

**THE FRIENDS OF MANGEMANGEROA
SOCIETY INC
Summer Newsletter 2006**



Chairman's Ramblings – by Allan Riley

In the winter newsletter we discussed the shocking destruction that had taken place in the reserve.

Our thanks now go to the Friends' supporter who phoned the MCC Call Centre advising the car number plate of a group seen taking fern fronds. That was quickly relayed from the Call Centre to the parks ranger who traced the alleged offenders car and visited them. The matter has now been passed on to the Police.

The MCC Call Centre number is 09 262 5104

Mangemangeroa Valley Reserves Management Plan

In November the Friends' committee carefully considered their recommendations for the draft Mangemangeroa Management Plan. The MCC highlighted several items they sought comments on, particularly the vexed question of access for exercising dogs on the reserves.

Subsequently I received two e-mails from members who objected to the stance taken when we recommended that the Hearings Committee reinstate the restrictions placed on dogs as given in the Mangemangeroa Reserve Management Strategy 1995. That restriction was later amended by the Dog Control Bylaw 2004 and which the current draft plan seeks to confirm.

Our position as advocates for the Mangemangeroa reserves forming the Mangemangeroa Valley walkways is for protection and promotion of the reserves, their fauna and flora and includes assisting in bush regeneration and restoration through the activities of Friends of Mangemangeroa and related interest groups. Notwithstanding that many members are, or have been dog owners, our charter does not require us to advocate for dogs.

In their submission on the Management Plan, Forest & Bird had this to say; "The Bylaw contains a number of anomalies that make it either unworkable or actively damaging to Mangemangeroa's natural heritage. How are "the lower estuarine area" and "the birdlife breeding season" defined in it? What practical measures are being taken to police the "on a leash" regulation? Why is so little consideration to be given to wildlife in and around the bush?"

In Auckland the breeding season for native wildlife can extend through most of the year, with some species producing successive broods, especially when earlier attempts have failed. The New Zealand pigeon, for example, which breeds at Mangemangeroa, is a nationally threatened species susceptible to predation. Its nesting can begin in September, but there are records of fledgling native pigeons being found on the ground as late as July. Certainly birds are at their most vulnerable while incubating and raising young, and not only to cats, rats, stoats and possums. Pukeko, pheasant, duck, quail, skylark, dotterel, banded rail and fernbird all nest on or close to the ground. Young fledglings of many tree-nesters spend some days on the ground – the sort of quarry that attracts the attentions of fast-moving terriers.



Cormorant captured by Doug Humby.

The same applies to other terrestrial vertebrates – skinks, geckos – which are ground feeders throughout the year. Consider the potential effects on rare ground invertebrates such as native land snails, disturbed or destroyed by foraging dogs. Enough is known about the wildlife that does or could use this habitat to make the admission of dogs to it "seriously unacceptable."

The Friends' committee shares these views of Forest and Bird and recommends
:**that the restrictions placed on dogs in the Mangemangeroa Reserve Management Strategy 1995 be re-imposed.**"

Restoration update:

Planting will commence in May 2007 with the trees from the Somerville Intermediate plant-raising unit and from Jim Duckworth's unit. If you are able to help with this the dates will be posted on the web site www.aerolink.co.nz/mangemangeroa/main.html. closer to the time. And we will email dates to those on the email list.

Council has recommenced weed control programmes both to reduce competition to the plants already planted and in preparation for this year's planting.

Unfortunately the automatic watering system at Somerville Intermediate failed around Christmas, but our standby surveillance team (initially James and Anita Lee) swung into action and hand watered until 15th January when Jessica and John Pybus took over until school staff arrived back. It was a great effort by this dedicated team and ensured the survival of the plants through the holiday period.

Should anyone want a backdated issue of the newsletter this can be found on the website.

Allan Riley

Stakes needed:

To indicate where plants have been planted we need a number of stakes. If anyone could help with these please:

**ph Allan 534 4067 or
email Sally:
sallyb@aaleda.co.nz**

The Tui by Bruce Keeley

If the old saying that 'familiarity breeds contempt' is true at times, it surely could not be true of our attitude towards the Tui, that very conspicuous and charismatic inhabitant of any decent clump of mature trees in the Auckland region. Unlike many native species, the Tui has coped well with urbanization, and being a 'blossom nomad', it is prepared to travel to where the best honey-bearing flowers are. Is there a more delightful sight than a Kowhai tree, heavy in blossom and alive with a dozen or more Tui, singing, posturing and chasing each other for their share of the feast?

