

PIGEON POST

Issue 53 February 2017

Hello folks, welcome to Pigeon Post, the newsletter of the Otatara Landcare Group. In this newsletter we bring you news of the latest happenings in our area and snippets of information about our past and ideas about improving our environment

**Your committee: Chairman Barry Smith 2131500
Secretary Chris Rance 2131161 Treasurer Glenda Graham 2131397 Pigeon Post editor Lloyd Esler 2130404**

Please contact the Otatara Landcare Group if you have questions, ideas or problems relating to the Otatara and Sandy Point areas, or if you want to help - otataralg@gmail.com.

AGM - Wednesday 17 May 2017 at the Otatara Community Church Hall, Oreti Road 7pm followed by slide talk – ‘Walking to Puysegur Point’ by Nathan Cruickshank

Membership of the Otatara Landcare Group

The Landcare Group is a Charitable Trust supported by members and volunteers. If you would like to support the work of this group or become involved in projects to enhance the natural values of the Otatara Area please consider joining or making a donation – the Bushy Point project alone costs the group over \$10,000 a year and it is a public space available for everyone to enjoy. **Life membership just \$50, annual membership \$20**

The OLG organises monthly events – <http://www.otataralandcare.org.nz/news-events/> and also manages the Bushy Point Restoration Project so you can be involved in a very hands on project - <http://www.otataralandcare.org.nz/bushy-point-restoration/>

Life membership just \$50, annual membership \$20

Subs or donations can be deposited directly into the OLG bank account 03 1355 0805312 00 but please make sure they are labelled with your name and olg subs as references.

Please email (otataralg@gmail.com) or send cheque to our treasurer Glenda Graham – 33 Rakiura Parade, Otatara – please put your name address phone number and email address.

Get this newsletter with colour photos and previous newsletters at
<http://www.otataralandcare.org.nz/publications/>

Chairspeak - a message from the Chairperson

Greetings to everyone out there.

The years are rolling about and some of the early plantings done at Bushy Point are looking rather spectacular. Cabbage trees, pitto's, wineberry to mention a few are in the 4 ~ 4M height. The mingimingi planted along the western boundary are providing excellent shelter, but unfortunately there is a minor downside. All our tracks are grass covered and as the forest grows the grass is sheltered and won't grow so we've ended up with a couple of mud holes and this will only get worse as our forest grows. We do however have a cunning plan, basically, we need to do some track maintenance and that will be a major feature of the next few years work.

Last September we had the final of our six years of funding for the living legends project. During these six years we have planted around 15,000 native trees and the support from meridian Energy, the Tindall Foundation, Department of Conservation and Project Crimson has been great. Now we are evaluating where we go from here as we are all getting older and unless we get some younger blood into the system we will be like other organizations around the place, competing for volunteers with newer more exciting past times.

On the home front I used to lament the export of our educated young adults as they hived off to Christchurch, Wellington, Auckland or overseas to pursue careers that we couldn't provide in Southland. However Robyn and I are happy to report that both of our Daughters are down south, one in Balclutha pursuing her chosen career path in Accounting whilst the other has returned to Invercargill with her Invercargill born husband and they are currently both working here so that is really great.

Life is always great and from now on I am going to find some of the best quotes around from famous people.... So here goes the first one.

"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up." - Thomas A. Edison

Barry Smith, Chairperson

GARDENS AND ART ANYONE?

We have such lovely gardens and talented artists in Otatara. Do you fancy sharing your talents in these areas and being part of a Garden and Arts Trail?

Better still – would you like to be involved in organising an event?

Phone Sally 2131403 if you're a starter



Living Legends

September 10th 2016 was the final day of planting under the living Legends banner. Another 1000+ plants were placed in the ground ready to begin their journey to a forest. During this year we were very pleased to welcome the Conservation Committee from Southland Girls' High School headed by McKenzie Alty and Sophie Cook and if you think Sophie's name sounds a little familiar, it may do because she was one of SGHS's Dux's. These girls came along several times during the year to our work days and this was really great to see. It is the first year the committee has done work outside of Girls' High and their dedication and work focus is to be commended and this is obviously reflected in their academic studies as well. Along with all the other volunteers we once again had our Living Legend Kevin Laidlaw along helping. The Living Legends conveners, Project crimson, couldn't be there for the day but came down in November to an inspection of what we were up to. Their representative, Gordon Hosking was very pleased with what he saw and we felt the easiest way to celebrate was to have a pot luck tea at the Southland Community Nursery.

At that Pot Luck tea we were very pleased to host Kevin Laidlaw and his wife Maymie and to make the occasion even more special Kevin and Maymie were awarded the Otatara Landcare Groups first Appointed Life Membership. Kevin for his dedication to the cause and Maymie simply because, as many of us know, we can't get on and do things if we don't have a good partner at our side.

