



### Otahuna Outing 22 September 2002

The photo shows Geoffrey Rice addressing members during the Otahuna Outing. Dr Rice of the History Department at the University of Canterbury last year published a book on Sir Robert Heaton Rhodes. His address described the human side and achievements of the man who created the house and garden we were visiting and who dominated many aspects of Christchurch life in the first half of the twentieth century. Your editor added details about the Otahuna garden in the context of Christchurch garden history.

We were relieved to finally hold this outing. Twice cancelled due to the weather, this time a near-gale was blowing during the morning, which posed a potential danger in this tree-clad garden. However the wind dropped just in time and we were pleased to at last enjoy our outing in fine weather. The famous Otahuna daffodils were still to be seen although past their best. Later in the afternoon about 30 of the 60 original starters took the walk from Otahuna to the lower reaches of Omaha Reserve, a route not normally available as it crosses private land.

The Society thanks Mr & Mrs Radford-Kirby, the owners of Otahuna, for permission to make this visit. Although Otahuna was semi-public in recent years, the new owners have converted the property back to the private residence it once was. We appreciate their hospitality, particularly in view of the on-again-off-again nature of our plans. We also thank Mr & Mrs Wilson for permission to cross their land en route to Omaha.



The Plains as seen from lower Omaha Reserve on our Outing September 22nd. Otahuna is out of sight where the lower valley meets the Plains.

### Council 2002 Civic Awards

#### John Willocks & The Eastenders

We are pleased to report the presenting of a Community Service Award to John Willocks by the Hagley-Ferrymead Community Board on 10th October. The citation reads:

'John has been a member of the 'Eastenders' work party for many years and its co-ordinator for the last ten years. The Eastenders work on the Eastern Port Hills building and maintaining tracks, planting trees and controlling weeds. As part of the Summit Road Society, they work closely with the Christchurch City Council's Park Rangers and other groups such as Turning Point 2000. Under John's leadership membership of the group has grown and the number of days worked and the scope of work has also increased.'

The Society congratulates John Willocks for well-deserved recognition of his considerable efforts on our behalf. As he himself remarked, the award is also recognition of the contributions to public enjoyment of the hills by all Eastender and other work party members.



Eastenders Work Party in snow at Castle Rock, about 1999.

#### Paul Loughton

Paul Loughton is to be presented with a Civic Award by the Mayor on 26th November 2002. The citation reads; 'Paul Loughton has been an active member, a valuable Committee member and Treasurer, since he joined the Society in 1985. At present, he represents the Society on the Advisory Committee of the Summit Road Protection Authority.

His expertise enabled the Society to negotiate the tenuous course of the initial and subsequent Ohinetahi land purchase. His careful monitoring of finances covering all the aspects of the Society's activity over a period of 17 years has helped to provide a degree of certainty for the future of the Society and its continuing benefit to the people of Christchurch. His membership of the Kennedys Bush Association and of the Turning Point 2000 Port Hills Project are other areas where Paul has freely given of his time and service to the community.'

## Editorial

Ah, the Summit Road! Top down in the MG, sun on the back of the neck, freedom of a summer Sunday. Not fast, just cruising - pleasure of movement and machine, twisting ribbon of road, cyclists, walkers with day-packs and dogs, dry grasses nodding at the roadside, and Christchurch stretched out below, flat and wide. Up here everything seems to work together - people, place, machines.

Harry, some parts you would hardly recognise – the tour buses and parapenters, the mountain bikes with air suspension and cadmium alloy frames, the extent of Christchurch's spread and the huge, brightly-coloured container vessels at the port. But other parts you would recognise – the cloud patterns and skylines, the light and winds and colour of the grasslands. You also would recognise the freedom of the people, cheerfully roaming the land, happy breaks from city routines, smiles on their faces. This was your vision for the Port Hills and, give of take some details I think you would smile Harry, once you got used to it.

But a state highway? I'm sure the MP in you would like central funding but should this delicate little road really be entrusted to Transit New Zealand? Guidelines and regulations for semi-trailers and volume traffic? Curvatures for high-speed safety and A to B business? Remote, single-purpose administration from Wellington (via a local office, but beholden to national

priorities)? I don't think so. This is a small multi-purpose pleasure road, humble and in harmony with its setting. It also is unique in location, character and purpose. The Summit Road passes through a landscape that, while robust in some senses, is very prone to be altered in character by changes wrought upon it. Would Transit really know how to keep 'hands off' and maintain the current harmony? Maybe, maybe not. But having myself worked on highway landscaping projects since the 1970's, personally I doubt it. Fund maintenance of the Summit Road certainly, but let's not change it.

