



From the Secretary

Happy New Year to all Society members and supporters. As you will see from this newsletter, things have been as busy as ever for the Society over the second half of 2014. As well as all the routine business that crosses my desk, this year, we will be looking at ways to raise the profile of the Society, to increase membership and to keep members better informed of our activities, and carrying out a review of the website. Membership numbers dropped slightly last year, but are still reasonably healthy, particularly taking account of the tramping clubs, walking groups and other organisations that are members. You can do your bit to help by renewing your subscription if it is due this year, and talking to family, friends and colleagues about the Society and its work.

Omahu update

Gibraltar Rock was first on a list of the five top picnic spots in the 5 December issue of the Christchurch Press. I am sure that anyone who knows Omahu Bush and Gibraltar Rock will agree.

The small group of volunteers led by Paul Tebbutt continues to work on the reserve making sure the tracks are in order and continuing the long process of clearing gorse. It is now accepted that gorse is useful as a nursery crop to allow native plants to germinate, which then over time outgrow the gorse. However there are many areas on the reserve where we really need to get rid of it. There are also a couple of interesting developments on the animal pest control front. Landcare Research is trialling a new rat trap design. After determining that we have enough rats there to warrant a trial, they have installed 200 traps! It will certainly be interesting to see the results. You may have seen an article in a recent edition of the NZ Listener about the possum and mustelid traps produced by a company called Goodnature which have had extensive field trials leading to a number of modifications and which are used by the Department of Conservation, and locally by the Port Hills Rangers. When the trap is triggered by an animal taking bait, a gas canister releases a lethal bolt which kills instantly. Whilst they are quite expensive, the advantage is that they can dispatch 12 possums or 18 stoats or rats before the canister needs changing, so can cut down significantly on the time spent checking and managing traps. They are not the answer to pest control prayers, but are a valuable addition to the armoury. Courtesy of the grant awarded to us by Selwyn District Council we have bought 10 traps. See page 8 for latest news.



Finally, **orchids!** Paul Tebbutt now notices native orchids wherever he goes on the Port Hills and spends a lot of time running between our volunteers making sure none are destroyed! (Please see the separate article.)



Over-40s Tramping Club

Ohinetahi update

Work also goes on at Ohinetahi, and the reserve continues to improve thanks to Mother Nature helped on her way by our small team of volunteers. By way of example, when the majority of the reserve was officially opened by Hon. Ruth Dyson MP in April (see the last newsletter), the speakers had to compete with the noise of at least eight bellbirds. There is also an interesting development here as a new course, "Field Ecology Methods" is being introduced at Lincoln University, and students will be carrying out field work and collecting data at the reserve. Over time this should provide valuable information about the flora and fauna. We haven't had the opportunity to have a detailed risk assessment done of the part of the reserve that is still closed, and as a first step we are hoping to deal with our infamous 'dangerous boulder', but given the cost there is still a bit of 'head-scratching' going on. At least word is obviously getting round as in November Anne Kennedy was pleased to see the **first walking group** through the reserve for a long time.



Pterostylis banksii

Eastenders

The Eastenders continued to meet regularly during the second half of last year, working at Rapanui Bush, Jollies Bush and Scott's Reserve, on the Captain Thomas Track, and have helped with the construction of a new section of track near the Tors. Numbers are still good, with a couple of new members joining recently.

Summit Road opening

We were delighted that the final section of the Summit Road from the Mt Cavendish saddle through to the Bridle Path was reopened for pedestrians and cyclists just before Christmas. Our friends from the Port Hills Rangers see this as a big milestone and the culmination of a massive effort by the City Council and specialist contractors to bring back all the recreational opportunities available before the earthquakes. As indicated in the last newsletter the status of this section of the road will be reviewed in 2016.



Before (2013), another section of closed road. For good reason!

