

# Matiu Really Matters

June 2011

*Haere mai ki Matiu*



## Celebrating the Treaty Settlement

Three islands in Wellington Harbour have been handed back to their iwi after a century and a half – ensuring they remain places of tranquillity and healing, the restored owners say.

Last November a ceremony and picnic was held on Matiu/Somes Island to officially acknowledge this groundbreaking re-establishment of mana whenua. In September 2009 ownership of the island, along with that of Makaro/Ward and Mokopuna/Leper Islands, had been returned to Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o Te Ika as part of the Port Nicholson Block Claims Settlement Act. It was time to get together and celebrate.

The islands are now jointly administered by the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust (PNBST) and DOC through the Harbour Islands Kaitiaki Board. Together they hosted several hundred people on the island, including dignitaries, mana whenua, and community groups such as Forest and Bird, Eastbourne Forest Rangers and other volunteers. Everyone came together “in a very real way” to bless the handover, said Chair of PNBST Sir Ngatata Love.

Special ferry sailings were chartered to carry invitees to the island. Mana whenua arrived first – setting foot on their ancestral land with a sense of homecoming – and were refreshed with tea and coffee in the Whare Mahana before gathering in a huge marquee set up for the day.

As the manuhiri arrived they were greeted at the wharf by kaumātua/elders and were taken through the regulation biosecurity check by DOC Island Rangers Jo Greenman and Matt Sidaway. From there, a compelling picture was made by the procession of visitors winding up the island road to the marquee.

Wero, haka pōwhiri and karanga ushered the group into the tent where a moving pōwhiri and whakatau followed, with DOC area staff and mana whenua welcoming the manuhiri together. In his formal speech Sir Ngatata remarked that Matiu/Somes has become a great place for schools to visit and a great place to see the tranquility of the harbour in a totally different way. “We want to ensure people can come there and take time out, like a place of healing.”



### 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.*

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*Celebrating the Treaty Settlement continues:*

Hon. Kate Wilkinson recognised all the islands' supporters, noting that Matiu, Makaro and Mokopuna have had a long and varied past. "It is heartening to see people here who are all contributing to the next chapter in their history; protecting and restoring the precious taonga that make up the Wellington harbour islands".

After the speeches a plaque was unveiled to commemorate the ownership transfer. Kai was a full picnic lunch enjoyed in the warm stillness of a beautiful day – Wellington at its best.

In the afternoon Morrie Love from Te Atiawa treated guests to a guided cultural and natural tour of the island. Return sailings ferried everyone off the island by tea-time. Everyone that is, except the hardworking DOC rangers who will continue to provide stewardship to these islands under their new, yet past, owners.

"Kua kā kē nga ahi" – the fires of occupation are already alight.



Kia ora Te Papa Atawhai whānau for making the ceremony the special event it was.

*Tessa Rain, DOC*

## The Rangers' Ramble for Winter 2011

Kia Ora all and Haere Mai

With another harbour summer season over, Matiu/Somes and its community eye winter and its continuing good times. On that note, summer 2010/11 proved to be the island's busiest on record, with January and February each cracking 3000 people for the first time. Parts of the February numbers were made up by brave evening audiences put into quarantine – in the original health board barracks – as part of a Fringe Festival play.

### **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

### **EMAIL ADDRESSES PLEASE!**

To save paper, reduce printing and postage costs, and minimise handling, we would like send this newsletter by e-mail to as many friends as possible. Please help by sending your email address to

[rmsmith@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rmsmith@xtra.co.nz)

It will be much appreciated  
Thank you

**DO YOUR BIT TO REDUCE WASTE**



*Rangers' Ramble continues:*

The island saw a steady flow of overnight guests enjoying the serenity and charm that is to watch the sun fall behind the city and the evening animals go about their lifestyle.

The Matiu flora and fauna had perfect conditions for healthy growth over the last six months. Plenty of sporadic rain kept the plants topped up and lush green, a verdant paradise for weta to roam, tuatara to cruise, kakariki to swoop, penguins to skulk and robins to hold their own. As per usual, more infrequent visitors to these shores kept staff, volunteers and visitors smiling, with seals relaxing on coast, NZ falcon perusing, "hire a ram" leaving his magic touch, and a tui singing here quite often.

This was the same for our volunteer core, which has been represented here on every other day, from the boom in guided walks covered by Eastbourne Rangers, nursery upkeep tended to by Forest and Bird, all our fantastic Summer Rangers, many school and corporate groups, Karobusters, penguin team, corrections department teams, and other special individuals – you know who you are!

