



Stream Invertebrate Research at Omahu Bush



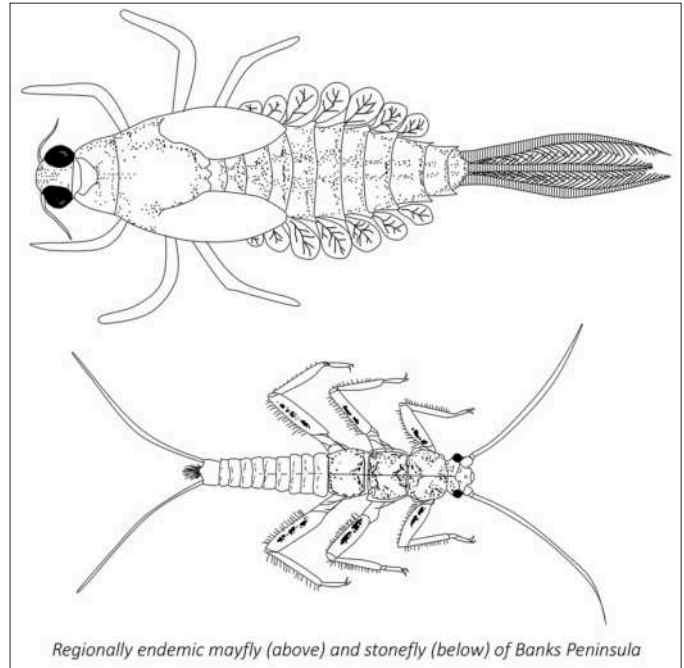
Fern cover over the stream Alice sampled in Omahu Bush

While Banks Peninsula is known for its regionally endemic plants and terrestrial insects, few know that there are ten stream invertebrates that also occur only on the Peninsula. In the summer of 2018-19, as part of my master's research, I carried out a survey of Banks Peninsula's streams, investigating the distribution and diversity of stream invertebrates.

Banks Peninsula hosts a diverse range of habitats, from old stand forests and fast flowing streams, to small trickles running through regenerating scrub or grassland. I travelled far and wide across the Peninsula surveying streams. However, in the western area of the Peninsula, bush cover thins and the streams become smaller and frequently dry in summer. Omahu Bush contains one of the few streams on the western flank of the volcanic landform that flows year-round and is well vegetated. From the beginning of my survey, I knew it was going to be a good place to sample. Furthermore, the prospect of avoiding bush-bashing by using a track is always welcome when walking in waders and carrying a pack full of oddly-shaped water sampling equipment. So, on a wet summer day I strolled down the reserve to find a suitable stream reach to sample.

Omahu's stream invertebrate community reflects the surrounding healthy regenerating kanuka scrub. The lush mossy rocks, leaf litter, and fast flowing riffles in the stream hosted good numbers of stoneflies, mayflies, and caddisflies. True-fly larva, aquatic worms, snails, crustaceans, beetles, and forest loving scorpion flies also reside in Omahu's streams. In a nutshell, the stream has good diversity and is showing good health. In total, I collected 27 different types of invertebrates (taxa) from just one small stream reach in Omahu Bush, and it is likely there are more taxa hidden within the reserve's streams.

The Peninsula's regionally endemic stream invertebrates are mostly restricted to the east of Lyttelton Harbour/ Whakaraupō. However, I collected one endemic stonefly species from Omahu, meaning the reserve marks the known western limit of the endemic invertebrates. Given the Peninsula's historic deforestation, it is



Regionally endemic mayfly (above) and stonefly (below) of Banks Peninsula

possible these endemic invertebrates were once more widespread in the Port Hills. But for now, Omahu Bush is providing a good refuge for stream invertebrates before the city and Canterbury Plains encroach on the Peninsula.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Summit Road Society for allowing me to carry out my survey in the reserve and for all of their hard mahi maintaining and giving the reserve a helping hand to keep on thriving.

Alice West

MSc student, University of Canterbury



Alice sampling a stream

Hugh and Hilary Wilson's 75th birthday celebrations at Hinewai

Several Summit Road Society members joined hundreds of people arriving at the base of Hinewai to celebrate the special birthday of twins, Hugh and Hilary.

We had been advised to park off Long Bay Road near Paua Bay Road and to take a complimentary shuttle down the steep and windy road into Otanerito Valley. There was an amazing variety of shuttles provided: DOC, Akaroa Mail (which we rode down in), City Council, Pohutu Penguins, and others. A number of guests also chose to walk down from the top.

A variety of walks was on offer—both morning and afternoon. The morning walk was upstream to Woodcutters Clearing. Larry Burrows pointed out a self-sown seedling nikau palm – a very special component of the regenerating bush before we passed through a long, cathedral-like archway of kanuka. For our afternoon walk, we headed to Fantail Falls. Even with rain the day before, the waterfall itself was a little underwhelming due to weeks of drought, but the walk there through well regenerated bush was most impressive when remembering that no planting had been done – just regeneration from seed bank, bird and wind.

The Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust sponsored an art competition, and on arrival at the venue we were all given a small wooden token to vote for our artwork of choice. The Peoples' Choice was a delightful work featuring Hugh, painted by Tracey Foley, titled "Thank you". This was later donated to Hugh amidst much applause. There were many excellent contributions, and many pieces sold, with donations going to Hinewai.

We were all invited to name the new four-wheeler, but warned that the name of choice might be kept under wraps!

Of course, such a celebration must have speeches and a cake. As we listened to the speeches, surrounded by hills covered with native vegetation, we were reminded by Hugh that these were previously grazed bare or covered in gorse. And the neighbours were not complimentary about his vision. Most have changed their minds.

With thanks to the organisers—Tricia Hewlett and the Hinewai team.

Paula Jameson & John Clemens



Larry Burrows leading a walk through the archway of kanuka



Birthday celebrations at Hinewai



Hugh and Hilary cutting the cake for their 75th birthday

SRS Display at the Botanic Gardens Kiosk

The weekend of 29 February to 1 March, the Society held an information stall at the Botanic Gardens Kiosk. We saw this as an opportunity to promote the Society, our reserves and our community programme, Predator Free Port Hills, to the wider public. We also invited Society members to attend and chat with the Board and give feedback on our draft strategic plan. With two big events at Hagley Park, the Botanic Gardens was not as busy as we had hoped and there was only a trickle of visitors rather than a stream. Nonetheless, we were pleased to sign up some new members to the Society and some new trappers with Predator Free Port Hills. Thanks as well to Di Carter, CCC Ranger, who gave a very interesting talk on spur valerian and the threat this invasive weed presents to the rocky outcrops of Ohinetahi Reserve and the wider Peninsula.



Di Carter speaking on spur valerian



John Jameson Lookout

Over the last few months, we have made significant progress with the proposed John Jameson Lookout opposite the Sign of the Bellbird. We held a feedback session with members in early December. Based on feedback from members and other stakeholders, an advanced landscape concept was developed. This formed the basis of our funding application to the Capital Endowment Fund. We were delighted to receive the news in February that we had been granted \$150,000 towards this project.

Over the coming weeks and months, we will be finalising the design in consultation with key stakeholders. We will have a display board at our AGM in September and are keen to hear your thoughts and feedback. We are also applying for some significant grants and intend to run a crowd-funding campaign to help raise the remainder of the money required.

Thank you to landscape architects, Graham Densem and Nic Kay, and to engineer Andy Hall of Davie Lovell-Smith, for their assistance with this project.

If any of our members would like to donate to this project or can put us in touch with a major corporate sponsor, please contact Marie Gray secretary@summitroadsociety.org.nz or phone 349 3409.

Ohinetahi Rockfall

Due to seismic activity over April, we identified potential rockfall hazard on the Faulkner Bluffs in Ohinetahi Reserve. We closed tracks and commissioned a geotechnical report which identified the remediation required. This work was estimated to cost \$7000 as we needed to engage specialist contractors. We set up a Givealittle page and shared this on social media. We were delighted to raise over \$7000 in a month! The remediation was completed in early July and all tracks are now open. Many thanks to our volunteer track sentries and to everyone that donated to this fundraiser.

We are now focusing on rockfall remediation at Linda Woods Reserve. We welcome donations.





Summit Road Society
PO Box 37-115, Christchurch 8245
Website: www.summitroadsociety.org.nz
Email: secretary@summitroadsociety.org.nz

Bank accounts for online payments and donations:
 Summit Road Society: **03-0802-0104055-00**
 Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust: **03-1592-0321653-00**
 Credit card donations can be made through the secure website:
<https://givealittle.co.nz/org/summit-road-society>

President	Bill Woods	03 318 4825
Vice-President	Jeremy Agar	328 9956
Secretary	Marie Gray	349 3409
Treasurer	Paul Loughton	322 7082
Board Members	Anne Kennedy	337 0364
	Melanie Coker	669 0336
	Paula Jameson	351 4221
Representatives		
Selwyn District Council	Jeff Bland	03 347 4070
Spreydon/Cashmere	Lee Sampson	021 772 929
Banks Peninsula	Tyrone Fields	021 100 4590
Linwood-Central-Heathcote	Jackie Simons	027 473 2795
Port Hills Rangers	Paul Devlin	941 7570
Eastenders work party	Graeme Paltridge	384 3592
Ohinetahi work party	Anne Kennedy	337 0364
Omahu Bush work party	Ian Johnston	332 8319

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, bequests, participation in work parties (non-members welcome—but why not join us as well!)

