



a passion for the Port Hills

Newsletter, Winter 2023

John Jameson Lookout



We were delighted to formally open the John Jameson Lookout in June. The Lookout sits beneath the peak of Ōrongomai within the takiwā (area) of Ngāti Wheke of Rāpaki. It is located opposite the Sign of the Bellbird on the Summit Road.

In embarking on this project, the Summit Road Society set out to provide a safe and accessible viewpoint over Whakaraupō Lyttelton Harbour, a site which weaves together the rich stories of this place and provides a gateway to the network of walking tracks on the Port Hills.

We worked closely with Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke and Christchurch City Council in order to honour the significance of this site. The space includes low stone walls, a pou whenua, interpretation panels and an accessible viewing area, all complemented by native plantings.

The stone walls are made of Port Hills stone. They were designed to complement Harry Ell's rest houses, particularly the Sign of the Bellbird across the road. The walls stand as an acknowledgement of the dedicated service of John Jameson, the founder of the Summit Road Society, and all the many volunteers who have worked to enhance the Port Hills.

The opening of the John Jameson Lookout marks the Summit Road Society's 75th anniversary. From humble beginnings, the Summit Road Society is now a major landowner on the Port Hills, a respected conservation organisation and a fierce advocate for the protection and restoration of our beloved hills.

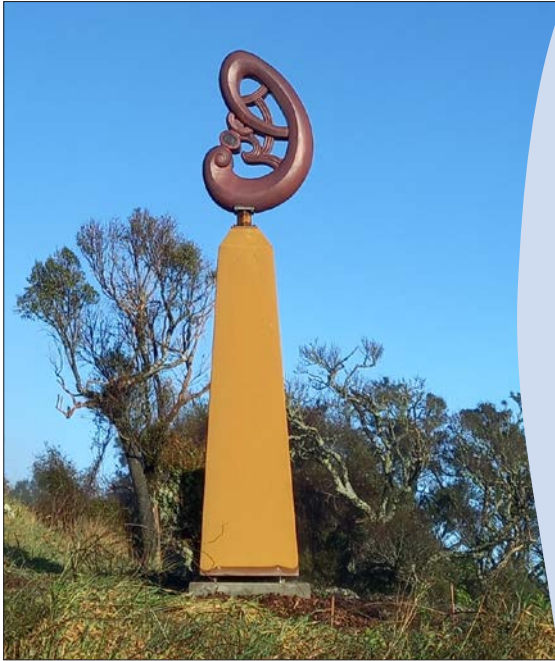


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Carver Caine Tauwhare with the pou whenua at the dawn ceremony.

Words cannot capture the beauty of the pou whenua. It was carved by kaiwhakairo Caine Tauwhare from Ngāti Wheke. It represents a taringa or ear. Caine has carved a number of pou whenua around the Harbour including the pou at the Timeball and on Ōtamahua Quail Island. In keeping with the wishes of the carver, the meaning of the pou will be shared a-waha (verbally).

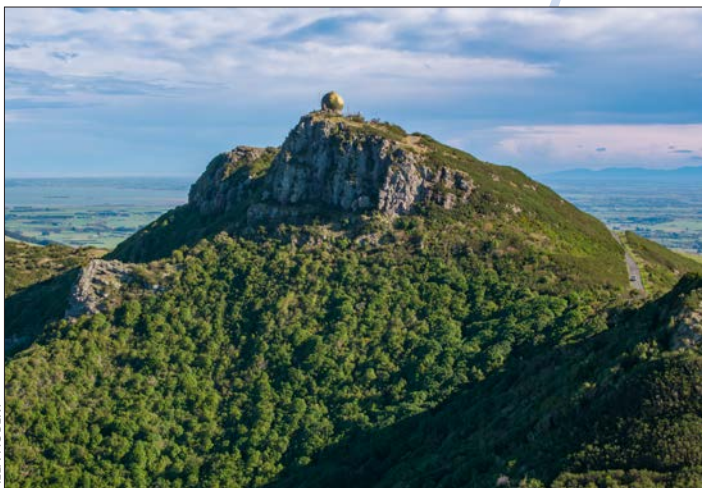


The pou whenua represents a taringa or ear.

Interpretation panels highlight the significance of this site to mana whenua. The area is traditionally known as Ōrongomai after the nearby peak. After Te Rakiwhakaputa took Ōhinetahi Pā, Ngāi Tahu continued their battles with Ngāti Mamoe. Upon entering the nearby bush, they heard the voices of Ngāti Mamoe coming from Mānuka Pā near Tai Tapu. Ōrongomai means 'the place where voices are heard'. In addition, a panorama plane table below the stone wall identifies important wāhi (places) around the Harbour.

Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke wrote 'The interpretation panels were carefully crafted and composed with the intention of creating an inclusive educational environment for all people to learn and appreciate the surrounding landscapes. They serve as platforms to convey our Ngāti Wheke narratives in a distinct manner, reviving our ancestral place names'.

