

Newsletter from Hinewai Reserve, Banks Peninsula
Aotearoa / New Zealand

R.D.3 Akaroa 7583

46

November 2017



puawānanga

Thirty years on

Maurice White was 64 when his Trust bought the 109 hectare nucleus of Hinewai Reserve in 1987. Now he is 94. What a difference 10,950 days make! One warm sunny Sunday this November more than 400 people gathered at Ōtānerito to celebrate a 30-year achievement and thank the man who made it possible. Displays spanning three decades filled the

Ōtānerito workshop. Participants walked nearby bush tracks flush with ferns and flowing water. Maurice cut a celebratory cake. It was a well-oiled happy day.

Among the crowd was Lianne Dalziel, Mayor of Christchurch. Her association with Hinewai goes back to 1995 when she took part in a fund-raising debate for the reserve. The proposition was "Gorse is a good one." With Jim Hopkins and Hugh Wilson, Lianne was in the affirmative team. She recalled that her team won. One should never let the facts get in the way of a good story, but actually the Chair, Banks Peninsula Mayor Ngeline Allan, had

2 diplomatically declared the duel a draw. Looking around at the Ōtānerito Valley 22 years later, no-one could doubt who really won. In early November gorse is in full flower, so flagrantly that even a single bush blazes like a beacon. From the celebration site the only yellow to be seen was the top of Ahuahi, burned by the 2011 fire and temporarily back in gorse again. Otherwise the whole scene glowed with the luminous green of māhoe and the bridal white of puawānanga against the cinnamon-brown of kākūka.

Also at Ōtānerito that day was Eugenie Sage, just-appointed Minister of Conservation in the new coalition Government. Years before, when she was



"Any of you girls good at darning socks?"

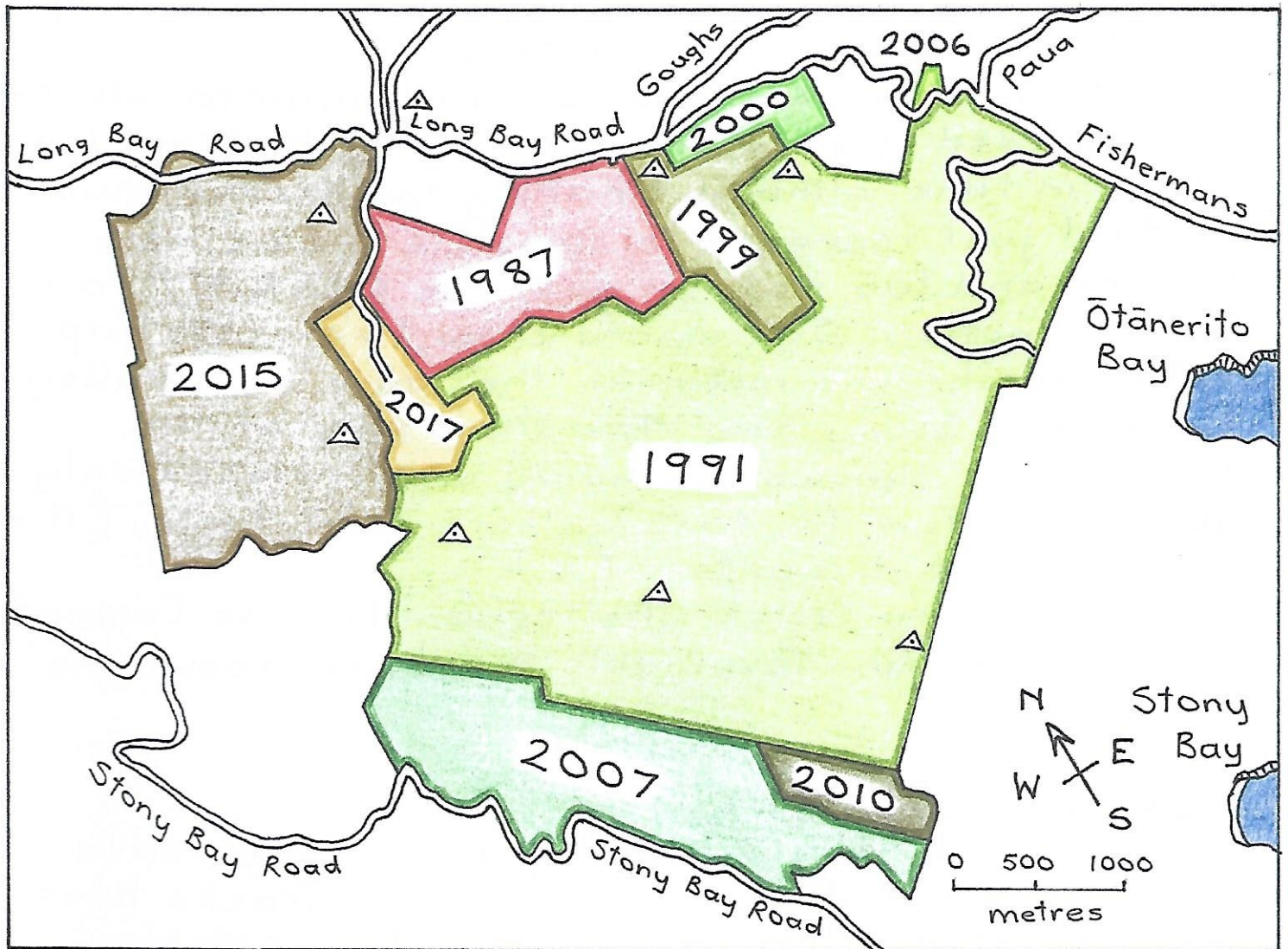
a democratically elected ECan Councillor, she had spent a day with Hinewai workers removing gorse from the Narbey boundary. At the celebration she sported a plaster cast on one arm. Queried, she claimed that the coalition talks had been tough.

