exhibition at the art centre.

Exhibitions that wow

The gallery, Rachel says, shows an eclectic mix of art where visitors are often blown away by what they see and experience.

The benefit of having a gallery of its size and caliber is that Arts in Oxford can attract internationally recognised artists.

"People won't just find landscapes on our walls - generally they are pleasantly surprised by the variety and quality of art on offer," says Rachel.

Fundraising ongoing

Arts in Oxford was officially opened by Hon. Chris Finlayson, the then Minister of Arts, Culture & Heritage on 25th February 2010 after years of planning, fundraising, donations from founding members (many of them locals) and a generous donation of \$200,000 from the Canterbury Community Trust. The arts centre still receives funding from the Trust towards its operating costs, however the continuing operation requires ongoing fundraising and support of the local community, which Rachel says they are always grateful to receive.

In March, a fundraising concert with the renowned Christchurch City Chorus will be held in the newly reopened Oxford Town Hall with all proceeds going directly to the running of Arts in Oxford. Tickets are available at the gallery, the Oxford Service Centre and Oxford Area School.

Arts centre a community resource

With the first artist workshop now built, Rachel says they've had great success running workshops for the public including jewellery making, watercolour painting and children's classes.

"What people don't realise," says Rachel, "is that the workshop is available for community use." For a small fee, locals can rent the space to run their own classes or workshops. "The gallery is also available for meetings and special events such as book launches."

Volunteers the backbone of the centre

Arts in Oxford would simply not exist without the support of the 20 dedicated volunteers who keep the gallery open six days a week and assist visitors with the purchase of artwork and gifts. They are a fun and friendly group and if you are interested in joining them, please contact Rachel.



Young talent: Proudly displaying their works of art are Felix Strahl, Elizabeth Horn, Abigail Buxton, and Elsie McRobb.

Art of Two

Philip Trusttum & Brent Firkin

31st January - 25th February 2015

To celebrate its fifth year anniversary, Arts in Oxford is proud to present "Art of Two", an exhibition by two Canterbury painters with strong connections to Oxford and the North Canterbury region.

Philip Trusttum, one of New Zealand's most recognised contemporary painters and Arts in Oxford Patron, presents a collection of new mixed media works together with recent works from the studio of Oxford artist and Arts in Oxford Founding Director Brent Firkin.

Philip Trusttum was born and bred in Oxford and his work is represented in all major public and private collections within New Zealand and internationally.

Brent Firkin has worked as a practicing painter and potter for 35 years and has recently retired from full time art teaching to return to his studio, where he is now full time painting. Brent has works in a number of private collections.

Arts in Oxford presents

CHRISTCHURCH CITY CHORUS AT OXFORD TOWN HALL

NZ's number 1 'A Capella' Harmony Women's chorus

Also featuring 'The Vocal Network' New Zealand's number 1 men's quartet

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Saturday 9am-1pm
Closed Sun & Mon

Hot tips for water safety

With such beautiful hot, sunny days we are blessed to have two rivers close by for recreational swimming at the Ashley and Waimakariri gorges. However, swimming in rivers offers greater potential hazards and dangers compared to the ocean, lakes and swimming pools.



Rivers are a constant moving force and the underlying current can be much stronger than it looks on the surface. According to Water Safety New Zealand drowning is the third highest cause of accidental death in New Zealand and more people drown in rivers than in any other New Zealand water environment. Swimming in rivers can be fun, especially if you pick your swimming spot carefully - keeping yourself, your family and friends safe is paramount.

Tips to keep safe:

- * Never underestimate the power of a river
- * Make sure you and your family learn to swim along with swimming survival skills
- * Check for hazards both where you are swimming and downstream
- * Always check the depth, and for submerged hazards, of a jumping spot
- * Always swim as part of a group

- * Do not mix swimming with alcohol and drugs
- * Always watch children in and around rivers
- * Never swim in or try to cross a river that is in flood
- * Remember that rivers change regularly and as such should be checked, even if it is your regular swimming spot.