They will suddenly appear from miles around when the flowers are open, and just as quickly disappear when they are done.

Within the Mangemangeroa Reserve the Tui may be seen – or at least heard - at any time of the year. Of all our diurnal birds, it is the first up in the morning, and the last to bed at night. The song comprises a very wide repertoire from the sublime to the ridiculous, and includes sounds at frequencies beyond human hearing but visible in the bird's pulsating throat. The purest call is best heard before dawn - a repeated simple note, or sequence, of great purity. During part of the breeding cycle the territorial male can drive his human neighbours to distraction with a monotonous repeated sequence which seems to go on all day.



When not in a vocal mood, the Tui's presence in the bush is indicated by its distinctively noisy, and extremely agile flight through the canopy foliage. The loud whir of wings, which is believed to have both an aggressive and courtship function, is produced by specially shaped primary feathers.

Though it is rightly called a honeyeater, and has a special brush-tipped tongue to prove it, the Tui has a range of food preferences. It can be seen exploring tree trunks for insects and other invertebrates; it will take insects on the wing; and it is not averse to fruit when honey is unavailable. It is thus an important part of the forest's ecological equation, as a pollinator of flowers and a disperser of seeds.

Introducing the New Education Park Ranger: Anna Baine (Manukau parks)



Toward the end of 2006, Anna joined Manukau Parks as the new Education Park Ranger. Her position involves a combination of general Park Ranger duties, setting up Environmental Education initiatives across Manukau parks, and improving park interpretation and promotion. Anna's role will also involve EnviroSchool facilitation with at least one school in Manukau.

Previous to joining Parks, Anna worked as a Ranger for DOC in Te Kuiti and on Rangitoto Island. She has spent 4 and half years as a Social Science teacher at Penrose High School. As well she has been involved with several voluntary

conservation organisations abroad in Zambia and Ireland.

Anna is looking forward to providing more educational opportunities across Manukau Parks for both the general public and schools.

Anna is leading four walks this year in the Mangemangeroa Reserve.

Guided Walks with Anna

Leaving from the white barn in Somerville Road

Friday **2nd March** 9:45 – 12:30
(with Sally Barclay)

Friday **20th April** 9:45 – 12:30
(with Alan LaRoche)

Friday **27th July** 9:45 – 12:30

Friday **23rd Nov 9:45** – 12:30

For bookings phone Anna:
262 8900 ext 8224

Talking and Walking with the Pigeon Mountain Garden Club

By Graham Falla

Members of the Pigeon Mountain Garden Club turned out in large numbers to their monthly meeting to hear Friends committee member Graham Falla give an illustrated talk on the Mangemangeroa Reserve. Although their displays and trading table were heavily dominated by exotic plants, enough interest was generated in the native bush scene to bring thirty five away from their gardens on a fine afternoon the following Sunday to walk through the central part of the reserve. Thanks to Manukau Parks possum control measures the bush was looking good.

Some surprise was expressed that dogs could now be taken through it. Fantails provided a close escort in relays, but most other bird life kept to the high canopy.

For many this was a first visit, but several spoke of their hope to return in future to enjoy Mangemangeroa.



As Busy As A Bumble Bee

The white rata *Metrosideros perforata* provided a haven for bumble bees this year in the reserve. This rata located on the middle section of the track is just above ground. The host ponga has fallen over hence the photographer was able to get close to the scene!..

If you have any interesting photos and would like to share them with other FOM members please email them to:
sallyb@aleda.co.nz

Contact details for the
Friends of the Mangemangeroa Society
Inc

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Deborah Grant – Secretary
Ph 535 7072 debsgrant@ihug

web address:
www.aerolink.co.nz/mangemangeroa/main.html

Link to other conservation groups in
the Auckland Region:
www.manawa.org.nz

See also www.arc.govt.nz for upcoming
events in the Auckland region

Our Rotary Project:

There has been recent publicity about the Rotary Walk along the Estuary near St Kentigems College, Pakuranga but our local Rotary Clubs; the Howick Rotary Club and the Howick Somerville Rotary Club have contributed both financially and with volunteer labour to the restoration program and development of walkways within the Mangemangeroa Reserve.



