

Pīpipi

ISSN 1173 6674

Maurice White Native Forest Trust
Newsletter from Hinewai Reserve, Banks Peninsula
Aotearoa / New Zealand

R.D.3 Akaroa 7583

47

May 2018

Never dull weather

Most agree; it was a crazy summer. How else could one describe, in a few short months [that's a long description — Ed.], record rainfall, nation-wide drought, unprecedented prolonged heat, two major ex-tropical cyclones, severe gales, summer snow on the western ranges



Akaroa daisy. See pages 8-9

in February, and snow again in early autumn?

Through all these vicissitudes Hinewai fared fairly well. An unexpected drenching in mid-December deflected drought right across the reserve while the rest of Banks Peninsula, even nearby Akaroa, stayed stubbornly dry. 2017 set an annual rainfall record for our 30 year dataset (Skyline gauge tallied up 2406.8 mm against a 24 year average of 1842 mm), but 117 years of data-logging in Akaroa suggest that this would have been beaten before,

"Pīpipi" in Māori, "brown creeper" in English, are names for a delightful little bird, abundant on Hinewai, and forever chirruping cheerfully about life on the reserve.

2 especially in 1986 and 1945. Neither heat nor drought nor gale nor flood inflicted any desperate damage on the reserve. Now at summer's end the streams and waterfalls are gushing forth with more than their usual vigour for this time of year. The bush is looking lush and lovely.

Inclined to ooze

We were a wee bit worried about one wildly steep stretch of Ōpātuti Track, but feedback has been mostly good. An experienced Banks Track walker wrote in Tara Track Shelter's "Positive Comments" book: "The new Stony Bay Valley route is as good if not better than the fourth day of the old route." We met a Kiwi family, rosy-cheeked on



the incline, and asked them outright if the way was too steep. "Challenging but wonderful" came the immediate response. One German walker said she was "moved to tears by the sheer beauty of the forest."

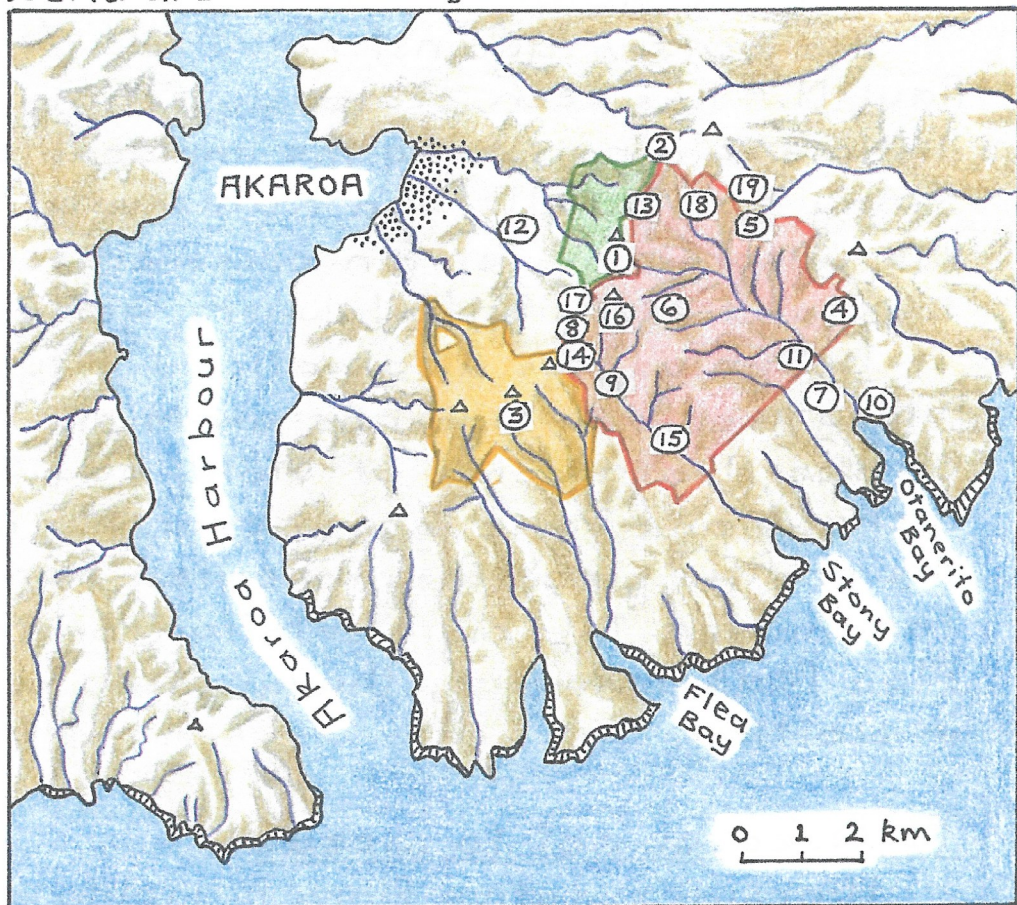
[The dictionary definition of "sheer" includes "perpendicular; unrelieved by more gradual slope." She was probably weeping from sheer exhaustion - Ed.]. [Thankyou Ed. - Hugh].

