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# Friends of Ben Rudd's Newsletter, No 15

21 October 2010

Welcome to the fifteenth Friends of Ben Rudd's Newsletter.  
This issue lets you know about the upcoming 2010 picnic day

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## **Joining the Friends, donations of money, time or expertise**

Hello Friends! It's been a while since you had a newsletter. Thanks to Henri for doing a newsletter last year.

- *If you know of anyone who might be keen to join the Friends of Ben Rudd's, please let them know about us, what we do, and how we can be supported. Read on to see how you could contribute.*
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### Successful funding bids

The Trust was lucky a couple of years ago to be awarded funding from the DCC Biodiversity fund for weed control work that, sadly, we couldn't take up. We lost that allocation of money, and resolved to not let it happen again. Last year, we approached the DCC again, grovelling somewhat, but also approached Montgomery Watson Harza, an environmental and engineering consultancy. MWH very kindly granted us \$2500, and that was matched by the DCC. The \$5000 obtained has been spent by the Trust on a project to clean up the firebreak and weed infestations up the hill from it, by combined targeted aerial spraying and hand control (cutting and stump-treatment).

In order to obtain further funding, the Trust is aware of the need to not only supervise this work, but to also check the efficacy of the work by monitoring, using before- and after- photos. The better we get at this, the more easily we might secure future funding.

If anyone among the Friends would like to help in this regard, please feel free to offer. We need to establish photo points, mark them for locating those taking follow-up photos, take the follow-up photos at appropriate intervals, or even help with organising and/or supervising the work team (TFG or any other individuals or teams). Your Trust members are happy to keep raising the funds, but we could always do with help and advice.

Our heartfelt thanks go to the Montgomery Watson Harza team and also to the Dunedin City Council, who on Debbie Hogan's recommendation, provided the money that allowed us to carry out this work with little impact on the Trust's limited reserves.

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### PICNIC!!

*The Trustees have decided to continue the OTMC picnics at the Ben Rudd's hut site.*

***Sunday 14 November, lunchtime.***

*If anyone wants help getting there, please contact Henri Rawlings at 476 4133.*

*The OTMC day trip, Spiers Road – Ben Rudd's – Rhododendron Dell – Davies Track, will be held in conjunction with this. If anyone would like to go to the picnic, join Richard Pettinger (phone 487 9488) by meeting at the OTMC rooms (3 Young St) at 9am.*

*Please support our picnic. You'll get to see what great work has been done lately, and how the native bush is returning to Flagstaff. This regeneration is, in part, thanks to the weed control work done by OTMC and then the Trust since the plantation was removed in the mid 1980s.*

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### Heli-Otago, Arthur Blondell and Task Force Green (with Jonathan Lewis)

The Trust engaged the services of some pretty keen people to help us in work on the property. Task Force Green (TFG) was taken on to work on clearing weeds at the skidsite and by the firebreak. It was with some delight that we worked in with these lads, and a pleasant surprise to find one of their key supervisors was none other than ex-OTMC member Jonathan Lewis, who was active in the 1970s. Jonathan has an intuitive understanding of what the OTMC has been trying to do with the land, and what the Trust's objectives are now. He is characteristically painstaking in his approach to the job, and because of that, we can take comfort in letting TFG get on with the work. I also wish to acknowledge the main supervisor Morgan and also TFG coordinator Alex Griffin.

TFG will look after spots not aerially sprayed by the HeliOtago chopper, above the firebreak. When the DCC Water Dept and the Scenic Reserve managers carried out aerial spraying earlier this year, the Trust took the opportunity to spray

patches of gorse and broom on our patch. We were grateful that Arthur Blondell was willing to be flown around our property to direct the spray to the impenetrable infestations that TFG could not be expected to treat by hand. We extend our gratitude to these fine folk.

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How about this for a fundraiser:

AS you know, the OTMC and latterly the BR Trust have had a programme to plant local-sourced native trees to suppress weed infestations on our land, which has been going on since 1990, paid for out of donations of time, materials and money, and by use of interest on the Trust's funds. I kicked the ball rolling in 1990, after I saw the bare ground starting to grow blackberry and other nasty things following the harvesting of our pine trees. Lots of people helped enormously, including many of you who are on the Friends list. Ken Mason was instrumental in keeping up the momentum in that regard more recently. He planted further local-sourced silver beech to add to the native 'plantation' the OTMC had established.

We understand that post-1990 forestry plantations are eligible for carbon credits under the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). This could be especially important for those trees not expected to be harvested. It would be great if we can investigate that fully. If anyone has any expertise, knowledge, experience or the energy to pursue this it could help fund more planting. The OTMC, in setting up the Trust, expressed the wish that we might remain fiscally neutral, and we have found that funding sources are fairly rare. What funding we have been fortunate to get has gone to tackling the gorse and broom that invaded our land from the firebreak put in urgently during a fire that swept over Flagstaff in the mid 70s. Both the fire and the urgent bulldozing were totally beyond our control. It was this external factor, though, that led to so much anguish among OTMC members. While the main older plantation was saved by the firebreak, many remaining trees had to be pulled out. Gorse and broom quickly followed the bulldozer's disturbance. The seeds were probably brought in by its tracks or the ground-disturbance caused. The OTMC often argued at AGMs about the desire to get rid of the property and the burden it meant to the Club. It was a burden which members could see was already greater in time, energy and direct costs than the meagre income the Club had received from the harvesting of the trees could provide for. And the burden got bigger every year as the whole hillside turned gradually yellow with the weed invasion.

Although the Trust inherited the proceeds from the sale of the trees, the results of that fire have caused us this expense which is greater than our funds can deal with.

So, ETS funding is the first part of the idea. And, it is poetic justice of a kind, if an external source of money can help us remain fiscally neutral, and result in us having the kind of landscape up there that nature would have given us if that fire hadn't swept through, followed by the invasion of gorse and broom.

But, here's my new idea. (Not Trust policy!) We could advertise what we're doing and what we'd like to do, and say that we haven't got the funds to carry out the plantings necessary to keep gorse and broom at bay. Then we invite conscience money from the public who can't wean themselves off long flights or even any use of fossil fuels that is troubling them. I envisage a sign on a prominent notice board in places like travel agencies, saying: "If you are travelling, and you wish to contribute to an offsetting programme to capture the fossil fuel carbon you are causing to be released, then the BRT will accept a donation of a minimum of \$20, and for that, one local-sourced native tree will be planted on our land: to restore biodiversity and, as far as we can, the original native landscape, as well as to capture carbon. Any tree planted with your money will have your name attached to it with a biodegradable swing tag, expected to last two years. An independent verifier, using a photo verifying its existence, can be in touch with you by email to prove to your satisfaction that your money was honourably spent." Ha! That should get us millions.

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Please contact me if you have any contributions, advice, suggestions, money etc, for these newsletters. I can be emailed at pettal@clear.net.nz, or phoned at home at (03) 487 9488. - Richard Pettinger.