

# Matiu Really Matters

May 2010

Haere mai ki Matiu

## The Rangers' Ramble – where to start???! Kia Ora all and Haere Mai

It's quite some time since we reported on island life and happenings. In fact our editor informed me the last edition of "Matiu Matters" was in October last year! As you all appreciate, this busy little rock moves fast and so much has happened that we wish to share with you. So with winter's first sniff in the air, its time to tell the story of summer's comings and goings.

We were once again spoilt for great help and company from our wonderful island volunteers. Along with the ever-diligent Eastbourne Rangers we had a fantastic group of summer rangers here to muck in and learn about Matiu.

Early in May we pleasantly found out that one of those summer rangers, Brandon Kingi, was accepted onto the trainee ranger school in Nelson, something we are very proud of. It is great to know that this small but big-hearted island continues to amuse and inspire people in their lives and lifestyles.

Our community relations manager Kerry Swadling recently told us the island hosts 800 individual volunteers every year. This adds up to lots of smiling volunteers departing us after a satisfying day out by having helped us to complete so many tasks.

Opening the Bullock track is one task highlight, now giving visitors a wonderful forested entrance and exit. Richard Brown, trainee ranger during the silly season, took this project on board as a personal challenge, and even got Jo and Matt out of office to crack a sweat.

Maybe this hard labour, or not wanting to let a good opportunity pass, saw Jo and Iain leave the island for winter to work sailing a yacht in Greece. Everyone notes that it sounds like a holiday, but knowing Jo and Iain's work ethic and lust for adventure, we are sure there will never be a quiet moment.

With their absence, Pete Russell's departure, and winter brewing, the island could have got a little lonely. Thankfully we have employed Richard Brown back on deck, with his family – Janet, Rosie and Louis, who have all relaxed happily back into island life.

Some of the projects that Matt and Richard will be involved with over winter are Forest and Bird kicking off the new planting season, organising new signage for tracks, and assisting with the very exciting sustainability project, something you can read more about later in this issue.

We look forward to catching up and sharing a cup of tea with you all soon, and Hearty Regards,

Matt and Richard



### Welcome to this newsletter

This Newsletter is produced by the Matiu/Somes Island Charitable Trust (a non-profit organisation with one of its purposes being to promote the Island) to let you know what is happening on the Island.

Matiu/Somes Island Charitable Trust members are Mark Te One, Liz Mellish, Fred Allen, Colin Ryder, Ray Smith, Erini Shepherd, Jan Heine.

### Kaitiaki Board

The Treaty settlement reached with Taranaki Whanui Ki te Upoko O te Ika in 2009 is a landmark and has led to the establishment of a Harbour Islands Kaitiaki Board, to govern the 3 harbour islands of Makaro/Ward, Mokopuna and Matiu/Somes.

The Board is made up of 6 members; Mark Te One, Liz Mellish and Mahara Okeroa representing Tangata Whenua, and Alan McKenzie (Wgtn Hawkes Bay Conservancy Conservator), Rob Stone (Poneke Area manager) and Dr Nicola Nelson.

One of the first big tasks for the Board is to produce a new management plan for the islands. Public access remains in place and is upheld in the Treaty settlement legislation with Taranaki Whanui.

Robert Stone, Pou Manahere/Area Manager, Poneke Area

## Sustainable energy for Matiu/Somes

As many of you know the idea of having a renewable, sustainable energy system on Matiu/Somes has been on the wish-list for many years.

Well – the good news is that working with the Kaitiaki Board, EECA and Industrial Research Limited (IRL) we have been given the green light to progress the project. Funding has been obtained from DOC's national capital pool to install a renewable power supply on the island – this system will complement the energy efficiency measures that are already underway (things like energy-efficient fridges, solar hot-water heaters, insulation and ecobulbs etc).

The power system is likely to be made up of solar panels and possibly a small, discreet wind turbine depending on the energy system chosen. Thanks to IRL it will include some fancy technology in the form of a distributed hydrogen energy system. (We have a fact sheet about this for those interested – it's a bit complicated to explain here.)

The main parts of the project and when we hope they will happen is as follows (a disclaimer that as we all know things don't always go to plan – so there is some flexibility here but we'll keep you updated!):

- May Project tender sent out
- July/Aug Contractor chosen and works begin
- Aug/Sept Power supply system installed and operational
- Oct Installation of the distributed hydrogen energy system 'hylink'
- November-ish Launch celebration

The Island will stay open while the system is installed and we will be producing fact sheets to hand out to visitors so they know what is going on. A media story will also be sent out about the time the tender is put out (Mid-May ish) and pages updated on the DOC website. If you have any other ideas about how to keep people informed about the project we'd love to hear your thoughts. Or even if you just want to have a chat about the project give us a bell, either Kerry Swadling in Poneke area office (470 8416) or grab one of us when you see us out on the Island.

