

STEWART ISLAND NEWS

CELEBRATING RAKIURA

December 2015 — January 2016

\$3.00

We were shocked and saddened to hear that Morrell McKenzie was killed in a tragic accident at South Port on 3rd December. We offer our condolences to his family and the community of his friends in Bluff.

Congratulations to Diddle's Tae Kwon Do class for all of their achievements toward earning their green belts. You guys are awesome!

The Fire Brigade has a beautiful pristine new building. And a big change occurred at the PO, almost as epic as the retirement of the anchor frank for off-island mail... can you spot what's different? (Hint: it's against the wall and full of hot air.)

We're lucky to live here for so many reasons and I discovered a new one recently: people here can cook a mean tagine! The inaugural Foveaux Foodies dinner had a Moroccan theme and the food was incredible, inventive, and decadent. There will definitely be more dinners down the track, join the group on FB or talk to Jess or Shona if you're interested.

You know that Bonnie Raitt song *Let's Give Them Something to Talk About*? That goes through my head as I look across Horseshoe Bay and see the glint of the predator fence around the Dancing Star land. The massive Bob's Point property has had people atwitter for various reasons over the past decade, and now the island is truly buzzing with the announcement it is for sale. Who's going to buy



Phred Dobbins and a beaked whale at Lonnekens Bay. Page 18. Photo by Vincent Ollivier

it? What will become of it? What's it like in there anyway? We're all asking the same thing Norm was wondering about the kegs with fiddly foreign taps he imported for his birthday: *Is this ever going to get opened up?*

HMB School has been tramping and camping —exciting for all the children and especially the “Room 3” kids, for some it was their very first night in a tent ! I asked Moby what he enjoyed most and he told me he liked eating 44 marshmallows. Tall tales from the campfire I hope...

Happy Holidays and HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

—Jess



Left: Deb unwraps her commemorative fancy new watch. The community honoured Deborah Dillon's fifteen years of service to Stewart Island as our nurse in a lovely afternoon at the Community Centre. These pages contain a few more words of thanks from us...



We've had some problems with our email contacts list and we lost a heap of email addresses. If you have not received a SIN deadline reminder recently, or you want to, please drop us an email at stewartislandnews@yahoo.com and let us know. Sorry for any inconvenience.

Correction & Apology: In the last issue we misspelt the name of Elvin Cyril Holt.

Stewart Island Four Square

It's that time of year again! There will be lots of visitors on the island and we don't want anyone to miss out on Christmas essentials! Please place grocery orders by Friday 18th December for items such as turkey, ham, bread, milk, cream, berries, fresh produce, pavs and flowers. Orders will be ready for collection on the morning of 24th December.

Christmas Day we open from 10am to midday.

Thank you for your continued support and shopping locally.

*Jill, Sam and all of the team,
Merry Christmas!*

SOUL KITCHEN by Lania Davis

Well Christmas has snuck up quick again! Another year almost done, and summer finally makes an appearance with sunburnt skin appearing on every second person I see around, doesn't the sun bring smiles to everyone's faces! Now if only we could rid the island of wasps and the black clouds of mini vampires, the bringers of the dreaded itchy bite!!

I find December full on, the build up to Christmas is a bit crazy, with lists of names to buy presents for, and Christmas food lists, parties to attend left right and centre, the pressure is well and truly on....work is busy (being Christmas time) and life can be exhausting trying to make it to everything that's on offer...

I think we often get lost in the hype and consumerism that Christmas is portrayed as ... Buying into the idea that it's all about presents, fancy food and Santa.

When really it's about family, friends, togetherness and enjoying and appreciating each other.

So to make life that wee bit easier I give you my easy to make and delicious Christmas spiced cupcakes.... And remember when you can't work out what to give someone because they have all they need.... Buy them a goat or chickens donated to a family in real need through World Vision....

CHRISTMAS SPICED CUPCAKES (gluten free)

- 150 grams sugar plain or coconut sugar
- 120 grams bakers gluten free flour mix
- 1 1/2 tsp Edmonds gf baking powder
- 120 mls milk
- 40 grams unsalted butter
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp ground ginger (Mrs Rodgers brand gf)
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground mix spice
- Pinch of salt

METHOD:

Pre-heat oven to 180 C fan forced oven. Line muffin tins with cupcake patties.

2) Combine flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, spices and butter beat on low until combined. Slowly add in half the milk, whisk remaining milk with the egg and add to mixture. Beat until smooth and combined.

3) spoon mixture into cupcake patties till 2/3rds full. Bake for 29 minutes until golden, test with a cake tester or toothpick in centre, should come out clean.

Leave to cool completely.

VANILLA FROSTING

- 100 grams butter
- 250 grams icing sugar (gf)



- 2 TBSP milk
- 1 vanilla pod de-seeded

Beat in mixer till light and fluffy, use a piping bag to add frosting if you don't have one use a glad bag and cut corner off.

You can change flour to normal flour if you aren't gluten intolerant it's the same ratio.

*MERRY CHRISTMAS
EVERYONE BE KIND TO
ONE ANOTHER
XO*

A small crowd watches as Phred frees a whale caught in kelp. See *What's Up DOC?* on page 18 for more.
Photo from Bastien Carobbio



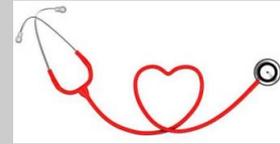
You know what would make a great Christmas present? A subscription to the STEWART ISLAND NEWS!!!
Drop us an email if you'd like to give the gift that keeps on giving (for 12 months).
stewartislandnews@yahoo.com

Summer: local children splashing around in Halfmoon Bay!
Photo from Bevan Mudie



In light of recent changes to the Health and Safety Act, Rakiura Maori Land Trust (RMLT) trustees have taken steps to prevent unauthorized hunting at the Neck. Four 'No hunting' signs have been erected at various access points throughout the Neck to inform people that no hunting is permitted without prior authorisation form RMLT.

Dick Ryan, trustee RMLT



I won't ever forget the sickening sound of Charlie's head hitting the cement floor after he tipped backwards off the edge of the community pool. A blast of high pitched screams followed by a terrifying silence when he suddenly slumped against my chest and his eyes drooped half lidded. Then more screams (just mine) as I ran with my toddler in my arms down the path past the Fords' house, barefoot and still in a soaking wet bathing suit, shrieking our nurses' names because in a village this small, why dial triple one when you can just holler:

"DEEEEBES! MAAAAARTY!!!" I must have aged a hundred years in that short sprint to the clinic. Debs and Marty looked Charlie over while a staccato of jarring thoughts and worst case visions unreel across my terrified mind: *emergency flight / I've got to call Stu / swelling brain / concussion / brain damage / life-forever-altered...* "Let's see if we've got any bickies "

Deb's calm voice interrupting my panic but I still can't even think straight *my god what does she mean what's bickies for, is that some euphemism for the braces he'll need for the flight?*

And then I was guided next door to the waiting room, seated on one of the old armchairs, and Debs retrieved a packet of rice crackers from the little kitchenette and offered one to Charlie who lifted his head up, bright eyed, grabbed one, and stuffed it in his mouth. He is fine, as it turns out, and as our nurses had discerned shortly after my hysterical arrival. I sat there shaking like a leaf, while Debs patted my arm, offered me a cuppa, and said,

"And how's mum doing?"

Thanks Debs for being there for us in sickness and in health, thanks for your kindness and steadfastness, thank you for being the calm in our storms and squalls.

Jess, Stu, Moby and Charlie

Good in Stone

by Jess Kany

You might have noticed an *OPEN* sign outside the Pearlers building and wondered if there's a café in there again. Nope...not yet, but there *is* something nourishing for mind and soul going on upstairs. After all these years I didn't even know there *was* an upstairs in the wooden building next to the slip! And up the stairs I went last week (with Rugarats-wagging Charlie in tow) to chat with carver Dave Goodin about an excellent new venture on the island.

