

**THE FRIENDS OF MANGEMANGEROA
SOCIETY INC
Spring Newsletter 2005**



Chairman's Ramblings:, Allan Riley

Orange Rata and other unwanted tree clearing: Recently someone cut through the Rata vine on the old Pururi on the middle track. As well growth from around smaller trees and climbers was cleared as if to better expose their trunks to view. The vine was estimated to be over 100 years old, but is now 'history'. A close look at the (mostly) carefully sawn damage done in 300 metres of the track suggests that the perpetrator was well intentioned, but definitely misguided. We hope that the article in the Howick and Pakuranga Times – 'Over-zealous green fingers kill rare flower' was read by the person or someone who knows who did it and that such damage does not happen again

2005 Restoration Planting: In the past three months, spurts of intensive activity of planting, weed clearance in areas ready for planting, and attention to existing plants, by a number of groups has resulted in the area near the new walk being successfully planted. This started with Forest & Bird followed by the Rotary Planting, Somerville Intermediate, and Bucklands Beach Intermediate (BBI) and then Somerville Intermediate again! All were coordinated and assisted by 'Friends'. In total around 5000 trees were planted. Manukau Park's trees will be planted in the next two weeks below Archie's Lookout. This is quite a rough area and will be a big task to rid the area of gorse first.

Somerville Intermediate now has their propagation unit up and growing seedlings for planting out in the reserve. This year saw the first planting contribution from BBI. They are 'growing on', in their Trees for Survival (TFS) propagation Unit small plants provided by Graham Falla. We look forward to the continued contribution from our school pupils.

Management: The restoration plan for the reserve is well under way. This document sets out the order of jobs to be completed. Fencing off of selected areas and having suitable plants under propagation to use to plant here is essential. This reduces weed infestation and encourages natural regeneration. The planting done by the various Friends' groups is undertaken to "speed up" what may have happened naturally over time. The species grown by the Friends are eco-sourced from seeds collected in the reserve or from other reserves within bird flight distance within the Hunua ecological district. However, some plants not in the reserve are at present declined for planting.

Slip: Just after the completion of the boardwalk for the new southern track a slip occurred above the waterfall. The debris from the slip almost covered the board walk. Unfortunately this was in the area where Jim Duckworth and Somerville Intermediate have been planting for the last four years. To try and stabilize this area 200 cabbage trees, grown by BBI have been planted into this land.

EIF Funding: The environmental initiative's fund operated by the ARC, granted the Friends \$1000.00. This is being used to fund the growing of around 300 specimen trees by Oratia Nursery. The seed for this

The track **will be opened by Sir Barry Curtis on Saturday 29th October** in the afternoon. Manukau Parks will send out invitations and confirm the starting time. We look forward to seeing you there. Bring your walking shoes and enjoy the afternoon.

Allan Riley
Chairman

Track names: What to call the tracks? As yet the middle and northern tracks are just that! We would appreciate any suggestions.

Secretary: We are still looking for a replacement for Stuart to be our secretary. We recognise that the job has become busier than anticipated and have broken it down into three roles:

- minute secretary for committee meetings: Jessica Pybus
- membership role. (This involves keeping the membership list updated and noting what contributions members are prepared to make, whether weeding, planting, guiding visitors etc)
Sally Barclay
- **inwards and outwards** Could you keep track of enquiries received/reroute these to the persons responsible? It would suit a person with a computer, e-mail and Microsoft WORD competence to enable letters to be sent. If this is a role you are interested in, please let Sally Barclay know at ph: 534.6196.

What's in flower

Kowhai (a mass of yellow – best observed in close proximity on the oldest section of the track – look for yellow flowers on the ground under the huge old specimens through out the bush)

Rewarewa (New Zealand honeysuckle) many flowers form the raceme which can be found on the ground after a storm. These are the spunky things with sticky out stigmas, a deep red in colour, about the size of a small hand

Fuschia (growing almost on the coast line)

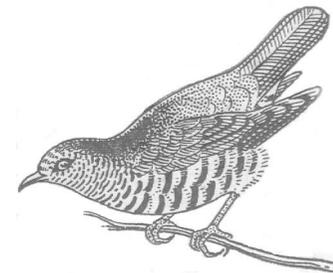
Kawakawa (these look like candles)

Rangiora (large fragrant white flower heads)

Bird of the Season: Shining Cuckoo or Pipiwharauoa

Not much bigger than a sparrow, the shining cuckoo (*Chalcites lucidus*) still makes quite an impact on the local scene when it starts arriving, along with spring, in late August, its numbers building up through to October. The annual migration starts in the island groups around the Solomons, to which the cuckoo returns in late February.