Kia ora mo te aroha, te awhina me te tautoko hoki



Working on the Bullock Track

For matters happening on the island that need immediate attention, your first contact is one of the Island Rangers, Matt Sidaway or Richard Brown

### So what's in this issue:

Jo is overseas until October 2010 doing sailing things in the Mediterranean

Sustainable energy power system is planned, & includes Solar water heating for the houses

Penguin ponderings on Matiu & Ward give results of nest checks

Our Weed Wrangler gives a full report

Eastbourne Forest Rangers report

F&B is planting more & making a book

Wellington Branch F&B gives ecosourced plants & plaque

Operation Bullship reunion

Renovation of EFR Motel Unit, & Whare Mahana news

Over 20,000 visitors over the last year

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rsmith@xtra.co.nz

It will be much appreciated  
Thank you  
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## Penguin Ponderings: February – April 2010

Our latest trip to Matiu/Somes took place in very good weather. We were able to complete all nest sites on the island by just after midday on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> March.

Two earlier trips, 9-11 February and 9-10 March, had been made to check on all nest boxes and nest sites, relocate any boxes that had not been used for 2 seasons, clear all tracks that needed pruning, GPS all the sites and locate any new nest sites. All in all those were 'spring-cleaning' exercises. Mokopuna was checked as well, with 38 nest sites located, of which 28 were natural and 10 were boxes. Three penguins were in the cave.

Our thanks go to Matt Sidaway who was able to arrange accommodation for us, after an influx of 19 American University students who were in New Zealand on a wildlife wetland course. They were able to join us in the evening at the wharf in small groups and learn how to handle penguins and see how they are transpondered, weighed and measured. And it was great to have Brent Tandy (DOC) join us on Wednesday.

We located 6 new burrows with penguins in them. Two were under sawn *Macrocarpa* stumps in the Workshop Paddock (WP) even though an empty nest box was very near that they could have used. Lots of penguins are around most of the island but none in Cable Bay (CB)! We could also mention that several dead Blackbirds were found in nest boxes.

**Reg Cotter** (OSNZ), Team Leader

## Trip to Makaro/Ward: – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Reg Cotter (OSNZ) Angi Buettner (VUW) and Lydia Metcalfe volunteer DOC Ranger on Matiu/Somes

We left Evans Bay Marina in DOC's patrol boat "Matahorua" captained by Hawea Tomoana and Renee Randall shortly after 9.30am for Matiu/Somes where we picked up Lydia and Peter Russell. We took supplies to Matiu including a ladder. Peter is engaged in weed control on DOC islands in Wellington Harbour.

We visited 19 penguin sites and several boxes had their lids off, but we saw no penguins.

A bird count was done, also the beaches searched for dead birds. Mallow is still a major problem on the island. We found a Bone Seed and several small Boxthorn plants.

It has been sometime since we were last on the island, and rubbish had accumulated. Several drink bottles, pair underpants, etc, and Angi found a very good carving knife.

The bird count did not reveal large numbers or variety of birds. A good number (16) of dead starling chicks were found, which was a surprise.

Lydia checked the Rat Bait Stations and found no sign of vermin, but lots of Forest Geckos in the boxes.

**Reg Cotter**, Team Leader

## Matiu Results

We visited 251 nest sites; captured 100 penguins; found 38 nest sites with birds; caught 13 penguins at the wharf the first night; 25 on the second night; transpondered 2 new penguins:

In total we captured: 56 banded; 20 transpondered; 6 duelled (band + transponder); 15 not banded or transpondered

In the nest sites we found: 14 single penguins and 24 pairs.

Thanks go to Brent Tandy (DOC), Ros Batcheler (OSNZ), Angi Buettner (VUW), Alicia Hopkins (DOC), Nikki McArthur (GWRC), Mike Rumble (EFR), Delia Small (DOC), Vince Waanders (DOC), for their company, help and general good humour.

## Makaro Results

### Bird Count

Black Back Gulls 17 (8 Juv, 9 Adults)  
Little Shag 1  
Mallard Duck 2  
VOC 2  
Spotted Shag 1

### Beach Patrol

Black Back Gulls 4  
Red Bill Gulls 1  
Starling 1  
Little Blue Penguin 1

### Seen On Trip To Makaro

Fluttering Shearwater  
Spotted Shag  
Black Back Gull  
W/F Terns  
Black Shag

Thanks to Hawea and Renee for transport, Jo Greenman, Angi and Lydia for their help and company.

