



## Tussock Hill Settled

The acquisition of Tussock Hill Farm has been made possible by two bequests and by a generous donation from Society president, Bill Woods. As a result of such generosity, the Society received a 'million dollar war chest' to acquire and protect additional land on the Port Hills. Tussock Hill Farm lies between the Avoca and Horotane Valleys and runs up to the Summit Road.

During his lifetime, past Society member, Jack Hutchinson, owned the Roseneath Nursery in Creyke Road where he specialized in producing large roses. Jack, a 'workaholic', was a member of the Royal Forest and Bird planting team at Kaituna Reserve before joining the Society and its Hill Gang in 1975. Jack gave many years of voluntary effort to the Port Hills, including in his self-appointed role as 'Caretaker' for Dry Bush in Mount Vernon Park. Jack served on the Society's Board for 16 years from 1980. When Jack died in 1997, his first bequest of \$63,000 enabled the Society to purchase additional land for the Society-owned Ohinetahi Reserve. Unknown to us at the time, Jack had also left the remainder of his estate in trust for the Society, with a lifetime interest to his partner. Upon her death, the Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust received a surprise inheritance from Jack of \$944,000.



Jack Hutchinson

Bill Woods, the Society's current president, had read in the Press that Terry McCashin, ex-All Black and well-known craft beer pioneer (McCashin's Brewery), was seeking expressions of interest for his 243ha family-owned farm on the Port Hills and made an initial approach. Soon after this, the earthquakes struck and any possible sale came to a halt. Bill became aware that Terry was still considering options post-earthquakes and approached Terry again.

A provisional price was agreed, provided that the McCashin family retained its existing right to build a house adjacent to the end of Avoca Valley Road. Discussion began with the City Council planning team. Bill spent many hours talking to various parties and negotiating before a compromise was reached whereby some 10ha and the right to build would be retained by the McCashin family in return for selling the balance of the land (233ha) to the Society.

During 2015-16 the Trust also received an unexpected legacy of \$100,000 from the Ewen Duncan Jones estate. Christchurch-born Dr Jones was a well-known author and teacher at the University of Canterbury who became a life member of the Society in 1980.

During the initial discussions the Board was aware that, even with the above mentioned legacies, it was short of some \$600,000 to pay for this land. Board members were heartened when Bill announced that, in addition to his time and negotiating skills, he would donate this sum to enable completion of the purchase. His single proviso was that the land acquired would be named after his late wife, Linda, a Christchurch girl who always had a passion for the Port Hills. Hamish Grant, solicitor and Board member, also provided his time and services pro bono. Documents were ready to be signed in November 2017 when news arrived of the sudden death of Terry McCashin. Negotiations resumed with the McCashin family early in 2018. A modified agreement was finally signed, with the Society taking ownership of Tussock Hill Farm on 5th October 2018.

An official opening of the reserve, including its renaming, will take place in the near future.

The Society thanks Bill Woods as well as the estates of Jack Hutchinson and Ewen D Jones for their respective financial contributions. For their time and effort in achieving a successful purchase, the Society again thanks Bill Woods, Hamish Grant, former secretary John Goodrich, fellow Board members, the Trustees of The Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust and the City Council team.

*Continued next page...*

We are also grateful for the assistance of the late Terry McCashin and the McCashin family who have supported our vision. We know Terry would have been pleased to see the end result.

Purchasing a property of this size was a huge undertaking but the real work is now to come.



Bill Woods

The reserve is strategically placed, providing the missing link in the chain of reserves below the Summit Road on the east side of Dyers Pass Road. The steep tussock landscape is very different from the Society's Ohinetahi, Omaha and Gibraltar Rock Reserves. It is located close to the city and borders the popular Rapaki Track. The Board is already aware of much interest from walkers, mountain bikers and horse riders. In line with the Society's vision, we also have both a responsibility and an aspiration to enhance the biodiversity of the area.

The Society is in the early stages of developing a management plan for the reserve. This process will take time and there will be plenty of opportunities for members to give feedback along the way. We will also be calling for both volunteers and additional funds to assist with fencing, track development, weed control and planting. Please let the secretary know if you want to assist. Keep an eye on our Facebook page, website and newsletters for updates.

Exciting times for the Society!

#### **Acknowledgements:**

Hutchinson family, Jennifer Loughton, *Fifty Years Along the Road: A History of the Summit Road Society 1948-1998*, Dawn Eagle, Canterbury Rose Society, Paul Loughton, Bill Woods.

