Ophir Info
March 2024

The Tatler
Val Butcher (Motor Mouth)

Not a lot happened in February. It's always quiet this time of the year, although I believe there is always a big run on the sale of aspirins at the beginning of the month as everyone studies their bank statements.

There was a bright and shining light the night Adriano Sangineto played his creative harp in the Ophir hall. What a great show and a clever man. He kept everyone entertained for a couple of hours with his one-man show. Did you know it is possible to play an Irish jig on a harp, there were a few adjustments of course including a drumbeat, and the man himself was an amusing showman. A big tick - bring him back.

Cath will give you the details on the pétanque but may I add that there appeared to be a shoe fetish going on in one team and tended to happen when the opposition was just about to throw. Lunch came early as with less teams than usual and was held outside which was very pleasant. Although the weather was kind for the pétanque it was a little windy for lunch and one had to put ones wine bottle firmly down on something stable. Everything was prone to being airborne, except hats that were securely anchored to heads in most cases. A very pleasant day and a big thank you to the organisers.

Our tourists are starting to drift back into town from all over the world and the comments have been very positive. They are very envious of our little town and the fact that we still have our own hall, post office, cafe, swimming pool, and the pub Gardens and our old bridge are much admired. We are getting lots of people from nearby towns bringing their visitors to Ophir now. Keep up the good work guys.

Keep safe Take care
Motor Mouth

Pétanque
Cath Haig

We had another great Ophir Pétanque competition and a lovely long lunch/BBQ out the back of the Post Office afterwards.

It was a smaller crowd this year with the hard-core boules players having conflicting family events and long planned holidays on Waitangi weekend. However the trophy was still hotly contested. There were four teams in total with the two teams in the finals round being Allo Allo and Screw Boules.

The 2024 champions are the Screw Boules – Harvey and Judy Trainer and Lyn and Leon Wright.

"Did anyone bring a measuring tape?"
Ophir Pétanque Tournament, February 2024

And the winners are the Screw Boules.
Harvey and Judy Trainer and Lyn and Leon Wright.
Ophir Pétanque Tournament, February 2024

The long lunch.
Ophir Pétanque Tournament, February 2024

Play Day

CODC

As part of Central Otago District Councils "Parks Week"

Sunday 10 March
will be
Play Day in Ophir!

Luke from Sport Otago will be in the Ophir Reserve (next to the Swimming Pool), from 10.30a.m. to 12.30pm with his trailer filled with games and activities for children of all ages!

All children (and grandchildren!) from Ophir, Omakau and the surrounding district are welcome.

Easter Spud Dig, Potluck and Prizes and the all-important Spud Auction

OWC

Potluck: *noun*
a communal meal to which people bring food to share

Our biggest community fundraising event is back on the social calendar. The Ophir Easter Potluck Dinner and Spud Auction will be held on

Sunday March 31st
5:30pm
Ophir Peace Memorial Hall

Bring food to share and be ready to raise your hand to pay more than you ever thought possible for a bag of spuds.

Items for the Harvest Basket Raffle can be dropped off at the Post Office before noon on Thursday 28th or delivered to Spike at 22 Swindon Street on Friday or Saturday.

The spuds will be dug on Friday and Saturday of Easter weekend with the usual prizes on the night. Please let us know by return email if you are not going to be at home and your spuds may be hard to find.

Don't miss this raucous fundraising evening.

Central Otago A & P Show

A&P shows are a country exhibition and fair, dedicated to celebrating, encouraging and developing New Zealand's farming and agricultural excellence. The very first A&P Show was held in the Bay of Islands in 1842, with Auckland following suit in 1843.

"The "Central Otago Agricultural Society" was established in 1893 and this is regarded as its founding date. A show was held on the **1st**

December 1893, and almost every year since, with the exception of a few dates, due to influenza, war time, petrol costs and a change of date."

Not a lot has changed with the show being a highlight of February each year since with the exception of lockdown. A chance for townies to appreciate the work that goes into farming, watch sheep being shorn, view winning fleeces and enjoy a great family day.

The home industries and equestrian sections are two of the favourites, but you can't miss the pet section and the Grand Parade. Unfortunately this year there was an intense rain event just before the Grand Parade and although we welcome rain it could have held off for a few more hours.

The Grand Parade was cancelled but not before Rose Watson, Matt and Rin Tipa's granddaughter, showed Pippi Longstocking in the pony section of the pets.

Whenever Rose (who is mad about horses and could tell you everything there is to know about them) is in Ophir visiting with family she spends hours grooming Pippi, taking her for walks and having long discussions. Pippi was groomed within an inch of her life on the day, and they well deserved the blue ribbon just as the skies opened.