## Notes from a Weed Wrangler

### Weed surveying reveals interesting plants

The weed control programme on Matiu involves a "Clean Sweep" during which all individuals of all significant weeds are killed (with a few exceptions). The Clean Sweep began at the north end of the island in 2008, has been applied to the entire central and eastern parts of the island and is now progressing westwards along southern parts of the island. This work not only involves killing weeds we expect to find plenty of, such as karo and boxthorn, it also involves keeping a sharp eye out for any other weeds previously recorded on the island as well as many other weeds which could potentially be present. Occasionally I find some interesting introduced plants and, somewhat less often, I find more welcome occurrences of locally rare native plants.

### Southern slopes harbour special natives

Matiu's southern slopes provide a unique environment that favours the survival of some plants more than other areas. The more common north-facing slopes are more exposed to sun and warmer winds, and were more accessible to stock in the past. During his 1916 survey of the island botanist Leonard Cockayne remarked that "the most primitive vegetation is that of the cliffs facing south". This is still true today in that relics of the island's pre-human vegetation still remain on lower parts of the southern slopes, including rare ferns. While searching for weeds in this area I have also recorded several patches of akatea/small white-flowered rata vine (*Metrosideros perforata*) and *Clematis forsteri*, two small native iris (*Libertia* sp.) plants and one patch of the low-growing tutu species *Coriaria sarmentosa*.

I more recently discovered two sizeable patches of kahakaha/bush flax (*Astelia fragrans*) on the southern slopes. This is particularly exciting because, unlike the plants mentioned above, there do not appear to be any previous records of kahakaha on the island (other than planted specimens). The plants I found are hidden amongst coastal flax beside rocky ridges that are somewhat difficult to access, which may explain why it took a thorough weed survey to find them! We intend to collect seeds from these and the other locally rare plants so that their populations can be bolstered on the harbour islands using local genetic stock.

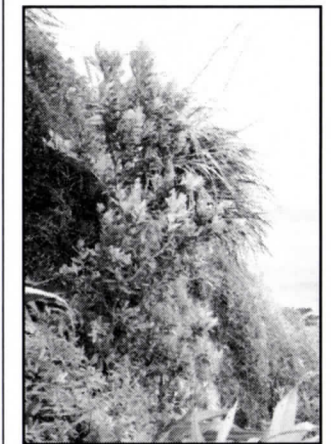
### Southern slopes harbour weeds too!

In several cases weeds have been suppressing locally rare native plants on the southern slopes. Weeds being removed from this area include blackberry, boxthorn, karo and pohutukawa. I recently found a re-sprouting common barberry (*Berberis glaucocarpa*) stump on the southern slopes. This was an unpleasant surprise because I am only aware of one other record of this weed on Matiu; a plant found near the southernmost house and killed by myself in 1998! Another recent unpleasant surprise on a steep and exposed part of the southern slopes



Clematis forsteri on Matiu

Akatea in flower on Matiu



Pohutukawa growing where others won't on the south coast of Matiu

was a sizeable patch of a weed never recorded on the island before: lily of the valley vine (*Salpichroa origanifolia*). This hard-to-kill, smothering plant is another garden escapee first recorded wild in New Zealand in 1940. It may have originated from the Lighthouse keeper's garden. Hopefully it has not spread to many other sites on the island. Not to be outdone the eastern slopes also threw up a surprise recently, although it poses no threat to the island: a pumpkin seedling! One wonders how it came to be there – discarded scroggin perhaps.

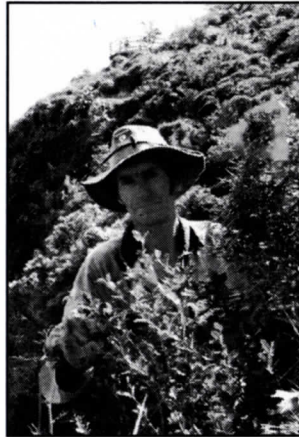
### Karaka containment

During the last two years DoC staff carefully considered the need to address the spread of karaka on Matiu. This involved assessing the distribution and behaviour of karaka on Matiu, much internal discussion and consulting several external agencies. We recently developed and began implementing a plan for the containment of karaka within a specific area. The following is a summary of our reasoning.