Further down Stony Bay Valley, where the gradient is more gradual, hundreds of booted feet were turning wet patches into mud-wallows. The amount of water here is astonishing, considering the limited catchments overhead. Numerous rivulets trickle and splash down the steep slopes on the south side of the valley. Their sudden encounter with the old benched farm track throws them into confusion; some spread sideways through sodden loess thick with watercress and monkey musk. Our laboriously scooped-out drainage channels were only partially successful. So we are spanning the worst wallows with little bridges.

From Stony Bay Road the valley below looks so deep and narrow it is dubbed "Grand Canyon" on

Where in the world are we talking about?

- ① Brocherie's carpark
- ② Cabstand
- ③ Flag Peak
- ④ Kahukura Bluff
- ⑤ Kāpuka
- ⑥ Lothlorien
- ⑦ Narbeyland
- ⑧ North and South Hīoi
- ⑨ Ōpātuti Track
- ⑩ Ōtānerito Beach
- ⑪ Ōtānerito Cabins
- ⑫ Purple Peak Track
- ⑬ Skyline rain gauge
- ⑭ Stony Bay Saddle
- ⑮ Stony Bay Valley
- ⑯ Taraterehu / Stony Bay Peak
- ⑰ Tara Track Shelter
- ⑱ Visitor Centre
- ⑲ Wahanui Gate



- ▭ Hinewai Reserve ▭ Purple Peak Curry Reserve
▭ Misty Peaks and Armstrong Reserves

the old Misty Peaks Farm management maps.

Catching up

So much time and effort went into Ōpātuti Track, the maintenance on other tracks fell behind, especially on Summit and Tara Tracks which traverse Hinewai's highest ground. Taraterehu Bluff, pregnant with promise of panoramic views, draws walkers from Akaroa like a magnet. They kept coming even as the prickly gorse closed in. Now they have a smoother, softer wander. That done, we launched in to other tracks on Hinewai, Kāpuka and Purple Peak that were overdue for short backs and sides.

Actually, we never catch up, because when we come to the end of one maintenance cycle we start all over again. One might weary of this, but none of us has yet! Also, track maintenance gets easier as gorse scrub transmogrifies into native forest.

4 Cutting down

The *putsch* against *Pinus radiata* is far from over. Paul N.* has been zealously felling, ringbarking, drilling and poisoning the implacable invaders near Stony Bay Saddle and Kahukura Bluff, despite the unforgiving terrain criss-crossed with rotting logs and laced with lawyers, gorse and ongaonga.

Delighted, we also noticed City Council assassins laying waste to wildings on Misty Peaks Reserve. On the Akaroa side of Stony Bay Saddle neighbours Richard and Jane are inexorably inching through the prolific pines they inherited from an earlier landholder. The big plantation on the west face of Flag Peak remains, though, like a massed army in waiting.

