



SOUTHLAND BRANCH NEWSLETTER

Summer Programme

Please note that all trips will leave from the Southland Museum at 9.30am (car pools will be organised from there) unless otherwise stated in the programme below.

October :

Sunday 10th , 10.30am 350 event. Bucket Gardening - at Korimako, 183 Findlay Road, Invercargill.

Wednesday 20th, 7.30pm Last of Winter Programme Speakers - Dr. Susan Krumdieck, Associate Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Canterbury. Find out all about "Transition Engineering – a solution to climate disruption, resource depletion, ecosystem reclamation and population reduction"
Venue - Room B1:11 SIT.

Saturday 23rd Te Rere penguin count. Contact Brian Rance rances@ihug.co.nz or ph 213 1161 *See article Page 13.*

November :

Saturday 13th, 9.30am SERN Field Day - bus trip to Central Southland restoration sites. Leader Gay Munro, ph 239 5827. Bookings essential. *See article Page 4.*

Volunteer Opportunity: Friday 26th/Sunday 28th - Eglinton Valley restoration project working bee. Accommodation bookings should be made asap with PC Taylor at Knobs Flat, if required. *See article Page 8.*

December :

Saturday 11th Te Rere penguin count. Contact Brian Rance rances@ihug.co.nz or ph 213 1161

Tuesday 14th, 7.00pm Hidden Secrets of South Invercargill. Meet at Kew Bush North Entrance. Leader Sheryll Ashton, ph 214 2319.

January :

Saturday 22nd The lovely Mataura Valley, let's keep it that way! Hear about the possible lignite mining scenario. **9.30am** Car pool from museum. Or meet Mataura Community Centre **10.30am**. Leader Jenny Campbell, 03 2486398 or email jennycam@xtra.co.nz.

February :

Saturday 12th Waipapa Point - Commemorative planting to Ericson Family **9.30am** Car pool from museum. Visit to James Pirie's QEII Covenant at Tokanui in afternoon. Leader Brian Rance, ph 213 1161.

March :

Saturday 12th Home Creek, Manapouri **NB: 9.00am** Car pool from museum. **11.00am** at Home Creek for restoration plantings. 1.30pm – explore covenanted wetlands & forest on Landcorp's Eweburn Station, with QEII Rep Mark Sutton. Leader Edith Jones, ph 213 1571.

Special Outing: Saturday 26th Wairaurahiri Jet Boat day trip. Special price to F&B members - \$150. Book with W-Jet at johan.joyce@wjet.co.nz. First in, first served basis. *See article Page 9.*

April :

Saturday 9th - Walk in Kamahi Bush and Seaward Downs Bush, followed by afternoon tea at Scenic Stop Lignite Pit, Kapuka. **9.30am** Car pool from museum. Leader - Tony Bretherick, ph 218 6137 .

May :

Tuesday 10th – Southland Forest & Bird **AGM**

Musing from the Chair

Spring has sprung
The grass is ris
I wonder where the birdies is

to paraphrase Robbie Burns (I think).

The birdies are still depending on us feeding them around here as there seems to be a very slow start to spring growth.

Spring is always a time of variable weather but the variations seem to be growing far more extreme. Weather effects have been serious in our Southland area and we feel for all the farmers and others who have been or will be badly affected by it.

We also feel for the millions in other parts of the world that have been affected by the extreme weather that has occurred across the globe. Maybe those much maligned climate change modellers have got it right.

Over the past decades many people, especially in urban areas, have come to think they are separate or even above the environment. Certainly the past couple of weeks have shown Southlanders that they are not insulated from the environment even if it hasn't shown them they are part of it.

Mankind needs to take a step back and reintegrate itself into the environment. One of my favourite thoughts is from the song Aquarius from the show Hair, "we are stardust". Mankind is not old but we are made from ancient elements (stardust), far older than the solar system.

We have no right to rule this planet, we are part of it and we need to remake this reconnection.

Spring is here, summer is coming. Make it a time to get out and remake a connection with the earth. Perhaps some of the trips we have on offer will help with the reconnecting.

Craig Carson, Branch Chairman

<p style="text-align: center;">ON SALE NOW Forest & Bird 2011 calendars Only \$14 The popular Forest & Bird Dairy \$22 (Limited numbers available – be in quick) Make great overseas gifts, or Christmas present for family and friends. Contact Peggy Snoep, 216 9103</p>

South Otago Branch of Forest & Bird present
The Jessie Gray Memorial Photographic Competition
Theme: *Celebrating Conservation in the Catlins and Beyond*

Age Groups: 12 and under; 13yrs–18yrs; Open

Format: 12 and under - any format

Other groups - minimum size 5x7

Closing date: 19th November, 2010

Judge: Jim Beeby

Cash prizes

Entries will be displayed at the South Otago A&P show and after that in local venues.

