



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 Pittinger 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.

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.

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.

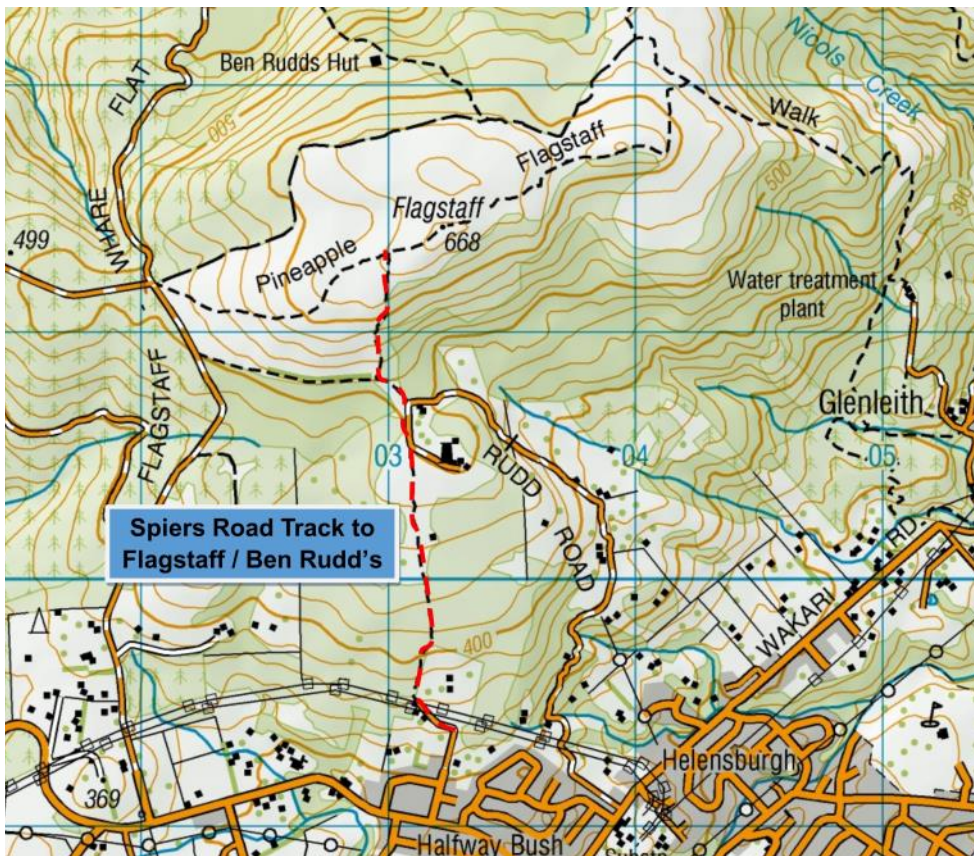


Friends of Ben Rudd's

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.,



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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 biodiversity 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

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