Rose Watson and Pippi Longstocking
Central Otago A & P Show, February 2024

Playcentre Fundraiser Raffle

Ellen Chisholm & Josefa Rodriguez
Omakau and Districts Playcentre

Our playcentre is doing a fundraiser because we need a new roof.

$10 will get you a ticket to go into a draw to win a night at Hawkdun Hut with a welcome platter and a bottle of wine on arrive (incl. paddleboards and a private lake)

You can purchase tickets by contacting Ellen by email: ellen@ahipara.com or through her facebook post on the Omakau and Ophir Community News page.

Foot Note:

Given the importance of the Playcentre to our community (not only have all the children that have grown up in Ophir attended the playcentre but with out it we would not be blessed with the sound of happy children in what otherwise might be described as an aging population of retirees) at the recent meeting of the Ophir Welfare Committee (OWC) a donation / grant of $1000 to the roof fund was approved.

Ophir Hall for Hire

OHC

Just a reminder to Ophir locals and to the wider community that the Ophir Peace Memorial Hall is available for hire at very reasonable rates for any private function - be it a birthday party, club meeting or performance.

Please contact the Hall Committee secretary Colleen Fewtrell to discuss rates and dates on 021 194 1755.

Comings and Goings

We sadly said goodbye to Peter and Paula Anstey at the end of February. They have sold "Faulty Towers" and relocated into Alexandra, which is just down the road so we hope to still see them both in town and at Blacks for the occasional "locals" night.

While Peter and Paula used the crib as a getaway from Dunedin they spent enough time here, especially over lockdown, to be almost considered permanent residents. Peter using it as a base for his trout fishing trips with both often walking, or in Paula's case running the local roads. Always ready to offer their respective skills as volunteers in the community they will be missed. We wish them all the best for the future.

Of course when someone leaves we gain a new member to the community. We offer a warm Ophir Welcome to Diane Noone the new owner of 16 Swindon Street who is keen to be part of our unique community.

Ophir Pool

OWC

We have now hit meteorological autumn. The days will start to get shorter and the nights cooler. The pool is planned to close the last week of March however depending on usage and the weather this could be brought forward. A notice will be sent out if changes are made.

It's all about Water

Globally there is a water crisis, closer to home we have our own problems:

Taste and odour issues at Omakau and Ophir

The issue with the taste and odour of the water delivered to our homes has been bad for the last few months. Recent complaints to the council have prompted the responses below which echo the response at the end of last year. Looks like we just have to toughen up and pray for rain.

"The decrease in the level of the Manuherikia has seen an increase in complaints related to the taste and odour of the water supply in Omakau and Ophir - an issue these communities have been experiencing for periods over the past year.

An investigation found the cause to be a naturally occurring chemical called geosmin, which is produced during the breakdown of algae and other micro-organisms in the raw (untreated) source water.

"Geosmin has a distinct earthy or musty odour which most people can easily smell and causes most taste and odour outbreaks in drinking water.

Seasonal increases in naturally occurring algae or bacteria in water can cause geosmin levels to increase above the tasting threshold," CODC Three Waters Customer and Compliance Team Leader Philippa Bain said.

"Although the taste and odour can be unpleasant, geosmin is not harmful to health."

Given dropping river levels and hot conditions, testing for cyanobacteria was undertaken to ensure the safety of the water source. Geosmin can be produced during the breakdown of algae and can be linked to a cyanobacteria event. All lab samples have showed no levels of concern.

Unfortunately, due to the low river levels, taste and odour issues may continue until flows in the Manuherekia River increase again and temperatures drop.

Since this event, CODC has had contact with residents in the community who have noted that the severity of the taste and odour issue has fluctuated over the past two months.

"People within the community do have different levels of sensitivity to the taste and odour, some noticing it more than others," Ms Bain said.

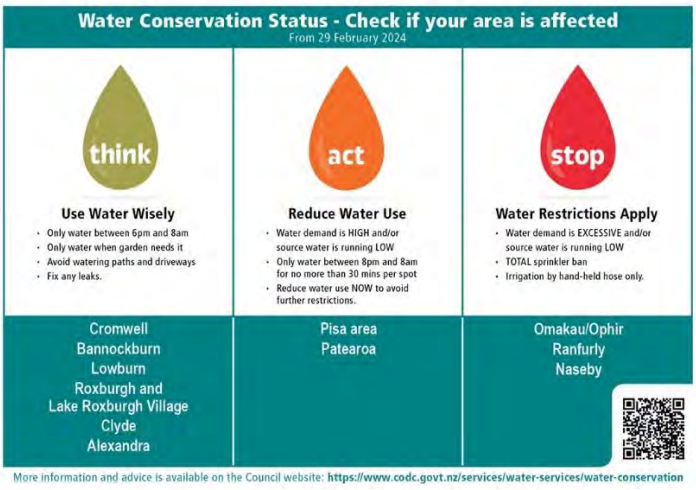
There had been concerns raised from the community about the safety of the water.