Gordon then spoke briefly about Kevin saying that of the 17 sites around the country Kevin is the only one who has stayed the distance. He is the only Living Legend that is still a Conservation and Rugby Legend! **Barry Smith**



OLG Chair, Barry Smith presenting Maymie and Kevin Laidlaw with their Life Membership Award

Editorial - Bushy Point – some landmark achievements

Bushy Point is looking fantastic – it's a huge commitment for the Landcare Group and volunteers and we need all the ongoing help we can get. If you can help, come along on a monthly work afternoon or if they don't suit, volunteer some time for some of the small jobs that you can do in your own time just email otataralg@gmail.com for ideas

For the last 16 years the Bushy Point project has been the main focus of the Otatara Landcare Group. If you are not involved in running such a community project then you probably don't realise the work involved, especially as the planting areas increase. After a time the plants look after themselves and don't need weeding but as they grow there are other issues like shading which can lead to muddy stretches of track.

Things like the mowing of the tracks, making baleage, signs, weed control, propagating the plants, organising working days and planting days and rounding up funds all take time. There is a working afternoon every month and more hands make light work. The dates are in the OLG calendar and the sessions are usually from 1-3pm. Walk through from Bryson Road towards the pond area and you will find people doing good work – give them a hand – we will all appreciate it. The calendar of workdays and other events is <http://www.otataralandcare.org.nz/news-events/>

The Bushy Point pest control team of Ian Gamble, the Dustons, the Kennedys and Darren May are doing a great job of keeping 90 hectares free of pests. Pests are at such low numbers that catching one is rare but it's always satisfying when you get a stoat or a possum and there are now more fernbirds and juvenile tuis.

Many of you will have helped with the annual plantings at Bushy Point over the years. The project started with the '2000 in 2000 project' idea with a tree planted for each of the 2,000 residents of Otatara in the year 2000. Between then and 2010 around 1,000 plants a year were planted by volunteers every year. In 2011 the Living Legends project kicked in with another 13,000 plants over the last six years – a massive community effort.

If you haven't been involved in this magnificent project then you can be on **Saturday 9th September 2017**.

Cicadas

A walk at Sandy Point in February aroused my interest in cicadas. The sound was deafening, as though on this one day (our 25 degree summer day!), all the cicadas had suddenly emerged and were 'singing their hearts out'. It made me do a bit of investigating and there is an amazing Attenborough video on cicadas at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjLiWY2nT7U>. Granted, these were US cicadas but there were some amazing facts and footage

- They live underground for 17 years!
- They feed on sap from tree roots
- In a few days the whole population emerges
- They climb out of the ground and up trees and there they change into adults with wings (you can see the abandoned cases attached to trees (see photos below))
- The males sing by using their wings, the females respond with clicks
- They mate and then die
- WHAT A LIFE!

Chris Rance

New Zealand cicadas are a bit different from these. We have dozens of species, mostly small, inconspicuous and raspy but there are a couple of bigger ones. Locally, the large crackling cicada is heard most often in Queens Park and in the pine forests of Sandy Point. Although its life-cycle isn't 17 years, it is probably several years and there are good and bad seasons. The 2017 one is very late. Photo shows a large cicada. **Lloyd Esler**



Day-flying moths

We usually think of moths as creatures of the night but there are many day-flying species. These sometimes have conspicuous markings – it's called 'anti-camouflage'. The message to birds is, "Here I am, you can identify me by my markings. You know I taste horrible so don't mistake me for him, sitting still pretending to be a patch of lichen in a tree trunk."

The common Otatara example is the Magpie moth – usual foodplant is ragwort but tough on Cinerareas as well. The hairy black caterpillars keep well in captivity. Photo shows a pair mating. The other one is the Tussock tiger moth which has an even hairier black caterpillar which eats grass. The female is flightless but the male has conspicuous black and yellow markings. Look for them on the grasslands of Sandy Point over the summer.



Photo of Magpie moths mating, a single Magpie moth and male Tussock tiger moth

Karariki or Red-crowned parakeets in Otatara

Have you heard the chatter of kakariki around Otatara yet?

There's a lot of chatter going on in Otatara at present. It's not any normal community rumblings but the sound of kakariki (Red-crowned parakeets) finding Otatara to their liking. It may have been an accidental release a couple of years ago that led to kakariki been seen and heard in Otatara, but they have obviously survived and thrived since this. Recent reports from residents have seen or heard kakariki in Rata Road, Oreti Road and in Ruru Avenue, as well as a number of sightings in Otatara Reserve.

So how have kakariki been able to survive and breed in Otatara when they have largely disappeared from mainland NZ? The most obvious factor is the on-going efforts of those carrying out pest control on their own property and in reserves around Otatara. Kakariki often feed on the ground and are therefore susceptible to predation. This is led to them disappearing from large parts of NZ and only surviving on pest-free off shore islands. The efforts of those controlling pests have helped kakariki and other native birds in Otatara, but there is still more that can be done. If you want to find out where pest control in Otatara is happening and how you can help, visit <http://otatara-pestbusters.org>.

To find out what kakariki look and sound like, visit <http://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/red-crowned-parakeet>. **Randall Milne**

Planting day

On 10th September 2016 a good crowd gathered to help put in 1000 trees and shrubs. It was a great day, and a fine family outing. Most of the holes had been pre-drilled and the potted plants set out alongside. Planting was a matter of picking a hole, dropping in a fertiliser pellet, ripping off the plastic potting bag and carefully installing the plant. As a follow-up we spent a lot of time putting up rabbit-proof covers on the plants and it is good to see that these have been largely effective. Rabbits are particularly fond of the twiggy coprosmas which are good for abrading their teeth which grow continuously.