Other nearby interpretation panels provide information on both the history of the Summit Road Society and recommended walks in the area.



Ōrongomai



Above and right: Maui Stuart, Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke and Tyrone Fields, Councillor for Banks Peninsula opened the formalities. Paul Loughton cut the cake to celebrate the Society's 75th anniversary

Right: The Jameson family gathered to celebrate the opening of the Lookout.



JOHN CLEMENS



The panorama plane table of Whakaraupō Lyttelton Harbour.

On the morning of the formal opening, Maui Stuart from Ngāti Wheke led a moving dawn karakia to bless the pou whenua and interpretation panels. This was followed by the formal opening ceremony later that afternoon. Over 40 people attended the event. Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate and, just as many visitors before, we took shelter in the Sign of the Bellbird. Christchurch City Councillor for Banks Peninsula, Tyrone Fields was the MC for the day. Maui Stuart opened the proceedings with a karakia, followed by speeches from Mayor Phil Mauer, Paula Jameson on behalf of the Jameson Family and President Bill Woods. Long term Board member, Paul Loughton, cut the cake to celebrate the Society's 75th anniversary. We then crossed the road to the carpark. Caine Tauwhare spoke on the meaning and significance of the pou whenua. John Jameson's grandchildren, Matthew and Kimberley, cut the ribbon to officially open the Lookout. We finished with a hearty barbeque, thanks to the culinary skills of the Christchurch City Council rangers.

The Board is very proud of the John Jameson Lookout. It is a big project for a small organisation like the Summit Road Society. It is a stunning addition to the Port Hills, connecting people and place.

HOW THE *John Jameson Lookout* CAME TO BE



The John Jameson Lookout is the result of years of work by many people. Early discussions were underway when the earthquakes struck and the idea was put on hold. We resumed work on the project in late 2018. It took several years to develop and refine the project design, raise the funds and gain the necessary consents and permissions. We would like to particularly acknowledge the support and guidance of Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke and the Christchurch City Council.

Our sincere thanks to Graham Densem who drove this project from a concept to reality. Graham is a professional landscape architect and long term member of the Society. In earlier days, he was the environmental adviser and activities' coordinator of the Society, as well as the editor of this newsletter and chair of the Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust. Graham worked closely with landscape architect, Nic Kaye (NK Landscape Architecture), engineer, Andy Hall (Davie Lovell-Smith), and Paul Loughton from our Board, to bring this project to fruition.

Construction of the Lookout was undertaken by a number of contractors. Mangers Contracting completed the earthworks, foundations and asphaltting, with support from Groundwork and Fulton Hogan. Southern Stonemasons Canterbury constructed the low stone walls, steps and associated stone paving. Regan Shanks Stone Masonry crafted the plaque to remember John Jameson. Taeye Engineering fabricated the Corten Steel balustrade and plinth for the pou whenua. The area is bitterly cold during a north-easterly. The teams working on site deserve a vote of thanks for persevering in such tough conditions.

We are incredibly grateful to manawhenua for their encouragement, advice and support throughout this project. For Ngāti Wheke, this site is Ōrongomai, the place where voices are heard. We thank Yvette Couch-Lewis for her early guidance on the design and Maui Stuart for his cultural support. Caine Tauwhare's pou whenua has been an outstanding addition to this space. Society members who went on the field trip to Rāpaki in August 2004 may recall it was Yvette and Caine who graciously gave their time to share the history of the settlement and restoration projects underway.

In addition, we give our heartfelt thanks to Donald Couch and Materia Hutana for their work on the Ōrongomai panel and the panorama plane table. This was a major project in itself, as the panorama identifies over 40 locations around Whakaraupō, with additional commentary on eight places. What an asset for Christchurch. It is modelled on a similar plane table at the Timeball and we acknowledge Heritage NZ Pouhere Taonga for their support.

Two interpretation panels on the history of John Jameson and the Summit Road Society, and recommended tracks in the area, were installed near the stone wall. Thanks to Paula Jameson for the historical information and Bill Kennedy for such a fantastic map. Photographer Alex Hubert provided the images. Signtech completed the design, fabrication and installation of the interpretation panels.