Under fives

Small children have no concept of the dangers around water.

- * If you're in a group of people, ensure you have an active supervision roster so you know who is watching the children at all times
- * Make sure older children don't have to take responsibility for younger children
- * Teach your children water safety behaviour as soon as they are old enough to understand, things like: 'Never go near the water unless you're with a grown up'

Be safe and enjoy the beautiful environment that encompasses the Oxford-Eyre district.

For more information and advice regarding water activities, visit: www.watersafety.org.nz

Keeping Healthy



With Oxford Community Health Centre

Getting the best from your Community Health Centre

It is hoped that this information is useful to you in achieving the best use of your time and money, whilst also providing an insight into some aspects of your visit you may not be aware of.

Patients come to the health centre for a variety of reasons but they can be broken down into two categories: routine and urgent. Routine visits are best for long-term, ongoing health issues such as diabetes or asthma. Urgent visits, by their very name, suggest that you can't wait to book to see your normal doctor/nurse but will see the first doctor/nurse available.

At OCHC we offer both types via appointments. Try to book an appointment by phone or online through our website whenever possible. At OCHC we book at 15 minute intervals. Some clinics only allow 10 minutes for a visit, and it was not long ago at all, that seven minute appointments were the norm (UK). If you think you will require a longer appointment (then you're probably correct), you can book a double slot but this will cost twice the normal fee.

Remember that in the 15 minute slot, the doctor may spend some time reviewing your records, results, prior consults, and writing referral letters. An average consultation creates about five minutes of administrative work, and some of this must be done during the consultation. We also spend considerable time 'behind the scenes' reviewing records, results, hospital letters, and so on.

A grumble we sometimes hear is that "I was only with the doctor for a few minutes". Try to remember that rather than paying for a 15 minute block of time, your appointment is for you to benefit from the doctors and/or nurses skills and knowledge. We work hard to ensure you see the right person at the right time.



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We look forward to caring for you and your family

Mothers Supporting Mothers

Want to talk about the highs and lows of being a Mum? Struggling with a new baby and adjustment to becoming a mother? Come to our free weekly meetings every Friday.

Kaiapoi 1-2.45pm at Kaiapoi Plunket Rooms
Rangiora War Memorial Hall 10am -12pm

Facilitated by counsellors. Childcare on site (0-5 years)
Contact Gabrielle on 027 3069 407
www.motherssupportingmothers.org.nz

Oxford

Community Health Centre

Primary Health for the Community / 24hr Medical Service
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39 Park Avenue, Oxford

Phone (03) 312 4195

Telephone operates 24-hours/day, 7 days per week

www.oxfordhealth.co.nz

Community Services

On The Beat with Senior Constable Tuu Maaka



This has certainly been a summer to remember, endless summer days with 30 plus degree temperatures.

Hot days seems to bring out the fire bugs and our patch of paradise hasn't been immune from their attentions. Suspicious fires have spontaneously ignited in grass and hedges alongside the road as well as parched trees and plantations. Once again vigilance is our best hope to avert a disaster.

Spare a thought for our farmers, they seem to be bearing the brunt of anything adverse at the moment with stock theft, diesel theft and suspicious fires all filling in the day that could otherwise have been spent productively. All of us are the eyes and ears of the community, so have a look at who's hanging around and what they're up to. Let your neighbours know what you see and if you think they're up to no good, then ring the Police straight away. Please don't leave it until they've had enough time to drive to Invercargill.

Secure your firearms at all times when you're not using them. Wrapping them in a security blanket under the bed doesn't count nor does leaving them in your ute, behind the wash house door or beside the fridge. Use the cabinet of stout construction, its their home.

Fire Report with Fire Chief Trevor Ealam



The brigade had a particularly busy end towards the year.

