



OTATARA PIGEON POST

NUMBER 42

OCTOBER 2010

Helping Otatara's Wildlife

**Open afternoon at Bush Haven and Southland Community Nursery
Saturday 6 November 2010 - 1pm-4pm**

At Bush Haven (49 Bryson Road) you will be able to see kereru, kaka and native parakeets close up and also view the exotic parrot collection.

At 1.30 pm three rehabilitated kereru will fly from the soft-release aviary to hopefully, become re-established in the wild. Experts will be on hand to answer questions about pest control.

At Southland Community Nursery (185 Grant Road - around the corner from Bryson Road) you will be able to see how to grow your own native plants for free and much more! See the article in this edition.

At both locations Otatara Pestbusters will be on site to assist with pest problems, take orders for pest traps and take registrations for Otatara Pestbusters.



Mission Statement

To focus attention of Otatara residents and others on the natural features and ecological values of the Otatara environment, especially native forest and wetland flora and fauna. To promote and where possible facilitate the protection, restoration and creation of such features in the interests of scientific appreciation and intrinsic worth and to encourage community appreciation of these values.

Objectives

- To act as a liaison forum for Otatara landowners, with the ICC, SRC, DOC and other agencies, in issues of land use and management of natural resources.
- To provide information to Otatara residents and other landowners on how best to manage and enhance natural areas, including weed and pest management.
- To advocate for the preservation and enhancement of forest remnants and other natural values of the Otatara area (including New River Estuary, Sandy Point and Oreti Beach).
- To promote increased use of native plants in gardens and on properties in Otatara.
- To improve the habitat for native wildlife in the Otatara area.
- To run a programme of activities which will include bush walks, field days and talks to improve knowledge of the local environment, and working bees to help individuals and organisations with their environmental projects.
- To promote Otatara's natural areas to local people and visitors through publicity (newsletter, leaflets, e.g., Gamble's Educational Boardwalk).

Your Committee

Please contact any of the committee members if you have questions, ideas or problems relating to the Otatara/Sandy Point area. Elected Committee Members 2009 – 2010:

Barry Smith – Chairperson (ph. 213-1500)

Chris Rance – Secretary (ph. 213-1161)

Glenda Graham – Treasurer (ph 213-1397)

Lloyd Esler (ph. 213-0404)

Linda Jackson (ph. 213-1271)

Brian Rance (ph. 213-1161)

Randall Milne (ph. 213-0851)

Cathy MacFie (ph. 213-1267)

Jill Warhurst (ph. 216-6234)

Clair Leith (ph. 213-1148)

Deidre Francis (ph 213-0957)

Russel Evans (ph. 213 0530)

May Evans (ph. 213 0530)

Chairspeak – A Message from the Chairperson

Traditionally a dreary time of the year, winter now has almost past, but far from being dreary, we as a family are quite excited. In mid-July our daughter Hilary arrived back from a year living in France and attending secondary school in Dunkirk. She was away for 10½ months and for the first time in her life she had to look out for herself to some degree. From all accounts she had a good family to live with, two brothers who are aged 5 and 7 and a small sister now aged two – all three are adopted and came from Ethiopia. The family she had been living with have had a really amazing journey in their lives to go through the adoption process three times. As well, they previously had an exchange student from one of the former Eastern Bloc countries and after Hilary left they welcomed a student from the Ukraine for three weeks. Hilary has had a journey with many adventures and we are looking forward to a powerpoint presentation she is currently preparing, but the one and most important story will be what the trip has done to her as a person. We believe that this adventure will stand her in good stead for next year at university and onward through life. Also she is now fluent in French. The downside of going away for almost a year is that she has a lot of catching up to do for her school work and needs to perform well to get an entry place into Otago University next year as there are now for the first time, minimum entry criteria.

Our household barely had time to settle when on the 1st of August we welcomed into our family Aviaja, a 16 year old AFS student from Greenland. Greenland has an area of about 2.2 million sq km, about 8 or 9 times the size of New Zealand, however the population is about 57,000 people for the whole country, not much more than that of Invercargill. Our population density is about 16 persons / sq km, theirs is one person per 37sq km. This is the first time AFS in Southland has hosted a student from Greenland. She is quiet and reserved and finds it difficult when we speak in our normal fast way and having a room full of people talking is also difficult. But in a one-on-one conversation she is starting to open up and we are enjoying her company.

On the Landcare Group front we had two rather successful planting days in May. We decided to do a bit of experimenting with planting in an area with a high sand content and little soil. Instead of digging a hole about the size of a spade we got a whole team of 'court appointed volunteers' and they dug us about 1000 holes 300 x 300 and 300mm deep (ie, about 1 cubic foot in size). To the spoil that came out we added a measure of Bio-solid (see article on biomass in this bulletin also) and some superdirt, mixed it all together and added the plant. The object was to give the plants some material with which to boost growth. We will now wait for about 5 ~ 6 years to see what happens, monitoring the site during that time to see if the growth is better than some plants we planted three years ago that haven't grown at all.

by Barry Smith

Community Nursery



Often at the nursery we get asked if we have any rimu or miro or matai for planting out. We don't! Experience has shown us that planting canopy trees straight away will nearly always fail because these species cannot tolerate wind, frost or full sun. Instead, follow nature's lead and plant fast growing 'colonisers' first.

