



Welcome to
Wairau Valley



A GUIDE TO THE VALLEY

Welcome

Hi there - the Wairau Valley community would like to welcome you with this small booklet which provides information for those new to the valley.

We hope you will become actively involved in our community and that we will see you at one of our activities and/or events in the near future.



We thank Wairau Valley News for their support in the printing of this booklet and the RD1 postie, for making the deliveries.

A brief bit of history

Our Wairau Valley community comprises the geographical valley area to the south of the Wairau River from the Waihopai Bridge to the Wash Bridge.

It is impossible to do justice to the history of tangata whenua in this short booklet however, it is known that early Māori used a network of trails for trade and travel throughout the region including through our valley. Bird traps have been found on the hills of Lansdowne and greenstone artefacts on the riverbed flats. Ancient pits and trenches have also been discovered on hills in the valley.



Several residents have a particular interest in the valley's history and it is hoped that more historical information will be published in future newsletters. Te Titiri o Waitangi deeds of settlement for local iwi also include agreed histories of each iwi which make fascinating reading and other excellent sources of information exist at: theprow.org.nz. and teara.govt.nz

There are four known iwi connected to the Wairau Valley: Rangitāne, Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, Ngāti Toa, Ngāti Rārua.

European settlement of the Upper Wairau began in the mid 1800's and, by 1850, settlers in the valley included Edward Sweet who built one of the first houses in the valley at Hillersden, Charles Watts at Lansdowne, Richard Coward at Erina, David Monro at Bankhouse, and George Duppa at Birch Hill.

By 1906 Wairau Valley was the centre of an extensive sheep farming and flax milling district with a church, school, hotel, post and telegraph office. Hillersden Flaxmill, the leading flaxmill in the province, employed 25 people.

As New Zealand's population grew, the demand for land increased and in March 1914 a ballot was held for 43 Hillersden sections which attracted 2588 applicants. Descendants of some of these families still live and farm in the area today.

Settlers worked hard and made their own fun. There were races in the valley from the 1880s, cricket matches played at various locations and the Scottish community extended a 'Caledonian welcome' to a Scottish concert at Hillersden in 1918.

Stella Maxted arrived in the valley in 1942 when her father bought the Wairau Valley Hotel, she recalled:

"When we first went to the valley, there was no electricity and most people didn't have cars. People didn't go into town much - church and school were the community hubs. There were dances every Saturday night which everybody attended. There were farewells and welcome homes for soldiers, kitchen teas for new brides, tennis, cricket, table tennis and wonderful card evenings at Hillersden."

As of June 2023, the Upper Wairau Valley area had an estimated population of 2,200 people, with approximately 220 living in the township.





‘The Valley People’ Wairau Valley Residents’ Association Inc.

Wairau Valley Residents’ Association provides a forum for members of the Wairau Valley community to voice their concerns and/or praises, and advocates on their behalf with other interested parties and authorities. Membership also offers an opportunity for locals to build a network of contacts in the community. A relatively small number of residents belong to the association, which limits how much support the association can currently offer in the community.

Membership is open to all residents for an annual cost of \$5.00. Please consider joining, attending meetings and adding to the collective voice of our community.

Association meetings are open to all member residents (you can join at the meeting) and take place every quarter at either the Wairau Valley Peace Memorial Hall or the Golf Clubrooms and as advertised in the newsletter and on Facebook at WV Chat.

Contact email: thevalleypeople.wv@gmail.com



The Wantwood Room

The historic Wantwood Community Room was built in 1919. It was originally a school situated about a ten-minute drive west of the township in the area known as Wantwood.

In 1949, after falling rolls, the building was moved to the site of the new Wairau Valley School in Morse Street. It was used as a classroom for many years, then became the school library.

Its use gradually declined as new school buildings were built and, in a controversial move, an appointed commissioner at the school decided to gift the room to a stamp group in Blenheim.

This decision was fiercely opposed by a group of local residents who formed the Wantwood Community Room Preservation Society and made a successful application for the room to remain in the valley where it belonged.

In 2015, the Wantwood Room was moved to the site of the old tennis court alongside the school and now belongs to the community.