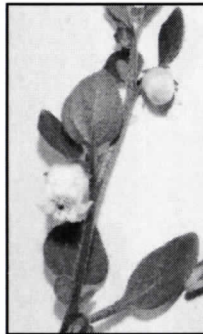
Karaka is native to the northern North Island and is considered extremely unlikely to be native to the southern North Island and further south. Pre-European Maori cultivated karaka as a food source and as a result it became widespread throughout the North Island and northern South Island. There is a very strong relationship between the locations of ancient karaka groves and historic pa sites in areas beyond the natural range of karaka. Karaka has been planted even more widely since European colonisation. The practice of planting karaka or dispersing its seeds in forest restoration projects beyond its natural range has generally ceased, as is the case on Matiu.

The oldest trees on Matiu are between the Visitor Centre and the wharf and appear to be about 50 to 70 years old. There is no evidence that those trees are remnants of pre-European plantings and karaka was not recorded by botanists Bernard Aston & Leonard Cockayne during their survey in 1916. Many different species of local natives have been planted in the area dominated by karaka, but most have perished due to the unfavourable environment created by karaka in that area. Most of the local natives that remain are on track-sides where there is less competition from karaka. Most of those amongst dense karaka are struggling to survive. In contrast, adjacent areas where karaka is rare or absent host a wide variety of local natives which are generally thriving in a higher light environment.

Karaka is widely recognised as an invasive weed in areas beyond its natural range, especially in ecological restoration projects where the goal is to restore indigenous ecosystems representative of the local area. Scientific studies have strongly supported widespread observations that karaka often becomes the dominant species in coastal forests beyond the natural range of karaka. A major study found that areas containing karaka have a lower diversity of native plants than similar nearby areas where karaka is absent. The scientists involved in that study concluded



Peter Russell with common barberry on Matiu



Lily of the valley vine on Matiu



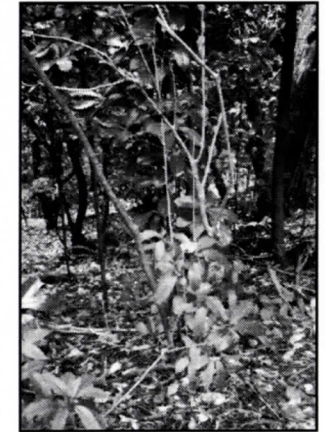
that karaka appears to “homogenise” vegetation, probably leading to eventual replacement of canopy trees, and that management of karaka's invasiveness appears necessary in the lower North Island. It is suspected that the dense canopy created by karaka together with its dense leaf litter severely restricts the growth of other plants. Karaka is also suspected to be allelopathic, i.e. to produce chemicals which inhibit the growth of plants around them.

Wellington City Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council are removing karaka from ecological restoration sites on land administered by them for the reasons provided above. This involves many community groups pulling out seedlings and poisoning larger trees. The managers of several ecological restoration sites on private land in the lower North Island are also removing karaka. Ancient karaka trees and groves near pa sites are generally left intact as they are culturally significant.

The Karaka Containment Zone on Matiu is defined by the lower edge of the nursery, the Circuit Track and the Bullock Track. This will provide clear boundaries for the containment area, allow a corridor of locally native vegetation to develop which links forest on the east side of the island with forest on the west, and help to prevent further karaka spread (perhaps until such time as kereru return to Matiu). This will involve the *gradual* removal of particularly dense karaka in the area between the track that links the Visitor Centre with the nursery and the Motel Units, and their eventual replacement with local natives. It will also involve the removal of karaka between the Bullock Track and the tram line where karaka will otherwise suppress several podocarps including the tallest rimu, kahikatea, miro and matai on the island.

Small karaka trees and associated seedlings are widespread throughout Matiu and unless most of them are removed they have the potential to dominate a large proportion of the island's forests. Fortunately most of them are small enough that their removal will be barely noticeable. Where larger trees are present, however, they will sometimes be poisoned rather than felled to avoid the damage which would otherwise be caused by falling debris. The dead-standing trees will then decompose gradually and provide good habitat for invertebrates, such as weta, for many years (which will be food for birds). When removing karaka elsewhere on Matiu efforts will be made to minimise the creation of eyesores, but there are few places where karaka is highly visible.

The next time you walk along the upper Bullock Track you may wish to compare the vegetation on either side of it. One side is within the Karaka Containment Zone and is dominated by karaka, with most of its local natives occurring on the trackside where there is more sunlight. The other side is now karaka-free, except for seedlings that will need to be removed as they appear.



