



Comings and Goings

Carol Haars, the Society's Secretary/Administrator resigned in January after seven years in the position. During this time, Carol has been involved in the growth of the Society's work, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all her hard work and commitment, and to wish her well for the future.

Graham Densem, who for the last three years has been our Environmental Adviser and Activities Coordinator, did not seek to renew his contract at the end of last year. It is Graham's initiative and enthusiasm that has seen the production of recent Newsletters, and the initiation of our monthly outings programme. Graham will continue to be involved with the Society, particularly for consultation on resource management issues.

During last year, the Executive Committee took stock of the Society's work, recognising that the growth has

brought increased pressure on Committee members in general, and the President in particular. It was therefore agreed that a new position of part-time 'Executive Secretary' be created, and this was advertised in the press in January. John Goodrich was appointed, and took up the role in February. John, until the beginning of the year, worked at Lincoln University, where he was Academic Services Manager. Originally from Sheffield, and living on the edge of the Peak District National Park, John has a firm awareness of the importance of landscapes such as the Port Hills, and the pressures on them.

"I am really thrilled to have been given this opportunity to work for the Summit Road Society. Its achievements in the conservation of the Port Hills since it was founded over 50 years ago, are fantastic. Here in Christchurch we have a tremendous asset, which is so important to the city and the region for its natural history and recreational value.

Christchurch would certainly not be the place it is without the backdrop of the hills. We are very lucky to have local bodies that also recognise this, but we cannot afford to be complacent. With increased pressure for development and recreation, the work of voluntary organisations such as the Summit Road Society is essential. With my role as Secretary, I hope that I can do my bit in helping the Society to continue with its work of reserve management, track maintenance and advocacy"

John lives with his wife Liz in Sumner, and hopes that his new job will allow him time to catch up with some long overdue projects on their house, and to do a little more rock climbing, surfing and bird-watching than he has been able to do in the recent past. He can be contacted on 326 7330, or by email at: secretary@summitroadsociety.org.nz

Annual General Meeting

There was a very good attendance at the Annual General Meeting 19th March, where Bob Parker, Mayor of Banks Peninsula District Council spoke about his passion for and commitment to the Port Hills and Banks Peninsula. He confirmed his belief that amalgamation with the Christchurch City Council is in the best interests of his council and the Banks Peninsula ratepayers. Of particular interest to our members, were the reasons why a special rural zone to include outstanding landscapes had not been created in the proposed District Plan. However, the Mayor reassured us that provisions would be made to give protection to the upper slopes of the Port Hills in the Lyttelton Harbour basin.

Board & Committee 2003

Behind every voluntary organisation is a hard working committee. There are three main committees in the Society:

The Board

The Board is responsible for the overall governance of the Society, policy and strategy. This comprises of:

President	Maurice McGregor
Vice-President	Mike White
Treasurer	Paul Loughton
Board Members	Barry Gerard Anne Kennedy Janey Thomas John Watson
Honorary Life Members	John Jameson Gordon Kirk

We are also fortunate to have representation on the Board from:

Christchurch City Council (Paul de Spa from the Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board and John Freeman from the Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board), Banks Peninsula District Council (Doug Couch), Selwyn District Council (Bill Woods), and the Department of Conservation (Tony Woods).

The Activities and Promotions Committee
This Committee, as its name suggests is responsible for any publicity relating to the Society, and the organisation of events such as our Outings programme. Its members are: Bob Cawley, Graham Dunbar, Jim Grennell, John Jameson, Gordon Kirk, Maurice McGregor, David Pringle and Janey Thomas

Resource Management Group
Gordon Kirk, Joy Burt, Maurice McGregor and Graham Densem

Resource Management Activities

As you will have seen from the press, the Environment Court did not approve the major housing development proposed for Montgomery Spur. This is definitely a boost for the Society's Resource Management Group, which, with financial support from many members, put a lot of time and effort into the case. Our evidence was specifically referred to in Judge Jackson's deliberations where he stated that the Port Hills identify Christchurch city in the same way that Table Mountain does in Cape Town, and Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh, and the harbours define Wellington and Auckland.

However, we have now received Notice of Appeal to the High Court for the rezoning of the lower slopes to enable subdivisions with an average size of 750 square metres and



In the process of preparing the Montgomery Spur submission: Graham Densem, Brian Molloy and Chris Fowler being shown the Development plan for Montgomery Spur by one of the land owners, Harvey Armstrong.

Planning Exercise

In 1997, a meeting was held at Living Springs for members to review the Society's work and achievements, and to discuss its future direction. Since then, committee members, work party conveners and other representatives have met each year to confirm our goals and objectives, and to agree the steps necessary to meet these. This has proved to be an excellent opportunity for us to discuss the Society's work, keep abreast of new developments, and to plan our work for the coming year.