Protecting Wildlife in Otatara

One of the special features of living in Otatara is having healthy bird populations, notable are the tui, bellbirds and pigeon. Lots of people are already helping to protect and enhance the native birds found in our back yards. This includes fencing and protecting bush, controlling weeds, putting out sugar water, and controlling pests. These pests are probably having the greatest impact on native birds in Otatara (and the rest of Southland). With pest control it is a case of the more people that get involved the more successful it will be.

The Otatara Landcare Group (OLG) has been undertaking pest control at Bushy Point in the south-east corner of Otatara for a few years. The monitoring of pest catch results shows that the numbers of pests, notably possums have decreased. More importantly the numbers of birds are increasing, especially fernbirds and tomtits, which are now being recorded more commonly. However there is an ongoing battle as these pests continue to invade the Bushy Point area.

Some locals wanted to see more done to control pests and so got the OLG involved. A public meeting was held on 9th June 2010. At this meeting there were four very interesting talks by scientist Ralph Powlesland on the DOC pigeon and tui research project, highlighting the impact of predators on these birds. Local photographer Jason Hosking showed photography from two tui nests that he followed progress of. Brian Rance talked about the Bushy Point pest control work. The evening finished with Tim Riding from Environment Southland (ES) talking about the effects of various pests and how to control them. The evening was a huge success with over 80 people turning up and over 30 people signed up to be involved with controlling pests on their own property.

Since the public meeting a sub-committee of the OLG has been coordinating this project. The number interested in control has grown to about 50 people (and is constantly increasing). An email contact list has been formed to keep people in touch. A pest control workshop was held on Saturday 11th September. This workshop had a great turn out with 26 people attending. Tim Riding from ES talked about pests and how to control them. There was discussion on how and where to put traps and other helpful suggestions.

There will be another opportunity to **learn about pest control on November 6th at the Southland Community Nursery open day**. The more people that get involved, the more success the control work will be.

Brian Rance



Southland Community Nursery 185 Grant Road, Otatara

email rances@ihug.co.nz

web address <http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~rances/>

New Website Coming Soon!



At the Nursery we grow all of the species that are ideal for shelter, wetlands, forest restoration, attracting native birds, school plantings – come and see us on a Friday at 185 Grant Road, Otatara, do some work and take some plants away for free!

SERN Spring Field Day **Exploring Restoration Sites in Central Southland**

Saturday 13th November, bus leaving Feldwick Gates at Queens Park 9.30am.

10.00am Forest Hill Learn about the plans for a pest free Forest Hill

11.00am Sherwood Forest – Turnbull's QEII Covenant is well known to many and has had restoration work going on since 2003. See how this significant matai forest has recovered since the severe damage of the 1996 frosts.

12.30pm Lunch (byo) will be in Pat Turnbull's garden, with her museum being open for people to peruse.

1.45pm John Cowie, East Limehills Otapiri Stream restoration plantings of threatened species.

3.15pm The Donut, Heddon Bush Heddon Bush School restoration project on a small kahikatea remnant on the de Wolde's property.

4.30pm approx. Return to Feldwick Gates, Invercargill.

The cost of the bus will be covered by SERN

Please note that you should bring your own lunch and drinks

Bookings essential – contact Gay Munro, 239 5827 or email g.munro@woosh.co.nz

or Chris Rance, 213 1161, or email rances@ihug.co.nz

SERN (Southland Ecological Restoration Network) www.sern.org.nz
a Southland website about community action in conservation across
Southland – have a look at the 40 projects on the site and see if you
can lend a helping hand to a project in your area.

Friends of Sherwood Forest.

This group was formed in 2009 to continue the work that had been started through Biodiveristy Condition Funds to return the Turnbull's nationally significant Matai dominant forest at Tussock Creek to good helath. The area was severely damaged by the 1996 frosts and regeneration in many areas was dominated by elderberry and other weeds. The other goal was to create a corridor between Sherwood Forest and the nearby DOC Marshall Bush. This 1.5ha revegetation area became known as Derek's Patch.

Working bees are generally held on the first Saturday of the month from September to May. If you are interested in becoming involved please email g.munro@woosh.co.nz or iere@southnet.co.nz.

There are a number of groups that also help out. Pat is most appreciative of the assistance that she has with looking after Sherwood Forest.



**Makarewa Lions Club working bee –
tidying the display area**

Gay Munro



Planting out Derek's Patch

Working in the nursery

Mataura Lignite

When the Liquid Fuels Trust Board explored the potential of the Mataura Lignite deposits for liquid fuel conversion about 30 years ago, one of the fundamental concerns was the effect on our freshwater resource. At that time the only way to ensure that the lignite was suitable for any process was to dry it out, and that would have required the dewatering of the area with the distinct possibility of affecting aquifers from Kingston to Mosgiel. The dewatering was considered detrimental to the Awarua RAMSAR wetlands, as well as other wetlands in the area impacted. Saltwater intrusion into coastal aquifers, and the loss of rich, very high quality soils in the mining area are other concerns.