Mahoe struggling under dense karaka on Matiu

All photos by Peter Russell



## Accidental transfer of weeds to Matiu

During the last two years it came to my attention that several introduced plants seemed likely to have arrived on Matiu accidentally as "stowaways" with native seedlings from the mainland. Some, such as Calceolaria (*Calceolaria tripartita*) and potato weed (*Galinsoga parviflora*), only appear to have established at the current and former nursery sites. Weeds growing in or near a nursery can easily spread into planter bags containing native seedlings, which are later planted in the wild. This appears to have occurred with American sedge (*Cyperus eragrostis*) and Fatsia (*Fatsia japonica*), although only American sedge is known to have spread further afield. More recently I discovered four introduced plants growing in planter bags which had been brought to Matiu from "home nurseries", a council-run nursery and a commercial nursery: Darwin's barberry (*Berberis darwinii*), foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), Himalayan honeysuckle (*Leycesteria formosa*) and tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum*). None of these had been recorded previously on Matiu.

Although some of the "stowaway" plants that have arrived on Matiu are not particularly bad weeds, others are a major threat and this situation is obviously unacceptable for a scientific reserve. I am now helping the Department of Conservation's National Office develop a "National Protocol for Addressing Biosecurity Risks Associated with the Intentional Translocation of Live Plant Material to Islands". This is likely to involve restricting plant transfers to tiny seedlings in seed raising trays that have been kept in enclosed shade houses. This will result in a much lower risk of weed seeds arriving amongst native seedlings than is the case with those left outdoors in planter bags. The protocol will also involve a requirement that weeds are absent within and near a nursery. Another issue that will be considered is the risk of accidentally introducing weeds or animal pests such as Argentinian ants in potting mix.

Peter Russell prussell@doc.govt.nz

## Whare Mahana Panui

Kia ora koutou

The regular monthly clean and maintenance of the Whare Mahana continues and it's been pleasing to see that the care and love volunteers put in to keeping the whare in tiptop condition and care is reciprocated from most of the various individuals and groups that now use the whare.

Here is a list of latest developments, which we will explain next issue:

**Thermal curtains** now make the whare cosier, visually and physically.

**Tangaroa Garden Bed** has been gravelled by Whare Mahana volunteer Kaye Mcleod (Taranaki iwi).

**Koha for Whare Mahana Library** continues to grow as several new books have recently been donated to the library

**Very special thanks to Kaye Mcleod**, my mum, who spent a week on the island giving the Whare Mahana an **extreme clean**.

**End of Month Clean/Maintenance and Whakawhanaungatanga weekends** follow a set programme every month. For more information contact Terese Mcleod Phone 970 8400 or mobile 027 75 33 219, Terese.Mcleod@vuw.ac.nz **Arohanui The Whare Mahana Whanau**



Darwin's barberry seedlings growing in planter bags brought from Wellington



Himalayan honeysuckle growing in planter bags brought from Hutt Valley

Derek Sole has been researching what the conditions were like **on the island** for the immigrants who were quarantined there during the 1870s. Most of the information so far has been obtained from the National Library "Paperspast" website and also from other publications such as Island Of Secrets, The Voyage of the Collingwood and Over The Mountains Of The Sea. If anyone has any family or other records or stories relating to that period or can suggest any other possible sources of information I would like to hear from them.

Derek Sole  
187 Muritai Road, Eastbourne,  
Lower Hutt 5013  
04 562 8059  
hinesandsale@clear.net.nz

## How fare the Eastbourne Forest Rangers?

The Rangers have had a busy time this season conducting guided tours of the island. These have varied between "spot" tours (on-the-spot unbooked tours) for a couple of people, and a tour for 60 people from the Historic Places Trust which we did in conjunction with Paulette Wallace, the DoC Ranger (Historic). Since the beginning of October we have conducted 37 tours for 795 people (468 adults, 89 teenagers and 238 children). This has resulted in a contribution of \$3560 to the Matiu/Somes Charitable Trust.

Tours by schools have been especially popular. The younger children particularly enjoying running wild around the gun emplacements! One teacher remarked that the island tour was the best school trip they had ever done.

As well as the tours, the Rangers have continued to assist the DoC Rangers at weekends and public holidays in manning the Whare Kiore for the biosecurity briefing and a talk about the island history, flora and fauna. This is the 13<sup>th</sup> year they have been doing this. They also patrol the island to check that visitors are not breaking any of the rules and answer questions about the island. Several illegal landings by boaties have been spotted and reported to the DoC rangers. The Rangers now have a distinctive uniform of a jacket and shirt with the logo "Matiu/Somes Volunteer" which help to identify them for the visitors.

We also take this opportunity to acknowledge the support and encouragement the Rangers receive from the DoC Rangers, Jo and Matt. Jo and her husband, Ian, are off sailing round the Mediterranean for a few months. We hope they have an enjoyable time. We trust that Skipper Ian will not be too hard on his crew!

