

STEWART ISLAND NEWS

CELEBRATING RAKIURA

JANUARY 2007-FEBRUARY 2007

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Welcome 2007!! Stewart Island went off with a bang at the New Year's Eve celebrations. In fact, there were many bangs to be heard, from fireworks on the beach and the raging "pops" emanating from the bonfire, to the bangs marking the "disposal" of old flares and sparklers from an unnamed residence on the hill above the bay. An enthusiastic drummer gave us some bangs on his African drums and I heard there were plenty of heads going "BANG!, BANG!, BANG!" on Monday morning.



Revellers preparing as the sun bids adieu, NYE 2006

New Year Celebrations certainly have not been limited to changing the numbers we sign in our cheque books, congratulations goes loud and clear to Sheila Natusch (nee Traill) who was recognised on the New Year *New Zealand* Honour list, some *new Islanders* have entered the world during the last few weeks (see pg 11 to find out which ones) and Lindsay & Lorraine Squires made *new* their wedding vows after 50 years of wedded bliss. I asked Lorraine and some other enduring couples for advice towards New Year's resolutions in the department of wedded bliss and was told "plenty of arguments sort things out very well!" Well, here goes...

Always good for an argument, that old favourite "Monopoly" is being made new, adopting a New Zealand flavour. See our article on page 5 for your chance to have a say about which New Zealand icons "pass go!"

sons for all school students. Kath Johnson, with the help of Helen Cave, has been building up the confidence and skill of the local squirts, and there are the beginnings of some pretty good swimmers in there. Move over Ian "Thorpedo" Thorpe, here come Caity and Maria!! See photos pg 11.

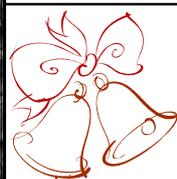


Finally, we have a couple of very timely reminders, some exciting invitations and a new "DOC Spot" column inside this issue.

Kiwi Ingenuity.... Shooting the breeze in search of friendly shores. See pg 3



The renewed community swimming pool has been put to good use, with a few swimming les-



Congratulations

Lindsay & Lorraine Squires, who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary during January, by re-newing their vows to each other, surrounded by 100 of their closest friends. Lindsay & Lorraine later shared a laughter-filled evening which was the talk of the town for the rest of the week!

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BOAT-OF-THE-MONTH: ULVA

The **ULVA** was designed and built on Ulva Island (hence the name) by Walter Trill, Postmaster, storekeeper and Stewart Island Ranger in approximately 1900. She is a 20' long clinker dinghy.

In 1920 she was sold to Cedric Smith who re-named her **MARIGOLD** because of the colour of her interior paint. She was then owned by W.A. Stout until she was bought by Ernest Squires, who raised the hull one plank and quarter-decked the boat, making her difficult to row by comparison with her original design. Squires seldom if ever sailed the boat, which had reverted to her original name.

In approximately 1945 **ULVA** was bought by George Dodds, whose wife Alison was a partner with Miss Mabel Prentice in "The Camp" at Ryan's Creek. During George Dodds ownership a small air-cooled engine was installed, and the boat was never under sail. When George Dodds

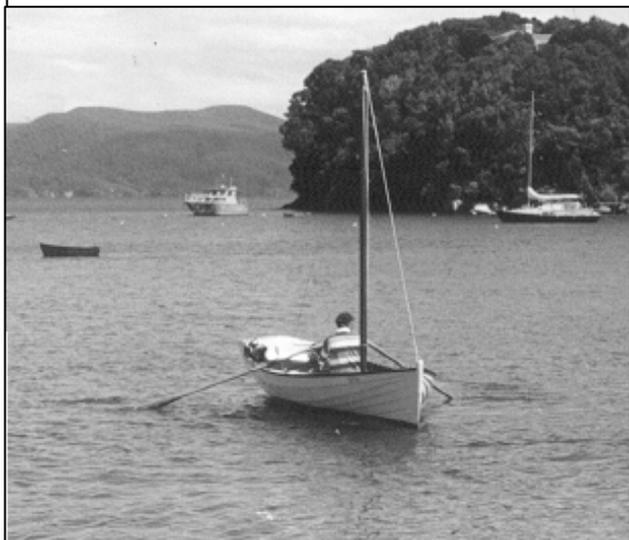
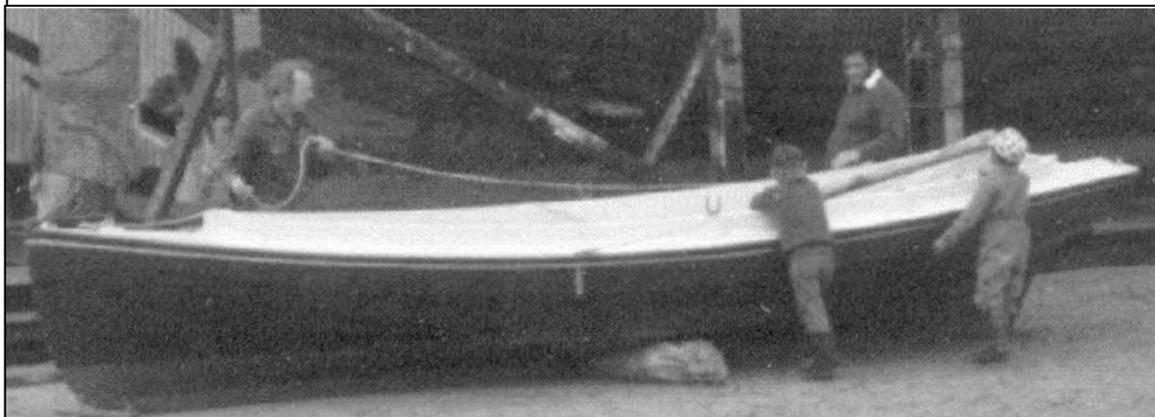
died, the boat was too large for Alison and her young family, and remained in a boatshed at Thule back beach until sold to Mervyn King who carried out extensive repairs and rigged her with a dipping lug.