It is the historic hub of Wairau Valley and has a digital collection of over 800 historic photos. The aim of the society is to preserve the building and use it for community benefit as a place to gather and socialise, share information and build relationships. It is ideal for art and craft groups, book clubs, small courses, etc.

Contact details: wantwoodroomtrust@gmail.com

Community Stall:

Our community stall sits alongside the Wantwood Room. It works on the philosophy of 'take what you need, share what you can'. Please contribute vegetables, fruit, other non-perishable food items and/or donations (in the iron maiden) when able. Residents will often post on the Wairau Valley Community Stall or WV Chat Facebook page when they have left perishable food items at the stall.



Church of the Good Shepherd

The site of the Church of the Good Shepherd is the oldest Anglican site in Marlborough. The first wooden church was opened on August 4th 1861 and served the community well for ninety-seven years before being demolished in 1958 due to borer and rot. A new church was built and opened on October 4th of the same year. The church holds a Christmas service each year and is available for weddings and funerals.

The church is home to a cemetery that has been in use for over 160 years and contains many graves of early settlers, with the first known burial being that of Selina Timms in 1863. The cemetery is currently available for burials.

The only public access toilet in the valley is on the west side of the church and is open 24 hours.

A very small Catholic cemetery, which was closed for burials in 1944, is situated in a paddock a few hundred metres west of the Anglican Church.

Contact Renwick Anglican Church at office@wairauanglican.org.nz



WAIRAU VALLEY NEWS

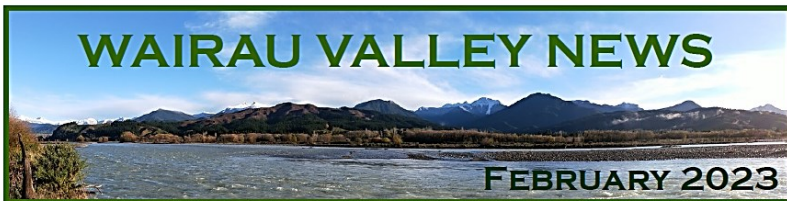
Wairau Valley Newsletter (Proud sponsor of this booklet)

A small group of committed volunteers produce our monthly newsletter, which is printed around the first Friday of the month and is delivered to residents the following week.

The newsletter profiles recent and upcoming activities and events in the valley and includes some advertising with a business directory and a list of local community groups and services.

Look out for your newsletter in your mailbox each month.

Email: wairau.valleynews@gmail.com



UPCOMING EVENTS
PLAYGROUP WEDNESDAYS 9.30am - 11.30am WAIRAU VALLEY PEACE MEMORIAL HALL 17 MORSE STREET, WAIRAU VALLEY
TAI CHI & QIGONG THURSDAYS 11AM WAIRAU VALLEY PEACE MEMORIAL HALL 17 MORSE STREET, WAIRAU VALLEY
TEA & TALK 2ND SUNDAY OF MONTH, 3PM WANTWOOD ROOM MORSE STREET, WAIRAU VALLEY
STREAM HEALTH MONITORING WORKSHOP 9.30AM-12NOON 12 FEBRUARY 2023 <i>See inside for more details</i>
SUMMERTIME ... <i>Come have some fun!</i> THURSDAY'S 5.30PM WAIRAU VALLEY GOLF CLUB MORSE STREET, WAIRAU VALLEY



Congratulations!

RICHARD PETERSON

Chief Fire Officer of the
Wairau Valley Volunteer Fire Brigade
on attaining a service record of 25 years
in the brigade and earning the

25-year Gold Star medal

A celebration will be held in February for this
amazing achievement.





Wairau Valley School

Wairau Valley School is our small, rural, full primary school, set in a central position in the township at 30 Morse Street.

The school accepts children from years 0-8 and has a roll of approximately 40.

The school welcomes all enrolments. Feel free to pop in for introductions to staff and to be shown around the amazing school grounds.

If you would like enrolment forms, either drop in to pick them up or email the school. A school bus service is available to transport pupils who live outside the township in the Wairau Valley area to the school.

