



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2003

New year off to a good start

Kia ora

Greetings and welcome to the first Parks and Forests newsletter, keeping you informed of community activities in our parks. Here, we will list upcoming events and outline the work of various groups.

This first edition contains items from volunteers who have run events for the Regional Outdoors Programme. We would like to thank all our volunteers for helping create a very successful programme this summer.

If you would like more information on a specific item please contact either the park ranger or myself.

Ross Jackson, Advisor – Community Projects

Family Fun Day – Belmont Regional Park

Six o'clock that morning and I had already looked at every New Zealand weather site on the web. Isobars, maps, satellite photos etc...the best prediction I could get said the cloud on the hills would lift around midday. Well it didn't lift until well after four so only the very last visitors saw the wonderful views from the airstrip.

Despite fog, cloud and mist, over 350 hardy souls came to our Fun Day. The weather stopped some of the arranged events so there was less for people to do than we had hoped. Visitors saw displays in the large marquee and most bought the appetising sausages. A highlight was trips by the 4WD club and many people went around the farm roads. The WWII army vehicles and St John's ambulance were enjoyed by all. Who was the strange chap in a quasi-army uniform brandishing a rifle?

Most people came up by bus with a very cheerful driver. Thank you CityLine! It is always easy in hindsight but if we had had a clear day and say 500 people, the single bus could not have coped.

Overall an interesting experience for the Friends and one which, in some form, we should make an annual event. Many, many thanks to all those who assisted, and to our sponsors.

If you would like to join the Friends of Belmont, please contact Pete Matcham (ph 565 1083) or write to us 120 Sweetacres Drive, Belmont, Lower Hutt

Richard Sadleir, Convenor, Friends of Belmont

Friends of Maara Roa: Cannons Creek Valley Restoration

We are making steady progress in creating more interest in this part of Belmont Regional Park, restoring the natural bush environment and improving the public access.

At this stage, we have:

- planted about 4000 trees in the valley
- 27 people growing seedlings at home
- potting-on mornings at the Trees for Survival nursery at Porirua College, helping the College's seedlings as well as those for Maara Roa
- a number of people collecting and germinating seed from the Valley
- five local primary schools who have "adopted" their own sites, for 10 years of Watch Your Trees Grow educational and practical work
- around 10 people learning how to manage 56 possum bait stations in and just beyond the Valley
- 400 Northern Rata being grown for us, to be paid for by Project Crimson (we hope).

Participants enjoying the views north over the Cannons Creek Restoration Area



Last year we planted the first seedlings from our growers and from Porirua College, as well as those funded by Greater Wellington.

We also keep trying to enthuse people about the “housework” side, namely, coming out to monitor and release all our young trees in the spring and autumn. All these operations have volunteer leaders, mostly on our Committee, who do a wonderful job.

Our guided summer walks were very successful this year due both to the fine weather and Greater Wellington’s excellent advertising. The walks are the very best way of introducing the public to an area hardly known. We describe it as an “Open Secret” because lack of access, signage and enhancement work has meant little public demand in the past. The walks are also the Friends’ best recruitment opportunities. We have over 60 people now actively involved, but 600 would be better! For a 100 hectare area, not to speak of a further 3km riparian bush corridor from Cannons Creek to Korokoro, we need a public organisation that will last 20 years for the restoration work alone.

We are proud of the 2001 Restoration Plan, a joint effort by the Friends and Greater Wellington with Boffa Miskell. It’s our Manual. You can visit it on GWRC’s website, or request a copy from the Wellington office.

If you would like to join the Friends of Maara Roa, please contact Sylvia (ph 237 4760) or write to us at P O Box 53029, Porirua.

Sylvia Jenkin, Friends of Maara Roa

Late news – fire destroys plantings at Cannons Creek

3000 native trees planted by the Friends of Maara Roa over the past three years were destroyed in a recent fire which was deliberately lit.

The plantings were part of the restoration project in the Cannons Creek Valley where the Friends are helping to bring back the native bush.

The Friends are taking a very positive approach and have actively developed strategies to reduce the impact of future fires. They have a full programme planned for potting, planting and maintenance this winter. The Friends are always grateful for assistance from anyone who has the odd Saturday morning available.

Ross Jackson

Children’s Sand Dune Discovery Day – Queen Elizabeth Park

Another gorgeous Kapiti Coast day dawned for children and parents attending this event. A first for Queen Elizabeth Park, Ranger Nola Urquhart was keen to run an event that was designed to encourage childrens’ involvement in the Park, specifically learning about the fragile sand dune environment. This was done through story telling, mural painting and sandcastle building.



Rihari Singleton of Hatch (storytellers) and Vanessa Patea of Taniwha Murals and Hatch hosted the event. On arrival, the children were given drawings based on the day’s theme to colour in, then work began on the mural painting. Once the mural was completed, Rihari and Vanessa told a beautiful story of Hine and the Taniwha using a number of different musical instruments. This sad story told of how the sand dunes were formed.

The morning ended with the children, parents (and some grandparents) heading down to the beach, where the children decided that instead of building sandcastles, they would recreate the Taniwha from the story. The Taniwha was decorated with shells and sticks.

Lastly, all participants had the opportunity to pot up a native cabbage tree (ti kouka) to take home and grow on as a reminder of their morning at the Park.

Sadly for Nola, it was her last event as park ranger as she has moved on to Cambodia to do Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA). Chris Muller has taken on the role of park ranger, while Simon Griffin is the new mobile ranger.



Nola helping the children pot up their ti kouka

Discovering rail history

For the second successive year, the Greater Wellington Regional Council organised a guided walk along the Rimutaka Rail Trail. I was invited to accompany staff and provide historical interpretations along the way.