Photo shows two Otatara rabbit skulls – one with normal teeth and the other with overgrown incisors resulting from damage to a single tooth.



Kingfisher nesting

Although good nesting places for kingfishers are limited in Otatara there has been some breeding. After a report of kingfishers carrying food, I had a search around at the end of Grant Road and found the probably nest, a cavity in the top of a large and decaying Cabbage tree. In the photo you may be able to make out a couple of holes. Other nesting sites are tall, dead trees and clay banks. If you are visiting the estuary boardwalk at Tautuku, have a look at the far bank for the kingfisher tunnels.

Photos of Kingfisher nest hole
and kingfisher



Introducing Ali Meade at Environment Southland

I'm Ali Meade and I have recently started at Environment Southland as the Biodiversity Programme Leader. This is an exciting new role that will focus on developing the council's biodiversity programmes. There will also be an emphasis on working with partner organisations and helping community groups.

I have always had a strong interest in biodiversity and conservation and studied both at university. I have subsequently worked for various conservation organisations in NZ, the UK and Africa. I also enjoy traveling and have been lucky enough to find volunteering opportunities in Kyrgyzstan and the Galapagos Islands that combine both travel and conservation. I recently moved to Southland from Auckland where I worked for Auckland Council as a Conservation Senior Ranger. This work included a wide range of animal pest and weed control, threatened species protection, riparian restoration and planting programmes.

One of my first tasks is overseeing Environment Southland's High Value Areas

Ali Meade

Biodiversity Programme Leader
Environment Southland
Private Bag 90116, Invercargill

and Environmental Enhancement Fund projects. The High Value Area provides free ecological assessments for people who want to find out more about the natural values on their land. The assessments are carried out by local ecologists and provide the landowner with information about the type of species and ecosystems found on their land. The report will also provide advice on how to look after these values.

The Environmental Enhancement fund is a grant scheme that provides funding for landowners or community groups who are carrying ecological restoration or protection works. Grants cover work such as trapping, fencing, weed control or planting native species. The grants will cover up to 50% of a projects costs. Contact me if you think you have a worthwhile project.

I'm looking forward to exploring Southland and learning about the biodiversity work that is happening in the region. If you are involved in biodiversity work and would like help and support or if you want to get involved but don't know where to begin, please contact me.

Flax flowering - Lloyd Esler

The summer of 2016/17, such as it was, was not a good one for flax flowering. You will remember the previous summer where the abundant flowers kept our nectar-feeding birds well satisfied. I have been counting flax heads on my property for nine years, looking for a pattern. Flax flowers well approximately, but not exactly, every second year. It seems that after a vigorous flowering the plant puts its resources into leaf growth the next season. Added to this, the fans, called 'ramets', die after flowering so there is less plant to produce flowers. Here are figures: 2008/9 – 99; 2009/10 – 1; 2010/11 – 101, 2011/12 – 9, 2012/13 – 29, 2013/14 – 125, 2014/15 – 8; 2015-16 150; 2016-2017 – 28.

I'm predicting a good flowering at the end of this year!



Southland Community Nursery News

Native Plants for Free

If it sounds too good to be true it usually is, but in this case it is true. But there is a catch. If you come along on a Friday morning and help with nursery tasks, you can take away native plants for your efforts. That's what we have been doing for over 20 years and its attraction doesn't seem to diminish with the years.

But of course it is not all about the plants. The Community Nursery is a place where people meet and network, have discussions (put the world to rights – there is plenty of that at the moment!), enjoy company and help a community project, all in a very convivial environment. There are tasks to suit all abilities from seed collecting and sorting, to potting up, pricking out seedlings, moving plants, track cutting and tidying. No experience needed and hopefully you'll learn something. Often new residents to Otatara find us and come along, introducing you to a new group of friends, a new community willing to share their advice on what grows and what doesn't in Southland. Vegetable, fruit and nut growing is often discussed as well as advice on local natives and weeds. And of course there is food! Bring along some food to share for morning tea – it's always the highlight of the morning!

Somehow we still manage to grow around 8,000 to 10,000 native plants a year which go out into the Southland environment. If you can't help on a Friday then consider buying a few hardy local native plants at very reasonable rates. In doing so you are contributing to the ongoing costs of the Education Centre which is on our property. We have a plant sale planned for Sunday 16 April 2017 but contact us anytime if you want to buy plants.

Workshop space available

The Community Nursery Education Centre in Grant Road, is available for hire for holding workshops. If you require an indoor space for messy or clean activities, come and see us. The Education Centre has a great outlook onto native bush and the workshops we hold often bring the “outside in” by being in this beautiful location. The Centre itself is equipped with vibrant artwork and nature resources as well as the usual projector screen, tea and coffee making facilities, toilet and large carpark. We also welcome teambuilding activities. (there is probably a more trendy description these days!) – help out with nursery tasks, learn something about your local native plants and environment and enjoy networking in a stunning natural place.