To weed or not to weed

Hinewai's native flora is richly diverse; the current roll call ticks off 330 locally indigenous wild vascular plant species. Naturalised exotics are less numerous, but not all that far behind; so far the register stands at 230 and increasing. Most of these foreigners are fated to be defeated by native forces. Some won't be, but their persistence is not a significant threat to native biodiversity. About five tick two important boxes: they are a serious risk to the indigenous integrity of native vegetation , and also, thank heavens, controllable . We fight these hard. Monterey pine, Douglas fir, sycamore maple, old man's beard clematis and wandering willy all fall into this category. Heaven help us from plants that tick the first box but not the second. So far we are spared.

An innocent-looking yellow daisy called tussock hawkweed (*Hieracium lepidulum*) is increasing in some Banks Peninsula localities. The biggest Hinewai

* Confusingly there are two Pauls. Paul N. = Paul Newport of Ōtānerito. Paul B. = Paul Broady of Kāpuka. One reader asked us to list all our personnel. We might run a little story on the staff in the next newsletter.

infestation is along road banks between The Cabstand and Wahanui Gate. For years we have diligently removed broom and gorse from the snow tussock shrubland there. This summer we wondered if a determined blitz might banish the barbarian hawkweed from these banks as well. Now we've tried, and wait to see if dreams of annihilation are mere fantasy. Possibly not. When Hugh forayed out to find a tussock hawkweed to draw for this newsletter he failed to ferret out even one. So as you can see he has drawn instead a native yellow rock daisy which rightfully occupies the same habitat, and is delightfully abundant there.



yellow rock-daisy
Brachyglottis lagopus

Going rusty

Even on Hinewai, which is a lush and healthy place, plants and animals sicken and die.

Since Pīpipi 46, dreaded myrtle rust has crossed Cook Strait on to the northern extremity of the South Island. A little puff of hope comes with it. Australian experience of myrtle rust (a few years now) suggests that small-leaved Myrtaceae such as kānuka and mānuka may not be too vulnerable. Moreover the South Island's cooler climates (touch wood) may mitigate the rust's malevolence. Among Hinewai's 78 native species of trees and shrubs, kānuka is second in abundance only to māhoe (not a myrtle). Virulent disease in kānuka could spell catastrophe. The susceptibility of rōhutu, shrubby rōhutu and white rātā vine is anybody's anxious guess. Hope hard!

6 There is no shortage of fungal diseases already on the reserve, native and not. Some seasons fuchsia trees can be heavily infected with their own native rust. Fuchsia is clever because, just as the rust becomes rampant, the trees fling off all their leaves for winter (few other natives do). In Spring, new growth shoots forth rust-free. The rust is clever too; it sleeps away the winter [rust never sleeps - Ed.] in a bed of leaf litter, but awakes to try again. Both fuchsia and fungus have had a long time to learn to shuffle through life together.

Blackberry, a delicious but dastardly alien, is often debilitated by blackberry blight, a rust which blew across the Tasman Sea after it was introduced to Australia for biological control.

A big healthy cabbage tree beside the Ōtānerito cabins suddenly sickened this summer, some of its symptoms suggestive of the Sudden Decline disease that ravaged tī kōuka throughout the northern half of Aotearoa over the last three decades. It's not clear yet though whether Sudden Decline is to blame. Old Age is not; we planted this tree in the early 1990s and although tall it is yet a youngster.

