

STEWART ISLAND NEWS

CELEBRATING RAKIURA

December 2023

\$4.00

There was no November issue.

AM HOPE
GUM BOOT UP
NEW ZEALAND

2023 Fundraising for Gumboot Friday



Thank You Rakiura - You're AMAZING! Together we were able to raise an incredible \$3628 dollars to support Youth Mental Health in Aotearoa. Mike King and the Gumboot Friday/ I Am Hope Team are humbled and sincerely grateful for the enormous support they receive from this comparatively small in number, but clearly big in heart, community. Ngā mihi to all the local business and individual supporters.



Bluebird day for the Stewart Island Health Committee's Garden Tour. More pictures and story on page 9



Happy Birthday Jack!

An apt costume for you, I am told..
Photo: Gwen Neave

As our island embraces the burgeoning summer, this issue brings together the usual suspects, and a few slightly more surprising ones. Among the regular features, keep an eye out for our resident sea lions making their splash. The creative pieces from the school kids are also something special.

Lately, the island has been buzzing with activity, leaving few locals untouched by the influx of visitors. Yet, amid the

hustle and bustle, the heartbeat of normal island life continues to thump steadily for those who call this place home.

To those islanders still navigating the ebb and flow of daily life, we wish you tranquility amidst the growing pace. Wishing residents and visitors alike an enjoyable summer, and a Merry Christmas to those who celebrate it.

- Freya

RAKIURA JADE with Carver & Sculptor Dave Goodin

Open from 10.30am, upstairs at 45 Elgin Terrace (next to the boat slip)

Enjoy stunning views of Stewart Island harbour from the world's southernmost jade workshop.

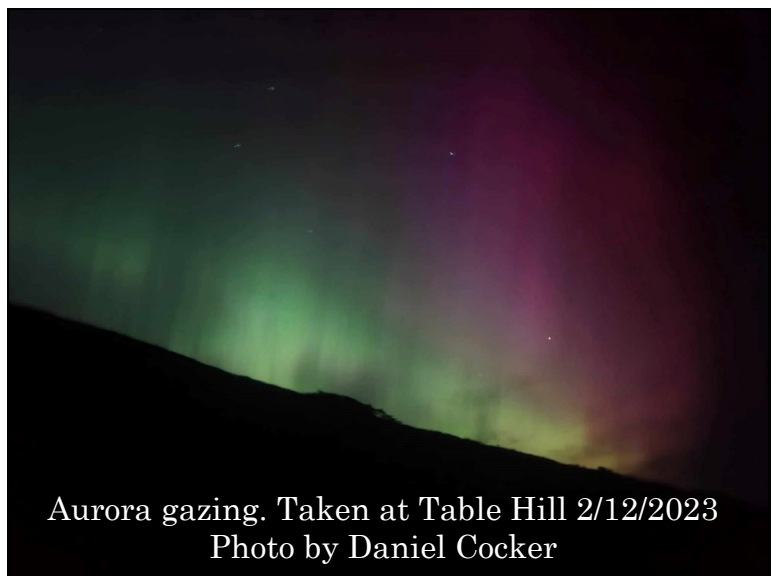
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Aurora gazing. Taken at Table Hill 2/12/2023
Photo by Daniel Cocker

Sympathy to the Lord family on the death of their mother and grandmother, Joy Lord.



**WEED
OF THE
MONTH**

Gorse - *Ulex europaeus*

Gorse is a well known pest plant originally introduced for hedging. Seed can be viable for decades, and seed pods explode spreading seeds up to 5m. Gorse can grow in poor soils and tolerates hot and cold but needs light to thrive.

To identify - Woody shrub with sharp spiny green leaves. Yellow pea-like flowers, turning into hairy seed pods.

To remove - While gorse can be controlled using chemical means there are also some novel ways to provide long term control:

- Hot composting - Warren Cullen and his wife Eileen Dawber have been using this method on their property on the Otago Peninsula. Gorse is mulched then put into piles to hot compost it. 95% of gorse seeds will die during composting and the end product is a useful for food crops or planting natives. The compost needs to be kept around 55°C (but not above 75°C) and needs to be monitored. Rice that has been placed near the roots of old-growth forest, and become inoculated with useful organisms is then mixed in with the compost reducing the need for fertilisers. This is based on the work of Dr Elaine Ingham, known as Soil Food Web.
- Natural forest regeneration - Gorse can be a good nursery plant to native species, which eventually shade the gorse as they grow above it, causing it to die off. Hugh Wilson (of *Stewart Island Plants* fame) has pioneered this on Hinewai Reserve on Banks Peninsula. In the last 30 years the improvement of the native forest has supported the return of native wildlife. However the key to the success of this method is removing grazing animals that will eat the native seedlings.
- Seed bombing - Similar to the above, but locally sourced seed is used to make 'seed bombs' then thrown into gorse. Seed bombs are ideal for hard to get to sites, like steep cliffs. It can take 10-15 years for the native plants to overtake the gorse. Fast growing natives that tolerate acidic soil are best. Locally sourced seeds are best these are mixed with compost from around the plants you are propagating, and clay. Mix one part seeds, 3 parts compost, 5 parts clay, and make into to marble sized balls with roughly 5 - 10 seeds in them, then let them dry for a few days. Aim to sow at least 1 seed bomb every 10 metres, but more is fine. Try some of the plants below.

