



Newsletter No. 75
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Friends of Mana Island NEWS

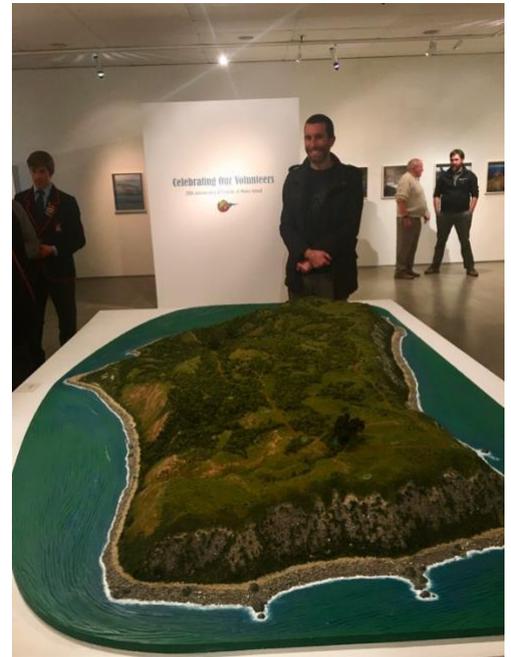
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Message from FOMI President, John McKoy

Kia ora koutou. In looking back over the last three months of FOMI activity it is hard to ignore the very positive support for FOMI and its activities which has been revealed through our 20th anniversary activities.

A highlight has been the exhibition at Pataka – *Celebrating Our Volunteers* - and the series of short talks which were an important part of it.



Model maker Doug Royson with Mana Island model – the exhibition's centrepiece.

The opening function was extremely well attended, and we were delighted to have Mike Tana, mayor of Porirua, and Jack Mace from DOC speak as part of the evening's speeches.

A huge amount of media exposure was generated around FOMI, our history and of course the fantastic progress that has been made by all of the contributing organisations in the restoration of Mana Island.

The organisation for the 20th anniversary projects was a massive task and I would like to express my personal thanks for the efforts of talented executive member Philippa Sargent for her fantastic efforts. Special thanks are also extended to our speakers Colin Miskelly, Colin Ryder, Trent Bell, Asha Fernandez, Graeme Taylor and Linda Kerkmeester. The talks were all very well attended. We are also very grateful for the support of Reuben Friend and his very professional team at Pataka in mounting the exhibition.



Linda Kerkmeester, FOMI vice-president giving a talk about the planting on Mana Island, as part of the exhibition talks.

One element of the work that deserves special mention is the amazing model of Mana Island that was the centrepiece of the exhibition. The production of this spectacular model was based on a very simple model constructed 10 years ago by Bob Maysmor from Pataka. Its development was a real labour of love by skilled modelmaker Doug Royson of Camborne, whose living room was dominated by the model for most of 2018! The model may well be destined to form a part of longer term displays at Pataka.

The exhibition and the associated publicity has stimulated an unprecedented number of new memberships and offers to help with volunteering – a fantastic result!

Another of our 20th anniversary efforts was the photo competition. This was the first time FOMI has attempted this kind of activity and it was an astonishing success - generating a very impressive number of high-quality entries. We are seriously considering running a competition on a more regular basis in future.

Working party weekends have continued (covered in this issue). Since becoming President I have become much more aware of what goes on behind the scenes in successfully mounting these trips. It is a team effort, but I would like to acknowledge the great leadership provided by long-time executive member Dale Shirtliff in organising and leading recent working party trips. This is where most of the real effort goes into realising the vision for Mana Island.

Ngā mihi, John McKoy



Winner of the landscape category was Leon Berard with this photo called Sunset from Hole in the Rock Track.

“Celebrating Our Volunteers” 20th anniversary exhibition – visit it online

If you didn't manage to get along to our special 20th anniversary exhibition – “Celebrating Our Volunteers” – held in August at Pātaka in Porirua you can now see it online.

There is a [short video clip of the event](#), kindly made for us by Kaboose Media which captures the opening function really well. There is also a [walk-through video](#) of the exhibition showing all the photos and the model of Mana Island which formed the centrepiece.

It has been interesting reading the memories shared by visitors to the memories board over the time of the exhibition. Some of these we have shared on [our Facebook page](#).