For further information email the school at: office@wairauvalley.school.nz





Wairau Valley Peace Memorial Hall

The community hall complex can be found at 17 Morse Street.

The main hall was built as a memorial to those men from the valley who had served during WW1 and to commemorate Peace Day. It is one of only a few NZ halls designated as peace memorials.

The community raised £500 to build the hall which was completed in time to be opened on the anniversary of Peace Celebrations in 1919.

Not to be outdone, settlers at Hillersden also built a hall and installed a Roll of Honour to remember those men from that district who served overseas. This hall was moved and joined to the Wairau Valley Hall on December 19th 1995.

The hall complex comprises the Hillersden Hall with an attached basic kitchen area and the Peace Memorial Hall with a raised stage, an adjacent supper room, and a recently refurbished kitchen.

An extensive outside area houses a children's playground designed for children up to 8 years old and installed by MDC in 2024. Please supervise children at play in the area.

The hall complex is owned by the Marlborough District Council (MDC) and administered by the Wairau Valley Hall Community Trust.

Contact wvcommunityhall@gmail.com for more information.

Wairau Valley Playgroup

The valley has an active playgroup for pre-schoolers, which meets at the Hillersden Hall (part of the Wairau Valley Peace Memorial Hall) every Friday from 9:00 am to 11:00 am.

Playgroup provides a great opportunity for parents and caregivers to build relationships in the community and for their children to socialise with others. A variety of play and learning activities are offered. Please bring a drink and snack for your child and maybe a change of clothes for if things get messy!

Contact: Wairau Valley Playgroup Facebook page



Medical Care

Newcomers to the valley should enrol at a medical centre as early as possible.

A list of Blenheim medical centres can be found on the website marlboroughpho.org.nz.

Our nearest medical centre is Renwick Medical Centre which is situated in Renwick and runs a half-day outreach clinic in the Wairau Valley School library room most Tuesdays from 9:00 am.

Call 03 572 8838 to enrol or for an appointment.



Urgent Medical Care

Medical emergency:

In a medical emergency call 111.

Healthline:

Healthline provides a 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week phone service that provides free health advice and information from professional healthcare providers. It is staffed by an experienced, trained team including nurses, paramedics, health advisors and doctors.

Call Healthline:

- for advice about your situation and next steps
- if you do not have a GP or cannot get to one
- if you need advice about medicine
- if you are worried or unsure about your health or someone else's health.

You can call Healthline any day or time for free on 0800 611 116.

Urgent Care Centre:

Urgent after-hours medical care is located on Wairau Hospital Grounds in Blenheim. Entry is off Hospital Road.

The centre offers G.P. and nurse consultations, and accident and injury treatment, and is open from 8:00 am to 8.00 pm 7 days a week including public holidays and can be contacted on 03 520 6377.



Urgent Dentist:

The urgent dentist can be contacted at weekends on 03 520 9999.



Wairau Valley Volunteer Fire Brigade

The Fire Station is situated at 2620 SH63. It is a volunteer station, which means all members of our brigade dedicate their own time to serve their community.

The brigade responds to a variety of emergencies in our local area including:

- Fires
- Medical emergencies
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Search and rescue
- Civil Defence
- Natural disaster response

The brigade offers fire safety advice.

If you are interested in finding out more or enquiring about volunteering for the brigade, the brigade meets on a Monday at 7pm at the Fire Station.

Risks in the Wairau Valley

Wairau Valley is exposed to a number of potential risks.

Fire: As in many rural areas of NZ fire risk can be high to extreme at certain times of the year. Always visit the 'Check It's Alright' website to check if it's safe to light a fire outdoors and to find out if you need a fire permit. This website also provides useful fire prevention and risk reduction advice.

Natural Risks: Parts of our township are at higher risk of flooding. The township experienced a surface flooding event in June 2025. Marlborough District Council website has plenty of information to support you in assessing flooding risk for your home.

Earthquake: The Wairau Fault runs through the valley along the terrace just to the south side of SH63. This fault is a continuation of the Alpine fault and could rupture in a future earthquake.