PHOTO: ROSS YOUNGER

 <p>Summit Road Society (Inc) PO Box 17-719, Christchurch Website: www.summitroadsociety.org.nz Email: secretary@summitroadsociety.org.nz</p>		
President	Bill Woods	03 318 4825
Vice-President	Jeremy Agar	328 9956
Secretary	John Goodrich	326 3035
Treasurer	Paul Loughton	322 7082
Board Members	Hamish Grant	928 2456
	Anne Kennedy	337 0364
	Paul Tebbutt	384 3086
<i>Honorary Life Member</i>	John Jameson	354 5925
Representatives		
Selwyn District Council	Grant Miller	03 329 6123
Hagley/Ferrymead	Islay McLeod	389 0954
Lyttelton/Mt Herbert	Paula Smith	03 329 4445
Spreydon/Heathcote	Melanie Coker	669 0336
Port Hills Rangers	Paul Devlin	332 5627
Eastenders work party	Paul Tebbutt	384 3086
Ohinetahi work party	Anne Kennedy	337 0364
Omahu Bush work party	Paul Tebbutt	384 3086
<p>We are a voluntary society working to enhance, preserve and protect the natural environment, beauty and open character of the Port Hills of Banks Peninsula for people to enjoy. 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.</p>		

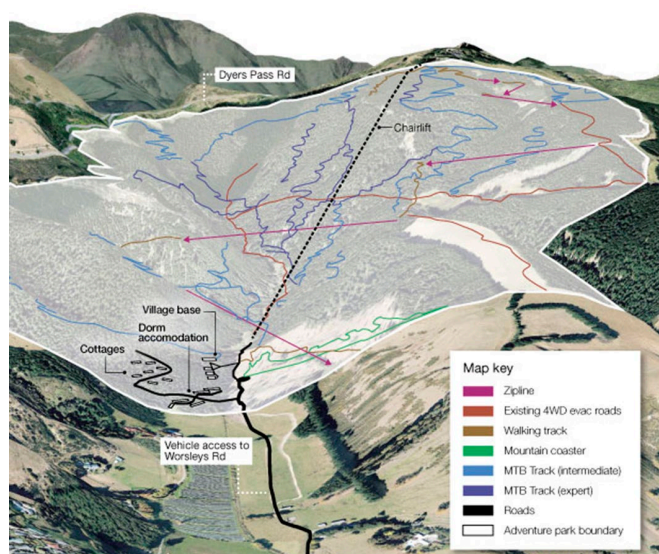
Christchurch Adventure Park, Cashmere Valley

The park has been the subject of a number of recent reports in the local media. In summary, the proposal by Select Evolution Holdings (NZ) Ltd is for around 100km of mountain-bike track catering for beginners to experts, with a 1.8km chair-lift to take riders to the top of the site. There will also be a learning skills area with a jump park and pump track, seven zip-lines (flying foxes) up 750m long, and a 'mountain-coaster' rail luge. As a commercial venture, there will be a charge to use the chair-lift, zip-lines and mountain-coaster, but the proposal is to allow free access from existing walkways and bike tracks in the area such as Worsley's Track and Victoria Park. At the bottom of the site will be offices, restaurant and some lodge-style accommodation.

The site has an interesting history. Since the early 1980s, commercial forestry was developed. In 2002 the owners put the land on the market, and the Port Hills Park Trust Board considered options for developing a forest park there resulting in a development plan in 2008 comprising a mix of forestry operations with walking/cycling tracks and other activities. However after lengthy negotiations, no agreement was reached. Select Evolution, which has experience of running this sort of the facility, then became involved. The company has now reached an agreement for a lease of the site, with the owners retaining the rights to continue to operate their forestry business. Select Evolution hope to have the park open later this year.

The resource consent application was publicly notified, a hearing took place on 24–26 November and consent has now been granted. A comprehensive set of conditions had already been agreed between the Council and the applicant covering a whole range of issues, including hours of operation, noise, hazard management, earthworks, waterways, stormwater, landscape planting and habitat protection—36 pages in total.

The proposals attracted a lot of interest and there were over 600 submissions. Of these, only 32 were in opposition, and were mainly concerning specific issues such as traffic generation. The Society made a submission and appeared at the hearing. We were in favour of the proposal, but wanted to be satisfied that measures would be taken to minimise the visual impact of structures on the site, appropriate landscaping, mitigation and reinstatement planting will take place, ecologically sensitive areas are protected, and that conditions would be imposed to ensure that the site will be managed appropriately. In the event, it became apparent at the hearing that our concerns were largely similar to many identified by the City Council and had been addressed by the applicants in a mutually agreed long list of conditions.



