

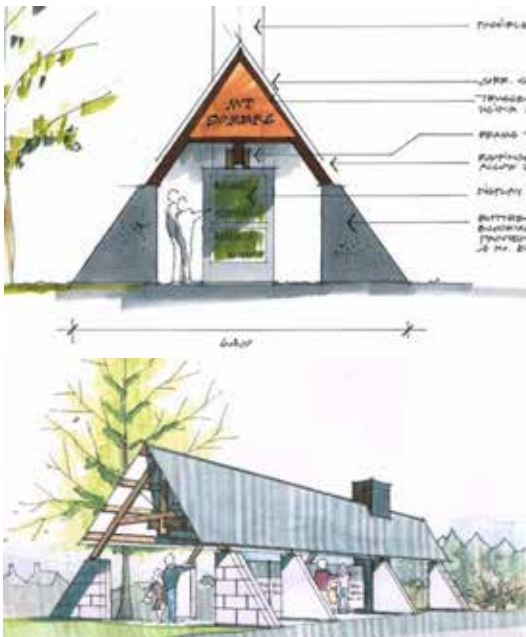
Bringing you the News from Carew in the south to Alford Forest in the north and all places in between.

Mount Somers Information Station

It has been a long time coming, but we can be pleased to say that the final phase of the development of McClimont's Green will commence in the spring. The building has been designed to display and provide information about the area – its unique history, recreation, geology and ecology.

The building will be placed on the Mt Somers School side of the green adjacent to the Ashburton Gorge Road. It is planned that the proposed information station will be seen as an attraction in its own right – a reason to stop in Mt Somers and be encouraged to explore the area in more detail and utilise the services provided by local businesses.

A large proportion of the materials for the building have already been purchased, promised or donated and it is envisaged that voluntary labour will be used alongside a builder who will oversee the process. In the last twelve months we have received grants of \$10,000 from the Ashburton District Council, \$15,000 from Mid South Canterbury Trust and \$6,000 from the Lions Club – sufficient to feel confident we can deliver on the vision of David McBride our architect from Timaru.



In subsequent newsletters we will provide more details of the building and seek the community's views on what they would like to see reflected in the information highlighted inside.

Mt Somers Information "Station" - why the name?

The two parallel roads that define the Mt Somers layout – Patton's and Ashburton Gorge Roads, were built either side of the branch railway line that travelled through the village to connect with the narrow gauge line that serviced the coal, sand mines and limestone quarries further up the valley.

The parallel road layout is a common feature where the railway ran through small towns and villages in Canterbury – think East and West Street in Ashburton. In Mount Somers, with the closure of the railway, the land became available for housing – the only remnant of the railway infrastructure is the shed now occupied by Joseph Builder which was the original coal storage structure.

Built in 1878, the Mount Somers line serviced the area from Ashburton, until its closure in 1968. For many years abandoned railway engines, wagons and tracks sat on the land now occupied by a number of houses as well as the play centre and the village green.



The railway station, (below) complete with a goods shed, sidings and the original post office was situated about 100 metres behind the existing Electricity Ashburton substation.



The choice of the name – Mount Somers Information Station is a nod to the key part that railway played in the Mount Somers establishment and development

continued on page 2

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McClimonts Green - Why the name?

One of the most influential families in the history of coal mining at Mount Somers was the McClimont family. William McClimont born in Ireland in the 1830's, emigrated to New Zealand and became involved in coal mining at Mt Somers before purchasing land above Woolshed Creek containing an out crop of coal in 1872. The development of this mine was hampered by its height above the valley floor however the construction of a steep jig railway built in 1901 led to large quantities of coal being extracted.

Although McClimonts Workings produced the highest quality coal in the district, the mine caught fire in 1912 and was closed and sealed permanently soon after. The McClimont family stayed involved with Mt Somers coal through three generations for over 100 years – the last being William's grandson, Len McClimont who passed away in 2022

For many years, Len and Rowan McClimont owned the area of land

now occupied by the current village green. The County water race ran through the Gorge Road side of the land while the block was fenced and ran a few sheep from time to time.

A group of local people who valued the open nature of the land between the school, store and the old post office and the views of the surrounding mountains suggested that the community should buy the land to prevent housing development destroying its character. A successful fundraising effort involving the "sale" of virtual "sections" of one square metre to local people was a cornerstone of the effort, however the project may have struggled to achieve its goals without the generosity of the McClimonts. Fundraising took two or three years but the family honoured their original asking price at a time when section prices in the village had continued to rise. Further more, in a gesture that cemented the community acquisition, the McClimonts gifted 25% of the purchase price back to the community.