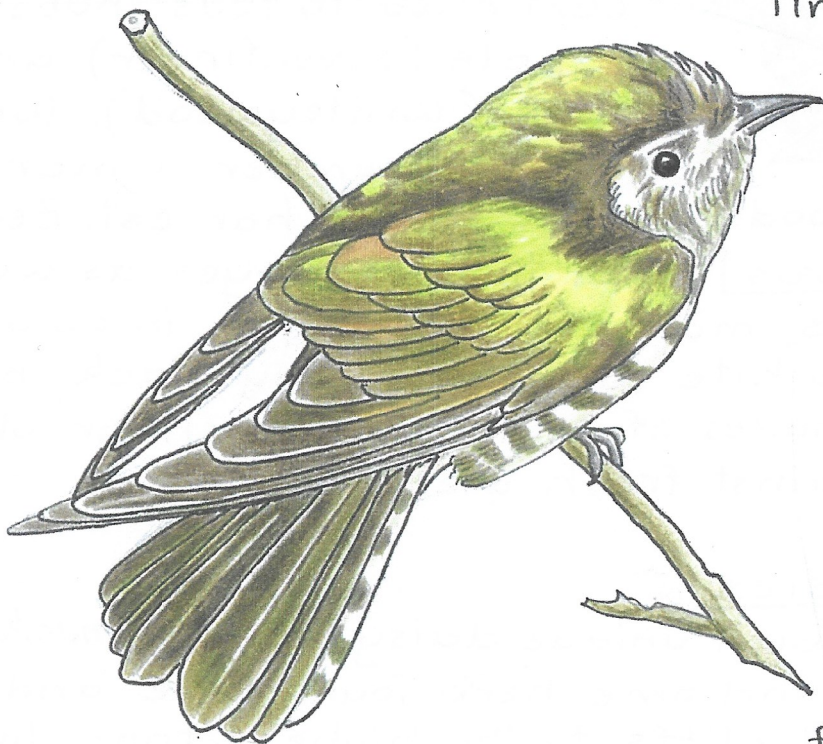
Failing other fates, Old Age will take us all out of course. It may explain the demise of one of the robust ribbonwoods at Lothlorien. Even so it was a bit of a shock for Paul N., brushcutting Broom Track in December, to find the much-loved old-timer prostrated by the latest gale. Fortunately vigorous young mānau are waiting in the wings.

Going strong

Hinewai has not wholly lost her honey bees. Some that remain no doubt visit from varroa-managed hives on nearby Narkeyland. Feral colonies in the bush, once widespread, now seem non-existent. However a swarm from somewhere

7
repopulated the east wall of the Visitor Centre many moons ago and has flourished ever since. High on Summit Track in mid-November a big bright display of native jasmine flowers was thronged with honey bees, native bees, hoverflies, and red admiral butterflies.

In late November a young female tomtit forayed into Andrew's house and had to be gently rescued. She was almost certainly a fledgling from the nest in the workshop (see Pīpipi 46), and probably the only chick to have finally fledged from that dicey endeavour. The tomtit population as a whole, however, is booming. One hot January day the male in charge of Andrew's house made a very pointed show of trying to have a bath in his nearly empty waterbowl. His human attendants were within a metre of this pantomime and promptly topped up the bowl with fresh water. Hugh's house, about 150 metres away, belongs to another tomtit pair. The male's chest is as bright as any ever seen on Hine-wai. South Island males have white chests more or less flushed with yellow or orange, but the colour can be so pale that the local boys are barely dis-



pīpīwharau
shining cuckoo

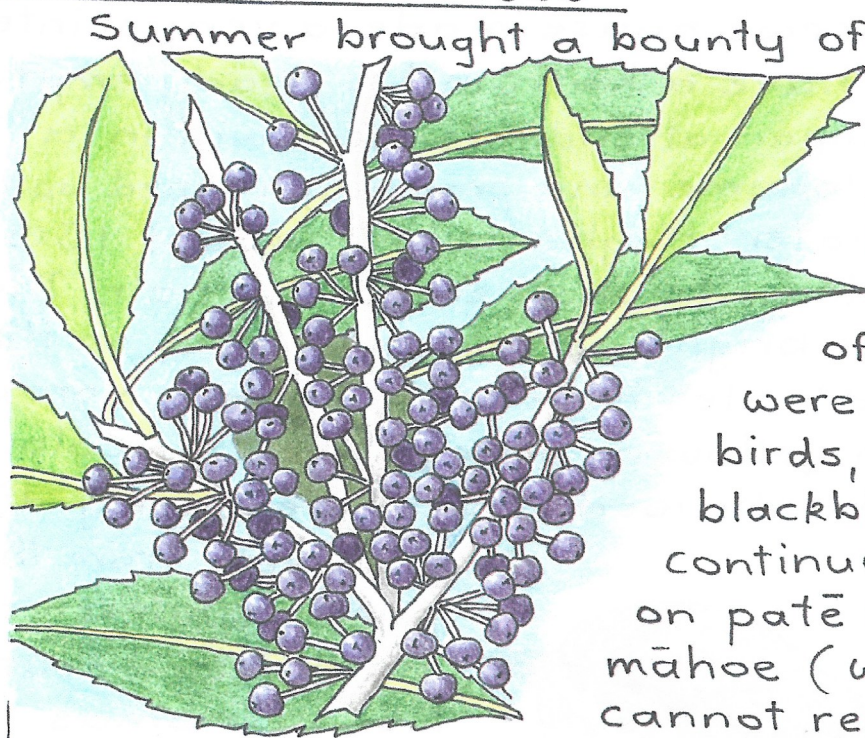
tinguishable from their purely white-chested North Island cousins. Not so Thomas. He's in no doubt about how flash he looks.

