



## PIGEON POST

### Issue 50 October 2014

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**

Please contact the Otatara Landcare Group if you have questions, ideas or problems relating to the Otatara and Sandy Point areas.

**Chairspeak** – a message from Chairman Barry Smith.

Greetings to everyone. There has been a great deal of excitement in the Otatara Landcare Group in recent months.

Firstly we have achieved a milestone (funny still calling it a milestone when we converted to kilometres many years ago, but kilometrestone doesn't quite have the same ring to it....) Anyway, the milestone we have reached (although not quite yet we will have achieved it by the time you receive this newsletter) is the 10,000 hours that volunteers have put into the Habitat Restoration project at Bushy Point. This is a fantastic effort and everyone can be proud of the work done to date. By my calculation it took us 15 years to reach this point and 25,000 plants have been put in the ground, so there is probably only about 30,000 hours to go..... and possibly another 45 years (gosh! I'll be 94) so keep up the good work.

Many of you will know we had a bit of a celebration at the Otatara Community Centre to mark the occasion. We had about 50 people attend our Haggis, Neeps and Tatties. The haggis was piped in and addressed and we all ate our fill. For those of you who don't know what all of this is, the haggis now-a-days resembles (and tastes) more like a spiced and herbed sausage with grains etc added. The Neeps is mashed swede and the tatties is mashed spud.

Just pondering this milestone vs kilometrestone business, If the milestone is 10,000 hours and a kilometre  $\frac{5}{8}$  of a mile then a kilometrestone must be 6250 hours..... (we passed that years ago!)



#### **The new Tractor**

We were recently fortunate enough to get a generous grant of over \$13,000 from The Southern Trust. This was for the purchase of a new tractor/mower for scrunching up the broom, lupin and gorse. Here Ray Jackson demonstrates its versatility and manoeuvrability as he steers it between plantings. This replaces Barry Smith's ancient mower which did good service for many years but finally succumbed to

the rigours of the work. This one will last us well into the future.



**Planting Day** The Otatara Landcare Group had its fourth planting day on Saturday 13 September 2014. About 80 people turned up in good weather as soon had about 1,200 plants in the ground. This was followed by a barbecue sausage. The holes had been pre-dug and the plants set out beside the holes. We put on the plastic kombi-guards as well, essential for keeping off the rabbits as this sandy gully seems to be the most rabbit-prone part of the whole reserve. This year we included about 60 'pull-outs' which are seedlings of flax, Cabbage trees, *Carex secta*, and broadleaf which had been

simply pulled from the ground elsewhere in Otatara and planted along with the potted seedlings. These have been marked with blue tape and if they take, it could mean that we can just transplant these species rather than growing them up.



The pictures show the team learning the ropes, Barry briefing the volunteers and everyone hard at work.



**Street names** – A short note on the origin of two street names. Mahuri Road and Marama Avenue are Maori

words meaning 'sapling' and 'moon' respectively but the reason for their use was unclear. Here is a clue. Tohi te Marama and Mahuri were two Maori fishermen from The Neck on Stewart Island in the late 1800s. When Mahuri's boat *Rosa* was wrecked on Ruapuke Island, Sir Joseph Ward arranged for him to get an old age pension, unusual in those times but typical of Ward's generous nature towards his constituents. Did the namer of the new streets know these characters? Mahuri and Marama were also racehorses, contemporaries about 1912. There is a Mahuri in Rajasthan in India and another Mahuri Road in Taumarunui.

### **Orienteering at Bushy Point**

Did you see rather a large number of people, like over 60 – adults, toddlers, teenagers (and dogs) - at Bushy Point, one wintry Sunday in July – running; walking; looking puzzled; in groups; by themselves; with buggies; wearing strange blue and white suits; rugged up in polar fleece?

This was the orienteering event put on jointly by the Otatara Landcare Group and the Southland Orienteering Club.

