



No. 50 Spring 2008 ISSN 1170-3172

CANOOPY

Newsletter of the New Zealand Native Forests Restoration Trust

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Our New Patron – Sir Paul Reeves

Following the death of our founding Patron, Sir Edmund Hillary, the Trust was anxious to recruit another person of stature in the New Zealand community who was both widely known and had links with the conservation field and the Trust's work. We are thus delighted to announce that Sir Paul Reeves has accepted our invitation to fill this important post. Sir Paul's role as Anglican archbishop and later as Governor General will be known to you all. Importantly for this position, he was, for a number of years, Chairperson of the

Board of Directors of the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust. The Restoration Trust has had close links with the QEII Trust since our earliest days and all our reserves are covered by covenants with that body. As reported in Canopy #37, Sir Paul opened the Ross Bishop Reserve in November 2002 and he looks forward, in a still busy schedule, to visiting other blocks. After a warm welcome at the August meeting of Trustees, our new Patron hopes soon to see more of our restoration activity at first hand.

Searching for a Sponsor

The Trust has been aware for some time that we need to seek corporate sponsorship to give us greater certainty in financing the management of our reserves. Recently we have been approached by two companies offering to help us find additional funding. One, Kyoto Forests of New Zealand, was focusing on the potential carbon credits our reserves might attract. This possibility has dimmed somewhat in light of recent Government decisions. The second company, Treescape, would also consider the benefit of our reserves in regard to carbon credits but hopes to attract bigger corporate sponsorship, giving greater support for all aspects of our conservation work.

At the June meeting the Trust asked Treescape to seek a sponsor, namely a corporate firm willing to support our organisation as a means of demonstrating their commitment to the environment. We are hopeful that our record of saving and restoring native forests will appeal as something with which a major firm would wish to be identified and so assist in furthering our aims.

Treescape is a well-known firm throughout New Zealand which specialises in tree management and consultancy. We have made it clear to them that any sponsorship we enter into cannot compromise our independence, or in any way interfere with our needs to preserve

and restore the vegetation on our reserves. We have also insisted that our working relations with our field officer and our honorary rangers cannot be affected.

A good sponsor should be able to assist us to extend the range of management work that needs to be done on our reserves. Much of the work needed involves considerable costs, often requiring contractors to perform tasks that are beyond us, such as goat shooting, aerial dropping of possum baits, repairing damaged fencing, or spraying invasive weeds. These are tasks that involve both time and costs, and yet they are crucial to improving the health and the better management of the reserves.

There is also the possibility of securing carbon credits in recognition of the significant amount of carbon that is locked up in a growing forest. The arrangements for trading in carbon credits are being finalised and we are confident that there is potential for financial advantage for the reserve lands we hold.

We are now compiling the data to help Treescape present a convincing case for sponsorship. We will let you know of the progress in finding a sponsor.

Arthur Dunn

With great sadness we report the death of Arthur Dunn of Puhoi who collapsed on 18 August while engaged in native forest protection on his property. Arthur was a good friend and active supporter of the Trust and of QEII National Trust - Dunn's Bush, set aside in 1992, marked their 500th covenant. More recently he has worked tirelessly to identify forest and wetland sites in Rodney County for reserve status. Arthur was deeply involved with the well being of his local community as testified by the large crowd packing the Puhoi Centennial Hall at the service in celebration of his life. We extend deep sympathy to the Dunn family and especially to Arthur's wife Val.

Honours for Jim & Jean Swindells

It is a great pleasure to report that Jim & Jean Swindells of Te Kuiti have been recognised in the Birthday Honours where they each received the Queen's Service Medal for conservation and service to the community. Jim and Jean have been supporters of the Native Forests Restoration Trust since early days; they have grown thousands upon thousands of native seedlings and these plantings have changed the landscape in many parts of the King Country and beyond.

Their work for the community is legendary and in addition Jean still finds time to raise money for the Trust. Jim and Jean are among our Honorary Rangers and we are very proud of their achievements and their well-deserved awards.