One of these kind folk is Shane Cotter, project leader for the fluttering shearwater re-establishment on Matiu, who has overseen tending to a site where we hope a translocation of birds will come to call home in future.

Another site that will see a slightly different airborne friend call home is the concrete pad outside the generator shed. We are very close now to having the island's wind turbine installed along with the solar panels and energy storage which will make up our sustainable power supply. The parts for this system and freight for many other projects should arrive by July on the Seaworks barge 'Brandywine.'

While this freight will get us ready for future projects, we happily look back to what Matiu/Somes achieved in the last half year: the very special Treaty Settlement ceremony, insulation installed in all island accommodation, some wonderful TLC of the hospital/visitors centre, new interpretation, cleaning up the fallen macrocarpa, Pete Russell's weeds and Joakim Liman's restoration work releasing special plants, bilingual track signage on order, designs for a wharf shelter and Whare Kiore extension. Ah, the list could go on...!

Both Jo and I look very much forward to catching up with you all – next time we meet on this harbour paradise. Until then, smiles all round.

**Jo Greenman and Matt Sidaway**, Island Rangers

*PS from Matt and please excuse me waxing lyrical on the above, oh okay, I usually do, but whatever the case, this will be the last Rangers' Ramble I write, as I have set my final day on island for mid-October this year, after which time I will travel Aotearoa, and then ripple on further outward!*

## How now Eastbourne Forest Rangers?

Our volunteer rangers have had a busy summer season. As well as our weekend and holiday duties a large number of guided tours were requested for a variety of groups.

Word seems to be getting about schools that the Island is an interesting place to visit and we were inundated with requests for guided tours at the start of the school year. The children, and their teachers and parents, are a pleasure to escort around the island, with enthusiastic responses to various aspects of the history and wildlife of the island.

Our summer season ended on 1<sup>st</sup> May and the 'winter' roster is now operating with only one volunteer on duty each weekend day. At least, that was the plan, but there has been no letup in requests for guided tours with bookings going into July. Because of the enthusiasm of the volunteer team all requests for guides have been able to be met. Thank you team.

In addition, Anne Cotter and Gail Rumble, the wives of two members of our team, kindly volunteered to provide catering services for a Corrections Department team that was working on insulating the houses. Thank you, ladies.

Our new uniforms are useful in identifying us as people to ask questions of and it provides us with a veneer of authority!

A few people have had to drop off the roster because of other commitments but fortunately new recruits have kept us at full strength. **Ray Smith**

## Penguin Ponderings: February – May 2011

Little Blue Penguin activity in February to May 2011, was focussed primarily on track and box maintenance on Mātiu/Somes. Bird checks day & night were carried out, with a noticeable increase in activity during the April and May visits.

DOC staff and volunteers who helped during the 2010/11 season were invited to a BBQ on Mātiu/Somes on 17<sup>th</sup> February. We had typically fine Wellington summer weather, and all who came enjoyed the opportunity to meet as families and chat about the work done during the year. Reg Cotter was presented with a beautiful original painting by Michelle Evans showing the head and shoulders of a Little Blue Penguin.

Vince Waanders master-minded the acquisition of timber for 30 more boxes. Reg Cotter and Mike Rumble helped with cutting and drilling the timber and making up 31 packs of kits (Vince managed to build an extra kit from the off-cuts).

Graeme Taylor joined the trip in May 2011 and installed, as a trial, five Temperature and Depth Recorders (TDRs) on selected birds. These birds will be monitored over the next few weeks until the recorders are removed.

### *Eggs and Chicks for the 2010/11 Season*

- 197 nests produced 346 eggs
- 273 chicks hatched and
- 212 were 'tagged' before they fledged
- 39 chicks were found dead in/around nests

The low loss rate for chicks and the high fledge rate suggest penguins in the Wellington area were not affected by the food shortage issue faced by penguins in other areas of New Zealand.

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



How the LBPs are looking

### **Family BBQ:**



Photographer Not Identified

### **Box Development Team:**



Photographer Vince Waanders

## Trip to Makaro/Ward: 9 February 2011

Once again we managed to pick a perfect Wellington day for this trip to Makaro Island. Transport was provided by 'Matahorua' skippered by Hawea Tomoana. It was fine, sunny, with a light southerly wind.