The boundary (in red) of the new Christchurch Adventure Park. Over the past 30 years, Cashmere Valley has undergone a visual transformation from tawny tussocked hills to the deep green of a commercial plantation forest. It is about to undergo another change; for the recreational benefit of many.



A copy of the approved consent can be seen on the City Council website:

www.ccc.govt.nz/CCC.Web.Projectinfo/cityleisure/projectstoimprovechristchurch/projectinformation/projectsearch/projectview.aspx?projectid=4716

Native orchids on the Port Hills

The following is an article by Gordon Sylvester from the New Zealand Native Orchid Group. Paul Tebbutt was approached by a member who had noticed orchids at Omahu Bush, and he accompanied two of them there on Show Day. The possible *Pterostylis cardiostigma* and *Pterostylis banksii* agg. are very significant as, if confirmed, will be the first records this far south.

"Occasionally I get a request to assist someone or an organisation to list orchids in their patch. Christchurch Show weekend was one such occasion.

Fri 14 Nov. 2014. A small party assembled at Omahu Reserve Car Park which includes Gibraltar Rock, with the intention of searching for its resident orchid populations. The Hon. Warden of the Reserve Paul Tebbutt and Melanie Brigden and I soon started down the track into the reserve proper on the Kirks Track. The only reference materials were the database records as well as Brian Molloy's book published all those years ago. We managed to locate one of the skylines photographed in Brian's and John John's book but the information was sketchy at best.

We soon came across *Pterostylis areolata* in two forms growing discretely and well separated. The red form was well coloured,

whereas the green form looked drab beside its companion. The green form on its own looked good noted at (350-400m) altitude. Melanie had previously seen both colour forms at another location nearby, last season. A little further down a micro sized *Pterostylis graminea* agg. was sighted. There were two forms of this seen. One was coloured light salmon stems up to the ovary the other was green entirely. There were several other differences relating to orientation of leaves, number of leaves, but the size of the flower was very small in relation to the plant. The occasional *Nematoceras trilobum* colony showed itself in the appropriate environment. As did *Nematoceras macranthum*. We noted on one seedpod developing in all of the plants spotted. Lower down the odd *Microtis* leaf showed up showing damage to the top of the leaf from weed-eater usage.

About two thirds of the way down was the biggest surprise—two *Pterostylis* plants with the typical *cardiostigma* growth pattern. The emerging flower was stiffly erect. About 20m away were two *Pterostylis* plants pretending to be *banksii*? These were not open sufficiently to determine their identity. What was noticeable was the tendency for the various species to be found in band widths across the landscape. It was noticeable in this environment. Paul Tebbutt was a complete newbie to our game was soon able to spot his own finds by the end of the walk. He left us and returned to his residence.

Our next location was nearby at the head of Kennedy's Bush at the Sign of the Bell Bird. Here we found *Pt. areolata* and what I have recorded as *Pt. graminea* agg. Type Two. That is the plant has leaves spread around the stem up to 180 degrees. The other *graminea* noted was tagged Type One; the leaves were on a horizontal plane at direct opposites from each other (180 degrees). We moved onto Okuti Valley and the Manaia Native habitat. First up was a couple of *Pt. graminea* Type 2 actually flowering beside one of the picnic tables in the camp ground area of the complex.

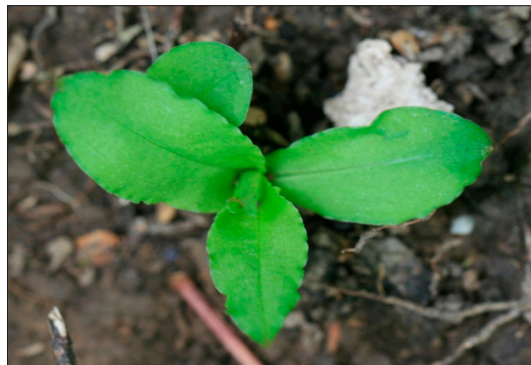
Sat. 15 Nov 2014. We awoke to a serious wind event buffeting the district. The Manaia Nature Habitat has a series of tracks wandering about a hillside above the camp ground. Interestingly the orchids appeared to less developed flowering wise than the exposed site the visited the day before. First up were several *Caladenia* stems (hairy) (*chlorostylus*?) flower head too small to determine any further. The same comment is valid for the following sightings *Pterostylis areolata*. Which is very low for this species (132m). Another *Pterostylis* with affinity to *montana*, *Thelymitra longifolia*, and *nervosa* all in young bud stage. *Pterostylis graminea* Type 2 and finally *Microtis unifolia* one plant with a few flowers opened.