"We acknowledge the frustration and discomfort related to the taste and odour issue but want to assure the community that the water supply is being monitored closely. Any concerns that water is unsafe are taken very seriously and we will ensure the community are aware of any issues."

And talk about praying for rain:

Water Restrictions

With the Manuherikia River running at just 1 cumecs and Falls Dam looking alarmingly low it was no surprise to see the notices go up at the entrance to Ophir that CODC have tightened the restrictions in the area.



"Water restrictions have been tightened in some Central Otago towns amid near-drought conditions in many areas.

The Central Otago District Council (CODC) this morning said Omakau, Ophir, Naseby and Ranfurly had been moved into the Red Drop water conservation status.

This highest conserve water status requires a total ban on sprinkler use but does allow for handheld hose for garden watering only.

CODC Three Waters Director Julie Muir said the low water level in Falls Dam was affecting the availability of water in the Manuherikia catchment, which prompted the move for Omakau and Ophir."

The Weather

Sam Leask

And the dry continues. The rainfall for February was 11.6mm well below the average for this month of 51.8 from 2006-2024.

Crunching the numbers for all you weather buffs out there it has been the driest February since 2007 when rainfall was 8.4mm and the driest summer since 2014/15 when we had 55.2mm (2023/24 63.1mm). For those years the annual rainfall was 309.5mm and 327.6mm respectively with the average from 2006 – 2023 being 441mm.

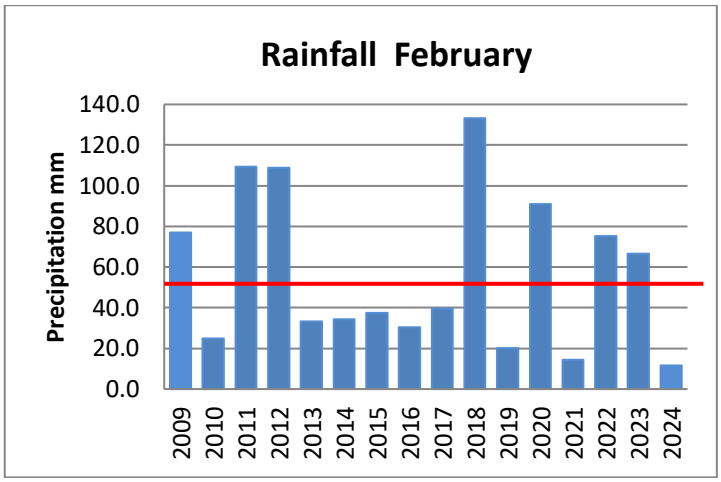
This does not of course indicate that we will have another dry year however the data cannot be totally ignored.

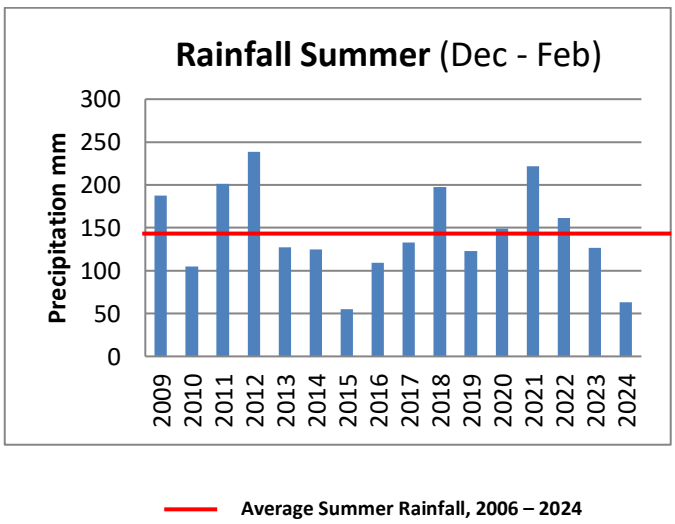
Farm irrigation water for this area has been dropped to 25% of our allocation which means only 6 hours per day for our farm, Pomona.

The average daytime temperature and nighttime temperatures were both slightly colder than as this time last year.

Data for February 2024:

Maximum Temp:	28.3°C	Thursday 29th
Minimum Temp:	0.2°C	Tuesday 20th
Rain/Precipitation:	11.6mm	





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