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Return Address:

# Ben Rudd's Management Trust

P.O. Box 1440, Dunedin.



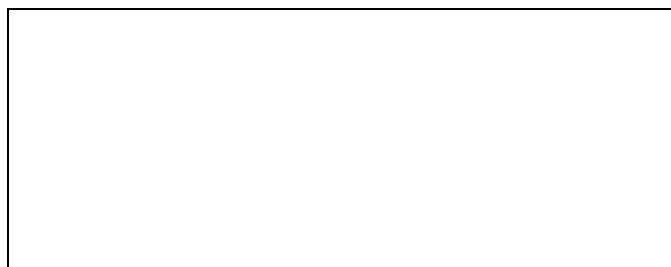
*Benjamin Rudd*

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Friends of Ben Rudd's Newsletter, No 20

( Stamp )

27 July 2017



Welcome to the twentieth Friends of Ben Rudd's Newsletter (in our nineteenth year).

This issue lets you know about our recent and upcoming work on the OTMC's lovely property.

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To all our Friends! It's been over 18 months since you had a newsletter. This has been a rather busy time.

- *First, a reminder about who the Trust is: Sam Patrick 4731156; Alan Thomson 4557878; Richard Pettinger 4879488; Jim Sime 4891067; Teresa Wasilewska 4774987; Kathy Woodrow 4554673; David McArthur 4811478. The Trust is reappointed every 5 years at the OTMC AGM. The next election will be in August 2018, but that AGM will be more important, as it's to be 20 years since the Trust itself began its 20 year term.*
- *Please see our past notices in our Newsletter archive on the OTMC's website. Where Ben Rudd's land is, who he was, who we are, how we function, our status and management objectives are all the kind of things for you to explore at: [www.otmc.co.nz/benrudds.html](http://www.otmc.co.nz/benrudds.html), and its associated archives, newsletters and event pages.*
- *If you know of any new Friends of Ben Rudd's out there who might be keen to join the mailing list for these newsletters, please contact us with email or home addresses, let them know about us, what we do, and how we can be supported. Joining's free. Read on if it interests you, and see how you could contribute or participate.*
- **Friends are invited to make donations direct to the Trust, through PO Box 1440, Dunedin.**

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**This summer's events:** OTMC committee has a suggestion about familiarisation over the coming summer for recently joined Club members regarding the land they now own. This would be very good. Before summer, we have two picnics on the OTMC trip programme: Tracy P's **working bee & picnic day on Saturday 2 Sept** (ph 4879488) and the 'real' **picnic led by Alan** (ph 4557878) **on 12 Nov**, visiting Bruce Campbell's **Rhodie Dell**.

*It is important for the Trust/OTMC to clock up volunteer hours in biodiversity work, as this helps getting funds.*

**Obituaries:** It is with huge sadness that we mark the passing of five great supporters of Ben Rudd's property and the work the Trust is doing on the OTMC's behalf. **Bob and Evelyn Entwistle** were not OTMC members, but were generous donors and strong supporters of our natural habitat re-establishment programme. Their enthusiasm and advice will be missed. OTMC member **Ross Chambers** passed away earlier this year. Ross was a great help in forging ties with City Forests, who provided access and plants for our initial revegetation programme work in 1991. He was one of the first to sign up as a Friend. Past Trust member **Ken Mason** died recently; he was a very hard worker for the property, responsible for many planting days and a key adviser with profound knowledge of practical approaches to meeting the property's objectives. Ken was unique! Even more recently, we lost **Bruce Moore**, like Ken another OTMC life member. Bruce was a dedicated Friend of Ben Rudd's who could always be relied on for encouragement and support. Our memories of these wonderful people will remain associated with our land, the hut site, the spirit of Ben Rudd and all his property stands for, and their endorsement will live on. -RP

**Recent earthworks:** An upgrade of the Firebreak for Chorus to access the fibre cable that crosses the OTMC land was a total surprise to the Club and Trust, and caused an excessive amount of land disturbance. Staff from the company and its related contractors assisted OTMC members in clearance of adult gorse and broom as a welcome gesture, and many hours of volunteer work were built up. We will however now have to be extra vigilant about the exposed soil, as the gorse and broom seeds pushed around by the excavator inevitably sprout. Sadly, the earthmoving dug into areas that previous working parties had diligently kept free of these weeds. Chorus have promised to notify the Club and Trust before any future work is done on our private freehold land, given it is not a legal road.