Thanks to help from David Whelan at ICC, Sven Pederson of the Southland Orienteering Club (and also Otatara), created a new map of Bushy Point, specially scaled for orienteering purposes. This is the second event to be held at the reserve and, whilst it's not a technically challenging area, because of the nature of the

# Bushy Point

Scale 1: 4000

Contour Interval 2.0 m

Southland Orienteering Club:  
[www.sportsground.co.nz/soc](http://www.sportsground.co.nz/soc)



Magnetic North

## Legend

- Major road
  - Minor road
  - Road
  - Vehicle track
  - Path
  - Small path
  - Less distinct small path
  - Fence/ruined fence
  - Gate
  - Building/ man made object
  - Distinct tree
  - Log/ logpile/ tree stump
  - Parking area
  - Open land
  - Rough open land
  - Rough open land with scattered trees
  - Forest: run
  - Forest: slow run
  - Forest: walk
  - Undergrowth: slow run
  - Undergrowth: walk
  - Fight
  - Distinct vegetation boundary
  - Contours
  - Formline
  - Slope line
  - Earth bank
  - Elongated knoll
  - Small knoll
  - Large depression
  - Small depression
  - Pit
  - Pond/water hole
  - Minor water channel
  - Narrow marsh or trickle of water
  - Marsh/small marsh
  - Indistinct marsh
  - Out of bounds
  - Trig station
- 406462 SAR grid reference



## Bushy Point Score Nov 2013

Score	206 points
Start	crossing point
1 4	Path junction
2 4	Path junction
3 5	SW end of ditch
4 6	SE side of hill
5 6	Path junction
6 6	N inside corner of fence
7 6	Path junction
8 6	Top of hill
9 7	Reentrant
10 7	Path and fence crossing
11 8	Depression
12 8	S outside corner of fence
13 8	Path and fence junction
14 9	Path junction
15 9	NW part of low hill
16 10	Between buildings
17 10	S side of water hole
18 11	SW end of path
19 12	S inside corner of fence
20 15	SW pit
21 15	Reentrant
22 16	Depression
23 18	W foot of spur

These organisations provided funding for our electronic equipment.

terrain, it's a great area to learn the ropes, for those new to orienteering, or for those just wanting a good work out on a Sunday afternoon. Both these events were what we call 'score' events, whereby you get a pre-marked map, showing the particular controls (points where you have to check in.) You have a given time to get as many points as you can. Spots harder to find get more points. Orienteering is a map sport which challenges you to read the features on the map (scales are usually 1:10000) and navigate your way from point to point. A new appeal, especially to younger brains, is the electronic aspect of the sport. With an 'e-stick' attached to your finger

you 'punch' each control spot and this gives an accurate printout of your time taken to complete the course. The attraction of orienteering is that you don't have to be a champion runner or have expensive gear – there are courses for all levels of fitness – you can walk and chat, push your baby in a buggy or be fiercely competitive. It's also not a huge time commitment.

So if this appeals to you, keep an eye out for the next event at Bushy Point (probably in the summer) by checking [www.sportsground.co.nz/soc](http://www.sportsground.co.nz/soc) or [www.otataralandcare.org.nz](http://www.otataralandcare.org.nz) Sally Duston

**Banana museum** Otatarā has a new museum, Southland's *leading* banana museum! The collection of over 100 bananas began when the curator tried to convince people that yellow bananas are unripe and we should wait until they are black before we eat them. Alas, yellow is winning and there are only a dozen black ones. Come and check them out Lloyd's collection sometime.



**Painted Ladies** Are we being invaded by Australians? Recently a number of these migrant butterflies were spotted in Bluff after a period of strong westerlies. Keep an eye open for unusual birds and insects which may turn up in Otatarā. It's only a few days of flying with the wind behind you to get across the Tasman and New Zealand shares quite a few ferns, orchids and spiders with Australia because their spores, seeds or

ballooning babies get carried aloft and a few make it to land.