For more information about the Trust, visit our website: www.nznftrt.org.nz

A Special Anniversary – Canopy's 50th Birthday

This is the fiftieth issue of Canopy. The first number came out in autumn of 1990. It followed a regular newsletter that we had sent to supporters since July 1982. However it was felt that our programme deserved a more formal and larger format and so Canopy was born.

Since then it has appeared in general three times a year and it has usually been in a fold of four pages. Trustees, rangers and NFRT supporters have contributed to the many and various articles and information conveyed by all these copies.

Here is part of a report from the very first Canopy:

INTERNATIONAL DENDROLOGY SOCIETY PLAQUE PRESENTATION TO THE TRUST

Saturday March 3rd 1990 was a memorable day for the Trust. Both the IDS and the NZFRT were hosted by the Auckland Regional Council at a very pleasant reception at the Arataki Park Information Centre, Waitakere Ranges, led by Mr Phil Jew and Councillor John Pettit.

An estimated 85 people attended the function, the main purpose of which was for the IDS party of 43, at that time touring NZ and studying its gardens and flora, to present our Trust with a handsome bronze plaque for its outstanding work in the restoration of native forests.

The IDS was formed in Belgium in 1952 with the idea of bringing dendrologists together from all over the world,- people who study trees, particularly rare or endangered ones.

The group which toured NZ was led by Lady Anne Palmer (more recently of Eastwoodhill Arboretum fame) and comprised a most qualified and distinguished membership.

The plaque - which is now mounted appropriately at the entrance to the McGregor Reserve at Waipoua - reads:

ARBORETUM DISTINGUISHED FOR MERIT
BY THE INTERNATIONAL DENDROLOGY SOCIETY
3 MARCH 1990, AUCKLAND, N.Z.

The first issue of Canopy also contains an account of the opening of the Steuart Russell Awakino Beech Reserve. This reserve commemorates the life of Steuart Russell who until his death in 1989 devoted much of his time to encouraging the planting of native trees. It is memorable as the site of the northernmost forest of hard beech on the west coast. At the opening we unveiled a plaque and scattered Mr Russell's ashes round a totara planted near the entrance to the reserve.

Further into that first issue you can read of the purchase of the property called Rangitoto Station. Three thousand feet up in the Rangitoto Range, this former farm land was providing opportunities for restoration planting, with the first work party scattering manuka, coprosma and horopito seed on some of the grassed areas. Already we were noticing with delight the bird population: pigeon, tui, yellowhammer, bellbird, whitehead, tomtit, falcon, finches, grey warbler, pipit, shining cuckoo and silvereye particularly. Since then we have seen this list enhanced as a result of the work done by Laurence Gordon to protect the population of kokako. And the extensive planting for forest restoration has made an important contribution to the control of flooding from the three rivers that flow out of this area of heavy rainfall into the Waipa valley - control that will increase as our plantings mature.

Under the heading 'Good News' we reported that the Government had released one million dollars to control possums, chiefly at Waipoua. And the Minister (Philip Woolaston) was introducing a bill to prohibit all mining in all parks and reserves.

Since that first issue, Canopy has reported year-by-year on our acquiring a further 24 reserves, which reflects steady progress by the Trust in preserving and restoring our forests and their flora and fauna.

Owen Lewis



Vehicle access to Rangitoto Station

Trustee Roy Dench reports that there is a problem with the access to Rangitoto Station. The bridge over the Waimahora stream has been condemned and has been removed. The present access is limited to high-ground clearance or 4-wheel drive vehicles, as it is necessary to drive through the river at the ford. Roy is investigating the feasibility of installing a concrete ford and has arranged through the Department of Conservation for an engineer to assess the situation. There will be no quick fix because if it is feasible, both from an engineering and financial point of view, there is still a resource consent to be sought, which will entail comprehensive engineering plans and public notification. If there are objections to the resource consent being granted, the costs to the Native Forests Restoration Trust may be beyond our resources.

Background

The history of the bridge is that it was not supposed to be there! It was built in the late 1970s to allow a large amount of material to be transported to the Ranganui Repeater Tower which was undergoing a major upgrade. Once the upgrade was completed it was to have been removed, however it was left in place for use when the Waimahora river was in flood. Prior to the Repeater upgrade there was no bridge at all, so we have a few "rivers to cross" with this operation.