Her original rig was a very large standing lug, the boom of which overhung the stern of the boat by about a foot, to the discomfort of the helmsman when going about. She was a fast sailer, and skippered by Roy Trill during a regatta in Halfmoon Bay in the mid-twenties, she won an open race contested by several Sanders Cup 14 footers and sailing dinghies. She was fastest on a broad reach, and once did the trip from Thule Point to Ulva Landing, in a strong breeze in 10 minutes. The distance between the two points measures 2.5 kilometers!

In 1977 she was used during the filming of "Castaways", the televised story of the survivors of the General Grant, which was wrecked at the Auckland Islands with a cargo of gold aboard.

The **ULVA** is now owned by Steve King, who stripped away the coamings and decking, leaving her as originally built – an open dinghy.

At over 100 years old she can still be seen sailing in Patersons Inlet on a fine day.



Stewart Island Community Centre News

Thankyou to everyone for your patience in recent times while we have been sorting out our Community Centre management. We now have Paula Brown in charge of bookings and issuing gym cards. At this stage she has no set hours at the community centre but is happy for people to leave a message on the Community Centre answer phone, which is checked daily. She can then arrange to meet up with you if you are wanting to get a gym card or renew an old one. Community Centre trustee Hilli Maass-Barrett has been putting in many hours over the past few months helping to run the Centre. Stewart Island is lucky to have such dedicated community volunteers who do many hours behind the scenes.

Missing Gear

Recent spring cleaning in the community centre kitchen

has highlighted the problem of 'disappearing gear'. Our kitchen was fully stocked with cooking utensils, large pots and a vast array of things that make life easy when catering for a function. Over time, we have noticed that one of our large boilers, all our oven trays, most of the tea towels and an assortment of other items have gone. These are expensive to replace and some people may have just taken them home with leftover food on them and not made it round to returning them. If you have any of our kitchen gear or you know where it might be then please return it as soon as possible.

Special Thanks

Rex Dunlop – for donating the rubber to put on the bench seats to stop the floor getting scratched.

Hilli and Jim Maass-Barrett – for fitting the rubber onto the seats.

Jan Eade - for spring-cleaning the kitchen.

Alistair and Jan Eade – for the many hours spent bottling rainwater for our fundraising.

END OF SCHOOL CAMP... STEWART ISLAND STYLE

Day one:

We left the Boat Shed at about 1.30pm and headed towards Fred's Camp. It was blowing westerly and was quite rough; we were towing 'Captain Kev' the double kayak. We got the water taxi to carry on past Fred's Camp and unloaded on a wee beach.



Ready to go!

We packed the kayaks, which was easy with all the space in the double. We started off with a bit of a head wind and by the time we reached the Rakiahua river mouth, the tide had turned and was ebbing. A hail storm just up from the mouth dampened our spirits somewhat. As we paddled on the river became much narrower. It was a nice paddle up-

stream and everyone was in a good state of mind. We landed the kayaks and put them to bed then carried gear up the 200m track to the hut. There were two trampers and three possum hunters in residence leaving only one spare bed inside. Luckily we had brought back up so we set up the hammock and tent. We cooked tea outside, went exploring, chewed the fat with the other residents and finally retired about 10pm

Day two:

Up and porridge for brekky, geared up and set off up Mt Rakeahua. The track was exceptionally muddy (up to 1 metre deep in places) for first 100m then began to climb up through the bush. It was quite steep. After an hour walking we found a spot for a break. We broke into the chocolate and pretzels and had a sit down for ten or so minutes. We set off again and as the track headed above the

bush line it became less steep. After 20 minutes we came to the tarn and our first view of the summit. With raised spirits we continued on.



