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Autumn begins: The wonderful warm ripening season - long shadows, low sun in Cornflower blue skies. (At this mellow time of the year, the poet in me emerges!!) I am still cutting back plants that looked stunning through Summer, but are now just tired and straggly like most cottage plants - bush Lavatera, Mignonette, Lavender tops and Geraniums - they will all leaf up again to go through the Winter.

Seed collecting: There are so many ready now. Dianthus, Delphinium, annual Lavatera, Salvias, Hollyhock, Sweet Peas - plus many more. I plant a few now but save most to sow in early Spring.

It's the perfect planting time for Trees, Shrubs, Spring bulbs, Perennials and Annuals. As I have mentioned before, buying punnets of Annual and Perennial seedling now to pot on into individual pots and nurse over Winter, will give you a head start for early planting and flowering. Some will bud up and flower - others will grow strong roots through Winter and flower when the ground warms in Spring. Try this with Polyantha, Iceland Poppy, Lupin, Primula, Wallflower, Stock, Snapdragon - and if Sweet Peas are planted in late Autumn, they will pop up and sit through Winter to flower in August.

This month is said to be the best time to plant Conifers. There are such a lot of different types, I consider Conifers contribute to the bones of a garden. Tall narrow Conifers planted in groups give larger gardens a vertical push and formality. Labels need to be read carefully - they give the height and width for the first ten years. After that they do keep growing and should be removed if they start to look untidy - most ornamental and ground cover Conifers look wonderful for years and years. A website with a comprehensive selection is <http://www.conifers.co.nz> - a good contact for those who like to Bonsai.

It's difficult to think about Spring when Autumn has just begun, but if you want that beautiful Spring splendour in your garden after the chill of Winter, it is now that most Spring bulbs are on offer - all that beauty sleeping in bags waiting to be planted. Daffodils along a roadside fence line, grouped in a vacant paddock, under deciduous trees with Bluebells - best of all they can be forgotten about and happily multiply year after year. Tulips are planted last in the month of May.

Compost: This is an excellent time to start building a new compost heap and get it heating up before Winter. <http://freshorganicgardening.com/learn-to-build-a-compost-pile/>. The heating process stops during the coldest months, so get one started now when leaves are falling and lawns still need mowing. Hen manure becomes too hot for heaps during other months but ok to add now. If you have no time or space for making compost, ring Gregg, 0272293215 for a delivery of ready made from our local meat works, which is wonderful for feeding plants and suppressing weeds.

Lawns. Autumn is said to be the best time to sow a new lawn, because perennial weed growth is slowing and the ground still warm with dew adding moisture - grass seed will be up in no time. Water your new lawn early in the morning instead of during the day, between 6am and 10am. This will ensure that the moisture actually gets down into the soil and to grass roots before the sun's evaporation. Mature lawns may need aeration with a fork or a push along spikier, or if a lawn is choked with thatch, then hiring a detaching machine will solve that problem.

Vegetables: That last rain did not make a difference to dry gardens, so watering is important now for all new plantings. Keep planting in rotation - leaf veg where root veg has been and it is a good time to sow Root plants like Beetroot, Carrots and Parsnips - also Chives, Leek, Onions, Shallots, Spring Onions and Asparagus. When Potatoes are dug, they need to be kept in the dark or they will go green. When storing there are products which will inhibit sprouting, but many gardeners avoid chemicals near food so I will once again mention a natural alternative with you. Layer the stored potatoes with sprigs of Rosemary, Sage and Lavender. The essential oils

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Cheers, Linda

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Waitaki Girls' High School Gala



Waitaki Girls' High School is gearing up again for its biennial Gala to be held on 15th March in the school grounds between 4 – 7 pm.

With a huge range of food stalls on offer you are invited to come and enjoy your evening meal while listening to music and shopping for a wide range of items such as crafts, plants, produce, books and beauty balms. Try your luck at balloon darts or on the computerised shooting range, or on the interactive water slide.

As part of Waitaki Girls' commitment to being an enviro school it would be great if people could bring their own shopping bags and hopefully BYOC – (Bring your own cutlery).

There is also a 'scary car wash' operating. Wondering what a 'scary carwash' is? Well come along and find out!

With activities for young and old, raffles and a garage sale, the proceeds will go towards replacing the school vans and upgrading of technology in the hall. See you there!

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Missing Wheelchairs

A number of wheelchairs have gone missing from Oamaru Hospital recently, including a Bariatric wheelchair.

The Bariatric wheelchair is an extra wide wheelchair designed to transport people weighing over 120 kg. It was recently purchased and was the only one we had available. If you have one of the Oamaru Hospital wheelchairs or any other short term loan equipment please return ASAP as these are expensive to replace.