First sign of the shining cuckoo's arrival is usually its clear, distinctive call, which has been likened to "Irish, Irish, Irish, Irish, Irish ste-e-ew," a call that is almost certain to be heard at Mangemangeroa and anywhere else that supports a population of grey warbler. Not being a nest-builder or care-giver the cuckoo finds the beautifully built warbler's nest to be the most commodious for its egg, while warblers Being small, well-camouflaged, shade-loving and often solitary, the shining cuckoo is less often seen



Introducing Passive Parks Park ranger – Trudy McNie

I am one of the two Parks Rangers for Passive Parks throughout eastern Manukau. The highlight of my current position is organising, liaising and working with volunteer groups. It is an exciting time to be involved as MCC is developing a Volunteer Strategy that will nurture the partnerships we have and acknowledge the enormous effort that the community puts into work for our environment.

Over the past years I have been employed in the fields of land management and natural resource conservation with local body authorities. My favourite job so far has been working and living on the Routeburn Track as a Hut Warden. I have also been employed as a Land Management Officer for Manawatu Wanganui Regional Council then as Parks and Reserves Project Manager for Works Infrastructure contracted to the Ruapehu District Council.

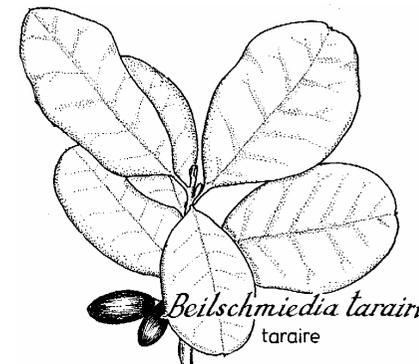
I have always had an interest in nature and farming – from the environment I grew up in (farming), to university study (B.Appl.Sc – Natural Resource Management) and now my career. I enjoy being out in the natural environment whether that be for leisure or work. I enjoy tramping, kayaking, social sports and raranga harakeke. I recently moved up to the big smoke from living most of my life in Taumarunui. 'Working' at Mangemangeroa is a real pleasure both in the natural environment and with the Friends Group and I look forward to many more tree plantings and bush walks with you all.

Trudy McNie
Parks Field Officer
Manukau Parks

Plant of the Season: Taraire by Sally Barclay



In mature bush the straight, brownish white trunks of the taraire extend some considerable distance before forming the branches which give rise to the canopy. At present large purplish dupes lay on the ground under these trees. This fruit (drupe) is a favourite food of the wood pigeon (kereru).



.Underneath the taraire their crinkly leaves (shed all the year round) form a thick mat which warn of approaching footprints

Pest control “Up the Valley”

By Sally Barclay

Rabbits, possums and goats all feed on native flora while cats and mustelids (stoats, ferrets and weasels) are by choice, fauna feeders. There is little point in attempting a restoration project without controlling these pests.

We are fortunate that at the present time there is a monitoring programme in place within the reserve for some of these pests. Unfortunately animals do not recognize boundaries but roam in the search for food over a considerable distance. It is believed that cats will cover up to 15 km in a night!

For this reason we need to recognize the work in pest reduction that is carried out by private land owners and “neighbours” from up the valley in helping to protect Mangemangeroa Reserve.

Simon and Morag Fordham and Linden and Mike Johnson are two families who take an active role in this pest control. Morag assures me it is Mike who is the motivator!

Linden in 1998 recognised that there was a huge problem and with her family began a serious attempt to reduce pests.

She recounted how in 1998, in a tree in the Upper Mangemangeroa valley they counted 23 possums! A little further along, they spotted 2 stoats up one tree. At this stage the family were keen shooters with daughter, Anthea being an excellent shot. They begun “hunting possums”.

The following year they approached Bruce Frazer, from ARC. Bruce proved an excellent guide with a wealth of knowledge on “pest habits”. According to Bruce (as retold by Linden) possums leave their burrow “early evening, toilet, eat and for 2/3 of the night spend their time grooming their fur” They are extremely fussy about the condition of their fur, and will go to great lengths to keep it clean. Therefore, they prefer to travel along ridges, and clear paths, rather than venturing along the valley bottoms. Being lazy climbers they use their two front teeth, as well as their claws to help pull themselves up the tree trunks, leaving a distinctive pattern of marks. Bruce showed Linden and her family how to recognize the signs of possum activity. Linden’s enthusiasm for pest eradication was such that she was thrilled when husband Mike presented her with her Christmas present, a Timms trap!



Since 1998 over 1000 possums have been shot and trapped and an unknown number poisoned in a pest eradication campaign. All have been ‘silver greys’ which were introduced from NSW, Australia.

Goats too have been a problem, in particular the King fern in the valley was heavily attacked. Morag recalled that in the 2001/2002 season six goats were shot from her bedroom window. Bruce and his team later did a marvelous job eradicating more feral goats from this area.

Probably the most significant change seen by the landowners was when the rats (both Norwegian and black) were poisoned and thousands of seedlings erupted from the forest duff. To maintain low rat populations. Linden and Mike have nineteen bait stations and use six traps in strategic locations set in