



TONGARIRO TIMES

The newsletter for the Tongariro Natural History Society
October 2008

Prepared by Sarah Gibb

HERE WE GO WITH ANOTHER BUSY SEASON OF:

Restoration projects
Volunteer opportunities
Historic surveys
Field trips
Events

And much fun with like minded people!!

I hope you enjoy hearing about our escapades and/or get to be a part of them.

STAFFING

We have recently said farewell and thank you to Cindy Jenkins who has been with us for two years, managing our biodiversity projects.

Cindy is working in Auckland now, in the city reserves managing pest control programmes. Auckland is home to Cindy and we wish her well there.

She did a terrific job of accelerating the development of Rotopounamu and Waimarino restoration projects and we were lucky to have someone with such diverse biodiversity knowledge.

THANK YOU CINDY.

In the office, Elle Heappey has left us recently to pursue her Real Estate career in Taupo. She lives in Taupo now too but that still keeps her close to the park and I'm sure we'll see her flying kites on kite day.

So Julie Nicholson has come to help us out in the office.

Julie only moved to Turangi a few weeks ago so she's a newby. You'll recognise her when she answers the phone – the English accent gives her away.

Julie's husband Mike works at DOC. He's the educator at the National trout Centre.

Remember Chris Bell – he has responded to our call for help. Chris volunteered here in 2005-6 and after a couple of emails and communication with NZ immigration he is here to supervise our projects and support our volunteers over the coming summer season.



Chris Bell

In September 2005 I arrived in Turangi to volunteer with TNHS for the season, staying for almost 7 months to work alongside our members and volunteers on the Rotopounamu project and many other TNHS events over that summer. I had the time of my life, and after the last few years spent gaining experience elsewhere in the world, I jumped at the opportunity

to come back and pick up the cause again!

As Project Officer I will be leading TNHS’s initiative at Rotopounamu and the Waimarino wetland alongside DoC, implementing the management plans and coordinating our volunteer effort, and of course mucking in with everything else going on in our busy summer schedule. In the short time I’ve been back I’ve been amazed at how TNHS has grown and is developing its projects. As well as exciting new challenges like the Hapuawhenua viaduct restoration, I can see how the first steps of willow eradication in Waimarino have progressed to cover a wide area, or listen to a more vibrant birdlife around the shores of Rotopounamu.

I hope to see you all over the summer ahead, this season is sure to be our best yet, building on the great work we have achieved through the vision and commitment that is the TNHS trademark!

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LIVING WITH RUAPEHU

This year the executive members of Tongariro Natural History Society decided they would like to introduce more New Zealanders to Tongariro National Park, by taking “the park to the people”.

It is hoped this will be a continued series of presentations to potentially raise funds for the Tongariro National Park, but also to promote the park and the society to a new audience.

Two presentations have been given this winter, with Dr Harry Keys the main speaker at both. The theme was ‘Living with Ruapehu’.

Wellington: 26 June, National Library. Presented by Dr Harry Keys and Dr Martin Manning.

Topic: An overview of challenges and risks facing management of Ruapehu Volcano in Tongariro National Park with a focus on volcanic risk management and an introduction to the effects of global warming.

Whakapapa: 2 August, Whakapapa Visitor Centre. Presented by Dr Harry Keys and Dr Gill Jolly.

Topic: Volcanic risk management and Ruapehu’s volcanic life story.

The two events were sponsored by Mills Reef who helped us out with the wine, Land Rover and a private donation from John Ryan. This support ensured we could go ahead and trial the idea.

Numbers were around 40 at each event and although we had hoped for more, they were still enough to create good atmospheres and the speakers were very well received.

The feedback has been very positive from the people who attended, most making the comment that “it was a shame more people weren’t there”.

The executive committee has since decided that we should go ahead with the idea of the ‘Park to the People’ presentations, but that we needed to look at improving our promotion methods and not provide food (as we did in Wellington which added big costs and therefore charge).

Anyone out there with any ideas for topics, speakers or venues – please come forward!

