



July 2010

## FRIENDS OF MANA ISLAND INC

FOMI Newsletter 42

P O Box 54101, Mana, Porirua

### Special points of interest:

- Editorial
- Colin Miskelly
- Whitehead and Bellbird Transfer
- Volunteer Work options
- Update from Sue, Field Centre Supervisor
- Brother International NZ Ltd
- Volunteer Positions available
- Committee

### President's Editorial

Hi

Today (22 June), Colin Miskelly and I accompanied Susan Galatowitsch and her husband, Mark, on a visit to Mana Island. Susan is Professor, Restoration Ecology at the University of Minnesota, in the good old US of A. She's writing a university textbook *Introduction to Ecological Restoration* and Mana Island is the only New Zealand example she will be using in a number of international case studies. I have to say it was a very enjoyable and interesting day. I hope Susan learnt something that will be useful to her and her students. I must admit I banged on a bit about the importance of volunteers and what contribution they can make, but I do have strong views on these. On the other hand, I learnt a lot interacting with three intelligent people who had thought a lot about issues that I regard as important.

Okay then, so what did I learn? Three things, basically.

First, a vision is vital. A vision will provide a focus for what you do as well as engender enthusiasm for the task ahead. The word "vision" is very much management-speak these days but is no more than articulating your ultimate goal. As that wise old man, Colin Ryder, said "if you don't know where you want to go, then you are not going to get anywhere." Colin Miskelly has challenged FOMI to suggest a vision for the restoration of Mana Island – any ideas would be appreciated.

Second, the need to plan succession. Many groups, including FOMI to some extent, rely on the drive and leadership of a relatively small number of individuals. Even quite large groups can disband if there aren't enough members willing to make the commitment and join the Committee. (The former Mana branch of Forest and Bird, which did some much good work on Mana Island, is a case in point). And every Committee must have a Secretary and Treasurer – the jobs that are always difficult to attract candidates for because they are not "exciting." While the situation with Mana Island is different to projects on the mainland, as one day the island can be left to its own devices, some of us are getting older quicker than others and new, enthusiastic blood on the Committee is always needed. Remember that when the next AGM rolls around. FOMI needs you!

Thirdly, the importance of relationships. Colin Miskelly has been involved with the island since he came to Wellington some seventeen years ago as a young whipper-snapper and I have worked with him all that time. He left a few weeks ago as a (relatively) young whipper-snapper to join Te Papa. I guess dealing with an old fossil like me all that time stood him in good stead when applying for his new job. The two Colins have built up an extremely good relationship over the years, despite about the only things we had in common being our first names and our love for the island. I would like to think that the restoration effort on Mana has gained from it. We have both needed what the other can bring to the table. I guess that forms the basis of a good, productive and enduring relationship. More about Colin later in the Newsletter.

Well, that what I learnt from my three companions on a fantastic day on the island. What did Susan learn from us? Guess I will have to read her book to find out.

**Colin Ryder**, President (and fossil)

## THE OTHER COLIN (THE INTELLIGENT, YOUNG AND RELATIVELY GOOD-LOOKING ONE)

*Contributed by Colin Ryder*

*This is an abridged and hopefully more coherent version of a speech I gave at Colin Miskelly's farewell from the Department a few weeks ago. I know that it embarrassed him somewhat so I thought it should be put on permanent record.*

I can't remember the first time I met Colin Miskelly but one of my defining early memories was him ringing me at work in, I think, 1997.

"Colin, I've got the perfect project on Mana Island for the Branch." *I was on the Wellington Branch Committee at the time.*

"Oh, yeah."

"I reckon if we could put a colony of gannet models on Mana we can get the real things to settle there."

"How much?" *Cutting immediately to the chase – I am an accountant by training after all.*

"About \$800."

Some \$16,000 later I had learnt an important lesson – never trust a scientist with a budget. *Colin grimaced at that remark –he probably wishes he was paid a dollar every time I've teased him about it.*

The concrete gannet project (or Colin's folly) was one of the most enjoyable projects I have worked on, even though, thus far, it has been one of the most unsuccessful. It involved a private company, a modeller, a philanthropic trust, the local school, three backbreaking days of chipping off the grass sward, and lots of messy white paint (to simulate guano). What made it really special is when the school kids were singing their waiata, two real gannets flew down and settled in amongst the decoys right in front of the dignitaries and TV cameras. I was up the top installing the display board when the birds arrived so Colin hogged all the glory in the media.

(I actually got a call from the BBC in London about it. I said that it was a trial for attracting Australian tourists - with about the same IQs as gannets – to coffee bars in Oriental Parade). Unfortunately nothing much since, even though we later installed a sound system as well. Interestingly, this combination of techniques is now working successfully at Young Nick's Head near Gisborne.

Fortunately, the other projects we have worked on have been more successful. These have usually involved species translocations. In particular, Colin, together with his DOC colleague, Graeme Taylor, has successfully developed techniques for reintroducing burrowing seabird species back to Mana Island, which are now being used elsewhere for species at risk. He was an outcome-focussed scientist who advanced science by doing it and pushing the boundaries.

He has had a prodigious output and I sometimes wonder if he ever sleeps. (*This drew a laugh from his colleagues so can't be too far off the mark.*). If you worked out his actual hourly pay rate, DOC has been getting very good value out of Colin. I recently told the Regional Conservator that, despite my occasional criticisms of the Department, I admired the staff for doing amazing work with bugger-all resources. Colin was a prime example of that.

Colin is a fantastic communicator. He has the knack for being able to convey complex scientific ideas in a way that the average layperson can understand and enjoy, and I'd go a long way to listen to one of his talks. In my opinion, his most important piece of work was the *Mana Island Ecological Restoration Plan* which has guided the programme on the island for a decade. This document has been an inspiration to many of us – not just those of us who are associated with Mana.

