

Ben Rudd's Management Trust

P.O. Box 1440, Dunedin,



Benjamin Rudd

27 July 2018

Friends of Ben Rudd's Newsletter, No 21

Welcome to the final Friends of Ben Rudd's Newsletter (in the Trust's twentieth and final year).

- This issue sums up the journey we've been on. It sets out how past Trust members feel about the future for the Trust.
- It also lets you know about a work day and an "appreciation day" on the OTMC's property. This should be an opportunity for the OTMC and new Trustees to get to know about how our Club's history is intertwined with this land and the responsibility past members have felt about it and how that has shaped the Club as well as secured walking opportunities on Dunedin's skyline. The land has wonderful potential to inspire future members to be proud of what the OTMC has done. It looks great, has a promising future and is a gem in Dunedin's crown.

To all our Friends: Goodbye, and thank you for the support, donations and hard work many of you have put into the future of Ben Rudd's land. It's been many decades of OTC, then OTMC dreaming and planning. There has been planting, tracking, hut maintenance, shelter building, tree pruning, broom and gorse clearing, more planting (local-sourced native now), animal and pest tree control, picnics, parties, celebrations... Only for twenty of those years has the land been managed by the Ben Rudd's Trust.

It has been exactly a year since you had a newsletter. This has been a rather busy year, readying to pass management on to a new Trust. *Please see our past Newsletter archive and, in due course, the Trust's meeting minutes posted on www.otmc.co.nz/benrudds.html.*

THE OTMC TRIP CARD announces two events in early September: Sue William's Working Bee (1 Sept) phone 021712606; then next day Richard Pettinger's "Ben Rudd's Appreciation Day" (2 Sept) ph 0279504517. The OTMC committee supports familiarisation over the coming months to get to know the land recently joined Club members now own.

It is important for the volunteers to clock up hours in property biodiversity work, as this helps when seeking funds as granting organisations such as the DCC and ORC have matched dollars for hours, in order to meet us halfway.

DCC Biodiversity funding: We are grateful that up to \$3000 has been granted to the OTMC via a Trust application, for the coming season's work, which the former Trust suggested could be undertaken following a drone photographic survey flight over the vegetation on the entire property below the Firebreak. This will be something exciting for the new Trust.

Obituary: It is with deep sadness that we mark the passing of **Geoff Jackson**, a hard-working member of the Trust in its early years. Geoff's cheerful can-do attitude was important in establishing a positive spirit within the Trust. Our sympathies go out to Avis and the Jackson family. - RP

So, who are the fine people who have been on the Trust, and who also helped out?

Alan Thomson 2008-now; Antony Hamel 1998-2008; Bevan Blackmore 1998-2003; David McArthur 2013-now; Geoff Jackson (deceased) 1998-2003; Henriette Rawlings 2008-2013; Ian Sime 2003-2013; Jim Sime 2013-now; Kathy Woodrow 2013-now; Ken Mason (deceased) 1998-2008; Richard Pettinger 1998-now; Sam Patrick 2013-now; Teresa Wasilewska 1998-now. Peter Mason was convened the *Friends of Ben Rudd's* 1998-2008. Along with supportive spouses, this was a good portion of OTMC active members!

A huge thanks to Ralph Allen, Graeme Loh, Sue Maturin, Sir Alan Mark, Les Cleveland (deceased), DCC's Aalbert Rebergen, Wild-lands' Kelvin Lloyd and Brian Patrick. These non-OTMC members have helped significantly to advise on vegetation management, and Phil Taylor and exOTMC member Ross Chambers (deceased) located suitable seedling beech trees for planting, along Whare Ck.

(As David McArthur points out below, a local source of silver beech seedlings, or even just beech nuts, might be needed by the future Trust, along with the best advice. The new Trust would welcome any help in obtaining local beech stock, and in propagation advice.)