## **From the Secretary**

It has been a busy six months since the last newsletter, with the acquisition of Tussock Hill Farm and the growth of Predator Free Port Hills. I have now been in the role nearly a year and am thoroughly enjoying the work. There is a wide variety of daily tasks, ranging from answering emails and phone calls to writing submissions, organising events and distributing traps to our backyard trappers. I really enjoy opportunities to connect with our members and the public, such as the Sign of the Kiwi mid-winter dinner, the events during Harry Ell Month and our numerous Predator Free Port Hills workshops. Sadly our annual Arbor Day in June was cancelled this year due to wet and muddy conditions.

I am keen to get a regular schedule of member events up and running so if you have any ideas please get in touch.

On a personal front, this great weather is providing lots of opportunities to get out and about on the hills with the kids. We recently attended the opening of Ōtamahua Hut on Quail Island. This Department of Conservation hut is perfect for families on their first overnight tramp and we've already booked two nights in January!

**Marie Gray**

## **Reserve Rules**

The development of the reserve will take time. The public are currently permitted access but extra care is required. Please be mindful of the risks. The property is a working farm and has both farming and natural hazards.

- The best access is through Mary Duncan Park off Port Hills Road. There is no access off Avoca Valley Road and the entrance from Horotane Valley Road has been temporarily closed while a safe pedestrian route is developed.
- Please keep your distance from stock.
- There are no toilet facilities or drinking water on site.
- Dogs must be on a lead. Please clean up after your dog.
- Leave gates as you find them.
- The only existing tracks are farm tracks.
- Please be mindful of the natural hazards common to the Port Hills including steep terrain and the risk of rockfall.
- The Society retains the right to temporarily close access to all or part of the land.
- See also our website [www.summitroadsociety.org.nz](http://www.summitroadsociety.org.nz)

## **Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust**

It is not very often that an organisation is pleased that its healthy bank balance is severely depleted without any visible return either now or in the future. This is so in the case of the Summit Road Society's purchase of Tussock Hill Farm and we are delighted to have been able to provide the funds to enable this to take place. A purchase such as this is the main purpose for which the Trust was set up. In practice of course, there is a significant return by way of securing the land's future for the public to enjoy and achieving a further and quite significant step in fulfilling Harry Ell's dream for the Port Hills.

This has been possible due in a very large part to the substantial and generous legacy of the late Jack Hutchinson. We must also thank Society President Bill Woods for his generosity which, along with Jack's legacy, a bequest from Ewen Duncan Jones and a number of more modest donations, means that although the Trust's bank balance is depleted, we still have funds to continue to look at any further purchase options that may arise or to fund any repairs or ongoing maintenance. We also need to remind the Society's supporters and all those who value the Port Hills that by remembering the Trust or the Summit Road Society in your will or making a donation, however small, you will help us continue with the Society's work.

The Trust is a registered charity (no: CC27183) and donations are tax deductible.

#### **John Goodrich**

Chairperson

*Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust*

# Maurice McGregor

In this newsletter, we take a look back at the life of former Society President Maurice McGregor who passed away on 16 April 2017 at the age of 87.

Maurice lived and breathed the Port Hills. He grew up in a house on Cashmere Road and attended Cashmere Primary School. His family had a bach at Diamond Harbour and he spent many a weekend enjoying the adventures both the hills and the harbour offered. Maurice also had family connections with the Peninsula, especially Le Bons Bay, and claimed Alexander Innes McGregor, the mayor of Akaroa for many years, as a relative.

Maurice had a passion for helping people. He initially trained as a teacher and taught at the School for Deaf in Sumner, now the van Asch Deaf Education Centre. Maurice married Judith in 1953 and they became house parents (foster parents) to seven children living in a group home in Sumner.

Maurice went on to study social work at Victoria University which led to a long and fulfilling career. He worked in both church-based and hospital-based social services, and was executive director of Presbyterian Support Services for 13 years. He is particularly remembered for his work on the Royal Commission of Inquiry for Contraception, Sterilization and Abortion. In recognition of his many contributions, Maurice received the New Zealand Commemoration Medal in 1990 for services to the community.

On retirement, Maurice concentrated on his golf and then lawn bowls. It was at this time he became involved with the Summit Road Society. Maurice was co-opted onto the Society's committee in 1992. He became vice president in 1993 and president in 1997. He was president for eight years, before stepping back down to the vice president's role.