We completed a bird count on the island, and observed birds at sea. After we checked all known Little Blue Penguin nesting sites, and searched for new sites.

There did not appear to be as much mallow as observed on previous trips, and we pulled out what we found, while Peter checked for various weeds and did some spraying and poisoning.

The exciting job of collecting rubbish was rounded off with checking the rat bait stations and changing the bait.

THE TEAM: Hawea Tomoana (Skipper), Brent Tandy (DOC), Reg Cotter (OSNZ), Mike Rumble (EFR), Peter Russell (DOC), Ros Batcheler (OSNZ), Katie Matthews (DOC). Thanks to DOC for the transport.

*Reg Cotter*, Team Leader

## Hello from the House Manager

It's been about a year since I was last around, but now I'm back again.

I have been keeping busy working in the Wellington Visitor Centre, where I have seen many of you coming and going, and doing odd jobs for the Wellington DOC office. I am currently revamping the Education Kits for the Island, so if anyone has any great games, or treasure hunt type activities they want to share, send them to me.

I am back now once every month in a new role as House Manager. This means I am working towards upgrading the houses to make sure they all have enough kitchen supplies, and that everyone has a comfortable stay. I will be getting new kitchen supplies in houses and the Caretakers Cottage, and possibly the campsite too, and getting blankets for all of the bunks to make the winter months a bit warmer. We are also looking for a new table and coffee table for Education House so the trestle tables can be put to use elsewhere.

So if anyone knows of any good deals going on house ware in the next couple of months, let me or Jo know.

So I hope to see many of you around while I am counting plates and relocating cutlery over the next few months, otherwise have a great winter.

*Alicia Hopkins*

## Makaro Results

### *BIRDS SEEN AT SEA*

Fluttering Shearwater 16  
Blackbacked Gull 7

### *BIRDS SEEN ON THE ISLAND*

Blackbird 1 heard  
Blackbacked Gull 168  
(including juveniles  
Dunnock 1  
Redbilled Gull Nil  
Shag, Black 1  
Shag, Pied Nil  
Variable Oystercatcher 13 adults,  
2 juveniles  
Whitefronted Tern 1 adult  
1 juvenile

Several dead birds were found:

Blackbacked Gull 9  
Starling 1  
VOC, juvenile 3

A dead chick was found in the burrow at the top of the cliff, at south end of the island, probably a White-faced Storm Petrel (this has to be confirmed).

### *PENGUINS*

Checked 19 labelled and  
6 unlabelled sites.

No penguins or chicks were found



## Sustainable energy for Matiu/Somes

Wellington's Matiu/Somes Island is a step closer to becoming a showcase for sustainable energy, with tenders being let for the supply and installation of a renewable energy system on the island.

The project, which will see diesel generation replaced with a system harnessing energy from wind, water and the sun, is a partnership between DOC, the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) and Industrial Research Limited (IRL). It is being led by the Harbour Islands Kaitiaki (governance) Board.

"This project will significantly reduce our diesel requirements and corresponding costs, freeing up resources for delivering more conservation work on the island DOC's Poneke Area manager Rob Stone said.

"We're really pleased to be working with the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust as the island owners, and EECA and IRL to get a renewable energy system in place.

"Matiu/Somes Island is an ideal showcase for sustainable energy in the middle of Wellington Harbour as it receives around 20,000 visitors a year."

"It is important for the protection and well-being of the island to install a sustainable energy system that is long lasting and effective", said Mark Te One, Chairman of the Harbour Islands Kaitiaki Board. "As the owners and joint managers of the harbour islands, we are obligated as mana whenua and members of the community to achieve the best outcomes", he said.

Rob Stone said that a renewable power supply, which could include solar panels and a small wind turbine, would complement the measures already underway to reduce energy requirements on the island (such as installing new efficient fridges, efficient lighting, insulation and solar hot water heaters) and was part of DOC's wider strategy to reduce its reliance on diesel generation.

EECA's spokesperson Joseph Mayhew said that, in situations where electricity generation was primarily from diesel, renewable energy often proved a much more cost-effective alternative, as well as delivering environmental benefits.

"You would expect a renewable energy system for the island to save around 5000 litres of diesel, 14,000 kilograms of carbon dioxide, and over \$15,000 each year.

"This is a win-win arrangement that will provide cheaper electricity for DOC and have tremendous environmental benefits."

The project will also include groundbreaking technology designed by IRL in the form of a distributed hydrogen energy system dubbed 'hylink'.