Although Colin and I are very different, we share one thing – a love for Mana Island. While I wish him well in his new job, I know that the island will draw him back. I will be contacting him a few months time to remind him that there is a spare spot on the committee.





## Introduction of Bellbird and Whitehead to Mana

You will have read in our last Newsletter about the opportunity to help support an exciting new project– the reintroduction of whiteheads and bellbirds to the island in March and April.

Well the date slipped a little, to last week in fact when the transfer of 43 bellbird and 38 whitehead took place, funded solely from our accumulated funds.



Just a reminder of what to look for next time you are volunteering on the Island, here are those pictures again.

Whitehead Left, Bellbird below



## Volunteer Work on the Mainland

The success of the restoration on Mana Island is inextricably linked to the adjoining mainland. Seeds for many of the plantings on the island are collected from nearby but unfortunately several weed species also find their way across. Several bird species (such as the tui and kereru) will self-introduce and there will be movements in the other direction, as is happening now with the brown teal and shoreplover.

For these reasons, FOMI has a legitimate interest in related conservation work on the mainland. This offers the opportunity for those of you would like to help but can't get across to the island to do something a bit closer to home.

Jason Christensen, the former DOC Field Centre Manager on Mana and a current Committee member, has identified the following list of possible activities. Perhaps you might have some ideas of your own. If you would like to head a little work group and help us draft a project brief then contact Colin Ryder on (04 4784 392 or [rydercj@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rydercj@xtra.co.nz)). We can find the money, if any is required.

Possible Opportunities	No of Vols
Bone seed Control/Removal from Plimmerton to Makara	5-30
Boxthorn Control/Removal in the Green Point Area	5-30
Brown Teal surveys (Taupo Swamp and other possible sites)	2-6
Kakariki surveys in Colonial Knob Reserve	5-10
Hebe Olipicta Plantings along the coastal area from Plimmerton to Makara	5-10
Leptonella planting or maintenance	2-5
Shore Plover surveys (Plimmerton to Makara)	2-8
Seed collection of harder to collect species	1-5
Beach clean up (Plimmerton to Boom Rock)	5-30
Planting with Whitireia Park Fire Rehabilitation and Restoration	5-10
Helping with plantings and weed control with Nga Uruora group.	5-10
Draft a Classroom Resource kit about the restoration of the island	2-5
Typing up Oral Histories	1-3



## Updates from Sue Caldwell, Field Centre Supervisor (July 2010)

### Planting Program:

The last of the planting is almost complete for the year, with the larger area of Kaikomako Valley finished. A small amount of inter-planting to finish which will bring the total to around 6,000 plants for the season

### Shore plover:

Latest shore plover monitor yielded 30 birds, including 3 of the Mana-bred juveniles

**Takahe:** Mana is part of a new project to collect data for an 'egg-



timer' type transmitter for takahe, ultimately this will enable us to gather info from the new transmitters on nest dates and therefore hatch dates

### Volunteers

Bellbird/whitehead/shore plover monitor weekend of 17/18 July (and possibly 31 July – 1 Aug) and 14/15 August. Tentative threatened plants group overnight 25/26 July.

## Brother International (NZ) Limited

Colin and Brian have been in discussions with Mayuko Hirose who approached FOMI with a potential sponsorship opportunity to further their new environmental initiative, Brother Earth ([www.brotherearth.com](http://www.brotherearth.com)) last month. Some environmental project sponsorships in the world by Brother's subsidiaries are introduced in the Brother Earth website (<http://www.brotherearth.com/en/top.html>).

We are currently negotiating an agreement which will provide FOMI with funding of between \$5,000 and \$10,000 per annum commencing in April next year and committed for a minimum of 3 years. This is a fantastic opportunity as they are very interested in our sea bird projects and would like to have their staff involved in small groups from next year. Their contribution is related to the success or otherwise of their program. We are currently preparing a heads of agreement which will be followed by a specific project for their

## Volunteers Wanted

### Are You a Web Guru?

FOMI needs you !

Our web site is almost as old as FOMI, 10 years ago it was stitched together by a bunch of amateurs and a school leaver and barely kept up to date since (apart from the newsletters which do get posted as they arrive).

If you have the time and the expertise to convert our web site to one worthy of one of the top 25 Australasian Conservation projects then you should contact me, at [info@manaisland.org.nz](mailto:info@manaisland.org.nz)

### Newsletter Editor

FOMI needs you !

Our Newsletter is an important communications medium for our membership and requires the stewardship of an enthusiastic volunteer to pick up the reins and take us into the next decade. If you have the skills and enthusiasm to produce a quality quarterly newsletter then contact [info@manaisland.org.nz](mailto:info@manaisland.org.nz)

### Transcription

FOMI needs you !

Denis Fairfax has produced a number of interviews on tape with people who have been or are an important part of the history on Mana Island since it was first farmed in the early 1800's. These tapes now require transcribing into a documentary record for posterity. Whilst the tapes are vested with the National Library we need to have available a written record. If you have the skills and interest contact [info@manaisland.org.nz](mailto:info@manaisland.org.nz)

**Your Committee** this year is :

Colin Ryder President, Brian Paget Vice President, Darlene Adams Secretary, Barry Dent Treasurer and a Committee of Brian Bell, Jason Christensen, Ian Cooksley (DoC Rep), Tama Coker (Iwi Rep), and Allan Sheppard.

One vacancy exists. Do you feel like volunteering your energy and wisdom?

To contact any of the above email them at [contactus@manaisland.org.nz](mailto:contactus@manaisland.org.nz)

For a colour version of this Newsletter download one from our web site or request delivery by email, [www.manaisland.org.nz](http://www.manaisland.org.nz)

Editor: Brian Paget

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