It was the family's generosity that was acknowledged when the name, McClimonts Green, was chosen.



♥ We are opening in the evening ♥

We are excited to announce we are open some nights for dinner service this winter!



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Draft Reserve Management Plan

From small neighbourhood parks to large domains, our district's parks and reserves provide places for our residents to play, relax and enjoy.

We want to ensure these spaces are protected, maintained and able to be enjoyed safely by everyone. So, with the help of the community's feedback, we've drafted a combined plan for how our parks and reserves will be managed.

Have we got it right?



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What's happening with the 'Murder House / Library at the Museum

Things have been progressing 'slowly'. The building is in place and power has been connected thanks to Brent Kilgour which is very much appreciated.

We are now at the boxing stage and preparation for the concrete pour to join the two buildings.

Thanks to Joseph Builders for their time and support with this project.

Managed by Nathan Huggins who is keeping us moving.

Applying for grants for future improvements. Small steps!

Mt Somers Foothills Museum Committee.



Life-Limiting Illness - What does that mean?

At Hospice Mid Canterbury (HMC), anyone with a life-limiting illness may become a client. The question is, what does "life-limiting" mean?

Life-limiting is a term used to describe an incurable condition that will shorten a person's life, though they may continue to live active lives for many years. There is a wide range of life-limiting illnesses, including heart failure, lung disease, neurological conditions, such as dementia, Parkinson's and Multiple Sclerosis, and cancer that is no longer responding to treatment intended to cure.

Some other common queries are:

HMC is called a community hospice. What does that mean?

A community hospice provides non-clinical support. Unlike clinical hospices, where patients may stay and receive specialist palliative care, a community hospice has "no beds and no meds." What it does offer are a variety of supports which can help the client maintain quality of life right from the time of their palliative diagnosis, which may be months or even years. Support is not only for the person with the life-limiting illness, but also wraps around the family and caregivers, and is offered wherever the client calls home.

Hospice Mid Canterbury provides a free service to clients and their families with the aim of complementing existing palliative care services in the Mid Canterbury district. It strives to enhance the quality of life for people dealing with illness and end of life.

How can I get help from HMC? Do I need a referral from my doctor?

To access HMC support, a person with a terminal diagnosis or a family member can make a referral via the Hospice website (www.hospicemc.nz), or contact us on 307 8387, or 027 227 8387 or email manager@hospicemc.nz. Medical professionals and support agencies may also refer a person to HMC.



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The Old Post Office Library



These days are getting colder!! It's reading weather... If you haven't got time, make time!!! Reading helps to prevent dementia which seems to be becoming a bit of an epidemic. The library has a great variety of books to choose from:

'There is a Cure for this' by Emma Espiner.

This book is on loan to the library courtesy of Rosemary M. I borrowed it recently and found it very hard to put down. It isn't a very long book and definitely held my interest apart from one angry chapter where she aired many grievances about the imbalance between Maori and Pakeha. She is a young qualified Maori doctor, now working in Middlemore hospital Auckland. She loves her job.

Her path to realising her dream of helping her people has not been easy and she writes well of her pathway to qualification. This book is more than a memoir, but you really need to read it to understand what she is writing about. I recommend it.

'The Optician of Lampedusa' by Emma Jane Kirby, a BBC journalist.

This is my book which I have lent to our library. It is one book everyone should read. It is a true story about 8 friends enjoying a boat trip off the coast of Lampedusa in the Mediterranean Sea in 2013 when "I can hardly begin to describe to you what I saw as our boat approached the source of that terrible noise. I hardly want to. You won't understand because you weren't there. You see, I thought I heard seagulls screeching, seagulls fighting over a lucky catch. Birds. Just birds."