Members would have been shocked to read of the death of Peter Yeoman in October. Your editor frequently was critical of Mr Yeoman's policies on Port Hills development, both at hearings and in this Newsletter. Our most recent locking of horns was over the Montgomery Spur development, of which he was the prime promoter. And before that the gondola. However I also worked with Peter a few times, respected and liked him, and was grateful for generous assistance he provided those around him along the way. It therefore is a matter of sadness to learn of his passing. I always regarded our criticisms as 'grist to the mill' of debate regarding the Hills, and was willing to take criticism as well as give it. My main interest was achieving the best outcome for the Hills. It was nothing personal. No doubt plenty debate is still to come regarding the Port Hills but many will miss Peter along the way.

Graham Densem



### Summit Road Society (Inc)

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President	Maurice McGregor	332 0597
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Administrator	Carol Haars	942 4857
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	Barry Gerard	326 5105
	Anne Kennedy	337 0364
Work Parties		
Eastenders	John Willocks	384 3252
Kiwigang	Anne Henderson	352 8058
Ohinetahi	Gordon Kirk	332 7134
Weekenders	John Grennell	358 4438

We are a voluntary society promoting enhancement, preservation and protection of the nature, beauty and character of the hills of Banks Peninsula, for people's enjoyment.

We need and welcome contributions to our work through memberships, donations and corporate sponsorships, participation in work parties (non-members welcome - but why not join us as well!), and bequests.



Summit Road at Ahuriri. Our next state highway?

## Trust Established

(from Society press release)

### Harry Ell honoured in Memorial Trust

The Summit Road Society, the tireless champion of open spaces on the Port Hills, has recently formed the Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust to attract more funds for even greater achievements.

Henry George Ell, a Christchurch MP (1899 – 1919), social reformer and visionary, was largely responsible for the formation and protection of the Summit Road and its associated open spaces. His grandson, John Jameson QSM, aged 81, is one of the founder trustees, and is still an active member of the Summit Road Society he established in 1948, 14 years after Harry Ell died.

Trust Chairman Maurice McGregor said Harry Ell's foresight and the society's dedicated implementation of that vision had gifted Christchurch residents and visitors a priceless legacy.

Continued next page

One regular visitor from the USA made the first donation to the new Trust - \$1000 and a promise of a further \$2000. Professor Al Fagerstrom of Ann Arbor, Michigan, lived in Christchurch each summer from 1994 – 2000. "I soon learned of the beauties to be enjoyed by looking both toward Christchurch and toward Lyttelton Harbour from the Summit Road. Since this early discovery, I repeatedly drove all segments of the road and hiked many of the excellent tracks especially the one from the Sign of the Takahe to the Sign of the Kiwi and those near Godley Head," Professor Fagerstrom said.



facilities. Harry Ell died in 1934 and the Trust seeks to continue his work on the Port Hills," Mr McGregor said.

The Trust's purposes are to raise funds to enable the Summit Road Society to purchase and otherwise acquire land on the Port Hills for conservation purposes, to fund the on-going maintenance of tracks, vegetation and facilities.

The founding Trustees [pictured front to back] are John Jameson QSM, Maurice McGregor NZ 1990 Comm. Medal (Chairman), Paul Loughton (Treasurer), Graham Densem and Gordon Kirk QSM.

Mr McGregor said the Summit Road Society seeks to minimise residential encroachment and intruding structures on the Port Hills.

"Our volunteer work parties put in more than 250 hours a month, working alongside City Council Park Rangers maintaining tracks and facilities, bush remnants and tussock grasslands. We have promoted the concept of a Port Hills Regional Park and we have purchased 150 hectares of land at Ohinetahi in Governors Bay. Our Society has covenanted and will maintain this land for public conservation and recreation purposes." Mr McGregor said the Summit

"The Summit Road and the hiking tracks so close to the city are an enormous asset for the people of Christchurch as well as for its visitors. I know of no comparable road, views and tracks in the U.S.A. maintained by the joint enterprise of Park Rangers and volunteers. In both my drives and hikes I benefited in a big way from these endeavours. With a modest gift to the Trust Fund I merely wish to say, thank you very much!"

The Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust now makes it easier for others to say thank you very much too.

"The Summit Road Society set up the charitable trust to enhance, preserve and protect the nature, beauty and open character of the Port Hills. We named the Trust to honour Harry Ell, because without him we never would have had the benefit of the Summit Road, its chain of public reserves and

Road Society had an urgent need for more money.

"In the face of present-day developments the current urgent need is for funds to maintain, improve and develop our existing operation. We need better means of accumulating and legally protecting land for conservation and public purposes, as it becomes available," Mr McGregor said. He hopes that people will consider making gifts for such purposes, either during their lifetime or by bequests, or the allocation of their residual estate. The Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust will give them the inspiration to also leave a legacy for future generations.

For more information: The Chairman  
Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust  
PO Box 583, Christchurch  
Or call the Treasurer: Ph (03) 322 708

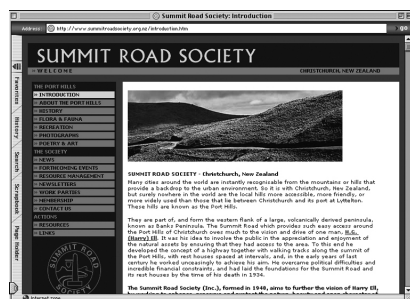
## Society Website

The Society is now 'on line'. Over the winter we got our website registered and on line and are pleased to be in the twenty first century at last, promoting Port Hills values to a new audience. The Society is extremely grateful to Janey Thomas for the enormous amount of time, skills and tenacity it took getting the venture up and running. Well done Janey! Visit us when next online and tell your grandchildren to log on to the

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

Society too. There is information there for homework projects as well as recreation options and updates on our activities. 2001 and 2002 newsletters are also available on line.

The Committee put a high priority on establishing the website to communicate with a wider range of people, in particular younger age groups. We are pleased at the fine result. Further contributions to the contents are welcomed – for example any poems or literature you may find, walks, history, botanical and other data. Comments would be appreciated about mistakes and omissions (or even things well done!) Please forward communications through the Secretary by mail, fax or email, with any contributions on disc if possible.



## Position of Executive Secretary

With the ending of Graham Densem's time as Society Co-ordinator and growth of the responsibilities shouldered by the President, the Committee have decided to seek the services of an Executive Secretary for the Society. This will be a part-time paid management position suitable for a person interested in Port Hills environmental issues, resource management matters and able to organise outings and promote the work of the Society. Contact Maurice McGregor for more details.

## Murder and Mayhem

Murder at Mount Vernon

The Press of September 25th 2002 reported another murder on the Hills. This one relates to a young Chinese woman found near a wrecked car below the Summit Road on Mount Vernon land. Her boy friend was later arrested. It brings to mind a case on the Godley Head Road in August 2000 and others going back to the Parker-Hume affair of the 1950's, and beyond. No wonder Ngaio Marsh lived on the Hills!

The Port Hills and Summit Road have a distinct nightlife, quite different from that of the daytime. Tyre marks from nightly 'donuts', cars over the bank, condoms in parking areas and the disturbed sleep of nearby residents remind us that the vast dark hills at night offer a whole range of attractions for Christchurch, quite apart from the daytime ones promoted by the Society. Many are harmless or at least don't affect others greatly. However as the underbelly of the city grows in size and mobility

and as cars become both faster and cheaper, perhaps it may become necessary to close or otherwise have surveillance on sections of the Summit Road after nightfall? Perhaps Harry Ell's notorious toll gates should be exhumed!

Mayhem on Watlings Track

An example of the willfulness of Port Hills users was reported to the October Committee meeting. The work party reported the illicit moving aside of stone steps on Watlings Track, apparently to make it passable to mountain bikes, and presumably to create a route from the Summit Road to Governors Bay. Some of the stones were large and it would have required organised effort by more than one person to move them. Watlings Track is on land owned by the Society and while open for public recreation, is not public land as such. Apart from the effrontery of such actions, it has opened steep sections of track to significant erosion risk. We do our best to maintain our land in as good a state as possible for people to enjoy and naturally are concerned at wasted resources from such

actions. On the other hand, maybe the Society needs to consider a mountain bike link from the Summit Road to Governors Bay?