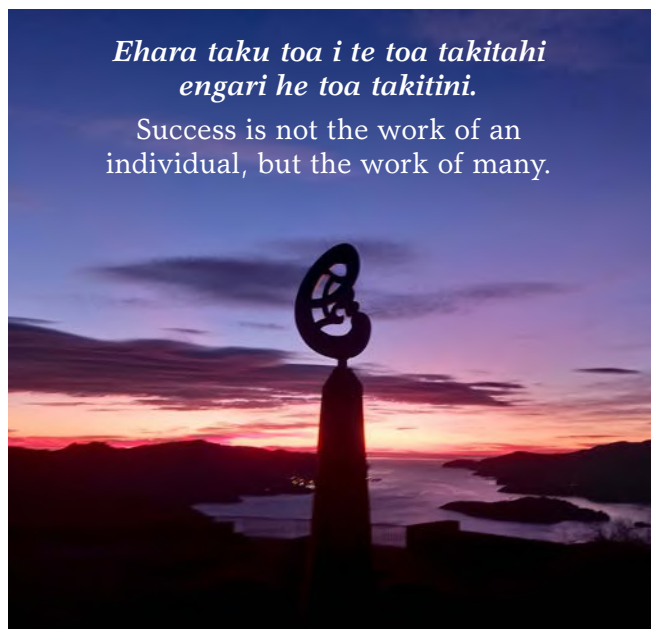
Wai-ora Forest Landscapes and Helen Hills supplied the native plants. Our hardworking Ōhinetahi volunteer work party, under the guidance of Anne Kennedy, undertook the landscape planting. The plants have been carefully chosen to minimise fire risk.

Paul Devlin, Rodney Chambers and fellow CCC rangers were, as always, a bedrock of support. We could not have completed the project without their advice and help, including installation of the car park security gates.

The Summit Road Society paid for this project through grants and donations from many organisations and funders—Christchurch City Council, Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust, Rātā Foundation, JD Stout Memorial Trust (care of Perpetual Guardian), Lotteries Environment and Heritage Fund, Lyttelton Port Company, Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga and donations in time, resources and money from Summit Road Society members and other individuals and families. Finally, thank you to Secretary Marie Gray for her work behind-the-scenes.

*Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi
engari he toa takitini.*

Success is not the work of an individual, but the work of many.





John and the The Hon Ruth Dyson at the unveiling of the commemorative plaque to the opening of the Summit Road, Sign of the Kiwi, April 2009.

John Jameson QSM

Harry Ell was a man with a vision. With dogged determination, he worked to establish the network of reserves on the Port Hills, the Summit Road and the four rest houses. Following WWII, his grandson, John Jameson, was horrified to discover that the reserves had been grazed and the rest houses had been vandalised. He pushed for the creation of a protection society, and in 1948 the Summit Road Scenic Society was formed. It was renamed the Summit Road Society Inc. in 1976. John was a leading figure in the Society for over seventy years. He was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the Society in 1983 and a Queen's Service Medal in 1998. He had long advocated for the enhancement of the carpark area above Ōhinetahi Reserve. John passed away in 2018 at the age of 97 after a long life of service.

Paula Jameson, Board Member and daughter of John Jameson, wrote to Graham Densem following the opening of the Lookout, 'The completion, by chance, so happened 75 years from that inaugural meeting in 1948, so the Lookout stands in recognition of all the volunteers, past, present, and future, who keep Harry Ell's vision alive.'

Remembering Jeremy Agar

In December 2022, Vice President of the Summit Road Society Jeremy Agar sadly passed away. Jeremy had been involved with the Summit Road Society for nearly twenty years. He first joined as the Banks Peninsula District Council representative on the Board in 2004. He was elected Vice President in 2009. Jeremy was a volunteer with the Eastenders and Omaha volunteer work parties and a trustee on the Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust.

Jeremy was also the driving force behind our community and backyard trapping programme, Predator Free Port Hills. Jeremy had a particular love for our native birds and had seen the benefits of trapping in both Arthurs Pass and the Catlins. While he was on the Banks Peninsula Community Board, he formed a proposal for Birdsafe Whakaraupō, a community trapping programme around Whakaraupō Lyttelton Harbour. He passionately believed in the need for a joined-up approach to conservation. Due to the earthquakes, Birdsafe Whakaraupō never really took off. However, Jeremy did not let go of his dream. In 2015 he took a proposal to the Board of the Summit Road Society for Predator Free Port Hills. The Board had the usual concerns. How would this be funded? Who would do the work? Could it even be done? Nevertheless, Jeremy was determined. He gave a substantial donation to the Summit Road Society to support the formation of the programme and in November 2016, Predator Free Port Hills was born.

There are nearly 1600 households now trapping with Predator Free Port Hills and we've removed thousands of predators from the Port Hills and Lyttelton Harbour. Our trappers report increasing numbers of native birds including fantails, bellbirds and kererū—and even the odd tūi coming for a visit from the Peninsula. We are also the buffer zone and advance guard for Pest Free Banks Peninsula who are making excellent progress with their elimination programmes at Kaitōrete and the extended Wildside.

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Summit Road Society
 PO Box 37-115, Christchurch 8245
www.summitroadsociety.org.nz
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	318 4825
Vice-President	Paula Jameson	351 4221
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Treasurer	Paul Loughton	322 7082
Board Members	Anne Kennedy	337 0364
	Melanie Coker	669 0336
	Finn Jackson	022 128 8137
Representatives		
Selwyn District Council	Grant Miller	027 381 7032
Spreydon-Cashmere-Heathcote	Will Hall	021 674 255
Banks Peninsula	Tyrone Fields	021 100 4590
Port Hills Rangers	Paul Devlin	941 7570
Eastenders work party	Graeme Paltridge	384 3592
Ohinetahi work party	Anne Kennedy	337 0364
Omaha Bush work party	Ian Johnston	332 8319
Linda Woods Reserve WP	Graeme Paltridge	384 3592

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 & Instagram - **Summit Road Society**
 & **Predator Free Port Hills** for regular updates



Jeremy with the trophy, Te Waka o Aoraki. Predator Free Port Hills received first place in the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board Awards in 2021.