The nitrification of our underground water sources by urea raises the question "does the world need more urea?" At the very time in our history when farmers are rediscovering the merits of animal manure instead of artificial fertilisers it seems perverse to promote urea as a positive facet of lignite mining.

There are very many unknowns about methods of artificial carbon sequestration and I am not aware of any method of dealing with the carbon volumes which will be a byproduct of conversion.

The history of any mining is boom and bust, whereas land-based industries can be sustainable and enrich communities.

As communities, as a province, and as a nation we need to use our present oil-based fuels efficiently and frugally as we move through a transition economy to more sustainable sources of fuels and energy.

Chris Henderson



Old Bikes Needed for Bike Loan Scheme
Any condition bike taken to be repaired for people to borrow
Contact the Invercargill Environment Centre

Te Whenua Awhi is Māori for cherishing or embracing the earth or place

The Invercargill Environment Centre Te Whenua Awhi, 11 S.I.T. Arcade, 46 Esk Street, Invercargill, Southland, New Zealand
Phone/Fax: (03) 218 4404 Email: ieec@paradise.net.nz Web: www.iec.org.nz

Kiwi Conservation Club for Children (KCC) – a great gift for Children and Grandchildren

Join now on-line at www.forestandbird.org.nz

- Junior \$19
- Junior Group Membership \$74 (30 magazines per issue)

Kiwi Conservation Club for Children Website

The KCC website is a growing resource, packed with information about New Zealand wildlife and wild places. The website has been specifically developed for children, so they will enjoy the site and gather valuable information for school projects.

Information on the KCC website includes... educator resources, how kids can help the world, a glossary of conservation terms, a conservation event calendar and Fact Sheets on conservation topics, such as the Black Robin, Extinct Birds of NZ, Hoiho, Hector's Dolphin, Kakapo, Kiwi, NZ National Parks and Weta.

Visit the Kiwi Conservation Club website www.kcc.org.nz

School Science Fair Winner

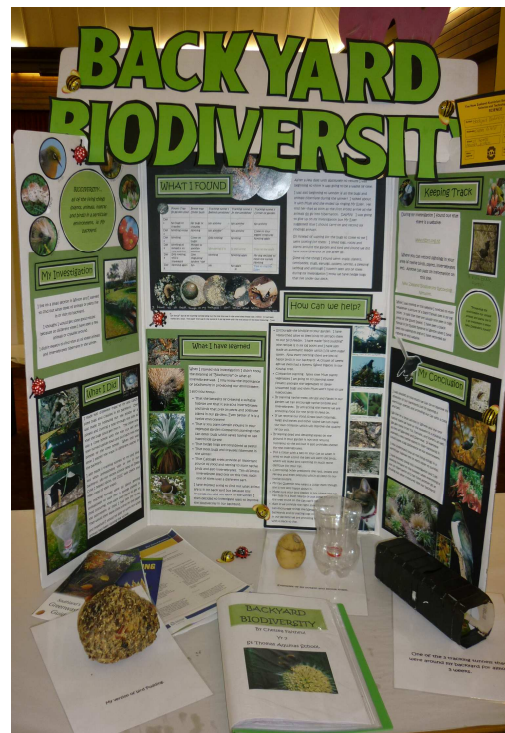
The winner of the Forest & Bird prize at this year's School Science Fair held in August, was Chelsea Faithful of St Thomas Aquinas School in Winton.

As this is the International Year of Biodiversity, her project was a most appropriate winner. She had made good use of internet resources, with references to both the Forest & Bird and Department of Conservation websites, where she obtained ideas for undertaking research on what was living in her back yard. She also used the NZBRN (NZ Biodiversity Recording Network) website to record a sighting of a black fantail.

The six days of recording from her five different kinds of traps brought disappointing results, however contact made with Lloyd Esler encouraged her to try the study again in the summer time, as being winter he advised her that things could well be hibernating. Her enthusiasm for the work shone through in her project presentation.

Congratulations, Chelsea, on an excellent and well presented project.

Gay Munro



Tautuku Forest Cabins – Lenz Reserve

Situated on the Southern Scenic Route (SH92) 8km south of Papatowai and 90 minutes north of Invercargill, on a sealed highway, the Cottage, Coutts Cabin and the A Frame continue to be a popular place to stay. In a bush setting of 550 hectares with beaches, caves and waterfalls nearby it provides an excellent base for exploring the Catlins.