A word from the former Trust's David McArthur

I have been partly inspired by OTMC's Wolfgang Gerber's comments. Wolfie hears comments that "I joined the tramping club to go tramping, not to work on Ben Rudd's property". How many times have we heard and sympathised with that comment? I have heard from time to time "Why does the OTMC continue to hold on to the property"?

I want to attempt to promote Ben Rudd's as a valuable asset, and envisage the new Trust has this as its mission statement:
"Ben Rudd's becomes a property that all club members will be proud to own."

First, let me say that the Trust has been working towards an essentially maintenance-free property. Native trees are beginning to have a significant impact at keeping noxious weeds at bay. What was tussock is now naturally a vegetation cover on its way to full forest.

Areas currently requiring ongoing work are:

- The Firebreak itself, especially after recent earthworks.
- The open space tussock area above the Firebreak; and
- The North East corner which has extensive broom and gorse.

To contain and mitigate maintenance on the above mentioned areas, the following is suggested:

For the Firebreak: initially planting local-sourced silver beech trees along the western side of the Firebreak, then ultimately along the eastern side. This should eventually control the broom and gorse along both sides. There is an additional benefit: Establishing a beech corridor will make for a very pleasant hike, already, from observation, very popular with day hikers and dog walkers. It could help avoid widening of the Firebreak by track maintenance, but the new Trust would need to carry out any plantings in consultation with the owners of a fibre cable on the east side. Covering the cable with silver beeches may be similar to the native tree succession that is occurring naturally, now.

For the tussock area above the Firebreak: The difficult task of retaining views, which the former Trust was committed to achieving, in managing that area compatibly with the adjacent scenic reserve, may become the DCC's task under a contract with the OTMC as land owner.

For the North East area: This has extensive unsightly broom and gorse, which must be contained, but with native trees becoming apparent already. We recognise the future Trust might keep management of this area to a minimum and monitor the ongoing promising growth of native trees.

Further enhancements:

Ben Rudd's shelter area: Plant Kowhai trees around this area. From late August through to November while flowering, apart from being picturesque, these will attract native birds such as tui, bellbirds and others. Another advantage is that by promoting the picnic area at the shelter will raise the profile and awareness of the OTMC and its good work through the Trust. The visitor log book indicates significant numbers of the public currently visit, which is very encouraging, especially given promotion is minimal.

Tracks: With ongoing planting and natural propagation of native trees, our property is becoming a desirable area for short walks (even challenging route-finding tramping). I suggest upgrading existing tracks and investigate additional track development.

Other comments: Establish timeframes around expected completion of suggested work.

Once the above suggestions are completed, Ben Rudd's will become a very desirable place to visit, with additional promotion. It should significantly raise the profile of the OTMC which may ultimately enhance membership.

- David McArthur

Ground birds establishing? An aspiring Trust member has recognised the importance of discouraging dogs on the land (other than for necessary pest animal eradication and, recreationally, under control, on the Firebreak) to disencumber the possible return of ground birds.

Money matters: Grants from corporate organisations, donations from Friends and interest have made much of the Trust's work possible without cutting significantly into its funds. This fund was the money earned from the trees planted and pruned by past generations of optimistic Club members, working for the Club's future wealth. While the Trust made its progress without spending that hard-earned capital, it now has money available for contingencies. We are sure the OTMC is grateful for this happy situation, as are we ourselves.

It is recognised that the Trust has over the years received regular donations from those who feel a need to contribute in some way to its work, and who regret not living close enough nor possibly having the energy or youth required to help out in any other way. The new Trust will undoubtedly still welcome donations and any manpower or professional assistance from those who consider themselves life-long Friends of Ben Rudd's.

The new Trust will be well served by the equipment and chemicals donated by the QEII Trust. (You may recall the land has a QEII covenant over it.)

Friends are invited to make donations direct to the OTMC, Box 1120, or the new Trust through Box 1440, Dunedin

Please contact me if you have any comments about this newsletter. Phone (03) 487 9488 or email Richard@Pettinger.nz