The Predator Free 2050 programmes across the country show that we can eliminate predators from mainland New Zealand but it takes vision, time, money and determination.

Jeremy was tremendously proud of the work of Predator Free Port Hills and Pest Free Banks Peninsula. He was a mainstay at our events and workshops, providing guidance and leadership, offering hands-on help and assistance, chatting with interested trappers and encouraging us all to keep the end goal in mind. Jeremy will be remembered as an intelligent, passionate and articulate man, positively impractical and technologically challenged, but with a quick wit, keen sense of fun and most of all a vision of a better future for people and our planet.

Jeremy is dearly missed by our volunteers with the Summit Road Society, Predator Free Port Hills and the wider conservation movement in Canterbury.

Community Representatives

The local elections took place in October 2022. We are delighted to welcome back Tyrone Fields as the Banks Peninsula Community Board appointee and Grant Miller as the Selwyn District Council appointee. Welcome also to the 'new guy' **Will Hall** (right), who has been selected as the Spreydon-Cashmere-Heathcote Community Board representative.



We farewelled Lee Sampson and Jeff Bland. Lee Sampson served as the Spreydon-Cashmere Community Board representative from 2017-2022 and Jeff Bland as the Selwyn representative from 2020-2022. We really value the input of our community representatives; they provide a valuable conduit to local government and are able to provide advice and insight on local issues. Thank you, Lee and Jeff for your support of the Summit Road Society.

Arbor Day

Our annual Arbor Day planting with local schools took place at Latters Spur in Victoria Park. Due to the teachers' stop work meeting, we moved the planting to our postponement date of 1 June and fortunately the weather was perfect. Children from Cashmere Primary and Somerfield School joined the Christchurch City Council rangers and Society volunteers to plant trees and plants across two sites. Arbor Day is a great chance for the kids to get hands-on with nature, not only planting the trees but hunting for worms and grubs in the soil. Thank you to the Eastenders for digging the holes beforehand.



PAUL LOUGHTON

School Arbor Day planting at Victoria Park.

Kids Talk

Last summer my little cousin came to visit from Italy. We took her on the Mitchells Track. She loved all the big roots to climb over. She refused to wear her shoes, and insisted on holding my hand. Her hand was very warm and small. The day was as hot as a desert. The trees were as green as grass. In the distance I could see the sea. Afterwards we stopped at the Sign of the Kiwi for a drink and icecream.

By Yvette, age 9



MIRIA GOODWIN

Yvette and her cousin on Mitchells Track



Programme leader Sarah Wilson speaks on Pest Free Banks Peninsula.

Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting took place in late June. We re-appointed Bill Woods as President. We had a Vice President vacancy with Jeremy's passing and Paula Jameson has been confirmed in this role.

Peter van Hout has stepped down as Treasurer due to work commitments. Peter has filled the role since September 2020. Peter is a qualified accountant and we have been grateful for his expertise and advice as we moved to the PBE Tier 4 reporting standards and our finances have become more complex due to significant grant funding. Thank you Peter for your service to the Summit Road Society over the last few years. Paul Loughton, our former Treasurer, was re-appointed to this role—but says it's just temporary! If you know of any accountants who might like to support the Society with our financial reporting, please reach out.

Current Board members, Anne Kennedy and Melanie Coker, were also re-appointed to the Board. We welcome new Board member, **Finn Jackson** (left). Finn



is a law graduate and is studying a postgraduate diploma in climate change science and policy. He has recently joined the committee for the Ōpawaho-Heathcote River Network and leads a restoration project in Riverlaw Esplanade Reserve in St Martins. Finn has a family connection

to the Summit Road Society too. His great-great uncle on his mother's side was past Society Board member, Huia Gilpin. On his father's side, he is a descendent of Thomas Kennedy of Kennedys Bush. We are delighted to have Finn join our Board.

Marie Gray continues as Secretary, which is an appointed position. Marie will be finishing up as Secretary at the end of this year as she will be undertaking a Master in Teaching and Learning degree in 2024, with the goal of working in environmental education. If anyone else is potentially interested in the role of Secretary or joining the Board generally, please do get in touch.

The annual reports for the AGM were sent to members by email and are also on our website under News and Reports.