The Cottage (10 beds)

Members \$15
Non Members \$20



Coutts Cabin (4 beds)

Members \$15
Non Members \$20



A Frame (2 beds)

Members \$10
Non Members \$15

For all cabins : Schoolchildren \$5 Under 5 Free

These prices are at 1989 rates and represent real value for money. The facilities are well equipped (all electric) with heaters (heat pump in the Lodge), microwaves, ovens and showers. Convenient walks are the 1 hour nature walk and 3 hour long track both starting and finishing at the Lodge plus beach walks, Cathedral Caves and Lake Wilkie nearby. Another feature in the area is the Cooks Mill site on which is located a Trill tractor and bogies under cover that were used for hauling logs, this has been refurbished and upgraded by the Owaka Lions Club as a project.

To book accommodation phone Diana Noonan 03 4158024, diana.keith@ruralinzone.net

History of Lenz Reserve

Books available from Mary Miller, 4 Cherry Lane, RD 2, BALCLUTHA 9230
ph. 03 418 1798 or email marymiller@kinect.co.nz

\$10 Donation

350

Campaign 2010 - Bucket Garden Workshop

The Bucket Garden Workshop held on Sunday 10/10/10 was part of the 350 Global Climate Working Bee – a part of the biggest DIY event the world has ever seen! The Invercargill Environment Centre, along with Transition Town Invercargill encouraged people to learn how to grow a vegetable garden in a bucket by attending their workshop thus improving their gardening skills and knowledge. Taking place at Korimako, on Findlay Rd, north east Invercargill, people took their own bucket, but were provided with free potting mix, vegetable seedlings and information. It was a great day with over 40 people in attendance.

350 Campaign 2009

Building sandcastles as a metaphor at Oreti Beach was the local response to the International Day of Climate Action on 24 October 2009. Events around the world highlighted the need for action on climate change and reducing carbon dioxide levels down to 350 parts per million (ppm), regarded as the safe level of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. Currently the level is 387ppm and rising approximately 2ppm every year. As a coastal community Invercargill is likely to be adversely affected by rising sea levels.



To highlight this issue and other adverse effects of climate change, local groups and individuals were challenged to hold back the rising tide at Oreti Beach with a variety of sand castles, sand sculptures and sand barriers. Despite some sophisticated and sturdy designs and some spirited running repairs while the waves crashed in, the result was inevitable.

“The determination but futility of the efforts of those trying to rebuild their sandcastles in spite of the incoming tide were a real metaphor for what we are likely to see as climate disruption takes its toll especially on coastal communities,” sandcastle maker, John Adams says. “It was so good to be part of the action, local and global, by taking a stand with about 200 others there and having fun.”

“It is amazing to think that all around the world on Saturday, there were thousands of people doing just what we were doing, not building sandcastles exactly but saying in a thousand different ways to their leaders that they care and want action,” Transition Town Invercargill coordinator Diana Zdravec says. “People with the same hopes, values and dedication came together to make a statement which makes me feel very hopeful for this planet.”

Organized by the Transition Town Invercargill and the Invercargill Environment Centre the sandcastle building was just one of 5200 events around the world in 2009 where people gathered to call for strong action and bold leadership on the climate crisis.

Jenny Campbell

New Look Website for Forest and Bird

www.forestandbird.org.nz

Branch information will be available on this website.

**Email central office and give them your email address to receive E-News,
Forest and Bird’s regular newsletter for members.**

The Waiau River

Once the second largest river by volume in New Zealand, the lower Waiau River has been changed from truly awesome to a shadow thanks to a decision in 1963 by the then government to divert the water back to Lake Manapouri and thence through the West Arm power station to provide electricity for the Comalco smelter at Awarua.

The successful Save Manapouri campaign protected the lakes from being raised, but the impacts on the lower Waiau River and Doubtful Sound were not addressed. This resulted in the dewatering of some parts of the river below the control structure, and the loss of the original ecosystems at the tunnel outfall into Deep Cove.

Almost 20 years ago the late Roger Sutton, the Guardians of the Lakes, and other concerned individuals drew attention to the parlous state of the lower Waiau and the Waiau River working party was formed to address the many issues arising from the daily diversion of the equivalent of the Clutha River

flow into the power station. Since then, the working party has worked with Meridian (and its previous incarnations ECNZ and Electricorp) with some initial success, including a low flow allocation, plus a number of recreational and environmental flows.

Since then the second tailrace has been built, which resulted in a further loss of natural floods to the lower Waiau, as will the latest successful application by Meridian to take 10 cumbers and high flows when conditions allow.

The original Manapouri/Te Anau development allowed the diversion of water from the lakes to the smelter for 99 years. This was pre-RMA, and electricity is now also being used for peaking purposed, to power Fonterra, irrigators and other uses, none which were provided for in the original agreement.

The environmental impacts from that 1963 decision are still being felt. Is it time to renegotiate the agreement?

Chris Henderson

Eglinton Valley Restoration Project.

The Eglinton River bed is an important habitat for several species of birds and other fauna. Nowadays this habitat is significantly altered by human activities and as a result is overgrown by lupins, thistle and other weeds, and introduced predators are causing havoc at nesting sites.