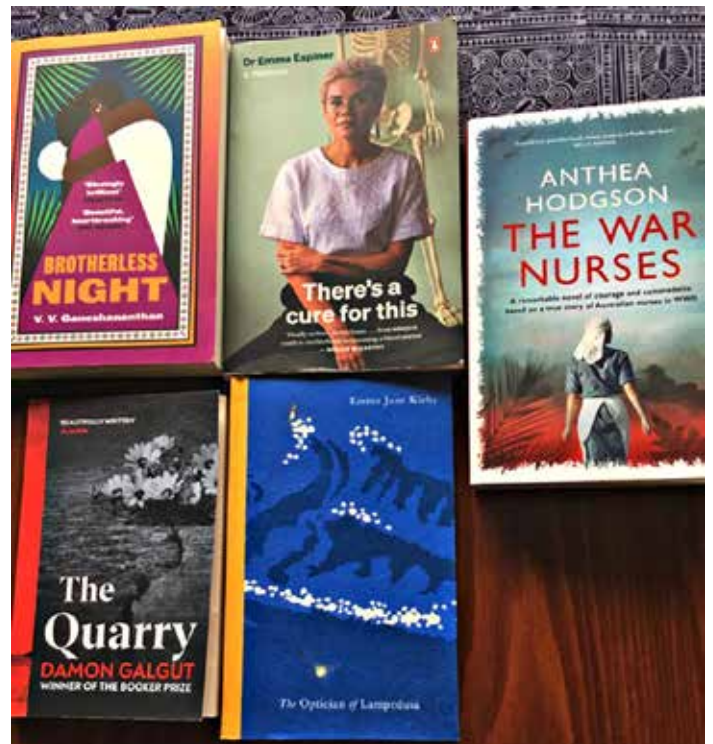
These 'birds' were in fact people. Hundreds of them being tossed and pulled in a restless sea. Many were dead.

They were from a hopelessly overloaded migrant boat making their way to so-called safety from Ethiopia. And this is the true story of how ordinary people set about to save them with their small boat.

It is an amazing tale... true and heartbreaking. And if you only read one book this year, let it be this one. So very highly recommended.

It is so tragic that similar disasters are still happening around the world.

The long awaited 'Long Island' has arrived, continuing the story of 'Brooklyn' by Colm Toibin. This is a sequel, so would be even more enjoyable if you read 'Brooklyn' first.



Another new book soon to be on our shelves is 'On Call: Stories from my life as a surgeon, daughter, and mother.' Another memoir, it's always fascinating to read about other people's lives and the different paths they have taken to reach their goal. The author is Ineke Meredith.

'Brotherless Night' by VV Ganeshanathan.

A courageous young Tamil woman tries to protect her dream of becoming a doctor as civil war devastates Sri Lanka. This book was shortlisted for the 2024 Women's Prize.

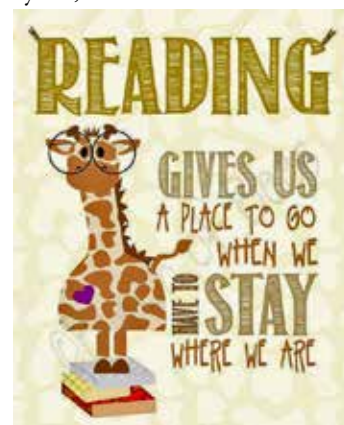
Recently we had a visit from Anne Smith from the Ashburton District Council. She is the Convenor of the Grants division. I opened up the library for her one cold blustery early evening, so the lights and heat pump were on. It was most cosy!!

And she thought so too, and loved her look around at our display of books. She was very enthusiastic about our community library and it made quite an impression on her. It was good for her to see where the Council Book Grant is spent. It is nearly time to reapply for that Grant which allows us to buy the latest books for you all. We are most appreciative.

Thank you again to our volunteers and if you would like an afternoon in our warm cosy library as a volunteer once in a while, please let Kath Schikker or Pam Annand know. It's not hard..... writing borrowers names in a book, sweeping the porch, and replenishing the outside shelves with spare books. Maybe some dusting, and putting some fresh flowers or leaves in a vase.

Keep warm everyone, AC

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So come and join us for an hour. Classes every Wednesday, Staveley Hall 1.30pm. For enquiries, phone Annette Syme 3030 803



It never fails to amaze me how generous the Ashburton community is. We are a close and caring community, always ready to help our newcomers.

Our programme relies heavily on volunteers, as does many community services. They help us in many ways, from driving mentors, child minders and drivers helping bring students into class. Some of our volunteers have been with us from the beginning of the programme. That was seven years ago!! And they are still here helping our people on their journey of making a new life in a new country.

There was a discussion in the office recently about how Ashburton residents do so much good in the community. They often fly under the radar, not wanting recognition for what they do or the donations they provide. But we are truly lucky that they are there giving so much of their time and skills. It makes Mid Canterbury the place to be, because I'm sure there isn't the same level of support for newcomers in the cities and bigger towns around the country. We are often getting enquiries from people living further afield hoping to join the programme because there isn't anything like it in their area. Unfortunately we can't help everyone, as much as we would like to.