Postscript: From descriptions given, the likely offenders have been spoken to by Council Rangers and are now on notice for good behaviour. They are believed to have been a commercial operation. The steps have now been reinstated by our ever-active work party and the erosion risk minimised as far as possible.

## NZ Geographic Magazine

Look out for an extensive article on the Port Hills and Harry Ell in the forthcoming issue of New Zealand Geographic magazine. It should be on news stands in December. John Jameson has devoted a lot of energy over the last three years in getting the article up and running, and latterly, in providing material for it. From the proofs it looks as if he and the writers have done a grand job. Good national publicity for the Port Hills and Harry Ell.

## Want to be on our Outings List?

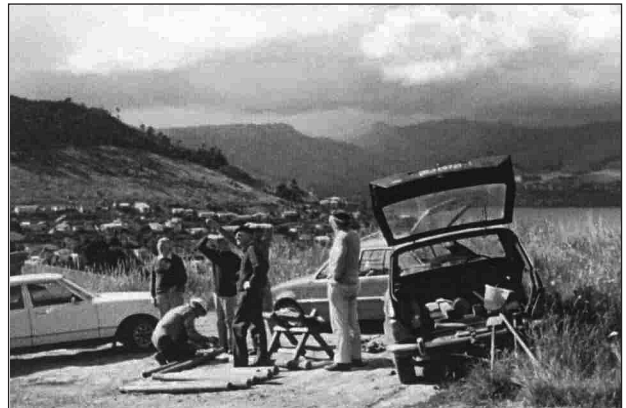
For cost reasons the Society no longer does an automatic post out of Outings notices to all members. Where possible we now send notices by email to members and non-members who have asked for them. We now do a reduced mail out only to parties who have requested the notices. If you wish to be added to either the email or postal list please notify Carol Haars the Secretary as on page 2.

## Membership

Society membership has grown a little this year but the Society needs all possible new members who support conservation and public enjoyment of the Port Hills. Our membership form is reproduced with this newsletter. Readers are encouraged to photocopy it 'multitudinously' and give to friends and loved ones. Suggest they become members, change yours to a family membership. It's only \$20 a year and could be regarded as a donation to Society work on the Hills. Just do it!

## Noticed our Notice?

A small metal sandwich-board bearing the Society's logo disappeared after our March Outing 'About Governors Bay'. It is white and stands about 400mm (18 inches) high and was brand new. It was set on the roadside beside our registration point before the walk but had disappeared by the time we packed up. Possibly al-Qaeda operatives have hijacked it for terrorist purposes. But if by any chance someone reading this happened to have rescued it on the day and has now forgotten it in 'safe keeping', we would appreciate its return. Contact the Secretary as on page 2, or Bob Cawley on 326.6687. The Eastenders, whom we borrowed it from, would like it back as they have now also lost its replacement!



Summit Road Society, East Work Party, Major Hornbrook Track, Lyttelton, March 1984. On the back is written 'First Major Job'. Photo Doug Meherne.

## 'Weekenders' Work Party

Our new weekend work group commenced operations last February and is now seeking additional interested people to join the current gang of seven. The group's purpose is to allow volunteers in weekday employment to undertake hill work out of working hours. They work in tandem with the Council Rangers and the Society's three other work groups and meet once a month on Saturdays. Their focus is on the mid section of the Summit Road between the Sign of the Kiwi and The Tors. Members and non-members are welcome to join and frequent attendance is not required. Contact Jim Grennell, 'Weekenders' Work Group Co-ordinator, tel 358.4438 (home), 349.1818 (office) and (027) 4330.358 (mobile).

## CCC Map

The City Council recently produced a new Port Hills brochure with map and basic cultural and recreation information on the Hills. The map is based on that in Gordon Ogilvie's *Enjoying the Port Hills* and is targeted at tourists and general Port Hills users. The Society contributed to the Council's production costs and we will include the brochure along with our own earlier map. While the new map is up to date and shows the overall Hills very well, including useful topographical shading, the scale is too small to supercede the more detailed track information and notes on the Society's earlier map. Nor does it replace the detailed cultural & historical information in our brochure. For the time being the Society therefore intends continuing to sell our brochure and map as before, but with the Council brochure also inserted. This should give users the best of both worlds for the time being.



