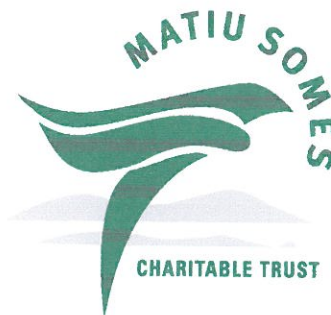


Matiu Really Matters

March 2008



A Ranger's Ramble – Speedos & Nudists

The summer season has been an interesting and busy time on Matiu/Somes Island. We have welcomed back the two hatched tuataras and that was a magical moment. They have been named *Ngake* and *Whataitai* after the harbour *aniwha*. Although as expected they have not been seen since the release.

Visitor numbers have been high and many thanks to the Eastbourne Forest Rangers for their consistent help. In November-December over 50 schools visited the island with group sizes of up to 130 children, which creates interesting games trying to organise everyone in the Whare Kiore (Rat House)!

Some of our interesting visitor activities included swimming from Petone as two Speedo-clad water polo players did one afternoon. Not without some embarrassment at their lack of proper attire, they hitched a ride back on the ferry. A young couple was also spotted sunbathing nude in the sheep paddock. While we are pleased to have such imaginative visitors, these events will hopefully not become everyday occurrences!

The camping trial which started late November has proven popular. Most Saturday nights are completely booked until April. Campers are getting a real feel for the island including the early morning seagull alarm! They are taking away a greater appreciation of the island and conservation issues. In fact a number of campers have gone on to offer themselves as volunteers.

The island continues to be helped by numerous volunteers getting involved in the basics like digging drains to

monitoring Cook Strait Giant Weta. We have also had a rush of researchers involved in a wide variety of projects involving Ground, Wellington Tree, and Cook Strait Giant Weta. Still more researchers were interested in skinks, geckos, and tuataras!

With very dry weather the island is on half-day fire closures at the moment. Our new cleaner Julia White obviously did her rain dance a bit too well, as we were hit by lightning during the storm on Sunday 10 February!

Matt & Jo were joined by Matt's family and friends for their first Matiu/Somes Island Christmas, and Jo's father will be visiting from the UK, end of February.

We now look forward to completing the paint work on the 60-year old historical crane on the wharf, concluding our giant Weta population monitoring, and easing into winter.

See you soon, **Jo and Matt**

Find out more on www.doc.govt.nz/Matiu/Somes page. As always **we would like your input please** & email janheine@xtra.co.nz or phone 04-562 8833.



Matiu/Somes T-shirts

The new Matiu/Somes T-Shirts are on sale at DOC Wellington Visitor Centre. Buy your long-sleeved (\$45), classic and fitted (\$35), or kids (\$25) Ts, in several colours and sizes.

The Third Sheep from the Pit

David W. Rodger

It is a hot summer day in Southern Ontario, Canada, and I am spending some time on the computer. Looking forward to my upcoming travels in New Zealand, I think: "Why not email the Department of Conservation and see if I can't find any volunteer work? The website looks inviting; they will certainly be open to the suggestion."

That July day has faded into the past, but the results of my simple query have provided me with an unparalleled experience. Matiu/Somes Island is one of the truly amazing places in New Zealand. I feel confident I can say this having tramped the country in the last 3 months of 2007.

If you were to ask what the highlights of my three-month trip were, here is what I would say. "Touristy" places are not my cup of tea, but the wildlife and natural places were not to be missed. More than anything, it has been the friendly Kiwis that I have met who have made the trip for me. At the time I did not know it, but these things that I enjoyed would continue, and get better, a little over a month ago when I stepped off the Dominion Post Ferry onto Matiu/Somes Island.