### **Doggy Latrines for Otatarā?**

Dog poo! The Taboo Topic. Not the most pleasant of dinner -time

conversation themes but inevitable with little ones present! Having a small grandson who likes to get out and about, I feel I am fast becoming a bit of an expert as to which road is most likely to take out the prestigious award - 'Pooiest Road in Otatarā 2014'. You've got it - my own one, Rata Road (or do I hear you protesting? That you, too, could claim this chance of instant fame for your very own road?). Now, don't get me wrong – every road has a goodly share of men's best friends and every dog needs long walks every day. Dogs are nice to pat and a great ice-breaker when meeting a fellow pre-dawn prowler. And, let's face it, there's



nothing a dog likes more than tracking down where his deadliest enemies or dearest friends have walked before him. Not to mention the fact that we, human or canine, all 'have to go'. But.... **not** good for the mower, the buggy tyre or the new sneakers.

A while back, we introduced a poo bag holder at the start of the Bushy Point entrance and, save for the odd bagful being tossed in the bushes, the response has been terrific. Bushy Point's looking so much more healthy these days – **thanks everyone** for making a special effort to not only pick up but take home too.

It would be great to extend that courtesy to all our road verges and remember those coming after. Sally Duston (who will remain dogless!)



### **Doggy Doo's and Donts Chris Rance**

Let me say right at the beginning, I am a dog lover. As such, I have been trying to think of a tactful way to write this article. But, being from Yorkshire and used to calling a spade a spade – or in my case calling a spade a shovel, I will call 'doggy do', 'dog s\*\*t'. I hope this doesn't offend anyone but I was offended when I was required to remove a doggy doo bag full of dog s\*\*t that some kind person had put inside the leaflet holder under the interpretation sign at Bryson Road. This is not an isolated incident, Sally has picked up many 'full' doggy bags placed carefully on the track into Bushy Point. We are all volunteers – who do the

people who deposit the bags think is going to pick them up off the track – PLEASE!! We assume that responsible dog owners will TAKE IT AWAY WITH THEM and thankfully most do. But for those who don't clearly we need more signs – please send me your suggestions – I have some already but I don't think we can print them!

Then there is the other camp of why not just flick it off into the undergrowth? Doggy do is one of the most biodegradable substances on the planet and plastic bags one of the least. In most circumstances I tend to be in this camp. However at the start of the Bushy Point track by flicking the offending article off the track it merely goes into areas where volunteers are weeding plants, so that won't work. We are doing our best on this one and we appreciate everyone's assistance.

## Subs Due

At the AGM we approved a new subs structure simplifying the categories to \$20 a year, \$50 for Life Membership. If you are a member who pays annually then annual subs are due. We hope you will consider the life membership option to reduce the need for us to keep reminding you to pay annual subs. The subs help to cover costs of printing newsletters, Bushy Point costs and other events such as the recent History Night and Haggis Night. Contact our treasurer Glenda Graham to pay by cheque or directly into our bank account 03 1355 0805312 00 - please put your name and OLG subs.

[STOP PRESS - the Otatara Landcare Group has just won the Community Group Award from the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network for its work at Bushy Point - congratulations everyone who has been involved.](#)



## UPDATE FROM BUSH HAVEN

We are now in possession of a male Kaka to keep our female company and photos are attached of the pair when first introduced, courtesy of Kathy Morrison; also the aviary extension. We still have a few issues to work through but so far the birds have settled in well and the female is not calling nearly as much as she used to. Our thanks to Fonterra for building the aviary extension, and also to members of the public who gave us donations and offers of materials.

Over the past months a pair of young tui were successfully released in the Chesney Street area where several residents are feeding them, and already there

are several other tuis around. There are a lot more native plantings in the area and they are really pleased to be encouraging tui to their neighbourhood.

Several of our regular kereru are still coming for occasional feeds and although some might say this makes them rely on us, at least it helps the breeding of more birds locally. We have received several reports of increases in numbers of these special birds around Otatara.