## Godley Head Heritage Trust

This new trust was established earlier in the year and in October issued the first copy of its newsletter *The Godley Beacon*. ('flashy' title!) Kit Iversen is Chairman. The aims are:

- in conjunction with the Department of Conservation to preserve and maintain the historic assets of Godley Head;
- in conjunction with DOC to undertake educational activities pertaining to the area;
- to undertake research and provide historical data into the Godley Head installation and sites;
- to develop public support and involvement in maintenance of the historic assets through sponsorships, grants and donations from the public, business houses and other bodies;
- to undertake other work and provide support and assistance consistent with the charitable purposes of the trust.

The Newsletter reports an intention to have a web site operational in October, initially through DOC's own site at [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz). Peter Wilkins the Trust historian can be contacted at tel 942.1942 and Graeme Hines the Curator at 384.3866. Postal address of the Trust is PO Box 354 Christchurch.

With formation of the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust, the White-Flipped Penguin Trust and our own Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust there appears to be, in Jim Hopkins parlance, a veritable deluge of trustworthiness sweeping the Peninsula. Long and deep may the deluge thereof be!

## Art of the 'ills

During October, your editor happened across an exhibition of new paintings by Brian McCracken, at Fishers Fine Arts in Riccarton Road (opposite Riccarton Mall). Five of the works took the Port Hills as their subject, such as 'Winter Nor'wester over Christchurch', 'From The Summit Gibraltar Rock', 'Towards Castle Rock from the Summit Road', 'Down from the Top Port Hills Canterbury', and 'Port Hills Autumn'. A particular feature were the fine portrayals of the skyline and atmospheric patterns which are so much a feature of Canterbury and the Hills. Recommended, though no guarantee the paintings will still be on display by the time you get this. Thanks to Fishers and the artist for permission to reproduce the attached illustration.



Port Hills, Autumn. Brian McCracken 2002

## Whats On

November 24th (Sunday) 10.30am:

Gebbies Pass-Packhorse-Orton Bradley Walk

A guided walk from Gebbies Pass to Orton Bradley Park, passing the Sign of the Packhorse, and crossing the flank of Mt Bradley before dropping down to Orton Bradley. Full details on Outing flyer accompanying this newsletter. Registration essential. Register with Carol Haars by phone, fax or email, no later than Wednesday 20th November.

December 1st (Sunday) 10.00am-2.00pm: [rain date Dec 8th]  
"There's Something About Victoria"

City Council family picnic. Activities include guided walks with the Port Hills Rangers, a rural fire-fighting display, mountain biking for children, a climbing wall, responsible dog ownership display. Victoria Park Road will be closed to all traffic and buses will take people from the bottom of Dyers Pass Road. Further information from Maria Moran, Community Recreation Advisor, CCC Beckenham Service Centre

December 6th (Friday) 5.00pm:

End-of-year Barbeque, Victoria Park Visitors Centre  
Our regular end-of-year barbecue for Society and Work Gang members and other interested friends. Will include a farewell to Graham Densem who after three years is leaving his position as Co-ordinator with the Society. We would like to have hill work party personnel, outings participants and members well represented at the gathering. Families welcome. There are play facilities for children and toilets nearby. The Society will provide basic BBQ fare but those attending should self-cater for drinks/extras they may require. Register with Carol Haars by Wed 4th December to allow for catering.



## Resource Management News

### Banks Peninsula District Plan

On November 1st 2002 the Society's Resource Management Committee lodged a submission to 'Variation 2' of the District Plan, recently notified by the Banks Peninsula District Council. This Variation seeks to incorporate various issues of the Peninsula's rural and coastal areas into the District Plan, following the Rural Task Force deliberations of the last two years.

