



# The Inlet

Newsletter for the Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet

DECEMBER

2012

*The Inlet* is a newsletter that brings together local and regional news affecting the Pauatahanui Inlet and its environs.

*The Inlet* comes out three times a year and current or back issues can be downloaded from our website.

The newsletter includes items of concern that affect the area as well as general interest topics for everyone.

Please contact us if you would like to contribute to *The Inlet*.

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## FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

In an environmental sense Porirua Harbour exists as two parts: the marine part (or the harbour proper) and the terrestrial part – the catchments of all the streams that feed into the harbour. The two are intimately related. Natural and human-induced activities in the catchment directly affect the ecology of the marine life. Natural changes such as the slow erosion of the land over millennia, and the consequent infilling of the harbour, proceed so slowly that the flora and fauna of the harbour can adapt; but the rapid pace of human interference with those natural processes – deforestation, agriculture, urbanisation and the motor vehicle, reclamation of the foreshore – is producing radical changes to the marine environment of the harbour. For example the ‘worst case scenario’ is that, if erosion of sediment from the catchments continues at its present rate, then the Inlet will be like Taupo swamp in as little as 150-200 years. Compare that with the estimate of 1300-1700 years if sedimentation rates could be reduced to pre-European levels.

That level is precisely what the Porirua Harbour Strategy is targeting: ambitious, yes, but possible the experts advise. Getting there will require an enormous effort of will by the local authorities and by the people who live or work in the harbour catchment. Land usage must change with revegetation of the steeper, more erosion-prone, land. Urban development must be as eco-friendly as possible, with reduced cut-and-fill and other sediment-inducing activities. At the same time action must be taken to restore those parts of the harbour proper that have become severely degraded. The worst of these areas are in the Onepoto Arm, but significant things can be done in the Inlet.

Working out how to do this is the first step in implementing the Harbour Strategy. It is now underway. Greater Wellington Regional Council is about to complete the draft of a Harbour Estuary Restoration Plan and is beginning the process of assembling a Catchment Revegetation Plan. I hope that the former may be out for public consultation early in the new year, while the latter is scheduled for the end of April. I am really looking forward to contributing to the formation and implementation of these plans. One reason is that the Council realises that it must garner the resources and enthusiasm of community groups like ours if it is to succeed.

*John Wells*

## GUARDIANS SUPPORT TRANSMISSION GULLY MOTORWAY

**Don't believe the rumours. Our support for the motorway has been continuous since 2000.**

**T**ransmission Gully Motorway has received widespread support, and for good reason. A naturally occurring gully heading north will provide an additional road for the region's growing population. In times of natural disasters it will be the only major land access into the city not exposed to tsunamis. You may remember the heavy rain events of 2006 that produced landslips, rough seas and stormy weather and severed all access to the capital. For the city which holds the seat of government this is not appropriate.

Closer to home we believe that the consequent reduction of traffic on SH 58 and Grays Road will greatly benefit the Pauatahanui Inlet environment. Stormwater run-off from roads contains toxic residues from oil and other spillages and from tyre and brake wear and incompletely burnt petrol and diesel. These pollutants are beginning to affect the health of the animals of the Inlet. We are also very concerned with sediment build-up in the Inlet and the effect this will have on plants and wildlife.

Thankfully NZTA are paying great attention to these concerns. They have already begun planting trees along the designated TGM area and the conditions imposed on their resource consent require them to design a mitigation programme that fully protects the environment of our Inlet.

In the long term we will enjoy improved Inlet ecology and increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

## THEN AND NOW

**W**e thought it would be a good idea to illustrate how Pauatahanui Inlet and its environs have changed over the years, and run a series of photographs called 'Then and Now'. The two images here are, we believe, both taken from Duck Creek Reserve looking towards Pauatahanui Wildlife Reserve. The old painting on the left is part of the Alexander Turnbull Library archives, while the image below was taken recently using a modern digital camera.



*Porirua near the entrance to Horaki Valley / C. D. B. [1860s?]. Barraud, Charles Decimus 1822-1897. Album. Ref: E-297-015. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/23016023>*

Apart from the obvious modifications that development of Highway 58 has created, the significant loss of native forest on the distant hills is one of the most overwhelming effects of human habitation. An extensive reforestation programme in more recent times has been with non-native species, giving the landscape an altogether different character.

