

## AUTUMN 2011 NEWSLETTER



After the rains, January 2011 Walkway 10 Reserve

## HEADLINE NEWS

### OMAHA PARK APPEAL

Just to hand is the news that costs of \$66,000 have been awarded to us to recompense us for the visual mock ups provided to the hearing. After outgoings there will be a small surplus and we will be writing to contributors in the next month to advise details and solicit their opinions.

While we have heard nothing more about the future of the Omaha Park land it would be foolish to think this matter has gone away completely. We will keep in touch with the local authorities and such other contacts as we have to ensure that if there are any new developments we will hear of them.

We mounted a considerable challenge to Omaha Park and members should understand just how substantial this was. In addition to our legal team the Omaha Park Fund commissioned planning, landscaping, geotech, traffic and other experts. The detail we were able to present was probably greater than that produced by Omaha Park.

We can now report that the total spend on our appeal was a little over \$600,000. Of this total Omaha residents, including the hill land

owners, gave approximately \$270,000, OBRS (for the Southern end) \$310,000 and OBC itself \$20,000 from our accumulated funds.

Once again our thanks to all those who contributed. Without your support we could not have achieved the result we did.

### FLOODING

As our front page picture shows the heavy rainfall in the last two weeks of January caused some severe flooding at Omaha. Our discussions with Auckland Council and their feedback are reported later in the newsletter. The volume of water was exceptional and only a very sophisticated stormwater system might have coped from the onset. Certainly we do not have such a system at Omaha and in fact have been arguing that such drainage as we have does not justify the rates we are presently charged for this service.

In the longer run however we are concerned to see that our system is adequate and better able to cope with heavy rainfalls in future. The fact that surface water (and accompanying mosquitos) remained in Northern reserves and Southern road berms and ponds for weeks after the initial downpour is of great concern.

## HEADLINE NEWS



**Flooding at Daydawn Reserve.**

### SIREN TESTING

Took place on the 3rd of April. The most recent incident, the huge Japanese quake, highlights the importance of the warning system to us at Omaha. Siren coverage has been extended and while not up to the number originally planned the sirens should be heard throughout the greater part of the settlement.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership subscriptions have been rolling in. Thanks to all of you who paid so promptly. If you have not paid the 2011 membership please do so as soon as. Remember this year you can pay directly as well as by credit card or cheque.

The subscription was increased by \$5 this year to a combined \$50 covering the membership and security levy. This figure now includes GST.

The increase was the first change in a number of years and was made in part to allow us to provide some seed capital or assistance for projects that we believe residents support. We will continue such a programme in 2011.

### MOTORWAY EXTENSION

At the time of writing it appears that despite the Christchurch earthquake Government has not deferred the motorway extension.

What continues to disappoint is the continued reporting of the extension as a holiday highway, a description that has now become in some way an accepted truth as things do when repeated often enough. Our local MP Lockwood Smith spoke very strongly about the need for the new route to the people of the North. If no such need

exists that should be clearly determined. The discussions so far have come nowhere near any such detailed analysis.

### SURF CLUB FUNDRAISER

This year's Surf Club dinner and Auction held on the Reserve by the club was a sell out. Nearly \$90,000 was raised, most of which will be put toward the makeover of the clubhouse which is already much enhanced by the new deck built late last year. The upper floor is to be opened up and a new kitchen installed. John Williams, Club President and a local police officer, is keen to see more youth involvement at the club and for the clubhouse to be a safe and caring environment where teenagers can come and hang out.

The Surf Club already plays a major role in the support and encouragement of our youngsters. We sincerely wish them well.

### EMAIL ADDRESSES

There are still many members who have not provided their email address to us. Email is used by OBC to advise members of events such as flooding, tsunami warning, safety and security matters and other events where we believe all our members would want to hear from us. We have also used the email addresses to contact individual owners when a safety or security problem affected their property. Recently a number of owners have realised they are not on our database and have made contact asking to be added to our email list.

The list is not available to outside parties and has not been given to any of our advertisers or any action group. We have this year allowed Insite access to the data but only on the condition that it be used to make contact with a resident in cases where Insite believes the property may be at risk or suspects that theft or damage has occurred.

We make this appeal because we have had a number of instances where it has been impossible to contact an owner quickly. If you have not given this detail to us before please reconsider providing it to our database manager Glenys McBain [obcdatabase@gmail.com](mailto:obcdatabase@gmail.com).

### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Member feedback is really important to us. Several projects are reported in succeeding pages and all of these require a strong buy in from residents and contributions both of time and funds. Our own funds allow for a level of contribution and support but what we are able to put in is unlikely to come close to the total required. Please let us have your views, A copy of the new book on the history of Morris and James has been given to us and every member giving comment/feedback will go into a draw to win this well reviewed work.