This programme makes a huge difference to the lives of our participants but what's in it for the mentor? An opportunity to meet someone from another culture, to learn about a different culture, to make new friends, to improve your own driving, enjoy a social outing, to celebrate the successes of your students and the sense of satisfaction you get from helping improve the life of a newcomer to our district.

We have two volunteer drivers who bring students into class. What's in it for them? An opportunity to meet new people, it's a social outing and you get a chance to see the beautiful Mid Canterbury countryside. We provide the car! It sounds like some very interesting conversations happen on the way.

Our volunteer Child minders look after children as their mothers attend class in the room next door. What's in it for them? A chance to engage with preschool children, a social outing. A great opportunity for people who enjoy spending time with young children.

If you would like to be part of this amazing programme, as a student, driving mentor or to volunteer in other ways, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Wendy Hewitt on 027 611 3301 or wendy.hewitt@safer.org.nz

We are also on Facebook, just search for the Mid Canterbury Rural Driver Licensing Scheme.

The Mid Canterbury Rural Driver Licensing Scheme is proudly sponsored by Waka Kotahi, Advance Ashburton Community Foundation, Ashburton District Council, The Lion Foundation, COGs, Community Trust Mid & South Canterbury and The Mid Canterbury Rural Support Trust.

Wendy Hewitt
Rural Licensing Co-Ordinator
Safer Mid Canterbury
255 Moore Street, Ashburton 7700
Ph: 027 611 3301
wendy.hewitt@safer.org.nz
Office hours - Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 4.30 pm



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Mt Somers Staveley Playcentre

Hello Winter! There have certainly been some fresh mornings at Playcentre this past month, but that doesn't mean the fun stops! We've even had an obstacle course and the sandpit is still as popular as ever.

This month we are planning our Matariki celebration. We will be having a shared meal on Thursday the 27th to mark the occasion, with fairy lights, a wishing tree, toasted marshmallows and lots of stars. If you're a previous member of Playcentre (or are wanting to become a member) please feel free to join us from 5pm!

We are also going to pop over to Staveley this month to go Ice Skating! We are so excited for the rink to open again this year, it is such a great asset to the area.

Thank you to everyone that purchased a raffle ticket for our huge Mother's Day hamper, a big congratulations to Lucy Dynes who was the lucky recipient!

As always, please feel free to join us on session if you'd like to see what Playcentre is all about. Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am - 12pm, 50 Pattons Road in Mt Somers Village.



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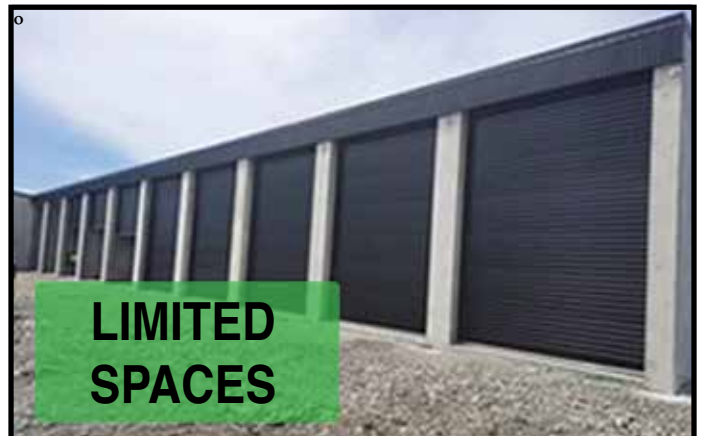
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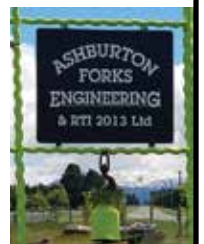
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EA Networks

Powers Up Sustainability

EA Networks has embraced renewable energy, installing a 75kW solar array on the rooftops of its offices in the Ashburton Business Estate. The array spans two buildings and includes more than 140 panels. It was designed and installed by local electricians ElectraServe who completed the project in March. By harnessing solar energy, the company aims to reduce its carbon footprint and lower its direct energy costs over the long term by generating its own energy, effectively making hay while the sun shines.

“We are really pleased to be able to generate some of our own energy needs locally and reduce both our energy costs and network capacity during summer” said Onno Mulder, EA Networks Chief Executive.

The initiative aligns with the companies values and demonstrates its commitment to sustainability and increased renewable energy. “As an electricity distribution company, we recognise the role we play in shaping a sustainable energy future, said Mr Mulder.

Whilst the installation is relatively small it enables EA Networks to learn more about the technology providing an opportunity to work with and support others in the community who might be considering solar options.