**Where the property management is going:** It is worth checking and challenging, for example if any area should be retained in open tussock grassland, or be allowed to become naturally dominated by woody species. The Ben Rudd's property is a great example where two very different management objectives are being followed on the two sides of the Firebreak. Gorse and broom are actually helping the progress to bush below the Firebreak, but above it is a very different story. They displace tussock, and any herbicide sprayed harms the grassland community. The DCC manages the Scenic Reserve for open tussock and the Trust has undertaken to manage land above the Firebreak compatibly with that goal.

As many of our expert advisers have suggested, we have a labour-intensive ongoing task if we wish to retain open tussock with all its uncommon vegetation elements, invertebrates (*lepidoptera*) that are part of tussock communities, inter-tussock species (green-hooded orchids are or were abundant in areas), and the native ecology supports our iconic pipits, skylarks and fernbirds. We are very fortunate to have several people in Dunedin, whose combined experience and wisdom do provide a way forward, and perhaps we should promote the property as a living experiment in the efficacy of appropriate management approaches, working in with the City's Scenic Reserve team. Grant money can be obtained for what we do.

A labour-intensive task we must keep tackling is the Himalayan honeysuckle, which is spreading. It is relatively easy to control, by pulling out when young, or trampling (call in the Otago Trampling Club!) before it fruits. Natives will win.

**DCC Biodiversity funding:** We are grateful that \$3000 was granted to the Trust in Autumn, which allowed David McPhee to be contracted to spot spray broom and gorse above the Firebreak. This will complement Tracy's teams' work.

**OTMC fundraising:** Thanks also to the Club's auction and especially to Ron and Sara Keen for donating mountain and travel books and maps to sell. \$367 was raised, primarily for the purchase of pest traps. Recent expert advice suggests that traps may be pointless on a property of this size if neighbours do not join us controlling them. There is a possum control programme by TBfree Otago commencing in the next year, within the Orokonui 'Halo' area, which includes our land. The Trust will keep stoat and rat control in mind, with a hope of restoring a sanctuary for rifleman and maybe robins.

**Past efforts:** Tracy Pettinger's 2016 working bee clocked up 102 hours in the tussock above the Firebreak, and the aforementioned Chorus effort (organised by Antony Pettinger) over several evenings added up to another 160 hours largely along the Firebreak and skidsite corridor. *These person hours exclude time spent consuming cake and beer.* Other work the Trust appreciates includes gorse clearing on Spiers Road by the Green Hut Group. That road is the property's only legal access.

**Where the Trust is going:** With the completion of the Trust's term of 20 years, it is important for the OTMC to encourage discussion of "where to from here" prior to August 2018. It will be great to see the Trust, the Friends and OTMC members old and new all having a look around and discussing issues and views, this Summer, as the OTMC committee suggested.

**Your thoughts are always welcome regarding the Trust's activities and future, and especially our battle for the tussock.** Get in touch with any of us to arrange a meeting, or attend a picnic or work party and chat over a cup of billy tea, cake or beer.

**New signage:** OTMC Treasurer Rodger Clarkson led a trip through the property, recently. On the way to the Shelter, Rodger commented it would be great if there was a sign at the skidsite pointing the way. After their visit, on retracing their steps, they were amazed to see a sign just like they had envisaged. Had they been blind? No! Sam had been and gone, erecting a very nice routed sign made by Arthur Blondell.

**Next signage:** The Trust is discussing improving signage at both the boundaries on the Firebreak. The welcoming signs would have similar wording to the splendid sign, made by Wolfgang Gerber, many of you will have seen in the shelter.

Please let the Trust know when was the last time any of you observed orchids, pipit, skylark or rifleman on the property. We are aware we still have fernbird and brown creeper.

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Please contact me if you have any contributions, advice, suggestions, (money etc!), for these newsletters. I can be emailed at [pettal@clear.net.nz](mailto:pettal@clear.net.nz), or phoned at home at (03) 487 9488. - Richard Pettinger.