Rotary members work on a voluntary basis for the betterment of their local community as well as offering service at an International level. Stuart Armstrong (Treasurer) explained how the Howick Rotary club (a club with over 60 members) raised funds from projects such as the huge "Howick Bookarama" and the annual Yacht Regatta held in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Half Moon Bay. These funds are used within the community for projects which Rotarians feel are worthwhile. The Mangemangeroa Reserve has been the recipient of these Rotary funds on a number of occasions.



Howick Rotarians cementing a seat in on the Rotary Loop

Howick Somerville Rotary Club with a much smaller membership, was the first club to be involved in the Reserve projects contributing labour to the barking of the initial track and funding the building of Archies Lookout. The Rotary Loop, so named because the local Clubs helped with funding, materials and labour. The picnic table area and the seats were a Howick Rotary Club project.



Archies Lookout; a sheltered spot from which to enjoy the view

.The propagation unit at Somerville Intermediate School is another Rotarian project. This unit was originally provided for Howick College by the Rotarians but as it was "surplus to requirements" a new home for it at Somerville Intermediate was found. At this location it offers the Intermediate students the opportunity to have hands on experience of propagating and caring for restoration species. The continued monitoring of the watering system in this unit over the holidays was



undertaken by Rotarians, Ex-Rotarians, and FOM members.

When working bees are called for; Rotarians provide "manpower". They give their time for ground preparation, planting out of seedlings, removal of competing weeds, and strong shoulders for digging holes in which seedlings are planted. Their legacy is recognized in the naming of the latest section of the track "**The Rotary Loop**"



Propagation Unit

JACKSON BRUCE McKENZIE (1925 - 2006)

By Deborah Grant

Jack was a self motivated, determined man of strong character with a contagious passion for life and New Zealand. He is sadly missed by us all.

Born, in Auckland, the second son of a builder and an English war time bride, he attended Mt. Albert Grammar. At the age of 18 he was taught to type prior to going off to war to serve in the Telcom unit. On his return and shortly afterwards he married his life long partner, the typing teacher, Dorothy. They had a wonderful life together moving many times to take on new challenges.

Jack was an extremely talented, creative person and always had a project on the go – be it building boats, houses or developing property and later creating beautiful pieces of furniture and woodwork, not to mention the countless fix it jobs for friends and family.

He had a great attribute of always making one feel welcome and always gave generously of his time and advice with a genuine concern for others.

His life long love affair with timber and in particular New Zealand native timbers, lead him into various community activities including the Motuora Restoration Society, different Rotary Clubs, Probus, founder member of Friends of Mangemangeroa and an active member of the Woodturners Guild. He was a deep thinker and somewhat of a perfectionist and was always looking for ways to improve and enhance situations. Jack and Dorothy shared a vision for the Mangemangeroa Reserve in the form of an Eco Centre to display the natural history of the area and in commemoration of the Somerville family. It would indeed be a wonderful parting gesture to them both if Friends of Mangemangeroa can help bring this vision to fruition.



Austen Gate and Jack McKenzie contemplate the lower terrace of the Mangemangeroa reserve before choosing a spot on which to plant the young kahikatea.

Plant of the Month Kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*)

By Sally Barclay



It is fitting that we chose as “plant of the month” the kahikatea. This tree was Jack MacKenzies favourite, a sturdy tree growing to a height of 60m and being the tallest of our native trees.

The kahikatea (kike) or New Zealand white pine, favours wet swampy sites, in particular, ground which is subject to flooding.. Kahikatea, like other cone bearing trees of the podocarp family develops seeds sitting on a bright coloured fleshy receptacle. (In this case orange-red). Kahikatea seed is a favoured food of the wood pigeons.

Jack MacKenzie took a particular interest in the recent planting of a grove of kahitakea on the flat damp area near the rotary loop. These young trees appear brown and “dead” but as juveniles they are somewhat unattractive in appearance. Later this rather brown foliage turns to a pretty green (see photo). As the tree matures the length of each “leaf” becomes less to form more needle-like “leaves”. One of the most attractive parts to the kahikatea is the beautiful patterned bark of the young mature trees.