We are already on number 6 kereru since April, with three in hospital care at present, and a successful release of four a

few weeks ago. This

year's released

kereru carry a fluorescent

yellow 'jess' over a silver band on one leg, and tuis have a red plastic band over silver. Last year's kereru have a fawn jess tuis have green plastic over silver bands. Our years run



from April to March so there is some overlap in colours of birds released in April or May bearing the previous year's colours, as birds are banded when they go to the pre-release aviary, where they stay from a few weeks to several months, depending on their individual recuperation.

## **OTATARA PESTBUSTERS UPDATE**

Numbers of Otatara home owners joining Pestbusters are slowly increasing, but there are still many of you out there we would like to hear from. Firstly those who have been controlling pests on your properties by some means for ages – don't just say 'I'm doing my own thing' – we would like to give you a cute letterbox decal to show everyone you are being responsible; we would also like to have you on our list, it won't cost you anything!

Next – even though you haven't seen any rats doesn't mean you don't have any! Around your compost bin or near the hen-house would be a great place to have a bait station. These cost just a few dollars and are available from 49 Bryson Road, Wednesday afternoons 3-6pm and Saturday mornings, 9.30 – 12.30.

Many people are noticing more kereru, tuis and bellbirds this year than ever before. We believe this is because so many responsible people are dealing to the rats and possums.

Become a responsible person! Phone 2130530 or come along to 49 Bryson Road for your pest-busting products, preferably Wednesday afternoons, 3.30 to 6.30 pm or Saturday mornings, 10 to midday.

Members of the Pestbusters are also looking after the Council Reserves, so why don't you do your bit as well?

See our website, [www.Otatara-Pestbusters.org](http://www.Otatara-Pestbusters.org)

## **FIREWORKS SAFETY – MESSAGE FROM BUSH HAVEN**

Once again, a reminder that all Otatara people should be aware native birds are nesting at present and the noise and flares of fireworks could seriously risk losing eggs, chicks and even parent birds. People often move to Otatara because of the beauty and proximity of tui, bellbird and kereru and of course the bush, so why risk losing them?

Fireworks are also very scary to horses, and most other animals. It is relatively easy to keep cats and dogs inside but not too easy with horses in paddocks.

Fireworks follow an English custom of Guy Fawkes attempting to blow up Parliament – it is celebrated in the Northern hemisphere in Winter which doesn't disturb fauna as much as it does here, in the Spring/Summer – our predominant breeding season for most birds and animals.

There is also the risk of a fire starting in the bush from sparks, which is a very real danger, even after so much rain.

Be responsible – if you MUST have fireworks, please ensure you attend public gatherings or let them off in large clear areas, well away from all animals and bush habitat.

Please ensure when using fireworks that a responsible adult is supervising or setting them off.

Russell & May Evans Bush Haven Otatara

## **Saving power Barry Smith**

Saving energy and reducing your power bill. In the last few months we have been replacing the most used light bulbs in our house with LED ones. The 7 x 50W halogen bulbs above the kitchen bench were replaced with 4W LED, the 5 x 15W long life bulbs above the dining room table have been replaced with 7W LED that light up immediately rather than over a period of several minutes. Some of the long life bulbs I removed we have used to replace the final lot of incandescent bulbs still remaining in the house. In doing this we have reduced our daily power consumption by about 1.5kWh (1.5 units). Although this amounts to only about 0.44 per day (we are on the low user rate – we pay more per unit but only about \$0.35 / day for supply) this amounts to a rather staggering \$240 and 550 units a year which we can re-invest in more LED lighting and make more savings. LED lighting tends to be quite expensive, however there are sites overseas where you can order them in direct and the range from about USD 1.50 ~ 7.00 (roughly NZD 1.65 ~ 7.70). If you are wondering what size bulbs to replace you existing ones with then the rough rule of thumb is: Long Life use 20% of the power of an incandescent (The old type) and LED uses about 10% of the

incandescent and 50% of the long life. Example: 60W Incandescent can be replaced with a 12W Long Life or a 6W LED. Just one more thing, if you are ordering bulbs it would be usual to order Warm White, this is the right colour temperature for our eyes, the White ones are very intense and stark and I liken them to getting snow blindness. Work out how much savings you can make by changing just one or two specific bulbs in your house to LED. LED have a 20,000 ~ 50,000 hour life, 3 to 8 times that of long life and 16 ~ 40 times that of the old incandescent bulbs.