A volunteer group has been established to protect black-fronted terns, which are classified as endangered, and other species such as banded dotterel, lizards, etc.

Now, in the beginning of our second season we have got a trap line on the site and hope to get as many volunteers as possible! Knobs Flat is great place to stay with magnificent views and the valley is one of last refuges of short-tailed bat!

Check out about this project at <http://www.fiordlandrestoration.co.nz/projects/eglinton-river-habitat>

If you would like to assist with this great project then join us for the weekend from **Friday 26th November** at Knobs Flat.

Discounted accommodation prices are being offered for F&B volunteers.

Cost per room will be \$60 per night for queen size double bed. (half the cost to be donated to the project.)

Please contact PC Taylor - info@knobsflat.co.nz to make your reservation asap.

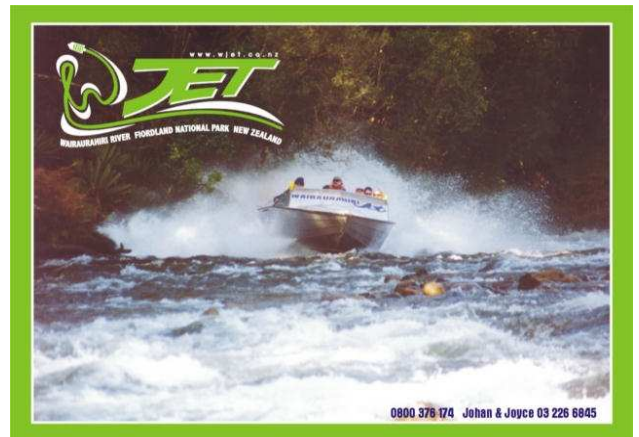
Southland Natural History Field Club

The Southland Natural History Field Club or "Field Club" brings together all those with an interest in nature and the outdoors and meets once a month (usually on every second Thursday of the month) followed by a weekend field trip, often on the same topic as the talk. If you are interested in becoming a member it costs \$20 per year (\$25 for a family) and you will receive the monthly newsletter and programme of trips. Contact **Lloyd Esler** (2130404).

The Wairaurahiri River Experience with Johan Groters and Joyce Kolk

Johan and Joyce have been exciting people on the Wairaurahiri River since 1996. The Wairaurahiri River is 34 km of rugged rock strewn grade three rapids that drop 600ft to sea level.

Five years ago they began exciting the stoats along the river too. They started a stoat trapping program as they had seen the decline in the native birds along the river and felt they needed to take some action before it was too late. What started as a trap line down the river, has now extended to one along the south coast, and they report in their latest newsletter that they are now only 16 traps away from Port Craig – an amazing effort.



Sponsorship of a trap costs \$225, and as a bonus you will receive a voucher for an All-Day Adventure trip! Not a bad deal!!

The results from their trapping programme to date is:
Wairaurahiri River Stoats – 298, Rats – 223, Weasels – 10
South Coast Stoats – 52, Rats – 59
That's a lot of villians taken out of the ecosystem – well done to Johan and Joyce and all their sponsors.

SPECIAL OFFER TO FOREST & BIRD MEMBERS

Saturday 26th March 2011

Join Johan and Joyce for an All Day Adventure (Depart Lake Hauroko at 10am and returning at 4:30pm ish back to the boat ramp) for the special price of \$150 per person. They can take up to twelve people, so it will be first in that will get this great opportunity. Mind you, if you decide to sponsor a trap (see above) then you may take the trip for free, but enjoy the company of other Forest & Birders!

Book now at johan.joyce@wjet.co.nz

SIT Presents

“The Geology of Fiordland - what the latest Q Mapping project is telling us”

Presenter: Dr Ian Turnbull, recently retired from the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences (Dunedin).

Dr Turnbull has been involved intimately with the Fiordland Q Mapping project for two decades. The presentation will feature the exceptional landscapes and scenery of Fiordland and will recount some of the physical and climatic challenges of doing field work in this amazing place.

The geology of Fiordland is very complex involving a wide range of igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks. It contains some of the oldest known rocks in NZ as well as the most highly metamorphosed. Compilation of previous geological studies, additional field mapping and the use of state of the art geochemistry and geochronology has enabled a very complex geological and tectonic history to be unravelled.

Come along to hear new discoveries about the relationship of the NZ land mass with that of the former super-continent Gondwanaland, the petroleum and mineral potential of the area and the factors influencing earthquakes in southern NZ.

Presentation: **Thursday 21st October 2010 at 7.00pm**

Venue: **SIT**, 133 Tay Street, Invercargill

RSVP by Monday 18th October on 03 2112699 extn 8675, or email erine.vanniekerk@sit.ac.nz

A Walk on the Mild Side

Town planning has done wonders for tramping, since they make great places to get away from. A break in the weather, just what we needed for a trip into the backcountry. The long range forecast generously gave us 3 fine days with gradually deteriorating weather. The Upper Oreti Hut (affectionately known as the Oreti Hilton) was a 1-2 hours walk over flat terrain to an old corrugated iron musterers' hut.