The 2003 planning session took place on 5 May, and the Development Plan is currently being finalised. If you would like a copy, or have any comments on the Society's work, please contact the Secretary.

not 3000 metres as decided by the Court. The Society has elected not to be involved with the High Court action as it involves density of housing within the area allowed for urban expansion in the Environment Court decision, not a change in the area proposed for housing. The proceedings will not therefore be critical to the Society's main interest, which was to maintain the urban edge as low as possible on the Spur.

Despite the favourable decision on Montgomery Spur, and the message that this sends about the importance of the landscape, urbanisation continues to 'creep' up the Port Hills. The Society will continue to be involved in issues where we consider proposed development is inappropriate, but this decision has altered the climate somewhat in favour of natural values, the promoting of which is the Society's prime aim.

- We recently gave evidence in support of Valerie Campbell's application to the Environment Court for the Christchurch City Council to impose design constraints on houses being built on Mount Pleasant above the 320 metre contour line.
- As a result of our objections to a house to be built on Dyers Pass Road above the hairpin bend on the Governors Bay side, mediation has resulted in a covenant in favour of the Society not to subdivide the property, nor to erect additional buildings without our consent.
- We have confirmed our objections to the extension of housing on Kennedy's Bush Road.



Summit Road Society (Inc)

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President	Maurice McGregor	332 0597
Vice-President	Mike White	329 9018
Secretary	John Goodrich	326 7330
Treasurer	Paul Loughton	322 7082
Board Members	Barry Gerard	326 5105
	Anne Kennedy	377 0364
	John Watson	332 5169
	Janey Thomas	332 5853
Work Parties		
Eastenders	John Willocks	384 3252
Kiwigang	Anne Henderson	352 8058
Ohinetahi	Gordon Kirk	332 7134
Weekenders	Jim Grennell	358 4438

We are a voluntary society working to enhance, preserve and protect the natural environment, beauty and open character of the Port Hills of Banks Peninsula for people to enjoy. We need and welcome contributions to our work through memberships, donations and corporate sponsorships, participation in work parties (non-members welcome - but why not join us as well!), and bequests.

The next Resource Management challenges

Banks Peninsula District Plan, Variation 2

The November 2002 Newsletter outlined the reasons for our having lodged a submission to the proposed Variation of the Banks Peninsula Plan. There has been no further activity to date, but we understand the hearings will be held late this year.

Urban & Residential Spread

Further to the Montgomery Spur item, the particularly pernicious issue for natural values on the Hills may well be not so much spread of what used to be called the 'urban fence' (ie urban zoning), but in fact the spread and intensification of urban uses in the rural area.

Being so close to town, the pressures on rural hills land will continue strongly for residential sites in what town dwellers regard as 'rural surroundings'. Unfortunately, every house built lessens that 'rural character' it feeds off. The risk for the hills is that we may end up with a low density 'rural-residential' spread across land whose natural character at present derives from its absence of such development. The Burkes Bush Spur is a case in point. Members should take a drive (or walk!) past Kennedys Bush on the Summit Road, and see the impact of low density 'sympathetic' developments over the last decade. If such spread continues too high on, or over too much of, the Hills, then the remaining natural areas will be insufficient to sustain the natural character we until now have valued.

One-off applications for low density rural-residential subdivisions are very hard to counter, given the economic gains to land owners from being able to sell on urban terms. Indeed, Banks

Peninsula Council's Variation 2 sets out to encourage such developments. Councils like hearing all the 'sympathetic' and 'blend in' words that, while well meant, are usually far removed from what actually eventuates. The Montgomery Spur decision may have shifted the balance for larger urban expansions, but the Society also is going to have to hold the line against the many small applications in the foreseeable future, until a Port Hills Park policy comes into being.

The Society's long term aim should be for a strongly-delineated urban-rural boundary on the hills, on the rural side of which high standards of rural and natural landscape remain in perpetuity, for the common good.

Grazing Management

An ongoing effort by the Society this year will be towards developing policies on management of Port Hills grasslands. The issue has arisen from twin changes to the hills over recent years – firstly, purchases of private farmlands to create new, publicly-owned reserves, some very extensive, and secondly, decline of income from grazing on remaining private lands. These changes amount to a silent conversion of the Hills from 'automatically-grazed' productive farmlands to recreation/conservation lands, which require active grassland management if the tussock/grassland character to be maintained.