Follow us on Facebook - Summit Road Society & Predator Free Port Hills for regular updates

Predator Free Port Hills

Over the summer, Predator Free Port Hills was very busy with information stalls at community fairs, fetes and markets. These local events were a great opportunity to connect with local residents, raise awareness about our project, sell traps and connect with existing trappers. We had stalls at the Estuary Fest at the McCormacks Bay Reserve, the Huntsbury Garden Party and the Westmorland Community Picnic. We hosted an evening workshop with Shaun Ryan and Matthew Hellicar who updated us on the latest developments with the Cacophony Project, including automatic bird monitors, thermal cameras that monitor predator numbers with AI and open design trap prototypes. It's exciting to see what's on the horizon, including some local projects on the Port Hills.

From mid-March onwards, events started to be cancelled due to Covid-19. That was a real challenge for us as we have relied on face to face and local connections to spread the word. Over lockdown, we moved to providing remote support to our existing trappers via email, Facebook and



Making homemade tracking tunnels at the Westmorland Community Picnic

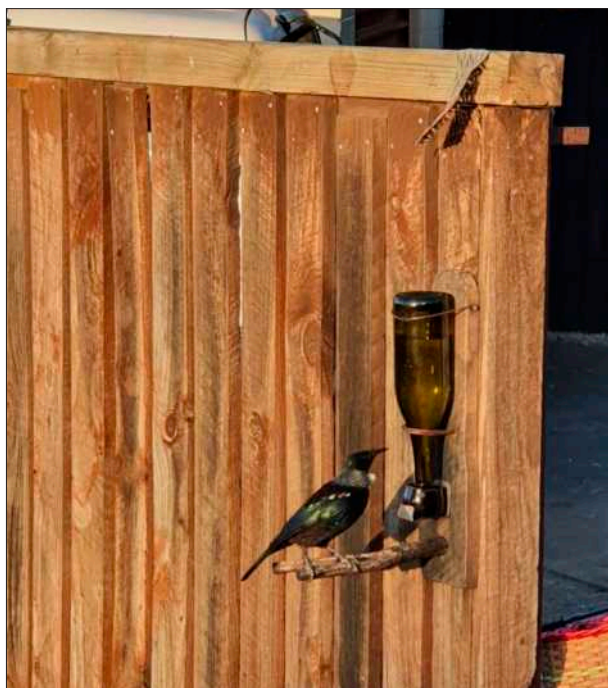
Zoom. We ran two very successful Zoom workshops including one with Kelvin Hastie from Predator Free Crofton Downs (Wellington). With Zoom, distance is no object. We will continue to hold our evening events over the winter months by Zoom and are now planning our face to face events for the rest of the year.

Over lockdown, a tūi visited the garden of one of our trappers in Mt Pleasant. She managed to capture this special sight on video, which we shared on our Facebook page. The video went viral and the story was picked up by the Press. It was great publicity for our project and we were sent some fantastic photos of native birds and lizards in backyards across the Port Hills.

We have also quietly launched our **new website**. It is now live for new trappers and we are in the process of transitioning current trappers from Trap NZ. When new trappers sign up via this website, they receive an email welcoming them to the project, including their local coordinator's contact details and a link to our trappers' guide.

Looking forward, we are working on a new campaign, "Sign up your neighbour", in the spring. We will also be resuming our work with schools and kindergartens, as well as building on the results of our monitoring pilot.

This project wouldn't be possible without the support of our funders and sponsors. Our thanks go to the Rata Foundation and Environment Canterbury for recent grants, to our private donors, to National Storage for providing a storage unit for our traps and to the Youth Unit at the Men's Prison for their ongoing efforts to build wooden tunnel traps.



A tūi visited Mt Pleasant over lockdown



And another tūi at Takamatua

www.predatorfreeporthills.org.nz

Summit Road Society
About
Get Involved
Map Your Trap
Record Your Catch
Our Maps

Predator Free Port Hills

A Backyard Trapping Initiative of the Summit Road Society

The Summit Road Society has launched the Predator Free Port Hills initiative. Our vision is to protect native species and to see their populations flourish in our lifetimes. Ultimately, we want the Port Hills to become predator free with thriving native wildlife in our neighbourhoods, local parks and reserves, farmland and bush areas.

Join Predator Free Port Hills

Predator Free Port Hills by the numbers:

Important statistics you need to know

Kids Talk

After school on a nice day, my family and I did the Quarry Rim walk. We parked next to the Whare at Halswell Quarry and stopped to explore inside the Whare. Then we started walking up the hill and we played a game while we were walking. We saw the rock that had been quarried, there were several different layers of rock. The view was amazing out over the city and I also saw some small townships. The Southern Alps were in the distance.

We stopped for a snack at the wooden bench at the top. Then we walked through a short section of native bush before heading back down to the park. We saw some cool lion statues that were also water fountains. The whole walk took about 45 minutes and it was an easy walk for after school.