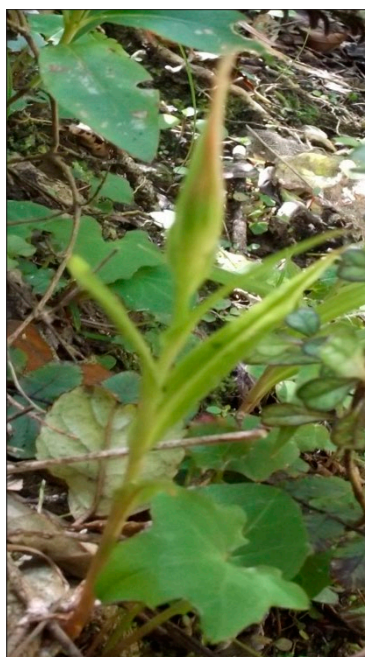
Pterostylis areolata



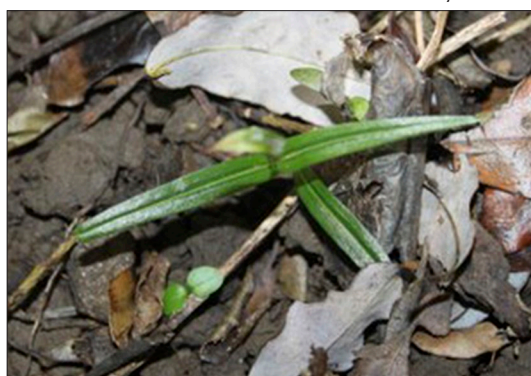
Pterostylis areolata



Pterostylis venosa



Pterostylis cardiostigma



Pterostylis graminea agg.

We moved onto our final destination for the weekend Montgomery Reserve and the Summit Track alt. 623m. We had been advised that the track was damaged and almost impassable. We bypassed the first slip and met up with the track a little higher up the hill. First up sighting was *Pterostylis graminea* Type 2 followed by *Pterostylis areolata* red. As we neared the higher altitude of the track a strange set of leaves were noted beside the track bearing a strong resemblance to the recently seen *Pterostylis* from Scott's Track. Did we in fact have *Pt. venosa* present the central part of the triple leaves was not developed sufficiently to determine. In the grasslands on the top of the hill noted *Thelymitra nervosa* and *longifolia* as well as *Microtis* leaves, no flowers visible. On the downward leg note *Nem. macranthum* in some slightly damper environs not seen on the trip up to the tops."

If you want any further information about native orchids visit the NZNOG website:

www.nativeorchids.co.nz/lnznog.htm

Colin Faulkner

We were saddened to learn recently about the loss of one of the Society's, and indeed, the Port Hills in general, great supporters, with the death of Colin Faulkner. Colin is survived by his brother Ben, with whom he worked tirelessly on the hills for many years. We can't do any better than reproduce a section from *50 Years Along the Road*, Jennifer Loughton's history of the Summit Road Society's from 1948–1998:

The Faulkner Brothers

Colin and Ben Faulkner, for many years part time farmers at Governors Bay, had worked on the Hills for a lengthy period before becoming involved with the Summit Road Society. In 1957, they constructed the Monument Shelter Hut on the Purau/Port Levy Saddle, and designed, grubbed, maintained and carried up marker posts to the walking tracks between Gebbies Pass and the Sign of the Packhorse, as well as to Mount Bradley and the Orton Bradley Farm Park. The brothers helped to maintain the Packhorse Shelter until the late Seventies, and gave support to the Youth Hostels' Association huts along the tops when these were much used by trampers.