Workshops and Events coming up soon:

<http://www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz/education-centre/activities/workshops/>

Foraging with Maggie and Chris – Wednesday 8 March 2017 (Maggie Elford, Chris Rance)

Nature Photography for Beginners – Sunday 26 March 2017 (Wynston Cooper and Dawn Patterson)

Natural Body Products workshops – monthly workshops April – December 2017 (Honorlea Mangion)

Know your Southland Natives – 10 April 2017 (Jesse Bythell and Chris Rance)

Seed Collecting workshops from March - May by arrangement

For further information on workshops, costs and booking details see the following link. We will be adding new workshops so keep checking

<http://www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz/education-centre/activities/workshops/>

Chris Rance

New orchid found at Sandy Point

Over Christmas holidays a friend from Nelson came down to visit her mother in Invercargill. Whilst here she did a few bush walks at Sandy Point and on the Daffodil Bay Track found an orchid she recognised from the Nelson area. It is a greenhood orchid *Pterostylus porrecta* which was previously known only from the North Island and Nelson. Now Sandy Point has been added to the distribution map! You can look up species on the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network website and see photos and distributions www.nzpcn.org.nz.



Or if you find anything interesting botanically that you want identifying send a photo to rances@ihug.co.nz or bring a sample along to the nursery on Fridays. **Brian Rance**

Living in a Nature Parks.

We left our two paddocks to their own devices this summer. No spraying, no mowing, no interference at all until we went thistle pulling. As we walked through the mixture of native cuttgrass, reeds & long grasses skinks were everywhere, scurrying about in large numbers. We often see the odd one around the woodpile or racing across the deck but the numbers through the uncut paddocks were startling.

Birds are also in abundance, feasting on seedheads & lifting in waves when hawks fly overhead to hide in the macrocarpas 'til the coast is clear. We also see the occasional tussock moth, magpie moth, red & yellow admiral butterflies & fernbird from our kitchen windows.

Watching the wind ripple through the waist-high vegetation is as calming as watching waves at the beach, not to mention the savings made by not mowing or collecting all that green matter. Time & money spent better on a glass of anything chilled while we observe our Nature Parks.



A Walk on the wild side - Greenpoint Domain

One of those glorious Southland mornings in June, overnight frost that promised a clear, crisp day to follow, but it was 6am – that's early - who invented early? This early morning idiocy was a mission to photograph the derelict boats in the sunrise at Greenpoint's Rotten Row. Prospect viewed from partly opened eyes looked good.

I leapt out of bed - well actually staggered if I'm honest, frightened a slice of stale bread into believing it was toast, grabbed a coffee and lit out for Greenpoint and the promised sunrise.

The well-graded track was easy to negotiate in the half dark and in 15 minutes I was sitting waiting for the promised sunrise to appear. To the continuous bizeet bizeet of the camera shutter I recorded every inch of the boats and surrounding view in a glorious Southland sunrise. With the rising sun reflecting magically in the sea, early didn't seem too bad after all.

On the way back I recorded a few details for those who would like to check this area out. At the carpark a panoramic view over towards Omaui can be dramatic, especially when the sky begins to indicate bad weather is on the way. Different times of day and weather will give you some interesting views.

The walk is a leisurely 15-20 minutes one way and suitable for wheelchairs although the track does have lumpy gravel in places. There are seats on the way.

Immediately you start the walk you will notice tussocks, flax and cabbage trees which are the prevalent species along the sides of this track. In time when more native species establish here it will look more

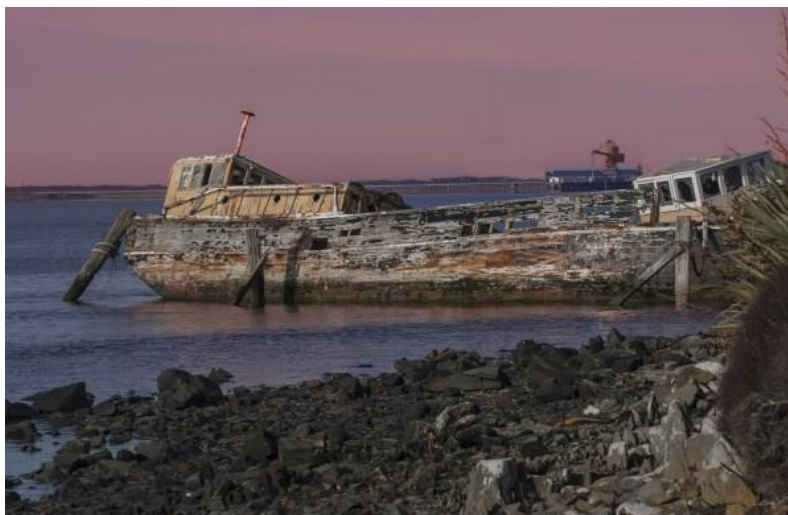
By Footloose – alias Dawn Patterson

interesting botanically. Occasional pepper trees poke their heads up in between the gaps in the boardwalk, only to have them either stomped on or cut off. I saw poroporo – one of my favourites – manuka in flower, mingimingi *Coprosma propinqua* and two mistletoes – the Green mistletoe *Ileostylus micranthus* and the Dwarf mistletoe *Korthalsella salicornioides*. But the dew sparkling on the grasses always takes my eye and I have lost count of the number of photos I have taken of them.

The nicely curved boardwalk lined with emerging native plant species covers some of the track edges as well. Oh don't forget to check for trains on the railway crossing as it is still in use.