Maurice was keen to see the Society grow in prominence as



Society stalwarts, John Jameson & Maurice McGregor, walking on the hills

the 'guardian and caretaker' for the Port Hills. He brought to the presidency his business acumen, his key contacts and management skills. Maurice initiated occasional Saturday planning workshops open to all members with the objective of establishing long term goals and promotional ideas. He also advocated for the Society to make submissions to the Council and others on issues of interest. His philosophy was to attend and present so that the Society was visible.

Maurice instigated an executive committee of senior members who met prior to Board meetings to discuss key issues in depth and report back in summary form to the Board.

An activities' convener was recruited in 1999 to organize events and promotional activity.

Following on from substantial land acquisition by the Society, along with the growing administrative workload, Maurice advocated for the secretarial role to be expanded. As a result a new part-time position of administrator and executive secretary was advertised and John Goodrich was appointed.

Some of the many matters dealt with during Maurice's time on the Board included opposition to the rezoning of Montgomery Spur, purchase of additional land to add to our Ohinetahi Reserve, the Port Hills Millennium projects (including Gordon Ogilvie's book, 'Enjoying the Port Hills'), production of a Society Port Hills promotional video and the revision of the Summit Road Protection Act.


The Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust was established with the primary objective of encouraging legacies and donations for furthering the Society's objective of protecting land on the Port Hills through acquisition. Maurice was appointed as the inaugural chairman of the Trust.

In 2005, Maurice was successfully nominated by the Society for the Queen's Service Medal for Community Service. He retired from the Board in 2007.

Maurice spent his last two years at Thorrington Village and then Cashmere View, looking out at his beloved Port Hills. While Maurice's accomplishments were many, Society members remember him for his dedication to the Port Hills, his calm and insightful management and his vision for the future.

**Acknowledgements:**

David and Robert McGregor. Jennifer Loughton; *Fifty Years Along the Road: A History of the Summit Road Society 1948-1998*, Paul Loughton, John Goodrich, Jack Fletcher, The Press; *Life story: Christchurch social worker pioneered the trade. 5-11-17.*

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|--|------------------|--------------|
|  <p><b>Summit Road Society</b><br/> <b>PO Box 37-115, Christchurch 8245</b><br/> <b>Website: <a href="http://www.summitroadsociety.org.nz">www.summitroadsociety.org.nz</a></b><br/> <b>Email: <a href="mailto:secretary@summitroadsociety.org.nz">secretary@summitroadsociety.org.nz</a></b></p>                     |                  |              |
| <b>President</b>   | Bill Woods       | 03 318 4825  |
| <b>Vice-President</b>  | Jeremy Agar      | 328 9956     |
| <b>Secretary</b>   | Marie Gray       | 349 3409     |
| <b>Treasurer</b>   | Paul Loughton    | 322 7082     |
| <b>Board Members</b>   | Hamish Grant     | 928 2456     |
|  | Anne Kennedy     | 337 0364     |
|  | Melanie Coker    | 669 0336     |
|  | Paula Jameson    | 351 4221     |
| <b>Representatives</b>   |                  |              |
| Selwyn District Council  | Bill Woods       | 03 318 4825  |
| Spreydon/Cashmere  | Lee Sampson      | 021 772 929  |
| Banks Peninsula  | Tyrone Fields    | 021 100 4590 |
| Linwood-Central-Heathcote  | Darrell Latham   | 326 6195     |
| Port Hills Rangers   | Paul Devlin      | 941 7570     |
| <b>Eastenders work party</b>   | Graeme Paltridge | 384 3592     |
| <b>Ohinetahi work party</b>  | Anne Kennedy     | 337 0364     |
| <b>Omahu Bush work party</b>   | Ian Johnston     | 332 8319     |
| <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.<br/>         We need and welcome contributions to our work through memberships, donations and corporate sponsorships, bequests, participation in work parties (non-members welcome—but why not join us as well!)</p> |                  |              |

## Omahu Deer Fence

The first stage of deer fencing at Omahu is complete! There is now a 2m high deer fence along the 1085m boundary with one of our eastern neighbours. We are also looking at deer fencing the rest of the bush. Given the terrain and size of the bush, this is a massive project. Both deer and pig sign are very evident in the bush. Helicopter fly-overs by a neighbour have identified at least 100 deer hiding in Omahu. The pigs have also caused significant damage in the bush near Prendergast Track.

It is very difficult to cull these pests at present as they can easily flee to neighbouring properties. We are therefore working towards deer fencing most or all of the bush and then undertaking a pig and deer cull in collaboration with the Christchurch City Council.