The 17km route of the old Rimutaka railway between Kaitoke and Cross Creek is becoming increasingly popular, especially now that it is recognised as a nationally significant historic area. Greater Wellington continues to invest considerable time and effort in improving facilities and preserving the remaining structures and relics.

Chartered buses took 90 participants from Upper Hutt Railway Station to the walk start at Kaitoke. After an introduction from Pakuratahi forest ranger Dean Hearfield, everyone set off in bright sunshine. The weather could not have been better for the occasion.

Several walkers were interested to learn of the work underway on the derelict bridge at Munitions Creek. Recent clearance work had revealed the remaining piers and abutments of this 1876 structure. Greater Wellington is slowly working towards a full reinstatement of the bridge and its approaches.

At the Rimutaka Tunnel ventilation shaft, just outside the Pakuratahi Tunnel, a lucky few walkers experienced the thrill of hearing a train roaring through the tunnel almost 120 metres below. It was a case of being in the right place at the right time.



Graeme Jupp providing interpretation at Summit

Upon arrival at Summit, everyone enjoyed lunch under the trees and around the yard. Greater Wellington staff had set up a 21st century version of a railway “refreshment room,” offering water, juice, fruit and other light refreshments. Some walkers actually entered the yard along the original 1876 alignment, now cleared of trees and nicely mowed. I gave a detailed talk about the

railway’s early history, the reasons for Summit’s existence and about life at this isolated spot.

A cool breeze greeted walkers inside Summit Tunnel and the descent of the famous Incline soon began. At Siberia, I explained the significance of this area and the fatal accident that occurred on 11 September 1880. The rest of the walk down the Incline passed uneventfully and at Cross Creek I talked about the history of the former settlement, what life was like for its residents, and the work involved in running trains up and down the three-mile Incline. Many people also visited the site of the locomotive depot and studied the photographs in the shelter.

An enjoyable day ended with a visit to the Fell Locomotive Museum. Several walkers were able to identify various locations and scenes from the photographs on display. A 21-minute film of colour movies filmed in the mid-1950s was of great interest.



Happy walkers on the Incline (Wairarapa) side of the Rimutaka Rail Trail

From the positive feedback received on the day and from a survey of those who participated, it seems that future guided walks on the Rimutaka Rail Trail will be runaway successes.

Interest in the Rimutaka railway and its history remains high, and I look forward to working with Greater Wellington staff on developing the Rail Trail as one of New Zealand’s premier day walks.

If you would like to join the Friends of the Fell Society, please contact Graeme Jupp (ph 237 8967) or write to the Society at P.O. Box 71, Featherston 5952.

Graeme Jupp, Friends of Fell Museum

Conrad Pharazyn – Landscape Architect

It was with sadness that we learnt of the sudden death of Conrad Pharazyn. Conrad was a senior Landscape Architect with the Greater Wellington Parks and Forests Department for 10 years and consultant for a further 8 years. During that time, Conrad had a huge influence on the development of the Regional Parks network. We plan to commemorate Conrad’s work in one of the Regional Parks after consulting with his family.



Conrad 24.07.1949 ~ 03.01.2003

Upcoming events

Korokoro Dam 100 year celebration

Sunday 25 May, 2pm, Oakleigh Street entrance

This year marks the 100 year anniversary of the Petone Waterworks (Korokoro) Dam.

The mass concrete (gravity) dam was built in 1903 for the Petone Borough Council and is believed to be the first built in New Zealand using this form of construction.

Petone built the dam because an existing artesian water supply had insufficient pressure and flow for fighting the fires that destroyed many early timber buildings in the Borough.

Petone Woollen Mills who used water from Korokoro Stream objected to the dam being built. The Borough was required to compensate the mill by building a second, small dam downstream and providing gas to an engine at the mill during low flows, an early example of water resource conflicts in New Zealand.

The Korokoro Dam was designed by Samuel Jickell, Petone Borough Engineer.

If you would like to celebrate this anniversary, please join us.



Foundation Stone Ceremony 1903

PHOTO BY PERMISSION OF ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY- A.P. GODBER COLLECTION

Planting the parks

We have many planting events coming up this winter in the Greater Wellington Parks and Forests.

If you would like to help out at any of these events, please give Fiona a call at the Wellington office on 04 802 0327.

Queen Elizabeth Park

- **Saturday 3 May** Rainbow Court entrance (local community planting). 9.30am - noon.
- **Saturday 10 May** Dune trial release (weeding the trial plots). Meet at Whareroa carpark, 9.30 - noon.
- **Saturday 17 May** Dune planting (first of several plantings). Meet at the esplanade entrance carpark, Raumati, 9.30 - noon.
- **Monday 9 June** Arbor Day planting in wetlands. Meet at the marquee, Mackays Crossing, 10.30 - noon.
- **Saturday 12 July** Remnant Bush planting. Meet at the rangers office, Mackays Crossing, 9.30 - noon.

Belmont Regional Park

- Numerous plantings by Friends of Maara Roa. To be listed separately when the dates are confirmed. Keep an eye on our website www.gw.govt.nz for this information.

Hutt River Trail

- **Wednesday 30 July** Planting at Whakatiki. Meet at the old quarry site, 10.30 - noon.
- **Wednesday 30 July** Planting at Belmont. Meet at the carpark, adjacent to Belmont School, 1.30 - 3.00pm

Battle Hill Farm Forest Park

- **Friday 13 June** Arbor Day planting in wetlands. Meet at the Ken Gray Education Centre (woolshed) carpark, 10.30am - noon.

You have received this newsletter because you are on our Parks and Forests database. If you do not wish to receive this, please contact Fiona (details below) to be taken off our mailing list.

If you have any comments or ideas for stories for this general newsletter, please contact the editor.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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