Dave has set up a studio with stunning "harbourmaster" views of Halfmoon Bay, and he is offering **jade carving workshops** to locals and visitors.

Charlie, who had promised to let the grownups talk and not to break anything, proceeded to jump off a chair right next to some of Dave's intricate greenstone carvings. Dave told me not to worry. "The strength of jade is amazing," he said as he rapped a delicate-looking carved feather against the edge of the case. Then he banged two pieces of jade together. "Sounds like steel."

A North Islander, Dave was a forestry worker until a tree hit him and "broke him all up."

"ACC require you to train for something else, so I went to the Visual Arts and Design School." It was there he found his life-long passion for carving, became a teacher of Maori art for 12 years, and met Stewart Islander Greg

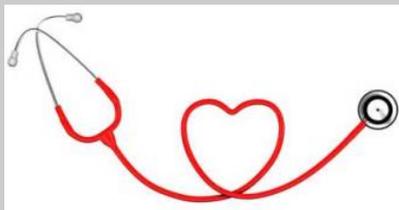


The beautiful "harbourmaster" view from Dave's studio with a translucent intricately carved jade feather in the foreground.



Dave holds a patu he carved. He works with a variety of stones including carnelian

Northe. In 1990 he came down to the island to visit Greg, and he has since returned, drawn by his love for the island. "I love the people, I love the community here, and I love the adventure." He's done kiwi spotting, helped on fishing charter boats, and enjoys giving visitors a chance to be part of something special. People who go
(Continued on page 7)



I don't recall where I was when I read this article, and can only assume it was in a doctor or dentist waiting room. I think it was in the Journal of Primary Health Care, but anyways it was from way back in 2006! Flicking through it, an article about Stewart Island caught my eye - about Debs! It was riveting, and skin tingling, and warm, and brought tears to my eyes and a smile to my face. If you haven't seen it I recommend you do (it's available online at rnzcgp.org.nz). Debs' passion for rural health really comes across, as does her humour. When talking about evacuations and factors such as weather, she says "scenarios are as varied as the shells on the beach!" I love that. I won't spoil the whole thing for you (you must read it!) but there is a lovely part where she says "the patients refer to us as 'our nurses'" and that's true isn't it. We do. Our nurses. Debs, thank you for looking after this community in so many ways, and I will always think of you as one of *our nurses*.

Jules & Matt



BOARD

As you may have noticed the Community Noticeboard has had a bit of a facelift (and a clean). Please note the following guidelines for putting notices up on the board:

Left Hand Side: This is for businesses to advertise their products and services to residents and visitors. There is a small annual charge to advertise on this board.

Middle: This noticeboard is for temporary (max 2 weeks) notices – employment opportunities, lost & found, public notices, upcoming events, and buy, sell & exchange.

Right Hand Side: This is for local community groups and local government notices, upcoming events, and details of public services.

When putting notices on the board please refer to the following:

- A4 or smaller, preferably laminated.
- Include the date the notice was posted.
- Remove the notice once the event has occurred, item sold, etc.

Any queries please contact Jo Learmonth (027-441-0166).

RAKIURA ARTISTS RESIDENCY PROJECT

Five established artists visited the Island from the 13th – 16th November and were blown away with what they saw and the experiences they had. They will now all go back to their respective homes and produce Island inspired works including a minimum of 2 limited edition prints. These prints will then be put together in an exhibition titled 47° South, with the exhibition opening planned here on the Island for Friday 13th May 2016 before it tours galleries around the country.

Planning is also underway to run an Art workshop weekend at the same time as the exhibition opening. This would be a selection of ½ and full day workshops with Artists covering such things as drawing, painting, print making, etc with classes being open to the public. The exhibition and the workshops are to be included as part of the Southland Arts Festival.

A big thanks to Toi Rakiura, the Rakiura Heritage Centre Trust, Aurora Charters, Akomana, Ruggedy Range™ Wilderness Experience, Ulva's Guided Walks, and Deep Bay Apartment for supporting this project.

COMMUNITY NOTICE-



Before



After

KAKA versus RUBBISH BAGS

At present we are having issues with the Kaka opening rubbish bags, looking for food. Rubbish bags should only be put out for collection on Tuesday mornings. Placing bags out for collection or leaving them at the 3 recycling stations between Tuesday evening and the following Monday night, only makes the problem worse.

We ask that all locals, Cribbies and holiday makers to please either bring your rubbish out to the Transfer Station or make arrangements with someone to put it out on collection day.



Glowing Sky Merino. All You Need.



This year we will be screening a number of NZ Independent films at the Bunkhouse Theatre (www.bunkhousetheatre.co.nz). These films have been receiving great reviews.

Our season commences Labour Day weekend with **A LOCAL'S TAIL** screening daily and in November 2015 we have the **SHOW ME SHORTS FILM FESTIVAL** back again.

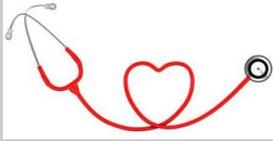
A turfer and tractor were needed to get this truck unstuck from the track at Ryan's Creek. Please note that if you're considering taking your ute for a spin up Ryan's Creek, don't. *Photo from Andrew King*



Feature Films 2015/16 Summer Season
 Don't miss out on seeing the latest NZ Independent films. Details about these films are on our website

All feature films start @ 7.30pm

 Sat 21, Wed 25, Sat 28 Nov & Wed 2 Dec 2015 Wed 6 & Sat 9 Jan 2016	 Sat 23 & Wed 27 Jan 2016	 Sat 13 & Wed 17 Feb 2016
 Wed 24 Feb 2016	 Sat 12 & Wed 16 March 2016	Adults \$15 Seniors \$13 Child \$10 Bookings Suggested!



I always remember the wonderful care I got on the Island through my pregnancies. In particular I can remember Debs trying to find Kieran's heartbeat when I was about 8 months using this antiquated metal listening cup thing because the electronic gadget wasn't working. You were soooo worried that you were hurting me as you had to press quite a way in to be able to hear anything. But it didn't hurt at all Debs and you managed to hear the heartbeat too!

*All the best,
Cath, Dil, Kieran & Michaela*

Beaks & Feathers

Ulva Island & Stewart Island
GUIDED WALKS

027 316 3077

info@beaksandfeathers.co.nz

www.beaksandfeathers.co.nz



I never thought I'd hear Chris Visser's name in the same sentence as the term 'politically incorrect', but any glance at the news will tell you the world seems to be going to hell in a handbasket, so I suppose this downward turn of events is just par for the course. Yes, it's been revealed that Chris's activities on the island are controversial, culturally insensitive and yes... *politically incorrect*. Ms

Visser has spent several years on the island as a yoga instructor, yet it's been determined by some people at a Canadian university that yoga classes are *NOT OK*. I caught up with Chris and interrogated her about these dubious doings. "Yes, our secret is out," she commented without a trace of contrition. And, bad to the bone, this yoga instructor claims she is going to carry on! —*Jess*

A few words from Chris:

Yoga is (generally) 5pm Wednesday at the RSA, \$3.00.