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Waitaki District Council approves Oamaru Harbour Masterplan Project

At a full council meeting on 19 February, Councillors voted on the next stages of the Oamaru Harbour Masterplan project, following the framework set down in an Establishment Report.

Councillors were asked to approve one of three delivery options, with varying levels of engagement and detailed design. The delivery option they agreed on has an estimated cost of \$150,000 and an expected delivery date of June 25. Mayor Gary Kircher believes this represents good value for money for the people of Oamaru and the wider Waitaki District. "While we have high levels of ambition for this masterplan, we didn't feel the need to completely reinvent the wheel; the option we have landed on strikes a good balance by ensuring we have a thorough and well-evidenced plan."

"This is another big step for Oamaru and marks a maturing of the work that has been underway at the Harbour for the past 15 years. It's an exciting time and we know the community will be pleased to see we are undertaking a very good process." The masterplan will be developed using the NZ Treasury Better Business Case framework which ensures a thorough process, and will be undertaken as one workstream taking into account a number of components including:

1. Land use and spatial plan
2. Transport, connectivity and accessibility
3. Heritage and environment

The Masterplan will deliver a spatial plan, indicating what should go where and how each element should interact with the others. This will deliver an easy to understand plan that will allow community buy in.

It will act as a guiding document for future changes and development – including a set of principles that help filter ideas and proposals to ensure Oamaru continues to have one of the best little harbours in the country.

Mayor Kircher said, "The team working on the masterplan have done a great job thus far. We have a very engaged community who care deeply for the Harbour, which is great to see. I know that I, along with many in the community will be looking forward to seeing how the Masterplan comes together over the coming months."

The lead manager for the project, Deputy Chief Executive Neil Jorgensen, outlined the next steps in the process. "We will hold a number of workshops in early April involving the project team and the Harbour Area Committee which has been expanded to include a member each from the North Otago Yacht and Powerboat Club and Oamaru Whitestone Civic Trust along with two other stakeholder representatives, yet to be selected."

"Once the draft Masterplan is ready, the public will be asked to provide feedback on it during consultation in late May/early June."

The establishment report was prepared for Council by infrastructure consultancy firm Rationale Ltd.

following the successful Oamaru HarbOUR engagement process held at the end of last year. It details the Masterplan process, governance structure, scope, components, estimated costs and timeline for completion.

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Community Diary

Wednesday 6th

Excelsior Petanque Club day, 1pm.
All Welcome Ph. 437 2557 or 437 1590.

Afternoon Social Housie 1.30pm Darts Hall,
Ribble Street. All welcome. Relaxed session
using counters. Grey Power Ph 434 6249.

Thursday 7th

Friends & Neighbours welcome you at
Orwell St Chapel, 10-11.30am, interesting &
varied program. Ph. Valerie 437 0520.

The Happy Scoundrels inc. Over 55s Ten Pin
Bowling Club, 1pm @ the Galleon Complex. Ph
Garry 434 1463 or Mike 437 0224.

**North Otago Asthma Society Respiratory
Exercise Class**, 10am, St John Hall, Exe
Street. Enquires Ph 437 2673.

Mainly Music - pre-schoolers/parents. 10am
Oamaru Baptist, 14 Sandringham St. \$3.
mainlymusic.org.nz

Friday 8th

AA Meeting, Orwell St Chapel, 12 noon,
Ph. 432 4191 or 437 2928.

Lower Waitaki Golf Club - Family Fun Night at
6pm Coaching available from 5pm. If you haven't
played golf, there is not better time than now.
Bring your kids & your mates. See you there.

Meadowbank Bowling Club, 14 Conway,
friendly bowls, 2pm start. Bowlers & non
bowlers welcome. ph. Mary 434 7196.

Newcomers Coffee Group 10.30am at the
Opera House. Ph. Christine 027 242 8643.

Waitaki Travel Club; Monthly meeting, The
Manor Estate at 10am.

Waitaki Travel Club monthly meeting, at the
Manor Estate, at 10am. "Guest speaker Lindsay
Walker, serving a need in Uganda".

Saturday 9th

Cycling Waitaki; community rides from
Enfield, 9:30, all riders, all abilities,
welcome. Coffee to follow ph 021 121 4627
or cycling waitaki.org.nz

Market: 9am-12, Garrison Band Hall,
Severn St - Tools, Jewellery, Handmade
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The South Island Rose Ranfurly competition
will be held at the Loan and Merc, Oamaru, and
will be open to the public on Sat, 9th March from
1pm - 4pm and Sun 10th March. From 9.30am -
2pm Everybody most welcome to attend.

