



OTAGO TRAMPING AND  
MOUNTAINEERING CLUB



# Ben Rudd's Management Trust

*An Overview 1998-2018*



# OTMC Ben Rudd's Property

The Flagstaff Hermit, Ben Rudd, moved onto what is today the club property in 1921, and lived in his small stone hut on the same site as the present shelter until his death nine years later in 1930.

The OTMC have owned Ben Rudd's 45ha property since 1946. Following a short-lived scheme to use the property for skiing (following the one-off big snowfall in 1947), the club looked to use the property to make *vast sums* of money through the establishment of exotic plantings. By the early 1970's it was realised that this didn't sit well with the club's ideals, and efforts were started to remove the trees.

It wasn't until the late 1980's that the saleable timber was able to be removed - unfortunately this left a large number of trees that were not economic to extract, and parts of the property left in poor condition, despite the best efforts of the club to get this cleaned up by the contractor.

A series of much needed revegetation work parties in the early 1990's led some in the club to question the continuing ownership of the property. The question of what to do with Ben Rudd's occupied considerable AGM time, and ultimately culminated in the formation of a management trust at the 75th Annual General Meeting in late August, 1998. The trust term was set for 20 years, ending on August

1, 2018. As we head towards the establishment of a new trust, this booklet looks back at the past 20 years, and the progress made on our club property.



## Formation of the inaugural Ben Rudd's Management Trust

The club realised that there would be a need for ongoing funding to assist with the restoration of the former plantation following the removal of the marketable in early 1989. The first major step taken by the club was to ring-fence the net income received from the sale of the trees as the Ben Rudd's fund.

Work parties in the early and mid-1990's concentrated on removing wilding trees and unwanted weeds and the planting of suitable native species within the former plantation sites. By 1997, there were again strong calls for the club to dispose of the property and concentrate on our core activities. A Ben Rudd's General Meeting followed the publication of a booklet which outlined arguments for both retention and disposal of the property. This meeting in November 1997 discussed the future of Ben Rudd's at great length, with the outcome being that a Management Trust be formed to look after all aspects of the property.

During 1998 a draft Charitable Trust Deed for the management of Ben Rudd's was completed, and presented to the 75th AGM for consideration. The motion to form the trust was passed, and Antony Hamel, Bevan Blackmore, Geoff Jackson, Ken Mason, Richard Pettinger and Teresa Wasilewska were elected as Trustees for the first five year term. The actual management agreement between the OTMC and Trust was for a 20 year term expiring on August 1, 2018.

## Management Plan for Ben Rudd's Property

At a pre-trust meeting in February 1998, a draft management plan was formulated. This plan sits alongside the trust deed, and prioritised the immediate work plan, as well as setting out some longer term goals. Now, 20 years later, most of these tasks have been completed or achieved, although it is recognised that the elimination of unwanted species (wilding pines, gorse, broom etc.) is ongoing.

Remaining exotic trees have been felled, with some of these being sold as Christmas trees in the early years of the trust. This provided a joint benefit of removing unwanted wilding trees as well as generating a bit of revenue for further use on the property.

Under the management plan, the only exotic species that can remain are the Bruce Campbell rhododendrons and the historical plantings of house garden plants at the shelter site. Plants such as gooseberry were originally planted by Ben Rudd in the 1920's.

### Friend of Ben Rudd's Certificate

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**Ben Rudd Property and the Otago Tramping Club Inc**

Ben, a gardener of repute in Dunedin, at the turn of the century, owned and farmed land at the top of Rudds Road, from 1990 to 1919. In 1919 he sold his farm and retired for a short period to Dunedin city. Finding urban life unbearable, in 1921 he purchased a 45 hectare block of land on the northern flank of Flagstaff and lived on this property until he died in 1930 at the age of 76. Ben was intolerant of trespassers, claiming at one time that up to 100 trespassers a week, were causing him considerable annoyance and damaging the property.

In 1923, a party from the newly formed Otago Tramping Club was "warned off" by Ben Rudd. One of those in the party described "the feelings of alarm as they encountered the sticky bearded little man with the shot gun". Despite the initial antipathy, Ben Rudd eventually established very good relations with the club. To help prevent further trespassing the Club paid him \$5 to cut a track round his property.

Ben Rudd died in 1930, and his property was bought by the club in 1940. The club's committee inherited only by chance, that the Rudd property was available, significantly, as it was probably the only property in the area, not already owned or spoken for by the Dunedin City Corporation.