I say 'generally' as it's a somewhat loose arrangement and occasionally we engage in alternative subversive activities instead, but if anyone wants to check with me call 027 3812348



Book Reviews *From Sue Ford*

Summer Reading

As I write this, it occurs to me that maybe we readers will be curled up in front of the fire with our books, the rain and wind lashing against the windows, instead of outside in the sun in our deckchairs! Whatever the weather, a decent read to begin with is "**Path of Needles**" by **Alison Littlewood**. Young PC Cate Corbin becomes involved in a murder where the body of a teenage girl is 'posed' as if from a fairy story. Cate seeks help from a lecturer in folklore, Alice Hyland, but when the second and third bodies are found posed in fairy tale positions, it looks as if Alice herself might be implicated. The writing is 'young' without the confidence of a seasoned writer, and with lots of unnecessary padding on the emotional state of the two young women. A failed attempt at implicating the 'supernatural' with a mysterious blue bird doesn't help, and an old hand at murder mysteries will immediately spot 'who-dunnit'! Still a good yarn, the mystery solved satisfactorily in the last chapter.

Less satisfactory to begin with was "**The Jump**" by **Doug Johnstone**. I had sympathy for the main characters, but no empathy. To say 'pull your socks up' to someone in deep grief is terrible, but that's how I felt about Ellie and Ben (and the children Ellie is bent on helping). Their son committed suicide six months before the story begins – when Ellie talks young Sam out of jumping off the same bridge at the same spot. Ellie has the chance to find out what drove Sam to such depths of despair, supplanting the bewilderment she feels about the reasons for her own son's death. But she finds out more than she bargained for. It becomes ever more suspenseful as more and more is revealed, as consequences of actions become more tangled. And when does self-defence become murder? The

exasperation that I feel over Ellie and Ben is my inability to believe in the depth of their grief as portrayed – or does the writer share some responsibility for not being able to convey the emotion in a manner with which I can identify? You be the judge of that. If you like psychological thrillers, this one has emotional depth for those who *can* empathise, as well as suspense with such a twist to the end! I'm pleased I stuck with it despite not believing in Ellie...

Bruce can't understand how I can read two (or more!) books at the same time. With the Malazan Books of the Fallen, it's more about putting off the inevitable ending to a series! At Book 6, I'm a committed fan of Erikson's epic fantasy series, but eking it out – hence my divergence into other areas – like "**Day Four**" by **Sarah Lotz**. Imagine a second-rate cruise ship peopled by *faux riches* plus a few odd balls: a fake medium who seemingly becomes possessed, a couple of old ladies with a suicide pact all nicely planned, a "date-rapist" who accidentally kills a girl, a burgeoning flu epidemic, crew members with secrets, and so on. Then it's Day Four of the cruise, New Year's Eve, and an engine-room fire seriously injures three members of the crew – but is that why the cruise ship is drifting helplessly, with no electrics, no electronics, hence no refrigeration, no communications, etc.? Finding out the answers is spooky enough but the writer doesn't take herself – or the plot – too seriously, and we cruise on through the disparate lives of the characters on board, whilst m.s. *Beautiful Dreamer* turns into a nightmare! Good, creepy fun, and an antidote to the more serious happenings in Erikson's "The Bonehunters". My next diversionary read will be an old Neil Cross mystery – not many giggles expected from this writer of taut thrillers.

Remember there's lots of good books at our Library – and reading isn't weather dependant. And you can always ask Santa for a book token, so Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

(GOOD IN STONE Continued from page 3)

through his workshop definitely have a special experience. Under Dave's guidance, they make a piece all themselves using the finest grade West Coast greenstone – they use a machine to do the initial cut but the rest is hand-worked. "95 percent of the jade you see on shelves in New Zealand is machine-made from China and hasn't been touched by hand at all," said Dave. "I get people to understand the stone. We live in a 3D world but most people don't see it that way. The whole process gets them to see the 3D world." At the end, he says, most people walk down the stairs wearing their new carving. "You can see they love what they've made, they walk out of here holding onto it,

and that's my buzz."

The workshop includes West Coast greenstone, instruction on how to carve it, and a lesson on different types of stone and the legends and history of pounamu.

We are lucky to have a master carver and sculptor in our midst who is sharing his valuable knowledge and skill, it's a totally amazing and unique opportunity for locals and visitors.

Words don't do justice to Goodin's beautiful carvings so I suggest you have a look yourself. (Even wee Charlie got the "greenstone buzz" -- he went home with a handful of off-cuts and reverently calls them his *treasure*.)

One workshop lasts about five hours and costs \$140 (further days by negotiation).

Bookings are essential as there are only three spaces available each day.

Gift certificates for workshops are available...wouldn't that make a cool xmas prezzie!

Dave can be reached at
021 025 93958
rakiurajade@gmail.com

HAVE YOUR SAY ON SEA LIONS

Stewart Island residents will have at least two chances to have a say on the New Zealand sea lion Threat Management Plan. The first is a public meeting to be held in January 2016 on Stewart Island, and the second will be when the plan will be released for a six-week public consultation period in February-March 2016.

Background

The New Zealand sea lion/pakake is declining and is the rarest sea lion in the world. There are only about 10,000 sea lions left. They were once found around the entire New Zealand coastline before human settlement. Hunting and commercial sealing greatly reduced numbers and restricted them to the subantarctic islands. The main breeding sites now are the Auckland Islands and Campbell Island. However, in the early 1990s they also began breeding on Stewart Island and the New Zealand mainland in small numbers.

While their numbers at the smaller breeding sites are steadily increasing, there has been a 50% decline in pup production at the Auckland Islands since the late 1990s. As a result of this continued decline and the low pup count at Auckland Islands in 2014, the Minister of Conservation and the Minister for Primary Industries announced the development of a Threat Management Plan for New Zealand sea lions. The Department of Conservation (DOC) and Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) are working together on this plan.

The Threat Management Plan process

In the past, sea lion management has focused on minimising interactions between sea lions and the squid trawl fishery. DOC and MPI are assessing all threats to sea lions at all breeding locations and developing a holistic plan of action. Other threats include prey availability, climate change and other types of human disturbance.

All available information on threats to sea lions has been reviewed by

a panel of independent experts. They provided input into a demographic model looking at the range of threats. All of this information will be included in the final plan.

Research and monitoring of sea lions has also continued. This included field trips to the Auckland Islands and Campbell Island. Further monitoring of Stewart Island sea lions is planned in early 2016. This will be an investigative study to see if sea lion pups can be found in reasonable numbers at the time of year when a count of pup production would normally be undertaken. If the trip is successful an annual monitoring programme could be established with the ability for members of the local community to join on the trip.

Next steps

The plan will provide a five-year programme to reduce the decline of sea lions. It will incorporate a research programme, engagement priorities, and actions for different sea lion sites around New Zealand. These actions will be specific to the differing threats they face at each location.

Opportunities for engagement

You have at least two chances to have your say on the plan. The first is a public meeting to be held the week of the 25th of January on Stewart Island to discuss the options that are being discussed for protecting sea lions on this island. At this meeting, you can tell us what you would like included in the plan's consultation document for Stewart Island. The plan will then be released for a six-week public consultation period in February-March and you will be able to comment on it during this period. Your submissions will be included in the final plan to be presented to the Ministers in May 2016.

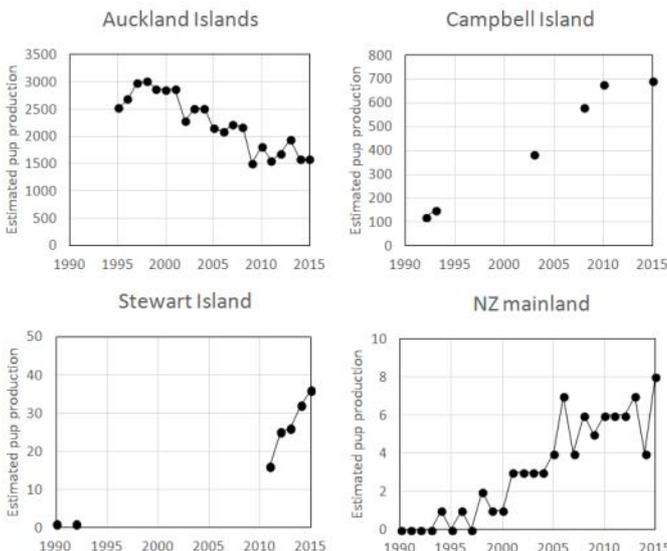
For more information see <http://www.doc.govt.nz/nzsl-tmp>

HOLIDAY HOURS. The SDC Office and Library close at midday on 24th December.