Plant instead - Mānuka (*leptospermum scoparium*), coprosma species (but not kanono - *coprosma autumnalis*), tauhinu (*ozothamnus leptophyllus*), patatē / seven-finger (*schefflera digitata*)



SIRCET are recruiting:

Full Time Fixed term positions – January 2024 to March 2024

Field Team - Weed Control

1 x Team Leader & 2x Team members

We have funding to continue our Darwin's Barberry work for three months to follow up on the work done over the last 2 years.

For more information please email info@sircet.org.nz



Mahi Ngatahi Working Together

December 2023

HEDGEHOG SURVEY YIELDS INTERESTING RESULTS



Predator Free Rakiura's search for hedgehogs has yielded some interesting results - despite few of the spiky mammals being spotted!

With support from landowners, local contractors, SIRCET, and the Rakiura DOC office, 147 cameras were set up in a 13-square-kilometre area surrounding Oban in May 2023. The idea of the camera survey was to see if we could find a boundary for the population of hedgehogs – so that we can start to understand how big the hedgehog problem might be. A further six cameras were used as a 'control', within the township, where hedgehogs have previously been known to be present.

Each camera was baited with wet meat cat food, and the cameras were in place for at least 10 nights. More than 30,000 images were captured by the cameras! No hedgehogs were detected in the survey area, while one was detected in the control area. Lots of other species were detected across the grid, including possums, rats, cats, deer, and many birds.

There was one animal detected which may have been a mouse. Further review of the images by PFR's research partner Manaaki Whenua was unable to confirm whether this was the case - it's possible the animal was a small rat - potentially kiore. We know that mice arrive on Rakiura but don't seem to set up an established population. So this possible sighting is helpful information not only for Predator Free Rakiura but others interested in mice sightings. We've passed on the images to Department of Conservation and Environment Southland.

There could be several reasons why hedgehogs weren't found within the survey area:

- Hedgehogs were already hibernating at the time – we know that hedgehogs hibernate in winter, and we were searching for them close to hibernation time.
- Baited cameras weren't an effective method for detecting them.
- Hedgehog density (the number of hedgehogs out and about) was too low to detect them.
- Hedgehogs are absent from the survey area.

'No detections' of hedgehogs doesn't mean that the work hasn't been valuable, nor that hedgehogs aren't out there. There hasn't been any other recent data available on hedgehog distribution, so this work creates a baseline for us to work from. It was also a great opportunity to test baited cameras as a tool for hedgehog detection, and we're keen to build from that with other techniques and at a different time of year.

The results could mean that hedgehogs are limited to the township, but we will need to do more research into hedgehogs on Rakiura - including where they are and how many there may be. The results from the survey have also helped us to begin building a data set on other species in the area, which is beneficial to PFR, too! We will keep you posted with what will come next for our hedgehog investigations!

In the meantime, a big thankyou from PFR to landowners and local contractors for their support in delivering this important research!



A couple of the interesting shots picked up by the cameras!

MĀ TE WĀ, CAMPBELL & BRIDGET!

There are changes afoot in the Predator Free Rakiura Project Team, as we say farewell to Project Director Campbell Leckie and Assistant Project Director Bridget Carter.

Bridget is most certainly a familiar face about town on Rakiura as a resident, and Campbell will be familiar to many of you as he spent lots of time on the island during his 18 months with the project.

Bridget finishes up with PFR this December, while Campbell is on deck until mid January. In the meantime, Te Puka Rakiura Trust is fast-tracking the recruitment process for new project leadership, and we hope to be able to share more on that in the new year.



CAMPBELL SAYS:

I have enjoyed my time with PFR immensely! To work on a project of this transformational scale has been an absolute privilege and I have enjoyed working with you all.

During my time in the role, we:

- Built some significant partnerships such as with Manaaki Whenua for research;
- Made substantial progress in our critical project funding conversation;
- Developed much greater project profile nationally and, in some cases, internationally;
- Laid the foundation for the critical next phase which, once funding is secured, is about getting operations underway to eradicate our six predator species!

I look forward to seeing what happens next with Predator Free Rakiura, and to visiting the island and reconnecting again with those of you I have met on Rakiura - a truly beautiful part of New Zealand.



BRIDGET SAYS:

Wishing the Predator Free Rakiura team all the best for what lies ahead. I remain deeply passionate about this vision and look forward to progress. Only together, will this be possible.

IN 2024, LOOK OUR FOR...

Working starting on biosecurity options
Increasing connections with the Rakiura Community
Identifying tools and techniques

KEEP IN TOUCH

Visit www.predatorfreerakiura.org.nz
Email info@predatorfreerakiura.org.nz

STEWART ISLAND-RAKIURA COMMUNITY BOARD

BONFIRES

A reminder that prior to lighting a bonfire, the Oban Fire Brigade should be notified and steps taken to mitigate the chance of injury or damage as a result of the fire. The fire should be fenced off from the spectators and extinguished prior to leaving the site. Don't cover the embers with sand as this only leaves a hot area that can not be seen and can result in burns to the feet if someone walks over the area. The area should be left clear of any partially burnt timber or litter.