Carrying gear to the hut

Once we were out of the scrub and into the tussock the climb became steeper again. It was exciting to see several rare NZ dotterels on the slope leading up to the summit. After several false summits, with Shane insisting each one

would be the top, we finally reached the radio transmitter. The view was *awesome* looking down to Mason Bay, over to Table Hill and all down the Inlet right to Native Island. It was of course pretty windy up there and I had to persuade the kids to put on their hats and coats. We had more chocolate, scroggin, pretzels, a packet of rice crackers and an orange each before taking some "summit shots" and heading down in high spirits knowing we had done it!

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ban Globetrotter *off-island adventures*

Stewart Dovey, our very own (former) Stewart Island News editor, left Stewart Island in February, though continues to hold his section and home on the Island. Stewart's wheels have taken him across the central plains, and rest in the Wakitipu basin.

Having left Stewart Island in February 2006, I can honestly say I have entered a different world but one not too far away and certainly no fuel surcharge. Now living in Arrowtown and working on a lifestyle farm in the Wakatipu Basin, life has never been more rewarding.

The climate here is great, the people are very open-minded and work availability/pay rates for anyone prepared to get stuck in are excellent. After leaving the Island, I worked for a bus company called Wanaka ConneXions for two months. Driving from Queenstown to two different destinations and back was interesting at first. However, Invercargill and Pukerangi (near Middlemarch to meet the Taieri Gorge Train) became a bit repetitive. So when an advert appeared in the Mountain Scene for a *Jack-of-all-Trades*, it was a case of in with boots and all.

And now that's what I wear all day. Work boots, often covered in mud, sheep poo, deer poo, dust, diesel, grass..... you name it. Daily routines don't exist. Every hour is different. The farm is situated centrally between Coro-



net Peak, the Remarkables, Arrowtown and Queens-town. 140 hectares in total, it is more like a large park than a farm. 250 hinds and 300 ewes make up the breeding stock but in early summer add 200 deer weeners (last year's fawns), approx 200 brand new fawns and 500 lambs from a great breeding season.

Of course there are the pests to tackle. Rabbits, thistles, horehound, woolly mullein and nosy tourists. Not too many of the latter though. This year the wet Spring followed by a hot Summer has trebled the winter feed growth. Just now we are trying to figure out how to move and store 800 large bales (900 kg each) of "baleage" which is what is contained in those mysterious green cylinders you seen on most farms these days. It's going to take the best part of a week to finish.

When the bus company gets really short of drivers, I still drive the

occasional bus mainly to Invers at weekends. This is a good opportunity to catch up with ex-Islanders such as Ag McGinnity and family and Kay/George Cowper. Other than that I haven't really heard much about the Island up here. Caught a glimpse of Chris Dillon at the Frankton BP station a while ago!!!

Hi to everyone who remembers me!



Photo: the result of our expensive burrow-blaster machine. 30% propane, 70% oxygen. Pump into burrow for 20 seconds and ignite. Nearly shut down the airport on terrorist alert!!



Above: Lake Hayes A&P show
Left: view from the "office"

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE ...

Our daughter Nadia was due to leave the island on the 1.30pm flight and we were enjoying a leisurely lunch in the sun on our verandah (YES! it was shining that day) before heading for the depot and the inevitable goodbyes.

Christmas was done, New Year celebrated and the last of the sprogs was about to depart.

A faint intermittent beeping caught our attention and I assumed the gas oven's timer was having a spasm as it sometimes does. However, a quick investigation proved it wasn't the stove but something upstairs that was now making a very insistent peep-peep-peep.

On rushing upstairs we found a haze of smoke and realised that our smoke alarm was the source of the urgent electronic summons. However, despite the haze and hasty checking of electric blankets (all switched off) and hair appliances (also disconnected) we could not find a flame, fire or conflagration. Garry raced outside for a ladder to climb into the ceiling to check there.

I made the 111 call from the office upstairs and gave the person who answered directions for our local brigade, a description of the smoke and our inability to find its cause. As I left the 'phone I saw *real smoke* pouring out of a linen cupboard we'd all passed several times in our search. As I wrenched open the doors to the cupboard flames leapt to meet

me. Nadia promptly grabbed towels and wet them in the adjacent bathroom and we doused the fire fairly quickly – just as Garry slid back down the ladder and the local brigade lads arrived at the front door.