We were called 14 times, one call was to assist the Cust Fire Brigade at a paddock fire. In our area, we were called to seven vegetation fires (hedge, grass and slash fires, etc.), two motor vehicle accidents (unfortunately there was a fatality at one them), one unpermitted drum fire, one chimney fire, one fully involved tractor fire, and one private fire alarm activation, which didn't require any action from the brigade. This brought our total number of calls for the year to 93.

Because of the dry conditions fire restrictions were put in place in mid December, which means a fire permit has to be obtained to light fires and later a fire ban was put in place over the whole district, which means no fires can be lit. So if people light fires during the fire ban, or restricted season without a permit, (doesn't matter how small) the brigade will have no option but to put it out.

If members of the public are unsure of the fire season status, the Principal Rural Fire Officer can be contacted by ringing the Waimak District Council Office in Rangiora.

Council Update with Councillor Wendy Doody



I would like to personally thank our Fire Brigades and Rural Fire Services in our Ward, they have had an enormous work load over the past three months and their dedication to duty is very much appreciated.

I would also like to thank their employers who allow them to take time off to answer their call for duty.



TOTAL



FIRE BAN

A Prohibited Fire Season is in force
from midnight Saturday 10 January

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oxfordearlylearning@xtra.co.nz



OXFORD R.F.C. Rugby Registration Dates

Club registration dates for the 2015 season

Thursday 12th February 6 – 8 pm,

Monday 16th February 3–7 pm (Crusaders visit pending)

Thursday 26th February 3 – 6 pm

Returning and new players of all grades meet at the
Oxford Clubrooms, Oxford A&P Showgrounds

U6-U10 \$45 U11.5-U18 \$65

Birth certificate required to verify age

Contact Kat: 312 3563 Email: hunter939@scorch.co.nz
or Contact Lisa: 314 2424 Email: lrwhite96@xtra.co.nz

Pets & Animals

**Renting with pets:
How to get a paw
through the door**

Words: Fi Maddison

It's tough trying to find accommodation just for yourself and your family let alone if you have a pet that needs to come with you.

So how can you make it easier for a landlord to choose you and your pet over anyone else?

- Firstly, be a responsible tenant and pet owner
- Be prepared - create a pet portfolio when looking for a 'pet friendly' rental property. (see below)
- Teach your pets to respect the rental property i.e. don't allow them to destroy/ruin chattels such as curtains, carpet, paintwork, etc.
- Clean up after your pets around the property
- Make sure your pets are well cared for with appropriate shelter, food, water, vet care, and daily attention.
- Never abandon your animals when you leave the rental property.
- Be quick to act on any problems as they arise.
- Keep communications with your landlord open and friendly.
- Know what is in your tenancy agreement. If your agreement says 'no pets', then do not bring a pet to live on your rental property without permission from your landlord.

Remember that a rental property is a valuable investment for its owner and as such a tenant with a pet is likely to be considered a riskier option than one without a pet.

Those willing to allow pets may compensate by charging a higher pet bond to cover any future damage caused by the animals or other related costs if tenants, who have left the property, abandon their animals. However, New Zealand law limits the amount of overall bond that can be charged. A tenant cannot be charged more than the equivalent of four weeks rental in bond and this should include the pet bond, if it is required. A pet bond cannot be additional to the four weeks rent bond already charged

Create a Pet Portfolio

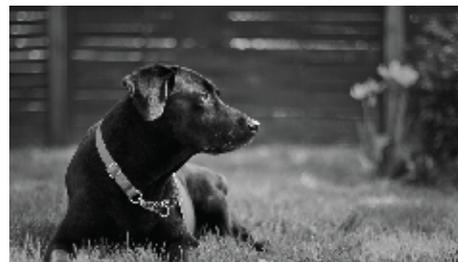
A pet folio should include information about your pet and include details about its care, daily habits, etc to reassure the prospective landlord that you are a responsible owner.