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DACTYLANTHUS AT KINLOCH

*Lucy Roberts, Biodiversity Ranger,
Turangi/Taupo area*

A couple of TNHS members were invited to join DOC and the Taupo Forest and Bird group to monitor the seed set of the *Dactylanthus* at Kinloch. They also made and replaced old cages to help protect the *Dactylanthus* from possums.

Doreen Abraham, who passed away earlier this year, was a member of both TNHS and Forest and Bird. Doreen was a true kiwi conservationist who had been involved with looking after this *Dactylanthus* in Kinloch for over twenty years. In her later years, one of her concerns was that the *Dactylanthus* would not be protected when she wasn't there.

A team of Forest and Bird members in Taupo are keen to continue Doreen's good work and not let her down. It was poignant that on this day, the group was told it would have been her birthday.

A great day was had by all and we can be sure the *Dactylanthus* are in good hands.



*Forest & Bird and TNHS members remember Doreen with a day checking on her *Dactylanthus*.*

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HISTORIC SITE SURVEYS IN OHAKUNE THIS SUMMER

Kaye Rabarts, TNHS

In October 2005 TNHS was asked by the Department of Conservation in this conservancy to start recording some of the unrecorded historic sites in Tongariro National Park (TNP).

We were given a box of information which included the four topographic maps covering TNP. These maps had red stickers attached, which identified sites relating to a document produced in 1991 by Janis Quiding.

In early 2006 a number of sites in the northern part of the Tongariro National Park (TNP) were recorded.

On the strength of this work we were then asked by DOC and the New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) to take on the updating of already registered historic sites in the conservancy. This updating is happening throughout the country. This work was undertaken and completed over the summers of 2007 to 2008.

What we now refer to as the "Red Dot Maps", were put aside while the NZAA upgrade project was undertaken.

This summer we are once again working with the Red Dot Maps and have chosen Ohakune S20.

Approximately 30 sites have been identified. They mostly fall within an area between the Makotuku River, Mangaehuehu Stream, Ohakune and Tukino ski field. The sites mainly relate to logging, milling, farming, park and tourism history. No Maori sites are presently identified for recording and any which may be found in the course of the

project will be discussed with Ngati Rangi.

I personally don't know the southern side of Ruapehu very well, so will be relying heavily on the local knowledge of TNHS members, Ohakune people and particularly DOC staff at the Ohakune Field Centre.

The work involves; finding the site; producing GPS coordinates, photographs, site assessment, sketch maps; and a written report. We will only be recording what is showing on the surface, so no excavation work will be undertaken.

Footnote from Sarah:

Kaye and others will be doing most of these surveys in December and January so if you want to be a part of it, just contact us at the office and we'll put you in touch. Ph 07 3866499.

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IN MEMORY OF CAROL LEGGETT
30 August 1947 – 25th August 2008

I struggled to ever get a photo of Carol in the park, because she never stopped working long enough for one to be taken!

But I remember this day – fighting broom in amongst the new plantings at the site of the old road over the Wanganui River on SH47, just after the OPC turnoffs. It was early days in getting members involved in hands on conservation and Carol was part of that Reporoa gang that would come down together.

Carol, here in the middle of this photo, tried to give me one of my first lessons in plant identification. You see, we were supposed to be pulling out the little broom seedlings to give the new natives a chance, but I couldn't tell them apart and kept pulling the wrong thing out. Carol

came and checked every so often and did the odd replanting! That site is now looking amazing and blending in with the rest of the park.

Carol has been a really active member of TNHS over the last 5 years, regularly helping out at Rotopounamu, the tussock planting at Tukino Rd, Kuratua Mill site and in our nursery area, and patiently teaching me a lot about Tongariro and its plants.

She will be greatly missed around here for her cheerful enthusiasm and energy.



Julie, Carol and Marie, 2004

Carols' family and friends have donated money to TNHS and we have chosen to buy some native plants. These will be planted at the Kuratau mill site, along with over a hundred *Pittisporum Turneri* we have been growing for the last two years in our nursery.

This site is a stronghold area for this special 'tent pole' tree, and Carol sourced many of the seedlings over the past 3 years by scrabbling around under the mature trees to dig out the seedlings and then potting them up in our nursery.