Since I am on the island for a number of months I can get involved in the day-to-day upkeep of the island. This ranges from the morning checks of emails and the daily schedule, to maintaining the grounds and tracks, to the all-important meeting of visitors coming off the ferry. The Whare Kiore talk is one of the first jobs I learned. It is important that everyone receives the same message about biosecurity. I have also been involved in the enforcement side of the island's biosecurity by checking the rodent bait stations around the circuit track, and putting out poison traps after boats have landed illegally on the shore.

Often the scientific community takes an interest in the island. There's always a

chance to learn from those studying here, whether it be about skinks or weta. One recent visit has engendered a population survey of the Cook Strait Giant Weta. This provided more opportunities for me to become involved. I spent a good portion of a week building weta boxes. There are now 30 of these shallow rectangular wooden boxes at various points around the island. Inside are various pieces of wood at angles. The idea is that weta will use them as day-time retreats, and these locations makes them much easier to find!

Working on Matiu/Somes Island is not always serious and predictable work. In fact, it is sometimes surprising that the routine can continue with some of the bizarre occurrences that happen. I was counting the sheep one morning and determined that one had disappeared. I counted the sheep again later in the day, but the ram had not appeared. Enlisting the help of one of the Rangers, we made yet another search and found that the ram had fallen into the old ablution block that the gunners used in the Second World War. After gathering a ladder, some rope, and boards, we made a successful attempt at pushing/pulling the ram out. As soon as it got a foothold it took off, tearing the rope out of my hands. The next fifteen minutes were spent chasing the ram around the paddock. This was all good training, because a month later a lamb fell into the same pit!

Lately, when not chasing after weta or sheep, I have been working on the maximum security animal quarantine building. My goal is to have it clean and safe enough so that visitors can walk through it by themselves. I am also working on plans that will see six panels constructed at sites around the island that will tell visitors more about the history of the site.

I have been very lucky to get this volunteer position on Matiu/Somes Island. I should mention that the fact I have worked as an interpreter for Ontario Parks, a provincial park system in

Canada, did contribute to me being offered the opportunity. However this does not exclude anyone from volunteering with DOC. They are always keen to have assistance.

Matiu/Somes Island has had the love and help of many different people over many years. Two of the more familiar volunteer groups are the Lower Hutt Branch of Forest & Bird and the Eastbourne Forest Rangers. These people have done great work replanting the island and sharing their knowledge with visitors. Like to lend a hand? Don't hesitate to email matiusomes@doc.govt.nz, and who knows, you might be lucky enough to help extract the third sheep from the pit!

F&B Revegetation Programme

Members continue to give the project great support and we have had no trouble in enlisting sufficient labour for monthly work parties.

October plans had to be shelved because of wet weather and in February because drought conditions forced the Island to be closed after midday. However with an average attendance of 17 volunteers during the past three months we managed to cope with maintenance work in the nursery and to continue with some site preparation for planting.

As we enter the planting season we may return to a fortnightly programme on Mondays and some Sundays. We may also plant a lower number than the 2,450 plants we managed last year, but the scattered locations and access to the small sites to infill will require considerable labour. So we will be again seeking volunteers for Sunday dates, possibly fortnightly from June onwards.

Many members are active raising plants for the F&B Annual Plant Sale which will be held this year in the Waterloo School Hall. Proceeds are directed towards revegetation programmes, including Matiu/Somes Island. Get ready for Saturday 9th August 'setting up' and the Plant Sale Sunday 10th August morning.

Lower Hutt Forest & Bird.
Alex Kettles

Eastbourne Forest Rangers (EFR) Programme 2007/2008

We welcome Josie Beruldsen, Chris Cheetham, Eef Geldermans and Stephen Gemmill to the Matiu/Somes Rangers.

We have been acting as guides for various groups since the last newsletter. Pupils and some parents from San Antonio School enjoyed an overnight outing to the island just before Christmas. That was when Rangers Stan Hunt and Ray Smith managed to conjure up a large tuatara at dusk on the main road. The children were also delighted to see the Little Blue Penguins nesting in the boxes some of which they had built themselves at school.