Ray Smith (the 'Pre-Historic' Ranger)

## Ex-isle of Strangers

A work-in-progress presentation on Mātiu Somes Island  
April 15- 18, 2010

The New Pacific Theatre Collective is an ensemble of theatre practitioners, musicians and designers under the artistic guidance of Bert van Dijk. We are investigating an approach to performance training & practice that is reflective of the unique geographic, cultural and spiritual qualities of Aotearoa/New Zealand, drawing inspiration from Contemporary European performance principles, Japanese Noh theatre and the Whare Tapere [pre-European Māori performing arts].

As a nation of islands and islanders, we share the experience of having left a Homeland, venturing on a journey over sea [by boat or plane], and arriving at a new territory - to be delighted, surprised and challenged by the 'unknown'.

Our first public presentation was on Mātiu/Somes Island - a place of remarkable geographic, cultural and spiritual attributes. It was held 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> April at various places around the Island, and involved walking so required a certain degree of mobility. The work we presented was a 'work-in-progress' and we invited feedback and responses to our investigations and creations from our selected audience. It was limited to 50 people per performance, who of course arrived by ferry.

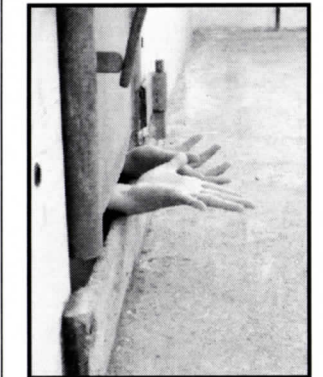


Ray Smith with Lake Rotoiti School children on a guided tour, telling them about the pa site, Te Moana o Kura



Eastbourne Forest Rangers and DoC staff. Training day and BBQ June 2009

photos by Derek Sole



For more information and future events, contact  
Bert van Dijk (Artistic Director)  
Tel: 04 233 2090  
Mob: 021 1857956  
Email: bertvd@clear.net.nz

## Forest & Bird doings

Activity in the nursery has been less than in past years, but during the last six months work parties have bagged on plants from root trainers and maintained the nursery in good shape. Some 2,000 plants are ready to be planted out, which for the next three months will be the focus.

DOC staff have prepared a detailed plan for the planting in some 30 plots scattered throughout the island, and will supervise planting. Most are easily accessible within close reach of tracks and on easy terrain. Work will be varied and interesting. Plots will be monitored with follow up planting and maintenance in future years.

We are anxious to build up a good team who can plant on a number of these Mondays or Sundays. So if you know friends or others who would be interested please let me know. For more details and to record your interest please contact  
**Alex Kettles 569 6208**

## 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the First Plantings of Matiu/Somes: *The Restoration of an Island*

To commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first plantings on Matiu/Somes by the Lower Hutt Branch of Forest & Bird, and to capture the memories of those who have been involved over this lengthy period, the Branch has embarked in the production of a small book to document the history of the restoration of the island. The book is being authored by F&B member Janet Hector who has produced the first draft, which has been forwarded to F&B member and well-known editor, Ali Carew, for editing.

When completed later this year, the book will be for sale to members, as well as to the public on the island and on the ferry.

It is intended that Janet's research material will be deposited in the Hutt City Archives, with some material going to the Oral History Archive at the Turnbull Library.

While many of us know the story, having read the drafts to date, a fascinating picture emerges and one which the Branch can be justifiably proud.  
**Steve Gentry**, Convenor Publication Committee

## Thank you Forest & Bird Wellington Branch

Many thanks to **Forest & Bird's Wellington Branch** for donating several large kahikatea, matai and miro, rimu and totara seedlings for planting on Matiu. The seedlings are all sourced from local forest remnants and represent all the podocarps that are likely to have occurred on Matiu in the past (although they may not have been particularly abundant).

They will be planted in a large, sheltered site which was recently cleared of weeds and will be nurtured to give them a good chance of growing large enough to produce seed. Forest and Bird's nursery (at Karori Sanctuary) is taking biosecurity seriously and has taken steps to reduce the chances of weeds establishing among their seedlings so that they are much less likely to spread to other ecological restoration sites.

## Planting Dates

That have been set aside for F&B members and friends to be involved in this new and very interesting stage of the revegetation programme, are:

### MONDAYS

**May 31;**  
**June 14, 28;**  
**July 12, 26;**  
**Aug. 9, 23;**  
**Sept. 6**

### SUNDAYS

**June 20;**  
**July 4, 18;**  
**Aug. 1, 15, 29**



## Talking Bullship: telling tales of animal quarantine

Around 40 former animal quarantine staff, who lived and worked on Matiu/Somes Island between 1950 and 1995, returned to the island in the last weekend (30<sup>th</sup> -31<sup>st</sup>) of January 2010 for a reunion, and to help the Department out with a special project. They represented the families of 15 or so staff members and had so much to reminisce and laugh over.