Judy Hanbury who handles bookings for visits to Rangitoto Station is being kept up to date with developments and we will also keep Trust supporters informed of progress via Canopy.

A fresh Minutes Secretary

Although most of the 'real' work of the Restoration Trust occurs in the field, there is still much to be done by Trustees and the executive committee in buying land, handling finances, keeping in touch with our Honorary Rangers and supporters and collaborating with other bodies in local, regional & national government and the whole conservation movement. It is important, too, that our discussions and decisions are accurately recorded and reported to trustees, rangers and others. The role of the Minutes Secretary is thus a crucial one. Jim Dart having stood down from this task at the end of last year, we were eager to appoint a suitable replacement. We are pleased to report that **Shelley Heiss-Dunlop** has taken on this role and is already providing us with detailed and accurate reports of our monthly meetings. She has a Masters degree in Ecology and is also a good botanist who has worked previously with Trustee Helen Lindsay on several restoration projects.

Jim Dart remains a Trustee and continues to hold the wider position of Secretary of the Trust.

Exciting Prospects

In Canopy #49 we reported a very generous bequest from Marie Neverman who foresaw its use to purchase a site for the preservation of bird habitats. Since then we have been active in seeking a possible property which could be established as a reserve in her memory and if possible at a site within easy reach of Auckland. This is a big challenge but we are optimistic and hope to have major news for the next issue of Canopy later this year.

Much further afield, the Trust sees an opportunity to be involved in nature conservation on the Chatham Islands. *Trustee Geoff Davidson reports:* Recently the Trust has been considering the purchase of a property on the Chatham Islands. The superlatives are many, but some are daunting. Not least is "remote". The Chathams are 800 km east of Christchurch. Followed by "expensive". All costs associated with the Chathams include a high transport factor. These points are, however, outweighed by "incredible biodiversity" and "nationally critical". Throw in a few additional adjectives such as "huge", "stunning" and "wilderness" to gain a sketch of the property. Mix in several degrees of urgency, lashings of Antarctic gales, and the comfort of log cabins and wood fires to complete the picture.

In essence, there is a property in the extreme north west corner of the main Chatham Island that is for sale. It is 3,400 hectares with 25 kilometres of coastline and includes a 25 hectare lake and a volcano (inactive). Just over a third of the property is near-pristine peat swamp dominated by an endemic rare plant - the restiad, *Sporadanthus traversii*. Another third is reverting to wetland vegetation, while less than a third is in pasture. Two elderly Swiss brothers have farmed the land for nearly 30 years in a sustainable and self-sufficient way. They have maintained the land in a near pest-free condition and have specifically eradicated pigs from their property. It probably has a greater number of acutely threatened species than any other privately owned land in New Zealand. We can save them!

The list of Chatham Island (CI) endemic plant species found there is long, such as CI toetoe and CI nikau. Chatham bird species are equally important. Recently the CI grey warbler was discovered in the remnant bush block on the property and CI Oystercatchers populate the coast. Given a totally pest-free environment it is expected that seabirds from adjacent rock stacks will begin to breed on the property, including CI albatross and petrels and shearwaters.

In April we applied for funding from the Nature Heritage Fund, but were declined due to a lack of funds. The cost of land throughout New Zealand increases, but so does the urgency to protect it. We urgently need the Government to commit more funds to NHF. NZ biodiversity needs your help! Please lobby candidates in the parliamentary election, asking them to back additional funding for this cause.

Meantime we are not giving up, but are seeking corporate funding to assist the purchase. If you have contacts with a particular company or consider one likely to be in a position to help, please let us know. Geoff Davidson, phone (09) 813 0229.

Ernest Morgan Reserve Ararimu Valley Road, Riverhead

Geoff Davidson writes: Millennia of bird calls amid silent forest growth were brought to an end in 1854 when the Government sold a Crown grant to James Maxwell at Ararimu Valley north of Riverhead. During the previous fourteen years, James had logged the Lucas Creek Albany area of all its best timber and he needed additional forest to sustain his business. For the next 20-to-30 years he systematically felled the best trees, principally kauri, which were hauled by bullock team to Maxwell's Landing and floated to Blakes Mill at Waikoukou.