Stan Butcher and Derek Sole spent a most successful day with the Forest and Bird group from Wanganui in January.

This February we are expecting a group from the Denmark High School, then in March we will be assisting Richard Nester with a large group from the Eastbourne Historical Society.

Since the half-day closure of the island started on 4th February, most of us have been made redundant although Reg Cotter continues his work with the Little Blue Penguin survey (see Bex Wolfe's article).

We now all hope for some decent rain so we can re-activate our roster and return to the island to do the job we so enjoy.

Louise Huxley, EFR

Little Blue Penguin Research Project Update

After a very successful first year the little blue penguin research project is now taking a short break as we wait for the breeding season to start up again. The first season has been a great success.

We have achieved a lot of great things. 100 nest boxes have been built and put out around the island. We have established a great group of volunteers with more people continuing to contact me, ready to help out. We have developed a mapping system which we will put into full swing in the up and coming season. We also met a lot of new and old penguins.

Overall we caught a total of 375 little blues. Of these 292 were new birds that had never been banded, that's 78% of the birds we caught! 126 birds are now sporting new transponders, both adults and chicks are included in this number. We managed to catch up with 73 chicks before they set off into the deep blue who are now either banded or have had transponders inserted (see below how to do this).



Now that we have a better understanding of the blue penguins living on Matiu/Somes we look forward to a busy 2008 breeding season. We hope to get more nest boxes built and placed around the island. Not a huge amount of research has been carried out on blue penguins but it is thought that these penguins reach

breeding age at 2 to 3 years old. We don't expect that we will be seeing any of our marked chicks back to breed but we hope to catch up with them one evening at the wharf (as they are doing in the photo).



As we now know of many natural burrows and we have 100 new boxes, we will be busy monitoring nest sites and hunting out more.

Thank you again to all the hours that have been given by our great group of volunteers. We will be in touch with volunteers closer to the start of the season.

Bex Wolfe

And now for the Blackbacked Gulls on Matiu/Somes

Records of the numbers of gulls nesting on Matiu/Somes are few. From figures that are available we can piece together the following story of how numbers built up early last century but are now falling over the last few years.

In September 1967, RA Fordham wrote an article entitled "*History and status of the Dominican Gull in Wellington*". This was published in *Notornis*, the official Journal of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (OSNZ). In it he stated that they were present in the early part of last

century (1900s), absent during World War 1, and up until World War 2 they were occupying the southern coast and nesting on the south-east ridge. They continued nesting there until 1959. A Weir, a Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries staff member, reported that gulls were nesting all round the island. Royal Forest & Bird (F&B) teams had started planting native trees in 1981, and since then have continued to re-vegetate most of the island. This enterprise has made conditions on the island more bird-friendly.

By the mid-1960s, RA Fordham counted 1,475 nests, while a census taken in 1994 undertaken by DoC with the help of members of the OSNZ counted 1,210 nests holding 2,498 eggs.

The Wellington Airport Authority has always been concerned about the large number of gulls that flew around the Airport and a number of planes have hit gulls, a problem called 'bird strike'. Other areas of concern for the Airport Authority were at Moa Point, and Taputeranga Island in Island Bay.

In 1997 DoC was contracted to decrease the number of gulls breeding on Matiu/Somes and started a control programme. Since then, each November and December we have controlled the eggs by injecting them with a poison, and since 2004 by putting an oil solution all over each egg.

Eggs in public areas, i.e. the summit area of the gun emplacements, and around the tracks, are marked with a cross, using nail polish. Each part of the island is covered except the offshore stacks and the steep rocky cliffs, though now with the vegetation growing up it is hard work to make our way over some of the main island as well.

The Blackbacked gull was rare in New Zealand at the times of Captain Cook's visits but, with the coming of Europeans, their numbers built up.