**You can contact us by mail (PO Box 123 Matakana 0948) or email at [us@omahabeach.co.nz](mailto:us@omahabeach.co.nz)**

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## Dear Omaha Residents,

Writing this so shortly after the Christchurch earthquake puts the issues we have at Omaha and the problems we have tried to address very much in context. If only the problems being faced by Christchurch residents were so slight.

We looked to provide a little rest and recuperation to the overseas search and rescue teams who worked so tirelessly in Christchurch. We made an offer of assistance to the Government to provide accommodation and a break to these people who we thought would very much appreciate the calm and beach atmosphere at Omaha.

We had no doubt that we would have been able to organise accommodation and support. In the end it was not possible for this to take place and with the Japanese quake many teams no sooner pulled out of Christchurch when they were called on to go to Japan.

The dramatic rainfalls at the end of January showed up the lack of stormwater facilities. We have complained that we do not have a proper system but merely a series of holding ponds largely created by the developers and at the Northern end some reserves on the beach side which have acted as stormwater ponds for rather longer than we would have expected.

Clearly the watertable failed to absorb the heavy falls but the length of time it took to clear is unsatisfactory. Our aim will be to ensure the system is improved to the point where the impact of these deluges does not linger as long as it did this time.

At the Annual General Meeting residents supported the small increase in subscriptions. It is not our object to build up large reserves but rather to allow some support by way of seed capital to projects that have member's support.

Currently we have two projects in mind. The first is the "Taniko walkway" that is the path through the reserve at the western side of Omaha South (Golf course) This is DOC land and regarded as

special in light of its vicinity to the harbour. Ultimately the path would meet up with the quarry track at the far end. The walkway has been discussed at our annual forums and annual meetings over the last two to three years. There is an article later in the newsletter explaining in more detail what is planned. There is no doubt that this is a major project with attendant costs.

The second project is the upgrading of the Community centre (the Club). The Golf Club believe such an upgrade is necessary to attract more usage and generate more income from the centre. Maintenance of the centre is presently the responsibility of the Golf Club and the maintenance fund we administer is for major works (external cladding, painting, replacement of drainage etc) not makeovers. Our starting point has been to commission a report on the state of the centre and the likely maintenance programme required over the next few years. When this is to hand we will be better placed to report more fully on what might be required in order for the Club to complete the work it believes is necessary. We will report the outcome in the next newsletter if not before.

At the start of this article I referred to Christchurch and the problems and strains faced by the residents of that city. In recent months we have had a number of issues of what I can only describe as trivial or petty. Is the question of the colour of a rubbish bin of real importance, is the issue of sand on the paths something that might be better fixed by neighbours taking a shovel to the problem. Sometimes in NZ we expect someone else to deal with an issue we could resolve ourselves or we persist in making a mountain out of a molehill. Let the problems being faced by the people of Christchurch be a reminder of how small some of the issues we have been asked to deal with at Omaha actually are.

**Graham Painter.**

## FROM OUR COUNCILLOR PENNY WEBSTER

**After the storms in January there were many people upset and rightly so about the stagnant water that just took ages to drain away. I did contact the Civil Defence and Council officials and asked the people dealing with this matter to at least go and have a look! Your chairman Graham met with them so at least they know of the issue. The frustration I have at the moment is getting to know a raft of people from**

**different departments and encouraging them to visit our area so that they get to know what is required. It will take time but we will get there in the end. In the meantime I will keep supporting Omaha as much as I can.**

***From Penny Webster***

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### OMAHA BEACH COMMUNITY CENTRE

It was strongly suggested by two speakers at the AGM and in subsequent discussion that OBC itself should be taking a lead in the refurbishment of the Community Centre. Before any decision is taken the OBC committee believes members should be fully informed about the present arrangements under which the Golf Club manages the centre and the purpose of the existing maintenance fund reported in the last annual accounts.

Residents will remember the excellent background notes given by a past OBC president John Fitzmaurice and included in the December newsletter.

In brief the centre was built for the use of all residents by the Rodney District Council using monies accumulated from rates and contributions by residents and the developers that remained unspent at the completion of the original development.

In April 1999 the lease of the Centre passed to the Omaha Beach Resident & Ratepayers Association. In turn, management and operation was passed to the Omaha Beach Golf Club Inc. including the upkeep and maintenance of the interior including what can be considered normal tenants costs: interior maintenance, electrical repairs, redecorating, plumbing etc. Additionally the Club pay \$5000 per annum into the Maintenance Fund for repairs and upkeep that would be considered the responsibility of the owner (then RDC and now Auckland Council). The arrangement appeared to work well for a number of years.

It is fair to say that the extension of the course with the new 9 holes at the Southern end changed the Golf Club's cost structure. Course maintenance and upkeep costs rose sharply without a corresponding doubling of members or revenue.