PARKING

Another year has gone by and still no changes have been made to our parking rules in the Halfmoon & Golden Bay areas. The board has consulted with the community and have put proposals to the Council but we still wait on the Council to open up the relevant bylaws for review before this can move forward. This has been promised on many occasions over the last few years, but keeps being moved back due to staff shortages and other policy reviews taking priority. In the meantime we ask that

residents and visitors alike consider all vehicle users by observing a few simple points:

- Access road to the wharf and the parking in front of the shops a 30 minute time limit on it.
- Limit the time you leave your vehicle on the Halfmoon Bay waterfront, outside the Community Centre/School, and the parking bays outside the Hotel and Museum to a maximum of half a day.
- If going off the island for longer periods of time leave your car at home or park on the roadsides outside the main bay area.
- Please do not park on the grassed verge areas on Main Road outside the DOC offices as we have tried hard to make this a pedestrian friendly area.
- If going to Ulva Island walk from Traill Park or take a shuttle to the Golden Bay Wharf rather than driving and trying to park in the limited parking area at the wharf.

RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT

Numerous groups registered an interest in developing and alternative energy option for

the island and these are being evaluated before a final selection is made for the development of a business case to be presented to the government.

ULVA WHARF-WALKING TRACK

Council and the Board continue to meet with DOC and other parties involved, but little progress has been made. It is still intended to close the present wharf at the end of this tourist Season. Council will receive updated information on any progress made early in the new year.

COMMUNITY MEETING

It is our intention to hold several community meetings either late March or early April. A similar format to the meetings held last September is planned. Further details once the dates are confirmed.

XMAS NEW YEAR

Members of the Community Board thank you for your support and ideas during the last 12 months and wish all members of the community a merry and safe Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

How to contact the editor

I (Freya) welcome questions/comments/chats about the SIN, however I am working full time elsewhere. If you want to talk about anything SIN-related with me, please contact me by email stewartislandnews@gmail.com in the first instance, or text 02041796127. I will respond to you out of hours when I am available.

I appreciate your patience and understanding.

Advertise in the **Stewart Island News**

This little paper ends up in most island households and is sent to over 150 crib owners, former residents, and other subscribers around the country and the world. Dozens of visitors see this too.

So tell all of those people about your business!

Contact editor for rates at stewartislandnews@gmail.com

Hato Hone St John 3-Steps for Life Awareness Sessions *By Julie Asher*

October 1st saw the Pavilion shocked with dozens of simulated cardiac arrests, and the Island's younger contingent stepping up to the challenge. Rakiura received free training sessions on CPR and use of an AED as part of Hato Hone St John's Shocktober campaign. It aims to increase awareness of cardiac arrest and improve the outcomes of those who might suffer one. St John husband and wife team Alan and Mandy Reilly began by making sure we all knew the difference between a heart attack and a cardiac arrest, before checking we could find the emergency call button on our phones, no matter the model. We also reviewed the basics of how to determine whether an unconscious person requires CPR. Then, to the earworm rhythms of 'Staying Alive' and 'Baby Shark', we tested ourselves on our ability to compress the chest sufficiently (in general 1/3rd its depth in an adult) and maintain around 97-99 pumps every 2 minutes, before practicing how to switch out with a replacement support person without losing rhythm. Trickier than it sounds! The specialist training mannequins brought along helped us track our progress, and provided clear feedback if anyone was falling off the pace. Finally the AEDs were unpacked and the process of setting one up, keeping clear and following the guided prompts kept everyone busy. A spirited discussion of where the Island AEDs are located and which were accessible after hours ensued 😊. Ka pai to mahi everyone and big thanks to Mandy, Alan, Hato Hone St John, the Health Committee, Lions and RealNZ for helping make the sessions possible.



[Changes to Stewart Island Rakiura Visitor Levy Policy](#)

Some minor amendments to the Stewart Island Rakiura Visitor Levy Policy have been made as the result of feedback from the Stewart Island Rakiura Community Board, the Stewart Island Rakiura Visitor Levy Allocation subcommittee and the local community.

These minor amendments are designed to better suit the lifestyle of island residents, and make board decision-making, advertising for applications and the allocation process more streamlined.

The changes are:

- The date advertisements are to be placed seeking applications has changed from the beginning of March to the beginning of April.
- The date the application period closes has changed from the end of March to the second Friday of May each year.
- The date applicants are to submit accountability forms has changed from 31 March to 31 May in the years after being granted funding.

Creative Kura

The Desk *by Sayla Ware*

There is a house on a street, its name is not important. Inside the house is a room, its whereabouts doesn't matter. However, in this room, there is a desk. The desk stands tall by the window, its aged wooden surface is stained with ink. On the sides of the desk are patterns, carved lovingly by hand. The patterns are far-off places, no one has visited, and no one will. On the desk lies paper with words swooping and diving, flicking, and twisting about the page. By the paper lies a jar, pencils askew with stories inside them. The window shines light on the desk, the brightness filling the room. There is a vase on the desk, old and dark blue, filled daily with flowers that spill over the edge, a lifelong ritual of hers. On the desk, there is a folder full of pictures and words never seen. Beside the desk, there's a basket full of crumpled paper, words and stories that were rejected. The desk's dark surface holds many special things, a box with a lock holding secrets inside. A little glass tortoise holding words to the paper and paper to the words. A pen with a plume writes words for the little glass tortoise to hold. Additionally, a tiny gold key that opens who-knows-what, too small to fit in the boxes lock, too small to fit in the doors.

By the desk there's a shelf full of books with leather covers cracked down the spine, written with love by hands now withered. The shelf is wooden with carved daisies down the side, they link in a chain, and on and on the chain goes whilst the books fill their shelves, the daisies never let go. On the shelf full of books there are precious things too, pictures full of love showing picnics and days at the beach, and to the right of the pictures sits a pen full of rainbows creating colour for all to see. On top of that bookshelf, a globe stands tall, full of adventures that have been and gone. In front of the desk sits a chair, old and worn to the bone, like its owner, it is frayed around the edges and nearing the end of its days.

