



## MERRA Newsletter April 2018

[www.scottslanding.org](http://www.scottslanding.org)

### Annual MERRA BBQ:

A good turnout, kind weather and great company made this another enjoyable community get-together. To all who attended, to Mark Croft for his superb organisation and to all those who helped out on the day... Thank you!





*Residents enjoying the annual MERRA BBQ at Scott Homestead. Photos courtesy of Simon Gould-Thorpe*

### **New Year's Day Cricket Match:**

A fun event for those who braved the inconvenient shower. Special thanks to Jim and Sue Cleland for their generous hospitality and for making the MCG (Mangrove Cricket Ground) and their lovely property available for this community event.

### **Ultrafast broadband (UFB) for Scotts Landing:**

Further to MERRA's long-term 'dialogue' with Chorus, Scotts Landing has now been *included* in the government's UFB roll out. This is a pleasing reversal from the positions previously reached and outlined in earlier newsletters.

We await more specific dates from Chorus. Following resident queries we have also asked about the possibility of free direct connection for properties just outside the residential boundary shown on their map. We will update our website accordingly.

To see more detail from Chorus about this exciting development (including maps) click on:

<https://scottslanding.org/ultra-fast-broadband-for-scotts-landing/>

In the interim we note very unsatisfactory service north of 107 Ridge Road. If you are affected please complain to your internet service provider. MERRA will alert Chorus directly.

### **Roading and walkways:**

Auckland transport advise that the temporary traffic lights on the persistent slippage near 449 Ridge Road will be in place for about a month after which permanent repairs will be undertaken. If you notice these lights are not working (as seems to happen frequently) please report it as a safety hazard on \*555.

The changeover to new contractors has resulted in many of the tracks and walkways that MERRA had only just got back onto the post-Rodney Auckland Council maintenance schedule again being neglected. We will pursue the maintenance of tracks and walkways with Council once more.

MERRA still plans to upgrade the Charles St noticeboard this autumn.

### **Plant Pest Control (from Heather Mackay)**

The Ngaio Bay Working Group reconvened in March and 3 sessions have been held to date.

There are 3 goals for this next period:

- 1) Complete clearing the triangle on edge of Ngaio Bay carpark of weeds, pampas, etc, retaining coprosmas and other natives and spray to ready for winter planting of small natives.
- 2) Focus on removal of regrowth jasmine, Japanese honeysuckle , and other weed pests in previously cleared areas. Continue to plant natives this winter.
- 3) Carry on tending the new planting of last spring. Most of these plants have taken and now require release from weeds such as convolvulus.

The group meets Friday am fortnightly from 8.30 (for 2-3 hours) at the Ngaio Bay carpark. **All new comers very welcome.** If you have any queries phone Heather (4256684). Next session is Friday April 13.



*Working group members attack a section of 'jungle' in the Ngaio Bay Reserve. Photo courtesy Heather Mackay.*

### **Footnotes:**

The group have noticed and reported to council 3 apparently poisoned (drilled at base) macrocarpa trees on the cliff reserve edge (see the note below in Neighbourhood Support). These will ultimately become dangerous.

We think the "war on weeds" collection will restart in May this allows for disposal of weed pests (usually in Warkworth) at no cost. Keep an eye on the noticeboard for dates.

Chris Russell (4255672) manages a limited supply of weed sprays on behalf of MERRA. Contact him if you would like advice.

#### **Animal Pest Control (from Mark Croft):**

Summer has seen an active period for pests on the peninsular, particularly mustelids (stoats, ferrets & weasels) and rabbits.

MERRA's stoat traps were in hot demand over summer and we have supplied quite a bit of Pindone for rabbit control.

MERRA has applied for funding from a Kiwibank initiative for more traps for mustelids. We are hoping to be successful and if so, will be looking at more modern humane traps.

Autumn and winter are periods when animal pests, particularly rodents encroach on human habitats looking for food as their own natural food sources become scarce. Be on the lookout for signs (droppings and gnawing) around your home and set traps early. Rats with poison in their system crave water and can gnaw through plastic pipes in houses with devastating consequences for homeowners.

In the meanwhile, MERRA volunteers continue with their programme of laying bait for possum and rodent control across the peninsular.

