Ophir Info

August 2022

The Tatler

Val Butcher (Motor Mouth)

While the "Gin Club Girls" are back from their trip to Rarotonga Val is still MIA having stopped off in Auckland on her way home to visit with her boys, so no column this month. However unless "what happens in Raro stays in Raro" applies we can look forward to some good stories next month. Welcome back girls.

Locals in the Spotlight

Christine Acres

Congratulations to Stephanie Lorimer on her recent achievement, graduating with a Diploma in Gemology from the GIA (Gemological Institute of America).

From the website: *"Established in 1931, GIA is the world's foremost authority on diamonds, colored stones, and pearls. A public benefit, nonprofit institute, GIA is the leading source of knowledge, standards, and education in gems and jewelry. One of the most sought-after gemology credentials, the GIA Graduate Gemologist® (GG) Diploma Program is an in-depth, hands-on immersion into the world of diamonds and colored gemstones. The GG is a springboard into many careers throughout the gem and jewelry industry – from gemstone discovery to luxury gem and jewelry valuation and sales."*

Stephanie started this journey several years ago with eLearning courses offered via GIA Distance Education. The Diploma is a combination of five online eLearning courses and three hands-on lab classes.

While the entire experience has been the realization of a dream for Stephanie the labs and hands-on workshops were a highlight, taking her to Mumbai, Surat and London. "The people I have met and worked with on these campuses have been amazing."

Most recently Stephanie realised that in order to pass the final most difficult (100% pass mark required) and important unit, Gem Identification, and complete the diploma she needed additional tuition and immediate feedback. With borders barely open she flew to the main campus in Carlsbad California and after two weeks of extra tutorials and workshops passed this final hurdle.

But the story does not stop there. Stephanie has decided to add an extra course, Pearls, to her qualifications which will give her another travel opportunity and more wonderful people to meet for a lab in pearl grading. She is also working on becoming a registered jewellery valuer in NZ through JVSNZ. With less than 50 members throughout New Zealand this would add yet another gem to her crown.

Once again congratulations Stephanie, not many people you have met along this journey have much knowledge of New Zealand let alone Ophir, we are proud of you.

Ophir Peace Memorial Hall Rocks It Out - with a two-gig month in August!

Veronica Alkema

Matt Joe Gow and the Dead Leaves blew into town the day after the big windstorm early August for the first of two performances at the Hall during the month.

With last minute door sales, an enthusiastic audience of 75 or thereabouts settled in for a wonderful night. What a great venue our little hall has become - looking fabulous with its newly polished floors and the new sound system delivering a clear and polished performance from the band.

Matt Joe kicked off with some introspective, solo acoustic numbers before his 'dead leaves', a drummer and bass guitarist, joined him for the rest of the two-hour performance. With the bigger sound and an upbeat playlist of older songs and some sneak previews off his new, yet-to-be-released album, the small dance floor at the foot of the stage quickly filled.

A highlight was a 'surprise' guest who joined Matt at the front of the stage for a duet – Ophir's own CC (Claudia Columb) - who charmed both audience and band.

Claudia Columb charms the audience joining Matt Joe Gow for a duet.
Ophir Peace Memorial Hall, August 2022

After several encores, the band left the stage to loud applause and blew out of town again before the snow storm hit the following day. Their timing was impeccable.

The performance by the Lyttelton band 'The Eastern' a fortnight later was equally well-supported and received. With rain setting in for the night, the hall was a warm and cosy venue for yet another night of good vibes and rockin' tunes.

Local Arrowtown musician Tom Maxwell opened with an acoustic set as warm up to the main act.

With a six-strong line-up of fiddle, keyboards (and accordion), two guitars, banjo and double bass – the Eastern's sound was big and warm. A mixture of foot-tapping bluegrass hoe-downs, folk songs and ballads interspersed with plenty of banter from front-man Adam McGrath gave the audience plenty to enjoy.

The Eastern rockin' it.
Ophir Peace Memorial Hall, August 2022

As the band chose to set up at the base of the stage rather than on it, there was no room for dancing other than in the aisles, but there were plenty of folks swaying in their seats.