Year after year stories are written at this desk, the stories will soon end, and the curtains will close, but till then the desk will stand strong.

Halfmoon Bay School Speech *by Tom Allen*

Tom was one of the six semi-finalists in the speech competition this year (future SINs may sample some of the other speeches)

Have you ever asked yourself what life would be like as a twin?

Well I sure haven't because that is the only life I know. Most people think that being a twin would be a lifelong bond with your best buddy - yeah right tamato tomato !!

Today I'm going to go through the pros and cons of being a twin. Firstly we have the cons, bear with me - this could take awhile. So I am going to just tell you my top five.

My first one is that When you insult your twin you kind of put yourself down - I can never get mad and call him ugly....although I still do. Its awkward when we can't tell ourselves apart in baby photos.

For my second one is that sharing playdates gets a bit annoying cause then I never really get a break from Sam, if you know Sam you'll understand.

Sharing a birthday is also a bit annoying - we always argue over the day's plans. Like he might want to go to Mill creek and I want to go to Lee Bay.

People getting us mixed up can be a bit annoying, especially when I get blamed for silly things Sam's done. But as you can tell my luscious locks are helping.

A lot of the time we get the same presents, at Christmas we have our backs to each other when we open our presents - then we compare and try and steal the best one.

And the pros Hmmm, this is tricky.... Always having a spare of things - like a dry wetsuit. But this can backfire cause sometimes he takes mine. The odds of finding matching gumboots are better but this backfired today.

The last but certainly not least is that the competition is easy at least for me it is. Well I just hope he doesn't beat me today, but that shouldn't be a problem.

In conclusion, being a twin may be good for some and bad for others but it is alright for me. What I just told you is my list of things - Sam's list probably would have a lot more pros on it.

Encounters with a sea lion(ess) by Bill Watt

It's that time of year again. The sea lions are around, and expectant sea lion mums are looking for a nice cosy spot to have their families. This can lead to unexpected encounters with humankind.

I was surprised by one which came all the way up my track from Golden Bay and greeted me at my door. She didn't think much of my abode, carried on up the path onto Leonard St, visited my brother Jim across the road, and was last seen under a rhododendron at Raylene's. We've never known sea lions come this far up the hill before. Maybe they've been warned about sea level rise.

Next day. It was a lovely 'Rakiura' day and I decided to kayak around Te Wharawhara ('Native Island'). It was a nice, sunny calm morning so I stopped off at my favourite beach for a swim.



Drying off in the sun, I probably dozed off.

A few minutes later – I woke up to a very surprised awareness of a large black animal lying on the beach alongside me, only a meter or so away!

Needless to say I "*invited her to 'go away'*" and she did. And I put on some clothes and paddled home. End of story. Fortunately.



400 Words by Beverley Osborn

Martin Luther King, jnr., said "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

If I were to deliberately kill someone, my fellow Kiwis would expect me to be punished and few would see the punishment meted out by our country's justice system as unjust. However, if my punishment was the killing off of everybody who lived on the same street, from babies to the very aged, there would be a huge outcry.

This edition of SIN is the one that comes out round Christmas, the season with the traditional message of peace and good will. But the scenes recorded for our TV screens are of bombs, injuries, terror and thousands of displaced people lacking shelter, food and water.

The injustice of the Hamas attack on Israel and the Israeli attacks on Palestinian civilians does affect us all. The huge bombardment of explosives in that particular part of the world will hasten the climate changes that will impact the entire world. The deaths and physical suffering of so many ordinary people is an injustice to them and their families

and the trauma resulting from helplessly witnessing atrocities is an injustice that will affect thinking and behaviours for years to come.

Humans have different ways of dealing with the sufferings caused by injustice. Some will retreat from the world as best they can, some will grab for what is left, without regard for the plight or rights of others, some will be so embittered that they see only continued destruction as the way of justice and some will turn their anger into the energy that educates and builds bridges.

The world is incredibly slow to learn from centuries and centuries of harsh experience, that the only way to stop the on-going breeding of injustice, is to think through the possible consequences of the pursuit of actions stemming from outrage and refrain from any that could cause on-going and multiplying injustice.

Along with our apparent capacity for committing atrocities, given certain triggers, humanity does also have an inherent goodness that rejoices in acts of kindness and care. If we make it a practice every single day to celebrate each moment of beauty, each action of kindness we see, then maybe those attitudes will benefit us all.



In nature, the unexpected is to be expected. There I was ambling home with the pup and scolding myself at the sight of my weed-infested roadside garden, when I spotted a recumbent form on the lawn just inside the gap in the fence. It was as massive and rounded as a Henry Moore statue and, thankfully, just about as inert. A female sea lion was snoozing in the sun, her head buried in a clump of renga renga lilies.

Lochie and I backtracked and went the other way round the house. Well, there would be no immediate tackling of the weeds near her ladyship today. The afternoon passed, tourists passed, some spotted the dozing creature, some were blissfully unaware that not 4 metres away a potential hazard could disrupt their holiday big-time.

About 7pm there was some action. Madame made her determined but not ungraceful way on to the verge and proceeded down the hill, giving the relieving policewoman quite a turn as she (the policewoman) drove slowly along on her evening patrol of the leafy but in no wise crime-ridden suburb of Golden Bay.

