Ophir Info

December 2021

The Tatler

Val Butcher (Motor Mouth)

In the post office visitors book someone has written "Ophir should be very proud". I cannot agree more and here is why.

December was kicked off with a Strawberry Soiree hosted by Heather Worth and organised by Heather and Judy Trainer and grand it was with a chocolate fountain lent by Stephanie Price. The koha kindly given by the participants was donated by Heather to the Ophir Hall Committee to go towards new furniture and was much appreciated. $235 in total was raised so a big Thank You Heather.

I must admit it is sometime since I have had a handsome young man sitting on my knee even if only for five minutes. He managed during that time to dribble a couple of litres on me and then went to sleep. So I guess he wasn't that impressed and his mother wanted him back anyhow. Henry and Sophia loved their strawberry hats. It was so nice to see so many youngsters, the children and grandchildren of our locals, enjoying the occasion even the dogs had a ball.

We celebrated the return of the hall to the community after the building of the new toilet block was completed with the annual community Christmas Potluck Barbeque. After a fabulous feast (where our new community BBQ was fired up making it a lot easier for the guys - not having to load a private one onto a trailer and then off again) and with a bit of a speech the ribbon to the toilets was cut. The occasion was photographed for the council and I am sure they will be impressed with the long queue shown waiting to use them. The main topic and debate of the evening was the indoor invalid ramp and whether it was the equivalent of a gin trap?

Christmas Potluck, Ophir Peace Memorial Hall. December 12, 2021

Malcolm Topliss (Treasurer) cuts the ribbon to the new toilet block watched on by Sam Leask and Colleen Fewtrell, Chairman and Secretary respectively of the Ophir Hall Committee. December 14, 2021.

A Long Loo view of one of the five new toilets

A week or so after the opening the hall was put into action again with an impromptu showing of the movie/doco on the life and career of Leonard Cohan "I'm Your Man" to test the sound system and new screen and hall lighting etc. It was a good night and the sound system was perfect. With such a great facility be prepared to fill up your social calendar with many more events to come. And just a reminder that we have a pretty good library in the hall as well. We don't want for much do we.

New Year's Eve began with pizza at Abattoir Cottage with top chef Harvie Trainer and head waiter John Shanks. These guys do this voluntarily and make these nights a big success, as this one was.

As always the New Year was heralded in at Blacks Hotel, this year with our new publicans, Chris and Saskia Trembath, and live music from Troy Anderson and his band. We do a great job of keeping it local and that's what community is all about. So congratulations everybody and a

Ophir Website

Gary Stewart

www.ophir.nz

It's live!

We're formally announcing the launch of ophir.nz, a website dedicated to Ophir.

Thank you to all the people who contibuted to get Stage One up and running (you know who you are), and a very special thanks to the donation from the anonomous 'patron' towards the site build – we're blown away by your generosity (no names - Malcolm was true to his word and has kept your identity secret – maybe one of the few secrets still in the village?).

So if you have half a day to kill, check out the site and share it. We'll be printing small business cards with the site address and some details once the printers are open. As always – if you have stories or photos you'd like to submit, or find a mistake (!), *email* gary@gasproject.co.nz

Wrapping up the Year: 2021

Christine Acres

Traditionally this is the time of year to reflect on the highs and lows of the past twelve months. So here I go – keeping it generalised for fear of leaving out a name or event – if I have missed something significant please feel free to bring it to my attention for publication next month.

While once again the world spent the year under the black cloud of Covid and we saw global protests against almost everything, Ophir came together in

the most positive way with community spirit running high.

Maybe it was that international discretionary travel was still out of reach with borders closed or just that lockdowns have made us more aware of our immediate environs and how we want to live our lives, but there were many hours given up by volunteers making our community what it is. A lot of these hours are 'invisible' - time spent writing letters to and/or liaising with various organizations, filling out the dreaded but required documentation and organising events. Auditing accounts and keeping the community in the know with regular communications and many hours spent developing an Ophir centric website.

With only one brief nationwide Alert Level 4 mandated in August with the outbreak of the Delta variant, most of New Zealand spent the year in Level 2 – except for Auckland where they toughed out the longest lockdown in the country. The South Island saw no community transfer and while some regional events were cancelled through uncertainty, life went on pretty much as normal with the exception of mask wearing and scanning QR codes.

We partied. We had bonfires. We played petanque in the scorching heat and held the annual Spud Auction and Dinner, this year having our sponsor represented. While we did not break any records for potatoes some of us, whether it be residents or grandchildren posted sporting personal bests both locally and on the international stage. We had a flood after record rain in January. Those of us still in the workforce learned we had to 'pivot'.

There were big projects started and completed.

The hall renovations seemed to take forever and threw up many challenges for those in the community that were keeping an eye on what was going on. A band of volunteers stepped up to paint the lining panels for the toilet block when it was learned that there had been a budget blowout and consequently no funds for the contractor to do this task. However with new wiring, lighting, screen and sound system and the hall cleaned from top to toe (again involving hours of volunteer effort) we now have a fantastic facility not only for ourselves to enjoy but for events and for hire thus generating much needed funds to keep the hall maintained.

The town calmed down with road works designed to kerb the speed. It seems to have had a positive effect and does define and tidy up the entrances to Ophir.

We welcomed new faces, Heather Worth, David and Jenny Perez and Chris and Saskia Trembath. The latter having bought Blacks Hotel with Sandy, Sam, Alex and Jaz Stoddart leaving Ophir for new challenges.