James Reid of ElectraServe, who led the build project, highlighted the economic benefits of solar energy. “There is a good business case for commercial and industrial customers to use solar to reduce their retail energy costs since a lot of their demand for electricity is during the daytime” said Mr Reid.

The installation will produce up to 70kW of energy during summer when the local electricity network sees peak demand. This is the equivalent of powering about 30 residential homes. The company has no plans to utilise battery storage at this stage. “There is no need for battery storage in this system since all the generation can be used immediately to power heating and lighting across the business. Every system is different, and it pays to speak to experienced designers early to get this right” said Mr Reid.

“We encourage other businesses to reach out to their local electrician to see what opportunities there are for them” said Mr Mulder.



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A COMMENT:

On Thursday the 9th of May I was fortunate to be with a group of Lion Club members on an outing to the head of Lake Coleridge. Enroute we were able to stop and look out to very sophisticated recent river work carried out in the Harper River. The Harper is a natural tributary to the Wilberforce which in turn is a tributary to the Rakaia River. From this viewing point the road dropped steeply an area just beyond the actual Lake Coleridge, we came to a standstill on the Harper River at a point where heavy machinery is stationed Catapillar D8 and D9 bulldozers and just below control gates on the Harper. We then followed a canal which carries the flow of the Harper to where it is discharged into the lake.

We were guided to the Wilberforce and were able to view the method of directing water to the Lake from the Wilberforce as required and in times of flood where excess water from the Harper is turned to flow into the Wilberforce and not over fill the lake.

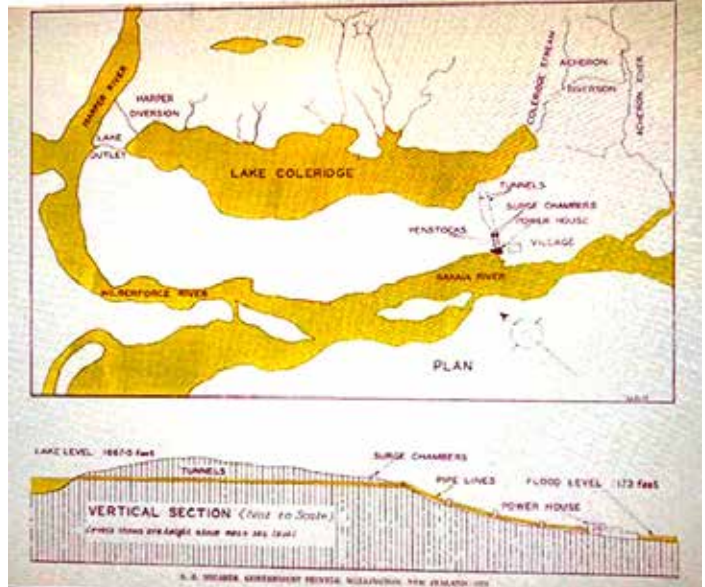
It was a unique opportunity to learn just what has to be done and happen to make the Coleridge Hydroelectric Power station work month in and month out. History: Coleridge was the first major power station in which the state was involved. The initial purpose of the station was to provide electric power for the City of Christchurch. Construct started in 1911 and in 1914 it was commissioned with three generating units. For the most part it was built by hand, with some heavier work done by steam shovels. Following construction twin 66 KV transmission lines were erected connecting the power station with Christchurch's Addington substation, these were the highest voltage in NZ and the longest at over 100 Kilometres.

In the early years demand for electricity grew rapidly and the transmission system was extended to Rangiora in the north and Oamaru in the south. The limited capacity at Coleridge resulted in regular interruptions to supply. To help overcome this a fourth generator was connected in April 1917, with a further two more in November 1921 and March 1922. The turbine hall was extended in 1924 to make room for additional larger turbines.

By the early 1930s, Coleridge had reached capacity, and was then supplemented in 1934 by the commissioning of the Waitaki Dam and then in 1935 by extending transmission lines south to join Coleridge/Waitaki to Dunedin's Waipori scheme.

Water supply was a challenge, and so three river diversions were made to increase water available in the lake; the Harper River in 1922, the Acheron River in 1930, and later the Wilberforce River in 1977.