SDC office reopens at 9am on 5th Jan

Library reopens 2.30pm 6th Jan

Below are the Rakiura Resource Recovery hours:



Friday 25 December 2015	Closed
Saturday 26 December 2015	8:00am - 12:00pm
Sunday 27 December 2015	Closed
Monday 28 December 2015	9:30am - 4:30pm
Tuesday 29 December 2015	Closed - (However, rubbish truck will collect as normal today)
Wednesday 30 December 2015	9:30am - 4:30pm
Thursday 31 December 2015	9:30am - 4:30pm
Friday 1 January 2016	Closed
Saturday 2 January 2016	8:00am - 12:00pm



The Stewart Island Community Centre Trust has an exciting new venture for early next year.

The Stewart Island Community Centre Trust is planning to host Market/Exhibition Days to coincide with cruise-ship visits on the 2nd and 25th of February and the 6th March, 2016. The Centre offers a central, all-weather venue where significant numbers of visitors can peruse and purchase quality, Stewart Island/Rakiura/New Zealand products and services. Feedback from the company managing the Pacific Pearl (1817 passengers), visiting on 6th March is positive & encouraging.

The Trustees encourage residents, businesses & organisations to contact the Centre Manager or any Trustee if you would like to be involved. A Terms & Conditions Information sheet will be available early January.

The Community Centre Manager is Denise Hayes: stewart.island@xtra.co.nz or 2191477. Trustees are Phil Dove, Kath Johnson, Karin Dawson, Stu Cave, Stacey Wilford, Deb Barry, Becca Diaz-Parry & Chris Sara.

—*Phil Dove*

Stewart Island Lions wish to invite all locals, cribbies and visitors for a get together at Stewart Island Community Centre on Good Friday of Easter 2016 at 7.00pm

There will be a great band and tasty supper plus cash bar available so get your glad rags on and come and enjoy Stewart Island hospitality.

Tickets are \$30 each and there will be no door sales so please buy tickets before Good Friday. Courtesy Van available.

LOCATIONS

WILLIAM TODD & CO LTD

Stewart Island Real Estate

For all local listings

houses, cribs, sections and blocks of land.

See our website www.locations.co.nz

or contact our local representative

Jeanette Mackay on 027 681 8589

for current listings.

St Andrew's Anglican Church, 10 Excelsior Rd

Christmas Eve Service

Thursday, 24 December, **7pm**. Rev. Aaron Douglas leading the service.

All Welcome. See you there.

Rev. Richard Johnson, Vicar

Iris Tait, Warden. phone 219 1151

Aaron is a recent arrival to Southland. Although originally from Nelson, he moved from Auckland after time spent in the Navy, theological study and a stint as a rental property manager. Married to Hannah, who was the draw to the Deep South, they reside in Invercargill and have one daughter and are expecting a new arrival in April. In partnership with the Anglican Dunedin Diocese Aaron works fulltime with Scripture Union NZ as the Otago/Southland Youth Consultant and is involved in running youth camps, supporting school groups, training those in youth ministry as well as mentoring and supervising youth workers.

St Andrew's Anglican Church.

On behalf of the Anglican Family thank you for generously contributing towards the South Centre Anglican Care Invercargill, Christmas Hamper for disadvantaged Southland Children.

An amazing effort. Thank you.

Special thanks to Stewart Island Flights staff for supporting this worthwhile cause.

Happy Christmas everyone. *Iris*

A big thank you to Wayne & Caroline for bringing their magic show over to the Island once again. We had Jimmy the Bearded Dragon, Henley the African Gray Parrot and Hocus the rabbit! The kids loved him and when he did his adult show later he cleverly made Ben's \$100 note disappear and reappear in the middle of a lemon! Huge thanks to Real Journeys for bringing them over; you guys rock!

Need a Resource Consent?

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Oban Presbyterian Church Chatter *by Jo Riksem*



Halfmoon Bay about 1910

The photograph above shows Oban Presbyterian Church with no trees or bush around it at all, looking quite bare but after all these years it's now surrounded by tree and lovely bush still looking over Halfmoon Bay. As we head into the holiday season it's good to be surrounded by family and friends and give to those less fortunate than ourselves not just in gifts but in time and friendship all year round.

Change of date *We are now having our carol service on Friday 11 December and it's going to be quite different with live animals of all sorts and a time to dress up! Young and old! Use your imagination and come as a shepherd, an inn keeper, a king, one of the animals from the manger scene, Mary or Joseph or whoever you think might have been there. There will be extra sheets, etc at the church if you need some dress up things. A special story will be told in quite a different way with carols mixed in between and a yummy supper afterwards.*

Going into January the following folks will be visiting. Come and hear them and meet and greet with them while they are on the island:

3 Jan 2016 - Rev Christopher Holmes is an Anglican Priest and a senior lecturer in theology at Otago University

10 & 17 Jan. 2016 – Alan & Rachel Judge – Alan is Executive Officer of the Southern Presbytery, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and we look forward to having him and his wife on the island for two weeks

24 & 31 Jan. 2016 – Rev. Trish Ducker - is a mother of two, grandmother of 6 and great grandmother of three. She is a newly ordained permanent deacon, at Holy Trinity Church Winton. Originally from Christchurch, where she was involved in fostering and community ministries to the elderly and marginalized, she felt lead to Southland three years ago to become a bridge (with like minded people) between community and church – serving and walking alongside the vulnerable, lonely, sick etc where they were at. Some of the activities she is currently involved in, are Rest Home services, Bible in Schools, Messy Church, young Mums group, visiting the lonely/sick in the community. Motto – Community ministry is more about using my eyes, ears and hands than my mouth.

Prayer circle every Saturday 11:30. Phone Raylene 2191092 for venue. The church is open every day so come and enjoy its history, its beauty and its peace. Sunday service: 11 am followed by a cup of tea or coffee and goodies.



Thank you Debs so much for all your support when my kids were newborns. I'll always be grateful for the kind words and reassurance during those early years. You have a real knack for instilling confidence in new mums.

Thank you x

Liz Cave

Glenda Rees had an accident on Ulva Island on Saturday 28th Nov. and her ankle was broken in two places. She would like to thank all that helped that day: Dale, the policeman, Phred and the team from DOC, Medics Carol & Marty, the guys who helped carry her out, Real Journeys, and that nice young pilot from Stewart Island Flights, and all those people behind the scenes, for such a well organised rescue.

**CONGRATULATIONS to Bridget and Eamonn on the birth of their baby girl
HAZEL BARBARA SQUIRES GANLEY**



SIRCET update
by *Shona Sangster*

It's that busy time of year for creatures, plants and people! We recently held our AGM and would like to welcome a new trustee to the family, Anita Herbert. The Herberts are building on the island and Anita will be a great asset to SIRCET we are sure.

Our annual monitoring of Little Blue Penguins at Ackers Point is about to start. Little Blue Penguins breed in colonies around Stewart Island, including the Ackers Point peninsula. The birds spend most of their lives at sea but come to the shore under the cover of darkness to lay eggs and raise their chicks. They walk inland, sometimes hundreds of metres, towards burrows dug in the forest floor. In areas where there are introduced predators, Little Blue Penguins are at risk during these walks and once inside their burrows, as they are ill equipped to protect themselves and their nests from mammalian threats.