As the track follows the shoreline you get some interesting panoramic views across Bluff Harbour, Tiwai, Colyers Island and Tikore Island. Some of New Zealand's oldest rocks are exposed along this stretch of coast. I have investigated many of the curious shaped rocks at other times in this area. This part is also the haunt of wildlife. Nutrient rich waters support abundant fish and molluscs, which then attract shorebirds and waders, so there are excellent bird watching opportunities. I did see a white-faced heron and a couple of Stewart Island shags out on rocks in the sea. Apart from that only this old chook, a tomtit and a blackbird made their presence known – no doubt other sensible birds were waiting for the sun to warm the earth before stirring.

Historically also this is an interesting area, with both Maori and Europeans converging on the area. Be warned – the closest loos are in Bluff.



Do You Want Help with your Weeds?

It is very pleasing to note the increased bird song here in Otatara. I recently played golf with some visitors from Dunedin who could not believe the number of birds on the golf course and their harmonious song.

The increase in birds has not happened overnight nor by chance. Public awareness about threats to our birds has developed to a point where we are a lot more aware of the threats to our birds and the simple everyday events that we can carry out to enable them to prosper, like trapping rats, stoats and keeping our cats well fed etc.

We need sustainable bush /forests to support good populations of birds. Unfortunately there are many adventurous plants available today that are happy to grow where they can and often at the expense of our native plants. Several weed species have the opportunity to change the natural make-up of our bush and sometimes displace some species. Sycamore (*Acer Pseudoplatanus*) is one which has become a problem in Otatara. Other species include: Chilean Rhubarb, Darwin's Barberry, varieties of Cottoneaster, Old-man's Beard and Chilean flame creeper.

The ICC has recently spent time eradicating some of its Sycamore within the Otatara Scenic Reserve as part of their long term weed program. Sycamore has the ability to create a canopy which chokes out the natural light source required by many of our sub canopy species, causing them to die along with ground growing species like ferns. Check the impact the Sycamore has had on the native species adjacent to the golf course north of the school.

Boundaries are favourite places for weed pests as there is often a good source of sunlight. If you own a large area of bush have you considered weeding it and preventing the seeding of unwanted species into your neighbours property or other natural areas in Otatara? Seeds can be spread via wind and birds. If you have large sycamore trees – are they seeding?....have a look down wind.

I offer a service to property owners which includes:

- evaluation of bushed areas identifying problem weeds and issues requiring attention
- a management plan for the long term eradication and management of weeds
- effective treatment of weed species
- removal of problem trees/limbs
- treatment of large weed species with removal of tree when dead (reduced weight) to reduce damage to bush and possible use as firewood.
- re vegetation of affected areas or planned landscaping.

The removal of some weed species may qualify for some replacement trees from the Southland Community Nursery in Otatara.

I am happy to discuss the health of your bush with you. Please call me, **Chris McMillan** on 2131165.

Otatara School go wild (again)!

Room 7 and 8 Otatara School (Year 4) Visit to SCN 22 November 2016

Just over 50 Year 4 students from Otatara School visited the Southland Community Nursery to continue their learning about NZ native birds and their adaptations to the environments they live in. Five activities allowed the students to discover and learn about native birds. The photo matching game showcased the NZ natives that are found here in their backyard – Otatara, Southland, and discussion highlighted the different beaks that different bird species have, and some interesting facts about the shining cuckoo!

The Bird Beak activity allowed hands on (or beak on!) experimentation of how birds have adapted different beaks and how these allow them to feed in different environments for different food sources. Habitats such as the forest floor (dirt, rotting log), streams, wetlands and estuaries (water), river bed (stones), and kowhai flowers had the students thinking. They learnt that the tui have a tongue! “What do I eat?” had students grouping the birds under insect, nectar and fruit eater headings, and then discovered what plants can be planted to attract these birds to your backyard.

A walk around the pond and collecting nature (as a bird would) ended in the students building an amazing array of nests. The “Who Am I?” cards were used to figure out what bird was being described and the students, parents and teachers all learnt some interesting facts about our NZ native birds. To finish off the visit their artwork was congratulated with many of these class members receiving a prize from the Southland Community Nursery and Kiwi Conservation Club bird art competition.

Bronwyn Graham



Foveaux Strait history

My next book is on the history of Foveaux Strait. Help sought with stories and photos and references relating to shipping, shipwrecks, oil exploration, muttonbirding, oystering, fishing, crayfishing, swimming, yachting, lighthouses, ferries, whales and anything else to do with the strait. In my definition the strait extends from Puysegur Point in the west to Tautuku Peninsula in the east and includes the islands of the strait and the northern coast of Stewart Island from Mason Bay to Port Adventure. **Lloyd Esler**

Orienteering

Ever wondered what ORIENTEERING is all about? Your chance to have a go in beautiful and friendly surroundings where you can't possibly get lost is on SUNDAY 6 AUGUST at BUSHY POINT, Bryson Road. This event is part of the Winter Series run by the Southland Orienteering Club to encourage new or newer orienteers to have a go and is a great family event. You don't have to run. You can go in groups.



Turn up any time between 11.30am and 1pm on the day, with \$5 for a map.