Include:

- Photo of your pet
- Description, breed, age and sex
- Current vaccination certificates
- Desexing, microchipping and registration information
- Housing information i.e.

how the animal will be housed - outdoors in kennel and run; indoors - house-trained, bedding, etc.

Fi Maddison occasionally writes for Animal's Voice a national SPCA magazine - the full version of this article can be read in the 2014 August issue.



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Classifieds & Church Notices

Church Notices

OXFORD and DISTRICT UNION PARISH

Serving Christ in our Community

Union Parish Services for February

1st Feb - Communion Service

10am at Oxford Union Church,
Main Street.

8th Feb - Combined Service

10am at Oxford Union Church.

15th Feb - Combined Service, Kids Friendly

10am at St. Davids Church, Cust.

22nd Feb - Combined Service

10am at Oxford Union Church



Poyntz Road, Horrellville

A Country Christian Fellowship

Services for February

1st Feb * 7pm Service
(Shared meal starts at 6pm)

8th Feb * 10am Service

15th Feb * No Service at present

22nd Feb * 10am Service

(Sunday School at morning services)
Prayer Group every Wednesday at 7.30pm
www.horrellvillechurch.nz
www.facebook.com/horrellville

The Sacred Heart of Jesus
Catholic Church, Main Street, Oxford

Weekly Services

Mass times will be

Wednesdays - 7.30pm

during Daylight Saving
(Sunday 28 Sept 2014 - Sunday 5 April 2015)

Sunday Mass - 8.30am

Enquiries: Rangiora Catholic Parish
313 6285

Oxford Baptist Church



Sunday Service & Childrens Church
at 10am. 166 High Street.

Providing Children & Family Services
to the Community throughout the week.

YOUTH GROUP

Years 9 to 13 + 7.30pm to 9.30pm + Fridays
Auditorium

ICONZ ADVENTURE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Years 4 to 6 Girls Monday Night 6.30 to 8pm
Years 4 to 6 Boys Tuesday Night 6.30 to 8pm
Years 7 to 9 Boys Wednesday Night 6.30 to 8pm

IFG CHALLENGE 4 GIRLS

Years 7 to 8 Friday 6.15pm

MUSIC & MOVEMENT (0 to 5yrs Monday Mornings)

10am for open sessions for all ages.
10.30am for morning tea & chat.
11am baby session (0 to 2 yrs).

EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

Open 8.30am to 3.30pm + Ages 6mths to 5yrs

OSCAR (Out of School Care & Recreation)

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Ages 3yrs to adult.

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Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday
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Phone 312 4499 for more information

Oxford - Cust Anglican Parish

Services for February 2015

1st Feb - 9am at St Andrew's Oxford

4th Feb - Wednesday 10.30am
at St Andrew's Oxford

8th Feb - 9am at St Andrew's Oxford
10.30am at St James Cust

15th Feb - 9am at St Andrew's Oxford

18th Feb - Ash Wednesday 7pm
at St Andrew's

22nd Feb - 9am at St Andrew's Oxford
10.30am at St James Cust

Wardens: **Lois 312 4715 * Judy 312 5136**
Priest in Charge: **Rev Christine Allan-Johns**
Contact: **313 5302 or 027 4493440**
or christineaj@ihug.co.nz
for any pastoral needs

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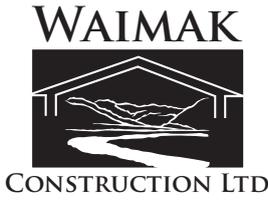
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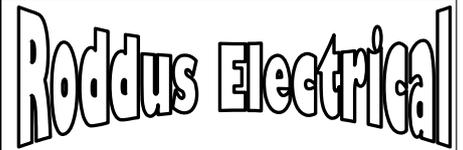
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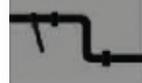
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To read the rest of this blog and for seasonal updates go to www.thelads.co.nz

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