Rubbish dumps were common around the coast in 1965 and 10 were operating in the Wellington area alone. Sewage disposal outlets within or just outside the harbour have now been 'cleaned up', i.e. at the Moa Point and Pencarrow outfalls. As well, 3 of the meat processing works that were within the harbour, i.e. Gear and Ngauranga freezing works, have closed down.

Gulls being scavengers, fed well at these 'Take Away' outlets and the population had increased by 10% per years for several seasons. However from a total of about 1,275 (c.1997), the number of nests has decreased to about 250 today.

Blackback gulls lay up to 3 eggs in a nest, as early as October and until about mid-December. Incubation takes about 4 weeks with both parents sharing duties while they are bringing food to the chicks. After about 50 days the dull mottled brown chicks leave their nests and move to the nearby beaches where they tend to hang around with the parents until the next breeding season. They live on average about 14 to 15 years but they have been known to live for 28 years.

Reg Cotter

Wonderful Weta Workings

The island has been a hotbed of weta research activity this summer with visiting researchers from Canada using high-tech equipment to investigate such things as how weta talk to each other, how far they move each night, and what takes place during their most intimate of meetings.

But to start with some simple domestic matters, the giant weta have now been given a housing opportunity to bring them up to the standards enjoyed by the tree weta on the island. Matt (Ranger) and Victoria University PhD student, *Alex Dixon*, have been testing a number of new designs for ground level bungalows, made from two layers of plywood with a complex array of internal partitions to

provide desirable day shelters for these nomadic and rather solitary weta. They have been placed under flax bushes and in similar shady spots where the big weta are known to hide. The scheme has met with immediate success, so it is now possible to find animals easily, and show these amazing creatures to visitors in the same way that tree weta are visible by day. The shelters should be useful when another 100 of these gentle giants are to be rounded up for transfer to the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary during March to boost this mainland population.

Then came *Dan Howard*, a visiting Postdoctoral Research Fellow from Toronto, Canada, with an interest in insect communication, drawn to the island by the sheer numbers of both tree and giant weta. He was trying to find out whether weta could communicate with each other by drumming on the wood or on the ground they stand on. Laser beams were used to pick up these tiny vibrations. He also attached some very small radio back-packs to giant weta to plot their detailed movements; and found that it is the ladies who sit around while the more active fellows charge around looking for them, all in the dark of course.

Finally *Darryl Gwynne*, a Professor of Biology at Mississauga, Canada, was lured by the island's ground wetas. These ricket-like weta are smaller than either tree or giant weta and live in tunnels in the soil, especially under the mown lawns. They were especially numerous this season and could be heard tapping out their signals to each other on a quiet night. Darryl studies their courtship behaviour and was delighted to find such a dense population of these fascinating little hoppers so that he could learn more about their more intimate doings.

George Gibbs

Tunnel vision for giant WETA

Corinne Watts and Danny Thornborough from Landcare Research in Hamilton and *Greg Sherley and Ian Stringer* from DOC are developing a technique for monitoring Cook Strait giant weta using tracking tunnels.

They set out six 'tracking-lines' each with 12 tracking tunnels about 30m apart on the tracks around the island on Friday 15th February and have been checking the papers in them each day.

They are also using a mark-recapture technique to estimate the number of weta present along each line by searching them each night, attaching tiny identity labels to every weta (behind the head on the pronotum, the large shield-shaped plate on the first thoracic segment) and recording the positions of the weta each time they find them. This should also give

an indication of how far the weta move each night.

But just to make sure, they have also attached miniature radio-transmitters to three males and three females and are following them as well.



Corinne and Danny have already shown that tracking tunnels can be used for giant weta with recent research with wetapunga on Little Barrier Island – both by setting the tunnels on the ground and up trees – and that adding peanut butter increases the number of wetapunga going through the tunnels.

So far on Matiu/Somes Island, 104 adult weta have been marked during three nights, 6 have been seen again twice, and 2 seen again three times. Giant weta footprints were found on 8%, 23% and 23% of the tracking tunnels each night and the tracking tunnels have also

produced beautiful sets of skink and gecko footprints.

