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To the nines . . . Dressed up for their trip on the Taieri Gorge excursion to Middlemarch for the Festival of Lights are Lesley Rowe and Bruce Conaghan.

PHOTO: LINDA ROBERTSON

Bright lights, big party

STAFF REPORTER

FOR Bruce Conaghan, it was a good excuse to dust off his tuxedo and support the community.

For others, the chance to have a midwinter Christmas with a difference prompted them to join about 90 others to take part in the Middlemarch Sub Zero Festival of Lights on Saturday night.

"Just because we are this far south doesn't mean we shouldn't set a standard," Mr Conaghan joked about his paua shell bowtie and matching handkerchief.

He and his wife, Lesley Rowe, had been looking forward to the event. The township lit up and the silly season came early, with a feast and entertainment.

Organiser Lorna Williams said the night was "very successful", with those who attended "blown away" by the experience and promising to bring carriages full of people to next year's event.

Mrs Williams confirmed the event would be held next year.

This year's event raised about \$5500 towards the refurbishment of the Middlemarch community centre.