It made a good story.

From its 109-hectare bud 30 years ago, the reserve has unfolded like a flower. It expanded nearly tenfold in 1991, and kept on growing. Hinewai herself now boasts 1250 hectares, but three appended petals belonging to other individuals and Trusts (Kāpuka, Ōtepihi, and the Purple Peak Curry Reserve) enlarge the greater area to almost 1500 hectares. Privately protected, publicly open, it's like a mini-National Park on the doorstep of Akaroa.

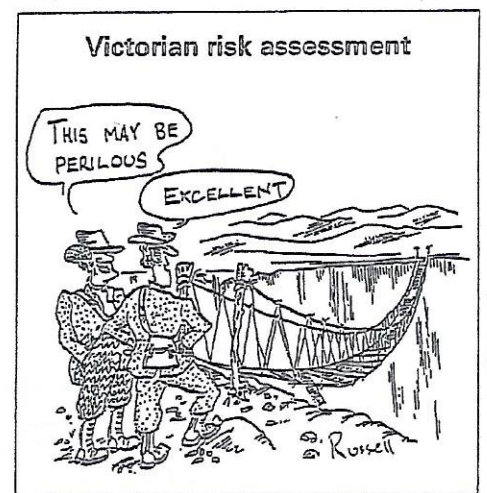
Ōpātuti Track

Our new track through the Stony Bay Valley had to be fully walkable by 1st October, the start of the re-routed Banks Track season. One of our team (Andrew) was side-lined with



concussion, but some wonderful reserve players put their hands up to help. Peter Joyce of Tai Tapu was particularly willing. Twice, no fewer than seven hardworkers were labouring mightily on the new route.

Andy Buchanan helped build Bridie Bridge. Andy is a retired professor of Civil Engineering and a world expert on timber constructions, mostly large buildings it must be said, but a footling fling across a minor stream was clearly not beneath him. At one point he politely questioned Hugh's design: "I'm intrigued" he said. "Why this diagonal? It serves no conceivable purpose." "Aha", Hugh patiently explained, "it isn't designed to serve a conceivable purpose, it's designed to cover inconceivable ones." As it happened the particular plank



4 in question was needed for unforeseen steps at the northern approaches.