***Photovoltaic panels for harnessing sun power***



***Generator for harnessing the wind***



***And the heart of it all – the control panel for the electrolyser***

***Mission Control here***



### *Sustainable energy for Matiu/Somes continues:*

The system works by capturing renewable energy from a wind turbine or photovoltaic solar cells. This energy then powers an electrolyser that extracts hydrogen from water by separating it into hydrogen and oxygen molecules.

The low-pressure hydrogen fuel gas is delivered by pipeline to a fuel cell to produce electricity. As well as transporting the energy, the system also stores hydrogen in the pipeline so that a supply of energy can be maintained even when the wind is not blowing.

IRL distribution and hydrogen-energy team manager Alister Gardiner said technological advances are making renewable energy more attractive.

“Being energy efficient and investing in renewable energy is better for the environment we live in and good value for money, as the system pays for itself over time.”

Mr Gardiner said the energy-efficient and renewable-energy systems to be showcased on Matiu/Somes Island are a good example of an energy solution for sites that are not connected to the electricity grid. The island will continue to be open to visitors for the duration of the project.

Water and sewage systems on the island will be upgraded at a later stage of the overall energy project.

***Kerry Swadling***

### **Warmer by the day**

Although winter is definitely here and temperatures dropping the rangers and overnight visitors to the island will feel much warmer this year.

One of the several sustainability initiatives currently taking place on Matiu/Somes island is the installation of underfloor and ceiling insulation in most buildings on the islands. DOC's sustainability programme has teamed up with the Department of Corrections to get the help of community workers for the hard task of installing the underfloor polyester blankets.

Almost every Wednesday over the last few months (if the weather allowed), ten committed workers worked away on the massive task and the end is in sight. Volunteers from the DOC National Office, Eastbourne Forest Rangers and family members of DOC staff have helped by providing the workers with an exceptional lunch each time.

Other sustainability initiatives on the Island include the installation of solar hot-water heaters, more energy-efficient lighting and appliances, an upgrade of the Field Centre office, a proposed renewable energy system, and a planned efficiency upgrade to the water and sewerage system.

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

***Kirsten Haupt***

### **Background information**

Supplying energy to off-grid sites represents one of DOC's greatest resource efficiency challenges as they rely almost exclusively on diesel generators, an expensive way of generating electricity. DOC is tackling this issue by installing renewable energy systems and energy-efficiency measures on up to 13 islands. See the links below for more information.

To find out more about this energy system:

<http://www.gets.govt.nz/>

To find out more about DOC's sustainability work:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/about-oc/news/issues/sustainability/>

To find out more about small-scale electricity generation:

<http://www.eeca.govt.nz/efficient-and-renewable-energy/distributed-electricity-generation>

To find out more about the hydrogen energy system being trialled on Matiu/Somes Island by IRL:

<http://www.irl.cri.nz/our-research/energy-power>

To find out more about Matiu/Somes Island renewable energy system:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-visit/wellington/poneke/matiu-somes-island/>

For more information please contact: **Kerry Swadling**, contact for DOC's Renewable Energy Comms group.  
[kswadling@doc.govt.nz](mailto:kswadling@doc.govt.nz)



## Fluttering Shearwater Translocation

### **Project Update**

Shane has completed writing the proposal to transfer Fluttering Shearwater chicks from Long Island, Queen Charlotte Sound, to Mātīu/Somes Island. It will be submitted to DOC after consultation with, and approval from, the Kaitiaki Board, and Te Ati Awa both here in Wellington and in the Marlborough Sounds.

The proposal is to transfer up to a maximum of 80 chicks per year for 3 years beginning in January 2012. At a meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> June between Te Ati Awa, DOC, Mātīu/Somes Charitable Trust and myself the way forward from here was discussed.

More artificial burrows were installed in December 2010 at the new site and since March, 5 burrows have been regularly visited by what is suspected to be adult Fluttering Shearwaters attracted to the site by the sound system.

A further 45 to 50 artificial burrows are to be installed in August/ September 2011. This will give the burrows several months to settle into the ground before any chicks are transferred into them. Any burrows being used or regularly visited by adults attracted to the site cannot be used to house a transferred chick. Volunteers for that work will be useful then.

The estimated cost of this transfer project will be around \$15,000 - \$20,000 per year for 3 years. Fundraising will be needed to obtain this amount.