Ngāpera Metcalfe-Taurerewa (aged 11)



Ngāpera and the quarried rock

Fundraising opportunity Ultra-Marathon Marshal Station 30 January 2021

The Board has agreed to staff a marshal station at the Sign of the Bellbird during the Port Hills Ultra Marathon as a fundraising opportunity for the Society. This will involve looking after the aid station and providing course marshals. We need 20 volunteers on Saturday 30 January 2021, 7am to 12pm at the Sign of the Bellbird carpark (carpooling is available). We need your help! To volunteer please contact Marie Gray: secretary@summitroadsociety.org.nz, Ph 349 3409

**AGM: Tuesday 8 September
7.30pm, Old Stone House**

Annual General Meeting

Due to Covid-19, our Annual General Meeting has been rescheduled to 7.30pm on Tuesday 8 September 2020 at the Old Stone House, Shalamar Drive, Cashmere. We will adhere to government advice on gatherings at that time. If you are unwell, please stay home even if you only have mild symptoms. We will take every precaution to ensure the safety of everyone that attends.

Predator Free Port Hills Monitoring Pilot

We rolled out a monitoring pilot project over the summer months. Most predator monitoring has been undertaken in the bush. There are few examples of systematic monitoring in urban areas across New Zealand. We were in new territory hence a pilot project. We were very lucky to have the assistance of Katie Pitt, an ECAN summer student.

Tracking tunnel lines were installed in neighbourhoods and reserves in three suburbs, Halswell, Westmorland and Sumner. 15% of cards involved interactions with rats and/or mice and 43% involved hedgehogs. We knew there are a lot of hedgehogs about but this pilot highlighted just how prevalent they are. While hedgehogs are often seen as a benign friend of the garden, they are a serious threat to our native biodiversity. They have a voracious appetite for native lizards and invertebrates.

The value of monitoring is in repeating the process and then comparing results over the time. We are now developing a longer term monitoring plan. We hope to continue our work with students and interns, as well as to use a wider range of tools, including tracking tunnels, chew cards and cameras.



ROBERT HENNO

From the Secretary

It has been a challenging time for the Society and indeed the whole of New Zealand over the last few months. Covid-19 disrupted normal life and caused widespread cancellations of events. We moved meetings to Zoom wherever possible and we have delayed our Annual General Meeting until September. Like many parents around the country, I was trying to home-school my children while juggling Society business. It was not easy but we got through. It certainly feels amazing to be in Level 1.

The Society's reserves remained open to neighbours in Level 4 and provided much solace in a stressful time. Now at Level 1, most restrictions have lifted but we are still asking people to wash their hands, stay home when sick and keep a diary of when they have visited—just in case.

Sadly, our annual Arbor Day planting programme at Victoria Park with three local schools was cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions. Fingers crossed for 2021!

Looking forward, events for Predator Free Port Hills will be ramping up from spring onwards. We are planning to lead another Kids Nature Trail Walk at Omaha Bush for the Banks Peninsula Walking Festival in November.

Please feel free to get in touch by email or phone if you have any comments or questions—always happy to help.

Marie Gray
Secretary

AROUND THE RESERVES



Ohinetahi work party tidying up the area below the Sign of the Bellbird carpark

Ohinetahi Reserve Work Party

Last Spring grass growth was again rampant. The weed eaters were busy from mid October until 31st December. Then the hot weather set in and we prowled the bush eradicating weeds—all the usual ones such as old man's beard, passion vine, berberis, cotoneaster etc. We have also been making an effort to eliminate the elderberries growing in the reserve. An interesting half day was spent installing a pipe in a drain on Faulkners track, eliminating a greasy jump. Thanks to Joan for sourcing this pipe. We also spent a morning removing sycamore seedling carpets that are growing on the boundaries of the reserve.

While the mild and sunny autumn was just the right weather for the lockdown, it was not conducive to autumn growth. Although most plants survived the dry conditions, they lacked growth. The rainfall to June this year was only just over half the normal. There were some losses with last year's plantings but the survival rate would have been at least 90%.

On the 28th April, as we were in level 3, some of us resumed work in the reserve, curing us of cabin fever as we released plants—a task where it was easy to keep our distancing. Level 2 saw the work party back to full strength tree releasing, tidying up the Bellbird area and cutting yet more broom ready for this year's plantings.

Anne Kennedy

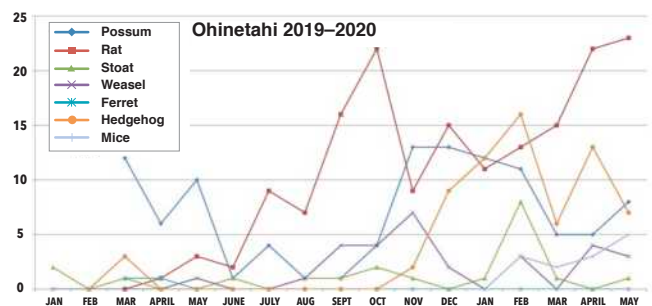


The sycamore seedling carpets invading the boundaries of Ohinetahi reserve

Ohinetahi Predator Control

The trap network now stands at 226 traps after adding another trap line along Trig V and down North Boundary and Faulkners Tracks. Member Merv Meredith, a regular workgroup member, has taken on this trap run. The network continues to concentrate on vegetated areas within the reserve from North Boundary to Orongomai. Society member and Omaha trapping volunteer, Brent Williams, has continued with building the DOC 200 and Victor tunnel traps installed in the past months.