In mid-January Paul N. and Tricia reported no fewer than three shining cuckoo teenagers about Ōtānerito Homestead, being fed by three frazzled pairs of exploited grey warblers.

8 Resident falcons are also flourishing. They kept a close and somewhat unsettling watch on Paul N. as he was pummelling pine trees near Stony Bay Saddle.

The local yellow-eyed penguin story is not so positive. Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust Wildside Co-ordinator Marie worries that the hot summer has been hard on these birds, here at their northern breeding limit. With the death of two more chicks in January she feared this season would see no local youngsters fledged at all.

Mellow fruitfulness



māhoe, whiteywood
Melicytus ramiflorus

Summer brought a bounty of bird fruit. Long after the cornucopia of kōnini was consumed [this is Hugh's flowery way of saying that a lot of fuchsia berries were eaten - Ed.], bellbirds, silvereyes, kererū, blackbirds and thrushes continued to feast happily on patē (sevenfinger) and māhoe (whiteywood). We cannot remember a more prolific māhoe harvest. Beautiful to human eyes as well

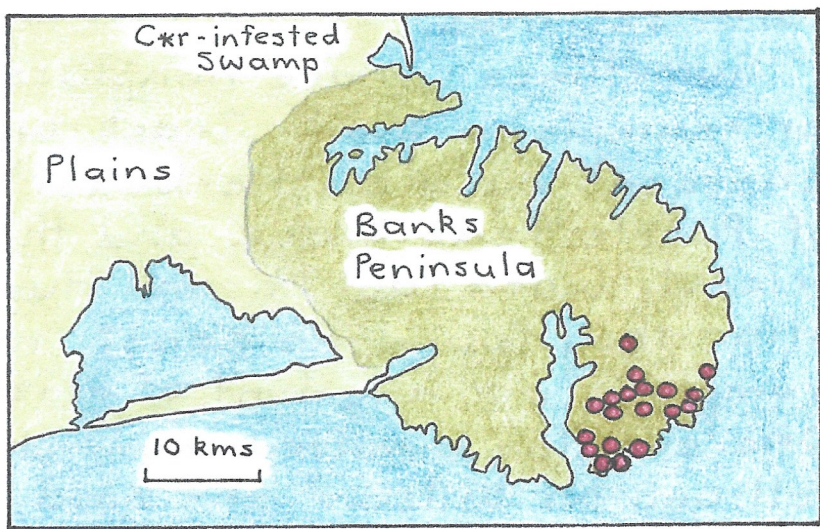
as to avian beaks, māhoe berries range in colour from rare ivory white to almost ebony black, but are mostly rich shades of violet purple, shown off to perfection against fresh green foliage.

Pushing up daisies

Akaroa has its own unique daisy. *Celmisia mackquii* is a robust and handsome herb found here and there from coastal cliffs to the highest tops, but only within an extraordinarily restricted area of 10 by 10 kilometres in the Peninsula's south-east corner.