The chicks targeted for transfer are approximately 10 to 20 days off fledging, and all these chicks need daily feeding up until they fledge. The feeding requires a team of 6 people for each week once the birds arrive until they depart which is about 4 weeks. At least 24 volunteers will be needed to help in this hands-on intensive feeding programme.

The proposed transfer date is 10<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

### **Some facts & figures**

After two stop work orders caused work to cease because the site is possibly on an archaeological significant site, it is all go again.

Pre-September 2010, Barry Dent constructed 33 Fluttering Shearwater artificial nest boxes which were transported to Mātīu/Somes Island.

On 23 September 2010, 7 nest boxes were installed on the Island under the expert guidance of Helen Gummer to ensure they were installed correctly. A month later, these 4 nest boxes were checked, and feathers were found inside them.

Between 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2010, the remaining 26 nest boxes were installed;

After an archaeological review of the site early March 2011, permission was granted for the site to be used for burrows with some restrictions.

Installed burrows 13/04/11



Alison Hull and Shane Cotter checking burrows on 5/5/11



An active burrow on 13/04/11



*Fluttering Shearwater Translocation continues:*

An on-site meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2011 of Brent Tandy, Jo, Matt and I was used to identify the areas not to be disturbed and to evaluate how many nest boxes could be installed. About another 40– 45 could be accommodated.

The site needed clearing as the summer growth of grass and weeds had hidden nest boxes and entrances.

Three burrows had nest material and feathers present in bowl-shaped depressions

Other burrows were still dry, clean, with no nest material or feathers. They did not appear to have been entered.

By 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2011, the active burrows had signs of continuing activity, while the non-active ones had not been entered yet.

Sticks have been placed at the entrances of each burrow for a better gauge of which burrows are being entered.

This is a great start and shows the site is suitable for Fluttering Shearwaters. This does not mean the intended translocation project isn't needed but it does show we have the right location and the translocation is needed more than ever.

But please the artificial burrows and the site must not be disturbed, so do not visit the site and do not be tempted to lift the lids.

**Shane**

## **Rats, what a let-down, there were none**

Occi, Moss and handler Miriam arrived in pouring rain and left in brilliant sunshine which reflects the result of their search of the Island. Although these two little dogs were a little disappointed at finding nothing we are very happy that, after a search of Matiu, they have declared us rat-free again.

Time and weather did not allow Makaro and Mokopuna to be searched so these will be a priority for their next visit.

***Two rat dogs feeling ratty without any rats.  
Thank goodness say the humans.***

## **Quarantine Theatre on Matiu/Somes**

This play by Paul Stephanus and Luke Hawker, directed by Paul Stephanus, was acted out on the Island in February and March 2011. It linked the tormented ghosts of the island's past with the moral, physical, political, and environmental problems of today's world, and involved the audience long before the play proper began, while being ferried to the island, and walking through the bush to the barracks.

There the trials and tribulations of immigrants to 19<sup>th</sup> century New Zealand were acted out, gripping the audience in this earnest and grim play about their infectious diseases of measles, typhoid, DTs, scarlet fever and smallpox.

They were a subdued lot on the return ferry trip home to present day life.

*Derived from Laurie Atkinson's review in Dominion Post 7/2/11*



## Matiu/Somes Planting Programme 2011

DOC started its 2011 volunteers' planting programme for the ecological restoration of Matiu/Somes Scientific Reserve, in the week after Queens Birthday, when a specialised group of volunteers dealt with the very steep slippery slopes.

Much of the work involves the re-establishment of plants that have been missing from the island for a very long time. Many of these plants are unusual and require careful handling and planting methods if they are to have a good chance of thriving, producing seed and spreading from carefully chosen planting sites scattered around the island.

### Planting dates

Dates have been set aside in July for F&B groups to help complete the planting of about 1,500 plants (about 1000 for secondary plantings and 500 for general plantings) over this winter.

More plants are arriving in September which are planned to be planted straight out on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> September.

At this stage we would want up to 15 volunteers each day. Alex looks forward to volunteers contacting him, so he can compile teams for these dates.

### Adopt-a-planting zone

DOC is currently mapping all our special trees that need on-going TLC to ensure their survival. The plan is to split the island into zones for the on-going care of these plants.

Then a small number of committed individuals can adopt a zone and come at least once a year or more, depending on the zone, to undertake this work.

This advance notice is to give you time to think about this proposal and let Alex know if you would like to be involved this way. Access will be easy for this work.

