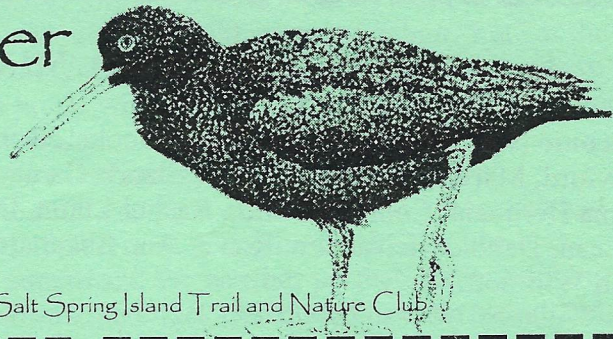


Oystercatcher



The Newsletter of the Salt Spring Island Trail and Nature Club

NEW ZEALAND'S TRAMP FOR THE NON-TRAMPER

Margaret Spencer

Kiwis take their tramping seriously. To be a "real" trumper you must carry a heavy pack preferably including a tent in case the huts on the track are already full, be prepared for all weathers most of which will be wet if you are in the southwest, and know that the track may well involve handholds as well as footholds. You may also be required to wade happily through waist-deep water in your boots of course, and you must then tell everybody what a wonderful time you've had even if the conditions were horrendous.

I managed to impress one serious trumper with my account of camping the Abel Tasman but totally lost it when I mentioned the Banks Peninsula. Well, I did it, and I liked it a lot, so I want to tell you about it.

The Banks Peninsula is an eight million year old extinct volcano southeast of Christchurch in the South Island. The sea invaded the caldera, making a beautiful, safe harbour for the small town of Akaroa, with the hills encircling it. In 1838 Jean Langlois, a French whaling captain, bought the peninsula from the Maori but when the French settlers arrived, they found the British in possession. The French stayed anyway. The French influence is very evident. Streets have French names, the hostel where I stayed is named Chez la Mer, and the cemetery has French names on some of the gravestones.

The main occupation of the people living around the peninsula was sheep farming. When the bottom dropped out of the market in recent times, farmers were forced to find alternative means of making a living. Ten landowners near Akaroa got together ten years ago and decided to develop a 35 k. private tramping track. Advertised as "four nights, four days, four beaches, four bays" the track follows the coastline for three days walking and then cuts inland, over a saddle, and back down to Akaroa. Twelve people per day are allowed to do the four day trek at a cost of \$91 Canadian, but an additional four people may do it in two days.*Continued on page 3*

Calendar

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|----------------|---|
| Nov. 23 | Social 7:30 United Church Hall, Bill Lee |
| Dec. 12 | Christmas Lunch 11:30, Meaden Hall |
| Jan. 25 | Potluck and AGM |
| Feb. 22 | Social 7:30 United Church Hall |
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TRAIL MIX

Welcome New Members: Tony & Jo Booker, Robert Borbas, Susan Brain, Jim Crawford, Martyn & Margaret Day, Claude Gamache, Michelle Grant, Connie Hardy, Ivanna Herdocia, Connie Holmes, Rachel Luton, Duncan & Sarah Mathieson, Robin McLean, Debbie McNamara, Ron & Ann Sheppard, Barry & Sheila Spence, Richard & Jill Willmott.

HELP We need **Trip Coordinators** to organize a club trip once or twice annually. **MORE HELP!** Our club is growing. In addition to our Monthly Socials, we have lots of special events like the Strawberry Tea. Please volunteer some time and energy to make these events fun. Call Bill Harrington at ~~637-1116~~ or Linda Quiring at ~~587-5116~~ to lend a hand.

WIRED: If you now have an Email address, send it to Membership Secretary Lynn Thompson at lhompson@saltspring.com

EAGLES ON DEATH ROW - AWAITING ELECTOCUTION

Bill Harrington

Fourteen percent of Bald Eagle fatalities are due to electrocution. Eagles like to roost on the crossbars of hydro poles or fly between the wires. However, their two metre wing span often causes them to make contact with the wires. The depletion of tall Douglas Fir through logging or development has increased the danger. The remaining trees they roost on are often shorter than the hydro lines. Flight paths take them through the wires rather than above them.

Some people aren't helping! For instance, a shoreline pub near Campbell River puts food scraps on the beach to attract Bald Eagles to entertain patrons. The Eagles must fly through hydro lines from their perches to get to the beach. Two have been electrocuted. The pub responded by putting one of the dead eagles on display for customers.

B.C. Hydro to the Rescue! They put markers on the power lines to warn the eagles. It worked. The eagles detoured around the marked lines and flew to the beach through other lines and got

electrocuted there. Now Hydro will have to extend the markers. B.C. Hydro is now putting some cross trees without wire at the very top of their poles above the regular wired cross trees. Eagles roost there safely without getting the hot seat. Wire are being spread farther apart. Hydro is being very careful about how many trees they trim or cut to keep lines clear. In some cases, they are actually building nest sites for eagles by trimming some branches for access and placing 4x4's across limbs for a nest base.

Read more about Bald Eagles in the latest B.C.Naturalist publication. If you are willing to locate and monitor eagle nests on Saltspring, contact Brian Radford 653-9370.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Linda Quiring

It's been an interesting year! Sad, in that we lost some of our favourite trails, glad in that we made new friends and had great walks, rambles and hikes. I look forward to seeing you at our fall and winter socials and outings.



We met in Akaroa at 5.45 p.m. We adjourned to a coffee shop where we were given our guidebooks, some instructions (I forget what they were!) and our questions were answered. I pointed out that I was alone, so if I did not turn up at a "hut" at the end of a day would somebody please notice! We were driven to Onuku Farm where we found our first lodging. A divine little house with two kitchens, rooms with bunk beds, showers, flush toilets and a beautiful view.