They were always planned to be planted out this spring.

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NICOLA HUGHES
MEMORIAL AWARD \$1,000
DOC STAFF

**International Association of
Volcanology and Chemistry of the
Earth's Interior General Assembly.
Reykjavik, Iceland 17-22 August 2008**

IAVCEI Assembly is a four yearly forum. The main theme of the meeting was "Understanding Volcanoes". The meeting was devoted to volcanism and volcanotectonics in all environments, and the impact of volcanic eruptions on the surface environment and human activities.

Pre-conference I attended a 2 day short course on field-based methodologies for quantifying volcanic activity. Acquaintance with these basic principals and subject specific terminology has improved my understanding and appreciation for the breadth of tools and research methods utilized across volcanology.

We ventured on a few field trips, covering the SW side of the Iceland, a cross section of some of Iceland's natural wonders, volcanology, geology and history. The world famous geyser area, Gullfoss waterfall, Bingvellir National Park, Sneafellsjokull National Park and Reykjanes Peninsula.

I presented on the "Earth sciences for society – an international year of the Planet Earth" education outreach and geo-conservation with special reference to volcanic hazards.

My presentation was: The challenge of turning public education into improved action: awareness and warning effectiveness before/after the 2007 Ruapehu eruption.

I have learnt there is an amazing amount of research going on around the world and it is a small but very professional and passionate team, willing to help each other out. They do not know everything and I believe Mother Nature will always be a few steps ahead and full of surprises. Every volcano is different, but we can learn from ones with the same make up as ours and from communities living with similar problems as our own.

I believe we need to do more about educating the public who visit TNP. Especially the day trippers to the ski area and the Tongariro Alpine crossing, regarding possible dangers, what warning system we have and how easy it is to get safe.

The assembly gave the scientists a chance to better understand the realities emergency managers face, and myself an opportunity to learn more of the science around volcanic hazards. I can truly say I have.

I would like to thank TNHS for their encouragement and financial contribution so that I could improve my skills and have this amazing opportunity to visit Iceland and attend the conference.

After the conference I went on my own adventure. A 5 day trek around Mt Hekla, Iceland's most active volcano. The landscape was forever changing and so was the weather, it reminded me of TNP. Amazing lava flows from over the years from explosive eruptions. The summit was out of bounds as the Volcanic Alert level was high!

*Nicola (Shorty) Hughes,
Biodiversity Ranger, Ruapehu area*

HAPUAWHENUA VIADUCT RESTORATION UPDATE

Well we can really see it happening now – the new sleepers are being placed and the walkway decking laid beside them.

The weather has slowed things down, but we still hope the restoration will be completed by mid November. That would tie in with the Centennial, as the original viaduct was completed on November 8, 1908.

The viaduct is 43metres high at its highest point. Therefore the workers have had to attend courses in working at height, including roping and harnessing. The workers are in fact casual DOC staff who worked on the track crew over the last summer. They presented DOC & TNHS with a plan for them to train and then build the walkway over the winter. Our project manager, Trevor Butler of Frame Group has been very supportive. It has been great to keep these guys employed locally over the winter and they are committed and doing a terrific job.

Ohakune 2000 completed section 1 of the Old Coach Rd last summer, and DOC staff are finishing work on the track to link this with the viaduct. It turns out there is some stunning bush in there and the track takes you through to a point overlooking the new and the old viaducts.

Interpretation panels to go along the whole route of Old Coach Rd, including the viaduct loop, are being produced now. The research was done by Glen Hazelton and Amy England. Then the text for each panel has been written by Che Wilson and panels and other interpretation features designed by Jan Ramp of Snapper Graphics.

It is all very exciting and TNHS plans to celebrate the completion the weekend of February 14 and 15. This will be the Centennial of the first passenger train to go over the viaduct.

We'll tell you more as the planning develops.



Workers are secured to scaffolding as they advance along the walkway.



People will be able to walk or cycle over the viaduct.

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2008-9 Membership renewals

There are a few people who have forgotten to renew their membership.

If you are one of these, a reminder will have been attached to this newsletter for you to complete please.