Monthly checking is undertaken across 8 trap runs by a group of hardy volunteers, Helen Hills & Robin Collie, Brian Boyes, Russell Genet, Matthew Hellicar, Greg Gimblett, Merv Meredith and Derek & Gill Crombie.



Graph showing Ohinetahi trap catches from January 2019 to May 2020

The graph shows the catch over the past months since completion of the network. We are starting to see seasonal variation and an increase in rat numbers.

Trapping was stopped during the Covid-19 lockdown but was resumed at Level 3 under strict conditions.

The second quarterly monitoring round was undertaken in late January 2020 to determine relative predator abundance. PAI (pest abundance index) is determined by predator interaction with peanut butter (or aniseed) impregnated corflute 'chew cards' placed out for 5–7 nights in a line of 10 cards at 20m spacing. Four such lines were placed through the Reserve to get a measure of predator numbers. The number of interactions (bites) helps us determine the relative abundance of predators. PAI (rat) was 10% up from 7% in October 2019. PAI for possums was 25% or an RTC of 4.2 (residual trap catch, another index). This indicates low population at the time, reflected in our trapping numbers. We propose to repeat this monitoring in winter, subject to rockfall issues, which will help us build up a better understanding of predator numbers in Ohinetahi.

Placement of ink cards in tracking tunnels for rats and mice numbers was undertaken for the first time in February. It shows a low (nil) result for mice and rats. This does not reflect our catch data so we now think it might be an incorrect reading. This also will be repeated in winter.

Thanks again to all the team, and all those SRS members who have been involved with predator control at Ohinetahi over the many years leading to today. A special shout out to Mike White, Tony Edney and Robin Collie, all who have made contact with me over the past months which is greatly appreciated. These are the guys that set us on the course we follow today.

Greg Gimblett



Omahu Reserve Work Party

Life carries on in the reserve with continuing battles with gorse, broom, blackberry and various other pest plants. The lockdown stopped work parties for several weeks and slowed down work on the deer fencing project, preventing it from being finished by winter as hoped.

The bush tracks are in good order but very slippery after recent rain. Rhodes and Prendergast tracks have had major foliage cut back, widening the access and allowing more sunlight on to the tracks. A few wind falls have been removed from the bush tracks and the trapping program has resumed since the lockdown rules were relaxed.

Last year's native plantings have all survived and are doing well despite the dry summer. We hope to do more planting this winter if suitable plants become available.

The grazer has about 100 sheep in the grazing paddock which are keeping the vegetation down to a more manageable level. Our work parties try to keep the gorse at bay with regular cutting and spraying on the grazing block and fence lines.

Many thanks to our usual team of 6 to 10 volunteers who turn out on a regular basis.

Ian Johnston

Omahu Bush Predator Control

The Predator Control team has again expanded over the past months with the return of Graeme Sleeman and the addition of Allan Brent and Tom Bruynel. A number of people have expressed an interest in becoming involved so a training day was organised in June to introduce three more volunteers.

We are fortunate to have a core dedicated team to undertake the 4 weekly trap runs and the various tasks that go with maintaining a trap network and predator control plan.

The trap network sits at approximately 250 traps.

The graph shows the seasonal fluctuation of predators and the increase in rats and mice in particular since a poisoning program was undertaken in August/September 2019. With improvements in trap type, we have seen an increase in mice catch with a spike in November 2019.

Omahu work party clearing Rhodes Track

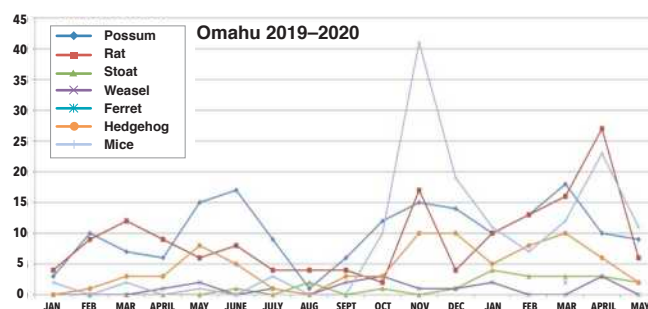
We again undertook chew card monitoring across the Reserve in October 2019 and February 2020, which showed a PAI (pest abundance index) of 5% for possums (both months) and 0% (October) and 30% (February) for rats. RTC (residual trap catch) for possums was constant at 0.8 for the six months.

We followed this up with 40 Tracking Tunnels across the reserve in February 2020 to more accurately confirm rat populations using a standardised method. This came back at 30%. In October 2019 it was at 5%. This was a significant increase in rat numbers in 5 months since the poisoning program. Mice interactions also increased significantly from 5% to 20%.