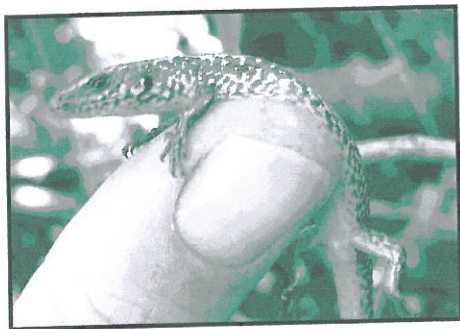
Transmitters have been attached to 5 weta and these have moved less than 40m each night. The tracking tunnel research was completed on Friday 15th February, but Corinne and Danny stayed on over the following weekend to help with a second transfer of giant weta to Karori Sanctuary.

Rangers Jo and Matt will keep track of the 6 weta with transmitters for another five weeks after Corinne and Danny leave.

Corinne Watts

Skink Patrol on Matiu

The warm summer weather has been bringing the skinks out by the dozens. I found myself, half way through my latest 7-day stint on Matiu, hoping for a cloudy day for some kind of retrieve from the hundreds of skinks (like this Spotted



Skink), but it just didn't come.

Over the past few months with the help of some lovely volunteers (Joachim, Helen and Anna) I've been studying the 3 main skink species on the island. We have sunk 124 buckets, which act as skink traps, at a range of sites with different vegetation. Each day we checked all the traps and took measurements of all the skinks that were caught in them before releasing them.

The temperature has a huge effect on how many skinks are caught and, with the warm patch of weather Wellington has seen, we caught (and released) nearly

1000 skinks in a week! This included some babies (see photo) and some huge girls. I hope to use the data to investigate how re-vegetation affects the skink populations on the island.

Susie Cooper

The Second Robin Breeding Season has finished

The adult robins have started to moult, signalling the end of the second breeding season (February 2008) of robins on Matiu/ Somes.

After a very successful 'top-up' transfer of ten robins from Karori Sanctuary in August, we started this breeding season with eight pairs and two 'extra' males.

Two pairs produced no chicks, but the other six pairs raised 12 fledglings, bringing the total population to 28 in mid-February. This result is similar to last season. The productivity is low, much lower than at Karori Sanctuary and probably related to habitat differences. However, the more relevant factor is how many will survive at the start of next season. We will continue to monitor them over the autumn with great interest.

Two adult males died, one from traumatic head injury, and one from unknown causes with no sign of trauma or disease.

One of these males had been helping his mate feed three chicks at the time, so Matt and Jo became busy surrogate parents and spent a lot of time looking for worms, weta and woodlice to help the female feed the chicks. One healthy chick fledged successfully.

We found the other male looking very ill, and took him off the island to receive expert care. He died a few days later, sadly, as he was the only surviving fledgling from last year to pair and breed. However, he had produced two fledglings himself, and one of these has been seen recently laying claim to a territory near the fountain.

I always enjoy following the normal daily lives of the robins, but also intriguing is unusual behaviour like this year's stories. The female from one pair built at least three nests but never laid any eggs. The male from the other non-productive pair fed a blackbird fledgling with great dedication over several weeks. This behaviour was observed once in Karori Sanctuary, but not over an extended period.

Then last year I was fascinated to find a female robin sitting on three blue eggs, after incubating two clutches of her own unsuccessfully. She had somehow 'taken over' a blackbird's nest. To my great surprise, the eggs hatched, and with her mate's help she even managed to feed the three blackbird chicks. This is an amazing feat, as an adult blackbird weighs nearly three times as much as an adult robin and the chicks fledge in 14 days rather than 21, meaning that they grow over four times as fast. The final outcome is unknown, as just before they were due to fledge I went away for several weeks. Frustrating! But never a dull moment!