Following the AGM, Sarah Wilson spoke on Pest Free Banks Peninsula with a focus on the elimination programmes underway at Kaitōrete and the extended Wildside on the south-eastern corner of Banks Peninsula. In a word, exciting! The team are making tremendous progress eliminating predators from these target areas, using a mixture of old and new technology and trialing what works and what doesn't work across difficult terrain. Our work on the Port Hills is a critical pillar in the Pest Free Banks Peninsula strategy, providing a buffer zone between Christchurch City and the Peninsula and building community enthusiasm and interest for the Predator Free vision.

Predator Free Port Hills

Our Predator Free Port Hills programme continues to expand. This year, we have held a trap building day in Lyttelton and community events at Mt Pleasant and Westmorland. We also hosted Cam Speedy from Predator Free NZ Trust. Cam is an expert in predator control advocating the importance of reading the landscape, understanding predator behaviour and taking an intentional approach to trapping. Over 100 people attended the talk at Aldersgate Centre. This was followed by a field trip the following day with the leads from different predator control projects across Lyttelton Harbour and Christchurch. Similar events were held in Selwyn and on Banks Peninsula.

We miss Jeremy but know he would be delighted to see the growth in the programme. We continue to hold our monthly stall at the Mt Pleasant Farmers Market. We were thrilled to receive the news that we have been awarded the Environment Award from the Sumner-Ferrymead Foundation. The \$3000 award will be used to support trap building days in our Sumner Bays community hub from Taylor's Mistake to Heathcote, a backyard biodiversity initiative and a trial of DOC150s at the market to target hedgehogs and mustelids.

In term 2, we worked with Halswell School to make tracking tunnels and build rat traps. We also continue to support the work of Pest Free Banks Peninsula as well as the new Predator Free Christchurch network. We are seeing a surge in interest and enthusiasm for the Predator Free vision in the wider Christchurch area. Discussions are underway regarding a Predator Free Central Canterbury initiative.

A big thank you to the volunteers, funders and supporters who make this project such a success.

Marie Gray



Community trap building day at Lyttelton Primary School.

LINDA WOODS RESERVE



JOHN MARSH

The work party taking a break from planting in Horotane Valley.

The hard working volunteer work party continue their good work on the reserve, including planting, releasing and weed control. They are also building a walking track up through the mid-section to the top of Avoca Valley.

Our Jobs for Nature restoration programme has been transformational. If you are keen to see the progress, walk along the closed section of the Summit Road. You will see plants as far as the eye can see. We have been fortunate to receive an extra 4000 trees from Trees that Count and funding from the Christchurch City Council Sustainability Fund for slip planting. All up, we are on track to plant 15,000 plants and trees in Avoca Valley this winter. Volunteers have already planted 1700 plants, including two public planting days, dedicated sessions with the Peninsula Tramping Club and local school Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o te Whānau Tahī, and efforts by the work party. Wai-ora Forest Landscapes staff are planting the balance. By the end of the year, we will have planted 52,000 plants in Avoca Valley! What an achievement. We have one more year of Jobs for Nature funding left, which will largely be used for maintaining the plantings.

Our predator control programme is getting underway, with support from Brent Barrett from Boffa Miskell and local residents, Jane and Ross Radford and Brigid Casey. Murray Smith, our coordinator for the Ōhinetahi trapping programme, has been providing advice, guidance and training. We hope to have three trap lines in place by the end of this year.



JOHN MARSH

The work party benching a new walking track in Avoca Valley.

We are also working with Shelley McDonnell and Angus McIntosh from the University of Canterbury to set up our citizen science monitoring programme of Avoca Stream to monitor improvements in water flow, water quality and biodiversity. This work is being funded by Environment Canterbury.

In Horotane Valley, President Bill Woods is building a new shed with support from neighbours and the volunteer work party. This will be used to store tools and equipment. We were also delighted to receive a significant donation from neighbours, Tim and Rachel Mundy. This is funding a volunteer planting project in Horotane Valley involving a dedicated group of locals, the work party and various corporate groups. We are planting 3000 kākūka around the gorse and on the slips.

Thanks to funding from the Christchurch City Council and support from the volunteer work party, we are continuing our work to remove weeds from the reserve, with a focus on boxthorn, briar rose and blackberry. We are also removing gorse and broom from the ridgeline as it is a threat to the flora that inhabit the rocky outcrops.

Linda Woods Reserve is slowly taking shape. Signage will be installed later this year and we will be engaging a contractor to improve drainage along the 4WD tracks.

A huge thank you to the volunteers and Wai-ora staff who work tirelessly at Linda Woods Reserve. We are also very grateful to the funders who support our work in Avoca Valley – Department of Conservation Jobs for Nature programme, Christchurch City Council, Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust, Million Metre Streams, Trees that Count, Environment Canterbury, Rātā Foundation, Meridian, Boffa Miskell, QEII National Trust and donations from individuals, families and local businesses. And special thanks to John Marsh for his assistance with the Linda Woods Reserve management plan and Avoca Valley restoration project.