Forest & Bird members who are interested in planting or adopt-a-zone, please contact **Alex Kettles**, [ma.pa@atrix.co.nz](mailto:ma.pa@atrix.co.nz), or 04-569 6208.

### Dates for the 2011 planting season

*First planting*

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July**

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July**

both at easy access sites

*Second planting/potting up*

**Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September**

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September**

*How some earlier plantings are looking*



## A possible his-story for Kim Lee

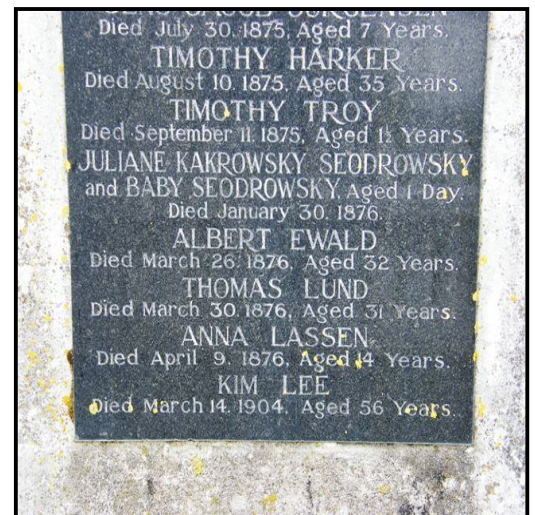
Kim Lee was a 56 year-old greengrocer who lived in Newtown, Wellington, diagnosed with "anaesthetic leprosy" on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1903, and for quarantine reasons sent to Somes Island. The residents refused to let him stay on Somes Island, so he was sent to Nga Mokopuna. He was provided with a small amount of furniture and lived in a cave, and his food was carried across in a rowboat and for inclement weather the lighthouse keeper rigged up a flying fox.

There are various versions of his history: one was he had arrived in New Zealand from Canton only 8 weeks previously; another that he had been in New Zealand for 11 years, had "gardened" in Lower Hutt and also "hawked goods", then in business in Adelaide Road Newtown for 8 years.

In February 1904, the "Chinese" sent to the island was said to be well fed, and exercised, and made to take daily baths in the sea. The result was that the leprosy symptoms were gradually leaving him and he was likely to be cured and discharged.

In March the spots had disappeared but internal complications had set in. He died of uraemia on 14<sup>th</sup> March. The Health Department gave every opportunity for the deceased's friends to attend the funeral. He was buried in an unmarked grave probably on Somes Island.

***A busy time at the wharf with the ferries bringing visitors. Many of them have heard about Kim Lee, and want to know more of his story!***



## Quail Island Newsletter June Issue 37

Is full of news: its lizard fauna is being surveyed, and fungi that have erupted in the autumn have been identified and recorded. Planting is continuing, despite disruptions from the ever-recurring earthquakes.

If you want to read it, contact Jan Heine, [janheine@xtra.co.nz](mailto:janheine@xtra.co.nz)

## Canadian First Nation Students Visit

On 18<sup>th</sup> May 2011, ten Canadian students from Guelph University came to Matiu Island as willing and passionate volunteers, wanting to help in maintaining the beauty and majesty of this beloved whenua. With great gusto and humble charisma provided by their fantastically knowledgeable and accommodating Ranger/Guide for the day, Matt Sidaway, the students 'dug in', worked hard, cleared tracks, enjoyed the views and came away from Matiu feeling very blessed and overwhelmed by the amazing beauty, rewarding kaupapa and a deep sense of appreciation for what they were able to achieve that day. The only disappointment was that they were not able to sight any of the Penguins or Tuatara; however, this was offset somewhat by the Giant Weta they saw and were able to hold, to their great delight.

This opportunity of going to Matiu Island (and consequently Hikoikoi Reserve and the Parangarahu/Pencarrow Lakes) was brought about through Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust and the Wellington Tenths Trust as the Mana Whenua over the Wellington area. The students were here as part of a programme called 'Project Serve International (PSI)'. PSI's purpose and aim is to *"inspire students to be actively engaged in community and social change through volunteer action ..... (and) to raise students' awareness on critical social issues and to encourage the development of a lifelong civic engagement"*. The students were the first-ever group from Guelph to come here under PSI, so we feel very fortunate that we had this wonderful opportunity to work with them and enjoy their company during the week.