Jed, Neville, Andrew, Mattie and Rex were up the stairs in a flash checking the cupboard, adjacent cupboards and in the roof. They were thorough and professional and seeing their calm efficiency was very reassuring.



Blackened cupboard evidence of close call

The culprit and cause of the fire was a bed sheet lying against the light bulb in the cupboard that had not automatically turned itself off when the door closed.

According to Jed the fire when discovered was only short minutes away from reaching "flash-point" at which stage we may have had a really frightening conflagration on our hands and lost most of the house. As it was, cupboard doors were well scorched, linen was burnt, smoked and stained, the light bulb and wiring a twisted black mess.

We were very lucky!

In hindsight some clear factors saved our house from extensive damage. These were:

- *Having a smoke alarm strategically positioned near the ceiling and upstairs
- *Knowing our rapid address and giving clear directions to the operator
- *Having easy vehicle access for the fire appliances to get near to the house.

Anyone can take the above simple precautions that would ease the job of the local brigade.

We farewelled Nadia on time at the flight centre.

Subsequent discussions with C.F.O. Jed revealed just how fortunate we were and how important it is for all householders to heed the three bullet points above.

The local brigade are well trained volunteers who at the call of the siren drop whatever they are doing and respond to a summons that could mean they face dangerous challenges and difficulties. Their dedication was highlighted very clearly to us.

Thank you Oban fire-fighting volunteers. We appreciated your quick response and obliging help. And as I said before – *we were very fortunate.*



Faulty light-bulb melted with heat

Shape the future of Monopoly....

Monopoly history is in the making, and it's up to YOU to decide which local landmarks deserve a prized piece of board game real estate in the all new, Here and Now New Zealand Edition.

Rakiura National Park, Bluff oysters, Milford Sound and the Invercargill Water Tower, have all been nominated as Southland icons. In order to take their place on this prestigious board game, Southlanders need to cast their votes in favour of these places.

Marketing Manager Hasbro New Zealand, Phil McIntosh says, "The vote has been put to all Kiwis to

determine which iconic landmarks will 'pass-go' to feature in New Zealand's own uniquely-devised version of the game."



New Zealanders can go to www.nzmonopoly.co.nz and vote once a day to launch their favourite kiwiana icon or local landmark into Monopoly fame.

"In a nation of quirky and interesting landmarks, only 22 will earn a place on the board game

so competition between regions is expected to be hot," says McIntosh.

Voting is open from January 8 to February 10 on the Monopoly website.



Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust news.

Since last writing in November, there have been substantial changes to the field programme for this season's monitoring of the yellow-eyed penguins. This has come about because of an unprecedented number of chick deaths on the Anglem coast. The breeding season there has been an almost complete failure. Field work for Joanna and I effectively finished in mid-December, instead of early March. Joanna has gone to stay with her Dad in Karitane and will continue her involvement with the Trust by working on projects around Otago. I will keep an eye on the birds here, and will be spending a lot of time at my desk looking at what we've found this year, and talking to DOC and researchers about what it all means. My cupboards are stuffed full with uneaten field food, and I spent time before Christmas wondering how to incorporate dried peas and two minute noodles into Christmas dinner without anyone noticing. (No-one did!)

Just one chick has survived thus far this season, (which

isn't over yet): it has been nicknamed "Big Fluffy" because of the contrast between it and the pathetically small, weak and sparsely clad chicks that eventually all died.

A few simple statistics help put this season into perspective:

- We eventually found 20 nests in the monitored areas between Bungaree and Long Harry.
- Each nest had two eggs, giving a total of 40 eggs (*above average*).
- 32 eggs hatched (80% of eggs laid).
- The average expected hatching success for yellow-eyed penguins is approximately 85%, so our results are comparable.
- 31 chicks have died so far (96.9% of chicks that hatched).
- Assuming the one remaining chick survives until it is old enough to go to sea in early March, breeding success would be 2.5% (i.e. 2.5% of eggs laid would be successful).
- The average expected breeding success for yellow-eyed penguins is approximately 59%. Clearly this season is a disaster!

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We explained to Terri and Shane that very few locals would have ever climbed "Raki" before and that they should be exceptionally proud of their achievement.

The trip down was uneventful until the last 30m when Shane and Liz both sank thigh deep in good 'ole Stewart Island Mud. Back at the hut, just on five hours since we had left, we packed up, lunched and shipped out.

Shane set himself a challenge to kayak off the bank into the river which was fun for Terri and I to watch; Liz of course couldn't resist his dare



Good 'ole Stewart Island Mud

to do it too! Paddling down stream on the out going tide was so pleasurable, the sun and scenery really making it a fantastic paddle. As we headed out into South west Arm the wind increased but due to our good planning and some luck we were blessed with a tail wind. After paddling for half an hour or so, Liz came up with a plan. We would take out the fly sheet from

the hammock, raft up, tie the top of the fly to Liz and Shane's paddles, and sail! What a humdinger!!