Omahu deer fence



Pig damage at Omahu



Possum caught in one of the new Sentinel traps

## Omahu Bush Pest Control

The Omahu Bush trapping team has grown to seven over the past 6 months. A further three people have shown interest in joining us for the next trap runs.

Pigs and deer continue to have the biggest effect on bush regeneration. A lot of pig damage is evident throughout the reserve. Efforts are underway to improve fencing around the reserve which will lead in time to more effective control of these ungulates. In the short term the existing fences have been repaired in an effort to redirect migration paths.

The placement of the Sentinel kill traps (for possums), which we started in April, is now largely complete across the majority of the reserve. 54 possums have been caught in that time across the 37 Sentinels traps, at an approximate spacing of one trap per hectare. More traps are planned in time.

The total trap catch for the six months to the end of October 2018 included 55 Possums, 62 rats, 16 mice, 3 weasels and 9 hedgehogs. Total trap numbers across all types is 181. Last year's tally was 58 pests across 93 traps. We are making inroads.

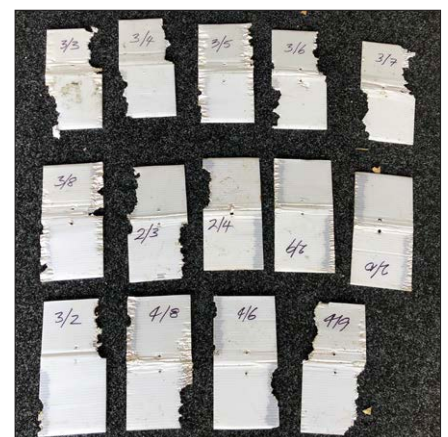
Chew card monitoring to determine pest numbers within the reserve was undertaken for the first time at the end of October. Preliminary results indicate the possum population is relatively low with an average 33% of chew cards interfered with. It could be concluded that the investment in Sentinels has been worthwhile. Unfortunately we did not do the monitoring before starting the possum trapping to estimate the baseline population, so we will never truly know. We still have some way to go to match the results achieved by CCC in Kennedys Bush. Our trap placement has been rationalised with GPS tracking, and we have sought advice on methods to improve capture rates, with trap placement and use of different lures.

The chew card monitoring also indicated rat interference at 64%, suggesting a higher than desirable rat population for this time of year. Our efforts will now need to concentrate on more effective rodent control, with additional traps, better traps, trap placement and a possible baiting programme, as funds allow. Rats and mustelids are the biggest bird predators, so we are keen to see a significant reduction in these pest numbers.

We also hope to carry out a bird count survey shortly, once we get some expert help to assist and train some volunteers. We intend this to become a regular feature of our monitoring and management in the reserve, as a further measure to assess the effectiveness of our pest control programme.

In time we would like to see our trapping network expand to the adjacent grazing block, to connect with the pest eradication that the Council is planning for Otahuna Reserve, and in time to neighbouring Coopers Knob.

**Greg Gimblett**



Results of chew card monitoring at Omahu

## Omahu Bush Work party

The Omahu work party has had a productive winter and spring. Track maintenance work was completed on Rhodes, Kirks and Nelsons Tracks, as well as the track to the waterfall. There were two significant slips on Rhodes Track, with both manually cleared by hand and machinery finishing the repair on the larger slip. The team also planted 200 trees on the bank above Prendergasts Track in June, with these trees kindly donated by Trees for Canterbury. The Society also engaged a new sheep grazer for the grazing block and repairs were made to the internal fences. In late August the team's attention turned to gorse control on the northern face of Gibraltar Rock. Gorse is a constant battle at Gibraltar Rock and the yellow flowering bush is particularly unsightly. Several days have been spent removing the gorse with saws and loppers as well as spraying problem areas. While more still needs to be completed, it is a huge improvement. Thanks as well to our friendly volunteer rock climbers who abseiled down the rock and manually removed the gorse growing on the steep wall.



Slip on Rhodes Track



Planting trees above Prendergasts Track

## Eastenders Work Party

The Eastenders have had a busy few months! Several days have been rained off but the team has achieved a lot. The winter months saw several days of maintenance on the Harry Ell Track. In late August, the work shifted to the Scarborough Walk Track. This track has been closed since the earthquakes and the team has been busy getting it ready for public use. Tasks have included clearing, weeding, tree trimming and installing steps. Moving into spring, the Eastenders have started to work on other reserves, including clearing tracks and general maintenance at Rapanui Bush in Sumner. The Society also sent its thanks to long serving Eastender, Richard Fenwick, who has retired from the group.



Installing steps on Scarborough Walk Track and Eastenders enjoying a well-earned break.



