

Dunstan News

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Better Road Safety Measures Wanted for Clyde School Pupils

The safety of Clyde Primary School pupils going to school on Earnsclough Rd is prompting principal Doug White to call on local residents to be more proactive about what the Otago Central District Council could do to improve the road's safety.

"It is far from satisfactory at the moment for children and their families who choose to cycle or walk to school on the road from Picnic Creek to the Clyde Bridge," he says. "Community support for safety enhancements will help get the work prioritised."

Since Conroys Rd was tarsealed several years ago, Earnsclough Rd has become much busier. The increase in traffic appears to be mainly motorists using it as through road from Dunedin to places further west such as Queenstown, Cromwell and Wanaka.

Maxine Williams, who lives close to Picnic Creek, says the road is now dangerous. "Signs are needed telling people to slow down, particularly near the bridge," she says. "People are trying to race onto the bridge and it is dangerous."

A group of residents at Picnic Creek is keen to support improvements such as a reduced speed limit at the Clyde end of Earnsclough Rd and is working with the school to take suggestions to the Central Otago District Council.

Mr White says an engineer parent has suggested some safety improvements near the bridge which he has passed on to the district council. He also intends asking the Vincent Community Board to bring the issue to the council.

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Major Step Forward for Clyde Museum

The first step has been taken to create a new Clyde museum centred on the Briar Herb Factory Museum site in Fraser St with Vincent Community Board members deciding to put \$94,000 in the 2019/20 Annual Plan to fund the next stage of the development plans.

The redevelopment of the Briar Herb Museum site was the overwhelming choice of residents who voted on one of six options outlined in a feasibility study by Origin Consultants and presented to the public last year.

As well as building a new all-purpose museum, the option also includes the demolition of three 1980s-built mudbrick buildings, the rebuilding of the railway goods shed and the strengthening of two further buildings. The Blyth St museum in the former Vincent County Council building will close and the police lock-up at the rear of the building will be relocated.

The decision delighted Clare Higginson, Clyde Historical Museums committee chair. "It's an important museum in an important historic town and we are very happy with the board's decision".

Russell Garbutt says the false "heritage" mudbrick buildings are long past their use-by date. Property and facilities officer Christina Martin says the large project will take time. The estimate cost of \$4.7 million is also going to need significant seed funding.

The money voted by the board for inclusion in the annual plan will come from the Earnsclough-Manuherikia Reserves and Development Account. The annual plan has yet to be ratified by the district council and, all going well, the money will be available in July.

Talking It over ... with Russell Garbutt : Vincent Community Board member

There are a couple of big issues in our community I'd like to talk about. First is the decision by the board to support the next stage of the development of the Clyde Museum. It was apt that we discussed this in the old County Council Chambers in Clyde.

There is no doubt in my mind that the relocation to the Briar Herb site is the right one. [see more in article on museum.] Second is the on-going issue with Aurora Energy. I took the unusual step of raising this as a notice of motion at the board's meeting in response to the pole that fell over outside the Clyde school just before Christmas and a fallen line which caused a fire at Jollendale



Vincent Community Board meets in old Council Chambers

Park (Alexandra). I've had wonderful community support and hopefully district councillors will give Aurora a clear message by their support of my motion that its neglect of our electricity network for over a decade is not acceptable. Even less acceptable are Aurora's plans to make up for this neglect by upping our line charges. As usual, if you want to get hold of me, ring 449 2254 or 020 4039 0424.



Young Actress Wins Coveted Award

Aspiring actress Hannah Anderson of Earnsclough is already making waves on the stage.

The 18 year-old was recently honoured at Otago Southland Theatre Awards (Ostas) as the best leading female in a play. Hannah, then aged 17 had a demanding role in the Clyde Theatre Group production, *Daughters of Heaven*.

"I felt proud of not only myself but also for the Clyde Theatre Group for putting on such a show," she says. "The hard work we all put into it was recognised."

Daughters of Heaven brought double honours for the Clyde group because Nick Meissel received the Ostas award for the best supporting male in a play.

Hannah, a former Dunstan High School student, came out of her shell after taking part in school plays and musicals with the Alexandra Musical Society.

"It was something I really enjoyed getting involved in as much as I could," she says.

Hannah is about to embark on her next step towards an acting career, being accepted by Unitech in Auckland for three years study for a Bachelor of Performing Arts for Stage and Screen. We wish her the very best.



Hannah Anderson with her award for best leading female in a play.

Our sincere thanks to those people in Clyde who have volunteered to help distribute the *Dunstan News* on those occasions when our regular people cannot.

Clyde Identity – Billie Tohill

Myra Tohill, better known as Billie, is one of Clyde's oldest and most respected residents. Born in 1936 in Cromwell to Myra and Ted Stevens, she was an only child, but made up for it after she married Joe Tohill in 1954 and had seven children.