The transaction, although undertaken by the committee without reference to the general membership, was enthusiastically endorsed at the next Annual General Meeting. The money for the purchase was loaned by Mr W Stevenson, who later refused to accept repayment, a generous gesture that has long been appreciated.

From the very beginning of the Club's status as a landowner, numerous ideas were advanced for using the property. Subsequently, considerable interest developed in establishing a park where the public

could enjoy a day's outing. To this end, a large number of trees and ornamental shrubs were planted in 1950, in a bid to make the area a paying proposition, planting of several thousand pine, mahoe trees took place. There was much speculation at the time, as to how the Club would eventually allocate the considerable sum of money which would become available, following the sale of the mature timber.

In 1970, the now renamed Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club (OTMC) committee, formally decided to skip the afforestation program. Since then, attention has focussed on restoring native vegetation on the property, so that it is compatible with the adjoining reserves. In 1998, the most plantation of exotic trees was felled and the sale proceeds of approximately \$100,000 were set aside to manage the property, including re-vegetation and elimination of noxious weeds.

After lengthy debate and exploring various options with DOC and the DCC, the Club decided to transfer the management of the property to the Ben Rudd's Management Trust. This trust was established by a group of long term Club members who wished to preserve and promote the property for the Club.

**Ben Rudd's Management Trust**  
The purpose of the Trust is to promote the environmental, recreational and educational role of the Ben Rudd's property within the context of the Flagstaff area as follows:

- To protect and foster the historical connection the OTMC Club in predecessor groups has with the Ben Rudd's property.
- To maintain the flora and fauna of the Ben Rudd's property.
- To manage the historical plantings of the Ben Rudd's property.
- To promote the use of the Ben Rudd's property by recreational visitors.
- To manage the place of the Ben Rudd's property within the setting of surrounding uplands and reserves.
- To select other like-minded organisations to work together to achieve the purposes of the Trust.
- To maintain clear identification of the property boundary.
- To manage 'Tahurangi's cable corridor' following the footpath track.
- To allow unobstructed use of the footpath track.
- To control animals.
- To control introduced vegetation.
- To ensure the re-establishment of the historic legal access to the Ben Rudd's property via Rudd Road to Waiata.

**Friends of Ben Rudd's**  
This certificate denotes the holder's donation and membership of the Friends of the Trust. The Friends are a group of people who support the aims of the Trust, OTMC members and ex-members of OTC/OTMC are encouraged to join the Friends.

**Places to Go**  
**Ben Rudd Shelter** This open framed shelter is set in a pleasant open clearing which was the site of Ben Rudd's home during his later years. The shelter was built by individual club members. The current shelter was built in the 1970's, has required a minimum of maintenance, it has no facilities.

**Big Rock (Chimney)** It is possible to visit this rock by using a roughly marked route which has been cut

from the fire break track. There is also a possible route slightly further to the west. This massive rock outcrop has been used over many years as a place to browse and for rock climbing. There are good views over the valley.

**Bruce Campbell Rhododendron** Ben's Rhododendrons, raised from seed, were planted here by Bruce Campbell in the 1950's. A single trunk branches off to the right at the sign and leads into the planted area.

**Rudd Ring and Old Bullock Track** The Rudd Ring was a staging area for stock being driven into Dunedin. The Bullock Track was used as an early northern route out of Dunedin, to avoid the steep bush and rugged coastline.

**DCC Exotic Plantation** Exotic trees were first planted on Flagstaff in 1936. Designed to prevent the water supply catchments and generate income, they yielded their first commercial crop in 1954, and since 1969 have provided an important source of export income. To Contact City Forests Limited Phone 485 5512.

**Flagstaff Summit** Originally named Mount Kettle, after the surveyor Charles Kettle, it is presumably named as a result of the need to have flagstaffs erected on the main to Highgate. A place table set in the summit rock identifies the main features of a panoramic view.

**Santaronium** The Northcote Cottage Santaronium was established on 150 acres (60.7 ha) of grounds by Dr Ralph Sutherland in 1899, for the treatment of Pulmonary Tuberculosis (Consumption). A private institution and the first of its kind in New Zealand, it closed at the beginning of World War One. The main-gardens included Cragshaw Falls, as well as a croquet lawn, and bush walks.

The information in this certificate is based on OTMC's Department of Records Officer, Chris Hill, & Deputy & Trustee, Ben Blackmore. The background photos from left to right: 1990's, 1990's, 1990's, 1990's, Ben Rudd's Old Bullock Track, Ben Rudd's Old Bullock Track, Ben Rudd's Old Bullock Track. Photographed by Ben Blackmore.