Annette Harvey OSNZ

Karobusting and more

**Matiu/Somes & Mokopuna/Leper Islands
10-11/11/07 by Karobusters
Terese Mcleod & Owen Calder**

Day One - Mokopuna/Leper Island

Mokopuna/Leper Island just off the northern tip of Matiu/Somes was a real highlight for a small team of karobusters who, to comply with safety rules, kayaked over while Ranger Jo motored over in a runabout and ferried the empty kayaks back to Matiu/Somes so more could paddle over. Given a choice, they all preferred to kayak anyway as Kelly gives it the thumbs up!

The second day concentrated on thinning the Karo so other plants and trees had a chance at the light. Removing it completely would have left the land and animals too exposed.



Pleasingly only a small amount of rubbish, mostly bits of plastic bags and fragments was found and removed.

The first day concentrated on removing a prolific amount of mallow along the eastern beach area (see photo) with



much of it taller than they were!

The team observed lots of Seagull nests, all occupied with three eggs, and while working on the top of the island they had to swerve while being swooped upon. Penguin nests were also prolific on the island, the team careful not to clear too much in areas that would leave the local inhabitants exposed. A couple of Canadian Geese nests were also found and the Oyster Catchers certainly warned the team if they got close to their nests, which are hard-to-spot slits in the ground. DOC plan to cull the seagull and geese eggs on the island.

Day One - Meanwhile back on the Mainland!
Matiu/Somes Island provided plenty of work on Day One for Dave, Terese, Sue, Natasha, Hannah, Amanda, Linda and

Nathan, who tackled scouting and removing karo, box thorn and mallow along the north-east of the Island. The steep ridge areas produced the most and more mature karo with only a small amount of young karo popping up along the bottom and mid sections.

A beach clean was completed along the north-eastern beach line, resulting in the equivalent of about 3 shopping bags full of rubbish dominated by plastic tops from milk and water bottles, plastic straws, and pieces of plastic bags. An unused candle, a car glove-box cover, a cricket ball and a very large pair of men's undies made up the more interesting discoveries.

Sweet peas, thistle and similar unwanted plants were removed from the east side of the circuit track by the group at the end of the day.

Day Two

Day Two began along the banks of the sewage pond for Terese, Sue and Natasha, who gingerly trod and were able to successfully remove half a dozen karo, a bush of lupin and a small amount of gorse. Relieved that no one took a dunking, they were treated to a mum with six ducklings in residence who swam alongside the group while they were working and proved a delightful if not a little worrying distraction in that area!

Wandering Willy, a ground level, shade-loving and brittle succulent, was scouted for in two key areas: down the bank from the lighthouse and the area in front of the Forest and Bird House. Volunteer Mike, who has been keeping an eye on this troublesome succulent for some 20 years, worked with a small team in front of the F&B House where they found and removed a moderate amount of Wandering Willy and some White Lilies. Frustratingly and perhaps fortunate, 3 sets of keen eyes couldn't find any along the lighthouse bank.

Removal of some unwanted plants was completed at Ranger Jo's house with the

remaining Matiu/Somes Island-based team members spending the last part of the weekend working hard at removing lots of karo, tainui and sweet peas from the back bank area of Education House, while the Mokopuna/Leper Island team, expanded to four on Day Two, continued with the efforts of Day One's team of two.

Evening traditions were duly observed: a BBQ, followed by a cricket match (that extended addictively far into the night, to the point that no one could see to hit or catch the ball!). Quizzes and conversation drew Saturday to a close. A special treat was learning about Hannah's recent volunteer project work in Madagascar to build a school house and latrines, and seeing some fantastic photos of the people, animals and environment. A French colony, Madagascar has some fascinating and brightly coloured exotic animals, with vanilla a primary product.

Fatigued by the day, the usual group night walk was abandoned by all but a few hardy members who reported back of an exciting night witnessing numerous Penguins who were in a robust vocal mood.

Unable to make this trip and missed were Willie, Karyn, Martin and Steve.