### Thanks to the Residents of Otatara from Karen Maw

In October of 2013 the Otatara Pestbusters community, the Otatara Landcare Group, and others supported my research by providing a variety of predators. While I did not find many skinks in the predators' stomachs I did make some interesting observations.



Although there weren't many stoats, weasels, and ferrets from Otatara I consider this was not a drawback as it revealed a great effort on the part of those that trap these animals. For my research I found that these were one of the identified predators of skinks. The research I conducted that studied other work revealed the serious threat that hedgehogs have for the birds and other critters that are native to New Zealand. This possum decided to have a feed of blackberry (left)

This hedgehog had bird remains in the stomach (right)



This is only a very small fraction of what appear to be the



remains of honey bees in the stomach of another hedgehog (left).

The last meal of a rat, well chewed and difficult to see what has been eaten (right)



Pregnant green skink, Tiwai Peninsula (left)

I am nearing completion of my research paper and once it is finished it will be made available to the community of Otatara. Once again my sincere thanks to the Otatara community for your help in collecting dead animals. Karen Maw

3<sup>rd</sup> year Environmental Management student, SIT

## *I'm A Potted Plant at Rances*

I'm a potted plant at Rances a native one in fact  
They don't hold with plants exotic, no, we'll be having none of that  
I used to be baby seed, in a pot well hidden from sight  
Watered and put under cover till I grew up green and bright

Just when I felt contented, I was ripped out of the pot by my neck  
My bum got banged on the table while for mould and disease I was checked  
No one thought to ask us plants, did we want to be re-potted  
Probably if they had, we'd have said -You want what ..... get knotted

Sorted now into tidy rows all orderly shipshape and proper  
Ouch, careful how you handle us, blimey Ginger's come a cropper  
I'm sat right next to Myrtle but I'd rather be next to Jim  
Specially since we're all snug and tight, Cor – I don't half fancy him

Left out in all weathers, I manage to retain my looks  
No Aloe Vera or such for us when we're pecked at by the chooks  
That fancy bit Cosinia she thinks she's better than us  
She's stripped her leaves – the hussy, really, enough's enough

Oh, and Madam Flax's another one with her leaves all shiny and red  
Swaying shamefully in the breeze, such carrying's on in the beds  
I settle, all calm & peaceful nodding off as the sunlight flickers  
Oh no they've turned the water on; I'm wet right down to my knickers

It's not easy being a potted plant life's full of stresses and strains  
You're banged up, bruised & battered and gravel dropped on your brain  
But they say it's for the greater good as I'll soon be bushy and tall  
Then one last move- and me - I'm off - to grace gardens or dunny walls

Dawn P – aka Footloose



### **Southland community Nursery - October 2014**

After closing for two months over winter, the Nursery is open again for volunteer Fridays, plant sales, school and group visits and workshops.

Since officially opening the Education centre in November 2013 we have had over 800 visitors to our property. Many school and pre-school groups have visited but also workshops as diverse as apple pressing, swede carving and plant propagation. We look forward to hosting other workshops – have a look at our website for the workshop facilities and make a booking. STOP PRESS – we are hoping to host artist Jo Ogier in the new year for a beginners art workshop. Jo is an amazing artist specialising in nature subjects – have a look at the following website <http://solandergallery.co.nz/node/2392> or Google Jo Ogier and you will see the diversity of her work.

Just before leaving of the UK, Kindergartens South held a workshop on “Nature Discovery” with 50 teachers from around Southland attending. It was inspiring to hear the stories which demonstrated that “**being in** the natural world directly and frequently produces positive physical, mental and emotional benefits for children and adults” (Fiordland Kindergarten Nature Discovery – Claire Marley-Shaw). Fiordland Kindy are leading the Country in outside learning and it fits very well with what we are doing here at the Community Nursery.