We conduct monitoring every year to get an idea of how the pest control we undertake in the Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project is affecting the numbers of Little Blue Penguins nesting there during the breeding season. The method we use is a slow walk count, which is exactly what it sounds like. You walk back from the lighthouse at the end of the Ackers point track, to the car park at a very slow pace (think walking down the aisle speed) looking around with a bright head torch. I can highly recommend it as a way to see plenty of wildlife, last year when I volunteered, I saw a kiwi and sooty shearwaters as well as lots of penguins. This year it is being coordinated by Katie Cornish, thanks very much Katie. She will be looking for volunteers to assist so if you'd like to participate get in touch with me at shona@sircet.org.nz

Kiwi hatching season is also upon us, and SIRCET is very pleased to announce that the kiwis we monitor in the project area have had

a great breeding season so far! More about that from Sandy on page 13.

As a regular feature in SIN we are featuring some of the interesting plants available at the nursery. This month's feature is...

Hebe Lavender Lace

Hebe Lavender Lace is a hardy, compact hebe with an extended flowering season, producing masses of pale lavender blooms throughout the year, peaking during spring and summer. This evergreen plant has a compact growth habit and is considered hardy in most situations. It thrives in both sun and part shade and can withstand wind and frost once established.

It grows very well on Stewart Island, and has been used in many public planting areas. It makes a great gap filler!



Debs on Duty



Two stand-out memories, one for laughs, one for a big "awww". The first happened in the middle of a Stewart Island Players production, chorus on stage, waiting for the big number, when "beep, beep" and one of the chorus raced off stage - to the consternation of the audience. Yes, Debs was on call.

To say she was on call was stretching it a bit for the second stand-out one. From time to time I have murderous migraines. I woke up with one such so went to visit the clinic. Debs sent me home, but I knew that the strong injection which would relieve my misery wouldn't be available - a 2-hour vigil was required and Bruce absent that day. To my surprise, Debs came round after clinic finished, stuck the needle in me and I went to a place where

migraines don't live. Two hours later, feeling soooo much better, I staggered out of bed. Sitting at the kitchen table, coal range ticking over nicely, a mug of tea before her and the newspaper open in front of her, was - well, Debs was still on duty wasn't she? Awww. But one thing Debs probably won't miss, now she's retired from nursing, is giving those injections - any injections! I don't think I ever heard a nurse apologise so profusely for the "pain" she was about to inflict with a needle: a true case of "this will hurt me more than it will hurt you". Thanks Debs, for the million times you've been there for Bruce and me, for the patience and bottomless well of kindness, for the professional skills, and just for being there for us when it hurt.

Sue Ford



If you want to see some stunning photography from around Bluff and Stewart Island, check out Joel Ryan's FB page *Joels In-Sights*. -

Buy a copy of the children's picture book *Seaberry Stomp* written and illustrated by island residents and featuring heaps of fun island facts! All proceeds are donated to the island's pre-school Rakiura Rugrats. Available at the Stewart Island Gift Shop, Red Shed, Ship to Shore, and the Bluff ferry terminal.



Predator Free Rakiura Update

On the 5th and 6th of October, the Predator Free Rakiura Governance

Group visited the island to discuss a series of papers that canvas the options for eradicating predators in the Halfmoon Bay area.

No one that came to the two days of workshops expressed disagreement with the concept. Some gave whole-hearted support for the project, some support the concept but with reservations / doubts about mechanisms to make it work. Common issues raised included the following points below:

1. Biosecurity will be one of the biggest challenges, which is why an entire paper was devoted to the issue. This is also the biggest funding challenge as it requires an ongoing source of funding. The most popular biosecurity question was how will we manage boats that depart and arrive in non-standard places such as weekend pleasure boats/ yachties or off-shore fishing boats sheltering in Paterson Inlet. There is a lot to learn off the experience of predator-free islands in the Hauraki Gulf.

2. Another challenge is community ownership of the project. It is important that the communities of interest back this project before it could proceed; their buy in will be essential for the predator removal and biosecurity arrangements to work. There are

different attitudes to increased tourism on the island; some people want the increased employment opportunities and more families on the island as a result of the project, others don't. Some people are also concerned that decisions have already been made, which isn't the case.

3. There was some concern about the future of domestic cats & dogs after predator removal is complete. Dogs are already managed and will continue to be - perhaps with more training or controls such as being kept on a lead in some areas to reduce attacks on native birds. Cats will need to be managed more like dogs to ensure that they don't escape into the wild and breed. Environment Southland already has provisions in its Pest Management Strategy for cats on Stewart Island to be micro-chipped, registered and neutered, but these are not yet enforced.

4. People asked about the various toxins that could be used and how long things take to decompose (i.e. secondary poisoning risk).

5. A number of people raised the location of the fence, noting that there are pros and cons to different options. Putting the fence closer to town means less risk of biosecurity breaches by boaties from South Island going to Port William and Paterson Inlet, and also prevents the fence being on Maori Beach, which is a place often photographed on the island. Further away from town

means greater biodiversity benefits from the predator free area, and means people are less likely to see the fence.

The Governance Group would like to thank all those that engaged in the events, and particularly those that helped organise them including local Governance Group members Garry Neave, Jill Skerrett and Sandy King.

The consultation will continue over summer to allow the various communities of interest to engage - including the fishing and aquaculture industry, iwi and hunters. Garry, Jill and Sandy are happy to continue talking to individuals and groups locally - it is important the Stewart Island community engages in this process. The papers can be seen on the Predator Free Rakiura website (predatorfreerakiura.org.nz), or from the Rakiura DOC office. If you want to discuss any of the detail feel free to contact the appropriate member of the Governance Group.

In the mean time the University of Auckland is going to do some work on home range size of kiore (with and without the other rats), which is one of the outstanding issues from the predator removal options. The Governance Group has asked them to consider using parts of Rakiura as study sites so the information can be utilised for the Predator Free Halfmoon Bay Project.

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Shop Talk

by Jules Retberg

Notes from a small island

First of all a nod to Bill Bryson for the title of this month's Shop Talk. His is a humorous travel book about Great Britain. Shop Talk this month is about a very different type of note and small island.

Did you know it's illegal to write on New Zealand currency? I didn't. We've probably all seen something scribbled on an old note, usually a total which presumably has been jotted down while counting stacks of notes.

We had a giggle in the shop recently when a \$20 note was dispensed from the ATM with a bold statement on the back.

If you are easily shocked I suggest you don't continue reading this!



Then a few days later I found a \$1 coin with a sticker on stating "thank you".

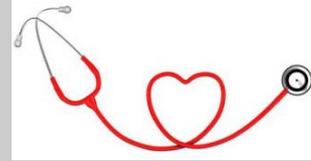
Were the two connected? We don't know - but does anyone recognise the hand writing?

If you're on Facebook you may have seen the caption competition that ensued. Ask Sam who the lucky winner was, and the winning caption!

Let's all drag our minds out of the gutter and move onto the subject of brand new clean money. You may have seen the new \$5 and \$10 notes that were launched in October which have a range of security features such as micro-printing, and the see-through parts make it difficult to counterfeit the note apparently.

Advice from the Reserve Bank is not to iron our polymer bank notes! I couldn't tell you the last time I picked up an iron, but it certainly wasn't to iron a bank note. When a tramper returning from the North-west Circuit gets a folded note out of his sweaty sock to pay for his well-earned drink at the shop, an iron isn't the first thing I think of either ...

Festive greetings to one and all - and don't forget we sell gift vouchers if you can't bring yourself to handle money!



Gentleness and Strength

These are the attributes that sum up for us the character, the contribution and the very essence of our much loved nurse, Deborah Dillon.