So another successful gig was had, adding to the growing reputation of the Ophir Peace Memorial Hall as a worthy place to perform. Thanks to locals' support of these concerts, and all those that volunteer time to promote, set-up, clean-up and host these performers – we couldn't do it without you!

Next scheduled concert is on 7th October is Kendall Elise – solo alt country singer/song writer (more info closer to the time). As a community we can do our bit by supporting not only NZ's wonderful musicians but also the efforts of the organizers so come along and enjoy!

And from the OHC Treasurer:

"Our community has, over time, been the benefactor of the generosity of the residents of Ophir, be that in volunteering their time to projects or the donation of funds for targeted improvements to our buildings and surrounds.

These gigs are no exception with profits being returned to the Ophir Hall fund. Over $4,400 has been raised from the three gigs this year which is an amazing effort. On behalf of the OHC and the community a big thank you goes out to all responsible for bringing it together."

Pitches Store
Colleen & David Hurd

It seemed we had only closed down when it was time to re-open! However we are now refreshed and raring to go. It's good to be back with all the team.

We would like to introduce our new Head Chef, Suz Goodwin, who was our Sous Chef. You may have sampled her great food at Blacks over the winter break.

We had a lovely break heading for the Canadian Maritimes - dipped our toes in the Atlantic but a tad chilly. Sara was off to Germany and the rest of the team recovered at home with a few breaks away.

"Where in the World Were You"

You could be excused for thinking nobody lived here anymore over the last month or so as you walked down a deserted Swindon Street. Given our tiny population we certainly got around the world over the coldest month of the winter.

Troy and Sara Anderson were so glad the borders opened in time for them to travel to Germany for the wedding of Troy's son. After a stop off in Cairns to celebrate Sara's daughter's birthday they arrived into Europe just as things were heating up.

A first trip to the EU for Sara (Troy had lived and worked in the UK back in his mis-spent youth and his trips to Europe were more about beer than museums and ancient ruins) she had a ball.

The wedding was amazing and as a special surprise Troy's son and new bride had organised a road trip for the four of them into northern Italy.

Troy and Sara Anderson at Neuschwanstein Castle, Bavaria Germany July 2022

Troy and Sara Anderson Verona, Italy August 2022

Troy and Sara Anderson. Venice August 2022
Sara "Troy I said either shave your chest or do the buttons up"
Troy "Just smile for the camera Sara"

David and Colleen Hurd spent time in the Maritime Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, thoroughly enjoying their trip. Banding lobster on a Lobster Tour was a new experience, the pity being that they did have to release them back into the chilly Atlantic as the season had closed. In Colleen's words "Think I'll keep my day job!"

Colleen Hurd bands lobster in Nova Scotia

Russell and Judy Hinsley have had an extended holiday, and great adventures, with family in the UK. This from them:

"It seems a long time since we said goodbye back in June. Since then we have had a wonderful time reconnecting with our grandchildren Otis (11) and Indi (9) here in Rochester, Kent, UK.

Highlights have been seeing Indi playing the guitar in the "I Rock" concert and cricket for her local team. Otis playing the part of Captain Cod in "Pirates of the Curry Bean" school leavers' play and transitioning to High School. They are great kids and we have had lots of fun together including:

A trip on the Shropshire Union Canal on a 64 foot narrow boat "Planet". Starting at Norbury Junction. The first night we moored at a quaint, safe, village (Gnossal) and some of the crew checked out the local establishment for purposes of playing pool and sampling the locally made tipple. Some of us played cards. The second night we pulled into a leafy area thinking we would moor there for the night. However, some of us had an instant uneasy feeling about the place and so decided to motor on.

While negotiating a lock we spoke with a woman that knew the area well. She advised to go further on as there had been a murder about two months prior, in the area we first stopped at. (A teenager had stabbed another teenager). It is true, you should always trust your gut feeling.

The third night was spent at a delightful village, Brewood, where we had our own pool room to ourselves in the local pub (one of five in the village). We also enjoyed the live (folk) music playing in the room next door.

Next day we headed back towards Norbury Junction, talking with permanent residents on narrow boats along the way. Observing and photographing the varied bird life ducks, geese, swans, herons, coots their antics and their offspring.