Emergency Readiness: The valley could easily be isolated from outside help for several days so it is important to have a household plan for you, your family and your animals. Visit www.getready.govt.nz for excellent resources on preparing these plans and ensuring you have done so BEFORE an emergency happens.



Emergency Response

Living in a small country community can pose some challenges in an emergency. A major earthquake, snowfall or flooding event may cut off access to the Wairau Valley for a period of time. Be aware that power may be cut off and mobile phone reception may be limited.

Visit [getready.govt.nz](https://www.getready.govt.nz) to find out how to prepare for any event. WVChat Facebook page is also an excellent resource for seeking assistance, provided there is internet connectivity.

The community is incredibly friendly, helpful and supportive, but residents need to develop their own network of close neighbours and have a plan for how they will check on each other.





Wairau Valley Domain

The Wairau Valley Domain is a large recreation reserve situated at the end of Morse Street and managed by Wairau Valley Sports Association. It is the home of the Wairau Valley Golf Club and a nine-hole golf course. The domain is well used by recreational walkers who should remain vigilant for flying golf balls!

NB: this is a dog on-leash walking area - please ensure all dogs on the reserve are on lead and pick up after your dog. Golfers, children and other walkers do not want to be exposed to your dog's deposits.

For more information contact Wairau Valley Sports Association or Wairau Valley Golf Club.

Transfer Station

There is no household rubbish collection service in the valley. Household rubbish and recycling can be taken to the transfer station at the end of Church Lane on Wednesday or Saturday from midday to 4.00 pm.

Other Services

Refer to Wairau Valley Newsletter or the website wairau-valley.co.nz for service/business contact details.

Justice of the Peace:

Our local Justice of the Peace is Richard Peterson – **telephone 03 572 2547**.

Postie:

Mail is delivered on weekdays by our rural postie, **mobile 021 034 4020**.

Other Things to do

Food and Drink:

Wairau Valley Takeaways operates from 3:00 pm to 8:30 pm (7:30 pm in winter) Thursday to Sunday, from the bright yellow cart in the car park of the Good Shepherd Church on the corner of SH63 and Church Lane. Check out the menu board for the weekly specials. **Mobile 021 120 2802**

Wairau Valley Tavern is open Fridays and Saturdays 10 am – 9 pm for lunch and dinner, dine in or takeaway, also homemade baking, pies and a wide selection of liquid refreshments. They are available for catering and functions outside the regular hours, get in touch with them to discuss your needs. **Mobile 027 788 5378**

Indoor Carpet Bowls:

Although there is no current indoor carpet bowls group running, all equipment to play carpet bowls is available at the hall. If you are interested in this email wvcommunityhall@gmail.com.

Table Tennis:

A small informal group has met intermittently in the past to play table tennis. Tables and equipment are available at the hall. If you are interested email wvcommunityhall@gmail.com.

Book exchange:

A number of book exchanges are dotted around the township in Church Lane, Morse Street and along SH63. Feel free to swap books.



Events

Community events occur at various times depending on the availability of volunteers to organise and run them. These have included:

- Wairau Valley Market (the first Sunday of every month 10am - 1pm)
- Wairau Valley Village Fair as advertised.
- Christmas Letterbox Decoration competition
- Children's Waterslide event run by Wairau Valley Volunteer Fire Brigade
- ANZAC Day commemoration
- Wairau Valley Art Exhibition

Keep an eye on the newsletter and/or WV Facebook pages to find out about any upcoming events.

Outdoor Recreation

Loop Walk:

The @ 5kms loop walk follows the left side of Church Lane down to the river, along the river and up Keith Coleman Lane through the golf course, up Morse Street and along SH63. The section along the Wairau River was washed out by flooding shortly after the walk was opened, so you may need to be prepared to get wet feet when crossing side streams.

Golf:

Play a round of golf down at the Golf Club. Women's golf on a Tuesday and men's golf on a Wednesday. Club days are every Saturday. It is a lovely golf course with a few obstacles to test your play.

Lake Argyle (Argyle Pond):

Take a drive up to Lake Argyle approximately 30kms west of the valley. This is an artificial lake approximately one kilometre long constructed as a storage reservoir for the Branch hydro-electric scheme. The lake is kept well stocked with trout and a concrete boat ramp is provided at the south east end.