Marie Gray



Volunteers at our public planting day at Avoca Valley

FOR THE BIRDS

Four birds in the bush are worth one in the hand

The Sign of the Bellbird, or alternatively The Sign of the Korimako, is one of the most appropriately named places on the Port Hills. It is a rare day that a korimako is not heard in the area. The numbers and variety of birds in the Summit Road Society Reserves seem to be increasing, but how exactly is this measured?



NADINE CAMPBELL

It is a surprisingly complex business and requires a great deal of experience. The Garden Bird Survey is completed every year in New Zealand. Residents record the birds they see in their backyards on specified days. This has been very popular but judging numbers in bush reserve areas is much more difficult. Andrew Crossland, a ranger for the Christchurch City Council, has been doing bird surveys of reserves in Christchurch for 20 years. Once a year, he walks the tracks in a reserve and records the numbers of birds he sees and hears. One would think the numbers would increase exponentially with trapping of predators but there are other factors at play. The severity of a winter, with a few days of snow for instance deadly for fantails, food sources and predation all play a part.

There is now hope for the future using artificial intelligence to monitor both bird and predator numbers in the environment.

Currently we only have blunt tools for monitoring predator numbers. Chew card and tracking tunnel results often don't correlate well with numbers being caught in traps. The Cacophony Project, based right here in Christchurch, is at the forefront of using Artificial Intelligence to monitor predator numbers. This not-for-profit organisation has developed a thermal imaging device for monitoring predator numbers. Obviously manually reviewing hours and hours of video footage of predators is a herculean task. But with the help of artificial intelligence, the task can be shortened dramatically. Cacophony is collaborating with Predator Free 2050, Department of Conservation and a Californian Google project in using artificial intelligence for this work.

Thermal imaging is used by search and rescue organisations and has military applications but the cost of the cameras used is prohibitively expensive for use in predator monitoring. This is where Cacophony comes in by developing cameras which are within the price range of volunteer organisations. These cameras are capable of differentiating between rodents (mouse or rat), hedgehogs, ferrets, stoats, weasels, cats, and possums (as well as wallabies, sheep, curious spiders, and a number of other semi-interesting species). This will prove crucial in measuring how well predator control programmes are progressing. As a not-for-profit, open source project, the role of The Cacophony Project is to develop the technology to a standard where it can be taken over and commercialised by companies (the first company to have done so is 2040 Ltd, also in Christchurch).

Artificial intelligence species classification by camera use is more problematical for birds. It is being used in open areas such as ponds or open fields but is more difficult in the bush. Being able to distinguish between different types of birds in deep foliage is obviously difficult. But one can see that, if both fixed cameras and sound recordings could be combined, it would make the task easier. As a first step, The Cacophony Project has developed a bird recording device which utilises artificial intelligence to classify birds by their calls which seems more promising than the use of cameras for bird identification and could provide a much better measure of how birdlife is responding to predator control efforts.

There is no doubt much work to be done in this area but the future is rich with possibilities. There will always be a need for monitoring by birdwatchers. Traps don't set themselves so volunteers will always be needed for trapping lines. But by using artificial intelligence the task of measuring how well the programmes are doing will become not only much easier but also much more accurate.

Murray Smith

EASTENDERS

The Eastenders have been busy over the past six months with numerous satisfying results for our efforts. Over the summer we focused on noxious weed control on three Council reserves. The first was removing an introduced succulent, *Cotyledon orbiculata*, sometimes called the round-leafed navel wort but more commonly known as pigs ear. Originally from South Africa, it is an escapee from domestic gardens that has spread rapidly onto dry aspects of the Port Hills, particularly east of Evans Pass. We spent three sessions on the Scarborough Hill Reserve and still managed to collect 1000kgs of the plant that had escaped being poisoned by contractors, particularly from sites where it was growing in close proximity to non-target plants. All the offending plants have to be removed and disposed of in a controlled tip as even a single fallen leaf will sprout again. Pigs ear will suppress other desirable plants and it is also poisonous to stock. This will be an ongoing task for some years in order to keep on top of residual seed germination.

Two other sessions were spent on Mt Cavendish and Mt Pleasant Reserves pulling out or cut-and-stump-pasting introduced scotch broom that threatens to take over silver tussock and native broom on these Reserves.

As winter approaches, the loess soils of the Port Hills become much easier to work. We have spent two work parties (with two more to go) upgrading the lesser known Kenton Track which parallels the eastern slopes of Heathcote Valley, starting at the top of the Quarry Track to join the John Britten Reserve. (Incidentally, the name Kenton derives from John Britten's middle name). Our first work party there was in wind so strong that it was at times difficult to stand up (true!) but we have now re-benched and realigned much of this track to make it easier to follow with better drainage and more comfortable for the casual walker.

We also had our annual session digging 400 holes on Latters Spur, Victoria Park, as preparation for Arbor Day tree planting by school children. Only one work party was cancelled because of rain.

The Eastenders has a core following of 10-15 volunteers who turn up twice monthly for three hours per session and we work in closely with the Christchurch City Council rangers.