In their natural state, mature forests can remain in a stable state for long periods of time. However, even before the arrival of people in New Zealand, our forests had to develop strategies to re-colonise areas destroyed by large-scale events such as volcanic eruptions, fires or landslides.

The process of re-colonising a bare patch of land is called 'succession'. It takes many years for the process of succession to transform an area from bare land to mature forest. The model of succession is outlined below:

During the succession process each group of plants makes the site suitable for the next group of plants, but no longer suitable for themselves. These plants are called 'colonising' or 'nursery' plants. They are eventually replaced until mature canopy trees establish. The forest then stays in a period of relative stability until another large-scale event.

by Chris Rance

Mixed Messages from the Estuary

Spring is sprung

The grass is riz

I wonder where dem birdies is...

Whether spring has actually 'sprung' depends on whether you believe it begins on 1 September or 21 September. The estuary hasn't quite made up its mind either. This morning, dead stalks of three-square were crunchy underfoot with a good coating of frost. Yet a closer look revealed the first tiny spears of this year's new growth pushing through the mudflat.

Waders like spur-winged plover, pied stilt and spoonbill seem to be going about their business as per usual. But mallard pairs are skulking purposefully in the undergrowth and, for the last week or so, white-faced herons have been fussing around nest sites in the topmost branches of macrocarpa trees. Best of all, at least two pairs of kingfisher are 'kek-kek-ing' to each other along our river bank. With a bit of luck there may be more fledgling residents this summer ... must remember to deter their flight path from our windows.

Rising sap may also have affected the decision making of two sheepish young lads who arrived on our doorstep at the weekend. They thought they'd drive their vehicle from the end of Oreti Road to Bushy Point – along the estuary. Remarkably, they got as far as

our place before getting hopelessly bogged. It took several failed attempts and two quad bikes to finally extricate them – just ahead of the rising tide. (I hope they appreciated the effort.)

by Cathy Macfie



Here's the mess they left behind.

Colonising or 'Nursery' Species

Colonising or nursery species (also called primary or pioneer species) grow well on bare ground in open sites. They are hardy, easy to grow and will generally tolerate extremes in temperature, terrain, soil type and drainage. They provide the perfect habitat for forest canopy species to establish and grow.

Examples of Southland colonising species include manuka, mingimingi, broadleaf, kohuhu, lemonwood, mahoe, koromiko and cabbage trees.

Regenerating forests dominated by colonising species are often referred to as 'scrub' in New Zealand. Unfortunately 'scrub' areas are often misrepresented as wastelands or unproductive areas, rather than as an important stage in forest restoration and recovery.

With the right selection of plants, a successful planting should also attract and provide habitat for native birds and other wildlife. Birds play a vital role in spreading seeds, further helping the regeneration process.

At the nursery we specialise in the colonising species – if you are not familiar with them, come along and see what they look like at our open afternoon.

by Chris and Brian Rance

Community Nursery Open Afternoon

**2-4pm Saturday 6 November 2010,
185 Grant Road, Otatara**

Come and have a look at the nursery,
established plantings, ponds

Bring along any plant for identification

See how the nursery can help you grow native
plants for free, best shelter species, native
plants to attract birds to your garden.

Help protect native birds by trapping predators
on your patch - Have a look at the various traps
available and get advice on their use.

Shrub Willow Trial – Bushy Point

If you have been walking around Bushy Point lately you may have noticed some shrub willows planted, and be wondering what is going on? As a joint project between Environment Southland and the Otatara Landcare Group, it has been decided to run a trial. The purpose of the trial is to try two different shrub willows, at two different planting densities. We want to see if a good planting environment for natives can be formed underneath the shrub willows.

The chosen site has a history of having a gorse problem. It is hoped that in 2-3 years time the shrub willows may shade out the gorse and then native seedlings can be planted underneath. Maintenance of the shrub willows is a lot easier than the maintenance for the natives initially, as during release spraying you can spray over top of the willows with Gallant and Versatill. You can not spray over natives without dire consequences.

Once the natives get established the shrub willows can either be cut out, or poisoned. A similar trial has been carried out with Crack Willow on the Mataura River. To date the trial has shown positive results. But due to Crack Willow being so big, it is feared many natives will be damaged/taken out when the Crack Willow is either cut down or poisoned. Shrub willow should be a lot easier on the natives when taken out.