In the Society's view the proposed variation gives inadequate protection to rural values and in particular to outstanding landscapes within the Port Hills and Lyttelton Harbour basin. Under the notified rules these urban-fringe areas are treated no differently from rural lands generally on the Peninsula with no special provisions made for urban pressures in sectors of the district bordering Christchurch. We are concerned that the rules will allow subdivision of lots in some cases down to 4 hectares within the rural area and are of the opinion that lots of this size cannot maintain the current rural openness of the Hills. Also that the buildings rules are set up to maintain low densities of development in rural areas. We foresee this as leading to the spread of houses, access roads, lights at night etc, throughout the upper hills, as on Burkes Bush Spur in Selwyn District. The Committee would rather see clustering of houses onto the lower slopes to allow the upper slopes to remain completely unbuilt. We believe a completely unbuilt form of the upper slopes will maintain their current values, whereas under a low density of development will devalue these values markedly. The Committee also believes that the Landscape Protection Area proposed in Variation 2 covers too small a proportion of the upper hills to adequately protect existing natural values.

The Society's submission requests that a special rural zone be formed for the Port Hills/Lyttelton Harbour basin section of the district in order to manage subdivision and building pressures on rural land. We also request clarification of the methods and boundaries used in drawing up the Landscape Protection

area, and request extending of that area to cover approximately the upper half of the Port Hills.

The Society also notified in its submission that it believes the consultation processes carried out by the Task Force was inadequate. We believe that Society views were not sought or taken into account, either as a landowner in its own right (the Society owns the 150ha Ohinetahi Bush between Governors Bay and the Summit Road), or as a submitter to the District Plan as originally notified in 1998. We have received no hearing or notice of

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“ If actions are not taken now, the concept of the upper hills as a natural backdrop for Christchurch, and of the Summit Road as a recreation road, will become lost for ever...

—Resource Management Committee

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outcome regarding that earlier submission.

Promoting such issues taxes the Society's resources severely but we believe it important to advocate for conservation and recreation interests in planning long term futures for the Port Hills. Rural lands in all sectors of the Hills are under unprecedented pressures for subdivision and development. No longer can farmed or afforested rural land be assumed to be a 'land bank' for future conservation or recreation as they have been for the past 100 years. Now rural land is increasingly being bought and sold purely for its 'added value' potential as housing sites which, once established, generally permanently compromises its conservation purposes. The Resource Management Committee believe that if actions are not taken now, the concept of the upper hills as a natural backdrop for Christchurch and the Lyttelton harbour basin, and of the Summit Road as a recreation road, will become lost for ever. Also a large measure of breadth and depth of the Port Hills recreation potential.

Members who disagree or agree with this approach are urged to make their views known to the Committee in writing, through either Gordon Kirk or the Editor. The society email and box addresses are listed on page 2, or the editor can be emailed direct at

g.densem@clear.net.nz. In appearing on behalf of the Society at hearings and in Court we need to be able to demonstrate that we are promoting views representative of our membership.

Also, should any readers with suitable skills wish to assist in the Resource Management Committee, you would be enthusiastically welcomed. We need people with resource management, planning, community, science or legal skills to assess notified proposals, and to formulate and present cases to Council and Environment Court hearings. Our vice-chairman Gordon Kirk and our advisor Graham Densem have carried much of this work in recent years but are unable to maintain the level of input required for the multiple cases we are facing over the three district plans. To volunteer, please contact the Chairman, Maurice McGregor, as on page 2. Just do it!

### Barnett Application

After nearly 3 years and three previous hearings this long drawn out case will be heard in the Environment Court in the last week of November. The application is for a house to be built on the 220 metre contour at 'Horse Trough Bend', the acute bend halfway up Dyers Pass Road above Governors Bay. The 24 ha site runs from this bend up to the Summit Road at the Sign of the Kiwi. The site originally formed part of the 100 ha site on which the 'Stan Hay' house on the Summit Road was built some years ago, but now has been divided off and sold. The Society will present evidence at the hearing.

The Resource Management Committee is concerned about this proposal on two counts. Firstly, we maintain it is too high on the hills. With a proposed floor level on the 224 m contour it is 67% of the height of the summit of Dyers Pass Road at the Sign of the Kiwi (332m). In comparison, the Sign of the Takape on the Christchurch side is a little under 200m. Land at this height is we believe within a zone that should be maintained as undeveloped natural landscape on the Lyttelton side of the Port Hills (both sides actually), in order to maintain an extensive natural backdrop for developments lower down. Housing this high will we believe cumulatively overbalance the natural dominance and

lead to a disappointing dulling down of the outstanding natural character of the Lyttelton side of the Port Hills.

The Committee's second concern is with the 'creeping' nature of development it foresees on the Banks Peninsula side of the Port Hills. First the Hay house was established on the Summit Road due to a technical error in the drafting of the Summit Road Protection Zone plans. Although not intended, the site was found to be outside the Protection Zone due to error in the plans, and, being on a site of more than 100ha (albeit comprising three titles), a house could therefore be built as of right. Not to mention the sheds to service the operation and the 100 ha of land, which haven't been grazed since in anything like the numbers claimed at the hearing to prove the property could be an economic unit. Now, without needing subdivision consent (because the Hay site already comprised three titles), one of the titles has been sold at town prices to become a rural residential section, and is the subject of the current hearing. Additionally, Variation 2 of the Banks Peninsula Plan will reduce the size requirement for a house in the rural zone to 10 ha, or in some case 4 ha. If allowed, the current applicants or indeed the present owners of the 'Hay' properties (Mr Hay sold soon after developing), can well be expected to apply for further house developments on the land in question. The same could apply on high land throughout the Lyttelton Harbour basin. The Committee is deeply concerned that very quickly the dream Harry Ell promoted for an undeveloped backdrop to Christchurch and Lyttelton will be compromised for ever. The Committee also feels the Banks Peninsula planning process has appeared to be hostile to serious consideration of such future uses for private land on the Port Hills, other than their subdivision for housing.

As with the Variation 2 discussion, members who strongly agree or disagree with the above sentiments are urged to make their feelings known to the Resource Management Committee. We need to know the degree of support or opposition we have amongst Society members for our approach.

#### Montgomery Spur

To date no decision has been released since the hearing last May. We believe

the Court may be holding decisions in order to co-ordinate between several related cases concerning the Port Hills.

#### Grazing Management of Port Hills Grasslands and planning for formation of a Port Hills Park

The City Council has this year been active in trying to co-ordinate grazing policies on the Port Hills, in the interests of maintaining grassland health. Initially this involves their own reserve lands, but ultimately management of all Port Hills grasslands need to be agreed. The Society generally supports the Council efforts, although critical of some aspects. Our position is along the lines of Professor O'Connor's paper, presented to the AGM in March. There is still a long way to go on this issue, particularly in co-ordinating different approaches on private and public lands. Resource Management Committee members are pleased the dialogue is progressing and hope to give the issue high priority in 2003.

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**"** Your committee wishes to give high priority to promoting the debate of the Port Hills as a Regional or National Park in 2003

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As to planning for a Port Hills (Regional? National?) Park, little has occurred this year. Parties agree on various issues but no-one to date has taken a lead. Your Committee wishes to give high priority to promoting this debate in 2003. We believe the Society as an 'outsider' to the three councils may be in a good position to promote the necessary dialogue. We are seeking additional volunteers for our committee to help us with this.

#### Helicopters

A stream of submissions was received by the City Council over the much-publicised application for a helicopter operation at the top of the Bridle Path. Currently nothing more has transpired except for a change of Council in Banks Peninsula. The new Banks Peninsula mayor Bob Parker was quoted in the Akaroa Mail of July 12th as emphasising that his Council had not given permission for the operation, despite claims otherwise by the applicant. He said 'the Council had agreed 'in principle' to the lease of an appropriate site, ... which was not the same thing as approving a specific proposal.' This is in keeping with

the Society's understanding that the former Banks Peninsula council agreed to let the matter go forward for discussion, but not necessarily to its approval.

The helicopter application has some interesting aspects due to its being located virtually astride the summit of the Port Hills and therefore the Banks Peninsula/Christchurch City boundary. Whakaraupo Reserve, in which the proposed site is located, is owned by the Banks Peninsula Council, but that section of the Reserve extending over the summit lies within the planning jurisdiction of Christchurch City. Hence the differing role of the two councils.

As an addendum the Newsletter notes failure in the Environment Court last month of a case brought by the same applicant regarding Tekapo Airport. In that case the applicant sought to have the Court require the Mackenzie District Council to compulsorily purchase Tekapo Airport, which is privately owned, so that the applicant could then apply to run a helicopter operation from the airport. The current owners apparently had declined such permission. Your editor is bemused at the applicant's apparent concepts of private versus public rights. The Bridle Path application could become equally messy, but the Resource Management Committee feels the large number of submissions lodged will give the Council a clear indication of the public's view.