In July 1990, while working 'feverishly' on their track up from Governors Bay to Trig V at the southern end of the Hoon Hay Park Reserve, Colin and Ben heard a clanging and tinkling through the bush, and discovered Johnny Johnson's party working on the Society's Watling Track, from the western end of Hoon Hay Park Reserve down the gully to Governors Bay. Cliff Holdsworth had played football with Colin and Ben's uncle, and other Society members had occasionally met the brothers on the Summit Road, but this coincidental meeting in the Bush began their work for the Society.

Since this time, as well as their continuing personal commitment to tracks in the Packhorse and Mount Bradley area, Colin and Ben have been very actively involved in helping to open up the Society land above Governors Bay, surveying fence lines and boundaries, and grubbing tracks. As part of their Hill work, the Faulknors have made a substantial contribution to the production and clarification of topographical and survey maps of the area, drawing, discussing, revising and redrawing many maps and plans. For at least three years, the brothers 'practically worked, lived and slept' Summit Road Society projects. Fuelled by a customary hot lunch eaten from a



Ben & Colin with the Hon. Luamanava Winnie Laban, Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, 2006

vacuum flask, 'to keep the energy up', Colin and Ben are especially noted for the speed at which they work and their amazing tenacity in locating boundary pegs. Although the Faulknors usually work separately and independently of the other Society Work Parties, combined team efforts have sometimes occurred. Barry Gerard and the Eastenders have complemented Ben and Colin's efforts and Mike Lusty has helped with track grubbing and widening.

The Rocky Bluffs (Faulknors) Track, from Hoon Hay Park Reserve down as far as the heavy plank seat supplied and installed by the Governors Bay Residents' Association, was a 'work of art' to devise and construct around bluffs and through rocks, gorse and flax. The Faulknors were 'constantly scheming, surveying, pegging, grubbing and benching. After a total of nineteen days of 'hard slog' down the two hundred metre drop, the track was completed by December 5, 1991.

In 1992, with their well-utilised builder's theodolite, the Faulknors surveyed a fence line to the Lookout, using ropes to descend down to the bluff edge. Bush Road, located from old and inexact survey plans, was defined and chopped through bracken, gorse, bush, stinging nettles and flax, traversing huge rocks and travelling down thirty-two degree slopes. In one section, the original survey line descended over a drop of sixty feet. More zigzag tracks were grubbed in quick succession. The Cass Ridge Track from the Bellbird down to O'Farrells Road Track, was a winter job, with the brothers often working until dusk, followed by a long footslog to Governors Bay in the dark.

The heavy snow storm in September 1992 broke off many tree branches, completely obliterating the tracks, but Colin and Ben ploughed through to reach the debris and clear it away. A return to surveying in 1993 saw the Faulknors slashing and track making their way through bush, over chasms and bluffs and through very rough gorse and nettle covered country, to define the north boundary of the O'Farrell Block.

Despite now being in the age of GIS and GPS technology it is a testament to the accuracy of Colin and Ben's maps, that we still use them at Ohinetahi Reserve. In 1995 they received a Banks Peninsula Council Community Award for their work, and in 2006 a Canterbury Volunteer Recognition Award.

The Lost Children



PHOTO: ANNE KENNEDY

Two monuments can be found in Mt Vernon Park, one just off the Rapaki Track and the other on the Mt Vernon spur just off the Summit Road. Below are the newspaper reports from the time about the tragic event they commemorate.

The Press: Tuesday 3rd April 1883 **LOST CHILDREN**

On Friday morning, two little boys named Archie Lilly and Mason, each aged about eight years, one residing in Salisbury Street East, and the other in Taylor's Lane, left their homes, and have not since been heard of. The little boy Lilly is described as of dark complexion, with black hair and eyes, and dressed in a dark knickerbocker suit with black stockings and tweed hat. Mason is of fair complexion, and was dressed in a knickerbocker suit, with black felt hat and scarlet socks. They were last seen together in the market place about two o'clock on Friday afternoon. Any information of their whereabouts will be gratefully received.