The station was built and initially owned by the New Zealand Government under the Hydro Electric Branch of the Public Works Department, which later became the State Hydro Electric Department in 1946, which in turn became the New Zealand Electricity Department (NZED) in 1958, which then became the Electricity Division of the Ministry of Energy in 1978. In 1987 the Government dissolved its responsibility for electricity to create a state-owned enterprise called the Electricity Corporation of New Zealand (Electricorp). Electricorp began downsizing staff and upgrading systems at the facility, in 1994 it restructured into two subsidiaries. Transpower adopted responsibility for the outdoor switching yard, with the parent company planning to sell the facility at Coleridge. After Ngai Tahu waived their right of first refusal to the facility, in 1998 the facility was purchased for \$90.6 million by both Alpine Energy and Trustpower. Alpine was only involved in the deal to circumvent a rule that the station could only be sold to a South Island company, Alpine withdrew from the scheme in 1998.



continued on page 24

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Pink Ribbon Morning Tea

Held on 2 May 2024, at the Ruapuna Hall

Margaret Rushton and Jo Cook organised this morning teas as a memorial to Jan Early who passed away 2 May 2023. They had almost 70 attend and between the morning tea and donations raised \$3761.00 All photo's where taken by Jo Cook.



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8 Bruces Road,
Mt Somers, RD1,
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Telephone: 03 3039 722
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Kia ora, Talofa, Mālō e lelei, Namaste, Ni Hao, Bula, Hola, and Namaste - greetings everyone.

At Mayfield School, we're all about celebrating achievements and fostering positive behaviour through our PB4L (Positive Behaviour for Learning) initiative. One of the ways we recognise and encourage positive behaviour is through our HEARTies programme, where students earn rewards for demonstrating our school's core values: Honesty, Enjoyment, Achievement, Respect, and Try Our Best. Recently, we had the pleasure of celebrating the accomplishments of two students, George Waddell and Thomas Clarke, who reached the milestone of 30 HEARTies each. As a reward, they were treated to a delightful high tea, an occasion filled with laughter, delicious treats, dapper top hats and moustaches!

In addition to our HEARTies program, we've been gearing up for some exciting events, including the upcoming Counties Cross Country competition in Ashburton on Friday, June 7th. Ash King, Ollie Baxter and Charlee Chard will have the opportunity to represent Mayfield School, showcasing their athleticism and sportsmanship on a larger stage.

Meanwhile, our students continue to embody our school values in various ways, earning recognition through our Principal's Awards at each assembly. And speaking of special opportunities, last term's lucky recipient of the Principal for a Day honour was Saskia Blake. Saskia put together an impressive lineup of activities, starting with a mufti day fundraiser where students were encouraged to bring a gold coin donation for Kids Can Charity. In the morning, she led a school-wide Jump Jam session, spreading energy and enthusiasm throughout the school and a Talent Show in the afternoon, showcasing the diverse talents of our students. In recognition of Saskia's selfless and thoughtful choices for her Principal for a Day activities, I treated her to a special

lunch at the Mayfield Cafe as a small token of appreciation for her dedication to making our school community a better place.

Our seniors are busy fundraising for their planned camp to Stewart Island in 2025. With the support of parents and their amazing teachers, they are preparing and cooking lunches every Wednesday which children can purchase. They have made American hotdogs, had pumpkin soup and saveloys and next week are offering pizza.

Our school thrives on the support and dedication of our amazing community members who continually step up to lend a helping hand and ensure the well-being of our tamariki. Recently, the school board embarked on a project to refresh the surroundings of our school house by replacing the old hedge with a new fence. This undertaking would not have been possible without the incredible support of our parents and community volunteers like Ron Cross, Brendan Sloane, and Tim Boyd. Their hard work in pulling out the hedge, removing the debris, drilling holes for the new fence posts and constructing the new fence has been instrumental in bringing this project to fruition. We are also immensely grateful to Lois and Rob Orchard for their nomination of Mayfield School in Ruralco's promotion. Thanks to their support, we were fortunate enough to win \$500, a delightful surprise that was presented to us by CEO Tony Aitken and Indiana Roberts at a recent assembly. We consider ourselves truly fortunate to have such generous individuals in our community.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, our Home & School committee has been tirelessly fundraising to support various school initiatives. Recently, they organised a Sausage Sizzle for Southern Rugby and catered for the Mayfield Lions Dinner. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the following businesses and individuals who contributed to the success of these events: Alistair at the Mayfield Caltex, for generously donating bread, tomato sauce, serviettes, and even lending us a float for the day, The Whillans Family at Westpac Bank, for graciously allowing us to use their BBQ for our events and the Crowley Family, for their kindness in lending us their tent when our schools was unavailable. It provided much-needed warmth and shelter for our dedicated volunteers throughout the day.