The Society's concern is that if we want to retain even parts of the tawny, tussock-grassland backdrop to the City, lands identified to continue as grassland have to be actively managed by grazing – neither under-grazed nor over-grazed. If under-grazed or simply left unused, weed infestation will follow, and ultimately regeneration in the longer term, where summer

moisture allows. Not to mention the fire-risk meantime. If over-grazed, the grasslands will become thinned, allowing erosion of the unstable loess soils. Many members were present to hear the definitive statement by Professor O'Connor on this topic at the 2002 AGM.

There is no single public view of what vegetation cover should prevail on different parts of the Hills, or of any balance between the maintaining grasslands or conversion to shrublands. The Society actively manages its own Ohinetahi Block for regeneration and extension of existing bush remnants. However we would not advocate this for all areas of the Hills as some environments are suited to it while others are not.

The sixty-four-thousand-dollar question will be to agree and demarcate the various areas to be managed for each type of future landscape – tussock, improved pasture, native forest, and production forest. Also, to achieve a suitable and sustainable pattern between privately- and publicly owned land.

This then is the challenge the Society sees itself assisting the Councils and landowners with. Probably it will take some years yet to settle matters on all the Hills, but initial effort is in assisting the City Council in considering its own lands.

Graham Densem
Environmental Advisor

Regional Park

Earlier Newsletters have outlined the Society's possible roles in working towards establishing a regional park for the Port Hills. We feel that the Society should take a lead role in this, and are currently preparing a paper on the options and issues to discuss with all interested parties.



Toll Gate and Lantern, Sign of the Kiwi. [ca. 1920]



Sign of the Bellbird. [ca. 1920]

Hill Work Parties:

The Hill Work Parties continue to carry out outstanding work on track maintenance, weed eradication and planting on the Port Hills.

The "Eastenders"

The current membership is 51, and the average turnout at each working bee is 25. Work days are scheduled on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month. The weather has again played its part in disrupting organised days on many occasions, particularly in the autumn, spring and summer. Frustrating as this was we were able to transfer these days to the following week, and overall not many days were lost. In addition, the Eastenders spent many extra days working to improve and maintain the tracks. Continuing work by Bill Le Gros and Terry Evrard on the Captain Thomas extension must again be mentioned. Also the extra work building the track into the Sumnervale Reserve under the direction of Ken Rossiter deserves special mention. There have also been many days devoted to the clearance of long grass and weeds on the Whaka Raupo and Stan Helms tracks. The wet spring necessitated repeat work on these tracks to keep them clear for trampers' use.

The Eastenders plan to hold a celebration later in the year to mark the 10th anniversary of their founding. Past members and their wives are welcome to attend. For further details, contact John Willocks 384 3252.

Ohinetahi

During the year ending 31st December 2002, the Ohinetahi volunteer work party gave a total of 2208 man hours towards the management of tracks between Ohinetahi Bush and the property south of Ahuriri Reserve, and to a greater extent, the maintenance and enhancement of Ohinetahi Bush. Naturally, the main objective was the enhancement of the Ohinetahi Bush area, concentrating on the control of the vigorous growth of grass on O'Farrell's Track and other open grassland tracks. The picnic area at the Bellbird saddle has been kept in good order, and is popular for visitors and trampers. It is also seen as a good place for wedding photos with the harbour and bush as a background. A special effort has been made to improve the track to Governors Bay via

Membership

As a voluntary organisation, the Summit Road Society is reliant on its membership for financial and practical support. John Goodrich is carrying out a detailed review of membership, and would like to thank all those who have paid their subscription for 2003. There are still a number of queries about membership, and John will be contacting some members individually to sort these out. In the meantime, if you have any questions about your membership, please feel free to contact John.

Ella's, Totara Log, South boundary and Titoki Tracks. This has resulted in an excellent one-way bush walk of approximately two hours. Covenant documents for the Governors Bay block have been finalised with the QE II National Trust. Fire resistant species have been planted along the boundary with Mr Valance. These will also provide a visual barrier from lower down. Growth of the bush throughout Ohinetahi is very good and quite obvious. Drafts of the Management Plan and of the new maps are now available.

The "Weekenders"

The group started the 2002 work party schedule on 16th February, after it came together in late 2001. It comprises four members, and is actively seeking participation from additional interested people willing to join the group. This has proved challenging, and is indicative of the difficulty in getting people to give up time at a weekend to devote to this type of activity. We remain hopeful, however, of attracting further members to the group. The early part of the schedule was disrupted by weather on three occasions, but with rescheduling, we were able to achieve 10 work party days during the year. The group's priorities have been agreed in consultation with Paul Devlin, and the focus will be the mid section of the Summit Road between the Sign of the Kiwi and the Tors. Activities in 2002 have been varied, and include building steps, track widening and maintenance, tree planting, scrub clearance, chemical treatment, and dismantling fencing and old stockyards. Our intention is to find tasks that can be completed in one or two work days so that there is a variety of work for the group.