We have taken advice from DOC and CCC and it's likely that an annual pulse of baiting will be required to maintain rat populations at low levels to ensure successful breeding of bird populations. Further monitoring will be undertaken in winter.

We have started to scope an expansion of the network across the reserve with the plan to continue to expand the network into the grazing block and Gibraltar Rock.

Greg Gimblett



Graph showing Omahu trap catches from January 2019 to May 2020



Eastenders Work Party

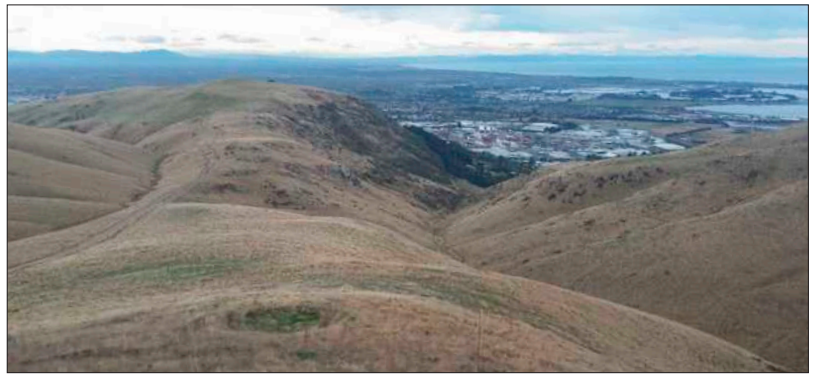
2020 has been a mixed bag for the Eastenders work parties. Commencing the last Monday in January, we have only managed five work parties up until now plus one that had to be cancelled because of bad weather. The reason of course, was the Covid crisis that effectively put paid to four sessions. Our annual tree hole digging exercise in preparation for Arbor Day planting by school children also came under the lockdown period. The areas where we did work were variously Mitchells, Gilpins, Cedrics, Harry Ell and the Eastenders Tracks, clearing drains, maintaining tracks and keeping encroaching vegetation in check. An average of 14 volunteers attended each work party from a volunteer database of around 50.

A Nassella tussock "training day" was held on a Council Reserve near Evans Pass, a known hot spot for the noxious weed. Matt Rose who is the Council's expert on these matters showed an enthusiastic bunch of us how to identify these offending tussocks amidst the native species - not that easy until you get "your eye in". After a morning of seeking, grubbing and having our confidence in its recognition boosted, we tallied up over 80 of these plants. The SRS Linda Woods Reserve, with which the Eastenders will have some ongoing responsibility with maintenance, has a low density Nassella infestation so it is important that we keep a lid on its spread as it can easily escalate. There are also other noxious plants on Linda Woods Reserve including gorse, broom and boxthorn and we will be involved in their control as well.

Graeme Paltridge



The Eastenders workparty clearing boneseed and gorse on the Eastenders track



Linda Woods Reserve (Avoca Valley)

Linda Woods Reserve

Work on the management plan for Linda Woods Reserve is progressing very well. We have received a report on the reserve's ecological values. Although highly modified, remnant indigenous vegetation occurs in rocky refugia and sheltered shady aspects. The reserve retains good examples of indigenous shrublands and to a lesser extent silver tussock grasslands. Botanical values include threatened, at risk and locally notable species. We have also commissioned a more detailed rockfall report which has outlined the remediation work required.

Prior to lockdown, a number of meetings were held with key stakeholders including the City Council, Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke and the local Heathcote community. We continued conversations where possible by Zoom over lockdown. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we have sought feedback from recreational groups via online surveys. We have been rather blown away by the interest and enthusiasm from the public.

We will be pulling this information together into a management plan over the coming weeks and months. In developing the management plan, we need to consider biodiversity, different recreational users, erosion, access, safety, cultural values and history, connections with adjacent reserves, the views of the local community, fire risk and the management of stock. We have a big job ahead of us and it is important that we take the time to get this right. We are very grateful for the assistance of John Marsh, retired landscape architect and Heathcote local.

Members are welcome to visit the Reserve but should note that it is still undeveloped. Keep to farm tracks and be alert to natural and farming hazards including active rockfall hazard. Please see our website for full details.



Garden Bird Survey

In late June and early July, many of our members and supporters participated in the annual Landcare Research Garden Bird Survey. Birds are "backyard barometers" and they help us better understand the health of our ecosystems. Participants spent an hour counting the birds that visited their garden. They then reported the results to Landcare Research for analysis. This citizen science project has been going for 13 years now and has improved our understanding of changes in bird populations over time. In the last 5 years, there has been a rapid increase in tūi and fantail, a moderate increase in kererū and a shallow increase in korimako (bellbirds) in the Canterbury region. Habitat restoration and predator control are key to bringing back our native birds.

