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Friends of Ben Rudd's Newsletter, No 11

(Stamp)

31 October 2002

Welcome to the eleventh Friends of Ben Rudd's Newsletter.

This issue lets you know about the upcoming picnic, the Covenant signing, and how the recent planting day went.

Joining the Friends, donations of money, time or expertise

- If you know of anyone who might be keen to join the Friends of Ben Rudds, please let them know about us, what we do, and how we can be supported. We are grateful to everybody on the current mailing list, for paying subscriptions.
 - For your information, the Trust has continued to meet regularly, with the last meetings being at Teresa Wasilewska's, Richard Pettinger's and Antony Hamel's places within the last few months. We still use a system of rotation of chairing duties. Antony Hamel is the keeper of funds and the PO box, and Ken Mason is Project Officer, keeping all work coordinated and true to the Trust's objectives, which are now embodied in the QEII Open Space Covenant.
 - We welcome two new Friends: Wolfgang Gerber, 102 Preston Cres, Dunedin; and Nick Prosser (Friends of Volco Trust), 524 Mt Cargill Rd, RD 2, Waitati. Donation recently received: \$25 from the Taieri Recreational Tramping Club. Thank you very much, long may you continue to enjoy the property. Thank you all for your continuing membership.
 - REMEMBER: Donations help the Trust and the Friends in the important work of rehabilitating Flagstaff for indigenous ecology and, importantly, for all trampers from the city and beyond.
 - Money, or offers of assistance or expertise, are always welcome. Subs are \$5 per calendar year per membership. Membership can be individual, family or club. Please send any money to the above address.
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- The Trust and Friends have recently learnt of the news of the death some time ago of Julian Bullock, another person with a long association with Ben Rudd's Property. Our sympathies go to June, in Wadestown.

THE PROPERTY AND THE QEII COVENANT

We were delighted to see so many of you at the celebration and ceremony for signing the Open Space Covenant with the Queen Elizabeth II Trust. The Covenant, for the entire Ben Rudd's property, was signed by the President of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club on 19 September 2002. It was a very positive event for the Club, the Friends and the Ben Rudd's Management Trust, and was well recorded in the Otago Daily Times.

Through the Covenant, it is intended that the land will remain available in perpetuity for the public, for foot access, but with mountain bikes tolerated on the Firebreak Track. It will be yet another sparkling jewel on the necklace that is the soon-to-be-completed Dunedin Skyline walk. Ben Rudd's property, although it is a little off the skyline, makes an attractive destination for a visit from the Skyline. The shelter site with Linda's seat, Ben Rudd's house site, the Bruce Campbell beech trees and the remains of Ben's garden, is of interest, along with the Jim Freeman Track, Bruce Campbell's Rhododendron Dell and the new silver beech plantation. All of these features go with the Flagstaff summit plane-table and the yet to be "uncovered" destinations and features of the Skyline completion track. All of these are assets for Dunedin which the OTMC is proud to provide or be heavily associated with.

The Ben Rudd's property and what it is becoming, is a contribution to a great treasure for Dunedin's future, no matter who is the eventual owner of the property.

Upcoming event: This year's picnic

The 2002 picnic will be held on Sunday 17 November. Previous picnics have been very pleasant gatherings, with the usual OTMC day trip arriving to join us via Spiers Road and descending the Davies Track.

An excursion to Bruce Campbell's Rhododendron Dell down the newly-realigned Jim Freeman Track will be made, but the flowers may well be past their best. Turn up at the Shelter from 11 AM onwards. If you would like to get a ride, or can offer one, please phone Richard Pettinger on 487 9488, as soon as possible, or up until 8.15 on the morning.

Report on Planting Day – 28 September

The small crowd met on Saturday at 10 AM at the Bullring, and everyone managed to get a lift to the skid site. The weather was just nice for the work, and about two thirds of the expected results were achieved. The majority of the beech trees were planted, and more pig damage to former plantings was undone. The ground in front of the Linda Mercier seat was raised and secured, and the Shelter's fireplace with its concrete slab was demolished and/or buried under soil and turf. The shelter was cleaned out. Some of the worst snow damage on the track was tidied up.

All that remained to be done was the track clearing (this has now been done by Ken and Peter Mason) and the tidying up of the Rhododendron Dell circuit to improve visibility. These last jobs were the lowest priority for the day. Had all of the jobs been completed, the property would now be in a fully presentable state for the forthcoming Rhododendron Week event, when people will undoubtedly visit our place.

The Bruce Campbell Dell is advertised on the famous Week's programme as Rhodies in the wild – a sight which mimics the natural setting for the species, and is seldom seen outside of the Asian mountains. If any Friend feels inspired to complete this little project, before the first week of November, please contact Ken Mason on 476 7100.

Those in attendance were: Helen Clarke, Geraldine Moore, Vincent and Richard Pettinger, Gavin McArthur, Peter, Ken and Brett Mason.

We told you in the ninth newsletter how the DCC Parks & Reserves Dept (PRD) is working on a fire-protection programme for the area, which means that a permit is required for every fire on the property, including any billy-boiling fire at the shelter. Provisions have been required to be made in the Covenant's supporting Management Statement, to ensure it is not inconsistent with that legal requirement. Also, the limitation of use of the Firebreak Track to walkers, mountain-bikers and rarely skiers or organised horse-riding events is recognised in the same document, to ensure compatible management with neighbouring land.

It is very important that no work be undertaken on the property without Ken's knowledge. His phone number is 476 7100.

Please contact me if you have any contributions, advice, suggestions, etc, for these newsletters. I can be emailed at richard.pettinger@orc.govt.nz, or phoned at home at (03) 487 9488.

- Richard P.