Some of us were blessed with new grandchildren and the population of Ophir was raised (and the average age lowered) with the birth in August of Joaquin Xavier Querel.

We sadly said farewell to two long-time residents of Ophir.

Bill Galer passed away in January and while he and Lois had been living in Dunedin for the past few years, he was a loved, colourful and contributing member of the Ophir community for many years.

The same could be said for Pam Wilson who fought the battle but lost the war against cancer in May. A courageous woman to the end who will be remembered for her love of animals and photography.

Some of us suffered health issues over the year and our thoughts went out to you for speedy recoveries. Others broke bones requiring metal work and engineering - and a lifetime of setting off the detectors at airports.

A piece of history was lost in September with The Bank burning to the ground on a day of huge winds. The same day, and eerily at the same time, a new house appeared at the opposite end of town with the Perez cottage delivered by truck and lifted onto it's foundations.

So a big shout out to everyone in the community for doing their part. You all know who you are and we are appreciative of your efforts.

Summer Poolside: Ophir Community Pool

Ophir Pool Committee

The coded gate lock has been installed and the bugs ironed out in the "membership" registration process. The pool opened on the 31st of December. We apologise for the delayed opening at the same time thanking you for your patience and positive response to the measures we have had to put in place to satisfy the Covid Protection Framework or traffic light system. Although quite a big administrative exercise the system seems to be working well and we hope you enjoy a long hot summer at the pool.

We also take this opportunity to thank all of you that have given your time to be on the pool cleaning roster, without you the pool could not operate.

Heads Up in the Garden

Christine Acres

Just a heads up to keep an eye out for fire blight in the garden this year. This disease, caused by the bacterium Erwinia amylovora, is mostly found on trees of the pear, quince, hawthorn and cotoneaster family but can infect apples and crab apples.

Fire blight presents as darkening leaves, turning black with the shoots wilting and hooking over. The tree looks as if it has been scorched by fire hence the name. There is no cure for fire blight although if caught in the very early stage some trees can be successfully pruned. It can be pre-empted with regular spraying of liquid copper over the winter and early spring.

I have had to remove an ornamental weeping pear and a fruiting pear in the past month. And weep I did. I tried to prune the disease out but was unsuccessful and had no choice but to remove the trees to prevent further spread. As I have quince, hawthorn, cotoneaster, apples and crab apples in the garden I am keeping my fingers crossed.

If you do have fire blight and opt to try pruning the tree, ensure that all garden tools used are well cleaned between cuts and when you are finished with either bleach or meths. Same goes if you are removing the tree.

The Weather

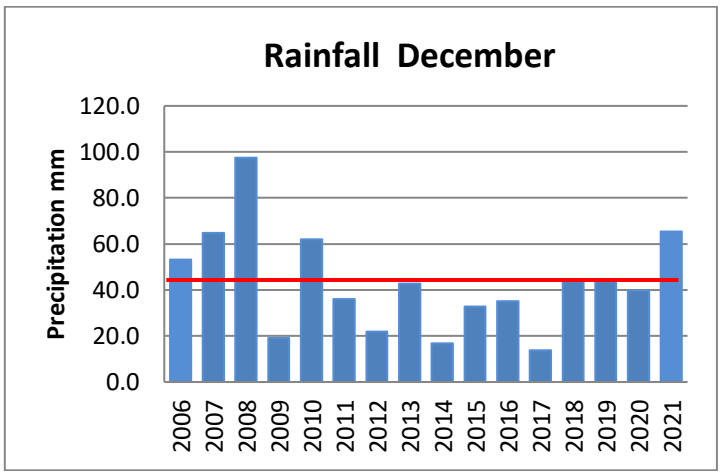
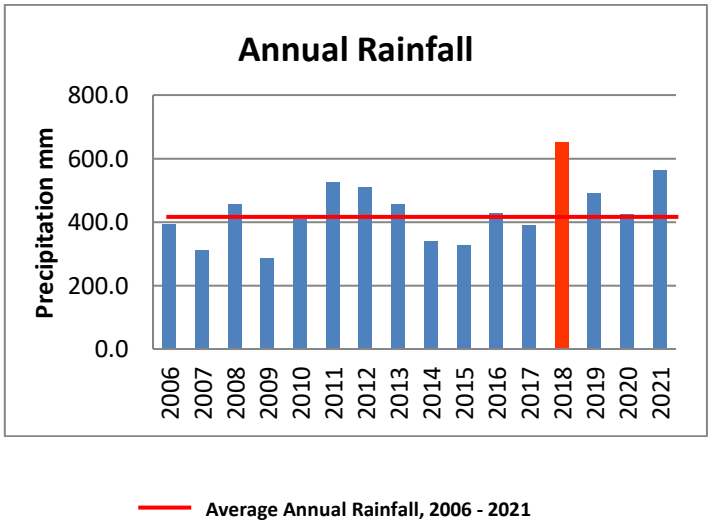
Sam Leask

Another month with above average rainfall has ensured continued growth. It has started to dry out on the ridges but still plenty of good feed, especially clover.

One unusual thing this month is that there have been very few totally clear days with only 3 mornings of the month with clear blue skies, so less sunshine, which might account for the lambs still being a bit underweight.

The average daytime temperature was 1°C colder than this time last year with the average night-time temperatures about the same.

The annual rainfall, although not a record, at 563.8mm came pretty close.

Data for December 2021:

Maximum Temp:	25.4°C	Thursday 2nd
Minimum Temp:	1.7°C	Saturday 18th
Rain/Precipitation:	65.4 mm