We sailed most of the way to Fred's camp only having to paddle the last couple of hundred metres. On arrival at our destination we were dismayed to see

many, many, *many* people on the wharf. "How many of you are there?" we shouted. "Seventeen" came the unwelcome reply.

We debated whether to cross the inlet to North Arm Hut or to head down to Abraham's Hunters Hut. Eventually after much deliberation we "sailed" 10km from Harry West Point to Bravo.

Terri and I headed up to the house to get tea on while Shane and Liz paddled out for a quick fish. They finally returned over an hour later with tea. By this time the kids had

been on the go for 12 hours, they had climbed a Mountain, paddled a river and sailed more than 15 km.



Cruising down the Rakiagua River

What an achievement! Not surprisingly they were all to keen for bed at about 10.30pm.

Day three:

We awoke to a screaming westerly and after our hard day, no one was rushing to get up. Eventually we got the house cleaned up and set off for a gentle paddle to the back of Bravo Island to cook damper on the beach for lunch. We paddled back to base just in time to meet our water taxi home. Back at the boat shed we unpacked and cleaned the gear with the help of the kids' parents before heading home for a well earned hot shower. We had planned to kayak back but unfortunately it was just too rough.

With the change of plans it had worked well. We still got our long kayak albeit on the same day as the mountain climb.

**Shane & Terri are off to High School this year. Good luck guys!*

Stewart Island: Warm Weather and Warm Hearts

by Daphne Stringer

“Can you play the organ?” Jenny asked. “Well, yes, but...”

Stephen and I had arrived on the Island for some much needed R & R on the 10:30am ferry on Monday 18th December – keen to make a good start to our first holiday in years, leaving the 5 children (aged 20 – 13yrs) ‘home alone’. We

were greeted by our host, Ewan, and duly introduced to Oban and taken over to Deep Bay. After a welcome cuppa, Jenny ran us back into Oban so we could try the Blue Cod at the Kai Kart for lunch and start exploring. We were definitely impressed with the meal. Ewan, we agree with you, “There’s no better eating fish than Stewart Island Blue Cod!”

Being long time members of the Mossburn Presbyterian Church, we trekked up to have a nosey around the Oban Presbyterian Church, and to our delight, found the door open. We had celebrated our 100 years in Mossburn in June, so it was special to be able to read the information provided and get a real feel for the history of the church and congregation. Spotting the two organs, I took the liberty of uncovering one and looking for the switch to get me going. “Find the mains switch please, honey”, was my request, as we have the same system in our home church. Away I went, practising the usual Christmas Carols I would play in our services on our return back home.

On our return to Deep Bay, Jenny asked what we’d seen and done, and we confessed to making free with the Church property! Jenny was delighted and duly asked if we might come along to the practice that evening and help out with the choir, for the Carol Service on the Thursday night. Always keen for fellowship and meeting new people, we said yes. We were impressed that so many turned out to practise! I was assigned to the alto section and duly learned the parts to 3 totally new carols. During rehearsals a couple of fellow travellers from Nelson popped in. An invitation to join the ranks was offered and accepted by one! So, there we were, Ulva making a wonderful job of playing the organ, and directing the choir in the



Back Row: Rev. Jim Hunter, Lindsay Lord, Graeme Amos, Andrew Knowles, Jenny Gell, Raylene Waddell, Lorraine Squires, Lee Wadds, Margaret Hunter. Front Row Gwen Neave (Choir Leader), Daphne Stringer (visitor), Susan Whitney, Barbara Wilson, Anita Geeson, Joy Knowles, Swiss Visitor, Airdry Leask and Ulva Goodwillie (Organ)

absence of Gwen, and getting us new ‘ring-ins’ up to scratch!! A night off was decreed for the Tuesday, with a practice for Wednesday duly scheduled. We returned home to Deep Bay, courtesy of Lee next door, and there ended our first night on Stewart Island – with a

real sense of adventure and an unusual sense of homecoming!!

The next day we explored close to home, taking a look around Ringaringa Beach and Deep Bay areas.

Wednesday we enjoyed walking the tracks and checking out the multitude of bays and beaches close by. Just before reaching Horseshoe bay Andrew and Joy (both fellow choir members!) stopped and offered to take us through to Lee Bay. We hopped in and had a very informative tour around further reaches than our feet would have taken us that day! Choir practice that night went really well, as the new tunes were becoming more familiar. Gwen directed and happened to stand beside me (so I could follow her lead!) White tops and black pants/skirts were the required uniform. Thankfully I had a pair of trousers, and Jenny promised me the loan of a white blouse. In true Island fashion, extra white tops would be available on the night for anyone who didn’t own one.