Debs' work as a Rural Nurse Specialist on the Island started on the 3rd of September, 2000. With her colleague, Marty Pepers, she provided comprehensive health care in this demanding location, where their clinical skills might be needed at any moment of the day or night to make life saving decisions.

Talking to her many admiring patients, I have constantly picked up their appreciation of Debs' total calm and acceptance of their needs and situation. Nothing fazed her, nothing was beyond her ability to seek out the best option, the best outcome for her patients. Sympathy and straight talking, where necessary, went hand in hand. My husband Ronnie came in for a measure of both from Debs and he adored her - on both counts!

Debs has a special love for children and her work to establish the Well Child programme has been of enormous benefit to Island families. The elderly have been gently supported and cared for and those of us in the middle years have been greeted into the clinic with that beautiful, warm smile and that sense of being able to bring our most intimate concerns to a nurse who will not judge us for our very human failings.

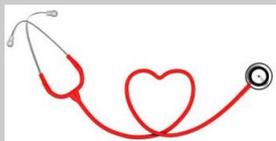
Debs has contributed so much good advice and guidance to the Health Committee, providing expert information and timely suggestions as to how we could respond to the needs of Island residents. We always came away from meetings feeling that she, whose contribution was enormous, valued ours.

In thanking Debs for her years of dedicated service, we wish to pay tribute too to her husband Chris, who has supported Debs in her taxing role of responding to call-outs day and night. The Island is hugely in their debt.

Bless you both!

Raylene Waddell
Chairperson

Stewart Island Health Committee



In times of sickness, sadness, despair or trauma it takes a very special person to quietly deal with all the physical and emotional drama which accompanies such events. Someone who quickly assesses a situation with calmness and offers practical assistance while reassuring family and friends is a godsend in our isolated community when medical events threaten our lives or sickness renders us 'inoperable'. Debs Dillon has been an outstanding nurse and friend to Stewart Islanders for so many years and we are really sad to see her retire from a position that she has carried out with

utmost diligence. Debs has the kindest manner, a lovely sense of humour and such a calm way of dealing with people whether it is a screaming newborn, a frustrated young mother, an anxious child, an elderly or dying person, or the family of someone nearing the end of their life. Debs has been there to offer us so much and expect so little in return. We as a community and 'large family' of an Island which Debs is so much part of will miss her as our district nurse and it is hoped that we can all give back to her in some little way when she needs us.

Margaret Hopkins

Kiwi Monitoring by *Sandy King*

Monitoring the kiwi released into the Ackers Point project area in 2013 is shaping up to be a busy and exciting job for me this summer, and a busy time for the kiwi as well. I'd been keeping an eye the whereabouts of the three males wearing transmitters since late May when two of them were caught and had their transmitter bands changed. At that time the third male, Matatika, was tucked up in an inaccessible burrow with his mate Ngaio and a sub-adult, and wasn't caught. Over the next couple of months he and Ngaio, and presumably the sub-adult (I don't look into the burrow unless there is a good reason as the transmitter signal tells me where they are) remained in the same burrow.

The other two males were also settled in the same burrows so in October I decided it was time do a bit more snooping and set up SIRCET's two trail cameras outside burrows. The camera set up outside Matatika and Ngaio's burrow failed to capture any useful images and, as Murphy's law dictates, they were the first pair to leave their burrow which was found empty on the first camera check. However they left behind evidence that they had hatched yet another chick – egg shell membrane was

clearly visible in the empty burrow.

The camera was moved and both cameras have since proved their worth at the two other burrows – the golf course pair Takiti and male Tx52 have a chick which first appeared on camera on 31st October and continues to live in the burrow. Better yet, Tx52 is also still using that burrow and is incubating a second egg! The camera shows his mate Takiti is there as well.

Back towards Ackers Point, male Tx22 and his unnamed mate have been using a very long burrow under a tree root complex. The transmitter signal comes strongly from a spot about 3m from the entrance so the camera is the only way to observe their comings and goings. This pair also have a sub-adult kiwi living with them, a chick from last season perhaps, and on 7th November this season's chick made its camera debut. Tx22 is still using the burrow, perhaps he is also sitting on a second egg! Matatika, although he has moved since his chick hatched, hasn't moved far and seems to be in the same general area at each signal check. If this continues in the next couple of weeks it could be an indication that he & Ngaio have re-nested, and I'll be paying close attention to their transmitter signals.

Potentially our three kiwi pairs could produce six chicks this season and, while it is unlikely that they would all survive to reach breeding age, this does raise questions about their future and the future of chicks in successive seasons. Stewart Island kiwi tend to live in family groups for a few years, but eventually the younger birds will be forced to leave and find a territory of their own. Ackers Point is a relatively small area and would quickly reach carrying capacity for kiwi which would then need to disperse out into the more populated areas of Leask Bay, Lonnekens and beyond. Increasing the birdlife in our backyards is a key long term goal for SIRCET which strives to control predators in its project area and encourages residents to do the same around their houses. However for kiwi domestic dogs and cats are as much of a threat as feral predators and need to be managed to ensure the safety of kiwi in our neighbourhood. We can all help to protect our kiwi by not letting our dogs roam unattended, participating in the kiwi avoidance dog training programme, and keeping our cats inside at night. Having kiwi in our backyards is one of the special things about living here, and a key point of difference that makes us stand out from the crowd in the eyes of the rest of the world.



Ltl Acorn C 048°F 009°C 11/07/2015 20:57:58

Ltl Acorn ● 053°F 012°C 11/25/2015 04:26:34

T22 chick and adult.

Look who else visits.

Community Board News from Jon Spraggon

NEW MUSEUM SITE

The Rakiura Heritage Centre Trust and the New Zealand Fire Commission has agreed on the terms of the lease of the land for the site of the new Rakiura Heritage Centre on Main Road Stewart Island. With the lease now signed the Trust can move forward with securing resource consents and raising funds to ensure the new facility will be up and running within a couple of years.

ELECTRICITY UPGRADES

At a special meeting recently the Stewart Island – Rakiura Community Board accepted prices for work to be carried out on the SIESA Power network on the island. This will include the connection of the recently purchased Generator into the network and the installa-

tion of underground ducts and cabling from the power station to Horseshoe Bay Road and then to the concrete bridge on the road towards Halfmoon Bay. These are Stages 1 & 2 of planned upgrades to ensure an uninterrupted supply of electricity to the main business areas on the island. Chorus have been approached to hopefully install telephone cabling into the ducts at the same time that this work is carried out.

XMAS & CRUISE SHIPS

That time of the year is here again when the island population swells and tempers sometime get short. Please be tolerant of our visitors and make them all welcome to the island. Allow a little extra time to get things done. We need the visitors. For many people and businesses they are their life blood and they add another character level to our lives.

NZ First MPs Clayton Mitchell and Ria Bond crossed a bumpy Foveaux Strait last month to spend an evening at the Pub chatting with locals about shark cage diving concerns. This was the most recent of several visits to the island Clayton has made this year to discuss the issue. On 3rd Dec Clayton and PauMac's Storm Stanley accompanied island cribbie Ken McAnergney in Parliament when Ken presented Helen Cave's petition to a select committee. Nearly 800 people signed the petition to cease shark cage diving near Stewart Island. The cage diving season has started again. For more information on the issue visit the community page *Stop Shark Cage Diving Near Stewart Island* on Facebook.



Sarah's Rakiura Remarks by MP Sarah Dowie

Christmas is right around the corner and with that, it's timely to reflect on a year of big initiatives and triumphs.

The Government backs the tourism industry and has invested an unprecedented \$600 million to help support overseas promotion and marketing work in both emerging and established markets. We have introduced the Tourism Growth Partnership which aims to boost innovation and productivity in the tourism sector – and have invested more than \$10 million in 20 projects that will attract international visitors.