The next day came reports of further perambulations by our peripatetic pinniped. She had been observed at Observation Rock, no doubt admiring the new structure built with her safety in mind; she had attempted entry to a garage and to Jim Watt's toilet. Whether the latter structure was in use at the time has not been ascertained. The same lass is thought to have disrupted the sleep of residents at Watercress.

Clearly this lass was looking for something (a place to have her pup?) and I am just so grateful she did not find it in my garden. The morning after her visit, I was ruefully checking the damage to a large garden bed. At first, I blamed the little grey ghosts but this was unlike the usual deer devastation. It dawned on me that the trampled swathe of destruction had been caused by Madame, lumbering in from Rankin Street, flattening my lilies, Red Hot Pokers and monkshood and then

proceeding to have a galumphing great time at the edge of the border, shredding hostas, hellebores and day lilies.

As I gazed in woe there was an avian shriek and another large female shot into view, crossing the scene of devastation. This time it was a kiwi. She too made her way out to Golden Bay Road but with a far faster turn of speed. Perhaps I could start a little business, providing deck chairs to tourists, so they can sit and watch for wildlife. The rate at which this tokoeka is leaving her calling card on lawns and driveway, they should not have long to wait.

Garden visitors aside, the late spring and early summer have brought so many delights. Wild the weather continues to be but what a feast of native clematis and of rhododendrons and now the ballet (whole hillsides!) of creamy kamahi flowers tossing in the wind! Flying home from Invers is always special but never more so as the plane skims over the Bay in all its flowering beauty.



Merry Christmas, everyone, and Happy Gardening!

Raylene

Church Chatter by Jo Riksem



Recently I tested positive for Covid and found myself housebound. Though plenty to keep me busy I found myself depleted of energy to do them. I am so thankful for such a caring community that sent me texts, phone calls and offers to pick things up for me. They were so appreciated. It's hard to put into words the smallest of gestures can make such a big difference when one is not feeling well. Never not take an opportunity to make that call, send that text or do something for someone no matter the situation. The day becomes that much brighter when you do.

The pressure seems on for all things holiday, but try not to make the holidays into a chore. Take time out to just be, no fancy trimmings. Need to take a plate, plain can be just as effective as fancy. A helping hand can be just as welcoming. Spur of the moment can be just as memorable as something all planned. Enjoy your time with friends and family. It is so precious. The good Lord kept things simple and we should follow His example.

Our speakers for Christmas and January are:

Christmas Services:

Christmas Eve 24 December 10 pm (there will be no morning service that day),

Christmas Day 25 December 10:30 am. - Christmas Eve and Day will be lead by Rev Barbara Walker who was with us last Christmas, and is a retired midwife and has served in many refugee camps.

31 December (New Year's Eve) 10:30 am – **Rev Peter Noble** – an arborist, caver and minister. Nice to see him back to our shores.

January 2024 Services: (All services this month 10:30 am)

7th – **Rev Nyalle Paris** – Minister at the historic First Church in Invercargill and a welcome return.

14th – **Tania Shakelton** – from Invercargill

21st – **Rev Lynnmarie Sopoaga (known as Aunty Lyn)** – minister at Malvern Co-operating Parish in Darfield.

28th – **Daryl Schwenke** - Daryl is a senior lecturer in Physiology at Otago University, where he does research into treatment for heart disease and diabetes, among other projects.

If you would like to view the inside of the church and there is nobody in the manse (building next to the church) please contact me at 027 455-2191.

All are welcome.

Garden Tour



For the third year in a row the Weather Gods smiled upon us for our annual Health Committee fundraising Garden Tour. Skilfully chauffeured around the twisting island roads by Pete, Pip, Butch and Raylene, 32 keen gardeners/wanna-be-gardeners and those just out for a fun afternoon had a ball.

We visited gardens and tunnel houses generously opened by Amber Leask, Jan Keen, Becky Bell, Helen Cave and Lindsay & Lorraine Squires (who threw in a house tour as a very much appreciated extra). This event is more along the lines of “Wow, I didn’t know you could grow an apricot in a tunnel house here” than “Oh I believe my roses are more exquisite than these ones” and as such is a great local learning experience.

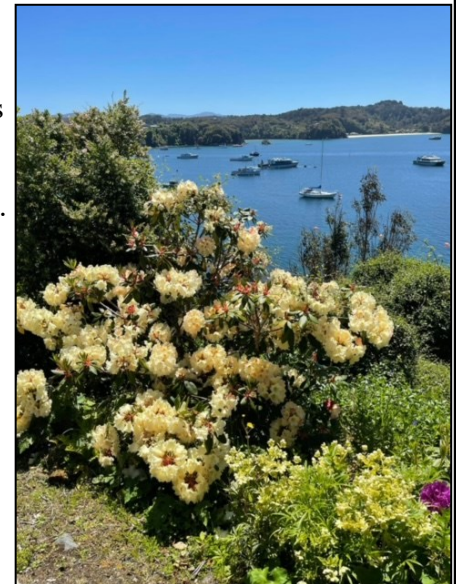
We have great local support with vans provided by Beaks & Feathers, Real NZ and Pete Ross Auto

(who also sponsored the scrumptious Snuggery nibbles we enjoyed with our drinks at Moturau Moana). Off-island support came by way of Raylene-organised raffles (thanks to Diacks, Nichols and Mitre 10).