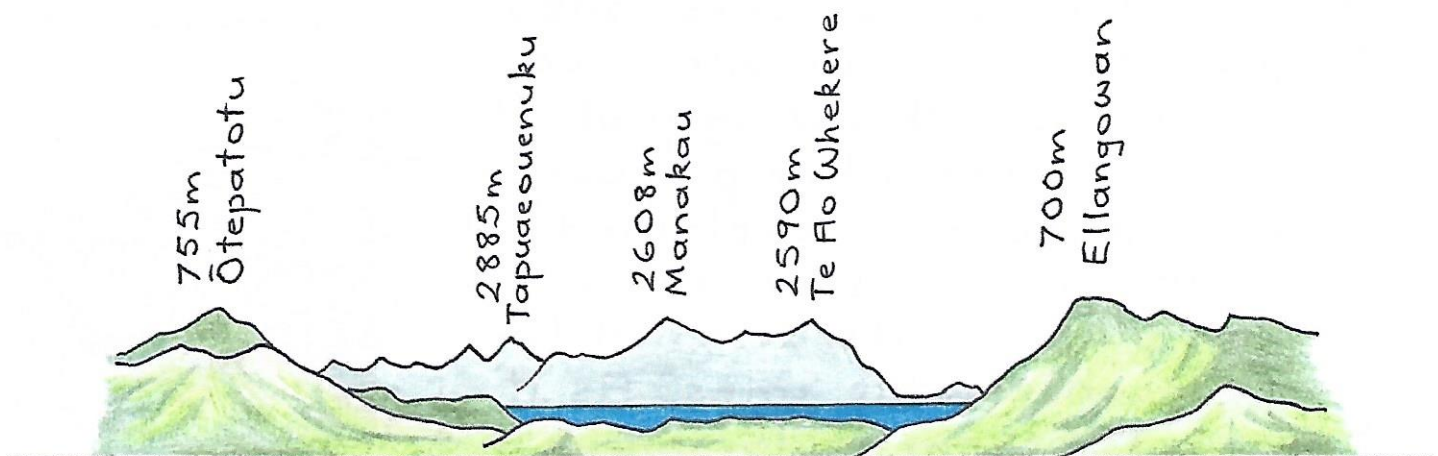
Cut, benched, stepped, staired, drained, brush-cut, marked, signed and measured, the track was ready in time, although finishing touches continue.

Paul just managed to complete a fine new shelter and loo not far past the Ōpātuti/Tara Track junction. Set among snow tussocks, turpentine shrubs and mikimiki, they gaze downvalley to distant Stony Bay. The third stile at the Armstrong/Hinewai boundary was installed only seconds before the first walkers came forth. [It's the thought that counts — Ed.]

In the Tara Track Shelter a 'Positive Comments Book' is fielding favourable feedback about the new route.

Signs and Omens

As well as directional signs to ensure safe passage, Ōpātuti, Tara and Paripai Tracks have also sprouted informative panels. Thus notable plants as varied as mamaku tree ferns and narrow-leaved snow tussocks are interpreted, and one large board elucidates native regeneration through exotic gorse. On Paripai Track, where the Kaikoura Mountains 200 kms to the north are framed by middle-distance Ōtepatotu and Ellangowan, a painted pānui points out the main peaks, including Tapuaeouenuku, the highest peak in Aotearoa outside the Southern Alps.



A wet winter

By the end of October Skyline rain gauge at 560m had totted up 2305.5 mm, with two months still to go. This already exceeds the previous wet-test year (1995, 2298.4 mm) in the gauge's 24 year history. The average to date is 1817 mm.

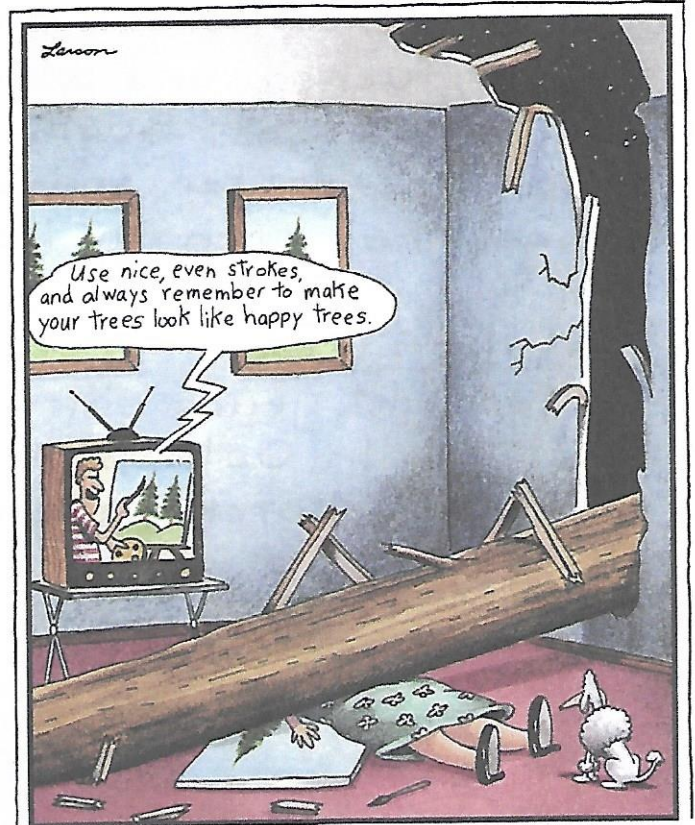
Despite this we have suffered no significant slips nor lost any bridges, in contrast to less bushy regions round about. Severe gales, however, snapped a big beech tree halfway up its trunk, laying the severed portion lengthwise through the forest near Tawai Track. Similar storms sent Spur rain gauge to oblivion.