Check out www.sporty.co.nz/SOC for information on other events run by the Club or phone Sally 2131403 for more information. **Sally Duston**

Motor Bikes in Bushy Point (are not allowed!!)

Over the summer (such that summer has been) there have been reported a number of incidences involving motor Bikes in the Bushy Point Conservation Area. This culminated in an incident on Saturday 29th January when I nearly got run over by these people. I was mowing the pathways at the time and I got off to have a wee chat to them but they sped off and headed for home exiting through the main entrance on Bryson Road. I have had a look around and there is some minor damage to the walking tracks where turf has been torn up but hopefully this will recover before the winter otherwise there is likely to be more muddy patches.

However there are several things that concern us:

1. The use of motor vehicles in a conservation area is forbidden unless it is for the management of the area (Which our ride on lawn mower is)
2. The speed they were travelling at meant that if I had been 3 or 4 meters further back on the track then there would have been a crash as they came over the brow of the hill at a speed they would not have been able to stop safely. What if this had been a family group?
3. Exiting onto Bryson road means they were travelling on the open road in unregistered vehicles which is another legal no-no.

The two bikes were of a predominant Light green colour as was the full faced helmets and protective gear they were wearing. The two bikes were of different sizes, with the smaller one following the larger one. This suggests to me that the riders were in the 9 to 16 year age group. I suspect (without proof here) that these bikes and gear may well have been Christmas presents.

The matter has been reported to the Police and is therefore out of our hands and this the riders can blame directly on themselves as had they stopped when they clearly saw I wanted to talk to them we could have sorted the matter out then and there.

If anyone in the Marama Ave Sth, Bryson Rd area knows who these riders could be could they either report the matter to us or to the Police directly, this can be done anonymously if you would prefer through crimestoppers. Contact to us can be either through our email address at: otataralg@gmail.com or they can call me at (03) 213-1500 or any of the other committee members direct.



Some of the damage caused to tracks by the two motor Bike Riders

Barry Smith. Otatara Landcare Group Chairman

Update from Bush Haven

We have been very busy over the Spring months, with over 30 Kereru coming to our property injured, from all over Southland. Also several tuis, one bellbird and several Little or German Owls. The owls go to our trustee, Gloria Harris for care and also two of our grandchildren successfully raised and released two. These birds are not native but come under the Bush Haven umbrella.

At present we have 16 kereru on the property, although we hope to release three more in a few weeks' time. There are four in hospital care at present. One tui will be released before this publication is printed, and another one is learning to fly again after a broken wing has healed. We have several young red-crowned Kakariki this year and we believe the number of wild birds has also increased, which is thanks to those people who are doing pest eradication on their properties, and in the reserves. Wouldn't it be great to have more of these special chattering parrots around?

Our special birds, South Island Kaka have surpassed themselves with raising five chicks, which are now flying in the aviary with their parents. There are four females and one male chick – the females will later be released at Abel Tasman Park at the top of the South Island and the male will go to Orokonui Ecosanctuary for release. Our birds are the top breeders in this programme, and we are very proud of that achievement. This brings the number they have reared to 16 so far. We at Bush Haven welcome groups of visitors to the property to see these and other birds, by appointment, for a donation towards feeding costs. As we are a registered charitable trust, if you wish to give a larger donation, this can go towards a tax refund later in the year.

The photos show two of our regular volunteers at Bush Haven, Kathy Morrison and Holly McKenzie, helping with weighing the chicks. **May Evans**



Otatara Pestbusters

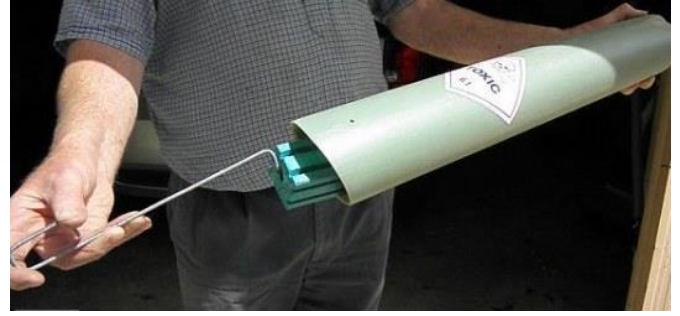
Have you had a look at our website yet? **www.Otatara-pestbusters.org**

Over the past year there has been massive movement of families into Otatara, and also some away. Some people leaving may have shown the new owners bait tunnels with poison for killing rats, or you may have found some of these in your bush after taking over the property. These tunnels and bait are important for the future wellbeing of the bush and birds in your area. If you do not know what to do with them, please contact Russell Evans on 2130530 to arrange for some poison to go in your bait stations, and relevant information. Traps are also available upon request, and also possum traps with lure, as they are still a pest in bush areas.

You may not believe there are rats in your area until you hear them in your ceilings – these must be got rid of by placing poison in tunnels about 10 metres from your house, **NOT IN CEILINGS**. If left in ceilings the bait attracts the rats which go to your spouting or header tank for a drink after taking the poison, and die

there!! leaving a decaying and smelly body for some time. With the poison outside, the rats are attracted away from the house, they take the bait and go away – never to be seen again.

The bait stations are safe from cats, dogs and small children as the bait is well into the centre of the tube. See photo. They cost only \$5.00 each and a bucket of bait is \$20 for 66 baits.