The Press: Monday April 23rd 1883 **THE MISSING CHILDREN**

Finding of a body

The story of the missing children, David Mason and Archibald Lilly —which has frequently been mentioned in these columns, has, it is to be feared, been doomed to a most pitiable termination. On Sunday evening, about five o'clock, a young man named James Courtney, a blacksmith, employed at the Addington workshops, came to Constable M'Gill at Phillipstown, and stated that he had seen the body of a boy lying far up on the Port Hills, a mile or so from Mr Murray-Aynsley's residence. Constables M'Gill, Daly and O'Leary, accompanied by the informant, started for the spot indicated in the police trap, at about 7pm. The trap was left at Mr Murray-Aynsley's, and the party ascended the hills. About two miles up, near the summit, and lying some distance off a cart track leading to some quarries, they found the body of a boy, who had evidently been about ten years of age. The body was lying upon its back and presented a most frightful appearance owing to advanced decomposition. In the hands was clasped a bamboo stick, apparently part of a boy's fishing-rod. The party bore the remains down the hill to their trap, and conveyed them to the morgue. From an inspection there made, the police have little doubt that this is the body of one of the two boys above referred to who left their homes on March 30 last. The body is that of a boy about the age of Mason, and is dressed in a knickerbocker suit, moleskin trousers and a vest with dark jacket; a soft felt hat was found near it. Up to late last night the body had not been positively identified, but it may be mentioned that when Mason left home he had money given him to pay his fare to Port, whither he intended going for a day's fishing. No money was found on the body, but as Mason and Lilly were seen together in Christchurch after they were missed by their parents, it is not improbable that the boys had spent what money they had and had then started to walk over the hills, and, at least in the case of one of them, missed the way and died from exhaustion. As it is concluded that the body found is that of one of the missing boys, the gravest apprehensions are felt for his companion, and three constables will start for the hills early this morning to search the locality, and if possible set all doubts to rest.

The Press: Tuesday April 24th 1883 **THE MISSING CHILDREN**

Yesterday morning the body found on the hills on Sunday evening was identified as that of the boy Mason by his mother and her two sisters. An inquest will be held on it today. About 8am yesterday, Constables Johnston, O'Leary, and Daly started in the police trap to search for the remains of the other lad, Lilly, who left his home together with Mason. They took a stretcher with them, and proceeded in the first instance to Mr Murray-Aynsley's, where they left their vehicle. They then went to the spot where Mason's body had been found, and separated, searching the hills in all directions for a considerable distance round, finally working their way to the top of the range and over to Raupaki, without finding the slightest trace of the missing lad. From Raupaki the party proceeded to Lyttelton, and returned by train to town about noon. The search was continued by Mr Lilly, father of the boy, and a large party of volunteers. Inspector Pender and Constable Johnston also rode out to the hills in the afternoon and prosecuted the search for some hours, but returned empty handed.

The Star: Wednesday April 25th 1883

THE LOST CHILDREN

INQUEST ON THE BODY OF MASON

An inquest on the body of the boy David Mason, who was missed from his home on March 30, and was found dead on the Port Hills on Sunday last, was held at the Clarendon Hotel, at 3pm yesterday, before Dr Coward (Coroner), and a jury, of which Mr H. Lynn was chosen foreman.

After the jury had viewed the remains, the following evidence was taken:-

Eliza Mason (mother of the deceased) deposed: I last saw my son alive last Friday three weeks, about noon. He was in my house in Manchester Street North. Mrs Lilly's little boy came and whistled for him. He took his fishing rod and went out, and I did not see him again alive. Yesterday I recognised the body at the morgue as his. (To Inspector Pendle): When deceased left he did not say where he was going. I had not been scolding him for anything, and he had never been away before. He used to go to Opawa to fish, but he always returned home at night. (To the Foreman): I recognised the body by his clothes. Deceased was 10 years old on Nov 3 last.

John B Courtney stated: I was out on the Port Hills on Sunday last with my two brothers, and about two miles and a half from Mr Murray-Aynsley's estate we came upon the dead body of a boy lying on the brow of the hill. The body was lying on its back, clasping a stick in its right hand. There was no mark of any struggle on the ground around. The clothes were not disturbed, and from the appearance of the body I should say that the boy had died peacefully. I have seen the body at the Morgue, and identify it as the same. The stick was lying across the legs of deceased.