On a different topic, it is prime planting time and we have lots of good plants ready to go into the ground right now – Pittosporums, Cabbage trees, tree Fuchsia, Coprosma, red tussock, Carex, toe toe etc. Come

for  
and



along on a Friday, help out and take a few plants away for free or plants are sale (PB3 size pots) for \$5 a plant. Pictures show Bronwyn and Abby carving a swede  
Kindergarten South’s Workshop in the Education Centre  
See you soon Chris Rance

[www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz](http://www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz)

## **Hugs & Bugs – A Must See on the Outskirts of Invercargill**

Do you see faces or objects in trees, driftwood, rocks etc ? Trevor Huggins does and out of rusted pieces of metal brings to life creatures, albeit in a different shape and form than originally intended. Rusted bits & pieces evolve into herons, flowers, beetles, bugs, sheep, you care to name it & Trevor creates it.

Trevor began making things at age five and loved creating something out of nothing. As an adult he sold scrap for years. In the early 80’s collecting scrap metal from rubbish dumps he would often put bits & pieces side because they “might come in handy one day”.(A generational thing I suspect)

Attending a sale to buy a scythe he discovered it came with a pile of junk. Hating to see things thrown out he commenced sorting through this pile and began to see the possibilities of bugs and animals made from bits & pieces. Accompanied by a desire to recycle, the first of his creations was born. Enter – A MILLENNIUM BUG) Since then a procession of amazing creatures have been assembled.

Asked to make a donation box for a Nature Centre he stood over his “junk” pile and in no time at all, a small gas bottle, tines from a hay fork, a conrod, small pieces of scrap reinforcing steel and a little imagination became a kiwi koha box. An artwork that Otatara Community Nursery will treasure.

Times for making these creations vary; once he has sorted the appropriate pieces out and fired up his welder three to four hours will produce a small kiwi, or bug. Larger creations like his palm tree can take up to 10 hours. Painting is on top of this and can take a wee while due to several coats of paint then a coat of rust kill prior to the final coat of paint and a new bug or plant has been produced. Others look better au natural. Some pieces have been around for hundreds of years and with a new life as a garden ornament will probably see us all out, and I might add look a darn sight more becoming

His art work has been exhibited at various fetes & country field days. Being a Taurus it is often a last minute scramble to get things ready for the day.

Trevor believes that what nature creates is often reflected in the shape of things we use. So go out and take another look at your hedge clippers, I’m sure you will see a storks beak and the beginnings of a new creature.

All this creation is fitted in with a full time job, a Bed & Breakfast Business, a craft studio run by his wife Lynne (also in full time work), a beautiful Function Area suitable for Weddings & other functions and a huge garden ruled over by Millie a hairy Jack Russell/Foxy cross.

Got any old rusty junk you were going to dump, especially shovels, hedge cutters, rakes and motorbike parts, or anything interestingly shaped then call Trevor on 03 214 1769 it might save you a trip to the tip.

### **Goodbye and thank you Postie**

Alan Smellie has always gone the extra mile for Otatara on his RD9 rural delivery round. No-one knows this more than the Otatara Landcare Group who have benefitted from Alan's generosity on numerous occasions. When you have received fliers about Landcare Group special activities and events, chances are it was Alan who dropped off the information into your mailbox. So, we take this opportunity to say THANK YOU Alan for a job well done and very best wishes for a well deserved break. And welcome to Nobby and Karen as you come to grips with the delivery run. We wish you the very best and look forward to meeting you.

**Anyone wanting to offer a garden** as a good example of the use of natives for a garden tour? If there are enough offers we will organise a tour. Contact Glenda Graham Ph 2131397.

**Onduline** The Fieldclub recently paid for about 50 lizard covers for a research project. These are available to anyone to borrow. They are onduline which is a heavy corrugated roofing material in squares about 50x50cm. Lizards live them.

**Rabbit project** Lloyd is working on a book on the story of rabbits in Otago and Southland. Also included are possums, hares, stoats and ferrets. Any stories or references welcome.

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