Graeme Paltridge



MATT ROSE

The Eastenders removed over a tonne of pigs ear from Scarborough Hill Reserve.

OHINETAHI

Ohinetahi Reserve Work Party

In the last six months, a great deal of time has been spent trying to keep on top of grass growth on the tracks. The weed eaters have been busy, busy, busy. In fact, one machine decided it was all too much and died on active service, a bearing coming loose and grooving its way up the piston. The hedge clippers have also been busy on tracks which, because of their rocky nature and/or steepness or remoteness, are unsuitable for the machines.

We spent three days clearing Old Man's Beard and Passion Vine. When we spot the occasional plant as we pass along a track, we also divert and deal with it.

Despite the extraordinary amount of rain this year, we have only had to cancel twice. The rain chased us home three times at lunchtime, but only after we had eaten. It is no good packing a lunch and then eating it at home. It doesn't taste as good somehow.

We have also cleared around our post-fire plantings and spent time planting and clearing the new John Jameson Lookout.

Anne Kennedy



HELEN HILLS

Volunteers David, Robin and Paul clearing blackberry at Ohinetahi.



HELEN HILLS

Russell with a basket fungus at Ohinetahi Reserve.

Ohinetahi Predator Control Report

Predator numbers caught since Dec 2022: 378
Volunteer hours: 445

The numbers of rats in Ohinetahi remain very high and a poisoning programme is being carried out this winter to reduce these numbers. With the increase in the rat population, there has been a marked increase in stoats trapped. In the last six months, we have trapped 30, compared with 24 for all of last year.

The teething problems with the automatic reset AT220 traps have been worked through and they are now operating as intended. We are installing 6 more of these traps in coming weeks and it will free up Sentinels to be installed in other areas within the reserve.

There has been increased collaboration with our neighbours in Living Springs and input and advice from Tim Sjoberg at Pest Free Banks Peninsula. This has the marked benefit of co-ordinating control programmes across boundaries.

No formal surveys have been done of birdlife but a walk through Ohinetahi is accompanied by the sound of bellbirds on most tracks now.

We had a field visit with well-known biologist, Cam Speedy, in Ohinetahi and his enthusiasm has been infectious for our programme.

As always, our nine trappers deserve a major vote of thanks for all the work they put in, often in marginal weather. Pest Free Banks Peninsula provides funding for traps and bait. Members of the public can help with financial contributions. The money is always wisely spent.

Murray Smith

OMAHU

Omahu Bush Work Party

The Omahu volunteers have been working on the usual problems of weeding recent plantings of tōtara trees and native bush, clearing tracks, gorse and broom control. Wet Fridays have been a challenge.

A weed survey of our area was carried out by Tom Ferguson (a botanist from Wai-ora Forest Landscapes) and Melissa Hutchison. The main pest plants of concern were Evergreen Buckthorn, Darwin's Barberry, Old Man's Beard, Male Fern and one pine tree.

Two work days were spent removing the Buckthorn, Darwin's Barberry and the lone pine. The Old Man's Beard will wait until it flowers again. The Summit Road fence was also cleared of broom.

We have fitted about 10000 hog rings to the top and lower wires to secure the equine mesh to the main deer fence. This is about the last job on the deer fence. A stock fence is also proposed to fence off Gibraltar Rock to keep the sheep away from regenerating bush.

The Omahu team meets on the first and third Fridays of the month with usually 6–8 volunteers. More would be appreciated. Many thanks to our regular team who turn up every week.

Ian Johnston



Field visit to Ohinetahi Reserve with Cam Speedy.



Ringbarking the lone pine at Omahu.



Work party undertaking enrichment planting at Omahu.

Omahu Bush Predator Control

'Kaizen'

–Kaizen is a compound of two Japanese words that together translate as 'good change' or 'improvement'. However, Kaizen has come to mean 'continuous improvement'.

This probably sums up the attitude of the predator control team at Omahu as we continually strive to get better, and improve outcomes for flora and fauna at Omahu Bush.

The battle against rodents continues.

In April, the University of Canterbury third year Ecology class undertook tracking tunnel and chew card monitoring for us. This is the second year they have undertaken this exercise at Omahu. Their monitoring confirmed what we were seeing in our trap capture rates. Rats were at 23% (against a target 5%) and mice measured 80% on our tracking tunnels. In other words, of our 40 tracking tunnels, 32 were visited by mice on the one night they were in place. This is the highest recorded rat and mice results for one night tracking tunnels to date. Possum RTC was very pleasing at 2.5. Our target is currently 5%.

Our rat capture for the months December to May was 82 rats compared with our next highest year (2021) of 50. We are seeing similar high capture rates with mice, but an increase of traps being set off, and bait being taken. This will mean that we will need to undertake our annual poison exercise via bait stations. Given the poor results from the toxin used last year, we are investigating the use of other poison types to improve results. Overall catch rates have reached 2000 since records started in 2018.