If you live in the Port Hills area and are keen to start trapping, please contact marie@predatorfreeporthills.org.nz

Feral Animal Management Programme

Feral deer, goats, and pigs (feral ungulates) have been in residence on various parts of the Port Hills and Banks Peninsula for decades. Their impact adversely affects native flora and fauna and the animal populations can increase very quickly, compounding the problem. Protecting a reserve from feral ungulates is not an easy job. One of the highest priorities is to complete a perimeter feral animal fence around Omahu and Otahuna Reserves so that eradication of any remaining feral ungulates within the fenced perimeter can then be carried out. This then needs to be followed by ongoing monitoring and further control work as necessary to help ensure they stay out. The perimeter fence is primarily a deer fence, but it will incorporate various “smart” features to help further inhibit any potential ungulate infiltrations in the future.

This work is being done in collaboration with Otahuna Reserve to the north and private landowners to the south. Once completed, the perimeter fence will help to protect a combined area of more than 300 hectares of precious native biodiversity and will also enable various biodiversity enhancement options to be initiated within the reserves in the future.

The Gama Foundation gifted Omahu Bush and Gibraltar Rock to the Society in 2010 and have agreed to pay for new, or improved, fencing along the boundaries of this 146-hectare Reserve.

We are also truly fortunate to be able to do this work in collaboration with two like-minded neighbours, so the wider benefits will be significant, particularly for the protection of the remnant podocarp/hardwood forest. The project has generated a significant amount of work for volunteers, particularly clearing vegetation along parts of the new fence lines, but there is no shortage of enthusiasm to see this project completed.

Fencing work is now well advanced. All fencing within Omahu Reserve will be completed this year and the Society’s northern border with the Otahuna Reserve will now also incorporate a feral animal fence to replace the existing stock fence to help cut the 300 hectares into two smaller cells of similar size. That fence

will be of significant benefit during the eradication phase and will facilitate more effective feral ungulate control in the future if new infiltrations occur in either Otahuna Reserve, or Omahu. Those phases of the work will also be planned and implemented in collaboration with Otahuna Reserve and its southern neighbour.

The fencing contractor continues to make excellent progress. He has a lot of experience with feral ungulates and this has been greatly beneficial, particularly with respect to the design and attention to detail of the fences and entrance gates. Fences like this can be visually intrusive initially but that impact should soften over time after grass seed is sown, and natives start to regenerate. Due to lockdown, the sowing of grass seed was delayed so please take special care if walking down Rhodes Track this winter as it can be slippery after rain.

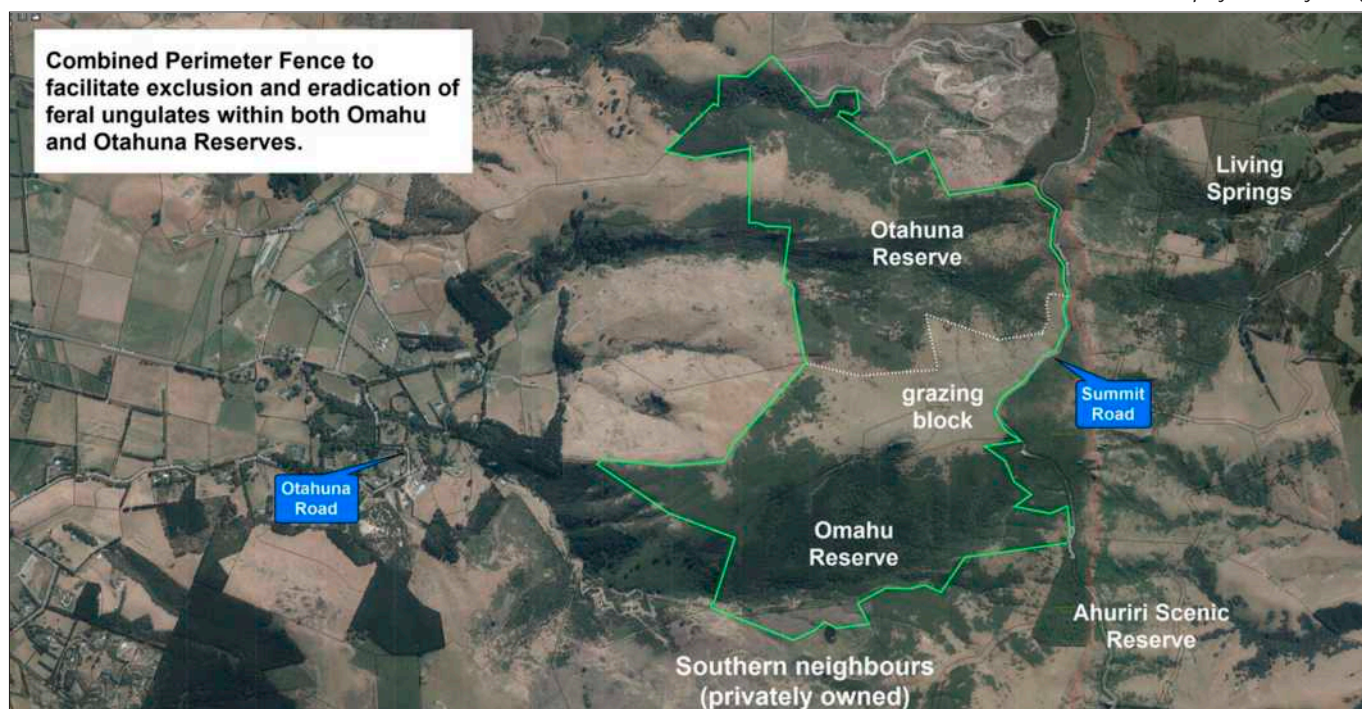
The value in the fence is to help protect the reserve for the future, but the work does not stop once the fence is completed.