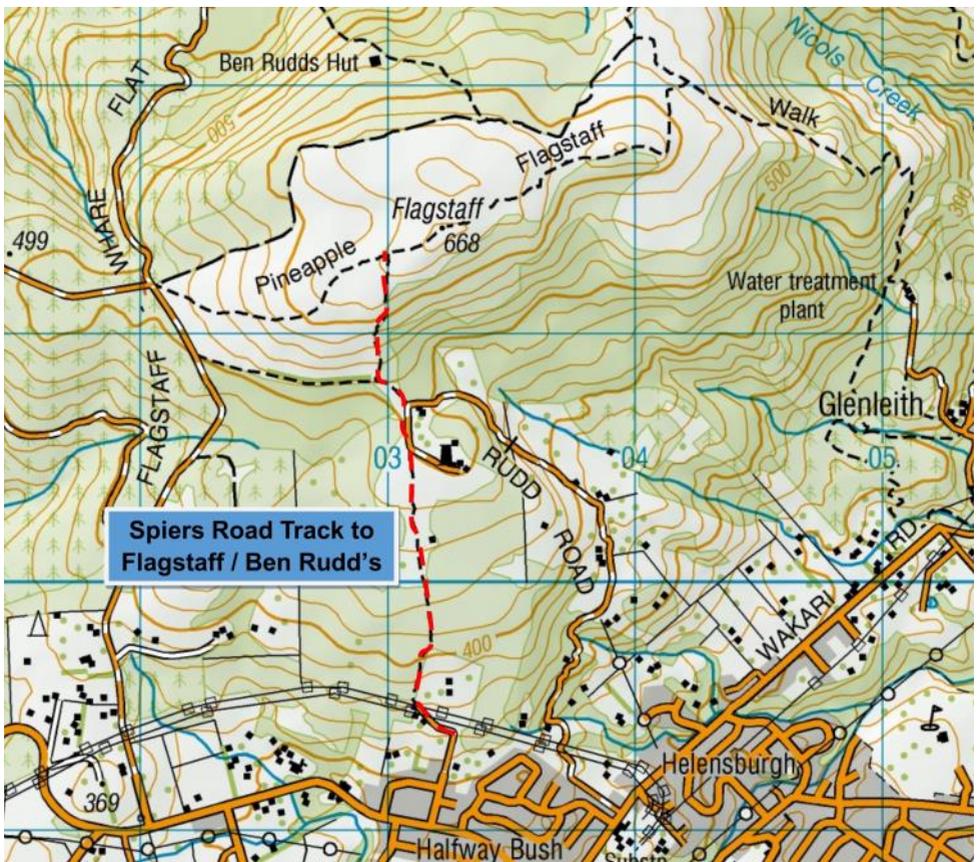
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## Friends of Ben Rudd's

In addition to the elected trustees, the Friends of Ben Rudd's was also set up. This allowed members and other interested people to subscribe to be a 'friend' - with a modest donation the Friends received a framed certificate containing information about the property and updates on progress.

## Development of Spiers Road as an access route

The current 4WD firebreak track is not a legal road (it was created during a large fire in the 1950's). Spiers Road is the legal road access to Ben Rudd's and dates from the late 1840's. Initial development to reopen this historic access route was completed by the trust in 1999/2000, and despite being encroached by gorse from time to time, the track remains open today (work completed circa 2017/18 means the track is currently clear). The route provides good views over the city as well as passing by Ben Rudd's original Flagstaff property 'Woodside', which he occupied from 1884 to 1919.





*Near Woodside Farm, Spiers Road Track*

## QEII National Trust - Open Space Covenant

One of the most significant steps in the protection and management of the Ben Rudd's property was the signing of the Open Space Covenant in 2002. An open space covenant is a legal agreement that allows protection of an open space. The OTMC's agreed intention for Ben Rudd's is to ensure the property is managed in sympathy with and compatibly with all neighbouring land that is managed for open space, water catchment, ecological restoration, biodiversity protection or other conservation purposes.,



The covenant is binding on the OTMC and any future owners, although it is recognised (and identified in 1997/98) that there is little to no interest by others in the land, due mainly to it's lack of formal legal vehicle access.

The covenant sets out in detail what can and what can't be undertaken on the property, as well as recognising the historical link with Ben Rudd, and the Campbell family (in regard to the rhododendron plantings). A copy is available on the [OTMC website](#).

In 2017, a significant amount of tools and other maintenance items were supplied to the trust by the QEII National Trust, both the OTMC and BRMT are grateful for this gesture.