A Tribute to Brian Paget, 1936 – 2018

16 years of dedicated service to Friends of Mana Island, including as FOMI President 2003–2007 and 2012–2015; Vice-President 2008–2011

It's no exaggeration to say that Friends of Mana Island owes its existence to Brian Paget and Jason Christensen. In 1998 the Mana Branch of Forest & Bird, which had managed Mana Island's planting programme from its inception, was being wound up. Jason, the then Island Manager, recognised that something needed to be done if this effort was to be continued. He had a chat with the Kapi-Mana Chapter of Rotary at a time when Brian was President – and the rest is history.

Brian was an inaugural member of the Friends of Mana Island Executive in 1998, when I was President, and he carried on until he moved to the Wairarapa in 2016. I got to know him pretty well. What I didn't know until now though, was what an interesting career he had had. He had been an architect, a CAD computer consultant and a university lecturer, and had even worked in Sierra Leone.



As evidenced at the recent 20th anniversary year celebrations, FOMI has accumulated a record of outstanding achievement over a long period while remaining in good heart, both financially and from a governance point of view. While this reflects well on all those who have served on the Executive, Brian played a large part in the Friends being able to achieve these positive outcomes. The Friends benefitted significantly from the personal attributes and skillsets honed during his career which he was able to bring to bear over most of this time, as well as his leadership qualities during two stints as the Friends' President. This dedication and these contributions were acknowledged in 2016, when he was made a Distinguished Life Member of Friends of Mana Island.

I noted that the notice of Brian's death in the DomPost mentioned that he had a passion for Mana Island. This was evident to all of those who worked with him on the island's restoration. While it was only a part of his life, what Mana Island is now and what it will become, will be a lasting memorial to what he contributed as a person to his family and society as whole. It's an amazing legacy.

Our thoughts are with his wife, Kate, and his family. I'll miss him.

Colin Ryder, Distinguished Life Member of FOMI



Guided trips made for different reasons by Philippa Doig, FOMI Executive

The first four trips of the new season were all blessed with sufficiently good weather to get to the island which is an excellent sign for our new season.

The motivations and backgrounds of our visitors are always fascinating. This season we've already welcomed a future conservationist (16 months old) who arrived with her own lifejacket and enjoyed the island from her parents' backpack.

On the same trip we had three girls aged 6 and 7 with their grandparents. The first of their 10 grandchildren who they plan to bring to Mana Island.

Three Japanese exchange students from Aotea College looking for an interesting experience on the weekend joined a trip this month. They got a new perspective on their temporary home in the Porirua region from across the sea and learned something about the restoration of a Cook Strait island. When they return to Japan they will have special memories of visiting Mana Island to add to their exchange experience in New Zealand.

There are so many tramping clubs and walking groups in the Wellington region and for a change from their usual bush or hill walk many of them come to Mana Island. We have arranged a special Monday trip early next year for a club who normally walk on a Monday.

We are also noticing that companies and organisations keen to do something together outside the office sometimes choose Mana Island for a work outing - an active and different day for a spot of team building which probably enhances relationships back at work.

The dates for the season through to June 2019 are on our [website](#) now. We hope to see you soon.

Flax trial work, seabird and gecko monitoring and more on August and October weekend work trips *by Dale Shirtliff, FOMI executive*



Working bee volunteers on the August trip.

August trip - It was all hands on deck on Saturday morning to move 80 waratahs, pitfall pails and cups, 20m of downpipe pipe, cows' ear tags, and tools uphill to the site of the mature flax trial site. Amazingly everything was on site by 10am. A huge effort by all! The reason for our volunteers to carry this – the quad vehicle was out of action.



Identifying skinks in pitfall traps, October trip.

A really diverse range of tasks were covered. There is a change of focus on these trips from physical jobs, to monitoring and training people in the skills required to do other work. Another excellent weekend effort from a dedicated group of volunteers.

[See the report on our website.](#)

October trip - The weather was very kind. Sunscreen was an essential and the breezes were gentle. Almost all of our 17 strong group were involved in monitoring geckos, invertebrates, birds or flax plants.

Over our work trips this year a shift in focus to these activities has been noticeable.

Learning monitoring protocols, observation and ID skills and sharing knowledge and ideas has been enthusiastically taken on by our volunteers, with some showing great leadership skills. As usual the food was great, the friendly and sharing atmosphere wonderful.

See the [full reports and lots of photos](#) from both trips on our website.