## Ohinetahi Work Party

Work on the reserve has been badly interrupted by rain this winter. Since the middle of May there have been eight wet Tuesdays. The bush has enjoyed the moisture and the mild temperatures though.

Forest and Bird came on Sunday, 6th May and cleared their plantings and some others as well. The work party finished clearing the remaining trees, mainly along the lower fence line where they had to contend with blackberry and gorse. Members smiled all the while as they marvelled at the tree-mendous growth that has occurred, some trees already being over a metre high.

Broom is thick in places where there can easily be 20 bushes to 100 square cm. Hopefully the broom gall mite will help us to gain some control. This new biological control was present in parts of the reserve last year and it certainly stopped the broom in its tracks.

This year approximately 1200 plants have been planted with the help of the Student Volunteer Army and the Rogainers -about 630 of these were in Sally Tripp's area. Hebes and divaricating shrubs have been planted in the area below the Bellbird carpark.

One Tuesday the work party cut back flaxes that were crowding Faulkners Track. Despite grimacing at what seemed a tough ask, by morning tea about 70 offsets had been removed and trimmed. We loaded them into Andrew's Hilux and took them round to the Bellbird. Shortly after lunch about 50 flaxes had been planted at the bottom of Cass Ridge Track to provide future shelter along the exposed fence line. It was then back up to the Bellbird to plant the remainder in that area. A wonderful effort!

We gather seedling trees from the sides of the tracks and grow them on in two plots to plant out when they are big enough – usually the next year. Last year's seedlings were planted on O'Farrells Track between Titoki and Ngaio Tracks and our nursery plots have been replanted with more seedlings.

Faulkners, Wai-iti and part of Totara Log Tracks have been tidied up.

**Anne Kennedy**



*Student Volunteer Army planting trees*

## Ohinetahi Possum Traps

As we start to recover from the devastating effects of the fire, we must consider the wider picture. Ohinetahi Reserve is now a mixture of open grassland, newly planted trees and well-established regenerating forest. Our work party have noted significant evidence of possums, especially in the more established areas of forest. Possums are one of the major threats to the biodiversity of Ohinetahi Reserve. Possums are opportunistic omnivores, eating leaves, buds, flowers, fruit/berries, nectar, eggs, chicks and invertebrates. They predate native fauna and also compete with them for food sources.

We are pleased to advise that thanks to grants from Forest and Bird North Canterbury, the Ron and Edna Greenwood Environmental Trust and the Mazda Foundation, we now have funding for 100 possum traps at Ohinetahi.



*Ohinetahi traps*



*Work party clearing Wai-iti track*

## Harry Ell Month

October was Harry Ell month, an opportunity for the Society to remember the vision of a man who did so much for the Port Hills and to celebrate the Society's 70 years of work protecting the Port Hills.

Forty people attended the launch of Harry Ell month on 30 September at the Sign of the Takahe. It was a lovely spring afternoon. This was the first opportunity since the earthquakes for Society members to look through the restored building and grounds. Following the tours, guests had the opportunity to browse our Predator Free Port Hills information stall and listen to speeches from Paula Jameson and Bill Woods. Paula, a current Board member and great-granddaughter of Harry Ell, spoke about Harry's vision for the Port Hills and the history of the Sign of the Takahe. President Bill Woods spoke about the work of the Society over the last seventy years. There was also a nature-based arts and craft area for the children, which was well received by our youngest members and supporters.

The signature event for Harry Ell month was the acquisition of Tussock Hill Farm. We have received a tremendous amount of interest from the public, especially on Facebook. When the news first broke about Tussock Hill in early August, we received 90 new likes in a day!

The next event was our Beca Heritage walk on 20 October. The theme for Beca Heritage Week this year was 'Strength from Struggle: Remembering our Courageous Communities'. Led by Paula Jameson, twenty two walkers plus marshals followed the Harry Ell Walkway from the Sign of the Takahe to the Sign of the Kiwi and back down again. The group included a number of current members as well as interested members of the public. It was a beautiful sunny day and the views out over the city were spectacular. At the Sign of the Kiwi, Paula spoke about Harry Ell and his aspirations for the Summit Road, with a particular focus on the building of the Sign of the Kiwi. Back at the Sign of the Takahe, Paula talked about Harry's struggles with the Heathcote County Council, the building of the Sign of the Takahe and the infamous dry stone wall incident. Harry was certainly a character! However without his stubborn determination and dedication to the hills, we would not have the network of reserves we have today. Bill Woods then spoke about the work of the Society over the last seventy years with reference to stalwarts such as John Jameson, Gordon Kirk and Maurice McGregor, and highlighted the responsibility that this puts on us to uphold this vision for the future.