Hinewai (4 by 5 kilometres) sits firmly inside the daisy's natural range and is home to hundreds of the plants. But the species is far from common.

Grazing quickly eliminates it. Shading by taller vegetation does the same thing a bit more slowly. What it loves and needs is banks, well-lit and out of reach.

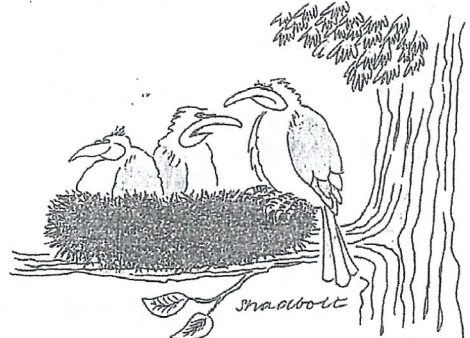


The red dots show the entire world distribution of *Celmisia mackquii*.

Hinewai's management philosophy of minimum interference [the loll-about approach? - Ed.] means that we remove malignant mouths and wicked weeds but leave Nature to handle propagating and planting. Sometimes, though, we are tempted to help Nature just a wee bit more than we need to. Paul B's Kāpuka has lots of ungrazed well-lit banks along Jules Knob Track. We gathered surplus seeds from Hinewai's daisies and, with Paul's permission, scattered them along Kāpuka's tracksides. Hundreds germinated. Now six years later some of the resulting clumps are old enough to have flowered and made their own fluffy seedheads.

Nought so queer

The Public come in all shades, shapes and sizes, and how to judge their behaviour is seldom black and white. People can cause problems. To be honest, though, the Hinewai experience of the *hoi polloi* is overwhelmingly positive. Nearly everyone is totally appreciative and responsible. The few instances that irritate (and some sure do) can mostly be put



"He says he's not leaving, as he prefers to sit around and be fed all day"

10 down to being just a wee bit thoughtless or silly or caught unawares and naive in unfamiliar rural settings.

Sometimes we are nonplussed. In November, for example, a Banks Track walker reported being "charged" by a "cattle-beast" at the Akaroa end of Purple Peak Track and thought this was hardly cricket. When Paul N. and Hugh checked the location they found no beast, no poo, no sign of trampling, nor any hint of grazing in the long grass. One evening a miffed mum phoned: "I have to tell you Mr Wilson" she said, "Kererū Track is simply not suitable for toddlers." [Nor is Colombo Street - Ed.].

Encounters with untrammelled technology tends to confirm Hugh's misgivings about modernity. As



"My husband finds the facial recognition technology on his new phone invaluable"

he approached Brocherie's carpark one sunny afternoon, eager to chat with walkers but a little naive in unfamiliar carpark settings, he noticed a car with its headlights blazing. Aha, he thought, the occupants have walked off without turning their lights out. But no. There were two human-like figures

inside, clamped to their cellphones. "Do you know your lights are on?" Hugh asked helpfully. The humanoids merely grunted. When Hugh came back a few minutes later from replenishing pamphlets and poo paper, however, he noticed the lights were now off. Unnerved by this lack of normal human communication he decided to modify Beechgate Loo into a cellphone trap, thus reducing their numbers on the Reserve. To date he reports considerable success. [I have told him a million times not to exaggerate. Beechgate Loo has not been modified. It has trapped only one cellphone so far and that was an accident. Walker Rebecca had settled down for a short sojourn when she was startled by

11
a loud plop, sooner than expected. Her cellphone had slipped from her shorts' pocket into the loo's magnificent depths — irretrievably so; Andrew had dug an impressively capacious void there. The cellphone was monitored for a few days by Hinewai staff. It beeped a bit. But gradually natural sedimentary processes isolated it from view and from all known forms of social media-Ed].