Thursday Stephen and I covered the Ackers Point area, seeing plenty of bird life, and then rested up in the afternoon before getting dressed for the Carol Service. While we were enjoying our day of luxury, Jenny and the team had been very busy doing flowers, decorating the church and baking for supper. 8pm arrived and the church was pleasantly full of locals and visitors. The singing and readings went without a hitch.

Thank you, everyone, for making our time on Stewart Island so much more than a holiday. It was a privilege to be welcomed into the heart of community, and definitely a highlight so share such a special time together. We shall return!



New Zealand
POLICE
Nga Pirihimana O Aotearoa

*Halfmoon
Bay Beat
January '07*

should reappear.

Nothing much for me to report, seems like everyone has been behaving (or hiding it well!) If there is anything I can assist with, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Oh, and by the way, I like fishing and beer!

Take care,
Malcolm (also known as "Budge")
Ph 219 0020

Greetings from your local coppa...

Malcolm Darlison is my name. I am relieving for Shaun Palmer until the 27th January '07. After that, you will have to put up with another "mainlander" until around the 3rd of February '07, when Shaun

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It is not unusual for wild birds to have a poor year now and then, but this has to be balanced by some good years for the population to maintain itself. The highest breeding success we've recorded during this study is just 33% - just over half of the expected average. The yellow-eyed penguins on the Anglem coast seem to be having consistently poor breeding seasons, which may be why we've noticed a gradual decline in the number of breeding pairs over the last 20 or so years. We initially suspected that the decline may be due to lack of recruitment of young birds into the breeding population, rather than to an increase in the rate of loss of breeding adults, and the results we have so far appear to confirm that.

But why are the chicks dying????

That is the question we've been trying to answer for the past 4 years. We've pretty much ruled out predation at the nest as the key factor; while it may occur from time to time, it is not what is killing most of the chicks. The chicks we are finding dead in the nest are starved and often show symptoms of disease. At the end of last season we concluded that starvation and disease were the two factors that needed to be looked at more closely, and this season we were fortunate to have three researchers (two from Otago University and one from Massey University), on site making observations and collecting information at the time when most of the chick deaths were occurring. Massey now has autopsy samples from most of the dead

chicks, and information on where adults were feeding and what they were bringing back to feed the chicks is being worked through at Otago. Due to the Christmas break, and the time needed to process some of the samples, it will be a while yet before results and conclusions start coming back to us.

Interestingly, the penguins on offshore islands haven't suffered the same losses and neither have those along the Catlins coast. I checked the Bravo islands in early January and was relieved to find a number of "Big Fluffies" - large healthy-looking chicks.



Big Fluffy: Carol Nanning

Perhaps the problem is unique to the Stewart Island mainland, but if so then what is affecting birds on the mainland but not on nearby islands? We've already decided that the most obvious difference - the presence of predators on the mainland - is not the key factor.

Perhaps the problem is unique to the particular stretch of coast we've chosen to monitor, and birds in other parts of the island are not affected. A look at what is happening in other areas would tell us whether this is the case, and a visit to other breeding areas on the island is planned for later in January. If we find a reasonable number of "Big Fluffies" then we will assume that the problem is confined to the Anglem coast. You will have to wait for the February issue of SIN to find that one out.

Yet again we are left with more questions than answers. One such question is whether our 5-year monitoring project is long enough. With so many questions, and as yet so few answers, can we afford to stop after next season? Can we afford to continue? The Trust has already had to dip into its capital reserves in order to fund the project last season, thereby risking its ability to fund other on-going projects and costs. Can it risk extending the project with no guaranteed funding? The challenge of all these questions will occupy us over the months to come.

Sandy

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DOC Spot

by Sharon Pasco

You may have noticed a number of different faces wandering around the bay in DOC uniform lately and wondered who they are. Like many of the businesses on the island at this time of the year, DOC employs seasonal staff – to help out in the visitor centre, act as hut wardens, tackle the weeds and carry out a variety of conservation work. We have also had a number of permanent staff leave over the past few months and it has only been in the last few weeks that the last of these positions has been filled. So if you're out and about and come across a staff member that you don't know, please take a minute or two to introduce yourself. It makes our work so much easier if we can put faces to names.