Paula Jameson speaking about Harry Ell



Predator Free Port Hills information stall



Beca Heritage Walkers

## Midwinter Dinner, Sign of the Kiwi

The Society enjoyed its annual midwinter dinner on 30 June at the Sign of the Kiwi. While a cool night, it was very clear and we enjoyed amazing views over the city. 34 Society members and supporters attended, enjoying a delicious meal and great conversation. The servings were very generous, with soup as a starter, a choice of ham on the bone, stuffed chicken breast or vegetarian filo for the main and hot apple shortcake to finish. Attendees were delighted to hear the news that the Society had completed the sales and purchase agreement for Tussock Hill Farm with a settlement date of October 5th. All in all, a lovely night!



### Extract from *The Accountant's Tale*

*Peninsula Pilgrims* by Kevin Beardsley  
Reprinted with permission

I've known this story since I was a lad,  
Often told to me by my old dad,  
When we walked these tracks of the Crater Rim,  
On Sundays whether the view was clear or dim,  
It's the story of Harry Ell and his fight,  
To keep his dreams alive, ablaze with light,  
Against councillors and small committees,  
With their bickerings and meagre kitties,  
They buried Harry but couldn't kill his dream,  
But he outlived most of them it would seem,  
And his glorious dream lives on for ever,  
For all to see and enjoy.

## Predator Free Port Hills

Predator Free Port Hills is growing in leaps and bounds! There has been amazing progress since the last newsletter.

We have been very fortunate to receive some significant funding for the project. In addition to donations from members, we have received \$45,000 from the Spreydon-Cashmere Community Board, \$19,000 from the Rata Foundation and \$10,000 from Halswell New World. This funding has been a game changer for the project and is enabling us to expand at a rapid rate.

Some highlights over the last few months include:

- A hands-on trapping workshop in June at St Martins School hall. Led by the Department of Conservation and supported by the Summit Road Society and Port Hills Park Trust (Mt Vernon), this workshop featured expert speakers and trap demonstrations. Over 180 people attended!
- A trap building day at the Halswell Quarry in July. Volunteers from Predator Free Port Hills and NZ Conservation Volunteers made 77 rat tunnels and 29 DOC200 traps. Many thanks to Halswell Timber for donating the wood, Halswell Menzshed for preparing all the materials and National Storage for donating a storage unit to store all our new traps!
- A monitoring workshop in November where 50+ participants learnt about the importance of monitoring, the different tools available and made chew cards and tracking tunnels to take away.

We have also moved from a loan-only system to a system of both loans and subsidised traps for purchase. Households can borrow traps from our 'trap library' free of charge for up to 4 months to trial trapping and to trial particular traps. They then have the option to buy the traps at a subsidised rate, normally 60% of the retail price. Traps offered include Victor rat traps in wooden tunnels, DOC200s, Trapinators for possums and the self-setting Goodnature traps for possums and rats/stoats.

Our Predator Free communities have also been very active at the local markets. The eastern bays are working together to staff a weekly stall at the Mt Pleasant Farmers' Market, providing traps and advice to households from Taylor's Mistake to Heathcote. Halswell also had a stall at the Halswell Community Market in October. And we are just getting started!

On 4 November, the Society signed the Memorandum of Understanding for the Pest Free Banks Peninsula and Port Hills Partnership at Living Springs. The Society has joined forces with the Christchurch City Council, the Selwyn District Council, the Department of Conservation, Environment Canterbury, the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust, the Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust, the Cacophony Project and Ngāi Tahu Rūnanga to work collaboratively towards the goal of a Pest Free Banks Peninsula and Port Hills by 2050. The Port Hills have already been identified as a priority area. Predator Free Port Hills will be one of the pillars in this strategy, helping



*Trap building day*



*Trapping Workshop at St Martins School*



*Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding*

to protect the Port Hills and its own rich biodiversity in fauna and flora and also helping to defend Banks Peninsula where a number of rare and endemic species live.

It is an exciting time for the project. Hundreds of traps are already out across the Port Hills and new trappers are joining every week. If any of our members are interested in hearing more about the project, please contact the Secretary at [secretary@summitroadsociety.org.nz](mailto:secretary@summitroadsociety.org.nz) to receive the Predator Free Port Hills e-newsletter.