The two different densities are 1.5 metre spacings and 3 metre spacings. The two different shrub willows used are the two most common shrub willows being used along riparian areas in Southland at present. They are Glenmark, and Pohangina. The trial was planted on July 30, and there are 400 willow wands in total. This is made up of 100 willows for each treatment. (100 Glenmark at 1.5 metre spacings, 100 Glenmark at 3 metre spacings, 100 Pohangina at 1.5 metre spacings, 100 Pohangina at 3 metre spacings) Willow wands are just cuttings about a metre long that are planted into the ground directly.

We will keep you informed on how the trial is going over time.

by Nathan Cruickshank

And for the cynics....weeding for beginners

I have discovered the easiest way to weed the garden - use Roundup. I get around the place in no time at all and with no effort (e.g. bending, sore knees etc) and no tools required, no gardening gloves etc.

I have also found that what I gave a squirt to last season has totally disappeared and no new stuff in its place!!!

Yeeeeeah.

A Walk on the Mild Side

It was one of those great Southland days, frosty morning, sun shining in a seamless blue sky, great day for a walk in the fresh air.

I phoned an old friend, now I don't mean old as in OLD, rather someone who has known me since I first waddled past her gate like an underpowered blimp (7 months preggers with #3 child).

Anyway we have travelled a fair few miles over the ensuing years, tracks, walks, aimless wanderings along the coast etc etc. She's a 'just around the next corner' person so you're never sure where you'll end up.

We met at Daffodil Bay and decided to do the Daffodil Bay Loop Track. Up the first of many steps to a fairly open understorey the ground being a carpet of houndstongue fern embellished with dog poop! It irritates the heck out of me that dog 'lovers' can't pick up their dog's business; surely a plastic bag isn't too big an item to carry with you? Obviously some of us are not endowed with even a vestige of grey matter.

All along this track you have glimpses of the sea as it comes in to investigate the shorelines. Just a few moments along the track is a nice secluded area with a picnic table. Here the frosted tussock & toitoi glistened brightly in the sunlight along with the new plantings of various natives.

There is a myriad of steps on this track but all blend nicely with the ambience of their surroundings, along with the birds who sang beautifully in the crisp, clear air.

We halted for a view of the estuary where a huge blue gum has a tenuous hold on life as it teeters precariously on a fast eroding bank where the sea sweeps in attempting to claim it.

A strategically placed seat gives you an exclusive view of...the regenerating bracken! It obviously at one time had a seaward looking aspect but the bracken has reclaimed it. Should it be cleared?, have a look and see what you think. I say yes.

Into the forested area with poroporo, wineberry, a couple of rimu, pittos, totara et al. Here old man totaras writhe upwards in a dozen different shapes pushing hard against the sand that has them trapped. One had up to 23 branches apparently growing out of the same spot but on closer inspection we could see a main trunk just above the surface of the ground. A veritable goblin forest full of twisted shapes and secret sounds.

Peter Rabbit and his rellies have made their home here and are prolific breeders if the number of rabbit holes are anything to go by. Where's Mr McGregor when you need him?

Ground cover again is houndstongue fern and some mosses.

There is a couple of side streams, one big enough to play 'trolls' if you have kids. We couldn't decide whether one was a natural stream or manmade.

Out eventually over a bare area and just beyond, the sea murmuring quietly, mermaids washing water making swirly off-white patterns in the mud. Looking across to Coopers Creek a seat with a view was beckoning but we didn't have our wellies on, and the mud looked a bit sucky, so we decided to leave it until another day.

Back then to the signpost (5 min) where we decided to do the 10 min walk to Hatch's Hill Lookout. Good grief I lost count of the steps after 50 something but the view was outstanding, well worth the steps. A 180° view (360°? ed.) out to Invercargill city, Tiwai , Bluff, Greenhills, the sand dunes at Oreti Beach, the Longwoods, Riverton & the Port Craig area. We could even see some snow capped peaks in Southern Fiordland.

Unfortunately a biting easterly sailed in so it was goodbye to the smell of the sea and back into a forest fragrance of damp earth with a hint of spring growth liberally sprinkled with dappled sunlight.

by Footloose

Up ** Creek Without A Paddle – Biosolid**

The question of Biosolid has come up once again. I wrote an article in the November 2007 issue of Pigeon Post about the stuff and some people have asked me to repeat it, so here is the latest...

Biomass is basically compost from a Sewage Treatment Plant. In Invercargill this is located at Clifton. It is the solid matter that is left over after the digesters and bacteria have done their job, in other words – Compost! In the past people have queued up to get trailer loads of this stuff for their flower and vegetable gardens and we had it on good authority that the roses did wonderfully well on this stuff. We all know that with time things change and so have the regulations with respect of the disposal of biomass, there are old men on Prozac, there are ladies on the pill and many other pharmaceutical prescription drugs taken which all find their way in traces into this biomass. The main thing with this stuff is that it contains higher than normal concentrations of Heavy metals (maybe Gerry Brownlee can mine this stuff instead of our National Parks!) and drugs and that it builds up in the system. The fact is that provided we don't add biomass to our gardens more than 13 times then there is no danger of the quantity of heavy metals exceeding health guidelines.