We also have small groups carrying out maintenance on recent plantings at Kennedy's Bush, and keeping the tracks open from Gebbies Pass via the Packhorse to Orton Bradley Park, and from Hoon Hay Park to Governors Bay.

The Society needs and welcomes additional volunteers.

If you are interested, please contact:

Eastenders:	John Willocks	384 3252
Ohinetahi	Gordon Kirk	332 7134
Weekenders	Jim Grennell	358 4438



Planning Morning May 3rd. (left to right) Gordon Kirk, Joy Burt, Maurice McGregor, Paul Loughton, Mike White, Barry Gerard, John Jameson, Jim Grennell and John Watson.

Port Hills Rangers

- A long fire season has drawn to a close for the Port Hills Ranger team. I spent a month fighting fires with some other Kiwis in Victoria Australia. We also had a bad season locally with fires around McLean's island, Governors Bay, Sumner, Redcliffs and Heathcote. Some rain over the last month has allowed rangers to take some much-needed leave.
- The draft Port Hills Recreation Strategy is soon to be presented back to those involved with the initial discussions. The document is looking to assist us with managing the Port Hills as a vital recreation asset to people of Christchurch while not compromising on the other intrinsic values that it possesses. The Society should receive a copy of this for comment shortly.
- Where possible, ranger Nick Singleton is continuing with the planned connections of mountain biking track along the summit road corridor through to Godley Head, this ambitious project seemed so unattainable only a few years ago but is now quickly coming to realisation as land is secured or access is agreed to. An example of this is the recent extension of track through Mt Vernon land. The Mt Vernon Trust agreed with the concept and design detail and allowed the construction of the track. Track maintenance is a priority for us so that we can get tracks into shape before winter hits us. The Rangers have been busy with inspections and work. KSI or Key Service Indicators is a tool that we are using to ensure that track standards and structures within those tracks are maintained to a high or acceptable level. By using this we are finding that there are fewer instances of tracks failing and that we are more aware of the

condition of recreation facilities. Some trial work is under way in the Bowenvale Reserve to manage the multi-use nature of this reserve. New signage, track design and symbols are being used to ensure that the best use of area is maintained without unnecessary conflict or dispute between users. We are hoping that a stronger management presence and clear guidelines will keep this area popular with families and individuals participating within the reserve.

- Revegetation of some areas is due to start soon. Ranger Di Carter has almost completed all the arrangements for winter planting, including the use of helicopters this year to fly in plants to some areas. Di is also working on a plan that will show what we envisage for restoration over the next 40 years, the rationale and probable costs for doing so. This will be important to ensure that we can manage what we are planning and that the results are feasible and desirable considering the overall recreation and wildlife management values for the Port Hills.
- Ranger Andrew Crossland has been carrying out regular monitoring of bush habitat, concentrating mainly on bird life. Gathering this data is important to our management abilities and will give us some clear evidence of the impacts that animal control and habitat modification are making.
- Work on a pastoral monitoring model is also nearly complete. This joint project between the Summit Road Society, Mt Vernon and ourselves will give us some useful data and models to base our grazing management of tussock grasslands on. Richard Harris has been contracted to do this work based on

many years' experience, both in the NZ high country and overseas. I hope to be able to present some information on this within the next few months.

- Plant pest control has progressed very well this year and we will continue with the aggressive control of all the listed plant pests as well as several other species that are causing local concern to us.
- I am hoping that we can play a lead role in assisting the Society and others in investigating the Regional Park concept for the Port Hills. There are many ways and models that we can investigate and only through relationship building, consultation and attentive listening can we achieve a positive result. I am passionate about ensuring the hills are managed with a mind on all the values they invoke in us and believe that we can achieve a holistic, integrated management philosophy that will satisfy the needs of all landowners and those who visit the slopes to recreate or quietly enjoy.
- Many thanks again for a tremendous contribution to managing the public land on the Port Hills. The work parties as usual have provided us with vital support and led the way in enthusiasm and commitment even after days spent on removing old fence lines! It is always reassuring to see the committee members striving to promote the hills and reach similar goals to us. Your work is outstanding, good luck and I look forward to continuing our aims on the hills together.