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It is through the collective efforts of our supportive community members that Mayfield School continues to thrive and provide a nurturing environment for our students. We are incredibly grateful for their ongoing support and commitment to our school community. Together, we truly make a difference.

New Enrolments

Here at Mayfield School we welcome all visitors and anyone wishing to enrol their children. We also welcome children of any age to be pre-enrolled. If you would like your child to attend our wonderful school please pop in to see me or email me at principal@mayfieldschool.nz or phone 03 3036214

We would love to welcome you here. Nga mihi mahana kia koutou - warm greetings.

Aroha Stewart (Tumuaki/Principal)

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MAYFIELD MT SOMERS ANGLICAN PARISH

My knee replacement operation is behind me, or sort of. I knew it would be painful afterwards, didn't I? Because hadn't I nursed Harvey through two of those knee replacements.

But I have to say that nursing someone else and having the operation yourself are two totally different things! Hats off to all the brave souls who go back for the second knee. But it is done, and sometime in the future I know I will be feeling very pleased that it has been done.

I have a wonderful nurse, our elder daughter Sandy, who has come up from Southland to see us through this recovery time.

We have also had visits, baking and flowers from neighbours, friends and parishioners, not only our own parishioners and we have been feeling very blessed.

Thank you to all those wonderful people and to those who have been praying for me too. Each little act of kindness makes me realize,

again and again how wonderful most people are. Thank you all for caring.
Blessings, Annette Eggleston

ANGLICAN SERVICES

Priest: Rev Annette Eggleston

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June 16 10 a.m. St Aidan's, Mt Somers

July 7 10 a.m. St Aidan's, Mt Somers

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PARISH CONTACTS

Parish Priest - Rev Annette Eggleston

Email: harann000@gmail.com 3024 006

Church Warden – Pauline Hewson 3036 397

Church Warden, Secretary / Treasurer

- Marion Jacobson 027 3607 180

Email: marion.i.jacobson@gmail.com

A MESSAGE FROM PLAINS PRESBYTERIAN PARISH

AN UPDATE

Alpine Presbytery have formed a commission to support the holding of a second congregational meeting – confirmed for Sunday the 9th of June following the 10.30 service at St John's Methven. Commission members are Rev Dan Spragg (convenor), Ann McMillan, Peter Yates. Dan will moderate the meeting. The purpose of the Commission is to confirm the previous vote on the resolution "That Alpine Presbytery be asked to close the Parish in order to pursue new ventures in the region." 33 people were in favour of the resolution, with one abstaining.

A reminder of the importance of attending this 2nd meeting so that any further questions can be asked, and a second vote taken to make sure it is still the wish of 2/3rds majority of the members and associate members present to take this final step.

Annette and Liz have met with representatives of Alpine Presbytery to plan the congregational meeting. This will follow a similar format with each attendee receiving a copy of the agenda to minimize confusion of both the process and what is being discussed. A cup of tea will follow. Apologies will be called for. These can be forwarded to your local Parish council representatives.

We look forward to a great turn out once again – this is the opportunity to voice your opinion, exercise your vote and enjoy some worship and fellowship with others in our Parish. Please add this meeting to your prayer list – it is our one point of difference from other community organisations you may belong to – when challenging decisions are made, our God is standing alongside us.

Liz and Annette (Co- Parish Clerks)

Interim Moderator Rev Eric Mattock
Ph 307 7024

Parish Clerks,

Annette Syme Ph 303 0803

Liz Depree Ph 021889341

Parish Contacts:

Kevin Taylor ph 303 6392

Kay King ph 303 6033

Website plainspresbyterian.co.nz

Facebook.com/ PlainsPresbyterianParish

WORSHIP SERVICES MAY 2024

Sunday 2nd June Rakaia 9.30 am

Rev John Titlow

Sunday 9th June St John's Methven 10.30

Parish service followed by a congregational meeting re the future direction of the Parish

Sunday 16th June St Johns Methven 10.30 am

Paster Paul Eden

Sunday 23th June Trinity Mayfield 10.00 am

Paster Paul Eden

Sunday 30th June St Andrews Rakaia 9.30 am

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Book of the Month – Mt Somers Library

Title: 'The Last Four Days of Paddy Buckley – A Novel'

