

STEWART ISLAND NEWS

CELEBRATING RAKIURA



March—April 2014

\$2.00

Raise a glass to March and chase your oysters with it. And your salmon... lovely pink steaks have been bountiful in our skilllets these days. Not to mention the Bay is just silly with deer. We can all **fatten up** for winter!

This is an extra fat issue: so much has been going on around the place and there are so many **burning questions** to answer. Like, why was a cuckoo clock seen working out in the gym? How do you wash the outside of submarine windows? Do fish really have rocks in their heads? Who won the purple potato competition? Why has the banging stopped in the post office's



Easter orchids. Photo from Carolyn Squires

back room? I'll answer the banging one before rumours get started. See story bottom left.

From time to time someone delicately mentions they are sick of some issue or other I bleat on about in these pages. I hear my most recent tiresome subject is **sharks**. Sharks tiresome?! Don't quit your jobs, Discovery Channel, this view isn't shared by everyone. Anyway if you're "over it" skip page 4 where the shark-related events of

recent months have been chronicled to dispel disturbing rumours going around the island, media and Internet.

Saturday 22nd March at 11am: **Grand Opening of the Bowling Green!** Don't miss the play *Too Far from Heaven* at the Hall 28th March—this should be a special evening as it relates to a member of the Goomes family.

Tui, boatshed, dinghy, buoy... with



Glen Carbines of Saltwater Science uses tweezers to remove the otolith from a juvenile blue cod's head. These miniscule earbones can help determine a fish's age, a pivotal part of a study of blue cod in Foveaux Strait. Page 15 for more scenes from a cod survey.

brushstrokes **Margaret Fairhall** managed to make this stunning island even more so, and she leaves a legacy of beautiful paintings on our walls. I'll end with a most sincere and heartfelt toast:

We raise our glasses to a great woman who will be greatly missed. Thank you, Margaret, for your friendship, intelligence, and humour, and most of all for bringing so much beauty into our lives.

Obituary next page.



SIN subscribers might have noticed something amiss on their envelopes this month. It turns out the machine at the postal distribution centre in

Christchurch can't read the Halfmoon Bay frank (the ink anchor insignia over the stamp) and our mail has been slowing down the whole system. So an era has come to an end: no more hand franking the mail going off-island (only on-island mail will still get the anchor). Halfmoon Bay postal employees have been hand-franking all mail for as long as their memories, the *bang-bang-bang* from the back room is commonly heard by anyone stopping in. As someone who once worked at the PO I can say there's something cathartic about repeatedly striking a hard surface with a heavy instrument, so while it means less work I think it will be missed. If anyone has more information about the history of the Halfmoon Bay hand frank please share it for the next issue.

Three weeks on the fire line

by Andrew King

For the last few years I have wanted to go to Australia bush firefighting. I've done a lot of training and been to fires on Stewart Island and in Southland but nothing compares to what you hear about the fires in Australia.



It all happened very quickly in the end. On the 28th January I got a phone call at 2pm and I had to make the decision there and then (Teesh won't mind me going will she?). Home to pack, say goodbye to my family and off on the 8am ferry the next day. I joined the Southland crew and we all headed up to Auckland. In total the deployment consisted of 21 people from around NZ, including our crew of five from Southland. We were to be gone for three weeks

From Auckland it was onto a bigger plane and off to Melbourne. The next day we had our first briefing and then it was a five hour drive to the town of Orbost, in East Gippsland. A tent camp for 200 people had been set up in one day with

(Continued on page 11)

Margaret Ruth Fairhall

1948 — 2014

Margaret was farewelled by her family and the island community last month following a period of illness. She will be remembered by all as a private person who didn't complain even in the face of her illness. She was a talented artist, gardener, and avid trumper.

Born in 1948, the youngest of 4 siblings, Margaret's early years were in Christchurch where she attended school. As a teenager she moved to the island with her parents, and worked at the Ferndale Guesthouse and then at Bragg's store.

During these early years Margaret is remembered for her artistic talent and for the sketches that she drew. In her early twenties and married with children, her interest in painting grew and she developed her skills by completing a correspondence course. As conditions permitted and her family grew up, she pursued her passion with attendance at art schools in Invercargill and Wanaka.

As she refined her skills she progressed from watercolours to acrylic and oil paints and in recent years opened the Ocean View Gallery, overlooking Halfmoon Bay, where she was able to display and sell her paintings.

In the intervening years, between Stewart Island and living in Nelson, she spent time in Marlborough and Southland, continuing to paint, tutor and enjoying the contact and involvement with the art societies in those areas.

Margaret loved Stewart Island and in particular Mason Bay. She enjoyed tramping and the many fishing and social excursions to the more inaccessible places where she was able to photograph the varied landscapes along with the flora and fauna. These photographs were then transformed into the paintings for which she is so well known.

In later years she travelled overseas and met up with a pen pal with whom she had communicated since childhood times. Trips to Europe, Asia and America all followed.

Margaret is survived by her three children Brendan, Rachel and Emma and 4 grandchildren.

Compiled by Rachel, Mona, Gwen and Jon



WISE UP TO WEEDS

with Amy



SYCAMORE

(*Acer pseudoplatanus*)

Sycamores trees are in gardens throughout Oban. Now is a good time to remove them before they damage more than just your guttering!

What is it?

Sycamore is a tree that grows up to 10m tall, with maple shaped leaves. It produces brown seeds with papery "wings" that help them fly in the wind.

What is the problem?

Sycamore creates dense thickets that shade out other species. This tree is very tolerant of harsh and low light conditions.

How to control it?

- Pull out seedlings by hand, be careful with the green waste.
- Cut and paste the stems, it may require follow up control
- For larger trees drill 10mm wide holes into the base, sloping downward at regular intervals. Pour 25mm neat glyphosate (Roundup) into each hole. The tree will die standing, thereby reducing green waste issues.

Please contact the Pest Plants Biosecurity Officer at Environment Southland if you find this plant – email service@es.govt.nz or telephone 211 5115

Pete Ross Automotive

14 Ayr Street

Stewart Island

Phone 2191 266

Have available for Hire

Lawnmower

Chainsaws

Waterblaster

Chimney Brush

Rotary Hoe

Rug Doctor (New)

Have For Sale

9 kg Gas Bottles (New)

Weedeater Cord

CRC

Degreaser

Fuelite, Meths

Kerosene and Turps

Coal and Kindling (New)

Weedkiller

Jumper Leads

Funnels and plenty more!

Summer Hours

(until after Easter)

Mon - Thurs 8am - 5pm

Friday 8am - 6pm

Sat 10am - 2 pm

Sun 11am - 2pm

Glowing Sky Clothing

Purely and proudly made by us in New Zealand.



Our 'Tech' layer is the best fabric ever devised for keeping you warm in the Deep South. Luxurious breathable Merino inner layer and completely windproof nylon outer layer. If you haven't heard about it yet, get yourself down to the shop in HMB before Winter sets in and let Sharon and Team bend your ear about it! Or see www.glowingsky.co.nz

Stewart Island in the media:

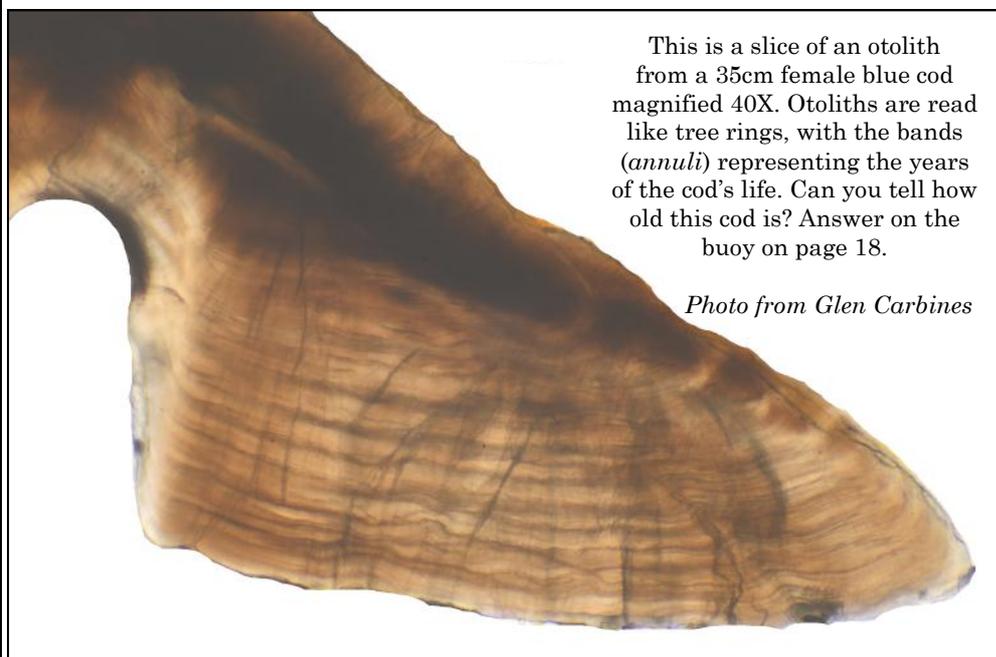
Ali and Jan and their farmed oysters and mussels were featured on **Country Calendar**.

Annette and Phil's lodge features in **New Zealand House & Garden**.

First Crossings was down here filming at Lord's River.

Discovery Channel is filming more sharks.

TV3's **Third Degree** filmed a shark doco here last month which *might* air on Wednesday 26th March so keep your eyes peeled.



This is a slice of an otolith from a 35cm female blue cod magnified 40X. Otoliths are read like tree rings, with the bands (*annuli*) representing the years of the cod's life. Can you tell how old this cod is? Answer on the buoy on page 18.

Photo from Glen Carbines

Shark Chronicles February-March

In mid-February, while local fisherman Zane Smith was green-boning in Foveaux Strait, a nearby cage dive boat put berley in the water to draw sharks. Unfortunately a white pointer became entangled in the fisherman’s net and died. Zane reported the incident in his logbook and to DoC.

On 17th February, a filmmaker and two shark conservationists (Riley Elliott and Ocean Ramsey) arrived to make a shark doco, and they spent three frustrating days on a cage boat struggling to locate sharks. The cage operator heard about the dead shark and surmised this was why he couldn’t find any sharks. [There is a theory that dead sharks produce a chemical which drives other sharks away from the area — the US Navy created an imitation of this substance to be used by men caught out at sea as shark repellent.]

The visitors became understandably appalled when they heard a rumour (the best kind of rumour: compelling, and false) that due to a longstanding vendetta between the local fisherman and a cage operator, the fisherman was targeting and killing sharks. Somebody called the media and TV3 showed up, and then the gloves really came off and everyone and their dog jumped on social media. Fisherman turned to fishermen *and paua divers*; shark turned to sharks; unfortunate incident became *vendetta*. The shark conservationists repeated the rumour about the shark serial

killer on their blogs, an on-line petition, and Facebook pages, and the rumour gained cyber-wings and flew around Halfmoon Bay and the Internet.

