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Friends of Ben Rudd's Newsletter, No 12

(Stamp)

10 October 2003

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

This issue lets you know about the upcoming planting day and the new membership of the Ben Rudd's Trust.

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.
 - Just to remind you, Antony Hamel is the keeper of funds and the Post Office box. 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. Peter Mason is the organiser of the Friends of Ben Rudd's organisation itself.
 - This time, we welcome one new Friend: Bruce Collier, 86 Mailer Street, Dunedin.. Donations received lately include \$50 from the Dunedin XY Tramping Club, and \$25 from the Taieri Recreational Tramping Club. Thank you very much. Long may you continue to enjoy the property. And thank you to all our Friends for your continuing membership. If you haven't sent in your subs for this calendar year, we'd love to hear from you. Donations help the Trust and the Friends in the important work of rehabilitating Flagstaff for indigenous ecology and, importantly, for all trampers from Dunedin City and beyond. Let's keep up the momentum.
 - Money and 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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Upcoming event:**This year's planting day**

The planting day for 2003 will be held on **Saturday 18 October**. Meet at the Bullring on Whare Flat Road at 9.30 AM, and join the Trust in a day of very positive and non-strenuous property improvement! We have 40 locally-sourced silver beech to get in before the weather gets too dry. If you can't make it at that time, come along when you can, and you should see us at the former plantation area (below the skid site). If we're not there, we could have been waylaid at one of the area's highlights – most likely the top of Spiers Road, or on the Flagstaff Walkway. Don't panic if you can't find us, we'll be there, certainly by 1.30 PM, and you might see a yellow track marker by the track down to the hut to indicate where we are working.

You will be impressed by the results of previous years' planting: the property is starting to look like it might have looked thousands of years ago. This is a really exciting project to be involved with. But, it doesn't come without some effort. We must acknowledge the energy of the Mason brothers and also Vincent and Rosa Pettinger, who have never missed one of our planting days yet.

If you turn up between 9.30 and 1.30, please walk to the property via the Walkway. That way, you will meet up with those ahead of you. We will have all the necessary tools, so just bring yourselves and usual clothing for a day in the hills. If Saturday is wet, it is possible that Ken will get up there on Sunday. Phone him on 476 7100.

A whole new Trust!

The OTMC held its AGM recently. The membership of the Ben Rudd's Management Trust lasts for 5 years, and the Trust has now existed for 5 years, so it was time to reappoint them. The OTMC received nominations and they were all declared duly elected. The Trust membership has changed. We now welcome Ian Sime, Life Member of the OTMC, as a brand new Trust member, and farewell Bevan Blackmore and Geoff Jackson.

Teresa Wasilewska, Richard Pettinger, Antony Hamel and Ken Mason stay on. Our grateful thanks go to Bevan and Geoff for their sterling efforts and useful contributions as inaugural members of the Trust. Along with their commitment to the property, they assisted to set up the QEII Open Space Covenant, and their input will help to keep the momentum going over the years to come. See you in the hills, guys, especially up on OUR hill!

Upcoming event:**Picnic!**

Previous picnics have been very pleasant gatherings, with an Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club day trip arriving to join us via Spiers Road and descending the Davies Track. The next one will be on February 15 2004, and will combine with the OTMC's annual picnic. It will be great to have OTMCers and the Friends of Ben Rudd's all together. 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, up until 8.15 on the morning.

History of the property and Ben himself

Ian is on the hunt for information to produce a pamphlet on the life and times of the property, and especially of Ben himself. We are keen to get anecdotes, photos, etc to build up an idea of what the place was like: Ben's home and garden, his experiences in town etc, thoughts on access, friends, foes etc. How important was Spiers Road, the Mountain Track, etc, what was known about the property and those tracks before Ben's time... I'm sure you can imagine how important it is to get this picture together before too long!

Part of the money from Friends' subscriptions will go towards the publication.

Notes from recent observations etc:

- Well, recently there has been some silly behaviour by users of the property. Our signs have been smashed, and people have lit fires in places where they could do immense damage to the vegetation we have been encouraging. It all seems so childish. Please, if you are on the property, and have a chance to talk to visitors, let them know that we are doing all this work for them and others in Dunedin's future. Careless or deliberate "accidents" could undo so much.
- The spraying programme partly funded by the Otago Regional Council has been a spectacular success. All the broom and gorse above the firebreak is completely dead and offers the opportunity for revegetation. A lot of people are very interested in the outcome of this part of the project. Had it not been sprayed, it would now stand out very obviously and embarrassingly beside the Flagstaff Scenic Reserve. It would have been great if it could have been done by person-power instead of chemistry, but at least it's done. Please help with the revegetation programme, though.
- Ken will be taking the Rhododendron Festival event through to view our Bruce Campbell dell on 1 November. Come along at 9.30 at the Bullring till about 12.30, that day, for "Rhodies Gone Wild".
- Now we have the covenant in place, the property will enjoy relief from rates from DCC and Otago Regional Council.

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 pettal@clear.net.nz, or phoned at home at (03) 487 9488.

- Richard P.