Venture Southland figures (based on the Stewart Island Visitor Levy) show more people are visiting Stewart Island - 33,073 people visited in the year ending September, compared with 28,717 in the year to September 2014, and this excludes resident and private boat access. The number of visitors benefits the entire economy from accommodation providers to transport companies, those employed in the industry and retailers/restaurants. I wish the local tourism operators; restaurants, transport companies and all of those involved in the industry all the best over the busy summer period.

The Government's conservation efforts to better preserve our landscape and our national parks have been targeted at both native flora and fauna. This is obviously a key part in assisting growth on the island whether it be through direct employment or eco-tourism. The DOC Community Fund has

strengthened local community group efforts to halt the spread of wilding pines and preserve the endangered galaxiid fish family. Further initiatives have been introduced in the last couple of years - the War on Weeds, a nationwide effort focused on 12 common weeds causing problems throughout the country, and the Battle for our Birds, an eight-month anti-predator campaign to protect our most vulnerable native bird species.

We all play a caretaker role in preserving New Zealand's landscape. It's vital that while we enjoy it, we allow it to thrive and make sure it retains its natural beauty for the generations to come and the many visitors who make the journey here to appreciate it.

I hope you all enjoy your summer! With the warmer weather comes the opportunity to appreciate the natural beauty of Rakiura. The best way to check it out is on foot, on a boat or kayak. Get out there and get active in our national parks! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I look forward to working with you all in the New Year.

My office will be closed from 23 December 2015 to 18 January 2016.

Should you wish to discuss anything with me or if there is anything I can help you with please don't hesitate to contact me on 03 218 6813 or email sarah.dowie@parliament.govt.nz

Museum Matters – Jo Riksem



Ferndale House

E.A. Phillips



Ferndale House Sunday 23 Dec. 1928 Edward Stephen Gale

The old boarding houses that were a big part of Stewart Island life were always very busy during the Christmas holidays. Edward Stephen Gale came on a holiday here and his album of Stewart Island photographs were a welcome acquisition to our collection some years ago. Ferndale House, until it burnt down was a big part of that life and there are still locals on the island that had their first jobs here and also met future partners. Oh, if only the walls could talk.

New book: The Bluff History Group have just released their new book, "Shipwrecks Bluff Area 1845 to 1920" This is a handy guide of shipwrecks that happened in the Bluff area with many of these boats having visited Stewart Island waters at one time or another.

Museum Special: Watercolour cards of Whalers Base by Margaret Fairhall – packets of 5 for \$2.00, and Norwegian mugs selling at \$5.00 each.

Opening hours;
Monday to Saturday 10.00am – 1:30 pm;
Sunday Noon – 2.00pm

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Any questions to Vicki on 114



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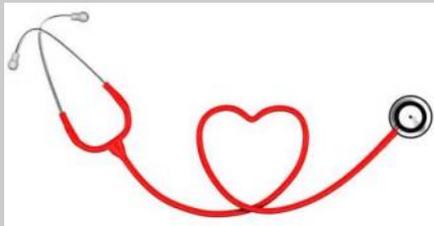
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On behalf of the Phillip & Diane Smith whanau I would like to sincerely thank Debs for all of her professional, medical and friendly advise to our whanau over all the years that Debs has been our community Nurse, occasionally out side of her normal clinic hours. Her kind and friendly manner made our problems more bearable. We wish Debs all the best for the future and will continue our friendship with Debs and Chris and if they need any assistance from us at any time they will only have to call us.

Aroha Nui

Phillip, Diane, Rebecca, Sarah, & Zane



Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust News

The first phase of this season's field work monitoring yellow-eyed penguin breeding success has been completed. The Bravo Islands were searched for nests in late October resulting in 16 nests, and 33 nests were found on Whenua Hou / Codfish Island in early November. While the number of nests on the Bravo Islands is down from 20 nests in 2013, the decline is nowhere near as severe as in other monitored areas. The Trust monitors penguin breeding areas from north of the Otago Peninsula to Long Point in the Catlins and nest numbers have halved compared with the 2014/2015 season, which itself was a very poor season.

The only apparent bright spot is Whenua Hou / Codfish Island where there were 33 nests compared with 32 nests in 2014/2015. I say "apparent" because an increase of 1 nest isn't truly significant, and the number is only half of what it was in 2001 when 61 nests were found, indicating a long term decline. Also, no juvenile penguins have been seen on Whenua Hou for a couple of years which doesn't bode well for future recruitment into the breeding population. The Trust began inserting microchips into chicks in 2006, marking 236 chicks between 2006-2012. Only 8 (3.4%) of these chicks have been detected as breeding adults and this rate of recruitment is too low to maintain the population long term.

Last season Timu Moxham helped out with monitoring at The Neck as part of his William Pike Challenge. It was great having Timu come along, so we decided to invite another pupil from the school this season. Principal Kath had the older kids draw straws to see who would get to come, and Winiata Edwards was the lucky winner. Winiata will join me for a check of chicks on the Bravo Islands later in December.

Sandy King
For the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust



As the weather was looking a wee bit dodgy and Traill Park

was doing its usual swimming pool impersonation, we decided to hold the **Picnic Day** in the hall. Brett and Kate definitely had the flashiest picnic stand ever complete with bubbles! The rest of us chowed down on the usual sausage, bread and ketchup combo (you just can't beat it) and washed it down with a few beers!

The kid's paua shell gardens all looked amazing and Liam took out the competition! The floral arrangement was so hotly contested but



Serena took out the with her lovely display and Lania just pipped herself at the post to take out best bacon and egg pie! (Well, it was the only one!) Big thanks to Jill and Sam at the Four Square for donating the prizes for these competitions.

But the highlight of the day had to be the silly races. It turned out to be backpackers v locals for a few of them; the three legged race final between Brett and Lawrence and Tina (working at Bay Motels) and Lee (salmon farm scientist) was extremely competitive, so much so Lee may have broken her

finger in the process!! But as she won, she really didn't mind too much! Again, thanks go to Glowing Sky for providing the adults prizes and SIWI for providing the kids prizes. Not sure on total amount raised as we still have a few costs to pay but probably a couple of hundred dollars was made to go towards the erection of a new park bench on the way to Golden Bay. This is a nationwide initiative by the Women's Institute to provide a new park bench in our local communities to commemorate the 95th anniversary of the WI in New Zealand. (As an aside, if you watch the Great British Menu on Food TV, they are currently in a competition to cook for the UK's 100th WI celebration!)



Article and photos by Vicki Coats
(for SIWI)

What's Up, DOC?
From Jennifer Ross

Staff Spotlight:
Spring Staff Update

The Department of Conservation (DOC) has welcomed four new staff members this month. I would like to introduce:

-Kevin Carter, who has come to us from DOC Thames for the summer season to do Southern New Zealand

Dotterel banding. Kevin's position has been fully funded by the Southland branch of Birds New Zealand (Ornithological Society of New Zealand).

- Anthony Hobern has rejoined DOC for his 3rd season working as a six month Operations Ranger after returning from 6 months spent in America.

-Alaine Holdom has joined DOC Rakiura as a six month Operations Ranger.

-Emma Feenstra is rejoining the team as a six month Operations Ranger. Emma started with DOC Rakiura as a Long Term Volunteer last year and has been travelling and working in Canada for the past six months.

DOC will have a dedicated local weeds team starting on the 5th January, 2016 for 4 months.

Ulva Island Rat Update

There has been no sign of the Ulva Island rat since Monday 26th October despite the continued Department of Conservation (DOC) weekly monitoring using trail cameras, traps, and tracking tunnels.