All up, the afternoon raised a fabulous \$1057.20 for the

Stewart Island Health Committee. The committee exists to support and advocate for health care (for residents and visitors alike) as provided by our local nurses. Recent projects include involvement in building the emergency helipad, supporting mental health and first aid initiatives.

Thank you for your wonderful support Rakiura!



Rakiura Marine Guardians Inc

Bill Watt – Chairman

Phone: 027 495 9288

williamwatt@outlook.co.nz

Fisheries

Concerns were raised at our AGM on 30 November regarding indications of



increased pressure on the fisheries. This included seeing large amounts of scallop shells at one location at Port Pegasus, and increased fishing activity around Ulva Island (prior to the current rahui) and other areas. The numbers of large trailer boats making day trips from Bluff or Riverton, and the increased number of charter boats, are likely to increase pressure on fisheries. Whether revisions to allowable take in other areas (notably, Ruapuke) will also result increased pressure on fisheries around Rakiura is also of concern.

This raises the issue of whether catch limits need to be reduced, whether catch limits should be ‘per boat’ rather than ‘per person’, and where there would be any merit in a voluntary code of practice. This is likely to be an ongoing issue and Rakiura Marine Guardians (RMGI) will be taking an interest, working with Fiordland Marine Guardians where appropriate.

Golden Bay

RMGI welcomes the initiatives earlier this year to ‘look at the big picture’ in relation to wharf facilities renewal at Golden Bay. It was

noted at the AGM that over the years a layer of silt appears to have built up, below “Mean Low Water Springs” but in the shallower part of the bay inside a line between the wharf and the reef. This raises the question of where this silt has come from, whether it has come from the road, and how siltation needs to be addressed in overall planning.

Hananui Aquaculture

This application (for salmon farming activity off the north eastern coast of Rakiura) has been referred to the Environment Court. RMGI as an original submitter can choose to be a party to these proceedings. RMGI notes the detailed science that forms part of the application and its main concern to date is to prevent other areas outside of the marine farms being ‘colonised’ by vessels and barges etc associated with marine farming. This could affect adversely the character of Port William.

Mess on our beaches

RMGI will continue to be active in ‘discouraging’ the dumping of fish frames on our beaches over the holiday season. It was noted with appreciation that several members (and others in the community) regularly do a ‘clean up’ of local beaches.

Our AGM

Our AGM was held on 30 November. The following were elected: Chairman – Bill Watt; General/Minute Secretary – Jo Riksem; Treasurer – Roy Barnsdale; Committee Members – Colin and Margaret Hopkins, Ken McAnergney, Bev Cowie and Jim Barrett. Fiordland Marine Guardians Liaison: John Cushen

Reflecting on Rakiura by Harrison Talarico

I moved to Rakiura from the Australian desert one year ago. Geographically, the two places have nothing in common. The desert is red, dry, and sunburnt—an endless expanse of heat and sky. Rakiura is green, wet, and windswept—dense with life.

There are many good things about living on Rakiura. I like that the island is exposed to the elements. I like the ocean and the birds. I like being involved in the community. But on certain days, when the weather is particularly bad, it is challenging to live here. Emotions like love, and hate, and longing, and sadness seem to be heightened—perhaps because it is so difficult to avoid those who evoke such

feelings. I sometimes wish I could go somewhere and have total anonymity. I often have the urge to go for a long drive.

Someone once said to me that the island attracts those with mental health issues. A remote island at the bottom of the world seems a fitting place for a person with a troubled soul. While there may be some truth to the claim, I don’t think that is the trait that binds us. Instead, maybe it is our connection to the sea and the land, or the urge to be a valued member of a tight-knit community.

I don’t pretend to know what drives each person that lives on the island. But it’s interesting to consider our commonality.

FUTURE RAKIURA

Our vision is ensuring a bright, sustainable future with the purpose to connect and support the Rakiura community to navigate towards this.

Future Rakiura Committee

Our AGM was held on 14th November and we thanked departing member Rakiura Herzhoff for his time as Chairperson. We welcomed a few new Committee members; Heather Osborn and Kev Carter (Chairperson) who joined Stu Newton (Vice Chairperson), Rose Bowman (Secretary), Cherie Hemsley (Treasurer), Simon Moir, Emma Simpson-Boyce, and Bridget Carter (Co-Treasurer). The new Committee held a brainstorming session in early December for the year ahead. We welcome additional support and ideas and would love to hear from you. We'll circulate our upcoming projects for the

year and if you'd like to get involved, please let us know.

Community Calendar

Check out what's on for Rakiura with the Community Calendar, an online calendar built for our community, bach owners and visitors to know what's on, on Rakiura. You can find community events, music, food, arts, volunteering, even the cruise ship schedule.

If you have an event to share, you can enter details via the form on www.rakiuracalendar.com or email rakiura.future@gmail.com.

If you're new to the island

Please get in touch with us if you're new to the island and want information or to be connected with like-minded folk. Check out our community calendar as a starter! This highlights a range of local community volunteer groups, general interest groups and events. If you're interested to hear more, to help out at an event, or to join Future Rakiura, please contact rakiura.future@gmail.com or message us on Facebook Messenger and one of the team will get back to you.

Christmas Hamper Appeal for Disadvantaged Southland Children.

Thank you to all who contributed towards making this
Christmas memorable for many Southland families

Special thanks to Stewart Island Flights Team for sup-
porting the appeal

Have a happy, enjoyable Christmas with family and friends



Iris Tait,
on behalf of Anglican
Care, phone 2191151



Notice from the Anglican Church: Christmas Mass

Christmas Catholic Mass at
St Andrew's Anglican
Church, 11:30am on
Christmas Day.
All enquiries to Fr Brendan
Ward at
basilica.invercargill@gmail.com,
or phone 0279753272.