The trials that we undertook on the AT220 traps have in part led to a change in the lure delivery system. We are in the process of upgrading our traps to the third generation version, which includes an enclosed lure pouch housed below the trap cover. This will enable interchanging of lure types more easily, and keeps the lure out of sunlight. Use of the mobile phone app has been quite a revelation, with the traps recording significantly higher kills (rodents in particular) than what we are physically witnessing. Predation of carcasses is thought to be the difference.



The AT220 trap attracts a curious possum at Omahu.

They have also been shown to be equally effective at rodent and feral cat control.

Making all traps more interesting to predators has been an on-going project for the team as the trail cameras show multiple interactions with predators for relatively low kill rates. 'Blazing' of the traps with flour, icing sugar and cinnamon is now a common tactic to lure predators to the traps, together with 'hazing' - laying a small barrier of tree branches at the entrance to the trap to direct rodents in particular to the traps. We are deploying the cameras in the reserve full time.

Our camera deployment has confirmed the presence of significant numbers of feral cats within the reserve and confirms the predation on carcasses that we have seen in the field. Our winter activities will see an increased emphasis on these predators.

We are extremely grateful for the grant from Pest Free Banks Peninsula. This has enabled us to improve and increase our AT220 traps, replace old traps, increase feral cat traps and trap numbers overall and cover our annual predator control costs.

I would personally like to thank all present and past members of the Omahu predator control team for their friendship and work over the past year. The team is currently eight strong.

Greg Gimblett



ON THE SUMMIT ROAD.

Y.M.C.A. WALKING PARTY ON TOUR.

Up the rugged slope which leads to Kaituna Saddle, between Castle Hill and the Remarkable dykes, there climbed last evening a tired but still lively party of about thirty Y.M.C.A. members, who had left behind the first seventeen miles of their walk to Akaroa by way of the Summit Road. They camped overnight in the Rest House, which, like an English hunting lodge, strides the saddle, and to-day they will traverse the scenic reserves, through which no track at present exists, as far as Port Levy saddle. The tour is expected to end to-morrow evening, when the party is to go into camp at Tikau Bay, opposite Akaroa township. On starting out from Cashmere Hills the party was joined by Mr H.G. Ell, who had volunteered his services as guide. At Kennedy's Bush Mr T. C. Field, president of the Y.M.C.A., and Mrs Field met the trampers and entertained them to a satisfying luncheon at the Rest House. There were felicitous speeches, and the guests expressed their thanks with hearty cheers for their host and hostess. A special vote of thanks was given to Mr Bushell for the splendid spread that he had provided. After lunch, in spite of the rain, the full party in great heart started out for Kaituna. Marching songs and jazz-band selections added to the general merriment, and it is doubtful if a more lively party has ever essayed the trip. Should the tour be completed as planned, this will be the first organised group other than surveyors to traverse the full route of the Summit Road to Akaroa.

In one respect the present tour is reminiscent of a "stunt" on active service. The food and blankets are being transported to the camping sites on the mountains by an independent party, which proceeds by the lower coach road. For this purpose a motor lorry has been lent by a member of the association, Mr G. H. Royds, and packhorses are being provided by Mr Walter Parkinson, of Kaituna Valley, and Mr Sullivan, of Little River.

LYTTELTON TIMES, VOL CXVIII, ISSUE 18598, 28 DECEMBER 1920, PG4.



An early photo of the Summit Road near Kennedy's Bush.



In May 1924, Harry Ell announced in the Christchurch Star that he was back in possession of his first Road House on the Summit Road, subsequently renamed the Sign of the Bellbird. It had been operating at a loss, subsidised by the Sign of the Kiwi, but Harry now planned to make it profitable. He commented, 'I first began the purchase of Kennedys Bush in 1900. I will leave that reserve one of the most delightful places that the public of Christchurch and of Canterbury will have the opportunity of visiting on the Port Hills'.

99 years on, the Summit Road Society, now in its 75th year, has added to Harry's vision with the completion of the John Jameson Lookout, opposite the Sign of the Bellbird, with a magnificent view of Whakaraupō Lyttelton Harbour. The Port Hills stone used in the wall is in keeping with 'the Harry Ell style' and is dedicated to all the Society volunteers who have progressed Harry's promise. The Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust has helped with funding this project.

The Trust exists to place monies aside from the day to day running of the Society, accumulating funds for further Port Hills land acquisitions. As well, it assists the Society to carry out special projects or to cover unexpected costs.

From near the beginning, Harry Ell raised money for his vision by setting up a toll gate on the Summit Road, just past the Sign of the Kiwi. The gate has long since gone but the Society, run by volunteers, still needs money to function. Please consider a monthly \$10 or \$20 'toll' by auto payment to the Harry Ell Trust's Westpac account 03-1592-0321653-00. Donations qualify for the 33% charitable tax rebate.

Please also consider leaving a legacy in your will in favour of the Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust.

Paul Loughton

Honorary Treasurer

Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust