

Stewart Island News

June 2003

\$2

Celebrating Stewart Island

June - A Quiet Month

Just a small issue of the News this month as many of our regular contributors have been doing their winter chores - visits to the mainland, attending conferences or just taking a well-earned break.

The response to our subscription drive last month was very pleasing. Some locals have paid in advance for the next ten issues and there were some extra readers from off the Island who have signed up. Please pass on any names of friends, relatives or colleagues who would like to receive a regular copy. Just fill out the form and return it to us with a cheque - an ideal gift for anyone interested in our Island!

This issue was to have a wee bit more on Golden Bay but pending legal action (not this publication) has made discretion the better part of valour. The matter of the car park has been widely discussed but it was hoped a summary of facts could have been presented. Maybe next month.

Our ace reporter has been off the island lately and has apologised for her lack of contribution this month. July's issue should be a good one!

Cheers, Stewart.

On other pages:

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Features:

Basin Award to Fiona Hall's spell checker

Chocolate Award to Elly-Mae

Acknowledgements and thank-you section.

Stewart Island Flights continue to sponsor our airfreight for the News, and Clampett Industries kindly pay the courier costs on the other side.

A big "thank you" to both organisations!

Thank you Stewart Island.....

for all the flowers, food, cards, phone calls and general support when both Ewan and I really needed it. We always knew it was a great place to live and after that horrible scare can only thank our lucky stars that it happened to us down here amongst such a caring community.

Jenny Gell

COMMUNITY CENTRE

BRIAN GEE - INTERNATIONAL HYPNOTIST

12 JULY AT 8PM TICKETS \$15.00

WATCH THE NOTICEBOARD FOR DETAILS OF TICKET SALES.
DON'T MISS BRIAN THIS TIME - HIS LAST SHOW WAS A
REAL HIT AND ABSOLUTELY HILARIOUS.

YOU'LL BE DISAPPOINTED IF YOU MISS IT!

Charter Boats

by Sam Sampson

There's been charter boats here on the Island for years
Some have been dry, and some have served beers
Now, Kev on *Moana* - a tot always gave,
Whenever I saw a six inch "rougish wave",
Alas, both have now gone to watery ends,
Here's a toast to them both and to other fine friends.
(Blokes in the Charter Boat trade)

"Old" Herbie ran *Kiwi* for many's the year,
Then "Young" Herb took over - boat, crew and gear.
I carved him a kiwi nameboard for the boat.
Then Herb bought a new one, and started to gloat,
To the wrath of us genuine "Wooden Boat" fans,
Hrrumph! *Southern Isle's* made of re-cycled beer cans.

Now, the "Tooth Fairy" he was a dentist by trade
Until down here to the Island he strayed
In *Riko Riko* we'd put out to sea
With punters, who paid him a jolly good fee
We'd head where the biggest waves do roar
Then sell 'em new dentures on coming ashore
(All me lies are true - it happened - once)

Sam Nichol, he skippered the bold *Toa Tai*,
Ponciest boat on the Island - no lie!
With a wee microwave, just for cooking the fish,
Straight off the line - t'was fresh as you'd wish.
Nothing like blue cod, topped off with a drink.
Straight from the rum bottle, tucked in the sink.
(Yeah! The Lodge was poncy but down to earth.)

Phil Smith heads out in *Volantis* at night
But, his Kiwi concession is awfully tight
"Ten feet from kiwi - no closer's" the words,
But DoC forgot to tell the damned birds,
You should see the look on the bird-watchers' faces
When the kiwi walk up and peck at their laces
(Bloody chewy worms, I'd say)

Captain Ian Munro used to work for a living,
Catching crayfish in seas that were so unforgiving.
Then he partnered up and built a new ferry,
The money rolled in which made him quite merry.
So he sold trusty *Jasmine* - a damned good boat
that!
And, bought a "Gin-palace", that *Extrava-Cat*
(That verse'll be worth a fine at Lions)

Talisker's a whisky that's really first rate
The ketch is for charter with Skipper Pete Tait
When he bought her, he found there's a bottle on board
For a nip - on the way home - when he got bored
But alas and alack poor old Pete got quite bleaty
When he found that the *Talisker* bottle was empty
(Anyway, Pete usually drinks "Old Sheepdip")

"Hurricane Johnny's" been fishing for years
Full of yarns for the tourists' gullible ears
In *Marino* he'll show 'em historical sights
Catch 'em cod and other Island delights
John lived up to his name in a vicious squall once
His dinghy flipped up on a punter's bald bonce
(Moral: Avoid light plastic dinghies)

Ken's *Seaview's* a Stabi that goes like a shot,
Gets trampers to Freshwater, right hot to trot.
The channel is narrow, and winds like a snake.
If the tide's not "full high" he must put on the brake.
He's come close to grounding, and even sweat blood,
But so far he ain't spent six hours on the mud.
(He will - everyone else has!)

We'll wind up with Fordley, who once ran the Pub.
Now he *Seabuzzes* around in a bright yellow tub.
He'll buzz to the salmon farms, buzz to Kaipipi
Buzz off to anywhere - all quick and slippy.
You want more treats for the punters? He's got'em,
When he hauls up, you can peer through his bottom.
(Just like we used to peer through the bottom of the glass while waiting for him to pour us a beer).

Campbell Island

by Sandy King

Question: How do you get to really appreciate the mild and temperate nature of a Stewart Island winter?

Answer: Go somewhere where the weather is worse, Campbell Island for example.

Well beyond the roaring forties and into the furious fifties, Campbell Island is about 650 km south of Stewart Island, that's about 42 hours worth of ocean to cross. At 11,300 hectares it is the second largest of New Zealand's subantarctic islands, all of which are Nature Reserves administered by DOC. I was there in April and May with five others and a small dog – our mission was to see if any rats had survived an eradication attempt in 2001. That attempt was the largest rat eradication attempted anywhere in the world so far, and as such there has been intense interest in the result from both local and international conservation organizations.

We arrived on April 26th after a not-so-comfortable 46 hour voyage. (“We didn't expect there to be that much wind” said the skipper when I commented that the trip had taken a little longer than expected. It had been gusting over 90 knots as we entered Perseverance Harbour.) Three of our team hadn't been that far south before and they got a true subantarctic welcome as we unloaded our supplies and equipment for the month by dinghy and outboard in a mere 45 knots and flying spray.

Jak the dog was especially pleased to be ashore. His little cage, with him in it, had been rolling about in the alleyway until a crew member spotted it and lashed it back in place. Jak is one of a small number of dogs throughout the country which have been trained to locate a specific predator. To become one of the elite the dogs have to be trained to a much higher standard than the average mutt, and demonstrate to an examiner that they and their handlers have a good rapport and are capable of finding their target species without putting anything else at risk. The latter is very important when working in sensitive conservation areas. Jak's speciality is rats and he was one of our secret weapons in the great rat hunt.

My involvement with this project began four years ago in 1999 when I spent a month there (again in winter) while a bait trial was carried out. The purpose of the trial was to see how much bait, in kilograms per hectare, would be needed to kill every rat. To do this we spread non-toxic bait from a helicopter over a 500 hectare area. The bait contained a dye instead of toxin and when eaten the dye worked its way into the rat's system. The rat's skin would then turn a bright pink and droppings were purple. A few days after the bait was spread we started a trapping programme that lasted for three weeks. All the rats we caught were “pink” which showed that there had been enough bait available for every rat to eat some.

In 1999 the rats were everywhere. I recall seeing them darting off through the tussock as we walked around. Their sign was everywhere from sea level to ridge top and they had invaded the field huts. I remember one night in one of the huts when I was woken by something playing with my hair, which was considerably longer than it is now. For an instant I doubted the integrity of my colleague. However that doubt vanished as soon as I moved and the culprit scampered back through its hole in the wall.

What a change in 2003! Not a hair of a rat to be seen. That hole in the wall was still there but I wasn't disturbed at night, and if we left food out on the bench it was there, untouched, in the morning. For the entire month we trapped and looked, and Jak sniffed his way around the island and found nothing. We did however notice signs that the island is recovering, after only two years since the eradication.

The bird nerds in the team were excited to see pipits, a small brownish bird that was formerly only found on some of the offshore islets. Although still not common, these friendly little birds were often seen on ridge lines and higher areas in the southern part of the island. They must have flown or been blown over from the islets and survived now that the rats are gone. It is possible that they bred there this past summer.

Another encouraging sign was the presence of weta. Weta had been extremely scarce; a scientist studying the diet of rats in the 1980's caught just 10 weta in 20,200 pitfall trap nights. (That's the equivalent of setting, if you could, 20,200 crayfish pots for a night and only catching 10 crayfish!) The same scientist concluded that rats liked to eat weta, and actively sought them as prey because he found quite a few weta in rat stomachs. We noticed weta several times, and found them quite easily when we actively searched for them.

One thing that hadn't changed was the weather. The furious fifties lived up to their name and the wind we experienced when we arrived was with us most days. It alternated between the breath-sucking, nose-numbingly cold southerly, and the gusty westerly that would cheekily shove you from behind one minute, then from one side, from in front, behind again then the other side. A casual observer might have thought they had stumbled across the Land of Silly Walks. The few days that were fine and calm ("Gortex-free") were truly magic.

On our last day on the island we sent the message that so many people were waiting to hear – Campbell Island is rat free, and toasted those who had made it happen. The years of planning had paid off and the island will continue its recovery over the next few decades. Although pipits have been quick to recolonise the seabird colonies that were decimated by rats and cats, (which disappeared earlier) they will take a lot longer to re-establish themselves. Some species will get a helping hand and there are already plans to release the rare Campbell Island teal there in 2004. For the most part though the island will be left to itself to recover. And I'll just enjoy the relative comfort of winter on Stewart Island.



**This month's award goes to Chris Visser (Elly-Mae), nominated for all her hard work re-establishing Stewart Island News and her unfailing dedication to Sin.
The box of chocolates was kindly donated by Jenny & Ewan Gell**

STEWART ISLAND PROMOTION ASSOCIATION UPDATE.

The Annual General meeting of the Association was held on Thursday, 29 May 2003 at the D.O.C. Field Centre followed by the General meeting.

The newly elected office bearers are as follows:

Sue Graham – President Lesley Gray – Vice-President
Jon Spraggon – Treasurer Bruce Ford - Past President
Executive members -
Sue Munro, Helen Cave, Jo Leask, Diane Smith and Wendy Hallett.

The Annual Plan and related budget were accepted. This team will have plenty to keep themselves busy in their efforts to promote Stewart Island.

It was agreed that a working party be set up to address the future of 'i-site'. 'i-site' is the new branding that the Visitor Information Network has adopted. There will be changes for this organization on Stewart Island in the near future. Two representatives from the Executive of this Association will be a part of this working party. You will be kept informed as different proposals are put together.

The Association has been invited to take part in a New Zealander Deerstalkers' Association display, which will take place at their National Conference at the end of this month in Invercargill. This will be yet another opportunity to put Stewart Island to the fore.

It has been agreed that, this year this Association will establish a stall/display of their own at the Christchurch A & P show to take place near the end of this year. This has always been a great promotional opportunity with great benefits for tourism.

Tourism New Zealand recently hosted a tourism expo in Invercargill with Stewart Island being invited to be present. Due to unforeseen time restraints the services of a professional were employed. Marijke Schiphorst attended the expo on behalf of this Association. She spent time with wholesalers and media personnel and networked with Tourism New Zealand staff from U.K. and Europe while promoting Stewart Island. It was with confidence and passion that she carried out this task.

This is just a snippet of what is happening. As you can see, there is plenty happening in the Tourism/Promotional arena.

Colleen Dawson
Secretary

A Short Essay

(written by a little girl).

People are composed of boys and girls, men and women.
Boys are no good till they grow up and marry.
My mother is a woman, which is a grown-up girl, with children.
My father is so nice I think he must have been a girl when he was a boy.



New Zealand
POLICE
Nga Pirihimana O Aotearoa

JUNE 03



Halfmoon Bay Beat

Well, into the depths of winter we go again.

Not too much on the crime front to moan about, which is good.

However I would like to draw the attention of all those interested in Search & Rescue to helping in some kind with Search & Rescue.

Search & Rescue encompasses a wide range of incidents and tasks on Stewart Island and it is time we expanded the Search & Rescue set-up here on Stewart Island.

Lately we have extracted two people from the Upper Lords River using a helicopter and a seriously ill hunter from Silvertown in the wee small hours of the morning late last month. Through the summer period there are a large number of medical extractions from huts and tracks around the region and usually the hunting season produces a couple of incidents.

I have been speaking with Police management reference Search & Rescue (SAR) on Stewart Island after being involved and running a number of SAR operations over the past two years.

To its credit, the small SAR Management and Reconnaissance Team that I work with here on Stewart Island has had a 100% success rate so far in all rescues and searches, remembering that does not take into account what the Invercargill Police SAR team has done here lately in regards to Search & Rescue.

Search & Rescue has been run on a find and use basis here for a number of years. SAR incidents and operations are also seeing an increased exposure to the outside via media. Another problem the Stewart Island District Nurses and myself have been encountering is external agencies taking control and running SAR operations here on Stewart Island without consulting locally prior to doing the mission or task.

These external agencies or groups acting in this manner without proper information or support can endanger those being rescued and themselves in the process. This is a type of incident that can bring criticism from many corners should we be found unprepared, even if it is not of our making. Something we on Stewart Island do not need.

To this end it is proposed that Stewart Island forms a Search & Rescue Group. The group will be responsible to Police to assist with, and action, Search & Rescue tasks around Stewart Island - both Land & Marine.

With the assistance of others from here and away, I will be co-ordinating a training schedule that will include SAR Management Structure Training, SAROP Training, Practical Search Training, Rescue Techniques and Plans, and formatting new call-outs lists. At present we now have a bank account with some funds and hope soon to be able to start purchasing some equipment that will facilitate Search & Rescue here on Stewart Island.

So on the 24th July there will be a public meeting at the Community Centre at 7.30pm to brief locals, gauge support and take names of those wishing to assist with Search & Rescue here on Stewart Island. Everyone is welcome from those who can help in the field to those who would be happy making cups of tea.

It will be good to see you there.

Regards, Rob

What's New at Halfmoon Bay School?

2003 is just flying by for all of us at Halfmoon Bay School. In a fortnight we will have completed two of our four terms, but there is little time to sit back and reflect upon them!

Our Principal Release Teacher, Julie Andrews, left at the start of June with plans to do some more studying. Her position is proving difficult to fill. As you would expect, we really want to do as well as possible for our children but we are facing an uphill battle. Few teachers are interested in a part-time teaching job in a place where they are unlikely to find supplementary teaching work. Temporary release time for Lee is even harder to find, as travel expenses can only be claimed for a limited time, and there is no assistance for accomodation. Teachers with families are generally not keen to stay away from home. Meanwhile Lee is teaching full-time, and doing her best to keep the paper work at bay. This includes new work on assessment, health and safety, and preparation for a visit from the Education Review Office sometime this year. The present situation is not sustainable, however the Ministry of Education have not been able to offer us any help to date. The other staff, Board and several parents are doing what they can to lessen the load and look for solutions to our recruitment problems.

Despite our staffing woes, things are very far from doom and gloom at school this year. We are very proud of our children: all twenty-one have been making progress in their own areas, and are great fun to be with. Our Winter Club programme has been a big feature this term, thanks to the community members who have come in to share time and expertise with the children.

Next term Clubs will be replaced by the new PrEP programme, which introduces enterprise concepts and skills to pupils of all ages. Companies will be formed, bank loans sought, materials purchased and goods or services produced for sale. The two classes have already run a competition to design and name our currency! It's all going to be very exciting, and although we may not have 100% successful companies in our first year, we will learn heaps. Also next term our senior class will go on their Winter Sports Club trip, skiing in the South Island.

This week we head off on a whole school trip to town. We decided to take our children on this trip to Invercargill, because a few days in the city can offer so many benefits in a very short time. This is especially so for Island children, whose families cannot all easily afford the cost in time or dollars to visit the mainland. Life here is very special, but it does not include many things which most kiwi kids take for granted. We have prepared for the trip in class, and will take back knowledge, materials and experiences to feed many post trip lessons. It will provide much "material" for PrEP! Venues include the Environment Centre and Recycling Centre; Southland Museum; Countdown Supermarket; Invercargill Library; Department of Conservation's GIS (Mapping) Department; College of Education Campus (intranet and digital camera classes); Splash Palace; Pizza Hut; Westpac Trust Bank; Stadium Southland (& rock climbing wall); Life Education Trust at Bluff School. Many thanks are due to our sponsors, Pub Charity (South Sea Hotel customers), Kai Kart, Clampett Industries, Ulva's Guided Walks and R&R Waddell. The children have really looked forward to this trip.

Fiona Hall

Basin Award

This month the coveted Basin Award is presented to Fiona Hall's spell checker. The previous article has been spared the attention of the SIN editor's pencil to show up the offending two *typos*. The award committee checked in the "English - Scottish" version of the dictionary but without luck.

MUSEUM NOTES.

BUILDING PROGRESS.

After about four years of planning, revising, rethinking, seeking “expert” advice etc, and getting the several consents needed, we put our final plans forward to Quantity Surveyors for their estimate of the cost of our project. Their figure left us bewildered, with a shortfall of about \$360,00.00 over the funds we had available! You could say the goalposts had shifted somewhat, mainly with changes in the building codes since we started out. However, we have had to bite the bullet, and at our last monthly meeting it was decided to put the project on “hold” for two years after listening to Tina Geary (Venture Southland) and Messrs Culling & McNaught of the S.D.C., who attended and gave their opinions. We did have one last iron in the fire, in the form of an appeal to the Prime Minister – in her capacity as a Patron of the Arts – forwarded on our behalf by Frana Cardno, but a reply from Judith Tizard virtually said “Sorry, we don’t do small museums”.

So that’s that, as they say. We all feel a bit dejected and “down” at the moment, but no doubt we’ll bounce back. You never know – there just might be a couple of Fairy Godmothers out there!

In the meantime poor Colleen will have to put up with her cramped facilities. We are sure not many S.D.C. employees would work in the conditions she faces. But here’s the rub! The building is owned by the S.D.C., and as Lessees, the Museum must pay for any improvements required. “Standard practice” they tell us.

STAY TUNED!

BOAT PROJECT.

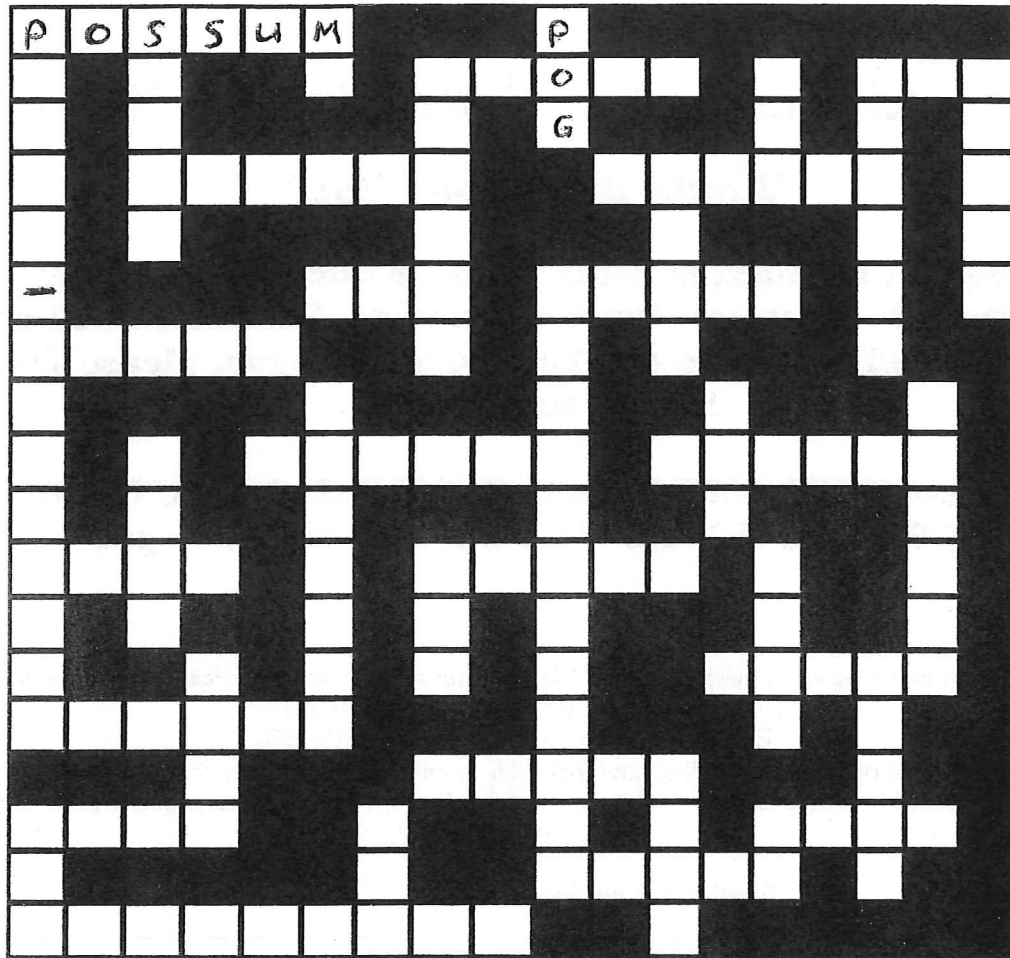
People keep asking how my “book” on Island boats is coming along, and I can only say “Slowly!” The master list stands at about 750 names at present, and of these I have written up some 200 – still a long way to go. However, I discovered I had used an uncommon program, and to make it suitable for use on other computers I had to find a way to change it, which I did eventually and put the lot on to a CD. Then I found there was still a problem so it was a case of “do it all again”! We learn something every day! Now you will understand why I say “Slowly”. However, we’re back to normal again, and I hope to have another boat story next month.

OTHER NEWS.

The other news is that there is no more news – most of our people have been away on various expeditions over the last few weeks. Licking our wounds, perhaps?

See you next month. Merv King.

Mystery Crossword – it's clueless!



Solution next month

STEWART ISLAND GARDEN CIRCLE

by Jenny Gell

It was a lovely sunny afternoon on 12th June when the meeting was held at the home of Myra Leask. We welcomed Janice Berney and Joy Knowles, and discussed pleasant happenings in the Winter garden.

Competition results were:

Variegated Branch:	(1) Mavis Tait	(2) Peggy Wilson	(3) Nancy Schofield
Winter Vegetable:	(1) Mavis Tait	(2) Peggy Wilson	(3) Raylene Waddell
Roadside Treasure:	(1) Anita Geeson	(2) Nancy Schofield	(3) Myra Leask

In-house prize went to Raylene.

Next Meeting will be at Anita Geeson's on 10th July at 1.30.

Ship to Shore

Now Has New Owners

Jill and Richard Wendy and Wayne

Would like to say "Hi!"

We will be making some positive changes and look forward to your continued patronage. Deliveries will be continued and if we can help in other ways, please feel free to approach us.

**WINTER HOURS WILL KICK IN ON THE 21st JUNE 2003
OPENING HOURS WILL BE 7.30 am TO 6 pm**

Stewart Island News – Celebrate Stewart Island is a (usually) monthly publication produced by
Stewart Dovey, P O Box 87, Stewart Island
Email: sdovey@es.co.nz Telephone 219-1270

Please forward your contributions (*preferably by email as an MSWord™ attachment*)

Subscriptions are available at \$20 per ten issues to a Stewart Island P O Box or \$25 per ten issues posted to a New Zealand mainland address by surface post.

Deadline for July issue is Friday 18th July 2003

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Please enclose cheque made out to "Stewart Island News" with this form.