Within a couple of days the comments and petition were removed, and Riley Elliott has since offered a sincere apology to the community (following page). The vendetta rumour is being perpetuated in Ocean Ramsey’s “Water Inspired” blog. (Ocean is the conservationist/shark whisperer/model renowned for swimming cageless with white pointers...In case you’re interested, this same blog explains why Ocean chose *not* to swim with white pointers in Foveaux Strait.)

While many Island rumours turn out to be a tempest in a teapot, this one had serious implications: it is a crime to purposely target and kill an endangered species; it is a crime to libel an innocent person; and while painting the island as a home to shark hating rednecks is not illegal, it’s certainly not good. An unfair line seemed to be putting shark conservationists and cage dive operators in one camp, while people who don’t like shark cage diving were presumed to be shark haters. In fact, disliking the shark cage operation and shark conservation are not mutually exclusive: many people who oppose the cage operation are also avid wildlife conservationists, thus their stance.

25th February. Bad press, ugly rumours, maligned fishermen... a group of island

residents who have long opposed shark cage diving decided *enough is enough* and composed a formal complaint about the shark cage diving in Foveaux Strait (specifically regarding the practice of *feeding* the sharks) and sent it to the Minister of Conservation, hoping for an eventual reply.

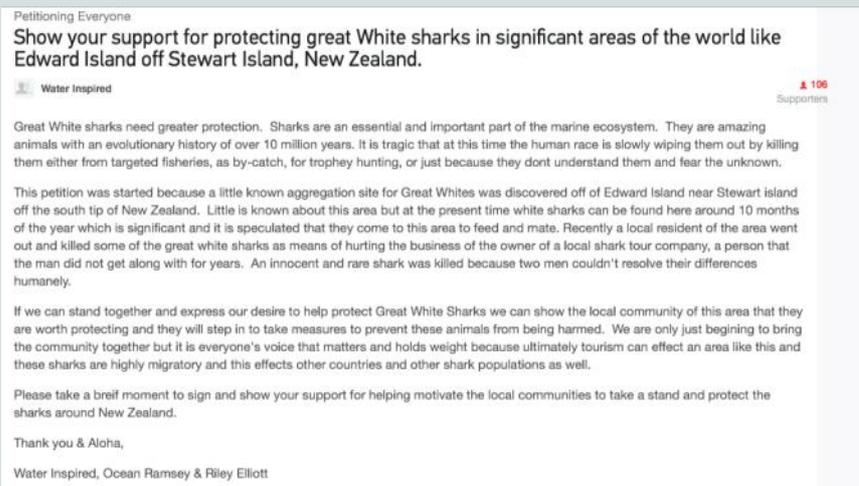
Now while this tempest of drama and conjecture was whipping around Foveaux Strait, a very real storm was bearing down on the *HMNZS Wellington* in the Southern Ocean. The vessel was caught in some of the most massive seas her captain and crew had ever experienced. Their misery, seasickness and fear made national front-page news. Passengers included the island’s Brent Beaven and Ty Connor of DoC, a TV crew, Gareth Morgan, and... the Minister of Conservation Nick Smith. They were en route to the sub-Antarctic islands, but the terrifying conditions and a damaged ship forced them to seek shelter at Stewart Island. Where they did what any red-blooded modern man would do after surviving an epic Southern Ocean storm and making it to safe anchorage—they checked their emails. And so this strange confluence of events—dead shark fumes, angry cage guy, horrified visiting shark whisperers, misleading rumours, Facebook, the media, and a whopper of a storm— meant that the politician the Stewart Islanders had just contacted was not far north, was not far south, but was parked RIGHT HERE at Stewart Island.

(Continued on page 18)

A bit of background information to the letters printed on the next page, and also a cautionary tale about on-line petitions:

This petition asks for the protection of sharks here. Concerned people from as far away as Texas USA and Auckland signed it, apparently unaware that great white sharks are *already* a protected species in New Zealand.

The petition appeared on the change.org website and its link was shared on shark whisperer Riley Elliott and Ocean Ramsey’s pages, and then reposted by their fans and followers. Riley and Ocean were soon contacted and told that the juicy part of their petition — the deliberate killing of multiple sharks due to a vendetta between an island fisherman and a cage operator — was untrue and based on rumour. By the time Ocean edited and then closed the petition, an untold number of people had seen it, and over 100 people had signed it. I spoke to one signatory on the document who was perplexed that a petition he signed in the evening was altered



and stripped of authorship by the next morning.

So when you’re going to sign a petition, check the facts: just because it’s on change.org doesn’t necessarily mean it is based in truth; and it’s useful to know that the author of the petition can change the content *after* you’ve signed it and then delete their own names from it, leaving your name hanging off a document different to the one you originally signed.

On a less serious note, while surfing change.org I came across this: *Petitioning the New Zealand Government: Stop the Hate on Stewart Island and Rename New Zealand to Tri Island People are not respecting Stewart Island and we have had enough. Its time to change South Island to Middle Island and Stewart Island to the South Island*

This ridiculous gem garnered 10 signatures.

LETTERS ☒ ☒ ☒

☒
 To the SAR team who rescued Cherie from Ackers Pt, cheers... and to Greg and Den for looking after Cherie and bubs, much appreciated guys.

Si Taylor

☒
 I am writing this letter to clarify recent events surrounding the White shark death and adversely written petition that followed. Feel free to share or print this in your local.

To begin with, I came to Stewart Island on the 17th Feb to observe the beauty of the island and the White sharks that inhabit it. I had never been before and was overwhelmed with the beauty that exists there, not only the island itself but also its charismatic people. It was obvious from day one that Stewart Islanders live and breathe the sea, something I can directly relate to and cherish. What was also apparent however, was the social issues revolving around white shark cage operators down there.

A large part of my shark research experience was based in South Africa, focussing largely on the effects of White shark cage diving on local stakeholders. Being an avid Paua diver, surfer and general waterman, enabled me to understand first hand the perceived risks and real threats involved with overlap of such stakeholders. In SA we combined science with community communication to understand and address issues, resulting in harmonious functioning of industries. Upon hearing and then experiencing the same social issues in Stewart Island, I had a passion to do what I could to help.

This led to the second purpose of my trip, to chat in depth with locals in every industry to better understand what was going on, and help communicate science and policy to ensure Paua divers and general water users are not adversely affected by cage diving operations. We had several very positive discussions with locals who voiced no animosity towards sharks, but to the lack of communication between themselves and cage operators. When dealing with a large apex predator such as the Great White, fear is totally understandable, especially when its someone's job and or loved one embarking into their domain in order to earn a living.

My stance on the issue is very much unbiased and objective, partly because I am a scientist, but mostly because I too venture into the sharks domain for recreation and employment and all too well understand the risks. Most importantly I understand that unregulated cage diving can adversely affect people in the water. After talking with a cage operator he was more than happy to do what he could to improve relations and my ultimate goal was to communicate science with the stakeholders, listen to their concerns and issues and piece it all together at a grassroots, community level to ensure everyone's safety and the protection of the whites sharks.

During our two days in Stewart we became aware of the white shark that had been killed, and that a fisherman was unfortunately involved. I deeply respect that generations of fishers have existed here, in harmony with the sharks and that they have observed sharks more frequently in recent time. At the time various stories rose depicting the situation in very different lights. Because of existing social issues, stories were likely blown out of proportion and the unfortunate fisherman was blasted as the devil. It is apparent now that he was likely doing what he, and his forefathers have done for years, and he unintentionally captured a shark in his net and died. I feel compassion for the fisher, as no one

deserves to wear the heat of killing an endangered animal, especially a fisherman whose livelihood revolves around a healthy ocean.

Unfortunately another party created a petition, accusing the fisherman of intentionally killing a shark. This was wrong and unfair and unfortunately my name was added to the end of the petition sign off. Upon discovering the write up, its wording and the fact I was aligned with it, I as quickly as possible acted to remove the petition and all links to it. Not only because it was unfair but also because it negated my initial purpose of working with the stakeholders on this exact issue. I regret that this has occurred as I feel the locals at Stewart Island who embraced me so well, have now judged me as a misleading person from the mainland. This could not be further from my intentions. I care very much about NZ, its waters and the animals that live in it, and have extreme respect for fishermen who depend on it and cherish it as any other farmer does.

I apologise to all Stewart Islanders and in particular the fisherman who has dealt with this head on, and am doing all I can to clear this up in order to continue to try and ease tension, unknowns and miscommunication around this topic. I sincerely hope locals will read this and accept my apology, and in doing so will have me back to the island in a productive manner. If this can occur, I guarantee that progressive change around areas of conflict will be eased and harmonious function around the white shark will be possible.

Kind regards,

Riley Elliott
 PhD Candidate
 Marine Science
 University of Auckland

☒
Breaking News: New Zealand is a big shame. There are piles of dead birds and feathers and wax everywhere. It's because of the cruelty that the human beings kill hundreds of the near extinct muttonbirds. These birds are classified as threatened!!! This happens every year in Stewart Island in New Zealand. Its enough! Don't let these people kill another species like they did the Dodo!! Take care of the world, it is your home!

Now, you, me and the gatepost know this is complete bullcrap. However, all I've done is take a hoax email circulating around and change a few words to make it look like it's about here. Now, imagine young Joe Blogs sat on his computer in the US. Terrible! he thinks, and immediately sets up a webpage, a blog, a petition and several social media alerts to all his friends so they can help stop the barbarity. Before long 35,000 people have signed up to save the birds.

The internet is a beautiful thing. People are gossips and love rumours. Mix the two and you have a recipe for disaster.

I had an email asking me to sign to prevent the release of the two boys who killed Janes Bulger (they had been let out about 8 years previously). I needed to sign a petition to stop the Danish killing Calderon dolphins (Calderon dolphins don't exist, Faroe Islanders kill whales for food) I shouldn't buy Heineken as they support dog fighting (a club in Manila had left some advertising posters up)

And on and on it goes. The most recent came from a young person who had just visited the Island as part of some "shark

(Continued on page 6)

Predator Free Rakiura - Project Update

The Predator Free Rakiura Governance Group met for the second time in Invercargill on 11th March. The group discussed and endorsed the idea of forming a Charitable Trust with current Group members being founding Trustees. The next step will be to finalize a Trust Deed, and work will be done on this over the next few months. Most of the meeting however, focused on reviewing and approving three documents for release for public consultation. These documents are:

- Predator Free Rakiura: An Economic Appraisal
- Predator Free Halfmoon Bay Project: Technical Aspects – preliminary outline
- Predator Free Halfmoon Bay Project: The Predator Fence – preliminary outline

There are some minor amendments to be made, but these documents will be available shortly (perhaps even by the time SIN is on the shop counter). The documents will be available on the Predator Free Rakiura website (www.predatorfreerakiura.org.nz) so keep an eye on that.

Hard copies will also be available – watch the notice board and your mail box for more information on where to find them. The next meeting of the Governance Group will be held on the Island on 15th April.

The community are invited to a public meeting at the Community Centre on 15th April at 7.00pm to discuss the documents and next steps.

All islanders are *strongly encouraged* to read and think about these documents and what is being proposed, and come to the meeting with your feedback. We look forward to meeting you there.

Sandy King,
- on behalf of the Predator Free Rakiura Governance Group.

(LETTERS Continued from page 5)

conservation". From a snippet of *someone's* conversation overheard *somewhere* they started this petition:

"This petition was started because a little known aggregation site for Great Whites was discovered off of Edward Island near Stewart island off the south tip of New Zealand. Little is known about this area but at the present time white sharks can be found here around 10 months of the year which is significant and it is speculated that they come to this area to feed and mate. Recently a local resident of the area went out and killed some of the great white sharks as means of hurting the business of the owner of a local shark tour company, a person that the man did not get along with for years. An innocent and rare shark was killed because two men couldn't resolve their differences humanely."

WTF?! Well, I suppose "shark gets caught in net and dies" doesn't exactly get you to the front page.

So next time before you sign that online petition or forward that email, take a minute to check out the FACTS. You have the internet at your disposal, it's a powerful tool. Snopes.com and hoax-slayer.com started at about the same time as the internet did, they have all the goss on rumours, photos, scams and they are free to use. Or just plain Google, it'll sort out the wheat from the chaff pretty quickly.

Although if you get started on conspiracy theories take a thermos and some bickies; you'll be there for a while.

I've also solved the age old (well, seems like it) dilemma about the shark diving vs the others. I propose that we keep the Shark Dive Encounters but *without* the cage.

After all, as we've been told, it hasn't changed the sharks behaviour, sharks are of no danger to paua divers, boaties or kids swimming in the ocean, so the tourists won't need cages either, right? Right?

Vicki Coats



The Riverton Garden Group recently visited Stewart Island to view your wonderful gardens and indeed they were a delight to see.

We were overwhelmed by the help in organising our trip, Thankyou Jenny, Judy and the garden group. The warm welcome, the food and friendship when we first arrived was just fantastic and to the ladies who helped transport us to the more distant gardens.

Our group will always have fond memories of your hospitality, gardens and the beautiful Island you have.

South Coast Garden Circle
Riverton

SIE ferry schedule 2014

May/October (Shoulder season)

Seven days a week

Departs Stewart Island	Departs Bluff
0800	0930
1500	1630

June/July/August/September (Winter months)

Day	Departs Stewart Island	Departs Bluff
Monday	0800	1630
Tuesday	0800 - 1500	0930 - 1630
Wednesday	0800 - 1500	0930 - 1630
Thursday	0800	1630
Friday	0800	1630
Saturday	0800 - 1500	0930 - 1630
Sunday	1500	1630

**Marine ecological integrity programme
Ulva Is / Te Wharawhara Marine Reserve, 17-30 March 2014**

Ecological integrity: "The degree to which the physical, chemical and biological components (including composition, structure and process) of an ecosystem and their relationships are present, functioning and maintained close to a reference condition reflecting negligible or minimal anthropogenic impacts".

The Department of Conservation is developing a programme of work that will allow it to monitor and report on the state of New Zealand's marine environment and how DOC's conservation management may be influencing this. As part of this work, we have been developing and trialling indicators of "ecological integrity" for the New Zealand marine environment.

As part of a collaboration with Air New Zealand, we will be trialling our indicators of "ecological integrity" within the Stewart Island marine environment (including Ulva Island / Te Wharawhara Marine Reserve) from 17-30 March this year.

This research will include population monitoring of seabirds; time depth recorder (TDR) tagging of little blue penguins (to study their foraging behaviour); monitoring aspects such as water quality; studying the linkages between the land and sea (e.g. establishing the sources of sediment in the marine environment); using underwater video cameras to survey the seabed; and describing food webs.

Information gleaned from this work will not only inform us about the condition of the Stewart Island marine environment (including Ulva Island / Te Wharawhara Marine Reserve) but will also serve as a case study for developing a nationwide framework for monitoring New Zealand's marine reserves and DOC's contribution to maintaining and restoring the health of New Zealand's marine environment.

As a separate stream of work, we are developing innovative ways of reporting on DOC's marine reserve monitoring programmes. As part of this we hope to be able to make monitoring information easily accessible to the public, through media such as a web-based report card and links to both technical and non-technical monitoring information.

Ex-pats with nervous credit cards should stop reading now. I've just found a disgusting website that has American and British chocolate, snacks and groceries which will deliver to your door for \$5!

Think Bisto, PG Tips, Fritos, Reeses, Clubs, Walnut Whips, Quavers, Kraft, Fray Bentos and even Batchelors Mushy Peas! (yuck!)

And pantry items; 2kg of gluten free flour for \$25! I even got a jar of Sriracha thai chili sauce, a craze that seems to be sweeping the states at the moment, Pringles are even using it for a new flavour chips! www.mightymart.co.nz

Vicki



Halfmoon Bay postal hand frank.

A few words from Cr. Bruce

Seniors Housing Project has been receiving considerable attention with many enquiries for examples of business plans, etc., and these are still being assessed. I believe there are some likely-sounding examples of operations and some may be suitable for our community. If so, this would mean we don't have to spend time – and money – re-inventing methods. We'll be preparing a 2nd Newsletter soon, bringing you up to date on the latest developments.

The Visitor Levy is ticking along, funds are accumulating and first allocation round will be in May and applications close at the end of March. Application Forms are available from the Area Office.

On the subject of funding, the SDC website – under “Funding & Grants” - will guide you to “Creative Communities” and the various funds and grants available to community organisations. Same time frame as above applies.

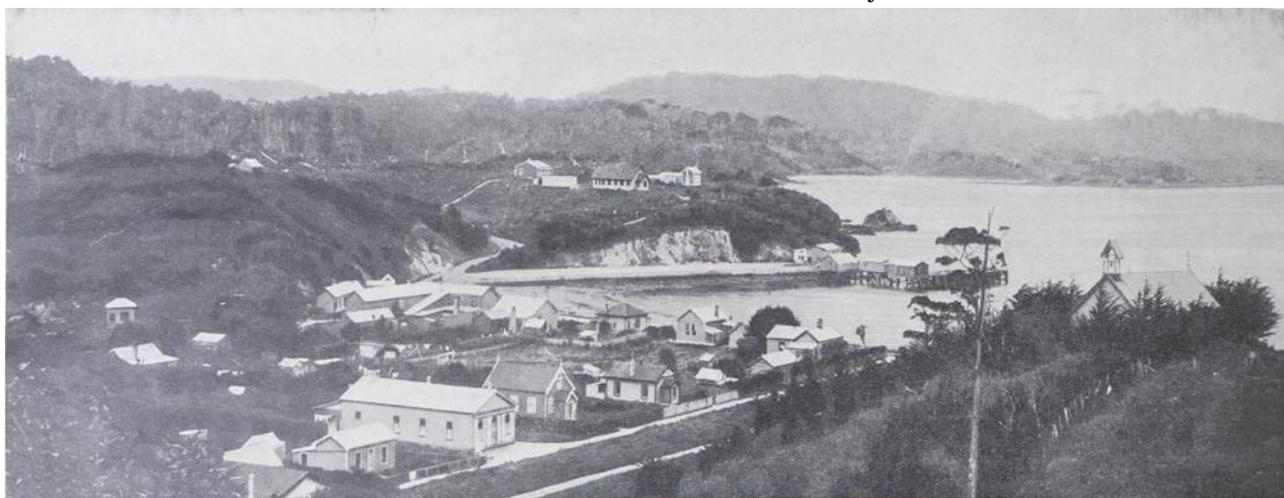
Take advantage of these two great opportunities; put your thinking-cap on.

Our new Mayor, Gary Tong, has certainly hit the ground running, and having new Councillors in the team reminds us of all those things we had taken for granted – like how complex some of the Local Government requirements are - and you all know what I think about red tape! At least it's a reminder too that bureaucracy is needed – I suppose The April Council Meeting will be held on the Island on the 16th, and this will be a chance to showcase all the

work that needs doing here, and also to show-off a bit – it's not a bad place you know, especially when you see some other Southland communities' struggles. But that's no reason for us to sit back and accept the status quo, there's still a heap to be getting on with, and I'll be doing my best to bring some of these things to the forefront. The agenda will be published and available on Kirsten's desk as usual, so you'll know the best times to drop into the “Public Gallery” to see how things have to be done.

As always, I have commitments regionally with my Council position, and many other projects keep me busy, but also give me ideas for our own community.

OBAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CHATTER by Jo Riksem



Halfmoon Bay 1910 showing the two churches on the hills

Did you know that the letters of NEWS are the four points of the compass and also our four winds? We all know when there's a Northerly or Westerly as they're our warm winds and then we rug up when the cold Easterly and Southerly winds come. Stewart Island has always held a fascination for me with it's changeable weather. It's like an ever changing canvas of a painting. Each time you look out the window it can be slightly different or a complete change altogether, but no matter what the weather, magnificent in a storm, glorious in the sunshine, wild in the wind, Stewart Island is always beautiful. No matter which way the wind blows, I feel fortunate to be a part of a newspaper that centres on Good News and in each edition there is always plenty to celebrate.

6 April Come join us for the special celebration church service on the Norwegian Weekend with Rev. Roger Wiig, a very special relative of the Wiig Family.

13 March thru 27 May– Bruce and Diane Keeley – They've already been here for several weeks now and will be with us for the all of April and May. We're delighted to have them in our community and hope they continue to enjoy their time here.

A bit of a catch up on what they've been doing in their lives. They recently retired from full-time ministry, have been greatly looking forward to new adventure on Stewart Island. Diane has not been here before, in spite of having lived in Invercargill for a time, many years ago. Bruce made a brief visit in 1969, after spending a summer on the Snares Islands during his university years. They were ordained together in the Anglican Church in 1977 and have shared parish ministry as a team for 36 years.

This included 8 years in the Co-operating Parish of Chartwell in Hamilton (comprising Anglican, Methodist

and Presbyterian) followed by 21 years at All Saints in Howick, Auckland, the area in which they continue to live. They have two adult children. Diane has recently trained as a Restorative Justice facilitator, and Bruce continues to serve as a Police Chaplain. Their spare time interests include bush walking and bird watching, so Stewart Island is right up there on the Bucket List.

Remember! 110th Anniversary of Oban Presbyterian Church at Labour Weekend, October of this year. Keep digging through those photos for any people that have been part of our history over the years

Church remains open daily so come in and enjoy its beauty and peace. Church services: every Sunday, starting at 11a.m. followed by a cup of tea and goodies. Prayer Circle: every Saturday 11:30 – 12 noon at the home of Coral Hotchkiss.



SIRCET Update

It's been a busy couple of months for SIRCET with Denise starting to see an increase in rat numbers. We have been working on intensifying the trap lines in the core and buffer zone (Ackers to Lonnekers), starting with doubling the number of traps on each line and putting out some new lines around the roads. Over the next month we are going to work on putting out more trap-lines to fill in any gaps in the network. All ready to catch the big influx of rats we are expecting over the winter!

Denise has been ably assisted over the summer by a number of volunteers. Gael Gordon spent the summer here volunteering for us and did a fabulous job. We waved her off in February to head back to her career but we are looking forward to her visit again in December. Gael spent the summer staying in Ann Pullen's cottage, along with three volunteers for DOC. This accommodation was sponsored by E Hayes and we are very appreciative of the support of DOC and E Hayes. Our local volunteers continue to check their trap lines weekly, catching hundreds of rats a year, a huge contribution to the project!

After the success of our last kiwi dog aversion training day we are holding another during Easter. Date/location/time still to be confirmed. It would be great to see all the dogs that attended six months ago to assess their reaction to our kiwi lure. Dogs that have not gone through the training are most welcome to come along to! If you have any questions please get in touch with Di Morris on 2190009 or email info@sircet.org.nz

Over the 11 years we have been operating we have had many locals put in time as trustees. They have all had different skills and experience to contribute and have helped to make the project a success. We would love some new trustees to join us and help to grow SIRCET, there is a lot more we could do! If you have an interest in the environment and want to learn more, please get in touch with one of the existing trustees or email us.

At the Community Nursery Denise and volunteers have been busy propagating, weeding and potting. As a regular feature in SIN and in our newsletters we are going to feature some of those interesting plants. This month's feature is...



Native Celery (*Apium prostratum*)

Dating back to Captain Cook's exploration of New Zealand, this herb was used to prevent scurvy among his crew. In today's kitchen it can be used raw or cooked to add a mild flavour. Native Celery has a creeping habit and is found growing wild throughout coastal areas. . Check out the garden plot up the Main Road, outside Bid and Ernies house. These plants have

only been in the ground since last June and have formed a lovely dense glossy green mat. We have also planted some at Lonnekers over the last few months and these have started to fill up nicely.



Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust news.

The Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust has completed another season's monitoring of yellow-eyed penguin breeding success on the Bravo islands in Paterson Inlet, and on Whenua Hou / Codfish Island. It began in October & November 2013 when both areas were searched for nests, and was completed in early February when surviving chicks were caught and weighed, and had a transponder (aka microchip) inserted.

Twenty nests with a total of 38 eggs were found on the Bravo islands but only 13 chicks were caught in early February. One of these was too small and skinny for a transponder to be inserted, weighing just 2.65kg. All other chicks on the Bravo islands weighed more than 4kg, the heaviest being 5.7kg. Interestingly, a Bravo islands chick that had a transponder inserted last season was found recently alive and well at the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust's Tavora Reserve, near Palmerston on

the North Otago coast.

On Whenua Hou / Codfish Island 37 nests with a total of 71 eggs were found and 28 chicks were caught and had a transponder inserted. All of these chicks weighed over 4kg, with this year's "fat boy" (or girl) being 6.25kg. Although these chicks all appeared in good condition, there were relatively few of them considering the number of eggs that were laid.

Assisting with the chick catching this year



Jen Lowther & Sarah McCallum prepare a yellow-eyed penguin chick for transponder insertion

were Sarah McCallum, a vet student from Massey University, and Jen Lowther, an environmental management student from the Southern Institute of Technology. Neither had any previous experience with yellow-eyed penguins, but came equipped with plenty of enthusiasm and quickly got the hang of penguin wrangling. Thanks to them both for their assistance.

Each year the Trust has monitored the yellow-eyed penguins they have been indebted to the goodwill of volunteers and in-kind or discounted rates offered by local companies. This year has been no exception. The Trust would like to acknowledge everyone that has been involved (you know who you are!). A written report, with full acknowledgements for the 2013/14 season is available from the Trust on request.

Sandy King

for the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust
Ph: 03 479 0011
Email: yeptrust@gmail.com
www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz



The third annual Purplettes spud dig began with lunch at the hotel where we watched it hail and pour with rain outside. Luckily it cleared in time for our driver extraordinaire Mona to take us from garden to garden where the girls took turns digging up each others spud crops. Six of them grew a red king and a purple Maori potato each. After much hilarity, laughter and a compulsory drink stop at the pub, we ended our tour at Stacey's where it was soon apparent she would be taking home the wooden spoon yet again!



Our judge Jill (Podesta Purplette) weighed and counted the haul and the winner and new Purplettes President is ... Denise Hayes!! Denise takes over from Sue Munro and had a massive shore of red potatoes weighing 9.4 kgs and had 122 purple potatoes! Karen had the heaviest potato at 456 grams.



A fun day was had by all and a big thank you to Stacey for the delicious pulled pork dinner. I look forward to growing and digging potatoes with all of you next year.

Paparazzi Purplette

More photos at Stewart Island Events page on Facebook



(Line of Fire Continued from page 1)

sleeping tents, ablution blocks, nurses clinic, communications, a kitchen and large dining room. It was a dry camp so no after work beers!

The first two days were a steep learning curve with temperatures ranging up to 40 degrees. Combined with the heavy gear and physical work, the most important thing was to keep hydrated. The



Another day on the line of fire.



Fire still burning at the base and in the fork of this tree.

instruction was to drink 2 litres of water to 1 litre of Gatorade. On the hottest day I consumed 15 litres of fluid, about as much water as I would drink in two weeks!!

A typical day was up at 5.45am for a cooked breakfast, a briefing and issuing of ration packs/food and fluids. We often had to drive for up to 1.5 hours to get to our location for the day, working, then home at 9pm for a big dinner, a shower and sleep. The work we did was varied and included putting out hot spots, back burning, pumping water, protecting houses and putting in firebreaks. The main hazard was falling trees and tree limbs. All day you would hear the crash as they came down randomly. Last year two firefighters were killed this way, so it was a very real threat. There was also the continual danger of flare ups. At one stage our truck got a bit close and the lights on the top were melted, a good sign to get the hell out!!



Helicopter with monsoon bucket.



A lucky wombat.

The hottest day we had was 42 degrees with 80km winds. All crews were deployed to protect houses and buildings on that day. It was always a sad sight to see someone's home burnt. While a lot of animals are adapted to avoiding bushfires it was also many that hadn't escaped the flames. We had a couple of close encounters with large snakes but they were busy fleeing the fire so we all stayed out of each others way.

In the middle of the deployment we were given two days off. Everyone was ready to let loose! The crews were taken to Lakes Entrance, a resort town, and put up in hotels. A cruise of the lakes had been arranged, with a few beers to dampen the dust. A big night was over before it started as everyone slunk off to bed by 930pm, tiredness winning out!

Returning after the break was delayed as the fires ramped up and it was too dangerous to drive back to the camp. By the end of the deployment I was well and truly exhausted, it was no holiday! The level of organisation was incredible and I felt well looked after



A digger helping out.

and as safe as you could be in those conditions. The experience I gained was world class and I would certainly like to return next time we are needed.

The fires are still burning. When we left on the 20th February the fires in the Orbest area covered 140,000ha, on the 10th March they are covering 165,000ha. There were more fires in other areas and states.



Back home with the fire crew in training.

Stormwater Upgrade – Main Road

Duncan Farm Holdings will be upgrading the stormwater system in lower Main Road.

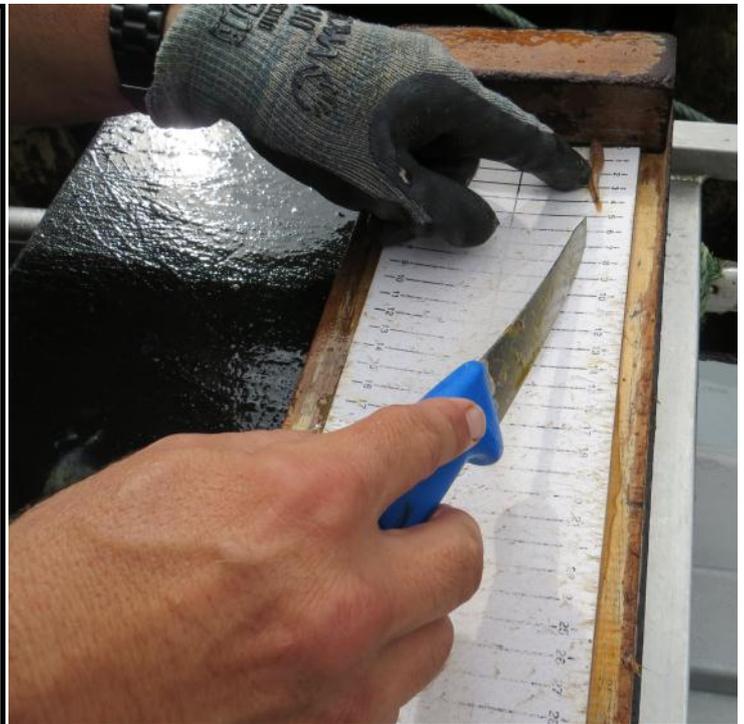
The work will be completed in two stages.

Stage One: From the beach outlet to the manhole located near Glowing Sky (30 m). This work is scheduled to commence 17 March, and be completed by 3 April at the latest.

Stage Two: Continues along Main Road, to the manhole in the Fernery entranceway, including one road crossing near the Theatre. Work on this stage is due to start on 28 April, or 5 May, and is expected to take five weeks.

During this time, all efforts will be made to keep any disruption to foot or road traffic to a minimum.

If you wish to contact SDC on this matter, please phone Aaron Toone on 0800 732 732.



Now *that's* an undersize cod!

BOOK REVIEW from Sue Ford:
 “Sycamore Row” by John Grisham

This is the sequel to “A Time to Kill”, his very first novel some 30 years ago, just before the ‘blockbuster’ “The Firm”. It was only recently published however, and if I read the first book, I don’t remember it now. “Sycamore Row” can be read with just as much enjoyment without knowing the story of the prequel though, so if you like courtroom drama – rather than out-and-out crime/mystery/action, this book verges on brilliant.

Jack Brigrance is a ‘street lawyer’, a small town lawyer struggling to make ends meet with all the small town problems that require legal expertise. His financial problems are made worse by the fact that in “A Time to Kill” he lost everything but his wife and daughter – but including the family dog – in a fire set by the Klu Klux Klan (yes, the story is set in ‘the Deep South’ where racial tension is still high in the ‘80’s), and the insurance company are not paying out. Nothing has changed in the insurance world in 30 years obviously. But then reclusive local businessman, Seth Hubbard, leaves Jack a letter and a handwritten, unwitnessed will, deliberately cutting out his unsavoury family and leaving everything to his black housekeeper, Letty, except a small percentage to his local church and the same amount to his missing brother, Ancil. Before the mail arrives at Jack’s office, Seth – already dying in great pain from lung cancer – goes out and hangs himself from a sycamore tree. The paperwork also includes an enigmatic reference to an event witnessed by himself and Ancil in his childhood. What no-one expects is that Seth turns out to be a multi-millionaire worth \$24m. – and if that’s a lot in today’s money, try and imagine what it was like in 1984!

What follows is a tense unravelling of the knots of love-

less lives dogged by misunderstanding and historic brutalities until the reasons behind Seth’s drastic will are discovered. I’ll admit I did catch on fairly early in the piece as to what it was all about, but John Grisham’s novels don’t always end happily-ever-after – an author-twist that I particularly enjoy, and which keeps me turning the pages of well-written stories even when I *think* I know how it will end. This one though does have a very satisfactory ending, and – I suspect – will be the last we’ll see of Jack Brigrance, so make the most of him.

Pat reminded me that Gwen did a review for SIN on the Dana Stabenow books, so I’ve started in on them. The first was a great read, part crime thriller, but also an adventure story with a side helping of Alaskan culture. The second – “A Fatal Thaw” – is equally entrancing, and begins with a mass murderer on a rampage, foiled in the first couple of chapters by the ever-resourceful Kate Shugak. And so the crime to be solved this time is? I won’t spoil it ahead of time. There’s enough humour in Dana Stabenow to leaven the bleakness of Alaskan life and the inevitable murders. Take Mutt for example – Kate’s dog. Mutt adores and is possessive of Kate, has facial expressions, and her supposed thoughts are recorded with Kate’s verbal responses! Some of them are hilarious. And then there’s Kate’s love-life – for someone who doesn’t *have* much of a love-life, her romantic entanglements are amusing at the very least. For best results, do start with Book 1 – clearly labelled as such in the library, because whilst (like the Grisham) each book can be read on its own merits, the development of the characters does rely somewhat on what happened in the last story. Thanks Gwen – and Pat for the reminder – for bringing the Stabenow books to my notice. They are going to keep me intrigued and giggling until the 3rd Deborah Harkness comes out in July!

Voice of a Girl Mechanic by Sharon Ross

The Importance of Good Tyres

Another thing I learnt from my father before I was even allowed to step in a car when I was learning to drive, was the importance of looking after your tyres, so I had to be able to change a tyre and know what to look for in looking after them. I also had to know how to check the tyre pressure and what was the correct pressure to put in (for most average cars 32 is the correct psi), 4 wheel drives, prams tyres and motor-bikes will all be quite different.

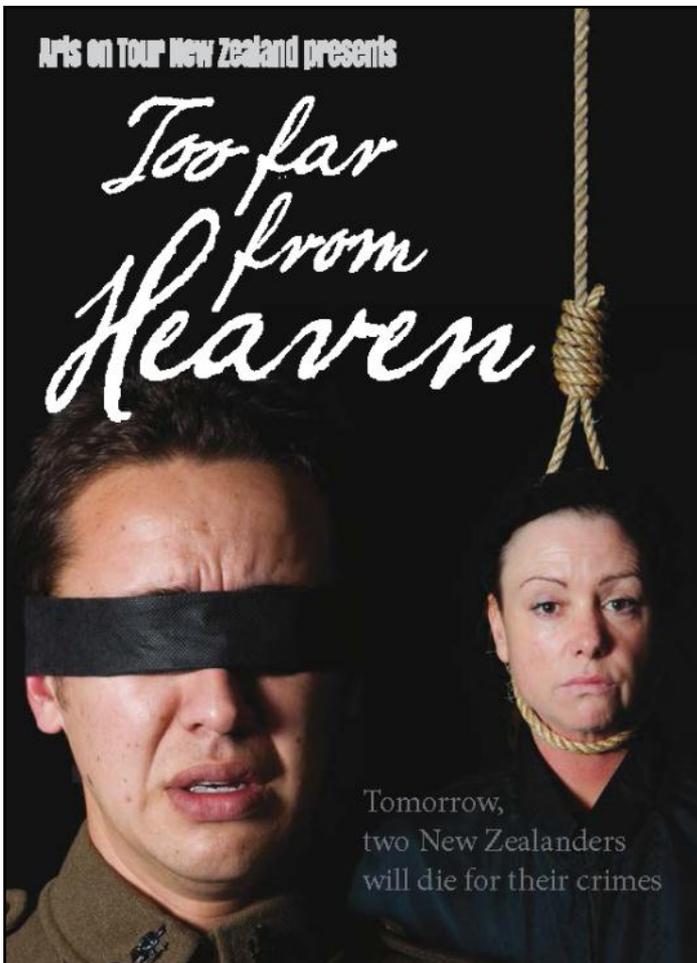
This was particularly valuable the first time I ever got a puncture on State Highway 1 at 11.30pm at night driving home after an afternoon shift. As all good stories go, it was a dark and stormy night!! (promise it really was!), which was following the first beautiful spring day in South Otago for that year. Hence I had gone off to work at 2pm in shorts, a T shirt and a cotton jersey thrown in the back – none of which was suitable attire for changing a tyre in the dark during a storm on the side of the road nearing midnight! As luck would have it, it was the rear tyre on the passengers side and with no street lights and no torch it was like doing it blind folded!! (All credit to my Dad he had told me I should always carry a torch in the car, and I usually did but had taken out only a few days before and not put it back – BIG mistake!!)

It took me one and a half hours to change that tyre, and I arrived home soaking wet, with a black eye and bleeding nose after trying to line up the wheel studs with one hand and push the tyre on with the other whilst not being able to see a thing! Being in the 80's before mobile use my husband was just about to organize a search party to come and find me after having rang the hospital to find I had left at the normal time and when he saw the muddy and bloody state I was in he expected the car to be a right off – I didn't see the funny side when he laughed when I said it was just a flat tyre!! Every other flat tyre I have ever got has been in daytime on busy suburban streets when I have been wearing a dress – and don't know why but some gallant knight has always come to my rescue and changed it for me (maybe that was karma for my first experience!)

Back to the tyres though! The minimum tread depth to pass a WOF for any vehicle is 1.5 mm over three quarters circumference of the tyre, unless the tyre is a Mud and Snow tyre when the minimum depth is 4mm. Keeping the tyres at the correct inflation also helps them wear better and is more cost efficient for your car running as well. If ever you should see wires poking through your tyre that is a very bad sign, you have worn them right down to the canvas and are at risk of them blowing out – not a good experience I believe! Not something I have personally experienced but have been following a trailer on which a tyre blew out and it was pretty impressive seeing him slew across the road trying to control the car, the noise sounded like someone had shot him!! I jumped out the car not knowing what I was going to find wrong with the driver and was very relieved to find my first aid skills weren't required.

Arts on Tour New Zealand presents

Too far from Heaven



Tomorrow, two New Zealanders will die for their crimes

Friday 28th March 8pm

Sunday 2 March 8pm

Community Centre, Stewart Island

\$20 Door Sales



www.aotriz.co.nz



Stewart Island Ball

All welcome



7pm Good Friday 18th April 2014
Stewart Island Community Centre

Band Rapid 123

Tasty Supper

\$25 a ticket
R.O.A.R

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<i>Mona Wiig</i>	<i>219 1531</i>

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M F

An update from Brent about the rat situation on Ulva Island:

Two rats have been caught on Ulva Island in the last few months. The first was a Norway rat caught in January - we responded with a check of the full trap network on the island, increasing frequency of trap checks and also got a dog down to check the island over four days. No further sign was detected. Genetic tests on this rat suggested that it came from The Neck area.

The second rat was caught in a DoC 200 trap at the Ulva Island Wharf on Sunday 2 March, collected, packaged and frozen on Monday 3 March. The team have stepped up trap checks again and are also running the ink card tunnels. Again, a sample has been sent away for genetic testing. Will keep monitoring and consider potential for another dog check.

At this stage, it looks like two separate invasions. The good news is that our trap network is nailing them as they arrive. We are looking to beef up the traps at Pipi rocks (one trap there at the moment) to intercept any swimmers.



The Stewart Island Swiss Ball

by Jules Retberg

grand - the idea came about when Karin saw a couple of visitors perusing the Community Centre gym classes and overheard their conversation, which went something along the lines of:

And so the idea of a spoof Swiss Ball was born.

Here's a bunch of Swiss maids and a cuckoo clock gatecrashing a swiss ball exercise class!

Was there lots of cheese and chocolate? Did the cuckoo clock strike midnight as we prepared for a duel with Swiss Army Knives? Not quite, but there was Toblerone (yummy Swiss chocolate), a few Swiss maids, a cuckoo clock and lots of plaited hair!

"Oh look! They're having a Swiss Ball, I wonder where we can get tickets?"

Sue, Serena, Dids, Karin, Jules - and thanks to Bruce the photographer!

The inaugural Stewart Island Swiss Ball was probably the world's shortest party. Perhaps 'party' is a bit



The magnificent otolith: scenes from a cod survey

*What's like a bone but is really a stone?
What's found in the sea with rings like a tree?*

What sounds like a Tolkien riddle describes the *otolith*, key-stone to a cod study that has been underway in Foveaux Strait.

Brett Hamilton was kind enough to let me aboard the *Francis* so I could observe Glen Carbines of Saltwater Science in the midst of a cod survey. His job is a yin yang of fish guts on deck and fiddly paperwork at home.

To determine the health of a fishery and comment on its future, a scientist needs heaps of information. "You can never get enough data," said Glen. "There is much more to managing a fishery than managing sheep in a paddock."

While fisherman's data (catch landing forms, log books, word of mouth) factor into the survey, at the end of the day Glen needs to physically go out himself and get his hands on the cod. Fishermen are not allowed to catch the smaller cod and as Glen points out "they don't know about the sub-legal stock; we're seeing the babies so we can gage what's coming into the fishery."

Glen goes to sea and drops cages with extra small mesh in a variety of points around Foveaux Strait. Known as a Hot Spot, this stretch of water historically yields over half of the Southland landings of cod. Through his survey he will catch and dissect thousands of cod (the legal ones get landed and eaten).

Wheelhouse office: fiddly paperwork and filleting knife.



The pots have extra fine mesh so Glen can catch the babies and see the "future of the fishery." However, there's heaps of by-catch. "Sometimes it seems more like a leather-jacket survey," he laughed.

Glen weighs the cod and measures its length, and then he gets into the blood and guts. Or more specifically, the gonads and brain. His first cut reveals if the cod is male or female, and he then rates its sexual status (where the cod is at in its breeding cycle) on a scale of 1-5: 1 being a baby and 5 being past its sexual prime.

Once Glen has the length, weight, sex and sexual status written down, he still needs a vital piece of information to get the whole picture of the cod's health: its age. The age is an extremely important piece of data because time is fixed—a year is a year. If he can age the fish and

then go back and match that number with the other data, eventually he can build a reliable model in which length equals age. For example, he can look at a 24 cm female and know there's an 83% chance she's four years old.

How do you know how old a cod is? Humans carry ID with a birthdate; a cod carries otoliths in its head. Known as earstones, the tree rings of the sea, or the black box of a fish,



"White gloves are a pain in the bum in this job." The tiny otoliths are tweezered from the cod's brain and placed on Glen's black glove. Go to page 3 to see a magnified (and magnificent) otolith.

otoliths are found in a cod's head. It is a calcium carbonate structure floating inside a sac of jelly, and provides the cod with its directional sense (like an inner ear).

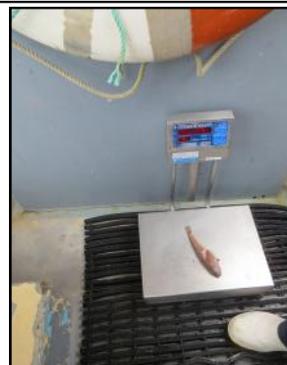
The otolith grows like a pearl, inwardly and by secretions. (Although sometimes

referred to as earbones, technically it is not a bone as it has no living cells, thus it is called a stone.)

The secretions form bands, and each band represents a year of the cod's life, the inward-most ring is the cod's first year of life. Scientists refer to these amazing structures as *black boxes* because they record information about every year of the fish's life, relating the state of the ocean in different years, the fish's diet, or poisons encountered (otoliths from fish that lived through the atomic bomb tests revealed high levels of radiation in the rings from those years).

Each cod has three pairs of otoliths but Glen prefers the biggest ones – the *sagittae* – which are easiest to read.

Glen gets tweezers and removes the otolith from behind the cod's brain. This is where the black gloves come in – "white gloves are a pain in the bum in this job," he remarks as he removes the miniscule earbones, puts them carefully on his glove, and carries them to the wheelhouse where he drops the largest one into a special little capsule. The capsule goes in an envelope marked with all the other data.



Ocean-compensated scales cost about \$20,000. The equipment to make stock assessments has actually become more available and more affordable in recent years, giving people like Glen a chance to manage their own company (he worked for NIWA for 15 years before "going under his own steam" five years ago.



Acoustic Current Doppler Profiler, another pricy gadget. Glen sets pots fixed in a hexagon around this thing, which measures currents and allows for tides which get taken into account in the study.



Otolith capsule.



I'd like to thank Glen for not laughing (and Brett for only laughing a little bit) when I photographed this item and asked how it functioned in the study. Glen kindly remarked that it is indeed "an extremely important tool for a fisherman."

(Continued on page 18)

STEWART ISLAND / RAKIURA: POWER TO THE PEOPLE

by Andrew Williams

Section 1: Research study of Stewart Island's power supply

Brief

Research Stewart Island's power supply.
Background and current situation
Future renewable power options and plans

Facts

The population of Stewart Island is approximately 400, mainly located in and around the main centre of Oban.
The Stewart Island Electrical Supply Authority (SIESA) is responsible for the generation and supply of electricity to consumers on Stewart Island. SIESA is owned and operated by the Southland District Council on behalf of Stewart Island electricity consumers and is governed by the Stewart Island Community Board.
SIESA is responsible for power generation, lines, meters and billing - and the costs are subsidised by other ratepayers in Southland.
Stewart Island has around 405 permanent electricity consumers connected to a distribution network powered by up to five diesel generators at a central power station at Hicks Road. These diesel generators produce approximately 1,400,000 kWh per annum.
Diesel brought from the mainland costs approx. \$500,000 per year. Stewart Island consumers pay \$0.62 per unit for electricity which is nearly three times the national retail average.
This \$0.62 per unit cost covers diesel but not the depreciation on the network etc.
An undersea cable from the mainland to link to the national grid would cost approximately \$10 million.

Background and current situation

Since the mid 70's, people have been looking at ways to reduce the cost of electricity by a variety of means. In 1980, the Ministry of Works considered the possibility of hydro generation but at that time it didn't look good enough to pursue. In 2011, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) awarded funding through its Marine Energy Deployment Fund for the development of a 20kW wave energy converter (with potential for future upgrades). This project halted following opposition to its resource consent application.

Venture Southland is a joint committee of Invercargill City Council, Southland District Council and Gore District Council, and the Community Trust of Southland. As a regionally coordinated body, Venture Southland is able to access external project funding that is not normally available to local authorities. Venture Southland is project managing current renewable resource measurements on Stewart Island and has assigned various roles to Massey University and the University of Canterbury.

Venture Southland's Robin McNeill is project managing the research. Mr McNeill is an electrical engineer with a background in remote and rural telecommunications. He first became involved in examining Stewart Island's power options in 2007.

In late February 2012, Venture Southland organised a workshop on the island and invited experts from universities and other organisations to speak. The aim was to present to the local community the options and difficulties concerning implementing a full or partial replacement of the engine-alternators. Venture Southland's intention was to seek community consensus for investigations into the options.

Renewable energy options for the island

There are three options being explored, wind, solar and hydro. There is potential for renewable energy to become the primary energy source backed up by the existing diesel generators. It is most likely that the solution will be a combination of options with diesel generated power co-existing with one or two of the renewable energy options.

Wind

Massey University has modelled the wind resource and a privately owned company, Energy3 will measure the wind resource at the best site.

Stewart Island has more than sufficient wind resource. The prime location originally identified through wind modelling was at Southwest Cape which, at 70 kilometres from Oban, made transmission line costs a prohibitively expensive option. It would also have significant consenting issues within the Rakiura National Park.

Another worthwhile site was identified at Garden Mound, 50 metres inside the national park, about 5 kms north of the Stewart Island power station located on Hicks Road.

Wind testing is to be undertaken at this site. Venture Southland has submitted a concession application to the Department of Conservation, which in turn has sought Conservation Board advice. Once received, it will then go to Environment Southland for resource consent. Hardware for the planned testing is already on the island and is stored at the power station site awaiting these approvals.

Wind farms are becoming an increasingly common phenomena around New Zealand in places such as the Wellington coast and the Manawatu Gorge. Approximately 70 per cent of New Zealand's generation from wind power is in the lower North Island. Annual national generation is accounts for 622 MW of installed capacity and nearly 5 percent of electricity generated in the country.

In 2010 Meridian Energy, in conjunction with Antarctica New Zealand, installed a wind power farm in Antarctica to serve New Zealand's Scott Base and the USA's McMurdo Station. The three 330kW turbines, costing \$10 million, have effected a saving of some 463,000 litres of diesel fuel each year. This also significantly reduces the environmental risks associated with transporting diesel fuel to Antarctica.

Solar

University of Canterbury will model and measure the solar potential. Hardware for solar testing is already on Stewart Island.

Stewart Island gets approximately 1650 sunshine hours a year which is a level that would make solar power a sustainable and viable option. By comparison, it is interesting to note that the number of sunshine hours Stewart Island enjoys is twice as much as Denmark receives and Denmark has a significant commitment to solar energy. Denmark's Bornholm Island, which is situated in the Baltic Sea off the coast of Sweden, currently draws its electricity from the Nordic grid but has a commitment to go 100 per cent renewable energy by 2025 via a combination of solar, wind and bio options. Bornholm Island is slightly smaller in size than Stewart Island and has a population of approximately 35,000.

Tokelau, a territory of New Zealand lying north of the Samoan Islands, comprises three tropical coral atolls and has a total population of only 1,400 people. Thanks to a New Zealand aid grant, Tokelau has invested \$7.5 million into the solar generators on the three atolls. They have gone from being 100 per cent reliant on diesel generation to about 92 per cent of their power requirements now being met by solar energy. It is estimated that the country will save 12,000 tonnes of CO2 during the life of the solar power plant and save an estimated 800 litres of fuel a day. The most likely site for solar generation on Stewart Island would be the council wastewater treatment plant on Hicks Road, which is a relatively short distance from the power station. This site is already on the electricity distribution network so this existing linkage adds to the viability of feeding solar generated power into the system.

It is estimated that a solar generation plant for Stewart Island would cost in the order of \$2.5 - \$5 million depending on the specifications and capacity. Introducing solar power into the local network would significantly reduce diesel consumption, thereby reducing overall annual pow-

er generation costs.

Hydro

University of Canterbury will model and measure the hydro resource.

There are plans to carry out hydro monitoring and preliminary testing indicates a micro hydro could be viable. A bigger, mini hydro may possibly meet all the power needs of the island but is unlikely to be economically viable and would involve considerable engineering works in a national park.

A V-notch weir will be used to measure water flow. The testing site is well within the national park. Applications for consent are with the Department of Conservation but Venture Southland do not expect any problems as it is a very benign test. This will also require a resource consent but Environment Southland have indicated they do not see any difficulties.

Testing and data collection

The testing of wind, solar and hydro needs to run concurrently over a 12 month period to span all four seasons. At the same time, the power station will measure the demand for electricity for network integration purposes. Data collected will need to be analysed and then matched up with actual consumption. The cost of carrying out the testing research is estimated at approx. \$150,000. In 2013 Venture Southland sought funding of \$60,000 from EECA (\$20,000 each for wind, solar and hydro testing). EECA declined funding as the research projects on Stewart Island did not meet its criteria.

Funding for the testing and research has therefore currently been through reserves and this will continue for the 12 month testing period. Further funding will then be required to progress the project.

Predicted timeframe

It was hoped that testing measurements would have started four months ago. Unfortunately some of the modelling has taken longer than expected and together with the need to obtain consents this has delayed the start date of the field testing. It is anticipated testing will commence in mid to late April 2014 but this depends on whether there are any objections raised in regards to the various applications for resource consent. There have also been problems with the system hardware and software associated with the weather station to be used with the study, but these have now been resolved.

Feasibility studies costs

(Funded by reserves on hand)

\$44,000	-	wind
\$30,000	-	hydro
\$15,000	-	solar
\$19,000	-	resource modelling
\$40,000	-	grid stability analysis
\$16,000	-	project management
\$16,000	-	contingency
<hr/>		
\$180,000		Total

Acknowledgements

- Bruce Ford, Southland District Councillor, Stewart Island*
- Ian Marshall, Southland District Council group manager services and assets*
- Robin McNeill, Venture Southland project manager*
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA)*
- Mike Bassett-Smith, Power Smart Solar*
- Dale Park, Out-of-Parliament Support for Andrew Williams, MP*

Section 2: Commentary:

Andrew Williams MP

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

It's ironic that small island developing states like Tokelau and Tuvalu have state of the art, clean and environmentally friendly solar power - generously funded by a New Zealand aid programme but that New Zealand's third largest island, Stewart Island, is still 100 per cent reliant on diesel to generate its power needs.

The solar power initiatives on Tokelau and Tuvalu are to be lauded. It is fantastic that we have been able to help our Pacific Island neighbours but there is background niggles that begs the question, shouldn't charity begin at home? The residents of Stewart Island have been waiting for decades for renewable energy and in the meantime pay an absolute premium for their diesel-reliant power which at \$0.62 per unit, costs almost three times as much as what other New Zealanders pay for their power.

Tokelau is a territory of New Zealand lying north of the Samoan Islands. It comprises three tropical coral atolls and has a total population of approximately 1,400. Tokelau has gone from being 100 per cent reliant on diesel to about 92 per cent of their power requirements being met by solar. Each of these systems has the distinction of being among the largest off-grid solar power system in the world. The one megawatt project with battery storage took just seven weeks per atoll to construct and was completed in late 2012. It is estimated that the country will save 12,000 tonnes of CO2 over the life of the solar power plant and save an estimated 800 litres of fuel a day. The solar energy project comprises three systems on each of the three atolls installed at a total cost of approximately \$7.5 million.

The island nation of Tuvalu comprises an archipelago of nine coral islands and is situated about midway between Hawaii and Australia and has a population of around 10,800. A solar power project was completed in 2008 and generates 40kW of electricity connected directly to the grid. Tuvalu has a commitment to being powered by 100 per cent renewable energy by 2020.

Tokelau and Tuvalu sit barely above sea level and as such are vulnerable to the effects of climate change. With global warming, the sea level is rising putting these low-lying islands at risk. The use of renewable energy not only reduces the carbon footprint, it sends a symbolic message to others about the importance of

promoting sustainable energy worldwide in the effort to fight climate change.

Tokelau and Tuvalu's switch to solar power is consistent with other countries who are leading the way forward to using renewable energy. For example, Denmark has invested heavily into renewable energy and has a goal to rely 100 per cent on renewable energy sources by 2025. For decades India relied on coal to provide electricity but depleting coal reserves forced the country to look for alternatives to power its growing electricity demands. Three years ago the country invested heavily into solar energy, adding 2.2 gigawatts of solar to its electricity grid, enough to power 20 million homes. It is anticipated that India will achieve a total of 15 gigawatts of solar energy by 2017.

The population of Stewart Island is approximately 400 and it is staggering to learn that it costs \$500,000 in diesel to power the island annually. You might ask why we simply don't plug them into the national grid, but running an undersea cable from the South Island across Foveaux Strait would cost in the order of \$10 million.

Locally and globally, the idea of having a "green" Stewart Island is extremely attractive, particularly given that most of the island is the Rakiura National Park. It could be a step by step process where renewable energy becomes the primary source of power. Gradually integrating renewable energy would be a more cost-effective way of achieving the ultimate aim of phasing out reliance on diesel. Long-term, as the price of diesel continues to rise, running a power station using this form of fuel will become increasingly costly. Renewable energy is therefore becoming more attractive and affordable, providing a long-term economic option.

New Zealand company, PowerSmart Solar, designed and constructed the solar power systems on Tokelau. PowerSmart managing director, Mike Bassett-Smith says that in comparison to harnessing wind energy, solar power is comparatively easy to install and sustain. He says "there is a perception that solar power is expensive to install but it is a surprisingly cost-effective way of utilising renewable energy. Installing solar power can be a gradual process introduced over two, three or four steps with the aim of eventually eliminating diesel. The added benefit of solar is that it requires no testing and comparatively little ongoing maintenance. We can tell you overnight what impact the solar systems can have on Stewart Island and can easily provide a two to four stage road map towards eliminating diesel. There is no need for lengthy testing as we already have most of the information we require to assess Stewart Island's solar energy requirement and that all we would need to produce a cost estimate are the consumption figures". Mr Bassett-Smith says as a guide, the electricity needs of about 500 people on Stewart Island can be met by 600 kw of solar energy, which is the equivalent of two of Tokelau's three atolls' solar installations. An approximate estimate of the cost would be between \$2.5 to \$5 million.

Wind farms are becoming an increasingly common phenomena around New Zealand in places such as the Wellington coast and the Manawatu Gorge. Approximately 70 per cent of New Zealand's generation from wind power is in the lower North Island. Annual national generation is accounts for 622 MW of installed capacity and nearly 5 percent of electricity generated in the country.

In 2010 Meridian Energy, in conjunction with Antarctica New Zealand, installed a wind power farm in Antarctica to serve New Zealand's Scott Base and the USA's McMurdo Station. The three 330kW turbines, costing \$10 million, have effected a saving of some 463,000 litres of diesel fuel each year. This also significantly reduces the environmental risks associated with transporting diesel fuel to Antarctica.

Venture Southland, comprising a joint committee of councils, are currently project managing renewable resource measurements on Stewart Island in cooperation with the University of Canterbury and Massey university. Venture Southland's Robin McNeill is an electrical engineer with a background in remote and rural telecommunications. Mr McNeill first examined Stewart Island's power options in 2007. The process has been laborious, funding testing has been an issue, as have resource consents to conduct the testing. However field testing of renewable energy sources on Stewart Island is expected to commence in mid to late April 2014. Wind, solar and hydro testing will be run concurrently over a 12 month period in order to span all four seasons.

With testing expected to be completed by mid-2015, the question of just what is the most practical, cost-effective and sustainable renewable energy solution for Stewart Island is still some time away. Perhaps that time could be used to focus on a holistic approach to turning Stewart Island even greener. Stewart Island - Rakiura could become the New

Zealand poster for environmentally-friendly living - showing the way to the future.

If New Zealand can do it for the likes of Tokelau, Tuvalu and Antarctica, we can do it for our third largest island Stewart Island.



Andrew Williams

New Zealand First Member of Parliament

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This press release and entire document available at the library and on-line at nzfirst.org.nz/news/renewable-energy-winner-stewart-island

(Shark Chronicles Continued from page 4)

Nick Smith spent the following day meeting with concerned locals, meeting with Peter Scott of Shark Dive NZ, and resolving that shark cage diving here should now be regulated. Hon Dr Smith also promised that Stewart Islanders will take part in the process.

There are no winners in a story featuring dead protected species and a chorus of aggrieved humans. Right now the shark cage operators say regulation is fine, it will keep them in business. The cage opponents are happy someone in the government has listened to their grizzling. *But...* the cage guys wish the grizzlies would just go away entirely; and the text of the formal grizzle specifically asked that the shark cage industry *not* be regulated with a permit system, but go away entirely. So despite all the dramatic events of February, March brings us a bit of status quo.

From the press release dated 28th February: ***DOC will be writing to the shark cage tourism operators notifying them of the requirement to have a permit under the Wildlife Act. The Department will also be consulting the Stewart Island community on the details of permit conditions to ensure these tourism operators do not change the behaviour nor harm these great white sharks.***

Oyster season started on 1st of March. On the 9th of March two oyster diving boats reported a 5 meter shark circled them at Bungaree. Fortunately, the men hadn't yet gotten in the water.

Discovery Channel is here filming another shark doco, and at the end of the month Clinton Duffy and his team (*welcome back, Kina!*) will do another shark study.

Next month *SIN* will explore the latest DoC documents regarding this issue. As things stand (from my understanding after poring over DoC docs) DoC seems fine with cage diving and reckons the industry is *simpatico* with the Wildlife Act. DoC is giving the nod for the operations to continue to use berley and bait and they are just quibbling over the texture of the chum (thankfully human body parts as bait has been given the thumbs down according to Appendix B of *Commercial Great White Shark Cage Diving New Zealand Code of Practice December 2013.*)

The Code of Practice, and the Responses and Comments on the consultations can be found at doc.govt.nz (if you can't be bothered clicking around the site just drop me an email and I'll send you the links.) So that's all folks, I've run out of room. Your input is always welcome.

Ed aka Jess

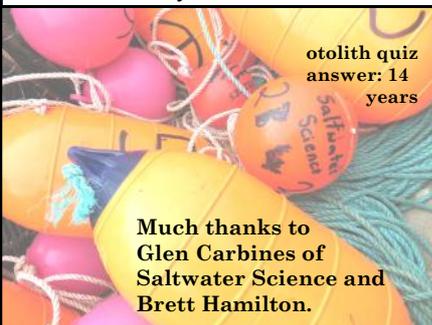
(Cod Survey Continued from page 15)

At the end of the workday on the boat Glen has hundreds of these envelopes. Ultimately he wants five otoliths representing each sex, breeding status, and size. When he goes home another project begins. Each tiny otolith is sliced, mounted on a slide, polished smooth, observed under a microscope, and aged. Aging means the rings must be read as a tree's rings are read, and it can be a tricky business so Glen relies on other agers around the country to also offer their determination and then he takes the average age as the record.



Glen sees all sorts of fascinating things as a fisheries scientist. The oldest cod he ever saw was a 35-year old female off the Banks Peninsula. While I was observing aboard the *Francis*, Glen cut into this juvenile cod and found a tinier baby cod (left) in its tummy. "They're the seagull of the ocean reef — predator and scavenger. Cod can be quite cannibalistic," he said.

I asked Glen if he's drawn any conclusions about the health of the cod fishery here but he wouldn't tell me. He did offer



his observation that the cod breeding cycle seems to be getting later in the Strait. "There's something going on there," he said.

—Jess Kany

A Little Bit of Forgotten Island History?

Shared with us by Sue Ford

Clearing out “the loft” I came across an old-fashioned attaché case labelled “Memories”. Amongst the newspaper cuttings and wedding invitations, I found the following typewritten report, unsigned but dated “22-3-79”:

‘The first sign that anything strange had happened was when Meda McKenzie failed to return from Stewart Island. That didn’t surprise anybody too much because after all the poor girl had been in Foveaux Strait heading south for 14 hours and was probably in need of a jolly good kip. There was just a suspicion too that she had been kidnapped by the Stewart Island schoolteacher, who had decided that a girl of her age should get a bit of schooling too, as well as just the glamour of travelling the world, and the fun of swimming across all the coldest, dirtiest, and most pointless pieces of water.

So Meda’s disappearance didn’t bother too many people, until the word got out yesterday that John O’Connor hadn’t appeared back on the mainland either. Mrs. O’Connor hadn’t panicked because she just assumed that the people at 4ZA had asked John to stay there a couple of days and start up the Lost and Found Blue Cod service that the island fishermen had been asking for, for so long. But then one or two curious facts started to tie together. An Otatara housewife rang the Invercargill airport and said she had just realised something. That boring little plane from Stewart Island Air Services had headed off on its 68th crossing for the day, but she hadn’t heard it coming back again. She’d had “Days of our Lives” turned way down low, but not a plane had she heard. Just as this disturbing news was being passed to the airport authorities, the police around the province were starting to cast eyes and thoughts southwards. Early in the morning a dazed Wallace County grader driver had lurched into the Orepuki police station to report that he had been taken by surprise on an isolated coastal road down near Pahia, tied to stunted manuka, and forced to watch helplessly as his grader was driven off towards a waiting fishing boat by a couple of desperate looking individuals who said they came from the Stewart Island National Roads Board and they’d missed out on their fair share of the grant money for the 94th year in a row.

Just as the police were hearing this horrifying tale, a body was being pulled gently from Bluff harbour. It was dressed in top quality, hand-made, imported clothes, and the inside pocket of the jacket was stuffed with Air New Zealand flight tickets. The deceased was immediately recognized as a member of the New Zealand Seamen’s Union, probably a crew member from the “Wairua”. This was confirmed by a note pinned to his back... a note which read: ‘We warned you to let us do the unloading and loading ourselves. The rest of the crew have been kidnapped and will be positioned around the 19 kilometres of Island road to act as signposts for the loopies’.