Sunday 10th

AA Meeting, Orwell St Chapel, 6pm,
Ph. 437 2928 or 437 2337.

Excelsior Petanque Club day, 1pm.
All Welcome Ph. 437 2557 or 437 1590.

Reformed Church Oamaru, 4 Eden St,
morning service at 10:30am, followed by
Sunday School; evening service at 5pm.

St Paul's Church, Coquet St, service and
kids club. All welcome, 10am.

Tuesday 12th

AA Meeting, Orwell St Chapel, 7.30pm,
Ph. 432 4191 or 437 2337.

Alzheimers Society carers meeting, Iona
Home, 549 Thames Hwy 1:30-3pm. All
welcome. Please note change of venue.

Age Concern Gentle Exercise Programme,
Orwell St Church Hall, Tuesdays 1.30 - 3pm,
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Free JP Clinic for certifying documents,
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U3A Waitaki, talks, discussions for
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Lounge. Ph. Linda 434 6613.

AGM

**Oamaru Victorian Heritage Celebrations
Committee AGM**, Tuesday, March 19th,
Scottish Hall, 10 Tyne St, Oamaru. Contact
Diane Lee-OVHC Chairperson, 03 434 6149
OVHCommittee@gmail.com

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The Smiley Team

Glenavy Women's Institute – February Meeting

17 Members of Glenavy Institute and husbands/partners met to pool transport to visit Oceania Dairy Factory for their February meeting. We were greeted by Jamie O'Conner and Tracy who gave out Hi Vis vests for everyone. All have to wear them and they are colour coded – orange for visitors and casual workers, and yellow for permanent workers. This means that in an emergency you know who is in charge. Shoes were also inspected as they needed to be closed in for health and safety reasons.

The factory employs 280 people – 40% from Oamaru, 30% from Timaru and 22% from the local Waimate area. There are a lot of Chinese people in the Administration department and they work there for about 3 years before having to move on. They are then replaced with another new group from China.

The factory mainly produces milk powder with baby milk powder being the main product, UHT milk in cartons and AMF which is a by-product. Most of the products manufactured at the factory go in containers to Oamaru and then on the train to the Dunedin port. 98% of the products goes to China, except for AMF (butter fat) which can go anywhere in the world.

The winter months see the factory mainly closed for maintenance, but they now keep a line open for winter milk which will make the UHT milk.

The factory itself owns no trucks – they are all contracted out to Hilton Haulage.

The factory is divided into blocks – administration, lab, maintenance and a steering block. The steering block is where the computers are that keep a check on everything in and outside the factory – from water bores, pivots in paddocks, heating boilers, milk arriving, packing and storage sheds, security cameras etc

We could see the baby milk powder going into the cans and packed and stored on the pallets. Robots were used for packing tins in boxes and boxes stacked on pallets.

The factory is audited every fortnight for the hygiene of the place. The place was absolutely spotless and you could have eaten your dinner off the floor!!!! No doors are left open and people who work in an area can only access that area. Both hygiene and security was very high tech. Work at the factory is 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. The roster is 4 days on, 4 days off. When the factory was first commissioned they employed 70 staff and there was a feeling of family. Now though, with working only in your particular area there are many people you don't get to see or to know.

Following the tour it was back to Glenavy where a shared lunch was set out with the usual great array. Not so much of where to start But where do I stop !! It was then on with the meeting with The Aspirations being repeated.

The motto was “Everybody should have a belief and I believe I should be laying on a beach with a cocktail in my hand”. The Roll Call was oldest cook book and sadly a lot of people had forgotten to bring theirs. Heather Holamby's book was a 1956 one and Hermien van't Klooster had one dated 1957.

Birthday sprays went to Bev Inch, Vicki Weller and Frances MacPherson.

All who had been up to the factory were impressed with what they'd seen and would recommend it to others. There had been a lot of walking and Vicki's fitbit told her she'd taken over 3000 steps so as well as being informed, seemed to be good exercise too.

Hash brown and spaghetti / baked bean bake



Hash browns, Spaghetti or baked beans, Eggs, Bacon - finely chopped, Onion - finely sliced Edam cheese - grated, Chives, Parsley - finely chopped

Place hash browns in the base of a deep baking dish, layer spaghetti or baked beans on top and even out. Beat eggs together and pour over the top of the spaghetti or baked beans. Sprinkle bacon and onions on top of the eggs followed by the chives and parsley, sprinkle over the cheese. Bake at 200 degrees celsius until egg is set and cheese has melted and is golden, approx 45mins. Serve with coleslaw or lettuce salad.

Helen Mikkelsen