From Mossburn we headed down the Mavora Lakes road turning right at the park entrance into the Von / Oreti Valley. Immediately after crossing the Oreti River we parked the car at the locked gate and with a stiff breeze at our backs headed off in light hearted mood along the meandering 4 WD track.

Sparkling in the sunshine the frost tipped tussock and grasses were still bowed over after the obvious onslaught of the Oreti Rivers last foray into the valley. Bog pine, tussock, dead heads of bulbinella & other emerging species indicated signs of recovery from years of grazing in the valley. On our LH side stood the Eyre Mtns & on our left Bald Hill both resembling a monks tonsure with the heavily forested lower area and the bald tops sprinkled with snow.

Numerous large puddles greeted us at every dip in the land, wet patches and the occasional small stream gurgled merrily thro on either side. The sun glittered on the pools of trapped water covered with ice; and childhood memories flooded back as we gleefully broke as much as possible. I figured at one such place that by stepping across the narrow bit to one side I would avoid wet feet, this resulted in the only spectacular face plant of the trip. A creative string of curses fell from my lips as the water, ice cold, seeping thru my trousers caused an arctic experience in certain parts of the anatomy that even a Speights couldn't reach. From then on it was straight through the middle no worrying about wet feet.

Crossing the Ashton Burn proved no problem as the water had receded after recent rain but the rocks were slippery. This was a relief indeed as it could have stopped us reaching the hut.

Moments later we arrived at the corrugated iron hut, and yay all six bunks had mattresses plus a new very breezy long drop had been installed. The hut smelt as if unusual mushrooms were growing in rich compost in hidden crevices, but this was soon replaced by surges of smoke from a reluctant fire, that threatened to take over the cabin as if in protest at the No Smoking Law. Outside seemed prudent if we wished to draw another breath on this earth so water was collected from a stream in the bush at the rear of the hut and while the billy brewed outside we replenished the firewood, something the last occupants had failed to do. Sitting in the sunshine we drank our Trampers Tea- made by throwing umpteen tea bags into a billy of boiling water, which causes your legs to bow when you take a sip of it, (this is why I drink coffee).

The afternoon stroll was 60 return minutes down the valley over undulating terrain and crossing a stream or three to where the delightful orange 2 bunk Lincoln Bivy was tucked into the bush edge. This is another yesteryear hut, no mod cons but as treat to stay in.

Another tale of adventure from Footloose

On the walk back under a seamless blue sky bright with sunshine in a cooling breeze, the occasional twittering of skylarks, burbling of streams /rivers it was a time to savour the stillness of the day when there is little to disturb nature's magic. Finally a purple shadow crept slowly down the slopes of the distant mountains and it was time to light the fire and eat.

That night having forgotten our candles we got into our sleeping bags early and spent the time waiting for sleep to arrive by reading the graffiti strewn walls & ceiling of the hut. Courageous exploits of hunters & musterers and the usual obscenities kept us entertained while waiting for Morpheus. Oh yes Kilroy wuz here too, he certainly got around.

I realize that physical comfort is a state of mind, and being the hero that opted for the top bunk, I eventually had to relinquish my hero status as the density of smoke emanating from the fire soon proved to be more powerful than a harsh laxative and forced me from my high nest. Being short in the wheelbase the getting down (there was no ladder) proved to be an act of major proportions. Fortunately I have long suffering friends who willingly come to the rescue in these circumstances. Mind you I do have to suffer a number of slings & arrows as a consequence. But after repeated counseling have learned to cope!!

During the night I awoke to a thud, a gasp and a giggle. One party member on her usual nightly foray had stepped bleary eyed out in to the darkness, only to discover by way of a icy step and cold wet feeling in her nightwear that it had been snowing. Our weather expert's aching toe had previously advised us that snow was on the way, naturally we all laughed heartily at such nonsense. Ho ho ho.

We awoke to a valley of magical white. When the sun rose it seemed as though the white land was touched with pink, apricot and gold..... Boy was it cold. We lingered over breakfast preferring to gaze instead at the magical scene before us.

The walk out was superb, crunching our way through the snow, stopping to take yet another photo of the view. Hogs backs were sitting sullenly over the mountains and we could see the weather down the valley toward Walter Peak Station beginning to show signs of the deterioration promised. An icy wind carved up the valley faster than a car salesman's BMW so it was heads down etc. In no time at all we were back at our vehicles which were covered in snow. A stop at Mavora Lakes for lunch then home. Another magical experience to commit to our memory bank.

This is a great trip for first time trampers or families with younger children. There are a number of other options using this hut as a base. Ashton Burn. (moderate/hard) Lincoln Biv, Lower Oreti Hut (easy).