This led to the question of what to do with this material, we all produce it and in the case of industrial waste in the system we all either buy stuff from these places or we work there so it is really a community responsibility. One local Real estate agent had a knee jerk reaction to the article in the Southland Times in 2007 and decided to run a petition! While petitions are really good when the full story is known and all the facts are presented and it is followed up in a positive manner, what we find is we need a bit more realism. The only way to stop producing the stuff is no more going to the loo! Hold it all in for your entire life and then be disposed of in a sanitary manner that doesn't affect the environment. We are no longer able to put this stuff onto land that has food produced on it for human consumption or on land where there is livestock which is used for human consumption, but it can be discharged to land for increasing the fertility for planting out Native Trees which is going on at Sandy Point and at Bushy Point. It makes plants grow really well! Oddly enough one country that doesn't have these regulations is China where they have been putting this stuff in the form of raw sewage onto their farms for the past (probably) 2000 years and have they got a problem? Well, frankly yes. The level of faecal bacteria and heavy metals in the vegetables they produce exceeds Health Department Regulations and countries like Australia which import these vegetables for sale in supermarkets have a government which seems to be ignoring the problem. So it seems to be OK to consume product imported and produced in other countries, grown in the stuff (under the free trade agreement), but not to grow it here and sell it!

So in summing up there are basically three options for dealing with this stuff, first of all we all stop producing this stuff (something that is not going to happen any time soon), or secondly the City Council returns your portion to you to dispose of in an environmentally friendly way - Yeah! Right! Or, thirdly we could go for the best possible environmental outcome and place it on land that is not used for food production, let the worms have a really good time and they are reasonably well known to deal with chemical contamination and release the goodness in the soil ready for plants to use. Then follow it up by planting native species and in a few years open it up to the public as a recreational opportunity. This is really a win-win situation, don't you think?

by Barry Smith

Common Names for the Small-leaved Coprosmas

The late John Salmon did a necessary but often-criticised deed when he coined common names for all the plants in his *Field Guide to the Alpine Plants*. Some say that such names are artificial but every other common name in the world has been made up by somebody. It's not like we have to wait for a voice from heaven..."Got another one

for youse guys," says God, and a slab...of stone with 'Small-leaved mountain buttercup' engraved on it in beautiful copperplate crashes down dangerously closeby. No, every word in the dictionary is a made-up

word. The small-leaved coprosmas are

short on common names. *Coprosma*

propinqua is called mingimingi

by some but I prefer to use

this for *Cyathodes juniperina*.

Both species grow on Sandy

Point, *C. propinqua* being

the commonest of the

small-leaved coprosmas

in scrubland and swamp

with *Cyathodes juniperina*

on better-drained land,

typically coastal gravel.

The other local coprosmas

are *C. areolata*, *C. rugosa*,

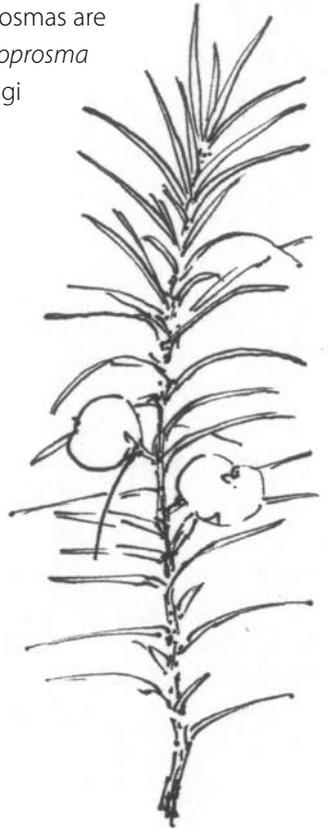
C. rigida, *C. tayloriae*,



Coprosma propinqua

C. pedicellata and *C. rhamnoides*. My suggestions for common names are: *Coprosma propinqua* – Common coprosma, *C. areolata* – Veined coprosma, *C. rugosa* – Rough coprosma, *C. rigida* – Rigid coprosma, *C. tayloriae* – Taylor's coprosma, *C. pedicellata* – Southern coprosma and *C. rhamnoides* – Bush coprosma.

by Lloyd Esler



Cyathodes juniperina

Otatara School Native Plant Propogation

In 2001 we approached the Otatara School with the view of getting them and the students interested in the environment. The proposal was that the year 5 and 6 students pot up plants in the spring and grow them over the summer and then sell them in the autumn. The students decide what to spend the profits on. Simple really... The school took to this in an enthusiastic way. They got a Rotary Club to sponsor a shade house and things really took off. The first plant pot-up day we took a trailer load of mix down to the school and in shifts, groups of students came out and we potted up something like 800 plants. Some died and some survived and the following year in April or May 2002 we had two plant sale days. I had taken along some plants to augment the supplies and diversify the species and they made the princely sum of \$153.50. Sales varied and every year was different. In 2004 they made almost \$700 and varied amounts between those two figures have been made every year since. This last sale day on April 30th was the ninth and we have now cut it down to one sale day per year.