Eventually in the 1890s the Morgan family purchased the area and the younger son Ernest began farming there. He protected a 21 hectare forest block which his three daughters inherited and set aside as a separate title in 1933 to remain undeveloped as a memorial to their father. Having sold the farm in 1972, this block was retained until 1983 at which date Ernesta Williams approached me for help to save the forest. Her sister, Amy Norton, needed to sell her share valued at \$20,000 and there was little interest from authorities such as the Waitemata County Council or the Auckland Regional Council.

Because the Trust's focus at that time, was on planting trees, not buying land, we chose not to become landowners. With great enthusiasm led by Trustee Shirley Guildford, we sought ways to secure the land. The Queen Elizabeth II National Trust was persuaded to take ownership and contribute \$13,000. Shirley had also got QEII to give us an interest free loan of \$7,000. We then raised the repayments over the next year or two. So by 1985 the NZ Native Forests Restoration Trust had formulated the model and methods of fund raising and land purchase we have since followed so successfully.

In November 2007, I suggested to our Field Officer Sharen Graham, that we should visit the Ernest Morgan Reserve to view its condition and recommend any pest control that might be needed. Although pests are present, the overall condition of the reserve is remarkably good. While there, we found a small clump of an unusual ground-cover that neither of us recognised. Rather like *Nertera dichondrifolia* which is locally very common (although more distinctly hairy and having leaves with toothed margins) it proved to be an enigma to the botanists who studied it. They have concluded it is a Parahebe but an unusual one in many ways:- the reserve is well north of the known Parahebe range; it has a chromosome number more often found in Hebe; and there are possible relationships with New Guinean species. Dubbed Parahebe "bamboozle" it proved difficult to relocate earlier this year and it was not until a group of Auckland Botanical Society and Forest & Bird members searched 'en masse' that we located a more sizeable population of the elusive plant.

In our intensive searching - perhaps as many as 80 hours - we found other species that, although well known, are outside of their more southerly ranges. The combination of species suggests a forest relic from colder periods when the plants would probably have been more common this far north. Thus *Cortaderia fulvida* is restricted to cold sites up here, *Cyathea smithii* is normally a higher altitude tree fern, *Lachnagrostis lyallii* is only the second record north of the King Country, while *Libertia micrantha* is usually found in colder areas. Furthermore, *Nertera villosa* is scarce as hen's teeth north of the King Country and *Nestegis cunninghamii* is very unusual in the region but more common in the central North Island.

All in all this discovery amounts to a special assemblage of plants which will now give focus to a search of the wider area to determine their distribution and occurrence.



Trips with Motuora Restoration Society

As mentioned in the last issue of Canopy, NFR Trust supporters are cordially invited to join members of the Motuora Restoration Society in their trips to this Hauraki Gulf island sanctuary for tree planting and other jobs. Three further visits, to be devoted to general tasks, are scheduled for the Sundays, 28 September, 19 October & 30 November. The ferry departs from Sandspit at 8.00 am and returns at 4.00 pm. Fares for adults are \$20, children 5-15 \$10, and a sausage sizzle lunch is provided. For booking (essential) and details of what to bring, call Robin Gardner-Gee 09 378 9548 (Auckland) or Eilene Lamb 09 427 8911 (Hibiscus Coast).

Your donation supports the work of the Trust and ensures that your address remains current on the mailing list for CANOPY

Yes, I should like to give a contribution to the work of the Trust

Here is my tax-deductible donation of \$

Name:

Address:

..... Phone:

Please make cheques payable to **NZ Native Forests Restoration Trust**
Send to NZ NFRT, PO Box 80007, Green Bay, Waitakere 0643

YOU MAY WISH TO KEEP YOUR COPY OF CANOPY INTACT - IF SO, PLEASE SUBMIT A NOTE OF ITS INTENDED PURPOSE WITH YOUR DONATION



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