*Talking Bullship: Telling Tales of Animal Quarantine on Matiu/Somes Island*, was a weekend-long event that focussed on recording oral history interviews. It was an occasion for former animal quarantine staff to reminisce about the past, and to contribute to how the stories of animal quarantine will be communicated to future visitors to Matiu/Somes Island.

The name of the weekend 'Talking Bullship' came from the title of the first official shipment of livestock to the Maximum Security Animal Quarantine Station, opened on Matiu/Somes Island in 1971. 'Operation Bullship' occurred on 8 March 1972, when 30 French stud bulls were brought into Wellington Harbour by ship and then air-lifted onto Matiu/Somes Island by helicopter.

Small sound bites from the oral history interviews will be used inside the recently-opened-to-the-public Maximum Security Animal Quarantine Station. In addition to a new self-guided tour of the quarantine station now available on Matiu/Somes Island, visitors will soon be able to pick up hand sets inside the station and listen to a yarn from one of the guys who used to work there.

Jack Perkins from Radio New Zealand captured a few of the stories from the weekend and put them together in his Spectrum programme that can be accessed from a link from DOC's webpage. To find out more information about animal quarantine on Matiu/Somes Island, view photos from the Talking Bullship weekend, and to listen to the radio story check out:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/historic/by-region/wellington/poneke-area/matiu-somes-island/animal-quarantine-station/> **Paulette Wallace**

**Newsflash:** Paulette recently attended the ICOMOS Australia conference in Broken Hill, NSW, giving a presentation about the Quarantine Station on Matiu. Received very positively by the Australians it was a great way to promote the successes of Matiu/Somes on an international stage.

*Some of the highlights of the 2 days were:*

**Rob Stone** DOC welcomed the families of the MAF staff who lived on Matiu/Somes from 1972 to 1995. Tales were told by vets *David Collyns* and *Geoffrey Moss* about looking after the animals.

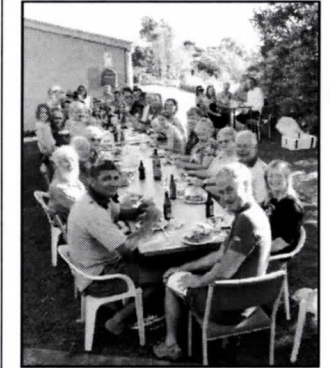
**Rod Sutherland** has given ongoing support and in his 'retirement' is a key link keeping MAF's stories alive in the history of Matiu.

**Richard Anderson**, first DOC Ranger, recalled the learning curves with the changes in looking after Matiu, how to cope with the sheep, and also the visitors who, from 600 the first year to 250+ per day, now arrive. As well as the privilege of living there.

**Haweia Tomoana** outlined the long complex pre-European history of Matiu/Somes, and how it has been an integral part of Maori life here.

**Jo Greenman**, present DOC Ranger, spoke of the spirit of Matiu, how it's community spreads further than its shores, to the Wellington Tenth, the 100 or so volunteers per month, Police, SAR, MAF fisheries (and illegal landings etc.), Eastbourne Forest Ranger guides. Now Matiu is a place for

conservation in its widest sense, with sustainable energy alternatives, and as a learning place for schools and public.



**Families of MAF staff, DOC, & helpers enjoy a great meal together**  
*Photo by Paulette Wallace*

Not content with great lunches, and a spit roast, loads of roasted veg, complete with decadent puddings on Saturday evening, a big Sunday Brunch was served (late May I add). Serving wenches Janet & Jan trotted to and from the Caretaker's House with plates of bacon, sausages and eggs (BBQ'd by Robert Hawke & Lynne Phillips), and pancakes (flipped by Alicia Hopkins). Filled up any hungry corners with left-over fruit salad and cake!  
Pure decadence!

## DIY (without a television crew) at Eastbourne Forest Rangers Unit

What do television programmes *DIY Marae*, *Mitre 10 DIY Rescue*, *Grand Designs* and *Mucking In* have in common?

"Well", says volunteer co-kaitiaki of the Whare Mahana (iwi house) on the island and Wellington Tenths Trust member Terese McLeod (Taranaki iwi), "they're all shows that I (Terese) get stimulated by to 'give it a go' and from which I pick up tips and apply them to various renovation and other projects on the island. I've also got a fantastic support group of very knowledgeable and talented family, friends, island rangers and amazing networks that I learn trade skills from. With this combination I feel reasonably confident tackling most island projects."