#### **Stop press - Extra Stoat Traps: (from Colin Harvey)**

We owe a big vote of thanks to Gill and Kevin Adshead of Glorit and the Forest Bridge Trust for the donation of 6 stoat traps. As noted above we needed more traps. These extra traps will help significantly in getting on top of this outbreak. If you think you have stoats on your property please contact Mark Croft.

Note: The Forest Bridge Trust ([theforestbridgetrust.org.nz](http://theforestbridgetrust.org.nz)) is a registered charitable trust whose vision is to create a connected landscape of healthy forest and flourishing indigenous wildlife from the Kaipara Harbour in the west to the Pacific Ocean in the east by restoring woodlands and farming areas and eliminating pests such as rats stoats and possum. At their landmark property Mataia on the Kaipara they began trapping and planting over 30 years ago. Possibly ten years ago they introduced perhaps 20 kiwi and now they estimate they have over 80 kiwi on the property.

Our sincere thanks go to Kevin and Gill for their generous support.

#### **Neighbourhood Support (from Susan Beer):**

There have been two incidents in the last few weeks.

A jetski was stolen out of the lean-to garage of #43 Ridge Rd on March 19. It was towed away during the day by a white Mitsubishi van and discovered missing the morning of the 20th. If anyone has any information about this please contact 021740721 or the Warkworth Police.

Large trees on the Ngaio Bay Reserve appear to have been poisoned via drill holes around the trunks. They have now turned completely brown and will likely become a hazard to



walkers and dinghies in the area. Anyone with any information please contact the council ranger (Jason on 09 426 1200 or by email at [jason.maguinness@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:jason.maguinness@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)).

**Sadly it is clear we have thieves operating rather brazenly in our area. Please secure your property, be vigilant and record or report the details of any suspicious persons, boats or vehicles. The police are keen to make further arrests. Dial 111 for urgent matters or report anonymously on the police Crimestoppers line \*555111 (or 0800555111).**

On that note, good police work has resulted in the man responsible for thefts from boats in Andersons Bay last Christmas appearing in court recently. A guilty plea saw reparations ordered. He will appear on further unrelated charges soon with police seeking a prison sentence.

MERRA and Neighbourhood Support continue to work to enhance security and liaise with the police (including the Boatwatch Group in conjunction with Mahurangi West and the police "Deodar" crew).

**Little Library (from Susan Beer):** There was a good turn-over of books through the summer which now seems to be slowing down. I will occasionally clear books that have been there too long and hope that with the arrival of wetter weather the turnover will pick up again. There has been a good selection of titles and subjects. We hope everyone is having a look.

Some puzzles and DVDs were left recently. While it is tempting to include these, limited space rules them out. Please leave/exchange only books and only at the Little Library not on my deck for me to take care of. Thanks Susan.

#### **Community Response Group (from Peter Seers):**

CRG has received funding from Auckland Council for a "Neighbours Day Gathering" which we will hold at the end of the MERRA AGM. This will provide a light lunch for Scotts Landing residents attending the AGM. The Auckland Council's focus on "getting through" has changed now from "prescriptive planning" to "the community understanding the needs and skills of others in the community" and they feel that the best way to do this is to have all residents know each other. Thankfully, Scotts Landing residents are lovely and friendly people, keen to get to know and help their neighbours. We are keen to encourage this. We expect to finalise our updated Scotts Landing readiness plan for distribution at the MERRA AGM.

#### **Historic Cemetery:**

MERRA was approached by the Presbyterian Church with a view to collaborating to better maintain the historic Mahurangi Heads cemetery on the site of the local church destroyed by Cyclone Bola in 1988. (See: <https://scottslanding.org/mahurangi-heads-presbyterian-church-cemetery/>). Access is up the overgrown earth 'steps' opposite the macadamia farm between 357 and 310 Ridge Road. An application for a heritage grant has been prepared seeking funding for a thorough clean-up that could be followed by more regular maintenance perhaps involving community input. If you would be interested in assisting with this project or being involved in a working bee please be in touch.

**Upcoming events:**

**The MERRA Annual General Meeting will be held at Scott Homestead on 29<sup>th</sup> April at 10.30. Attendees are invited to the CRG Neighbours Day Lunch to follow.**

If you are interested in standing for the committee please be in touch.

**Warmest regards on behalf of the MERRA Committee  
Stuart Windross (Chair)**