## William Pike Challenge

This year, a group of students from St Martins Primary School participated in the William Pike Challenge Award.

For this challenge we had to complete 20 hours of community service, 20 hours of passion projects and 5 outdoor education trips. This Challenge encourages students to step outside their comfort zone and try new things. This year for William Pike we have done a variety of activities ranging from planting trees to kayaking.

To help the Summit Road Society we have attended one newsletter stuffing afternoon, where we packaged newsletters and attached address stickers to envelopes. We have also helped out at a trapping afternoon where we set up chairs and helped serve afternoon tea. Our biggest task was a weeding day at the Sign of the Bellbird. We spent 4 hours weeding around the base of the plants and clearing the inside of the plant cages of any grass. We then collected soft grass to lay around the outside of the plants for mulch.

Helping the Summit Road Society has been a great experience for myself and my peers. We are now more aware of our environment and more conscious of littering.

Thank you so much to the Summit Road Society who have given us this opportunity.

Regards

**Emily, Jessica, Emma, Cara, Orla, Jenna, Isabella, Mya & Dom**



Stuffing newsletters for the Society



Enjoying a well-earned break during the weeding day

## Predator Free Port Hills T-shirts

Congratulations to the winner of our t-shirt design competition, Willow Cook, whose amazing fantail design now features on the back of our Predator Free Port Hills t-shirts. Willow received a free t-shirt, a family membership to the Society and a native bird colouring book. T-shirts are available for sale from the Secretary for \$25 each. Congratulations as well to our runners-up, Chloe Drinkwater and Jasmine Heffer, who both received a native bird colouring book.



Willow Cook receiving her prize



Alex and Matthew Gray modelling the new teeshirt



Some of the wonderful designs...

Clockwise from top left; Jasmine Heffer, Willow Cook, Chloe Drinkwater Nina Wilke.

## Kids Talk

### Treks to Gibraltar Rock and Omahu Bush

We walked through the bush and we heard a korimako singing. Then we walked up to the rock mountain. There were lots of rocks. I wanted to climb to the top but Mum wouldn't let me.

The next week, we went down into Omahu bush. We saw lots of birds and five dead possums in traps. We walked a long way to the waterfall. We ate some snacks on the rocks. The waterfall was cool. My big brother and I wanted to go for a swim but we didn't have our togs. Then we walked up a big hill to the carpark. There was a giant spider nest in one of the trees. It was a long way and I got tired legs. But when we got to the car, I told my family it was easy.

by **Matthew Gray** (4 years old) dictated to Mum.



Matthew walking up to Gibraltar Rock

## Bryophyte Discoveries

By **Dr David Glenny**

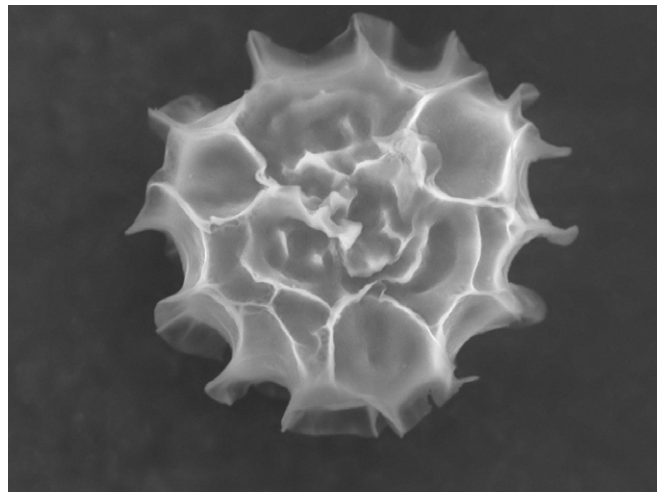
On the Canterbury Botanical Society Coprosma field trip for August 2018, I collected bryophytes, as late winter and spring is the best time to find these in habitats that dry out by summer, particularly thallose liverworts which complete their lifecycle before summer. I found *Fossombronia pusilla* below Gibraltar Rock. I also searched for two Australian *Riccia* spp. (also thallose liverworts) found in Otahuna valley below Gibraltar Rock in 2008 but gorse appears to have covered the site. The moss *Entodon plicatus* was on boulders in Omahu Reserve. This has only been found on Banks Peninsula previously at Kaituna Valley, by Bryony Macmillan in 1993 and at The Monument by myself in 2012. On the roadside cliff under Coopers Knob I found the leafy liverwort *Lamellocolea granditexta*. This is a first record for the Port Hills Ecological District, but was already known from sites further east, at Otepatotu, Bossu Road and Devils Gap. There are published species lists for Banks Peninsula for mosses (Macmillan, 1996) and liverworts (Glenny, 2013), but further species may turn up, particularly if the search is made in springtime.