We have received some exciting results back from the rat droppings the field team collected. It has been confirmed that the rat is a male! This is a very important finding as it means that we aren't chasing any offspring from this particular rat. However, this does not mean that another rat hasn't arrived at the same time, so we will continue monitoring until the full check of Ulva Island has been completed starting on the 4th December, when rodent detecting dog Gadget and an independent dog will check the island. This will give us a high level of confidence that there aren't any more rats on Ulva Island at present.

The results of the analysis also indicated that it is very likely that the rat came from the Neck (this isn't 100% certain but the closest match is with previous samples from the Neck). This once again highlights the ongo-

One of the last trail camera images captured of the very healthy looking rat (note the fat rolls) on 22nd October, 2015



Introducing: Kevin Carter, Anthony Hobern, Alaine Holdom, and Emma Feenstra! Photo: Jennifer Ross

down to available resources and balancing risk. We may have been able to catch the most recent rat in a trap if we hadn't had the traps in boxes, however it is generally agreed that the risk of having traps outside boxes is not acceptable due to the likely impact on non-target species. Additionally, we may increase our chances of catching a rat if we had traps closer together but that would significantly increase the costs of on-

going maintenance including trap checks and trap line maintenance, so the benefits from extra traps need to be compared with doing more regular checks of existing traps. We will be applying for additional resources next budget but appreciate the assistance given by the Ulva Island Trust to date and will be looking at how best to use our available resources in the meantime.

We have confirmation that the rat droppings had brodifacoum in them. It is amazing what information you can get from a few rat droppings!

We are currently undertaking a review of the biosecurity for Ulva Island and updating the surveillance and contingency sections of the Ulva Island Biosecurity Plan based on what we have learned so far and continue to learn from the latest incursion. The latest rat highlighted that when we are dealing with individuals they can behave quite differently from rat populations, and that while our biosecurity to date has been quite successful (it has removed more than a dozen rats before they could establish), we can always do better. We need your help to prevent rodents from re-establishing, and making sure that if a rat does get there, it is detected as quickly as possible.

If you see anything of concern on the island, or hear about something second hand please make sure you report it to DOC as soon as possible. We need to make sure that a reporting form is completed at the time to capture as much detail as possible, and to make any future follow up so that a decision can be made regarding an appropriate response. I can't stress enough the value of taking photos, or collecting samples such as droppings or feeding sign. Not all reports will warrant a full response but cumulatively they help form a clearer picture.

Biosecurity is always a compromise between what is ideal and what is achievable and affordable. Where we sit on that scale comes

going maintenance including trap checks and trap line maintenance, so the benefits from extra traps need to be compared with doing more regular checks of existing traps. We will be applying for additional resources next budget but appreciate the assistance given by the Ulva Island Trust to date and will be looking at how best to use our available resources in the meantime.

If you would like to be added to the Ulva Island weekly information update distribution list please send an e-mail to jjross@doc.govt.nz.

Beaked Whale Rescue

Phred Dobbins was called by Vicki Coats on Friday 20th November after backpackers reported a "dolphin" stranded on the rocks near Lonnekers Beach. Phred went to investigate and realised that it was a beaked whale and looked as though it had been stuck there for quite a while. After some time Phred managed to turn the whale around, getting it away from the rocks and seaweed where it had been stuck. A small crowd had gathered and watched as the whale swam back out into the sea.

We are currently waiting for DOC marine specialists to identify the whale but it is thought to be a juvenile Gray's beaked whale. The young whale appeared to have an eye injury which may have been caused by contact with the rocks. It is difficult to determine the reason for most whale and dolphin strandings, but it was later discovered that there had been Orca spotted on this side of the strait that day so the beaked whale may have come into area to escape or hide from them. Alternatively, it may have been the result of disorientation from the eye injury.

Possum Control

After possum monitoring was carried out in wet and cold conditions in June/July we looked at the results for each of our blocks. Numbers of possums were low in some areas but in other areas we identified possum numbers high enough to justify control. These areas are Doughboy, Little Hellfire, Southwest Arm, south side of the Rakeahua River and upper Rakeahua River, a total of 6621ha.

These areas were put out to an open tender and the successful tenderers were Tomau Holdings for Doughboy and Little Hellfire and Contract Wild Animal Control for Southwest Arm. Unfortunately we have not yet been able to secure a contractor for the re-



Ulva Island rat droppings found and analysed. Photo Credit: Elaine Murphy

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maining 3 areas but we are in the process of doing that. Control work by Tomau and CWAS will be undertaken in November and December and work in the other 3 areas will likely occur between January and April, next year. Control will be undertaken using trapping and the toxins cyanide and 1080 paste in bait bags, with bait bags being removed at the end of the control period, as per previous years.

Relevant hunting blocks will be closed during the time of control and to allow post monitoring and caution periods will be in place for four months.

Doughboy Bay Whale Stranding

Several pilot whales/upokohue which stranded at Doughboy Bay had to be euthanised by Department of Conservation (DOC) staff on 5 November to minimise their suffering.

A pod of 29 pilot whales stranded at Doughboy Bay were discovered on the evening of Tuesday 3 November by two trampers. The pair, who had tramped into Doughboy Bay hut on the west coast of the island, found the pod of dead and dying whales. It was two days before they could raise the alarm via water taxi operator Matt Atkins.

Phred Dobbins and Jennifer Ross flew to Doughboy Bay to assess the situation. Once there, they found the whales stranded the length of the beach at low tide.

“Eight of the whales were still alive when we arrived,” said Phred.

“However, refloating them was not an option given the length of time they had been stranded in hot, dry conditions. With the tide well out, we saw little hope of keeping the animals alive until enough rescuers could be flown in to assist,” he said.

Phred added the decision was made to euthanise eight whales.

“Euthanasia is a difficult decision but is made purely for the welfare of the animals involved, to prevent them from prolonged suffering.”

The whales will be left to decompose naturally on the beach, due to the remoteness of the site. Visitors should stay well clear of the carcasses and avoid swimming in the area.

“We’re extremely thankful to the trampers who reported this incident” Mr. Dobbins said.

The public are the eyes and ears of DOC, and DOC encourages anyone to report conservation emergencies, especially whale strandings and fires, by calling the DOC hotline, 0800 DOC HOT (0800 362 468).

Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978 it is illegal to take any part of a marine mammal without a permit to do so. Taking of marine mammals or parts (alive or dead) without proper authorisation could incur a penalty of up to 6 months imprisonment or a fine up to \$250,000.

Close up of the beaked whale. *Photo Credit: Vincent Ollivier*



Fire Danger High

The Southern Rural Fire Authority is warning the public that the risk of fire is high due to the warm temperatures and low levels of rain.

Indicators of fire risk, which the Southern Rural Fire Authority measures on a daily basis, have been steadily trending upwards. Principal rural fire officer Mike Grant said that this, combined with dry and dead vegetation, is making fires easy to start.

The Southern Rural Fire Authority is asking people to think about their burning practices before they light a fire. “There have

been a number of small fires where the dry conditions led to the fire burning a lot hotter and faster than anticipated by the members of the community who began them,” he said.

“People can reduce the risk by assuming that the worst can happen and acting accordingly. It’s not wise to leave your fire unattended, be it a camp fire smouldering while you go for a hunt or a pile in your back paddock. We can all miss the obvious danger areas or get busy and not notice that the weather conditions have changed.”



Phred Dobbins at Doughboy Bay with one of the stranded pilot whales. *Photo: Jennifer Ross DOC*



Group of pilot whales stranded on Doughboy Bay Beach. *Photo Credit: Jennifer Ross*

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Contact
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Liam, winner of the paua shell garden competition at the SIWI Picnic Day (page 17)

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