Perhaps the biggest changeover of staff has occurred within the Community Relations team. As you may know, I have recently been appointed Field Centre Supervisor / Programme Manager Community Relations, basically keeping things running and likely to be your point of contact for many issues which affect the local community - taking over from Jim Flack who has left the department for a position with MIN Fish in Wellington. Jan West has returned to the island to take over my old position as Visitor Centre Manager. Emma Hopkins has joined Ann Pullen in the visitor centre, temporarily filling the vacancy created by the departure of Lesley Gray, who has taken up the manager's position in the new community-run visitor centre. Tamra Austin continues to help out and Paul Graham, a ranger trainee, is also spending two months with the Community Relations team.

Rakiura National Park Visitor Centre
The departure of the VIN service down to the Red Shed has meant our visitor centre staff can now concentrate on providing information and interpretation that will help visitors and locals alike make

the most of the wide range of opportunity the island presents. To help differentiate it from the community-run Stewart Island Visitor Information Centre and in recognition of its status as an Icon DOC visitor centre it has been renamed the *Rakiura National Park Visitor Centre*.

Signage reflecting this name change has yet to arrive, so it may be a little confusing for visitors trying to find us, however please tell them to look for the DOC logo and encourage them to call in - particularly if they are looking for information on walking tracks, huts, etc so that they can have the best experience possible.

Already this season, Police, Ambulance and Search & Rescue Volunteers have been called out on two occasions to search for overdue day-walkers. In both instances these call-outs may not have happened if the parties involved had called into the DOC visitor Centre and been briefed on the walk they were undertaking. There has also been the potential for serious harm to a number of trampers who have headed out onto the tracks without calling into the DOC Centre to register their intentions and seek the most up-to-date track, weather and hut information. Anyone who has walked even a small section of the North-West or Southern Circuit Tracks will know they are no stroll in the park and that the walk to Port William can give people a false sense of security. It saves a lot of time and resources, which can be far better used elsewhere, if people simply call in to the DOC Centre and make use of the information and knowledge which is readily available.

Summer Visitor Programme
Eighteen eager children registered

for our first children's day event on the 11th of January and spent the afternoon with DOC staff exploring the rockpools at Ringringa. The next children's day is to be a *Weed-buster's Adventure* on the 25th January (pre-booking essential). Watch the DOC and public noticeboards, or collect a programme from the DOC visitor centre for details of other Summer Visitor Programme events on offer until the end of February.

Fire Permits

One good thing about the cold, wet start to summer is that it has kept the risk of fire down and an Open Fire Season has remained in place for a much longer period than normal. However the arrival of several hot sunny days in a row has brought that situation to an end. The Southern Rural Fire Authority has imposed a Restricted Fire Sea-



Summer Visitor Programme Children's Day 2007

son over the district as from 8am on January 20, 2007.

This means that anyone wishing to light a fire in the open must apply for a fire permit to do so. DOC issues permits on the island on behalf of the SRFA, so if you are planning a fire – please ensure that you allow plenty of time to obtain a permit. Only a few of our staff are warranted fire officers, so it may take a few days to process your permit if they are not in the office when you call.



Stewart Island Workshop

Plants and the Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project

- ↪ Key threats to our native bush
- ↪ What are we doing? What can *Ido*?

Plus: Project Workday & Open day

We'll be taking on a small project which, with everyone's help, we can achieve within the day. The day will be adjusted to various ages, fitness levels and areas of interest.

And BBO - All invited!!

(BBO starts 5pm ,back at the RSA)

27th January, 2007

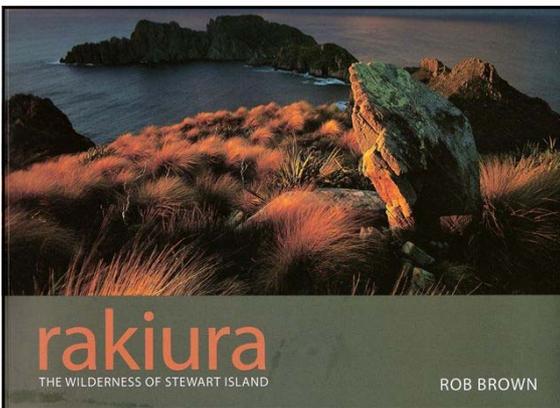
Meet 1pm at the RSA

(contact info@sircet.org.nz, or ph (03) 2191 223 for questions)



The RUGRATS would like to say a big thank you to Ship To Shore and the community for the donation of five cents pieces that have gone toward some books.

Christmas was well celebrated by the Garden Circle at their annual Christmas luncheon at Church Hill Café.