## Ongoing Activities

Following the contracted felling of saleable trees, the property still had many thousands

of exotic trees on the property. Sporadic felling has been undertaken since the early 1990's, but a substantial effort by the trust saw 5000 or so trees felled in 2000. This was a combined effort with Forest and Bird and City Forests. Since then work has concentrated on removing isolated trees, and responding to any new wilding ones.

The shelter remains a focus point for the property. The current shelter is the third structure at this site - the first being Ben Rudd's stone hut. The Otago Tramping Club built a second hut not long after acquiring the property in 1946 - over time wear and tear along with ongoing vandalism led to its removal in the early 1970's. The present day shelter was built as a replacement, its design deliberately took into account the risk of further vandalism. The trust have carried out maintenance as required, as well as closing in the right hand wall, as seen in the photo below.



Fire remains one of the greatest risks to the property (there have been several substantial fires on Flagstaff and over the property several times over the years, causing major damage). The lighting of any fire on the property is not allowed (as the property is within



1km of a Department of Conservation reserve, any fire would need a permit from DoC).

In line with the agreed management plan, the boundary lines of the property have been identified and marked with warratahs. Signs have also been placed on both boundaries where the firebreak track enters and exits the property.

With agreement from the Mercier family, a memorial seat for Linda Mercier has been installed under the beech trees behind the shelter, with expansive views over Whare Flat as well as towards the Silver Peaks and Swampy Summit. Linda was an OTC / OTMC member in the 1970's.

In the earlier years of the trust, a lot of planting of natives was undertaken. It is encouraging to now see the results of the plantings, with substantial growth visible. While the gorse and broom are definitely on the unwanted list, they do provide a nursery for the young plants to become established. In time, the natives will win through.

Ongoing work parties have always been a point of contention within the club, but they are necessary (as with any property). The trust have used commercial and aerial spraying operations (sometimes in conjunction with adjoining landowners), but manual removal of unwanted plants is still required. The revegetation of Ben Rudd's is a long term project, but it is pleasing to see the progress being made. In recent times one official work day



has been undertaken in early Spring. In 2016 a trial of evening and monthly work parties was undertaken - this allowed a significant amount of mainly broom to be removed from the fringe of the firebreak track as it traverses the property.

In 2015 the trust provided the OTMC a history of the property to be used on the OTMC website. The Ben Rudd's section has since been expanded by the OTMC to include maps, a downloadable brochure, all BRMT newsletters and other files. This has been complemented by a permanent display in the clubrooms.

## The future

With the 2018 expiry date for the current agreement approaching, the OTMC committee have consulted with the outgoing trust to work towards a future management agreement. A well received night was held in the clubrooms in August 2017 outlining the history of the property - this presentation is available on the OTMC website [here](#).

The OTMC Committee have finalised a new agreement, and will present this to the 95th AGM for ratification.

Ben Rudd's property forms a tangible link to the first few weeks of the Otago Tramping Club in 1923, following the clubs first encounter with Ben Rudd, the stocky, bearded little man with the shotgun in September 1923. Since then, the property has become an important and special part of many members lives, and continues to do so. As the natural vegetation becomes dominant, the need for future work parties will reduce, and we can proudly share this special land with future generations of trampers.

## The Ben Rudd's Management Trust

The trust was formed to remove the day to day and long-term management of the property away from the OTMC Committee and wider club. This has been achieved. A significant amount of money has been spent on the property - mainly for spraying noxious plants and revegetation. That the trust have retained the original Ben Rudd's fund fiscally neutral is a credit to the careful management of the fund, along with very successful application for funding over the years (matched by many volunteer hours of work on the bio-diversity work on the property).

On behalf of the OTMC, the committee would like to express our appreciation to all past and current members of the Ben Rudd's Management Trust, and look forward to continuing our relationship in the years to come.

### Members of the Ben Rudd's Management Trust: 1998-2018

**1998-2003** (*inaugural trust*): Antony Hamel, Bevan Blackmore, Geoff Jackson, Ken Mason, Richard Pettinger, Teresa Wasilewska.

**2003-2008**: Antony Hamel, Ian Sime, Ken Mason, Richard Pettinger, Teresa Wasilewska.

**2008-2013**: Alan Thomson, Henriette Rawlings, Ian Sime, Richard Pettinger, Teresa Wasilewska.

**2013-2018**: Alan Thomson, David McArthur, Jim Sime, Kathy Woodrow, Richard Pettinger, Sam Patrick, Teresa Wasilewska.

**For more information on the Ben Rudd's property, visit [www.otmc.co.nz](http://www.otmc.co.nz)**

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