It is changes like these that have resulted in increased sedimentation and pollution, factors that are now threatening the survival of the Inlet.

If you have any images of the Inlet from an earlier period in time, and would like to have them shown in this way, please contact the editor. We would love to include them in this section.



*Photo: Michael Waldron*

## MAARA ROA: THE BIG PICTURE

*Friends of Maara Roa* is a group of people dedicated to the restoration of native forest in Cannons Creek valley near Porirua. Like the Guardians this conservation-minded organisation is concerned with the progressive deterioration of native habitats in the area due to increased urbanisation, deforestation and changing land use that our modern lifestyles demand. It is for this reason we have invited them to contribute to our newsletter this month, and explain in their own words the progress they have made and where they see the future for our region.

Founding member Sylvia Jenkin is the Friends of Maara Roa publicity representative and has compiled the following for us. Further information can be found on their site:

<http://www.maararoa.org.nz/index-mr.shtml>

The 'Long Natural Garden' which the Friends of Maara Roa have been restoring in the Cannons Creek valley is at last assured of becoming the bush corridor link between Wellington and Porirua harbour which was the original vision of the initiator of the project, Sylvia Jenkin of Cannons Creek. After Greater Wellington Regional Council purchased Waitangirua Farm from Landcorp NZ in 2005, it became public land and fully part of Belmont Regional Park, and a new 'Sustainable Land Management Plan' has since been adopted which involves the retirement from farming of the headwaters area of both Cannons Creek and Duck Creek. This will, it is claimed, enable the 'managed reversion' of the gullies to bush, and after many years should reduce the excessive run-off and regular erosion in these streams which has – like that in every other deforested stream in the catchment – added to the rapid sedimentation of Porirua's twin harbours over the last 100 years.

The 'Friends' are still fully occupied in the middle valley, now planting more of the missing species to complete the original forest canopy (rata, rewarewa, and podocarps such as totara and kahikatea) and improving the bio-diversity generally. We are aware, however, that the remaining 200 hectares of steep pasture land further upstream is unlikely to heal by itself if just fenced off and left to its own devices. Approval has been given for Wellington Forest and Bird to compile a Restoration Plan proposal for the headwaters. They have seen the potential for the harbour-to-harbour link via the Korokoro valley, Cannons Creek and the Kenepuru stream, to our Onepoto harbour arm.

It is just good fortune that the headwaters of Cannons Creek are actually within the boundaries of Wellington City and that this whole potential eco-corridor is now on publicly owned land, making the full protection of these catchments a real possibility thanks to the vigilance and vision of groups such as GOPI, the Friends of Maara Roa, and Wellington Forest and Bird.

Long may that continue!

*Sylvia Jenkin*

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## STILL ON THE HORIZON

### *Update on the Pauatahanui History Book*

The book is currently at the publishers being edited – no small feat when dealing with 130,000 words and hundreds of old pictures, maps and graphics. The book spans modern Whitby to Paekakariki, Haywards Hill to the beginnings of Camborne. Available from May 2013, the book should be around \$50 and won't be available in bookstores.

## FEATURE ARTICLE

### *White-faced Heron (Egretta novaehollandiae)*

This bird is one of the icons of Pauatahanui Inlet. Its statuesque beauty, with an elegant, even haughty, posture and delicate walk as it searches for its food, makes it so. It is because of this that we have adopted it as the featured animal on our new brochure.

However, it is but an Australian immigrant. Widespread from Indonesia to the subantarctic islands, via New Guinea, New Caledonia and Australia, it was first seen in New Zealand as an occasional visitor in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. By the 1940s it had become established in Otago and on the West Coast and is now common throughout the country, especially in coastal areas.

Hérons are usually thought of as associated with marine wetlands and estuaries, but they also occur around rivers, freshwater lakes and ponds, and even on pasture land. In Australia they are present everywhere except for the very driest parts of Western Australia. It has been suggested that their explosive spread through inland New Zealand in the 1950s and 60s was aided by the rapid conversion of forest to farmland. The many farm dams established at this time were quickly colonised by the Australian Green Frog – a favourite food of the herons in Australia.