Constable P M'Gill, stationed at Phillipstown deposed: In the afternoon of April 22 the last witness reported to me that he had found a body on the Port Hills. I and two other constables went with him to the spot, and removed the body to the morgue. I searched the pockets, and found the mouthpiece of a pipe and one of a set of dice. The piece of fishing rod produced was lying beside the body. I should say that it had been there for several days.

To a juror: There were no rocks near from where the deceased could have fallen.

Inspector Pender handed in a telegram from Sergeant Morice, at Lyttelton, stating that the two boys had called at the house of Mrs James, in Lyttelton, on March 30. The inspector stated that Mrs James had not been able to leave Port in time for the inquest.

The Coroner remarked that it seemed to him from the evidence that the only verdict that could be returned would be one of "Found dead". There was absolutely no testimony as to how deceased had come by his death. The jury returned a verdict of "Found dead."

Wednesday April 25th 1883

THE MISSING BOYS -

Yesterday morning information was received by Sergeant Morice that the two boys, Mason and Lilly called at the house of Mrs Annie James, at the foot of the Bridle Path, on the Lyttelton side, at dusk, on March 30. Lilly was very tired, and they stated they were going to Christchurch. They went up the hill, but the road is almost obliterated towards the summit, and the probability is that the poor lads wandered from the track, got lost in the spurs of the hills, and died of cold and exposure. A party of police and civilians have left Lyttelton to search for Lilly's remains. Mounted Constable Johnston, and a number of volunteers, left town yesterday to prosecute a search from the Christchurch side. At the inquest yesterday afternoon, on the body of the boy Mason, an open verdict was returned.

Thursday April 26th 1883

THE SEARCH FOR THE MISSING BOY

The search on Tuesday for the missing boy Lilly was prosecuted by a party of about 70 men, Messrs P and D Duncan, the employers of the boy's father, having shut up their works in order to allow of their employees taking part in the search. Should the body not be discovered before Sunday, it is the intention of Mr Lilly to thoroughly scour the hills with a strong party. It is anticipated that 400 or 500 men will take part in the expedition, which is to rendezvous at Mr Murray-Aynsley's estate. A rumour prevailed in town yesterday morning that the remains had been found, but on enquiry it was found to be incorrect. Inspector Pender had another search among the hills yesterday, but without success. As it is probable that several persons intend prosecuting the search, it may be stated that in the opinion of Inspector Pender the two boys (who are known to have started from Lyttelton to Christchurch up the bridle path) have passed through a gate which is at the top of the hill, and confronts a person coming from Lyttelton, and then went on towards the where Mason's body was found. If, therefore, a large search party were to spread themselves in line and proceed from this gate along the spur of the hill towards the spot where the body lay (which it is intended shall be marked by a whit flag), the body of the other boy would almost certainly be recovered. Inspector Pender intends to visit the hills again on Sunday, and would probably be willing to give directions to those who join in the search as to the best course of procedure.

Saturday 28th April 1883

THE MISSING BOY

No trace has yet been found of the remains of the little boy Lilly, who was lost on March 30 last. In connection with the final search to be undertaken tomorrow, it may be mentioned that Inspector Pender wishes all who intend to take part to meet at the summit of the Bridle path at noon, in order to form a line and thoroughly scour the hills each



PHOTO: ANNE KENNEDY

side of the path, working towards the spot where the body of Mason was found. It has been suggested that the members of the Volunteer corps should turn out to assist the search, and also that all who intend going should travel by the 9.30 am train.

The Star: Monday April 30th 1883

THE SEARCH FOR THE MISSING BOY –

Notwithstanding the wretched state of the weather yesterday morning upwards of 400 persons assembled on the Port Hills for the purpose of making a thorough search for the unfortunate boy Lilly. The rendezvous appointed was the summit of the old bridle path, and at about noon Inspector Pender addressed those present, giving them a few words of advice as to the best manner to be adopted in carrying out the search. The whole of the assembled crowd then formed line, and worked their way over to the spot where the body of the boy Mason was found. Their efforts, however, were fruitless, not a trace of the lost child being discovered. There is little doubt but that the elements were most strongly averse to anything like a thorough search being made, the hills being literally shrouded with fog and mist and drenched with sleet. In addition to the large number of people from Christchurch, including the volunteers and police, a crowd of residents from Lyttelton assisted in the quest.

