

Mid-winter magic

By GRANT BRYANT

DREAMING of a white Christmas?

Well, you might be in luck when the Middlemarch Festive Lights Group sparks up their mid-winter Christmas Lights events later this month.

The idea that would help brighten up the dark winter days and cheer up the residents of the occasionally snowed-in town was the brainchild of a committee formed to raise money for the refurbishment of the interior of the Middlemarch Community Centre.

"We're a small community that's got a lot of time for community events. When ideas for the fundraisers were being formulated we realised that the trend for lighting up homes and properties with Christmas decorations and lights at Christmas time was one that was taking off in the town," committee member Lorna Williams said.

"The idea to transfer it to winter seemed like one that would make a lot of sense and be a lot of fun, so we ran with it and expanded it." The event will take place on June 20 and 27.

Out-of-towners can get in on the action by booking a ticket on the Taieri Gorge Train, which will leave Dunedin at 3pm on both Saturdays, stop at Wingatui and head to Middlemarch.

At Middlemarch passengers will be greeted by town residents, taken on a tour of the light-trail then head to the Community Centre for a traditional Christmas dinner.

"We aim for this to be a total experience for people of all ages - with the tour providing entertainment and the meal giving everyone a chance to socialise. Winter in the south can be a time when people tend to huddle up at home, but we want to let everyone have a chance to see our town in a different light," Mrs Williams said.



Elves aplenty: Elves, fairies and a big guy dressed in red will all be making off-season appearances in Middlemarch this month.