Photo: Helen Westerbeke

It seems herons don't like the bush, though they do need tall trees for nesting. The macrocarpa and pine trees around the Inlet are particular favourites. Unless present in very large numbers they tend to be solitary birds and don't breed in colonies. They breed in spring and early summer, and when in breeding condition they exhibit long, often curved, feathers (the nuptial plumes) on the neck, head and back. They also practise sexual equality: male and female contribute equally to nest building, egg incubation and care of the young. Their mating system is unknown, but what is known is that the young, who fledge 6-7 weeks after hatching, often stay with their parents until the next breeding season. This may imply that herons mate for life, or at least for more than one season.

Their ability to live in such varied habitats is founded on their very wide diet of small animals, which includes, for example, crabs, fish and frogs, land insects such as grasshoppers and large flies, and aquatic insects such as dragonflies. Around Pauatahanui Inlet white-faced herons are most commonly seen fishing for crabs and small fish, which they disturb with their feet as they walk in the shallows.

## INLET CLEAN UP DAY

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> November was Inlet Clean Up day. Many individuals and families came together on a sunny afternoon to help remove as much rubbish as possible from the Inlet shoreline and had a great time in the process. More information and photos of the day can be viewed on our website.

<http://www.gopi.org.nz/annual-clean-up-2/>



## FAMILY CORNER

### SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Here are two pictures of the Paremata Boatsheds on our Inlet. The view is the same in both but 10 changes have been made to the bottom picture.

Can you spot all 10? (Answers Page 6)

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	



Photo: Helen Waldron



Photo: Helen Waldron

## PLEASE SIGN UP A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOUR

Sign up a neighbour, friend, or another family member. Just explain to them that membership numbers really count in giving us a strong voice to argue for what we all value about the Inlet. Membership forms can be downloaded from our website [www.gopi.org/nz/membership-form](http://www.gopi.org/nz/membership-form) or copied from the one at the back of this newsletter. The cost is tiny but the significance of the added voice could be substantial. **Every new member will receive a free Living Waters DVD.**

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS FOR THE PAUATAHANUI INLET

**Pollution:** Discharges of contaminants to air, land, storm-water drains, streams, rivers or sea and for after hours consent enquiries: Greater Wellington 0800 496 734 (24 hours)

**Boating infringements:** Greater Wellington 384 5708 (24 hours)

**Fisheries issues:** Ministry of Fisheries 0800 476 224 (24 hours)

**Pauatahanui Wildlife Reserve:** Department of Conservation 0800 362 468

Let us know what you have reported so we can keep an accurate record and follow up if necessary.

**233 2557 (Secretary, GOPI) or pauainlet@gmail.com.**

## PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 2013

Our photo competition is a regular feature of the Guardians' year and 2013 will be no exception. This year's competition will be held in mid-April which should give enough summer weather to produce another great batch of images featuring our Inlet. Details will be sent to you closer to the time but key dates to diary are:

Closing date for entries: Monday 8th April  
 Judge's results issued: Wednesday 17th April  
 Prizegiving at Pataka: Sunday 21st April

As in previous years Geoff Marshall has agreed to judge the entries. In anticipation of the interest that the competition generates Geoff has this year put together some guidelines for budding and seasoned photographers alike, that may help inspire that special image.

Geoff writes:

### *Your entry for the 2013 Pauatahanui Inlet photo competition*

Now is the time to think about your entry for next year's Pauatahanui Inlet photo competition. Like all successful projects the secret of a winning entry to the competition is planning. Think about what you would like to photograph for the competition; then think about what you need to do to make it a stunning image that stands out from the rest.

Time of day and weather conditions make a huge difference to images. Successful images are rarely made on the first visit to a location. Find the place you want to photograph and try to imagine where you would like the sun to be to light the subject the way you want. Then figure out the time of day you need to be there for the sun to be in that position and return at that time, when the weather conditions are right.

What are the right weather conditions? Pleasing images can be made in good weather but sometimes, with some extra thought, stunning images can be made in the worst of weather conditions.

With wildlife a knowledge of the habits of the bird or animal you are photographing is as important as being a competent camera operator. If you can predict the animal's movements you can be in right place at the right time to press the shutter and fully capture the characteristics of the animal.

Daylight saving gives us longer evenings and, together with improving weather conditions, offers more opportunities for photography. In general the light at the middle of the day is very flat and stunning images are very hard to capture. The light is much better an hour or two after dawn or before sunset.