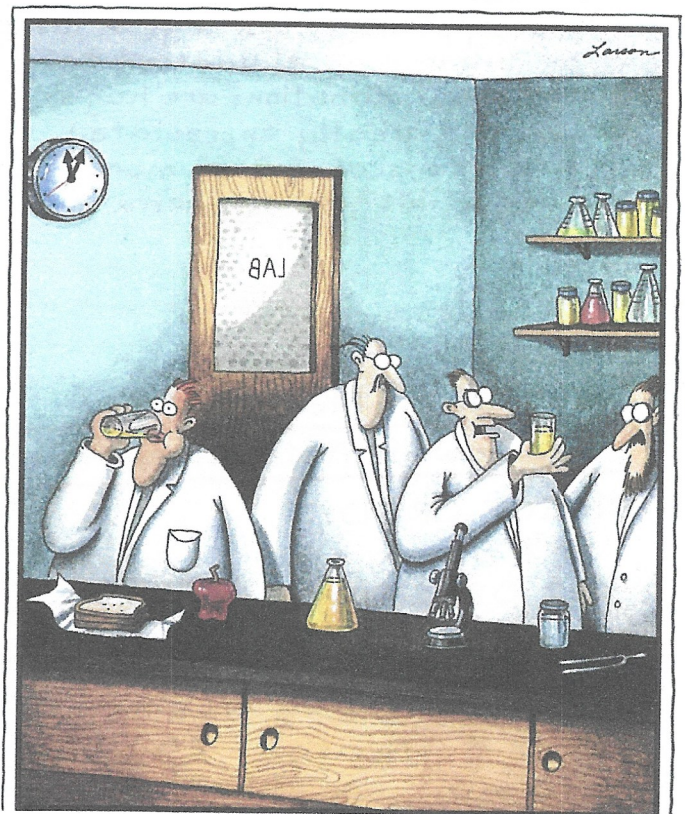
The paradise ducks at Brocherie's Pond did acknowledge Hugh's friendly greeting at the time with some enthusiastic and much appreciated honking, as always.

No further on forbidden foreshore

The conundrum over public walking access to Ōtānerito Beach remains unresolved. And a possibility of extending Hinewai Herself to the Sea has just resolved itself into an impossibility. Meanwhile our resolution is to continue building up our land-purchase fund so we can try again to jump at appropriate future opportunities.

For the record

Alert reader Elizabeth Brocherie pointed out an error in Pīpipi 46, where her Pākehā pioneering tupuna Lucien Brocherie was said to be Polish. He was of course French. There was a Polish pioneer associated with Brocherie's Flat/ Ōtepiiki; his name was Augustus Kotlowski. [Hugh can't avoid alliterating even when evidently erroneous — Ed.].



"What the? ... This is lemonade! Where's my culture of amoebic dysentery?"

12

T-shirtsAdvertising feature

Several readers have asked if they can still purchase the T-shirts produced for Hinewai's 30th Anniversary celebration last November. Trust trusty Trustee Bruce Hansen to follow this up! He will organise a re-run if needed, with several sizes and colours and of three designs:

- | | |
|---|------|
| ① C*r-infested Swamp (on front) | \$35 |
| ② Gecko (on front) | \$40 |
| ③ Gecko (on front), C*r-infested Swamp
(on back) | \$45 |

If you are interested you can contact Bruce by telephone (03) 354 2207, by post (36 Bainton St., Harewood, Christchurch 8053), or by instant noodle email (bahansen@xtra.co.nz).

Mystery donor

Mrs V. Steven made a donation and we don't have details to send a thankyou and a receipt. If you can enlighten us drop Hugh a note (R.D. 3 Akaroa 7583) or phone him on his evening landline

(best between 7.30 and 9.30 p.m., or even during the day if it's raining)
(03) 304 8501.

Hinewai Reserve receipts are mailed out in real envelopes to your quirky letterboxes for sustained satisfaction.



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

NAME

ADDRESS

CHEQUES Make out to:

Maurice White Native Forest Trust

DIRECT CREDIT

BNZ Akaroa

02 0832 0044225 00

POST : Hinewai Reserve

632 Long Bay Road

R.D. 3 Akaroa 7583

[PĪPIHI 47]

CC 11107



Thomas Tomtit