So who are we?

Now into its third year, the group has done a mix of nine one-day and weekend trips to the island. It's a fantastic group, with members being able to explore the island extensively, from deep in the bush, to the beaches and crags. Members also benefit from deepening their knowledge of the island's history.

While removing Karo is a primary focus, the group have painted fences, monitored the bait boxes, removed succulents and other unwanted plant inhabitants. Tasks are available for varying levels of fitness and although you typically end the weekend tired, sore, scratched and smeared with pink Vigilant, everyone is always happily satisfied.

Members get to learn a great deal, developing and increasing a vast range of skills. Other benefits include getting plenty of fresh air, increased fitness and a sense of restored and refreshed perspective on life. Meeting wonderful and fascinating people on these trips are priceless experiences and form rich memories.

Changes in personal circumstances of some members who can no longer attend have opened up a few spaces to join this group. If you are interested in joining the karo busters group please contact volunteer group leader **Dave Cox** for further details at coxfamily@paradise.net.nz

**The next Karo busters group is planned
May or June 2008
So for further information please
contact Dave Cox:
coxfamily@paradise.net.nz**

Whare Mahana on Matiu/Somes Island Makeover

Staying in the Whare Mahana on Matiu/Somes Island will be a lot more stylish and comfortable soon when interior renovations get underway.

This project is co-ordinated by Terese Mcleod and Dr Alice Te Punga Somerville (whose mothers are Tenths shareholders). Terese has been heavily involved with a range of DOC work on the island for the last 4 years and constantly takes a wide range of groups she's involved with to the island. Alice has been a welcome addition on these various trips after returning from work overseas. Both work at Victoria University and belong to Taki Rua Maori Theatre writers group. After several visits together the pair decided they wanted to make staying on the island more attractive and get more people to enjoy this amazing place, so they formally

approached the trust with their proposal which was wholeheartedly endorsed and supported.

The plan is to paint the entire interior of the house in fresh contemporary colours and to modernise the whare without losing its era or environment. The rooms will be themed to pick up on the existing colours and features inside the whare and those of its immediate environment. For example, the lounge or 'flax room' will pick up on flax colours, the dining room or 'stone room' will pick up on stone/river colours, the bedrooms will be themed paua, driftwood and moana. The kitchen will most likely be in olive colours. Some minor repair work, a thorough clean inside and out, and acquiring new fittings and furniture will complete the project.

Terese and Alice are passionate about the island finding it a special place for all manner of people and events. Taking whanau and friends over has been particularly satisfying as many of them have never visited – only knowing it as off-limits during its quarantine era, many are surprised to learn not only can they go to the island but that staying there is possible. Many comment that they find it fascinating to actually see what the island is like after only seeing it from the motorway!



Terese and Alice belong to Taki Rua Maori Theatre Writers Group 'Writers Block', and are here with that group on a recent writers' retreat on Matiu/Somes Island, December 2007. Terese is at back far right (in white T-shirt) and Alice seated (in blue T-shirt) in front of Terese.

The schedule of the mahi, and the stages in which it will be completed, is given below. You are all very warmly welcome to be a part of this schedule in anyway or at any times that suit you.

Keep an eye out for future newsletters where we will show you some before and after shots of the whare as the work progresses. For further information on this project or to indicate your desire to be a part of it please see below for contact details.

Further information about this project: please contact Erini Shepherd at the Wellington Tenth Trust Office on (04) 473 2502,

hepherd@wttandpnmr.maori.nz, or

Terese Mcleod, *Terese.Mcleod@vuw.ac.nz*, (04) 463 9786 (DDI), (04) 970 8400 (Home) or 021 043 5285 (Mobile).

Schedule for Makeover of Whare Mahana Matiu/Somes Island, February-April 08

Stage 1: Clean (inside/out)

Saturday 23rd - Sunday 24th February

Tasks: Clean the whare (inside and out) and minor repairs (patch hole in wall/silicone window latches/door stop in loo, etc.).