Dune Restoration Day

Report by Jenny Campbell

Empowering coastal communities to adapt to climate change was the theme of a day of workshops organised by Environment Southland in mid-September with Dune Restoration Trust of New Zealand members providing expertise. The Trust's aim is to increase understanding of the importance of sand dunes and their native plants and animals.

The workshop topics covered the natural beach system, dune vegetation and restoration along with coastal erosion and management, taking in the human dimension. Housing developments being too close to the sea with little buffer zone, vehicle damage to dunes and their vegetation and how to manage the dune systems provided discussion points.

Dr David Bergin stressed the fact that erosion is a natural dynamic process and that dune management and restoration is not about stopping erosion but working with nature in the hostile environment. "Working collaboratively with the community, providing accessways, controlling pests and doing

appropriate revegetation plantings are all essential to restoring dune systems", he said.

Caring for this vital and fragile ecosystem while balancing the cultural, aesthetic and recreational values and uses were high priorities discussed as people participated in a field trip at Oreti Beach. "Natural dune systems continue to buffer the coast from climate change," Department of Conservation botanist, Brian Rance said. "The sand dune systems of the southern South Island are nationally important with their unique plant communities such as the large *Raoulia* cushion field on the Fortrose Spit."

Using local expertise, involving the local community in education to think differently about dunes as a buffer zone and using native species such as pingao in plantings are all practical aspects to be explored in order to restore dunes.

"We are pleased with the turn out of interested people today and will do a follow up on a pilot trial proposal involving plots at Oreti Beach," organiser, Environment Southland Land Sustainability Officer, Nathan Cruickshank said.

Signs of Change Conference **Monday 15th and Tuesday 16th November 2010.**

This exciting new venture is about to happen in Aotearoa NZ - an 'e-conference' with people gathering locally, saving on expensive travel and accommodation and of course saving carbon emissions along with reducing our green footprint. Check out the website at www.signsofchange.org.nz.

The line up of speakers is impressive with the focus being on examples of actions, people and initiatives about things which are already happening to alleviate the pressure we are putting on our planet.

It is hoped a venue can be found in Invercargill which can cope with the high speed video conferencing needed instead of having to travel to Dunedin, our closest centre at present. After watching presentations from the stimulating speakers, people attending in each centre will discuss their responses to what they have heard and how they might respond locally to make a difference. People can attend all or part of the e-conference

Organiser -Dr. Susan Krumdieck, Associate Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Canterbury

If you are interested in being part of the e-conference- especially if it is happening in Invercargill, please contact Jenny Campbell, 03- 248- 6398 (home) or 218- 2100 (S F work), Invercargill Environment Centre 218- 4404 or email jennycam@xtra.co.nz

Muriel Ericson - 9 October 1920- 22 August 2010

A valued Southland Forest & Bird member, who will be sadly missed.

Thanks to Jenny Campbell for the following obituary that was published in the Southland Times.

A full and varied life in Southland, connected to the farming and teaching world enabled Muriel Ericson to enjoy contributing in so many fields. Like many other women of her era her contribution was through her teaching, family commitments and the local community with her hospitality, generosity and thoughtfulness renowned.

Born on 9 October 1920 at Wyndham, as the middle daughter, her mother Sylvia became an influential role model. She was one of the first women to drive a car locally, and was in full partnership with Muriel's father Angus Campbell which was quite unusual for those times.

Muriel's life was influenced by the chances she had for education, not enjoyed by many young women in those days. She attended Wyndham school at five, writing on a slate, then moved on to Edendale and a new farm. She went to Southland Girls High School on the News bus which ran daily from Gore carrying freight and passengers going past their gate. Going to Teachers College in Dunedin at 18 was a big step, with war breaking out at that time. After training for 2 years, Muriel did her probationary year at Nightcaps going on to Ohai as a reliever with school being held in the hall as they had mined coal under the old school.

From 1943 she went teaching at Otarā where she met and married Ronald Ericson, moving to the farm which they named Lokrestuen, after a Swedish farmhouse. Home was a sawmillers' cottage with kerosene lamps, a coal range, no power initially and no telephone. Muriel was busy with her children as they grew up on the farm. Shelter was the main focus, creating a micro-climate enabling tamarillos, grapes and kiwifruit to grow, although fruiting was not always successful.

She continued to teach but mainly as a reliever, influencing many and enjoying seeing her students' successes. The local Country Service Library was kept at their house, organised through the National Library Service. After teaching a social life was possible with concerts through the Music Federation and ballet the norm. Both Ronald and Muriel actively involved in Forest and Bird, Men of the Trees field trips, the Te Rere Yellow Eyed Penguin Reserve and Tautuku Lenz Reserve. She was a strong supporter of Women's Division of Federated Farmers (now Rural Women)

Together Muriel and Ronald created wildlife refuges in perpetuity with Lake Cook, a wetland reserve of 6 acres, along with 200 acres of coastal native bush adjoining the Catlins Forest Park. Muriel protested when she felt an injustice had been done, writing to influential people and the Editor.