#### The City from the Hills

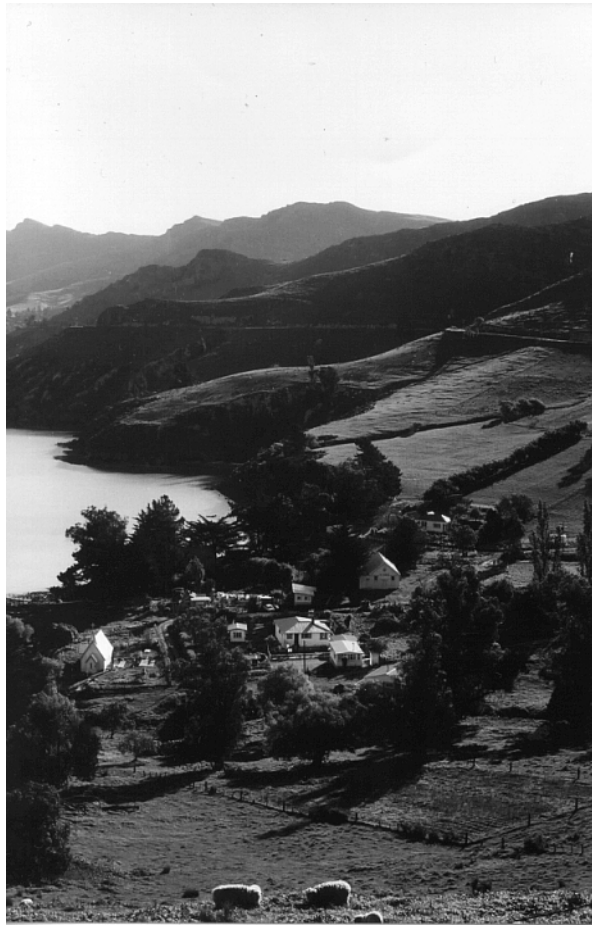
There lies our city folded in the mist,  
Like a great meadow in an early morn  
Flinging her spears of grass up through white  
films,  
Each with its thousand thousand-tinted globes.

Above us such an air as poets dream,  
The clean and vast wing-winnowed clime of  
Heaven.

Each of her streets is closed with shining Alps,  
Like Heaven at the end of long plain lives.

Arnold Wall  
From 'New Zealand Verse' 1906





Rapaki afternoon light (1970)



## BREATH OF LIFE - SPRING

Cold change coming,  
 Grey and ominous to the south,  
 Last week's spring warmth  
 About to be shunted northwards  
 By a dark southerly sting  
 In the tail of winter.  
 Better hurry to finish our lattés  
 At warm tables on the Boulevard,  
 And our lawn's first mow of the season.

Up on the hills a line of boiling cloud  
 Spills silently over the beautiful skyline,  
 White against the black storm behind,  
 Lyttelton's basin filled and overflowing.  
 And within those recumbent slopes  
 Sleeping Papatuanuku sighs and stirs,  
 Breath of life exhaled over warm hills.

Mothering hills, generations patient  
 As your precocious children have  
 Tumbled and spilled about your sacred body,  
 Bound with roads and lines,  
 Mounted and occupied,  
 Tunnelled your inner privacy,  
 Improved your naked beauty  
 With a clothing of houses and trees,  
 Fashion accessories for a sleeping beauty.

Yet still, there you recline -  
 Patient, silent, beautiful,  
 Empowering, loving, giving -  
 Mothering the careless little ones,  
 Breathing them life, promising them future  
 Despite their tumbling and squabbling.

Hail Mother, full of Grace!  
 Ave Maria, mater dei i!  
 Ki a Papatuanuku!  
 Haere mai! Haere mai! Haere mai!  
 Breathe on us your breath of life,  
 Caress us again with your rainbows,  
 Angle again golden sunrises and shadows  
 Across your beautiful body,  
 Bleed again your mother's cleansing renewal,  
 Your seasons changes,  
 Your gift of rebirth for tomorrow's children,  
 Spring renewal from the hills to our restless city.

Mothering hills,  
 Day by day  
 Season by season  
 Generation by generation,  
 Change us with your breath of life.

GHD Oct 2002