Billie received the name because she was referred to as "Young Bill" before her birth. She says she had nothing but happiness growing up in Clyde.

"I was privileged compared to the other kids here – not that we had a lot of money — but I had a pony and Mona Lopdell in Clyde taught me to read music, although I could play by ear."

Music and horses have always been a major part of her life although she has had to give up riding, much to her disgust. She has put years into the Central Otago Pony Club training young riders and was made a life member.

Billie has also had a long association with musical events. She recalls the revivals by the Alexandra Musical Society in the 1950s and 1970s of locally-written and produced musicals such as *No Roads to Arrow* and *Hellbent for Dunstan* in which she was heavily involved. She is still active in the society's children's theatre and is a life member of the Clyde Theatre Group. She keeps in practice by playing the organ at St John the Baptist Church in Alexandra — and has done so for 58 years.

One of her grandfathers, Malcolm Macdonald, was a miner in the Nevis; the other was Had (Harold) Stevens who bought *The Dunstan Times* in 1900. Her father worked as a lino-type operator but later took over running *The Alexandra Herald* which the Stevens family also bought.

Billie went to Clyde School and remembers Bill George as the head teacher and also remembers the appalling living conditions many children in and around Clyde suffered. "They had a tough time. They came to school in bare feet and hand-me-down clothes. There was a lot of poverty in Clyde.

"Fraser Domain used to be a marvelous place for picnics or swimming. There used to be a deep pond, but floods filled it with stones and took away the swing bridge. Picnics were held at Fraser Dam and the whole town, about 300 people, walked there. Earnsclough road used to be so barren, now it's so lush and green."

In addition to horses and music, she pursued her love of learning, receiving diplomas in theology and catechetics (religious teaching) and a certificate for pastoral ministry. Age and two hip replacements have not stopped Billie – she has a "lot of things on my mind and it never stops buzzing".



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Funding for Historic Clyde Group

The local business group, Historic Clyde Inc, has received \$4800 from the Vincent Community Board's promotional funds. The money will be spent on upgrading and extending Clyde's free wifi service, extending and replacing the historic precinct's lighting and on leaflets, posters and tickets for the annual Cuisine in Clyde.

The group's bid for funds to print its Historic Clyde Promotional booklet and for flags, banners and uniforms for the Lord Clyde Parade was declined by the board.

Group Aims for a Predator Free Clyde

Clyde has been selected as Central Otago's first area for a community backyard trapping group with the aim of ridding properties of introduced species such as stoats, possums, rats, weasels and ferrets.

MAD4CO (Making A Difference for Central Otago) is using a \$3000 grant to start the group and is inviting Clyde residents to join a workshop where they will learn why trapping is important as well as making a trapping box to take home.

It follows a successful workshop during Thyme Festival Week last year. Organiser, Abi Hawkins of REAP's sustainability unit, says there are tight regulations around this kind of work.

"We have to make sure trapping is done in a humane way that is safe for pets, children and other non-target species."

The backyard trapping movement, which is now popping up all over the country, was sparked by the Predator Free 2050 campaign which aims to eradicate introduced predators throughout New Zealand.

"The trapping groups reflect people's concern and support for their native species," Abi says. "These introduced predators have a huge impact annually on our native birds, lizards and insects."

Clyde was selected as a base because Enviroschools pupils at Clyde Primary School have already been tracking lizards and their predators in the Clyde River Track native planting area.

The school has received funding for some traps and pupils will be making more as part of their EOTC (Education Outside The Classroom) week.

As Abi says, "Wouldn't it be great to see tui, korimako, piwakawaka and kereru as regular visitors to our Clyde gardens"?



Sophia Manning (6) helps her dad Nathan build a predator trap at a workshop held during Thyme Festival last year.

Build Your Own Predator Trap. Workshop on March 3 2-3.30pm Clyde Primary School

Stiff Out of Luck If You Want To Know More

Rehearsals for Clyde Theatre Group's new production are well under way but the company is not saying too much about the play:

"We don't want to give anything away," one member whispered to the *Dunstan News*. What the group will say is that the play is called *STiFF*, a comedy with plenty of laughs and will run for a week from March 29 at Clyde Community Hall. Sounds like a play not to be missed.



"STiFF" rehearsal

Eco-Nursery Working Bees

Thursday morning working bees at the Clyde Railhead Community nursery have resumed after a summer break.

If you are keen on gardening and want to help improve our environment, the Haehaeata Trust would welcome you to come along from 9am to noon on Thursdays. (This includes time for a cup of tea and a chat from about 11.30am).

There is always a varied list of jobs to do and something to suit every one of all ages, abilities and interests.