Day one was the most strenuous. We had the option of having our packs transported and all the couples opted to send one pack at least. I didn't, because had only one pack. Today was an ascent of 1800 ft. and a length of 11k. The turf was springy, the gradient gentle, the view superb and the weather perfect. After reaching a summit with a 360 degree view the well-marked track descended to enter woodland, and follow a stream to our second night's lodging at Flea Bay. This cottage had a comfortable living room, trailing geraniums outside the door, and the beach was spread before us. We all turned up sooner or later, and sat around in the sunshine with a beer or a soft drink available for purchase from a fridge. The landowner, Francis Helps, came to introduce himself. For thirty years he has been passionate about the little white-flipped blue penguins who are making a comeback in the bay, Francis said there were hundreds when he was a boy. They coexist happily with the yellow-eyed penguins which are here in great numbers. Francis has made sixty nesting boxes to make life easy for them, but many more dig their own burrows in the hillside. They have been known to climb as high as 600 metres to nest. We had some quick peeks at the little chaps, but they don't like the light when they are nesting. We had walked quite high up on the hillside to see them, and as we looked down we saw about fifteen or more Hector's dolphins cavorting in the bay.

Today was a mere dawdle of 6 k which was nice after the previous day. It was the day of the grassy headlands, up, over and down, then up again. It began to spit with rain as I approached Stony Bay, and then became a downpour with tremendously strong winds all night long. Stony Bay was just precious! The shower was built around a large, dead tree trunk with a new shrub grafted onto it inside the shower. There were two outside baths. One of the men filled one, lit a fire underneath, and two by two or in my case one by one we took a shower followed by a divine soak in the hot tub with the rain pouring down! There was a pool table in the garden, and a tiny store with all sorts of food to buy. Dinner was steak, asparagus, and a bottle of Pinot Noir.

We thought the roof would come off in the night. I was not allowed to hike alone today in the strong wind! Five of us set off together. I had noted that today was only five kilometres! Well, let me tell you five kilometres was plenty. We left late in the hope that this 'typical southerly' would blow itself out. It didn't. It took us three hours and had any of us slipped on the grass and rolled, I think nothing would have stopped us rolling right off the cliff edge. Our reward was the most beautiful cottage yet, at Otenerito Bay. The garden all around it was ablaze with perennials, and the sheep being 'mustered' at the farm sang us to sleep. Steak and wine again, from a second little store, this time with rice and tomatoes and canned mushrooms.

The last day was another fairly strenuous one, and again we had the option of having packs transported. A lovely day dawned. The track went inland through the Hinewai Reserve which the botanists and biologists among us were very excited about - so many young indigenous plants looking happy and healthy with the absence of stock, and a vigorous attempt to control the opossum problem. In a beautiful beech wood I sat and wrote my journal and read for an hour in the sunshine. After a serious climb the track emerged on a saddle with a view back to the sea, then led over the hill to a wonderful view of Akaroa and the sea-filled caldera. I ate my lunch, and, together with my new friends, sadly descended to the end of my walk.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

Annual Membership Dues for 2001 are due January 1, 2001. The dues are \$17.00 per person. Please send your cheque and any changes to your current address, phone number, or email address to:

Treasurer, Salt Spring Trail & Nature Club
Box 203 Ganges P.O.
Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2V9

Payment can also be made at the annual Christmas Luncheon on Dec. 12.

PLEASE help your executive make this a one month drive rather than the usual six month ordeal!

General Information

The Salt Spring trail and Nature Club features Tuesday outings September through June at three levels of ability. The monthly schedule of outings and events is published the final Wednesday of the month in the *Driftwood*. The fourth Thursday of each month the Club meets at 7:30 PM in the lower hall of the Ganges United Church. The Club is affiliated with the Federation of BC Naturalists.

Ramblers enjoy walking without pressure to keep up speed. Members of any level fitness are welcome. Ramblers have frequent "time-outs" for taking pictures, examining flowers, plants, stones, fossils, and hugging trees. Rambles start at 10 AM and usually end around 1:30PM

Walkers move at a relaxed pace taking time to smell the roses. Walkers usually try to avoid long steep climbs and will stop to catch the breath along the way. Walks are generally less than 8km and end around 2PM.

Hikers like long, adventurous and occasionally quite strenuous hikes, and like to gain a bit of altitude. Hikers need good strong boots and a good but not excessive level of fitness. They may smell the roses, but do it rather quickly. Hikes usually start at 10AM and finish between 2:30 and 3:30 PM.

Membership: Annual dues are \$17.00 per person. New members must sign a waiver. Send waiver form and membership dues to Membership Secretary, Box 203, Salt Spring Island BC V8K 2V9

Current Executive

President:	Linda Quiring	537-5116
Vice Pres:	Bill Harrington	537-1118
Past Pres:	Fred Howell	537-1133

Treasurer	Rollie McCallum	537-0052
Secretary	April Steel	537-4207

Walkers	Alan Robertson	537-9459
Ramblers	Harold Page	658-7230
Hikers	Fred Powell	537-4739
FBCN	Brian Radford	658-9878
(alternate)	Nancy Braithwaite	537-9525

VOLUNTEERS

Membership	Lynn Thompson	537-2814
Trail Co-ordinator		
	Ian Fraser	537-9849
Archivist	Joanne Cartwright	537-2439
Photography	Chris Pattinson	537-9547

OYSTERCATCHER

Oystercatcher is published three times annually. Comments, articles or ideas are welcome but space is limited. Mail them to Box 203, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2V9 or call Linda Quiring 537-5116 email soapworks@saltspring.com

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