Muriel lived on the farm for 5 years after Ronald died in March 2001 but retired to Christchurch in 2006 to be closer to her children, Raould, Karin, Arne and Lars and grand children. Her philosophy of remembering and practising faith, hope and love in looking at the world with all its diverse people have been important values for herself, her family and influencing others she has connected with over her lifetime. Like many other women of her era her contribution was through her teaching, family commitments and the local community with her hospitality, generosity and thoughtfulness renowned.

She looked beyond, being visionary and asking strategic questions. Humour and providing laughter to ease the difficulties have helped her help others have a wonderfully rich life.

Commemoration for Muriel Ericson

There will be a time of Commemoration for Muriel's friends to gather at her old garden at Otarā, due to the hospitality of the new farm owners, the Moss family, on Sunday 31 October 2010 from 2pm. Please bring a thermos and afternoon tea for a picnic time followed by a walk to the lighthouse. If the weather is unkind we will gather at the Otarā Hall. Please bring a memory, story, photo or an item of memorabilia to share with others so we can reminisce and be thankful for Muriel's life and all she shared with us. This date happens to be Ronald's birthday which is appropriate and we remember Muriel on 9 October when she would have celebrated 90 wonderful years.

Everyone is welcome to join us.

Jenny Campbell for F&B Exec jennycam@xtra.co.nz if you have any queries.

Te Rere Yellow-eyed penguin Reserve Update

For photos and stories about Te Rere visit - www.converge.org.nz/fbsth/

The Forest & Bird Te Rere reserve continued to progress well over the last couple of months we have had the two winter work bees. At the first planting day on 24th July we had a record turnout with 53 people present! This group included a group of DOC volunteers from Dunedin, Southland Trampling Club, some SIT students, F&B members and others with an interest. On this day we managed to plant 500 plants, to split and plant flax fans and also to undertake some plant maintenance. For the second work day on 14th August the weather gods were smiling as the day was fine and went ahead (often this second day has to be cancelled)! The was small but keen group of 11 people from Invercargill joined by Fergus Sutherland, Arne Clelland and Christine Mckenzie. The group managed to plant 100 plant, put hare protectors over the previous months plantings and also to split and plant flax fans. Were were able to stay long enough to see the first few penguin land at Falls Creek - what a great way to finish the day!

The other great event was the world premier of our own Te Rere video at the August public movie. This movie is about 20 minutes long and features our Te Rere caretaker and past branch chairman Fergus Sutherland. Fergus described the history of the reserve, talked about the revegetation programme and much more. The movie has great scenery and excellent penguin footage. The movie was shot, edited and produced by former Southlander Wayne Birchall. Chris, Fergus and myself accompanied ayne and his wife Moira over two days of filming at Te Rere. It is intended to make copies of the movie and sell them with the proceeds for Te rere management. I am sure there will be many of you that have visted Te Rere that would love to have this momento of the reserve the rekindle memories and to show to friends and family.

One other penguin related activity was attendance at the Yellow-eyed penguin symposium hosted by the Yellow-eyed penguin Trust in Dunedin. This was attend by Te Rere sub-committee members Fergus Sutherland, Arne Clelland, Chris and myself. It is always and excellent day. The morning includes updates from many of the penguin reserves through Southland and Otago. Of special interest this year was a presentation on the Auckland Island penguin survey that was undertaken over summer. It was also great to hear what is going on in the new YEP Trust reserve at Long Point in the Catlins. In the afternoon were a number of presentations including Fergus who presented on the Biodiversity of Te Rere - of course we known Te Rere has far more of importance than just the penguins though they are the flagship for management at the reserve.

The next Te Rere activities will be the October and December penguin counts. These are a garanteed way to see penguins! The work is simple, just sitting and recording the where and when the penguin land. What a great way to pass a few hours. We always need helper with this count. If you are interested contact me (Brian Rance ph (03)2131161 or e-mail rances@ihug.co.nz)

Brian Rance

Join in the Penguin Count this year and have a great day out at Te Rere
Saturday 23rd October and Saturday 11th December
Contact Brian Rance, ph 213 1161 or email rances@ihug.co.nz for further details

HOT OFF THE PRESS: Thanks to clients of Fergus and Mary Sutherland's Catlins Wildlife Trackers, Te Rere Reserve has received a donation of \$2200 from the UK arm of 'New Zealand in Depth', courtesy of Paul Carberry. Part of every client's payment goes to conservation, and Te Rere is one of his chosen projects.

See <http://www.idnewzealand.co.nz/index.php?page=paul-carberry>

Southland Branch Committee

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SOUTHLAND BRANCH NEWSLETTER

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PO Box 1155
Invercargill

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