As volunteers under PSI, the students have paid their own way and have been living with 'host' families while in our country. Their partner organisation in New Zealand and which has co-ordinated the majority of their stay is the Wellington Business School. Emma Kim and her team did a remarkable job in facilitating the students' activities and ensuring their safety and provisions were met.

It was a great time and we thoroughly enjoyed having their company and we are sure that the feeling was reciprocal. We feel that we have made some great young friends and look forward to further opportunities in the future. We thank all DOC staff who helped make this event and day an enjoyable. In particular, Matt Sidaway for his awesome mahi and personality, and for Kerry Swadling organising the day on our behalf. Much appreciated.

**Will Goldsmith**

Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust



The ten from Guelph Uni, Canada, with Matt

## Karobusters

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

The trips until June 2011 are overfull, but we have trips planned for July 2011-June 2012. If you are interested or would like to find out more,

**contact Dave Cox:**

[coxfamily@paradise.net.nz](mailto:coxfamily@paradise.net.nz)

Dates of these work parties are:

**20-21 August 2011**

**12-13 November 2011**

**10-11 December 2011**

**18-19 February 2012**

**17-18 March 2012**

## Revegetation Ranger's Update

I recently finished my fourth stint on Matiu focussed on weed control and it feels like the weeds are seriously on the run. Each year there are fewer species and populations of "rare" weeds and the abundance and distribution of "widespread" weeds is reduced. Apart from the occasional seedling, karo is now generally restricted to the steep slopes between the lighthouse and the middle of the west coast. Our crack weed team, Karobusters, are raring to make a big dent in the karo stands of that area in the coming months. In the meantime Karobusters have enjoyed the refreshing change of doing most of this year's planting (see Peter's photo), a job they have been doing to their usual high standard.

Another awesome volunteer, Joakim Liman (photo by Peter), has made huge progress implementing my plan to 'rescue' the many rare, sun-loving native trees that have been suffering in the shade of faster-growing pioneer species. Joakim's excellent botanical knowledge and observation skills led him to notice that not only has porokaiwhiri (pigeonwood) been fruiting, but that seedlings are appearing – another species to add to the list. We also discovered makomako (wineberry) seedlings earlier this year. As if that wasn't enough I discovered a flowering kohekohe (photo by Amanda Salt) in an area of forest planted by Forest and Bird in 1985 – the first time this has been noted on the Island as far as I am aware.

I am back on Matiu briefly to co-ordinate a very concentrated burst of planting. In one week we planted more than 1,100 plants! (see Planting Programme notes). Most of these were in our secondary planting sites where we are establishing seed sources for hitherto rare or absent species. I hope to return to Matiu later in the year to continue revegetation work.

*Peter Russell*



*Our crack weed team turned planters*



*Joakim releasing sun-loving tees*



*Peter with a first for the Island, a flowering kohekohe*

## **A New Cloak for Matiu** **He Korowai Hou mō Matiu**

### **The restoration of an island ecology**

by Janet Hector

The Lower Hutt Branch of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand Inc. 2011.

\$25 delivered, from LHF&B

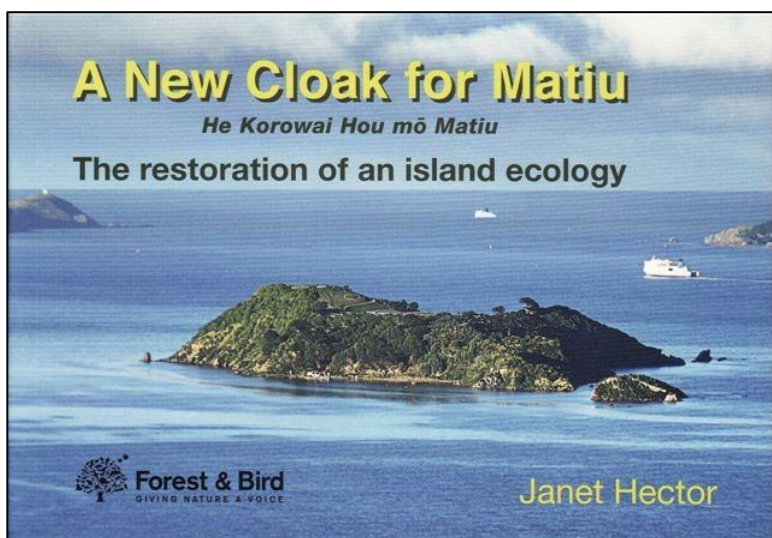
PO Box 31 194, Lower Hutt or [www.forestandbird.org.nz](http://www.forestandbird.org.nz)

Matiu/Somes Island is the jewel in the crown that is the Great Harbour of Tara. It is a treasure that was elusively out of reach for most of us (unless you were in quarantine, an enemy alien, or MAF quarantine staff), until that all changed in 1995 when the island came under DOC's care. Now in 2010 some 20,000 of us had visited it.