Wet as this winter was, it was also the least snowy of all our 30 documented years. Again, this was not true of other places near us, especially during the polar blast of mid-July which dumped heavy snow to low levels on the mountains. Soon after, widespread flooding hit much of Canterbury and Otago. The same tempest blew a pine tree down across the main highway between Akaroa and the c*r-infested Swamp, narrowly missing our much-loved chief of Akaroa District Promotions, Hollie.

In mid-August Paul and Tricia snuck home from a foray to Westport, despite deep drifts on Porters Pass and floodwaters around Waihora.

Wahanui c*rpark descended into a soft and squishy wallow, visiting vehicles driving deep wet ruts into the mud.

But the water was welcome. Streams and falls ran boisterous and beautiful all winter long, and



6 ferny understoreys had seldom seemed so luxuriant.

Following fire

Ōpātuti Track traverses Stony Bay Valley, which suffered dreadfully in the fire of July 2011. Walk the new track now and you will be hard put to notice that there ever was a fire. Gorse and broom have thickened across burned slopes, but native māhoe, fuchsia and wineberry have resprouted from blackened bases. Bushy and bold again, they dapple the golden scrub with lustrous green. The setback has been far less serious than we feared.

Tailing tūī

It's eight years since the first of the tūī releases in 2009. In October this year many Peninsula and Christchurch people gathered in the Akaroa



sports pavilion for an update on how these feisty birds are faring. Laura Molles showed detailed data suggesting a population of around 70 known birds, concentrated in Akaroa. They are thus holding their own but are not wildly proliferating. Some folk had worried that these larger, more unruly honeyeaters

might supplant their less boisterous bellbird cousins across the Peninsula. There is not the slightest hint that this is happening. Bellbirds, bolshie enough themselves, continue to be gloriously abundant. Of course the two species have co-evolved throughout Aotearoa for hundreds of thousands of years. Even in their modern modified milieu neither threatens the other. Both are cherished treasures.

Wilful wildlife

Tomtits are another treasure, wonderfully common now across the whole reserve. The pair currently in charge near the Visitor Centre decided this year to nest in the old workshop, choosing a pozzie right under the tool board, between the pinch bar and the CRC. They didn't physically put up a 'Do Not Disturb' sign, but they may as well have done. We were very anxious not to trouble them. Occasionally an adjacent tool proved essential to the day's work and we crept in to pluck it out, sending Thomasina instantly off the nest and ourselves into guilty embarrassment. It was pushing the limits of acceptable behaviour to put the tool back afterwards, so a little mountain of exiled implements swelled outside the shed door. Four eggs hatched at the beginning of November. Three orange gapes were soon being serviced by both parents. One chick seemed to have expired soon after hatching.

A paradise duck pair took over one of the Ōtānerito woodsheds, but this proved less disruptive. By early November two broods each of six ducklings were



8 bustling about near the homestead.

We tend to act like anxious aunties towards these gorgeous little families, so the frequent appearance of falcons, though fantastic, causes some alarm. Andrew regularly releases his homing pigeons at Wahanui c*rpark each Monday morning. One mid-October Monday he marvelled when his tight-knit flock, circling to get their bearings, suddenly exploded in all directions. On this occasion the fierce little falcon can't have been hungry. Suzanne later confirmed that all 17 pigeons returned safely to Heathcote, 40 kms away in a direct line.