Alongside the boat launching ramp is a picnic area and campsite for self-contained vehicles. There is also a toilet block with flush toilets and electric lighting.

Swimming:

Holes suitable for swimming may form from time to time in the Wairau River which can be accessed from the end of Church Lane. Residents may also be able to access the unheated school pool during summer months - contact the school for more information.

Playground:

Visit the playground for 0-8 year olds at the hall but make sure your children are fully supervised whilst there.

Skiing:

Rainbow ski area is approximately 80kms west of the township. This is a family ski area with terrain and trails suitable for beginner to advanced skiers.

Nelson Lakes National Park:

St Arnaud is approximately 65 kms west of the township and is the gateway to Nelson Lakes National Park. Short walks range in length from 15 minutes to 1.5 hours, day walks from 5-10 hours.

N.B. Dogs are not permitted in the National Park (including the lake side) except for the Teetotal Flat area.

Mountain Biking:

The nearest mountain biking areas are Wither Hills in Blenheim or the MTB Trust Trails at Teetotal just west of St Arnaud (well signposted from the main road).

Dog Exercising:

Dogs are allowed off-leash at the river.

There is also a small dog park at Renwick which has a few agility obstacles. Head out of Renwick towards Havelock - the dog park is on the east side of the road on the corner of Foxes Island Road.

Further afield you can walk your dog off-leash on the tracks at the Teetotal area just west of St Arnaud.

They are allowed on-leash on the loop track and the domain (i.e. golf course).

They are also allowed on-leash at Grovetown Lagoon (@ 5kms north of Blenheim). If you walk your dog at the lagoon, please keep it on a shorter lead and under control at all times to protect the birdlife.

Other places to visit:

Other places to visit for a day include: Havelock, Picton, Pelorus and Nelson.

Local Business

(The following businesses support Wairau Valley News)

Church Lane Art

For prints and cards of original pencil art. **Telephone 03 572 2547**

Bev's Firewood

Firewood supplier. All wood is subject to availability. **Mobile 027 567 3874**

BT Mechanical

For WOF, tyres, servicing and repairs: 48 Church Lane. **Mobile 022 592 7795**

Callanan Contracting

Digger Truck hire, vineyard development, tree stump removal. **Mobile 022 693 8629**

Cowan Building Limited

Specialising in renovations & new builds. **Mobile 021 100 3138**

CS Integration Ltd

Electrician and water engineering services. **Mobile 021 961 439**

Express Homekill

60 Havelock St, Renwick. **Telephone 03 572 8949 or mobile 021 894 411**

EZI Mow

General property maintenance. **Mobile 021 894 976**

JB Towing & Salvage

Breakdowns, vehicle for repairs, relocation vehicles. **Mobile 027 567 38744**

Jeymar Soap & Body

Premium natural bath, skincare and haircare products. **Telephone 03 572 2547**

Living Extras

Installation of security and insect screens. **Telephone 03 572 2928**

Renwick Medical

Clinic at WV School most Wednesdays from 9.00am. **Telephone 03 572 8838**

TML Hire

Equipment hire for earthworks, construction and landscaping. **Freephone 0800 856 000**

TWIGS

Tech-Web-IT-Graphics-Social. **Mobile 027 436 4500**

Facebook pages

The following Facebook pages will keep you updated with what is going on in the valley:

- WV Chat
- Wairau Valley Peace Memorial Hall
- Wantwood Community Room

These Facebook pages may also be of interest to you:

- Wairau Valley Playgroup
- Wairau Valley Golf Club
- Wairau Valley Seniors
- Wairau Valley School, Marlborough
- Wairau Valley, Marlborough, NZ
- Wairau Valley Community Stall
- Wairau Valley Tavern
- WV Gardening, Backyards and Blocks

Websites

The following websites will also keep you updated:

- wairau-valley.co.nz
- marlborough.govt.nz
- teara.govt.nz
- wairauvalley.school.nz
- marlboroughapp.co.nz
- theprow.org.nz