What we have done is sell as many plants as possible and at the end of the day if the school has any suitable plants left over then the Otatara Landcare Group buys them and plants them out on their planting days in May. This year the Senior Syndicate made \$325. In the past they have used this money for many projects including a picnic table, and Steve Harrex the local pastor received a donation for some of his mission work projects. They have had a bus trip to Riverton at the end of the year and this year they will get what the Senior Syndicate decides to spend the money on. In September this year we will begin year 10 of the process with a day of potting up again.

by Barry Smith

Otatara's Oldest Building

The hunt is on for the oldest building in Otatara. Otatara has no structures listed with the Historic Places Trust. In Southland there are 102 listed structures or historic areas including 31 in Category 1 – National significance. The closest to Otatara is the Invercargill wharf which dates back to 1861.

Perhaps some of today's Otatara buildings are destined to be the historic places, or maybe the historic ruins, of the future. Picture your house in 200 years. Will it still be there with a blue plaque on the door? Will it be a paddock? Will there be something else there in 2210 build of materials we haven't dreamed of yet?

Anyway, are there any nominees for oldest building in Otatara?

by Lloyd Esler

Protecting Our Wildlife in Otatara

One of the special features of living Otatara is having healthy bird populations, notable are the tui, bellbirds and pigeon. Have you noticed how much birdlife we have compared to many bush areas of Southland and Fiordland? Lots of people are already helping to protect and enhance the native birds found in our back yards. Some things you can do is to fence and protect your bush, control weeds, put out sugar water, and to control pests such as rats, possums and mustelids. These pests are probably having the greatest impact on native birds in Otatara (and the rest of Southland). With pest control it is a case of the more people that get involved the more successful it will be.

The Otatara Landcare Group has been undertaking pest control at Bushy Point in the south-east corner of Otatara for a few years. The monitoring of pest catch results shows that the numbers of pests, notably possums have decreased. More importantly the numbers of birds are increasing, especially fernbirds and tomtits are now being recorded. However this is an ongoing battle as these pests continue to reinvade the Bushy Point area.

Some locals wanted to see more done and so got the OLG involved. A public meeting was held on 9th June 2010. At this meeting there were four very interesting talks by scientist Ralph Powlesland on the DOC pigeon and tui research project, highlighting the impact of predators on these birds. Local photographer Jason Hosking showed photography from two tui nests that he followed progress of. Brian Rance talked about the Bushy Point pest control work. The evening finished with Tim Riding from Environment Southland taking about the effects of various pests and how to control them. The evening was a huge success with over 80 people turning up and over 30 people signing up wanting to be involved with controlling pests on their own property

Since the public meeting a group has been coordinating progress from here. All those expressing interest in pest control have been contacted and an email contact list has been formed to keep people in touch. There is an opportunity to learn about pest control on November 6th at the Southland Community Nursery open day.

If you are interested remember to invite your neighbours and friends. The more people that get involved the more success the control work will be. Remember you will not only be helping our birdlife, but also helping the bush, making your garden healthier and stop pests getting into your house.

Otatara Pest control equipment available for sale

The Otatara Landcare Group has a selection of pest control equipment available for sale. This equipment is that recommended by Environment Southland (ES). We buy this equipment through ES who are able to bulk purchase and offer us cheaper than commercial retail rate. We have also been successful in achieving some funding from both ES and ICC for this project and we can therefore offer an initial subsidy over and above the cheap ES rates for most of these products. You won't get a better price!

The following is the list of equipment available:

General Purchase ES price (OLG price)

Timms equivalent possum kill trap \$18 (\$15)

Possum Master possum kill trap \$43 (\$35)

DOC 200 stoat trap stainless steel \$52 (\$52)

DOC 200 stoat double trap set box (S/S) \$150 (\$150)

DOC 200 stoat single trap set box (S/S) \$80 (\$80)

DOC 200 stoat double trap set box (used alloy) \$80

OLG rat bait stations \$5.50 (\$5)

Contract rat poison blocks - small \$0.35 (\$0.30)

Contract rat poison blocks - large \$3.50 (\$3.00)

Poison Bait Buckets with bait purchases of \$10+ \$2 free

Victor rat snap trap \$4 (\$3)

Victor mouse snap trap \$3 for 2 (\$3 for 2)

Trex Rat snap trap \$8 (\$6)

Trex mouse snap trap \$3 (\$3)

Plastic rat trap tunnel \$11.50 (\$10)

Starter pack - special offer \$75

1 Timms trap

6 Contract rat poison blocks - large

Poison bait bucket

6 OLG rat bait stations

18 Contract rat poison blocks - small

2 Victor rat snap traps

If you want more information contact Randall Milne (milnes@xnet.co.nz ph 2130851), Russell Evans (bush_haven@xtra.co.nz ph 2130530), Brian Rance (rances@ihug.co.nz ph 2131161) or Tim Riding at Environment Southland (tim.riding@es.govt.nz ph 2115115).