Author: Jeremy Massey

Publication year: 2015

A review by Elles Smallegoor

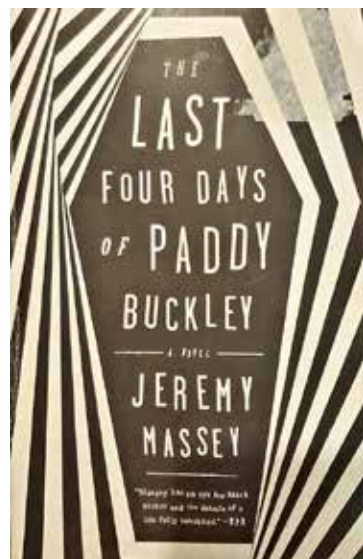
While most books are property of the Mt Somers Library, some books are there on loan. One of these is Jeremy Massey's 'The Last Four Days of Paddy Buckley', which Anne Chapman has kindly put in the library for us to read. Published nearly a decade ago, the fast-paced, action-packed book centres on what seem to be the last days of a Dublin undertaker's life. Things have taken a bad turn for Paddy who only a few days ago, in a moment of panic, decided to drive off after accidentally hitting and killing Donal Cullen, one of the city's feared crime bosses. To Paddy's dismay, his employer Frank Gallagher has assigned him to arrange the funeral. Donal's brother and ruthless partner-in-crime Vince Cullen is determined to take revenge: "Now that Donal was in the ground, the theme of the day for Vincent was retribution. It was a word and concept he always liked. And it went well with another favourite. Tribulation." (p. 219). It does not take long for Vincent to find out it was Paddy who did the unintended hit-and-run and for Paddy to realise his days are done.

The novel's central premise makes for a great crime comedy and the book certainly contains comic scenes that fit the genre: there is a car chase with a hearse, an escape in a coffin and some clever scheming involving Vincent's unusual cross-bred pet Dechtire. Massey, a screen writer by training, is at his best in these scenes. The action and suspense propel the plot ahead and the reader is compelled to keep reading. Also captivating are the paragraphs in which Paddy explains the ins and outs of the undertaking business. Massey, not only a screen writer but also an undertaker himself, elaborates on the technical specifics of embalming, draws attention to the importance

of preparation and timing in arranging funerals and reveals what can go horribly wrong if you don't do the job right. The novel is written in the first-person and told from the perspective of Paddy who generally does a lot of magical thinking after tragically losing his pregnant wife.

In the book, death is both comically and sensitively presented and embraced as being an integral part of life. The story also reveals that some people, like widower Paddy, get more of a share of it than others. It is in this respect, however, that Massey carries the theme a little too far into a different direction. In a scene at the start of the book, Paddy visits the enigmatic and beautiful artist Lucy Wright to discuss her recently diseased husband's funeral arrangement and the pair end up having sex upstairs during which Lucy has a heart attack and dies. Lucy's death may be intended as black comedy but the incident feels implausible and has limited comic effect. In light of how the story develops, the scene even becomes slightly disturbing. Not soon after Lucy's sudden death, her equally beautiful artist daughter Brigid enters the house. Paddy pretends the sex has not happened and claims he found her mother dead upstairs. Then, within an hour, the two are also irresistibly attracted to each other and they end up having a relationship. Seriously?

This absurd plot line appears included purely to increase the attraction of Paddy as the central tragi-comic hero of the story. Is



this Massey having a bit of fun as a writer in a genre that, traditionally, is fairly male-centered? Is he doing an exercise in writing an over-the-top male fantasy whereby the ordinary undertaker is some sort of James Bond who makes women swoon as soon as he enters a room? It makes sense in the rest of the book's context in which Paddy, like Bond, is able to outsmart the bad guys in multiple ways. And yet, with not one interesting and/or complex female character in the book, the novel also feels lacking and dated. The ending makes up a little bit for these implausible sections, so all in all still an entertaining read.

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A COMMENT continued from page 12

The facility has been owned by Trustpower (currently known as Manawa Energy) since that time.

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Coleridge was the first station in the world to use aerated draft tubes, invented on-site by Silston Cory-Wright to solve an issue with heavy thumping when under load. It was also the first to be built on glacial moraine, this caused significant issues with stability of the turbine hall.

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From my simple calculations it appears there is a generating capacity of 28,500 KW which I think equates to 38,300 hp (horse-power).

FOOT NOTE: When on that outing in this high country area a fellow Lion member hinted to me, should I write about this experience then make sure it is accurate! I have always sought to be accurate; I could say given the information I was directed toward that this article is accurate to the best of my ability, that's not to say that it would be possible for an occasional minor error. It can be possible when researching subjects to find different sources of detailed information a little at odds. Today this information is not an opinion but taken from some of the large amount of information easily available to any reader interested in the above subject.

Cheers Denis



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