Ōtepiki

Brocherie's Flat changed hands on 1 September. Its 31 hectares are entirely surrounded by Hinewai and Purple Peak Curry Reserves. The new owner, Warren Begley, is wholly sympathetic with Hinewai's goals, and wants to manage the land in a similar way to Paul Broady's Kāpuka, as part of a wider conservation area. He asked Hugh to draw up management guidelines and maps. He also discussed possible names for his new enterprise. It nestles under the crater-rim prominence that bears a centuries-old name "Te Piki o Te Ake" ("the topknot of Te Ake". Te Ake was a Ngāi Tahu chief in the 1700s who wore his hair in the sort of topknot fashionable among high-ranking men.) Hugh conjured up several names in both Māori and English, but the one both he and Warren like best is "Ōtepiki" — "the place of the topknot [of Te Ake]". This name defers to the old Māori name rather than to more recent Pākehā references such as Purple Peak, or Polish pioneer Lucien Brocherie.

Beach ban

The 1 km long foot track from Hinewai's bottom

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boundary down to Ōtānerito Beach crossed the private property of neighbours Brian and Faye Narbey, and not the unformed legal road along the foot of the hill. Brian and Faye closed this walking access in mid-October, regarding it as a major hassle to their working farm and feeling awfully anxious about recent occupational safety and health rules (OSH). [Gosh - Ed.] Brian opined that public visitation to the beach is making his life a nightmare. Even now, greater minds than the Editor's [Oi - Ed.] are at work trying to find a way through this impasse.

Brain gain

Readers may recall from Pīpipi 45 how Andrew toppled backwards off a bank beside Ōpātuti Track in the autumn, striking his head hard against a gorse log. At the time, Hugh checked the log, which appeared to be unharmed. He laid it carefully along the right hand edge of the new track. Andrew, on the other hand, was left with serious side effects. Happily as Pīpipi 46 goes to print he is pretty much back to normal. [Who would want to be normal in a world like this? - Ed.]

Falls found

Working on Ōpātuti Track one day in October, Hugh and Andrew made time [Wow! - Ed.] to check out a steep sliver of Hīoi Gully where they had long suspected a waterfall might be lurking. Sure enough they found a 7 m precipice, luxuriant with mosses and ferns and overtopped by towering red beech trees. Although the flow of water is not great so high up near the head of the valley, they felt the fall deserved a name.



"What do you mean you're gay?
Why can't you be normal like
your mother and me?"

10 "Andrew Falls" and "Andrew's Folly" were vetoed almost immediately. Tricia's suggestion of "Hidden Falls" won the popular vote. Further downvalley where the flow is greater Ōpātuti Track slips past another waterfall, 5 m high, now known as "Fivefinger Falls" after nearby trees. This brings the total of named waterfalls on Hinewai and Purple Peak Curry Reserve to 47, equivalent to one waterfall for every two years of Maurice's life to date [Golly! - Ed.]

One winsome weed

Monterey pine, sycamore maple, and old man's beard clematis continue to be our threatening threesome. Others wait in the wings. Common polypody is the latest unwelcome discovery. It is a pleasant-looking fern from Europe and Asia (related to our kōwaowao or hounds-tongue) that wasn't content to stay confined to Christchurch ferneries. Well-established on the Port Hills it is now sending out advance scouts across the wider Peninsula. So it was no great surprise to find, and remove, a vigorous clump growing under kānuka in the mid Stony Bay Valley. As with another northerner, male fern, we will continue to remove any we encounter, winning localised battles but almost certainly losing the war. These are zealous colonisers, determined to gain permanent residency despite being under no threat in their own countries.



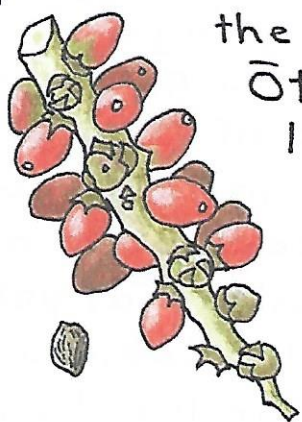
A risk of rust

Dreaded myrtle rust has arrived in New Zealand, first noticed in a Northland plant nursery.

The disease appeared some time ago in Australia where the myrtle family, including *Eucalyptus*, is richly represented. It was only a matter of time before spores dispersed across the Tasman. Banks Peninsula has five native species of Myrtaceae, all of them likely to be vulnerable. Kānuka is the most abundant, and also the most successful native tree pioneer on deforested land. So we await the rust's almost inevitable advent here with trepidation, hoping that our native myrtles have rust-resistance resting and ready in their genomes.