Plan Change No 9 – Otatarā

Recently the Invercargill City Council advertised some proposed plan changes for Otatarā. These proposed plan changes will be of interest to residents of Otatarā as, if they are adopted, they will result in changes to land management in Otatarā. Many of the proposed changes are a move to strengthen the protection and restoration of natural values and landscape values in Otatarā. The major changes are:

Objectives and Policies for Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and Areas of Significant Vegetation and Significant Habitats of Indigenous Fauna

The changes to the Objectives and Policies came into effect the day the Plan Change was notified i.e. 17 July 2010, which means they apply now. While there are minor changes to the wording of the Objectives for these sections, the direction and intent remains unchanged from the current Invercargill City District Plan.

The way that the Policy for Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes is written has changed, but the direction is still as it was before the Plan Change was notified. What the Council is looking to do is to control significant changes to topography and significant intrusion of structures in areas identified as having outstanding natural features and landscapes.

The policies that apply to Areas of Significant Indigenous Vegetation and Significant Habitats of Indigenous Fauna have had more emphasis placed on promoting the use of locally sourced indigenous species for planting initiatives in relation to subdivisions, restorative planting, enhancement planting and landscaping. In addition the Council has introduced a new Policy to promote restoration planting of indigenous vegetation on sites that are contiguous with existing areas of significant indigenous vegetation. The intent of this new Policy is to improve connectivity of remnants by developing corridors of indigenous vegetation between existing areas of significant indigenous vegetation.

Rules for Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes

Unlike the Objectives and Policies in the Plan Change, the Rules for Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes do not come into effect until the Council has completed the hearings process, made and notified its decisions on all the submissions concerning the Plan Change.

The greatest change is in the area that is defined as Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes. Under the existing Plan this applies to all of the Otatarā sub-area. However, the Plan Change proposes that this area be reduced to the south-western corner of Otatarā. If this proposal is accepted, consent will be required to alter contours of the land, to erect structures or to increase the footprint of existing structures, within this area.

Rules for Areas of Significant Vegetation and Significant Habitats of Indigenous Fauna

The changes to these Rules came into effect the day the Plan Change was notified i.e. 17 July 2010, which means they apply now. This includes a change of status for constructing any access way or road, or to construct utility services, in the areas marked on the Planning Maps as “Areas of Significant Vegetation or Significant Habitats of Indigenous Fauna,” from a controlled activity to a discretionary activity. This change means that the Council now has the ability to turn down or grant an application for any of these activities. Prior to this change, the Council could not turn down applications for these activities.

The Plan Change also changes the status for removing or altering any live indigenous vegetation or erecting any building or other structure, in the areas marked on the Planning Maps as “Areas of Significant Vegetation or Significant Habitats of Indigenous Fauna” from a discretionary to a non-complying activity. The non-complying activity status involves a harder test and means the Council can only allow the activity to occur if it believes that either the adverse effects of the activity on the environment will be minor or the activity will not be contrary to the objectives and policies of the Invercargill City District Plan.

Rules for Subdivision

Unlike the Objectives and Policies in the Plan Change, the Rules for Subdivision do not come into effect until the Council has completed the hearings process, made and notified its decisions on all the submissions concerning the Plan Change.

The Plan Change proposes making Subdivision a restricted discretionary activity, with discretion restricted to subdivision design, including the provision of building platforms, vegetation planting proposed and the effect of the subdivision on long-term viability of any identified outstanding natural features or landscape. This means the Council can turn down or grant an application to

subdivide, but it can only look at the things it has listed as matters it has restricted its discretion to, within the Invercargill City District Plan.

Rules for Private Open Space and Density

In the Otatara sub-Area the Plan Change proposes that the maximum density would be one residence per 4000sqm, where the residence is to be connected to the reticulated sewerage system; or within the Airport Outer Control Boundary a maximum density of

one residence per 10,000sqm where the residence is to be connected to the reticulated sewerage system; or one residence per 2ha where the proposed residence is not to be connected to the reticulated sewerage system (an increase from 1ha (10,000 square metres) currently); or one residence per Certificate of Title as at 31 March 2010, where the allotment is 1-2ha.

Change in Boundary of Otatara Sub-Area

The Plan Change proposes to reduce the Otatara Sub-Area boundary, with areas in the north of the current boundary being incorporated into the Rural Sub-Area.

The Plan Change proposes an addition to the Maximum Density Rules relating to the Rural Sub-Area for sites under 2ha identified in Appendix X of the proposed Plan Change. These sites, if the boundary change is adopted, were originally in the Otatara Sub-Area (and complied with the lot sizes for that area) but would not comply with the existing Rules for the Rural Sub-Area maximum housing density. The purpose of this proposal is to provide for these sites.