Obviously, things were serious. Since the start of the week a radio announcer, a blond marathon swimmer, and 510 copies of Monday’s Southland Times which happened to have in it a reprint of a Noel Holmes article in the Auckland Star, called “The Day the South Seceded” (*had disappeared*).

By this stage, of course, everything was falling into place and the news spread fast. The first feeble cracklings of Radio Rakiura came drifting into people’s transistors, and soon whole Invercargill families were clustering around breathlessly to hear the first broadcasts. There were long speeches from somebody call-

ing himself President Goomes about self-sufficiency, about island republics, and about linking up with Ruapuke and the Mutton Bird Islands into what he called the F.E.C. This turned out to be the highly protectionist Foveaux Economic Community which was to shatter the world with the news that from henceforth the only payment accepted for mutton-birds, oysters, or paua shells would be a drum of diesel or a crate of whisky per dozen.

But the broadcasts weren’t all pompous political speeches. Snatches of the new Island Anthem could be heard (it was a revised version of an old hymn and it sounded like “From Greenland’s icy mountain to Stewart’s sandy strand....” and it was alleged to have been written in collaboration by Olga Sansom and Sheila Natusch). In between these broadcasts and all the static, startled Southland listeners could hear the choking voice of John O’Connor appealing for the return of a large blue cod, answering to the name of Fishy, last seen off Butterfield’s Beach.

Worse was to come, incidents that showed how devilishly well-planned the whole Stewart Island secession had been. On TV1 that night, a most uncomfortable looking Tina Carline was heard to announce that the temperature that afternoon at Oban had been 32 degrees “..... just as it is (ouch!) every day of the year....”. When she had finished, viewers the length of the land could see that the weapon being held at her back was an old and rusty whaler’s harpoon.

From there on, the story has become familiar to all of us by now. For instance how, when Mr Rex Austin, the MP for the island, was asked to comment he just shrugged and muttered something about “they were idiot enough to dance with Rowling in 1975, and then to vote Social Credit last year”. Then there was the unsurprising news item the other day that no-one on the island republic was to be called plain mister anymore. They were free to call themselves knights (or Mrs Knights) except for the 56 crayfish millionaires that already existed who can call themselves Sealord Bragg and so on.

Apparently things are going pretty well. The captured plane is bringing back the muttonbirds to the diesel drum exchange depot and the old Wairua has been chartered out to the Germans for squid fishing. And Meda McKenzie ... she’s being very well paid to bring the daily papers over from Bluff each day. The islanders reckon that there isn’t much in them except for the odd good suggestion from the Auckland Star so it doesn’t matter if they arrive 14 hours late, and a bit damp.”

That will be a trip down memory lane for some Islanders! There are a few ‘in jokes’ and ‘topical references’ of course: what’s the reference to Mrs. Knight, for instance? And what’s the significance of so many “‘missing fish’ references, especially to John O’Connor’s? And the Auckland Star article – what’s that all about then? References to Wairua crewing problems, to Meda McKenzie and to F.E.C. are easy enough to guess at if you have access to history notes – especially to Stewart Island’s. Otherwise, is there someone out there who would write – for SIN – the actual story and the true sequence of events of the “Secession of Stewart Island”? I think those SIN readers with the appropriate memories would be surprised at how many of we More Recent Residents would appreciate hearing the tale. (An unconfirmed report states that Beryl Wilcox may have had a hand in the writing ...???)

RAKIURA MUSEUM MATTERS – by Jo Riksem



Margaret Fairhall's painting of Halfmoon Bay created especially for the Stewart Island Boat book

We lost a very special friend of the museum last month, Margaret Fairhall, but she has left a legacy of her beautiful paintings. She was wonderful with ideas and so supportive of making sure Stewart Island history was preserved. There will not be a day she is not remembered as the Stewart Island Boat book is used constantly. One of her last paintings has been made into a card that will be on sale from the 4th April, as a special tribute to the Whalers Base.

In our acquisitions last month we were given two books on the ancestry of the Bailey family. One of the books features the descendants of William Booth Bailey and Violet Pauline Wiig and will be of great interest to many islanders. It is rich in photos and stories of Stewart Island. We have been given permission by the author to reproduce it for anyone who would like a copy. It is 167 pages with both colour and black and white photos. The price will be \$20. If you are interested in a copy please phone or email us as we will be doing them to order. You don't have to be a relative of the Baileys, Squires or Wiigs to enjoy this book.

Enquires last month included Robert Duncan Yule, a draper from Invercargill who came over to Stewart Island and sold items from the old Halfmoon Bay School. We even found an old invoice for a pair of underpants made for 7/, much to the families delight. Also enquires about Captain James Wybrow, a whaler and William Cook of Port Pegasus.



There was a mistake in my naming last month on Maisie on the Mason Bay photograph. It should be Maisie Johnson who became Maisie Dunlop.

There's still a few copies available of the Dorothy Jenkin booklet of her beautiful orchids, Elsie Smith's Stewart Island Orchids and copies of the DVD on Mason Bay farming, a real delight for fans and families of Mason Bay history.



There's only a few days now before the beginning of our "Norsk Feiring" (Norwegian Celebration) and we're looking forward to a great weekend. Thank you to all that have helped in this special endeavour. Enjoy the history filled weekend. The community hall will be open with a gold coin donation on Saturday from 10-4:30 and Sunday from 10-3 pm for viewing of photos and special exhibitions.

There will also be a sales table of special items just for the weekend. Come have a look.

Museum hours up until the end of April are Monday thru Saturday 10 am-1:30 pm and Sunday Noon-2 pm

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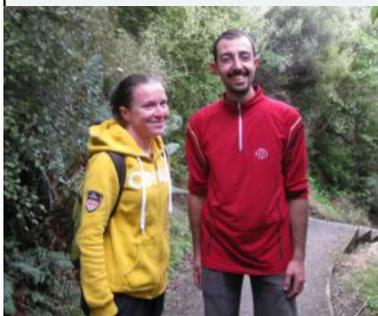
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SIRCET Kiwi advocacy update

by Cherie Hemsley

Monitoring of the kiwis that were released into the Ackers project area in February 2013 had interesting outcomes this month!



Stacy and Guillaume

The game camera that we had set up on TX22's burrow at Ackers has proven he has a mate!!! Lucky boy. She looks to have a band on her leg but no transmitter, which means she is more than likely a fellow releasee from Ulva, whose transmitter has fallen off. So this gives us some hope that there will be more baby kiwi running round Ackers soon!!!!

astelia, while mother Ngaio prefers the shelter of LOTS of supple jack.

Mary Chittenden and her boys came out to volunteer with me and our day started extremely well. Then disaster struck as we were locating our first kiwi of the day! I injured my knee and had to be rescued from the bush by our local SAR team!!! This would have to be the most embarrassing moment of my life to date!!! However I am very thankful for the aid I was given. Mary was also amazing and used the opportunity to talk to the kids about bush safety and what to do if you hurt yourself. Thank you to everyone for your help!



Mary and her boys Shay, Travis and Josh.

TX12's partner remains unidentified at this stage. She has moved burrows and we have yet to check the game camera that volunteers Stacy Wilford and Guillaume helped me to set up on her new location around the golf course area. Here's hoping they are still together in the honeymoon phase of their relationship!

Matatika and Ngaio are still in their home, with the chick no doubt nearby! Matatika likes to hang out in crown fern and

*Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall
 Humpty Dumpty had a fall
 All the kings' horses
 And all the kings men
 Helped to get Humpty safe again*

**Until next month,
 Ka Kete Ano E Hua**

Cherie



HMB School alum Caity Kenny poses with Tania Murray, New Zealand's most successful high Jumper ever. Caity jumped 1.67 and broke Tania's 29-year record at the Otago/Southland Sec Schools event in Invercargill this month.



The ladies of the Stewart Island Garden Circle relax at Bird on a Pear.

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Market Day Easter

Monday 21st April

at Halfmoon Bay School

Sausage Sizzle

All welcome to have stalls;
personal or fund raising

Please email/ring Vicki if you'd like a
stall 498 or 0275 211 895 or
stewartisland@xtra.co.nz

If you stall needs electricity this can
be arranged via prior arrangement
and a small fee to the school.



Much thanks to Luke Simoen who let the Rakiura Rugrats watch him wash the semi-sub windows last month. He uses a razor and water blaster to clean the outside of the windows, but beforehand he mustered up some sea creatures for the children to view. (I'm sure the first order of business when all our sticky hands departed was washing the *inside* of the windows!) For locals and visitors who haven't yet been aboard, the semi-sub is a great experience. Contact Real Journeys to make a booking.

Stewart Island News is published on a monthly basis as material permits.

**Please send articles and enquiries to Jess Kany at
PO Box 156 Stewart Island
or email to editor@stewart-island-news.com**

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- 12 issues to an Oban address or Internet address \$24
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Shop Talk by Jules Retberg

“**Yes! We have no bananas**” sang Eddie Cantor in 1923 - a song I found myself humming as many New Zealand supermarkets face a banana shortage. I almost flippantly wrote *banana crisis*, but I stopped myself when I thought about the real crisis. Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines in November killing thousands of people. Floods and tsunami-like storm surges damaged or destroyed homes, lives and livelihoods.

The supply of bananas from the Philippines to New Zealand has understandably been depleted and New World, Pak N Save and Four Square supermarkets are receiving around half of what they request in an effort to ensure that everyone gets at least some bananas on the shelf for customers.

In turn, I don't want to be a rotten banana and buy-up-large the minute we get some nanas in the shop. I reckon we can control our banana cravings to allow everyone a piece of the banoffee pie, so to speak!

Further compounding the shortage, a New Zealand-bound ship carrying bananas from the Philippines broke down and had to return to port.

Typhoons, earthquakes, bush fires, floods ... they often fall off our radar because another attention grabbing headline takes its place in the media. But how's this for putting things into perspective: *imagine everyone in New Zealand having to leave their home.* More than four million people in the Philippines have been displaced and aid agencies are still working to get food, clean water and shelter to many of them.

Suddenly having a couple of bunches of bananas in my basket doesn't seem so important.

So here's my idea.

The New Zealand Banana A-PEEL ...

Donate to the Red Cross the equivalent cost of a bunch of bananas to help the Philippines get back on its feet. It just might catch on.

www.redcross.org.nz/donate

Jules



The ladies from South Coast Garden Club, Riverton arrived on the island on 18th February to have a look at the island's gardens. The first two days were organised by Stewart Island Garden Circle, the following two days were spent visiting Ulva Island, Ackers Point etc. The visit was a great success being enjoyed by the ladies as well as the locals, special thanks to John and Barry, Stewart Island Flights for the informative bus trip and to those in the photo below who went out of their way to make it such a special time.