“rakiura”

THE WILDERNESS OF STEWART ISLAND

By Rob Brown
Craig Potton Publishing

For ten years Rob Brown has repeatedly returned to wander the wild and rugged coasts, the windswept mountain tops and the cool dark forests of Rakiura / Stewart Island. The photos of his journeys and his depth of feeling for the Island are beautifully displayed in his recently published book **rakiura The Wilderness of Stewart Island.**

This is more than just a coffee table book. With over 80 large-format photographs and carefully crafted essays on the human history of the Island and the themes of sand, forest and stone, Rob Brown has led us on a voyage of discovery through ever changing landscapes. For those who have not ventured far from Halfmoon Bay, the amazing images are an enticement, and for those unable to travel, the photos are proof that Rakiura / Stewart Island's outstanding landscapes are deserving of national park status.

Rob Brown states in the preface of his book,

‘the photographs are, in a way, a testament to my belief in the importance of natural beauty – ancient natural beauty – in our lives.’

Trying to choose my favourite image in the book is difficult but the Mason Bay and Port Pegasus photos truly reflect the wild, spectacular nature of the place.

Reviewed by
Margaret Hopkins

CONGRATULATIONS TO
PROUD PARENTS NIC
AND GEORGE AND HAPPY
BIG BROTHER Leeym:
Welcome SUMMER



CONGRATULATIONS TO
PROUD MUM TINA
BENNETT AND BIG
BROTHER Connor:
Welcome LUKE

Inspired Gift

By Kari Beaven

Living half a world away from Stewart Island served not to dim the flame of inspiration of world-renowned artist, Margaret Fairhall.

Last year, SIRCET received an e-mail from *out of the blue*, encouraging the protection of natural values around Halfmoon Bay, and announcing that Margaret “may have found a way” to support the Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project despite being in the UK. Margaret offered to paint us an inspired work, which we could use to raise awareness as well as ongoing funding to support the Project work. The “resounding success of the Stewart Island Weka, after many years of absence” was felt to epitomise the spirit of the project. Thus, it was decided that this would be her gift.

The painting sent a short time later captured perfectly the body-language and colouring of a mother weka curious, yet protective of her vulnerable offspring.

The weka and chicks have been made into gift cards, from which all profits go directly to the Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project.



The cards are available individually and in packs of five or ten cards. The rear of the card shows the “end of the story;” a smaller painting of a weka mum and older chick feeding closely.

SIRCET hope, in time, to create “limited release” prints from the painting, which will directly support ongoing protection of native wildlife around our homes and gardens.

We would like to thank Margaret for all her support, encouragement and her beautiful gift.

For more information about the cards, please contact Mary Chittenden (03)2191 223, write to info@sircet.org.nz or PO Box 124, Stewart Island.



HMB Students develop their water confidence & skills



STEWART ISLAND GARDEN CIRCLE

The Stewart Island Garden Circle are planning to have a bus trip to visit the Community Native Plant Nursery and Lee Bay, followed by afternoon tea at the Empress Visitor Centre.

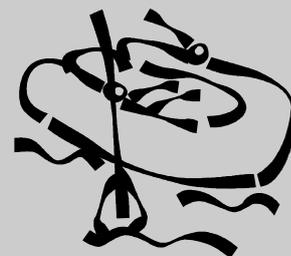
2 o'clock 8th February

Ph Wendy 357
Anita 014
or Jenny 219



The January 2007 Chocolate Award goes to Jack Frew.

The *Halcyon* helmsman has kindly demonstrated to us all the importance of keeping enough fuel handy to get there and back again.



On her way to another season "on the ice", Belinda Sawyer stopped in Ushuaia with a copy of SIN.



New Year's wisdom: There is no pleasure in having nothing to do; the fun is having lots to do and not doing it! (Mary Wilson Little).

January '07 Basin Award

Awarded to Ewan Gell.



Ewan managed to "pull the plug" on the Christmas Eve service. As they say, the show must go on, and after re-attaching the cord, Ulva was able to begin playing again, this time *out loud*.

Ewan was also able to turn the heater off using the *other* electric cord!

Award sponsored by Greenvale B&B.

New Year's wisdom: If you're going to be able to look back on something and laugh, you might as well laugh about it now. (Marie Osmond)

RUA
(Celtic band)

Saturday, 27th January
8.15pm, Wharfside café

Adults \$15
Children \$5

Bar refreshments available

Stewart Island News is published on a monthly basis as material permits. Contributions relative to Stewart Island are welcomed and can be sent by email (preferably as MS Word attachment).

Please send articles and enquiries to Jess Kany at Box 156, or to jesskany@yahoo.com. The deadline for the next issue is 17th February.

If you wish to have Stewart Island News posted to you or a friend, please fill out this form and forward it with a cheque made payable to "Stewart Island News" to P.O. Box 156, Stewart Island. The cost is as follows:

- 12 issues to an Oban address \$24
- 12 issues to other New Zealand address \$30

Yes, we can arrange for international subscriptions — contact editor for rates

Name of Recipient: _____
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