Submissions have closed and over 80 submissions were received. We understand the Council is now investigating the need to commission further reports on matters raised in these submissions. If further reports are commissioned, this information will be made available to submitters and any person who is eligible and wanting to make a further submission (see below). The Council will summarise the original submissions and any submissions received as a result of any further reports. The summary will be publicly notified. Any person representing the public interest or who are affected more than the general public can support or oppose any of the original submissions (this is called a further submission). After this step, the Council will hold public hearings so that people can speak to the Council about their submissions. At the end of the hearing process Council will issue its decisions on the Plan Change, including whether the proposed plan changes will proceed or not, subject to any Environment Court challenges.

by Brian Rance

More Otatara Street Names....

(From 'What's In A Name?' by Wendy McArthur)

Otatara Road

The origin of the name Otatara is uncertain. It seems likely that it might correctly be Ototara meaning 'The place of the totara'. Changing the spelling to O te tara we get 'The place of tara'. Tara is the white-fronted tern which breeds in the estuary. By swapping two letters we also get Otarata meaning 'The place of tarata'. Tarata is lemonwood *Pittosporum eugenioides*.

One suggestion is that the spelling and usual pronunciation are correct and the name is Ota-tara – Green Point.



Totara



White-fronted tern

Oreti Road and Oreti Beach

Oreti is an abbreviation of 'Te Whanga Koreti Hau Tonga' meaning 'The Bay that catches the South Wind'.

Pacific Ave

Most probably named after the Pacific Ocean. The Pacific Ocean was named by Ferdinand Magellan in 1519 when his ships entered what he called a 'beautiful, peaceful ocean' after rounding the bottom of South America.

Mahuri Road

Mahuri means a sapling or youth. A Jacob Mahuri Newton was recorded in the 1851 census as a child living at Oue Village – the site of the present Coopers Creek settlement on Sandy Point. Perhaps there is a link here.

Marama Avenue

Marama means moon or moonlight. Another resident of Oue in 1851 was Te Marama so there may be a link there.

Matua Road

Matua means adult or parent or it may have been somebody's name.

Niven Road

There were Nivens in Invercargill in the early days of settlement but the origin of the name here is unknown.

Oki Street

This street is part of the planned Oreti Beach township which was subdivided and sections offered for sale in 1926. The land was owned by William Curran but his plans for the township here came to nothing. Oki is the Maori transliteration of Oak but that seems an unlikely origin.

Taking up the Challenge

Otatara provides me with a wonderful environment to live in. I wake to the song of the tuis and bellbirds, enjoy my morning cuppa on my porch looking out on a backdrop of ancient forest trees, maintain my garden with generous amounts of free local horse poo and seaweed, and access a network of well-maintained bush reserves in easy walking distance. I have lived in many parts of New Zealand and never before found so much diversity in such soul-satisfying surrounds. I believe this to be a place worth protecting. Otatara can only be here for us if we are here for Otatara! And I would suggest some ideas for how each and every individual can contribute.

- Borrow a trap from Environment Southland to reduce the predators threatening our flora and fauna.
- Pick up the booklet 'Plant me Instead' from E.S. and rid your garden of the weeds identified
- Exchange your labour for eco-sourced plants from the Community Nursery and share in the tasty Friday morning teas.
- Volunteer for a few hours pulling out invasive weeds flourishing in our local reserves.
- Join in planting days at Bushy Point, a long-term project by the Otatara Landcare Group to convert pasture into a forest for the future. All of the above are FREE, but for less than the price of three coffees you could join our Otatara Landcare Group. We NEED your contributions and input for the long-term benefit of our special community, so please be in touch.

by Linda Jackson

Otatara Pigeon Signs

While driving around Otatara you will have noticed the new pigeon signs. The need for these was raised with the Otatara Landcare Group (OLG) by May and Russell Evans. May and Russell run the Bush Haven rehabilitation centre for injured pigeon and tui, therefore they know that too many of our birds are injured or die each year. The main source of injuries to birds is by flying into windows. Give them a ring to find out some of the ways to reduce window strikes. Birds are also injured or killed as they swoop in front of cars. Russell and May thought this could also be reduced if people are aware of the main danger areas and are prepared to slow down. They worked with the OLG to design the

signs and identify the main danger areas. They then made the case to the ICC Regulatory Services committee and asked for some funding to produce and erect 12 signs scattered throughout Otatara. The committee thought that the advocacy from this project would be of benefit to the Otatara community and its wildlife and supported the project. The roading department agreed to oversee the sign construction and erection. This is a great example of the community working with the council in a positive way to support its special environment. I hope everyone takes heed of the signs and slows down and looks out for low flying pigeon and tui! You can also help our wildlife by controlling pests (see the article in this Pigeon Post), by putting out sugar water in winter, planting food trees, controlling weeds that threaten our bush and protecting your bush - every single action helps.

by Brian Rance



The New River Heads

I have been doing research on the early Omaui area and most of the references to the name in early copies of the Southland Times are to shipping movements in and out of the estuary, ie. between Sandy Point and Omaui where there was a pilot station.