We moored at Gnosall again for our final night where we all played pool at the local pub and listened to varied musical acts (an open mic night) where locals are invited to entertain.

Driving home the following day (after a side trip to Pontcysyllte Aqueduct in Wales) a little voice from the back seat enquires "Mummy are we going to a hotel tonight?" to which Rosa replies "Oh dear, what have I done?" Needless to say it was an early night for all.

Our second fun-filled adventure together was in Fuertaventura, Canary Islands on a 23m catamaran, yacht. After swimming, snorkelling and a hearty meal of paella it was time to return to shore. However, the sea was rough and the waves were crashing over the bow, port and starboard side of the yacht and on occasions, the stern! All of this to the sound of "Highway to Hell" playing and then "Livin' on a Prayer". Every one of the 50 plus people on board were still smiling when we moored including the laid back Spanish crew members.

Russell and Judy Hinsley with daughter Rosa and grandchildren Indi and Otis.
Canary Islands

Last weekend we checked out Hever Castle and Chartwell House, Winstone Churchill's home. A very peaceful place. Rochester is quite central. Less than an hour's drive to these places (and to Dover Castle or the ferry to Calais) and only 35 mins by train to London.

We hope this finds you all well and enjoying signs of spring.

While it will be sad to say goodbye to our UK family it will be good to get home. See you all soon. Russell and Judy. "

Bannockburn Arts School 2022

Bannockburn Arts School which runs from Monday 3 – Friday 7 October, offers a range of creative workshops brought to you by experts in their respective fields.

Learn the art of life drawing, improve your photography skills, discover your poetic voice and more at the inaugural Bannockburn Arts School.

To read more about our classes and to book your spot go to the website: www.bannockburnarts.co.nz

Spaces are limited, so get in early to avoid disappointment.

Market Place

For Sale: Red leather tub chair and ottoman.

The ottoman is convertible to a coffee table or can be used as a storage box. There are some cracks in the leather of the seat cushion otherwise in good condition. Asking $200.

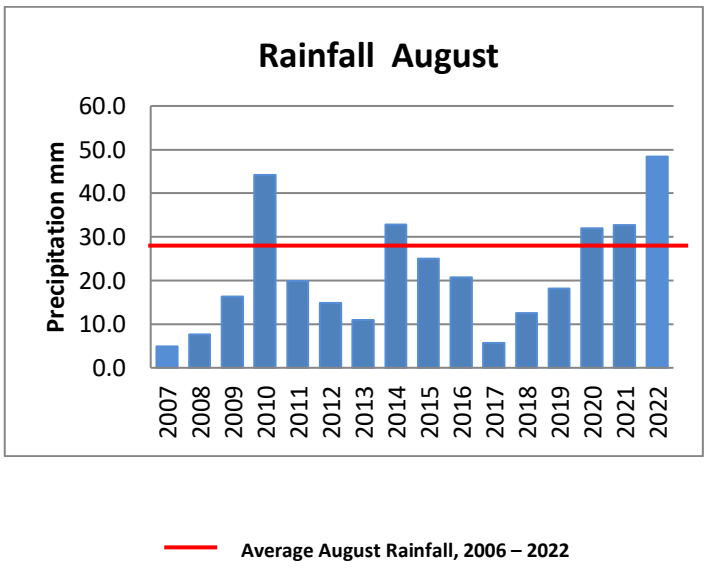
Phone Christine on 021 231 4615 or email me: christine.malcolm@xtra.co.nz

The Weather

Sam Leask

August started off with strong winds on the 5th followed by the coldest week of the winter. Rainfall of 48.4mm was above average for August. It has been hard on the sheep post shearing due to the cold and wet conditions. They lost a fair bit of weight but by the end of the month started to come right.

Just to show how cold the month was, the average night time temperature was a whopping -5°C colder than August last year. I had to redo my figures to make sure I had not made a mistake! The average daytime/maximum temperature was similar to this month last year.

Data for August 2022:

Maximum Temp: 19.5°C Saturday 6th
Minimum Temp: -8.5°C wednesday 10th
Rain/Precipitation: 48.4 mm