The latest project for Terese has been renovating the Eastbourne Forest Rangers Unit which started over a week in April and will be completed over another week in June. It includes: a through clean and sort of various items, junk disposed, walls painted to more contemporary hues, and freshen the unit, new furniture, new kitchen and bathroom items, new thermal curtains, linen and towels. Later in the year new systems and possibly new carpet and lino will complete the project.

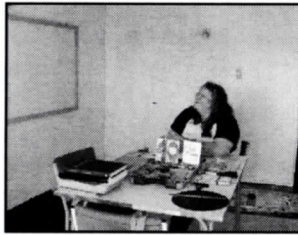
"It's not only about renovations, it's about relationships", says Terese. "With so many people passionate about the island, from all sorts of backgrounds, I also think it's important to take bi-culturalism off the policy documents and really apply it. Doing such things as mucking in on grass-roots-type projects with different groups of people I believe really facilitates that in the most meaningful way for me. I've been able to have really fantastic conversations with various rangers which have been really rewarding and enriching. I've long admired the work this group does on the island and their individual and collective knowledge about so many aspects of the island's history and its life is really informative and interesting, I also get great tip-offs and treats. A recent tip-off was witnessing mating weta and a treat was being shown a great place to observe Tuatara."

While starting on the island many years ago as a karo buster, for the past few years Terese's niche has switched more to places and people and the associated admin and logistics. "I know for sure that taking something ugly and making it look nice has significant effect", says Terese. "The unbelievably dramatic rise in use and enjoyment of the Whare Mahana by so many people, from various walks of life, convinced me that taking a building and making it as aesthetic, comfortable and as functional as possible has attracted and supported people to really engage in the unique life and learning the island has to offer."

"Those familiar with the Whare Mahana will sense a similarity in the Eastbourne Forest Rangers Unit because it has used the left-over paint from the Whare renovations", says Terese. It's actually worked out perfectly; the colours are subtle environmental tones and suit the unit, and amount of paint left over from the Whare renovation was exact - to the last paint brushfull!

Well done, Terese, and a big thank you from all the Rangers.

Terese and a before-shot before she got underway renovating the Rangers' Motel unit



And the after-shot, with Ray & Derek pleased with the result

## Karobusters

Is another long-established volunteer group removing karo and other undesirable species on Matiu, and doing a range of tasks to assist DOC - visits the Island about three times a year.

New volunteers are sought as changes in members' lives mean some can no longer attend. So a few spaces in the group have opened up. If you are interested or would like to find out more, **contact Dave Cox:** [coxfamily@paradise.net.nz](mailto:coxfamily@paradise.net.nz)

Next work party is:

**21-22 August, 2010**

## Overnight stays for Friends

We now have a variety of overnight accommodation available for Friends of Matiu. If interested check out the DOC website [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) for information and bookings.

Forest and Bird Members can get a 25% discount on any Island accommodation contact the DOC Wellington Visitors Centre [wellingtonvc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:wellingtonvc@doc.govt.nz) 04 384 7770

**The next Karobusters trip is on 21-22 August 2010**

**and for further information please contact Dave Cox:** [coxfamily@paradise.net.nz](mailto:coxfamily@paradise.net.nz)

## Guided Walks

**Interested? check out the doc website [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) or email Matt and Jo at [matiusomes@doc.govt.nz](mailto:matiusomes@doc.govt.nz)**

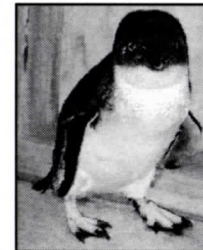
## Matiu Really Matters\* - Newsletter

Issued c.3 times a year, and as required

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

*Thank you to all contributors - without your input it would not be the interesting read it is. And thanks to the team on Matiu/Somes of Matt & Richard, & Jo in absentia.*

**Next issue is September 2010: Deadline due 01/08/10**



## Would you like to help with projects on Matiu/Somes Island

Please give us details of your name, email address, and phone number and we will send you notices and news of projects, events, and the newsletters. If you do not have email but would like to contribute to conservation projects on the Island, please give your postal address and we will send you newsletters from time to time (about 3 times a year).

Then we can invite you to:

- take part in hands-on conservation projects
- work with like-minded people on Island projects
- receive newsletters
- stay overnight as part of a 'work' weekend

Name: .....

Email address (keeps postage costs down): .....

Telephone: .....

Postal address: .....

**Your donation (tax-deductible) will help the Trust initiate projects on the Island**

Donation .....

Please send to:  
**Matiu/Somes Island Charitable Trust**  
C/- PO Box 536  
Wellington

Do you want to help the Trust?

Why not fill in this form?