John Turnbull Thomson selected the site for Invercargill based partly on its ease of access from the sea and he had to spend the rest of his life defending this interesting theory. From reading old records it's clear that Bluff was the better port and widely acknowledged as such from about 1860. There were too many vested interests in keeping the port of Invercargill open however, and for decades the various, futile schemes for maintaining the port sucked thousands of pounds from the provincial coffers. The final straw in the bankruptcy of Southland Province was the loss of £32,000 on the inane Mokomoko wharf which was built in 1864 and used only a few times before being abandoned. The interests of a few men prevented the obvious project from happening. This was the railway and road from Bluff to Invercargill. They delayed the completion of the railway until 1867. The Port of Invercargill wasn't officially closed until 1955 and even then, the council had to maintain a signalman at Omaui until 1962.

by Lloyd Esler

The Spring question

The first of September is touted as the first official day of spring. Who is the official who has the right to make the decision? I don't remember getting to vote on the matter. I maintain that summer lasts for the six months that the sun is in the Southern hemisphere, namely the spring equinox to the autumn equinox – September to March. Even then, a late summer can last well into April before you start to think of autumn. I say six months of summer and the other three seasons may fight it out as they see fit. Here's a guide: spring is the first snowdrop, summer is the first cuckoo, autumn is the first falling leaf that you can catch and winter is the last leaf falling from the pear tree.

The appearance of the Pleiades or Matariki in the dawn sky in late June has been taken as a sign that the seasons have reached a turning point – summer celebrations in the northern hemisphere and a recognition by Maori that the hardest part of winter is over in New Zealand.

by Lloyd Esler

Otatara in the Snow

How did you fare in the snow? How did it affect plants and animals in Otatara? I saw many broken branches and cold birds including a redpoll and a couple of silvereyes sitting, too weak to take off. Send in your observations for the next Pigeon Post. It will make a good record of a major weather event.

by Lloyd Esler

Bonfire Night Risk in Otatara

In a past survey, Otatara residents overwhelmingly cited the native bush and birdlife as a key attraction of the area, yet the use of fireworks in November poses serious risks to local kereru, tui and bellbird populations, as well as to the bush itself.

Bonfire Night remembers the English Gunpowder Plot, where Guy Fawkes attempted to blow up Parliament with a keg of gunpowder on November 5th 1605. As 5th November is the northern hemisphere winter, fireworks and bonfires do not typically cause much disturbance to fauna, yet in the southern hemisphere, Bonfire Night falls squarely in the predominant breeding season for most birds and animals.

Otatara Landcare Group Committee member and Bush Haven bird sanctuary owner Russell Evans is concerned that as the human population of Otatara increases, the risk to native birds from fireworks also increases. Nesting birds can be scared away from eggs, fledglings may be abandoned, and even adult birds can be scared into an injury situation by fireworks.

Despite the recent wet weather, many bush areas are still dry enough to be set alight by an errant firework or windblown bonfire spark, causing destruction of bush and with the associated risk of fire spreading to houses and sheds.

Livestock and pets are also at risk. As Otatara is a rural area, there are many properties with animals such as sheep, horses, cattle and goats, not to mention a large number of pet cats, dogs and caged birds. We would like to encourage residents to contact their neighbours before celebrating Bonfire Night with fireworks or bonfires. Not only is this a great opportunity to meet your neighbours, it's also a chance to check that they are able to keep their pets inside, or possibly shift livestock to another paddock before an accident happens.

Please be considerate this Bonfire Night. You can attend public gatherings or let fireworks off in large clear areas, well away from all animals and bush habitat, which keeps all the neighbours, whether human, hooved, feathered or furred happy!

Russell Evans Ph 213 0530 Email bush_haven@slingshot.co.nz

This newsletter has been produced by Lloyd Esler, Julie Campbell and Chris Rance



I Want to Help Care for the Birds, the Bush and Wetlands at Otatara and see them Prosper for Future Generations to Enjoy. I can Help by Joining the OTATARA LANDCARE GROUP.

Membership

First Name/s

Last name/s

Address

.....

.....

Contact phone/email

I enclose an annual membership fee \$10 per household \$

Ten year membership \$50 per household \$

Lifetime membership \$100 per household \$

I wish to make a donation \$

Enclosed Total Payment of \$

Tick if receipt required ()

Activities

I want to (please tick):

() help with restoration, weed control or growing plants

() help with or attend local Otatara walks

() help with bird surveys

() help with liaison with local councils

Send to:

Otatara Landcare Group

33 Rakiura Parade

Otatara.