Editor's note: Bryophytes are small, non-vascular plants, such as mosses, liverworts and hornworts.

Glenny D 2013. Checklist of liverworts and hornworts of Banks Peninsula. Journal / Canterbury Botanical Society 44: 4–33.  
Macmillan BH 1996. Checklist of the mosses of Banks Peninsula, New Zealand. Landcare Research Science Series No. 17. Manaaki Whenua Press.



Matthew and Alex at Annes Waterfall at Omahu



## Canterbury Botanical Society Field Trip to the Port Hills

By Joe Potter Butler

*Coprosma* is New Zealand's second largest genus of flowering plants (after the hebes). While some of these are large-leaved and distinct, many of them have tangled growth forms and very small leaves. They are notoriously difficult to tell apart. The Port Hills boasts ten or so small-leaved coprosmas (plus a couple of large-leaved species) and a number of other small-leaved shrubs. On a chilly August Saturday morning this year, about twenty members of the Canterbury Botanical Society headed into the hills to try and get their heads around this difficult group of plants.

We stopped first at the Sign of the Bellbird to investigate the shrubs on the harbour side of the road. There were enough people there to enable the party to split naturally into different interest groups. Some of us focused on distinguishing between coprosmas and other small-leaved shrubs, while others discussed the differences between *Coprosma wallii* (classified nationally as *At Risk, Declining*), *C. dumosa*, *C. rhamnoides*, *C. rubra* and others found on the site. David Glenny, author of the Landcare Research *Coprosma Key*, talked a bit about the importance of hair type and position in identifying coprosmas. Trip-leader Alice Shanks led us to some *Melicope simplex*, *Myrsine Divaricatus* and a couple of *Raukaua anomalus* which had all survived the recent fires—although not totally unscathed.



*Coprosma rubra* growing amongst some lemonwood

We then crossed the road to the Sign of the Bellbird proper. While the BotSoc members buried their noses in the trees and bushes, three interestingly-dressed members of the public played music and danced in front of the stone buildings while they blew bubbles out over Kennedys Bush.

It's hard to say whose behaviour was more unusual.

We added yellow-wood (*Coprosma linariifolia*) to our list and those with smartphones had a go at using the coprosma key app to identify some of the other species. We then decamped for Gibraltar Rock.

On our way to Gibraltar Rock we passed first through some shady bush and it felt like we were back at square one with our small-leaved coprosma knowledge as we investigated the quite different shade-forms. You would think with all the professional experts and knowledgeable amateurs present that we would

reach a quick consensus about the identity of each plant we found—but this seemed only to multiply the suggestions! We got there in the end however with a focus on stipule shapes and hair types and positions. Although bitterly cold, the shrubby skirt of Gibraltar Rock had a good range of coprosmas growing closely together which allowed for side-by-side comparison and cleared up a lot of confusion and misapprehension. It was here that we found examples of *Coprosma propinqua* and *Coprosma virescens*.

Having (more-or-less) conquered small-leaved coprosmas, we decided to head down into Omahu Bush to check their larger-leaved relatives. While we did find *Coprosma robusta* and *C. lucida*, it was the ferns that took centre stage as we sought out the Banks Peninsula endemic *Tmesipteris horomaka* (Nationally Endangered) and the local rarity, *Rumohra adiantiformis*. Both were eventually relocated—a satisfying end to the day. That we knew where these ferns were at all is thanks to the efforts of Sally Tripp and Rosemary Koller (authors of *Ferns of the Port Hills*) who had previously pointed out these species to some of us.



### Zane Dalzell

The Society gives its condolences to the family of Zane Dalzell who passed away in July this year at the age of 91. Zane was a long term member of the Ohinetahi work party. Mike White recalls "He was strong and fit and was certainly in his element building the tracks with shovels, spades, picks and crowbars. Zane was our rock man. Whenever boulders and rocks were encountered on the intended route of a track, the crowbar was handed to Zane and he would wrestle with the problem, first loosening it and then heaving it out of the way and would not give up the battle until he had won". Zane was also proud of the tracks he helped create at Omahu Bush when it was owned by the Gama Foundation. Ten years later the Gama Foundation gifted this reserve to the Society. Rest in Peace Zane. Your contribution lives on.



# Predator Free Port Hills



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**Port Hills**  
one trap at a time