Paul Devlin
Head Ranger Port Hills Reserves
Christchurch City Council

William Sutton Exhibition

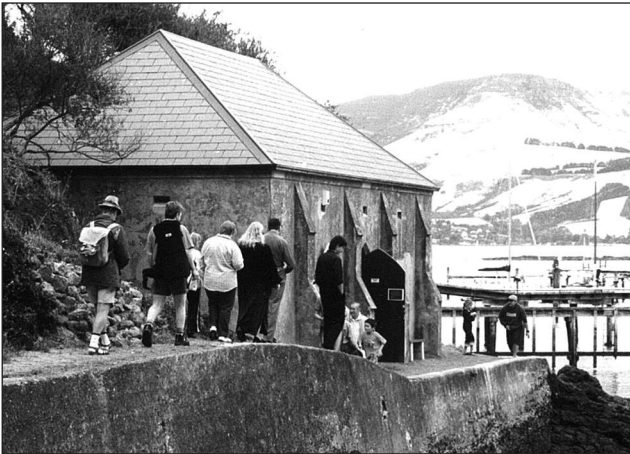
An item in our July 2000 Newsletter paid tribute to the painter William Sutton, on the occasion of his death. In it we referred to Bill Sutton's several paintings of the Port Hills. Members may be interested to know these now are on display in the new Christchurch Art Gallery, in a major exhibition of Sutton's work to mark the Gallery's opening. It includes a rare chance to see all four of the 1968-70 series

on the Port Hills 'Four Seasons', together in one place for the first time in years. Also displayed are four of the huge 'Te Tihi o Kahurukura & Sky' series (1977-78) and also the 1982 watercolour 'Summit Road' mentioned in the 2000 article. Highly recommended to those interested in the atmosphere and sky patterns of the Port Hills.

Outings

We began the 2003 Outings programme with a visit on the 23rd March to the Torpedo Museum at Magazine Bay in Lyttelton to see the restored sections of the 1885 boat and a video documenting its history. This was followed by a guided walk of Historic Lyttelton.

On the 13th April we had a display at the DOC's Conservation Day at Motukarara, and were pleased by the interest in the Society, and by sales of our video, maps, and Gordon Ogilvie's book *Enjoying the Port Hills*.



Members of the society visit the old powder magazine building, Magazine Bay during the Historic Lyttelton outing March 23rd.

Future Outings

Historic Sumner	see details below	29th June
Summit Road Circuit	see details below	27th July

The draft programme for the rest of the year includes a bus trip along the Summit Road, a visit to Quail Island, Mansons Peninsula, and a walk based around the Stan Helms and Whaka Raupo tracks. Full details will be circulated to members and supporters when these are finalised.

Arbor Day

On Thursday 5 June (Friday 6 June if wet), the Society will be carrying on its tradition of being involved in Arbor Day, working with the City Council in organising tree planting to be carried out by senior pupils from the local schools. Members of the Hill Work Parties will prepare the sites, but more members to assist the children would be welcome. Please contact John Goodrich for further details.

Arbor Day is a day dedicated to an annual tree planting day, which began in America in 1872. New Zealand began Arbor Day plantings in Greytown, Wairarapa in 1890. The Society initiated Arbor Day in Christchurch in 1948, with 28,800 trees planted between then and 1964. We are really pleased by the enthusiasm shown by schools for this type of practical conservation on the hills as it is vital for their future that our children become actively involved.

What's On

HISTORIC SUMNER

Sunday 29th June: 1pm

This outing will be held in the historic Sumner Borough Council Building on the corner of Nayland St and Wakefield Ave. Enter the door marked "Community Centre" on Nayland St, opposite the Marine Tavern. A video will be shown and Topsy Rule, the knowledgeable Secretary of the Sumner/Redcliffs Historical Society, will speak. We will then repair to the Museum, entrance on Wakefield Ave.

This is an indoor outing, so will proceed wet or fine. Museum access is by stairs.

Registrations please, as space is limited. Charge \$2, non members \$5
Phone the Secretary John Goodrich 326 7330

SUMMIT ROAD CIRCUIT with John Jameson

Sunday 27th July: 9.45am-4.45pm

Similar to last year's event, this outing will trace the route of the Summit Road from Evans Pass to Gebbies Pass in the comfort of a coach. Guide John Jameson will provide a fascinating narrative of the historical and contemporary aspects of the area. Sights include Cashmere, Sumner, Evans Pass, Dyers Pass, Teddington, Gebbies Pass, and Victoria Park. The coach will stop at the Teddington Tavern for lunch.

Cost \$25 per person (lunch included).

Two pick up points:

Coach departs Rydges Hotel, Worcester St, 9.45am Or Princess Margaret Hospital carpark 10 am.
(Please indicate which pick-up point you will meet the coach)

Registrations essential as seats are limited. Post your cheque to PO Box 17-719 by July 22.
Phone the Secretary John Goodrich 326 7330