In 2009 the island was transferred to iwi ownership, following the Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika Treaty Settlement, and LH F&B is justly proud that the island is in such good shape.

But before that change came about, the Lower Hutt Branch of Forest & Bird Protection Society (LH F&B) had the vision of restoring the island's ecosystem initially by planting. This slim volume has been produced to commemorate the 30 years that the Branch has been involved in their far-sighted vision, and it is a treasure in its own right.

It is full of photographs both in colour and archival black & whites, which are sharp and well captioned. Photographic comparisons of changes then and now are impressive and useful, showing the real impact of LH F&B's work and vision. Its clear and readable text leads the reader through the sometimes convoluted sequence of events leading to the successful revegetation of the island.



Cover photo & design: **John Groombridge**

Chapters cover the reasons for the decline of the original forest cover, then how LH F&B began the planting programme which is the 'story of many threads coming together for a common purpose', and the commitment that ensued including development of the planting programme and then the nurseries, in league with MAF.

Planting was not the only aspect for revegetating the island that the Branch was committed to. It made submissions to the many meetings with Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries (MAF), DSIR Botanists for advice on plants, then to DOC, local authorities and boards to decide the future of the island. This real commitment is well documented in the book.

As one thing leads onto another, the idea of a predator-free island evolved, with rat eradication by 1990. This led the Branch to suggest to DOC and VUW (Victoria University) that the island could be a home for endangered species such as tuatara, giant weta, geckos, robins, kakariki, and now fluttering shearwaters.

By 1995 with the closing of the MAF quarantine station, DOC took over responsibility for the island. Under this new regime, LH F&B were involved in the development of management plans for the Matiu/Somes scientific reserve, and an historic reserve for the buildings. Other factors came into play with the ferry servicing the island and other volunteer groups helping. Naturally the emphasis is on LH F&B because it is their story of their work. Nevertheless this is balanced by references to the many other groups who have since become involved in volunteer work on Matiu/Somes.

*A new cloak for Matiu continues:*

The future for Revegetation means moving on as bulk planting comes to a close, and to continue the work of re-establishing an island ecosystem. This success gives strength to tackling similar projects on the mainland with confidence.

The text is augmented with a good index, a list of the indigenous plant species introduced by LH F&B between 1981 and 2010, an historic timeline and an Island restoration timeline to keep you on track with the twists and turns in the story.

Janet's References are a treat in themselves, and show how thoroughly she has recorded the details of her research for the book, and the extent to which she has ferreted the information out of the players in the story.

*A New Cloak for Matiu* really is a great little book, and worth every dollar of the \$25 it will cost you.

**Jan Heine**

*Warming up the Island on a stunning May Day was Chris Silvester who proposed to his girl friend Sophie with a 2m-high sign on the Island summit, and she said 'Yes'.*



## **Matiu/Somes Lighthouse**

A blink is as good  
As a nod, they say

From Pencarrow's little sister  
When you can't find your way

She's been putting out  
For fifty thousand nights

More alluring than co-ordinates  
Her bright white light

Don't leer and stare  
On rocks don't stray

Come here  
Go away

**Keith Lyons**

From *Sidetracks*, a collection of essays and poems on Matiu/Somes Island

International Institute of Modern Letters,  
VUW, and prepared for

Department of Conservation/Friends of  
Matiu Somes Island/ Lower Hutt Forest &  
Bird





## 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  
20-21 August 2011**

**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)*

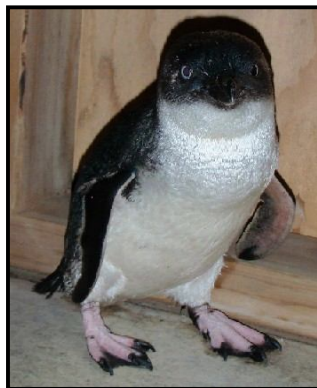
### **Matiu Really Matters\* – Newsletter**

Issued 2-3 times a year, or 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 Jo & Matt.*  
**Jan Heine**

**Next issue is September 2011:  
Deadline due 01/08/11**



## 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?**