Have a look on our website and you will see a tag on your property when you have joined Otatara Pestbusters. We are an important part of the National group, predatorfreeenz.org and there are many interesting stories about pestbusters on this website.

If you value the birdlife and renewal of our special bush you should be controlling the pests on your property. You will receive a tasteful sign for your letterbox to show you care for our birds.

This summer there has been an increase in the number of young tuis and bellbirds around, which shows that what some people are doing is definitely helping. We want this to continue.

Remember that you are a guardian of this piece of land you call home, as long as you live there!

See Russell at 49 Bryson Road, Wednesday afternoons 3- 6pm or Saturday mornings, 9.30am – 12.30 pm; or contact him on (bush.haven@kinect.co.nz) ph 2130530. **May and Russell Evans**



Photo is of Russell showing off two of his passions!

Kiwi Conservation Club – families involved in conservation

Come and join the Kiwi Conservation Club (KCC). KCC is a club for children and their families to explore, discover, love and become the kaitiaki/guardians of our unique natural world - the native plants, the native animals and the places where they live. I'm a KCC Volunteer and I coordinate family events in Invercargill and around Southland. In the last year we have visited Sherwood Forest, Waituna Lagoon, met kaka, kakapo and kereru, walked through 500 yr old kahikatea forest, met wetland wildlife, planted native trees and had fun with boats, kites and bubbles. We are often found at the Southland Community Nursery which provides a great place for our adventures.

If the KCC sounds like you join the Kiwi Conservation Club for just \$24 a year and receive the excellent children's magazine "Wild Things" four times a year. It's easy to join. Go to www.forestandbird.org.nz/kcc or phone 0800 200 064.

Come along and be a part of the fun!

Bronwyn Graham southland@kcc.org.nz



kiwi conservation club
for kids who are wild about nature



Eco-Fun Day - 11 December 2016

Southland Community Nursery, Otatara Landcare Group and Kiwi Conservation Club (KCC) teamed up for an exciting Eco-Fun Day on 11 December 2016.

The event started at the Community Nursery Education Centre where keen families picked up their Eco-Passport in which to record their stamps for activities.

The idea was to get outside and explore nature at Rances and Bushy Point. Activities included identifying bugs and plants and discovering the uses of some plants also becoming a legend alongside Otatara Landcare Group members and plant another tree in this forest in the making. Each plant had a number and after planting them children measured the height of their numbered plant and their own height to keep a record of growth in future years. Bushy Point is a “forest in the making” and also a site where you can see conservation in action – you can visit the area any time from the public access and walkway on Bryson Road. There have been over 25,000 native plants planted here in the past 6 years - all by volunteers.

Families also saw what life lives in the pond (koura and damselfly larvae were pulled out of the nets), and children played games and learned all about pesky possums and other pests.

A lot of fun was had as well as learning about all the creatures that live in our own backyard – thanks to everyone who attended.

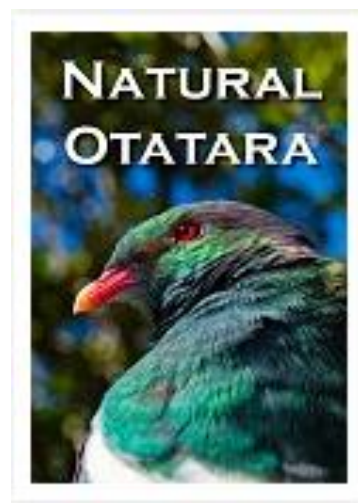
KCC is a children’s conservation club you can join at www.kcc.org.nz – you will receive 4 copies of the “Wild Things” magazine as well as being able to enjoy local outings – contact local KCC Coordinator Bronwyn 213 0017, southland@kcc.org.nz for further details.

Chris



**Get a Free Copy of the Booklet Natural Otatara when
You join the Otatara Landcare Group.**

**Pick up your copy from
Southland Community Nursery
185 Grant Road, Otatara – just past the rapid number.**



Otatara Landcare Group membership form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Cellphone _____

Email (for newsletters and events) _____

Subs (please tick)

- 1 year \$20 _____
- Life \$50 _____
- Donation _____

Subs or donations can be deposited directly into the OLG bank account 03 1355 0805312 00 but please make sure they are labelled with your name and 'OLG sub' as references.

Please email (otataralg@gmail.com) or send this form with cheque to our treasurer Glenda Graham – 33 Rakiura Parade, Otatara RD 9 Invercargill 9879