The Press: May 28th 1883

INQUEST

Dr. Coward, District coroner, held an inquest at the Clarendon Hotel on Saturday afternoon the body of the boy John Lilly, whose body was found on the Port Hills yesterday. Mr John Duncan was chosen foreman of the jury, who, after viewing the body which was lying in the police morgue, returned to the inquest room and heard the following evidence:-

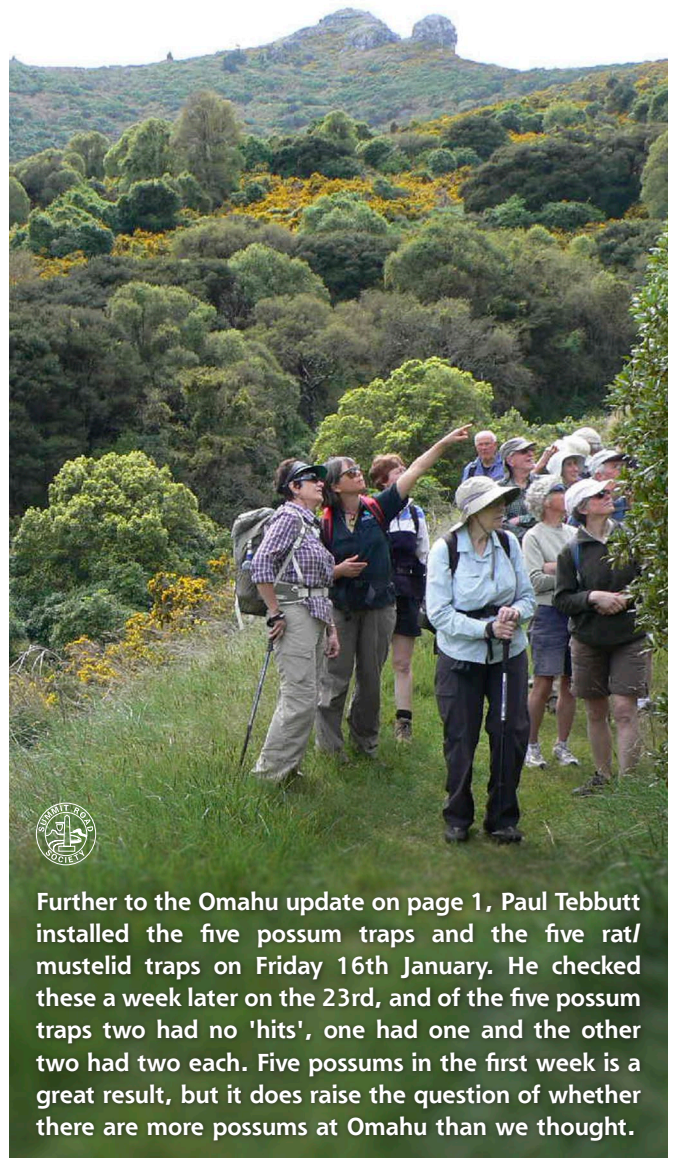
John Lilly – I am the father of the deceased child. My son was eight years and four months old. I last saw him alive on the night of the 29th March, at home. He left home the following morning but I did not see him, as I went to work before he got up. I have seen and do recognise the body lying in the morgue as the remains of my son. I have made several searches for him, and I made the first enquiry on the night of the day of his departure from home.

John Keogh – I am shepherd for Mr Moreton White, and was mustering sheep on the hills yesterday, when I found the body of the deceased. It was lying at full length, the face downward, and did not appear disturbed. I at once reported the matter to the police, who returned with me, and conveyed the body to the morgue.

This was all the evidence, and the jury returned a verdict of "Found dead".

We would like to thank Anne Kennedy for her research into the tragedy and for obtaining the press reports.

STOP PRESS



Further to the Omaha update on page 1, Paul Tebbutt installed the five possum traps and the five rat/mustelid traps on Friday 16th January. He checked these a week later on the 23rd, and of the five possum traps two had no 'hits', one had one and the other two had two each. Five possums in the first week is a great result, but it does raise the question of whether there are more possums at Omaha than we thought.