
Return Address:

Friends of Ben Rudd's Newsletter, No 2

(Stamp)

20 July 1999

Welcome to our second Friends of Ben Rudds Newsletter. Thank you for the positive feedback about Issue No 1.

How do you like our letterhead? The logo was drawn by Peter Mason, from the only known photograph of Ben smiling! It is a fitting image for such a positive and vibrant organisation. We are considering adding Ben's signature to the logo, now that the Mason Research Team has discovered it on a document. Note that the Trust's PO Box number has changed.

We were all extremely disappointed that the inaugural March 14 picnic had to be cancelled. Better luck next time... Nobody wanted to turn up, and one could hardly blame you. It must have been the only bad day we had all Autumn. Thanks to Ken who went to the Bullring in case some silly sod DID venture up.

Peter Mason is still looking into the preparation of the 2 routed wooden entrance signs for the firebreak track approaches, and two small metal signs to go where the Freeman track and Big Rock route cross the property boundary. If you know anyone who could help with this work, please let Peter know (phone 455 7074 or 025 223 4874).

The Trust is a subscriber to the NZ Ecological Restoration Network, (see next article). Their newsletter, Bush Telegraph, and email noticeboard Kereru are very informative. If anyone would like to see this material, contact Richard Pettinger (see foot of page 2). Last month we were fortunate to receive a visit from Chairman Mike Peters. Ken Mason showed Peter around a number of Dunedin projects, and introduced him to a number of key Dunedin contacts.

Philip Dunn and Ribbonwood Nursery continue to assist with propagation material, advice and support. I would urge any of you who need locally-sourced native plants, or advice about them, (even if your project is only home-garden scale) to support Philip's business. For those of you out-of-town, why not get in touch with the Ecological Restoration Network itself.

And don't forget to encourage others to join the Friends, as we gather momentum. The more the merrier!

The NZ Ecological Restoration Network.

From humble beginnings in a Christchurch suburb where neighbours shared a vision of restoring indigenous vegetation, this has grown to become a nation-wide network for ecologists, plant propagators and enthusiastic volunteers alike, to share resources and information so groups like ours can carry out such restoration work in a way that would be effective, efficient (and sanctioned by ecological purists!). Chaired by an incredibly motivated individual named Mike Peters, it has technical support from the Crown Research Institute: Landcare Research which hosts the principal website.

The network creates and distributes information resources free to its members so they can do their own projects more easily. The network is not a lobby group, making no statements, submissions or stands on environmental questions. It simply wants to "bring back the native bush". It can, for example, put us in contact with the best sources of propagation mix, and alert us to new publications. This is a very valuable organisation to be a part of. With our experience and contacts, the Trust will already be able to contribute to other local communities restoring natural ecosystems.

This is a network for those who are involved in any way with a native plant revegetation programme. It provides such things as an Advisory Panel: a listing of ecologists, plant propagators, pest controllers, fencing contractors etc, to answer questions from volunteers about restoration, sent via the office. This is an "Ask a Scientist" system. Results will be posted in Kereru and on the web.

You can see their page at <http://www.converge.org.nz/bush/>

Alternatively: Mail: PO Box 9000, Christchurch;

E-mail: office@bush.org.nz;

Phone: (03) 338 5451

Keruru is available at <http://www.bush.org.nz/kereru/>

It is important for the Trust and Friends to keep our vision firmly in mind. As you know, the Trust has what amounts to twin goals: the retention and establishment of quality walking opportunities on the property, within a restored indigenous setting. We need all the help we can get, and not just to cut tracks. So the contact with the above Restoration Network is invaluable.

To this end, Ken, and Phil from Ribbonwood Nurseries, are currently propagating several hundred local genetic Silver Beech and Snowtussocks. These are part-owned by Ken or Dunedin Teen Conservation. Many will be planted on the property. The DTC worked in March to remove broom among indigenous vegetation on the bank adjacent to the cairn on the loading site. John Fitzgerald (an enthusiastic Friend!) intends to bring small groups of Wakari patients to work on the property from time to time. Ken has found a practical new route to Big Rock, which will be another route that takes you to the property. Of even greater importance, the renewal of use of an historic legal road to the property from Halfway Bush is being steadily worked on. More on this exciting development next newsletter.

Remember, if you or others you know of wish to help out, that's fantastic. Please make sure Ken knows (phone 476 2494) before anyone ventures out though, OK?

Richard Pettinger (phone 487 9488) is looking for suitably mad volunteers to cut lightwells and plant into the big patch of Old Man Gorse. Any takers? Anyone masochistic enough??

KIWI CONSERVATION CLUB REPORT

30th May 1999

Ben Rudds Revisited, Part 2

The Dunedin Kiwi Conservation Club has once again stamped its mark on the property with a splendid effort on the broom around the skid site. With light rain and low cloud, it did not look a hopeful day for any activity on the hill, but by 1.30pm we had approximately 17 souls up at the skid site ready for some serious fun. Yes, fun is what we have on KCC trips when removing broom.

At stages we had some very warm sun on the work area, but most of the afternoon the mist rolled through chilling some of the younger children and the odd adult. By mid afternoon the masses started to move off to warmer climates, and to the TV for the rugby.

It is hoped that over time there will be less and less of these broom-clearing work parties as the Otago Regional Council has introduced an organism whose favourite food seems to be pest broom. Richard is interested in its progress around the district and over time this wee helper should reduce the vigour (if not the spread) of broom and the amount of work needed to control the broom on the property. On my way out from Ben Rudds I noted the number of gorse and broom plants that were removed on the access road by the departing KCCers. Over time, by doing this, we should reduce the need to revert to chemical sprays for weed control.

The next trip planned to the property by the KCC will not involve broom. We will look at the history, plantings and future by guided tour. By doing this, we should increase the awareness among the up-and-coming environmentalists to the needs of this and other projects in and around Dunedin.

- Bevan Blackmore

NOTES FROM THE TRUST

- Since our first newsletter, the Trust has had another two meetings, on 28 April and 2 June continuing rotating chairing duties. To remind you, Bevan Blackmore keeps the files, Teresa Blondell is treasurer, Antony Hamel is keeper of funds & PO box and Ken Mason is Project Officer, keeping all work coordinated and true to the Trust's objectives.
- An A3 coloured aerial photo of the Ben Rudds property is available at a small cost. Contact Richard Pettinger if you would like one. It was taken in 1997.
- Bevan has been giving some thought to a Trust policy on funding, to establish clear guidelines when obtaining funding for projects and assets.
- Ken's letter to Dunedin's walking clubs inviting them to use Ben Rudds drew several replies, including generous donations. The Trust agreed that those groups who supported the Trust should become Friends of Ben Rudds. It is great to see those kindred clubs who make good use of the property taking an interest in our activities, and helping out financially. Thank you very much! The Friends' address list now stands at 46, (including the Hocken Library and OTMC). Most recent new Friend is Ross Adamson. Welcome aboard, Ross.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE: Some people have asked *who are* all these Friends. Accordingly, we would like to include a membership list with the next newsletter, so you can all see who your fellow Friends are. Before we do this, however, we need to know if you're happy with that. It is clearly presumed that when any person or group joined the Friends, one of the purposes of joining was that we could all get to know one another, and cooperate together on working parties or just give each other advice and encouragement. If any of you would NOT like your name and address published for any reason, then we ask you to let us know before the end of August 99.

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 487 9488

- Richard P.