Graham Corbishley



The new deer fence with Gibraltar Rock in the background

Map of Omahu fencing



I hope that you are all enjoying a return to some semblance of normality following the recent lockdown. For Liz and me, it was both rewarding and challenging as our bubble included my son and his partner plus our 2 grandchildren, Riley, just turned 6 and Mason 4½. We are lucky living where we are, as our 'neighbourhood' and where we could exercise, includes the beach and the hills. It was a great opportunity to introduce the grandchildren to our local Port Hills tracks and we had a wonderful time exploring. It was encouraging to see so many families enjoying, re-discovering and I suspect in some cases discovering for the first time 'our' tracks, and I'm sure it was the same across the Port Hills.

Like many others, I was introduced to ZOOM during the lockdown, and we managed a successful trustee meeting. Following that, when the alert level was reduced to 1, it was good to return to a face to face meeting on June 12th. Business included the annual accounts, the John Jameson Lookout opposite the Sign of the Bellbird and the Society's closure of certain tracks at Ohinetahi due to rockfall risk. In some cases, public safety is an issue, with a need for urgency. The Society set up a crowdfunding page for the necessary remediation and the Trust agreed to fund any shortfall.

In the case of the Society, in addition to the ongoing spending at Ohinetahi and Omahu Bush, the Linda Woods Reserve will require additional funding for some considerable time, and capital will be needed for the John Jameson Lookout.

"Where there is a will, there is a way"

Have you considered making a lasting gift to the community at large? A gift that both the community and visitors from afar can enjoy for generations? The rural land of the Port Hills is Christchurch's signature. Once this hill land is subdivided and built on, the attached rural vistas and recreational values are lost.

The Society established the Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust to provide a safe haven for legacies and donations separate from the generic funds of the Society. The Trust funds are intended to facilitate the purchase and protection of Port Hills land by the Summit Road Society along with the maintenance of Society-owned land. In the unlikely event of the Society being wound up, its Constitution requires this land to be passed to the Christchurch City Council to continue as public reserves.

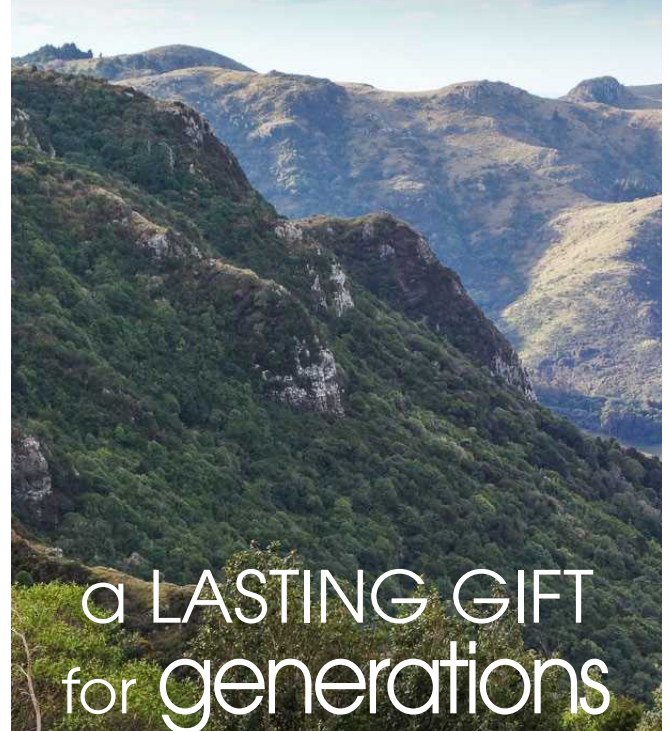
Substantial legacies and donations have made possible the purchasing of Ohinetahi and Linda Woods Reserves by the Society. Omahu Reserve and Gibraltar Rock Reserve were both gifted by the Gama Foundation.

The Trust is a registered charity, dependent on donations and bequests, with the sole purpose of furthering Harry Ell's vision for the Port Hills. No promises can be made, but favourable consideration may be given to naming any land acquired through donations or bequests in line with the wishes of the donor. If you would like any further information, please feel to contact me.

John Goodrich

Chairperson

Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust



PROTECTING
the unique values
of the **Port Hills**