Flourishing flora

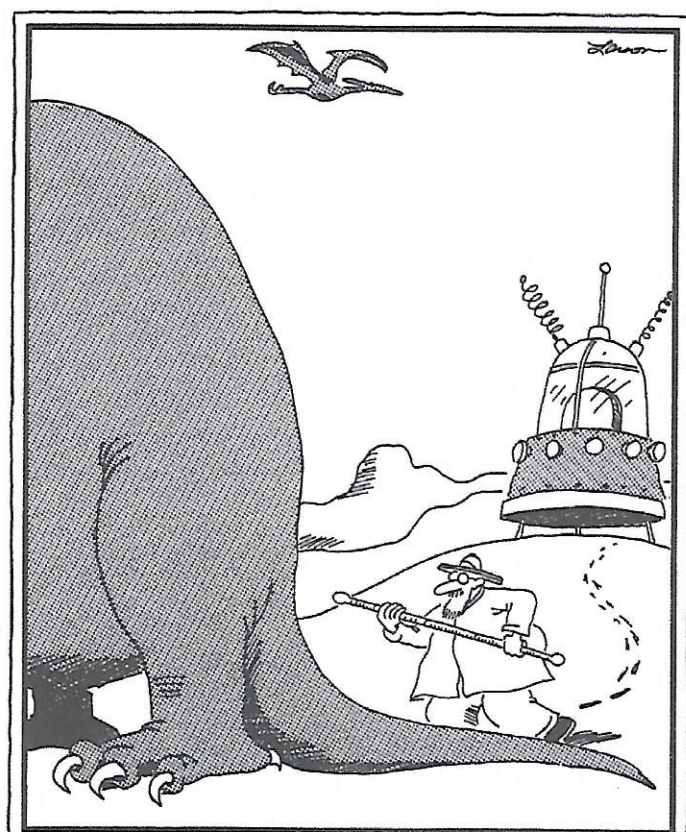
Near Nīkau Bend on lower Long Bay Road a small palm is somewhat stunted by altitude; at 230m it is growing at the natural upper limit of nīkau on Banks Peninsula. Despite this, the tree produces viable seed; it is the proud parent of the planted palm gracing the back lawn of Ōtānerito Homestead. Germinated in 1995, this specimen is now 4m tall, and



expected to start developing its distinctive trunk over the next few

years. The forest at Nīkau Bend has been free of grazing mammals for 25 years so we kept hoping to see nīkau seedlings appearing naturally there. This year, at last, during annual track maintenance, we found three healthy infants.

From a few surviving



An instant later, both Professor Waxman and his time machine are obliterated, leaving the cold-blooded/warm-blooded dinosaur debate still unresolved.

12 adult trees, matai is regenerating well on Hinewai, up to an altitude of about 500m. Eventually growing to a barrel-boled forest giant (there is a fine adult male near the Visitor Centre) this podocarp is notoriously slow-growing. While measuring arboretum plantings in May, however, we were impressed by the vigour of two young matai at Otanerito. They were germinated from forest floor duff off Big Beech Track in 1989. Now 28 years old they both top 4m, their green adolescent foliage obscuring remnants of the peculiar brown juvenile stage still tangled round their feet.

No flies on us!

The first edition of the Banks Peninsula Track booklet claimed "No insect problem". This was immediately disputed by a walker who reckoned she had been eaten alive by sandflies at Stony Bay. We toned our language down, but stayed smug:



"Fortunately biting sandflies are much less common and far less annoying than in other parts of New Zealand"

we wrote in the second edition. This year, while our situation is nowhere as potent as in Westland or Rakiura, we have to admit the local squadrons of sandflies have been more aggressive than usual. We wonder why. Is it climate change? Is it a wet winter? Is it the increasing quality of our streams? (Native sandflies or namu breed in clean running water. It would be Nature's joke if enhanced habitat favoured both falcons and sandflies).

Pipipi appears twice a year. There is no sub and no obligation to donate, but donations are hugely useful and greatly appreciated. We will send a receipt - contributions of \$5 or more are tax deductible.

NAME

ADDRESS

CHEQUES Make out to

Maurice White Native Forest Trust

DIRECT CREDIT

BNZ Akaaroa

02 0832 0044225 00

POST : Hinewai Reserve

632 Long Bay Road

R.D. 3 Akaaroa 7583

Aotearoa/New Zealand

Phone (evenings) 03 304 8501

CC 111 07

[Tricia would love to receive any Celebration Day photos for our records ~ hinewaireserve@gmail.com]