Thanks to the tamariki of Halfmoon Bay School who painted these trap boxes. DOC's dotterel team reported that on the 18th of December a cat was caught in one of these on Rocky Mountain. As most readers will know, the Southern New Zealand Dotterel is critically threatened and has a population of about 126 individuals, so every cat counts.



Al Burns, Stewart Island's Batman? by Freya

Al Burns and SIRCET have been on the prowl for bats around Halfmoon Bay lately. I joined Al's Robin (Emma) on one of their community bat walks. We set off from the Community Centre at 10pm. Ferg expertly took control of the handheld bat detector, tuned to the right frequency for the bat calls. He pointed it at the treeline and listening for a "steam train" type sound which would tell us a bat was vocalising. While we walked down to the wharf, Emma filled us in on some of the bat ecology and behaviour (much of which remains a mystery...).

Unfortunately, while there are short-tailed bats on Whenua Hou, Emma said it was very unlikely they are here as they are ground foragers and especially vulnerable to predation. We were hoping to detect the long-tailed bats. These bats can have a home range of 100km, but their movements on Rakiura are not well-studied. This species is also likely to be impacted by pests and habitat degradation. If you want to do your bit for the bats, Emma advised keeping your cats inside and retaining trees that provide good roosting sites and hollows.

When we reached the wharf our attention was unexpectedly

drawn to other wildlife activity - several little blue penguins nesting and vocalising on the rocks, their bellies glowing in the waning light. This was also the point where we heard some unusual activity on the bat detector..

We walked in the direction of the mysterious signal up towards the church but unfortunately lost it.

We finished the walk at 11, still able to see each other in the summer night. While no confirmed bats were found that night, it was a refreshing and educational walk, and the more monitoring that is done, the more we will learn about the bat population. Thanks Emma and Ferg!

SIRCET have both handheld bat detectors, and AR4s which can be left in situ for extended periods, passively recording bat-like signals. They are working on setting up some of these AR4s in different habitat on the island, outside the township, where bats may have a better lot. Watch this space as the bat walks are planned to continue in the new year, and we may hear more about the monitoring results.

If you have technical queries, chat up Al Burns or get in touch with SIRCET, e.g. info@sircet.org.nz

Stewart Island News archives and contact information can be found at www.stewartislandnews.com Keep up with island news on our Facebook page Find subscription information for SIN on the back page



Stewart Island Real Estate

For all local listings - houses, cribs, sections and blocks of land.

See our website TODDCO.NZ or contact our local representative **Jeanette Mackay on 027 681 8589** for all Island real estate enquiries.



Kia ora

As visitor numbers increase in the summer season, so do the numbers of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians using the paths and roadways. Be mindful of the other road users, pedestrians use the footpaths where they are available and drivers don't leave your vehicles parked with the nose or tow bar protruding on the pathways encouraging pedestrians to walk on the roads. Locals residents set the standard, don't whinge about other motorists and pedestrians then do the same thing yourself.

No current Warrant of Fitness and/or no registration on your vehicle get it off the road until it is road legal. If it is beyond getting road legal, contact the Resource Recovery Centre and plan for disposing of it off island.

82 drownings in NZ for 2023 at the time I am writing this, remember water safety ensure you have lifejackets on as you are boating around the Island. "You don't drown by falling in the water, you drown by staying there".

Stewart Island Resident Scammed \$1,800

There are the online scams out there doing the rounds and one has bitten a local resident for over \$1,800. It started from an authentic looking reminder email from Waka Kotahi (NZ Transport Agency) with a "Click Here" link, being a responsible person and knowing their vehicle registration was coming up for renewal, they acted to the email and made the payment. Three days later they found a large amount of money including an international currency exchange fee had been incurred against their credit card.

On the genuine reminder email there was a vehicle type, registration number and expiry date with the instruction to go to the website www.nzta.govt.nz to renew. For this resident they are feeling gutted and it has created self-doubt about their online activity and security, while being left wondering "how they were so gullible"

If you get an email which makes you question its validity, take a moment to read it properly if you have already opened it and do not click on any links within.

Other scams are generally greed based and if it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is.

Kia pai to ra

Senior Constable Stuart NEWTON

Ahikura Whānau-Centred Fire Education

Ahikura Whānau-Centred Fire Education is a free and confidential programme aimed at tamariki (children) and taiohi (young people) who are overly curious about fire or have undertaken risky fire behaviour. The programme helps educate them about positive and negative effects of fire by using consequence-based education material such as workbooks, photobooks, videos, firefighter experience and storytelling. The content and programme delivery varies according to the age, maturity and cognitive ability of the client and their whānau environment.

**For Ahikura referral
support phone 0800 734
2667 or scan QR code for
more information**



The poster features the New Zealand Fire Emergency logo at the top left. The main text asks "Does your child light fires?" in large white letters. Below this, the word "AHIKURA" is written in a stylized font, with "WHĀNAU-CENTRED FIRE EDUCATION" underneath. The bottom half of the poster shows a group of diverse children's faces looking upwards. A stylized orange triangle is in the top right corner.

What's up, DOC?

Observation Rock platform



Photo credit: Jennifer Ross DOC

Observation Rock platform is now open to the public. The retaining wall has been completed and work is underway on seating and interpretation panels.

Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara

So far, no rodents have been detected by the upgraded surveillance system on Ulva Island which includes trap rechecks, trail camera footage and rodent detection dog work. Further rodent detection dog work is planned for December and January. If no rodent detections are made during the check in January, we will be able to confirm that the rodent re-eradication was successful.

The biosecurity plan has undergone technical review by DOC's island biosecurity team and the local team will be incorporating their feedback into a final draft for approval.



Photo credit: Si Taylor DOC

Rakiura National Park Visitor Centre

The Visitor Centre has been busy with people through the door, phone calls, emails, hunting permits and managing radio calls for DOC staff. A lot of visitors are enjoying the local walks with the history of the old stone cottage, the greenery of Fern Gully, and the views from Observation Rock. Our most popular product is our \$2 local walks brochure!!



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

North Arm and Port William huts have been regularly full every night with trampers coming from all around the world to experience our Great Walk. There is varying feedback from trampers on the muddy section between Port William and North Arm from "not a problem" to "whew, that was muddy!!" We now have Hut Wardens Dean and Sam in the Great Walk huts for the season. Along with hut duties and hut talks they also do track maintenance: undertaking minor repairs, clearing water tables and making sure the water supplies are working.

A reminder that in December our opening hours are between 8:30am and 5:00pm. We will be closed on Christmas Day and open between 9:00am – 4:00pm on Boxing Day. In January we will be open between 9:00am and 4:00pm on 1 and 2 January, and then for the rest of the month, between 8:30am and 4:00pm.

Southern New Zealand Dotterel/Tūturiwhatu Recovery Project



Photo credit: Craig Stonyer DOC

The team have been working hard to boost our predator control results. They have been doing exceptionally well removing feral cats from high-risk areas, with 25 being caught in traps since the start of the season.

We are concerned with the lower-than-expected number of nests being found in traditional breeding areas and have recently run a broader nesting survey targeting more remote breeding habitat to see whether birds are simply nesting elsewhere.

Banding work is being planned for February/March next year. This is a great opportunity to estimate the total population size ahead of the official flock counts in late April 2024. Banding work also gives us an opportunity to complete health checks and disease screening.

The University of Otago are helping us by undertaking genetic analysis of blood samples collected over the last few years and this should provide an understanding of the current sex ratio which could be limiting the number of breeding pairs in the population.

A range of expansion work is currently being planned thanks to the additional funding being raised through the New Zealand Nature Fund sponsorship. The first tranche of funding will enable the cutting of extra trap lines to increase the reach and quality of our predator control efforts.

Rahui

A reminder that a rahui is in place around Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara. Please do not eat shellfish or fish from within 1km of the island until the rahui is lifted (warning signs will be removed and notification undertaken).

Rakiura Hoiho

It has been an extremely poor season for hoiho so far on Rakiura. A total of 13 hoiho nests were found within Paterson Inlet this season. This total is tied with last season for the lowest nest count on record. Two nests failed during incubation. Across the remaining 11 nests, 20 of the 22 eggs hatched. 18 of these 20 chicks have now died, all within the first 1-2 weeks of life. Many of these chicks showed symptoms of avian diphtheria, which is unable to be sufficiently treated in the field. The remaining two chicks are doing ok. Both are now over 1kg and on track with weight gain.



Photo credit: Sara Larcombe DOC



Introducing Sara Larcombe



Photo credit: Kristen Clements DOC

Kia ora, I'm Sara. I'm a conservation ecologist with a background in threatened species monitoring and predator control work. I've worked with a range of bird species across New Zealand and Australia, and particularly enjoy spending time with seabirds on remote windswept islands. I'm currently working as the Hoiho Ranger for DOC here on Rakiura.

A rubbish reminder

Please remember to take all rubbish with you when you leave any of our beautiful locations. Recently our Rangers found a burned and hidden rubbish pile beneath some rocks at Freds Camp. There were multiple cans and wine bottles, some of which were shattered.



New Zealand Government



Stewart Island News is published on a monthly basis as material permits. Please send articles and enquiries to Editor at stewartislandnews@gmail.com

Explore...THE SECRET WATERS OF RAKIURA

- Water taxi to Millars Beach, guided sea kayak return, exploring the lovely bush-clad bays and inlets along the northern shore of Paterson Inlet. An area of rich natural and cultural history.
- This is an all-day trip suitable for 1 – 4 active people, teenage or older
- The trip is run 'on demand' in fair weather only, prior bookings are essential.
- Indicative price: \$220 per person for 2 people, \$250 for one.

Stewart Island Sea Kayaking with Bill.

Phone 027 495 9288

If you wish to have Stewart Island News sent to you or a friend, please email us the recipient's name and address. Then pay to: Westpac 03 1750 0250628 00 Please use recipient's name as reference.

The costs are as follows:
12 issues to an Oban address: \$48
12 issues to other NZ address: \$66
12 issues to international address: \$96
12 issues emailed: \$36

Congratulations to Becky and Zane on the birth of Mohi Smith last month.

Welcome Mohi



THIRD ISLAND GIN

STEWART ISLAND

Try, buy and take away at the South Sea Hotel



Available online for local pick up and nationwide delivery at RAKIURADISTILLING.CO.NZ



RAKIURA RAIN
RAKIURA BOTANICALS
RAKIURA BOTTLED



Glowing Sky Merino



Between The Shop &The Pub / glowingsky.co.nz