OLG Calendar 2017

JANUARY Monday 30	Chilean flame creeper removal, Bowman's Bush , Ruru Ave – 7pm-9pm (ph Randall 2130851)
FEBRUARY Friday 3, 10, 17, 24	Southland Community Nursery , 185 Grant Road - volunteer mornings – 9am-noon (ph Chris 2131161). www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz (park at 183 Grant Road car park).
Sunday 19	Bushy Point work day – 1pm-3pm (ph Sally 2131403)
Sunday 26	Seaweed KCC Activity – Omaui Beach with Lloyd Esler Leaders Chris Rance 2131161, Bronwyn KCC 2130017 Meet at Omaui at 10am
MARCH Friday 3, 10, 17, 24, 31	Southland Community Nursery , 185 Grant Road - volunteer mornings including seed collecting – 9am-noon (ph Chris 2131161). www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz (park at 183 Grant Road car park)
Wednesday 8 March	Foraging with Maggie and Chris – meet 183 Grant Road carpark at 6.30pm - \$5 per person
Saturday 18	KCC exploration at Bushy Point – start from Southland Community Nursery, Otatara – 1-3pm. Leaders Chris Rance 2131161, Bronwyn KCC - Southland Community Nursery, 185 Grant Road. www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz (park at 183 Grant Road car park).
Monday 20 Tuesday 21	Southland Girls High School Breakout days at Bushy Point, volunteer help always appreciated (ph Chris 2131161 evenings). This replaces our March Bushy Point working day so feel free to come and help. All help appreciated – start 9.30am-2pm – entry through Barrys at 173 Grant Road, Otatara.
Sunday 26	Nature Photography for Beginners – 10am-1.30pm venue Community Nursery Education Centre. Tutors Wynston Cooper and Dawn Patterson – venue Community Nursery Education Centre \$10 each booking essential rances@ihug.co.nz
APRIL Friday 7, 14, 21, 28	Southland Community Nursery , 185 Grant Road - volunteer mornings – 9am-noon (ph Chris 2131161). www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz (park at 183 Grant Road car park)
Sunday 2 April	Native Plant Sale 185 Grant Road, Otatara – 10-noon
Sunday 9	Bushy Point work day – 1pm-3pm (ph Sally 2131403)
MAY Friday 5, 12, 19, 26	Southland Community Nursery , 185 Grant Road - volunteer mornings – 9am-noon. (ph Chris 2131161) (park at 183 Grant Road car park) www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz
Friday 12	Apple Pressing Workshop – Southland Community Nursery – 1pm-4pm (park at 183 Grant Road car park) www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz
Sunday 14	Bushy Point Planting Day 1pm-3pm ph Sally 2131403 and KCC event – collecting seeds
Wed 17	Otatara Landcare Group AGM – 7-9pm – Otatara Church Hall, Oreti Road followed by speaker Nathan Cruickshank – “walking to Puyseger Point” .
JUNE Friday 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	Southland Community Nursery , 185 Grant Road - volunteer mornings – 9am-noon. Friday 10 and 17 will be CUTTINGS WORKSHOPS please book a place (ph Chris 2131161). (park at 183 Grant Road car park)
Saturday 24	Matariki Night Celebration and BYO Supper to share at Community Nursery Education Centre – 7pm-9pm - park 183 Grant Road (ph Chris 2131161). www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz
Sunday 25	Bushy Point Work Day 1pm-3pm ph Sally 2131403

JULY Friday 7, 14	Southland Community Nursery , 185 Grant Road - volunteer mornings – 9am-noon (ph Chris 2131161). Nursery closed for winter.
Sunday 9	Kiwi Conservation Club Children's Exploration Trip (Planetarium?)
Sunday 16	Bushy Point Work Day 1pm-3pm ph Sally 2131403
AUGUST Sunday 6	Orienteering Event at Bushy Point (ph Sally 2131403) START 11.30am-1pm
Sunday 13	Bushy Point Work Day 1pm-3pm ph Sally 2131403
Saturday 19	Kiwi Conservation Club Children's Exploration Trip – Southland Community Nursery Education Centre – 2-4pm. Leaders Chris Rance 2131161, Bronwyn KCC 2130017
SEPTEMBER Saturday 9 Friday 22, 29	Big tree planting day for families at Bushy Point (ph Barry 2131500) REPLACES Monthly WORK DAY. Combined with Kiwi Conservation Club. Southland Community Nursery , 185 Grant Road - volunteer mornings – 9am-noon (ph Chris 2131161). www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz
OCTOBER Friday 6, 13, 20, 27 Sunday 8 Sunday 15	Southland Community Nursery , 185 Grant Road - volunteer mornings – 9am-noon (ph Chris 2131161). www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz (park at 183 Grant Road car park) Overnight KCC Trip to Tautuku and Earthlore (TBC) Bushy Point Work day 1pm-3pm (ph Sally 2131403)
NOVEMBER Friday 3, 10, 17, 24 Sunday 5 Sunday 12	Southland Community Nursery , 185 Grant Road - volunteer mornings – 9am-noon (ph Chris 2131161). www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz (park at 183 Grant Road car park) Eco-Fun Day at Bushy Point and Southland Community Nursery 1pm-3pm (ph Sally 2131403) (park at 183 Grant Road car park) and pick up your eco-pack from the Education Centre. Leaders Chris Rance 2131161, Bronwyn KCC 2130017 Bushy Point Work day 1pm-3pm (ph Sally 2131403)
DECEMBER Friday 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 Saturday 9 Wednesday 20	Southland Community Nursery , 185 Grant Road - volunteer mornings – 9am-noon (ph Chris 2131161). www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz (park at 183 Grant Road car park) KCC Nature Discovery 2-4pm Bushy Point Walk (Leader Barry Smith 2130500) – 7.30pm Kiwi Conservation Club (KCC) is a children's nature activity club for families. You can join at www.kcc.org.nz and will receive the "Wild Things" magazine 4 times a year.

If we have your email we can email reminders and new events directly.