Most of all, to win a competition, your image must be different from other entries. Think about this when shooting and try to make your image unique, reflecting your own personality and photographic style.

**Geoff Marshall**

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*Missing black reflection first boat. Missing rail support first boat. Extra orange buoy. Missing black line second boat. Missing window second boat. Change of colour third boat. Black buoy missing. Orange buoy moved. Change of boat house roof colour. Extra patch of trees on hills.*

**SPOT THE DIFFERENCE—ANSWERS**

## KEITH CALDER: AWARD WINNER

We offer our warmest congratulations to Keith Calder who has been made a 'Welly winner'. Keith has just been named Wellingtonian of the Year in the Environment category and naturally we are absolutely delighted.

As you will know, Keith is the driving force behind the Porirua Harbour Strategy and Action Plan and it's thanks to Keith's vision and hard work that we now have a clear path forward for cleaning up our waterways. In a remarkably short space of time he achieved consensus amongst groups concerned with our local environment that a 'whole-of-harbour' approach was the right one to pursue.

The quality of the Plan has also been recently recognised with the New Zealand Planning Institute's Geok Ling Phang Memorial Award – a recognition from professional planners that, under Keith's direction, Porirua Harbour has been given a sound blueprint for its future.

The Guardians are totally behind Keith. One of his recent initiatives that we are involved in is a Community Education Group which has been set up to develop ways of educating all the people of Porirua on how they can help clean up and maintain the harbour and its catchment. Obviously this is dear to our heart – our 'Pauatahanui Inlet, a Living Resource' has for years provided teachers with Inlet-related materials they can use with their students, and you will know that we are currently updating and rewriting it.

We are looking forward to continuing to work with our very own Welly winner.



## INLET PATHWAY (TE ARO PIKO). WHERE ARE WE AT?

### Ration Point to Pauatahanui village

Work on the pathway around the Inlet continues. Porirua City Council tells us that the pathway will get as far as a bridge over Ration Creek by the end of this summer. By the end of 2013 it will have reached Pauatahanui village.

### Motukaraka Point to Camborne

The pathway so far has been done with great sensitivity to the environment. But it takes time to solve the problems – and the bit alongside Grays Road from Motukaraka Point to Camborne is especially tricky. There are sensitive salt marsh areas to be crossed and there are safety issues with placing the pathway alongside Grays Road

The Guardians, along with local residents, have been talking to the council about the form the pathway will take. The consultations and planning needed to get it right will take some time and it will be at least mid-2014 before construction begins.

.....But it will be worth the wait.



# Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet

[www.gopi.org.nz](http://www.gopi.org.nz)

[pauainlet@gmail.com](mailto:pauainlet@gmail.com)

## Membership form: new members

To join the Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet you can pay your sub either online or by post.

### Online payment

1. Pay your sub via e-banking into our Westpac account 03 1533 0009387 00. In the 'Particulars' or 'Reference' columns, write your surname and initials.
2. Then fill in this form and either email it to us at [pauainlet@gmail.com](mailto:pauainlet@gmail.com) or post it (see next column for our postal address)

### Postal payment

1. Write a cheque made payable to Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet.
2. Then fill in this form and send it, along with your cheque, to Membership Secretary, Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet, Box 57034, Mana, Porirua 5247.

Please fill in your details for our records. If you are filling in this form electronically, **click** at the beginning of a dotted line and then type.

Name: .....

Address: .....

E-mail: ..... Phone: .....

Please put  next to the subscription you are paying (electronic completion – **highlight** the box and type lower case x.) We are also very grateful for donations. (We are a registered charity for tax purposes: registration number CC47523.)

One-year individual (\$12.00)  Five-year individual (\$50.00)

One-year family (\$15.00)  Five-year family (\$60.00)

Donation: \$ ..... Do you require a receipt for your sub? or your donation?

Date subs paid: ..... Reference appears as: .....

*(e-banking only)*

We'd like to send you newsletters and notices via email. May we do this?

Please tell us which of our activities you would like to be part of.

Annual Clean-up day  Other: .....

Three-yearly cockle survey

Stream monitoring

Submissions to local bodies

Our educational programmes for schools

How else do you think we can care for the Inlet? Please use a separate sheet or just email us.