Stage 2: Prep & Prime

Friday 29th February - Sunday 2nd March

Tasks: Prep and prime the whare.

Stage 3: Painting (interior only)

Saturday 22nd - Thursday 27th March

Interior painting whare (this will be the key part of the operation).

Stage 4: Furnishings/ Dressing the Whare

Dates TBC (? April). This is the curtains/bed covers/fittings etc. stage. We will set the dates for it for during Stage 3.

Stage 5: Celebrate the refurbishment (?)

Date TBC (? April).

ANZ National Volunteer Day on Matiu/ Somes Island

The ranks of volunteers working on Matiu/Somes Island will soon be growing thanks to the efforts of ANZ National's Retail and Business Credit team.



One of the volunteer ANZ groups

All members of ANZ National's staff get a day of paid 'volunteer leave' each year to work for a community organisation of their choice.

"In November last year, a group from within our team recently spent a day working on the Island and they had a great time," explains Bruce Thorpe, Manager Business Credit Management.

"Everyone enjoyed the real sense of achievement in completing their assigned tasks, so much so that we decided that, each month, a group of 10 or so from our wider team will regularly spend a day each month using their volunteer day to work on the island."

Continues Bruce, "our team particularly appreciated the opportunity to learn about the history of Matiu/Somes Island, and the conservation work currently taking place reinforced the importance of contributing to the community in a practical way".

Tasks will include: maintaining the track circling the Island, checking bait stations for signs of rodents, and, if it's raining, building weta motels.

"We're really looking forward to continuing our involvement with Matiu/Somes Island" says Bruce.

Overnight stays for Friends

We now have a variety of overnight accommodation available for Friends of Matiu including **camping**. Are you interested? Why not drop the Island an email: matiusomes@doc.govt.nz

camping \$12/night, access to kitchen, toilets

Forest & Bird house is again available for Conservation groups to stay overnight. Contact the Accommodation Officer, PO Box 31 194, Lower Hutt.

Charge is \$20/person/night or \$40 minimum.

Thank you to NZ Post for supplying 100 postage-included envelopes for this newsletter. It certainly helps, along with hand deliveries and emailing, to keep our expenses down.

Jo Greenman, also on Friends of Mana Island Committee, has been co-ordinating some volunteer maintenance trips to Mana Island on:

3-5th March and 17-19th March

when the main aim is to paint and repair the stone Gannets and tidy up the nesting site.

Week-long Monday to Friday Planting trips start around **19th May**, repeated each week until at least the end of June. These take up to 10 people.

If you are keen, please let Jo know and she will give you more details. Also you may wish to organise with the other volunteers for group cooking for evenings & she will co-ordinate this.

Matiu Really Matters*: Newsletter of Friends of Matiu & Matiu/Somes Charitable Trust
Issued c.3 times a year, and as required

**NEXT ISSUE IS JULY:
DEADLINE DUE 13/06/08**

*Name based on that used in Wellington Botanical Society Newsletter, by kind permission of Stan Butcher, Lower Hutt Branch Forest & Bird, Wellington Botanical Society

Friends of Matiu/Somes Island Become a member

The Friends of Matiu/Somes would love to hear from you. To join, please fill in the form and send to the address below.

As a Friend, you will be invited to take part:

- in hands-on conservation projects
- have fun and learn new skills
- receive newsletters
- be able to stay overnight as part of a 'work' weekend

Name:.....

Address

.....
.....
.....

Telephone:

Email (for newsletters)

Annual membership (Jan-Dec), please tick:

Adult	\$20
Corporate/Club	\$50
Life member	\$200
Family	\$30
School/Library	\$25
Donation

Please send to:

Matiu/Somes Charitable trust
C/- Wellington Tenths Trust
PO Box 536
Wellington

Do you want to become
a Friend of Matiu or
update your sub?
Why not fill in this form?