Fabulous photos entered in FOMI competition

Our judges had a tough job selecting the winning entries in our recent 20th anniversary photo competition celebrating Mana Island, its wildlife and people. The winners were announced at Pataka in August. It was wonderful to see the amazing photos that people have taken over the years on Mana Island. They were of such a high standard that the judges awarded some extra awards for highly commended.

Of the 112 entries, from some very talented photographers, more than half of the photos were in the fauna category with lots of birds featuring.

Congratulations to all our winners and thanks to everyone who entered. Thanks also to our judges Destina Munro and Linda Kerkmeester, and to John McKoy for organising the competition.

All the [winning photos are on our website](#) now.



Dancing Red Bill, by Allan Sheppard, fauna category winner.



Yellow Crowned Kakariki, by Emma Rowell, runner-up fauna category.

An update from our Mana Island DOC rangers – Nick and Gen

Kia ora koutou

The island is drying out and the kowhai are flowering – it must be spring! It's been a busy winter period out here, and as we start the busy field season on Mana some news of note:

Following the transfer of five juvenile takahē in June, in August two more birds were transferred off the island, with one bird also arriving. Tupuarangi (a sub-adult male) was transferred to Rotoroa Island to pair with a single female; Tara (an adult female) went to Burwood Takahe Center for future use at one of the recovery sites and she was replaced with Cape (a sub-adult female) who is a better genetic pairing for Swifty (adult male and Tara's former mate).

Cape and Swifty spent some time in a holding pen to get to know each other and have now been released back into Tara and Swifty's former territory in the hope they will attempt breeding this year.

After all the chaos of transfers it was astounding to realise that the 2018/2019 season is already upon us! At this stage, three of the eight paired females on the island are confirmed to be sitting on nests, including Buddy and Elie who didn't breed last year.

The National Takahē Team has also released a [takahē short film](#). The film was designed for the takahē sanctuary sites and their audiences in mind, to help share the takahē story. It covers the Recovery Programme's key messages and contains great footage of takahē in their natural habitat. Check it out!

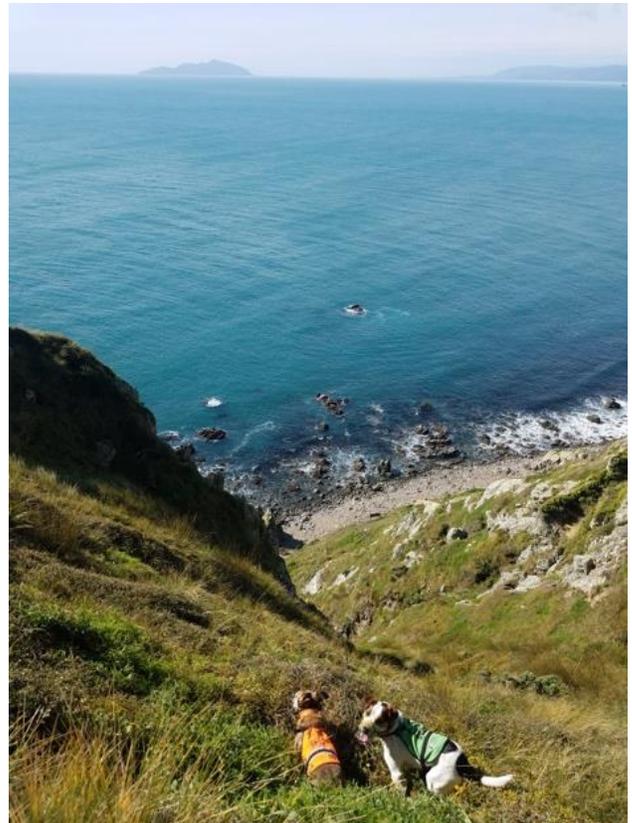
Our mainland DOC Recreation Team spent a week on the island recently and got stuck into a wide range of tasks including some new steps from the beach to the woolshed, repairing some holes in the Lockwood house roof and also repairing the public toilets.

We also had two pest detection dog handlers visit the island as part of routine biosecurity surveillance work. They brought their rodent and mustelid detection dogs to scour the island for any sign of rats and stoats. Their two-day trip came up with no sign or evidence of either mammal.

These dog searches are an integral part of the island biosecurity system, as there are numerous ways that a pest could potentially reach the island. Having far flung corners checked by these dog handlers helps to make sure that not just the 'easy to reach' parts of the island are being routinely surveyed.



New steps from beach to woolshed.



Pest detection dogs on Mana Island. Nothing found!

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