In recent years the club has looked to increase resident's use of the centre and we have been wholly supportive of such a move. The centre was built as and remains a facility for the enjoyment of all Omaha residents.

It is now believed that the interior is "tired" and a real makeover is needed in order to attract more patronage. The maintenance fund which stood at \$62 000 at the end of 2010 cannot be used for this purpose. It is expected to be entirely taken up by a programme of repainting, reroofing and outside deck replacement. Further it can only be spent with the unanimous consent of the three parties involved: the Auckland Council, OBC and the Club. Previously we had believed that there might be some willingness by the council to apply some of the fund to an internal upgrade and that in the event of a shortfall RDC would make up any difference. With the change in

Council we no longer have this comfort and comments from Penny Webster at the AGM tended to confirm this.

It is also fair to say that we have not always been in accord with the Club who have lately felt that the cost of maintaining and managing the centre falls unfairly on them. The club accounts do not support the contention that the Centre is a millstone to the Club. The bar is a major income generator to the Club and without the Centre there would be no bar.

Having said this we do not want to debate the past. Our interest is the future. Accordingly we have commissioned at OBC expense an independent review of the Centre with a view to producing a major external and internal maintenance/ refurbishment programme and from this an understanding of what funds might be required over and above those on hand. As soon as this is available we will report to members. The centre has to be attractive to non Golf members and a makeover is timely.

### WATER RATES

Rates for the 2010/2011 year were set by the outgoing Rodney Council with some charges on a valuation basis (capital value or land value - eg stormwater) and some on a fixed basis. The Wastewater Utility Charge, a fixed charge, was described on the invoice as "Fixed per separate Part - Service Availability, Location, Use".

In addition to this "Utility Charge" RDC had always made a second Wastewater charge for services on developed sections, basically for sewerage disposal. Until 30 June 2009 this was charged on the total rates assessment invoice as a fixed "pan charge". From 1 July 2010 RDC moved to a "user pays" basis for this charge, and billed it in instalments. Because we do not have any metered, reticulated water at Omaha this was billed to us by RDC as a "Wastewater Fixed Usage Charge".

In November 2010, with the advent of the 'Super City', Watercare took over RDC's water and wastewater services. Watercare sent out invoices for the period 1 May to 20 October 2010 and their bills referred to a "Fixed annual charge apportioned by days", and showed the annual charge on the reverse side.

### Vacant Sections

Watercare have confirmed that no usage charge applies to vacant sections and enquiries relating to some specific vacant sections have confirmed that Watercare does not have accounts set up for them. Any Omaha Beach ratepayer who believes they are being incorrectly charged by Watercare for a vacation section should contact Watercare on 09 442 2222. They will investigate, with an engineering inspection if necessary.

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## OMAHA ON THE MOVE

Omaha has some exciting projects ahead – and already under foot.

Nine kilometres of cycleway/walkways linking Matakana and Point Wells to Omaha Beach are under construction, plans are being finalised for a walkway from the entrance of Omaha Beach to its southern end, and at Easter concept plans will be displayed, showing development ideas for the old Omaha quarry at the end of Mangatawhiri Road.

Details about all these projects will be displayed at the Omaha Beach Club for about two weeks, starting at Easter Weekend, and a 'happy hour' will be held at 4pm on Saturday, April 23, with representatives from each of these projects present to answer any queries.

- The Matakana Community Group has opened stage one of its walkway/cycleway from Matakana to Omaha. This 1.5km path links Jones Road to Takatu Rd, and the next stage will be a link from Whitmore Rd to Tongue Farm Rd.
- The Pt Wells Community Group opened its 4km path cycleway/walkway on April 17, linking the village to the existing cycleway at Omaha estuary. This \$120,000 project was a joint venture between the Pt Wells group and the Auckland Council and is already being enjoyed by cyclists from Omaha and Point Wells.
- OBC is finalising plans for a walkway from the entrance to Omaha and through the edge of the kahikatea forest of Taniko Reserve, inside the predator fence boundary, to link with the path around the Omaha quarry at the southern end of Omaha Beach (see next feature). These will be presented to members for comment and approval.
- We are also looking at future development of the disused quarry and how it could link these tracks to a focal point along the lines of other quarry gardens being developed throughout New Zealand and internationally. A minimal maintenance concept plan looks at landscaping this area with extensive planting, flat grassed areas, landscaped walkways around the quarry and a formal bridge entrance. This is a new project presented to OBC and not previously discussed. As with the walkway is dependent on members support

The OBC Committee believe these are tremendous projects that are a tribute to our present communities working together and will benefit many generations to come. The enhancement of the southern end of Omaha, connecting Taniko Reserve with Omaha Beach via the walkways around the quarry and existing wetlands and lakes, has the potential to add a new recreational value to Omaha and its residents. These projects will require strong backing from residents

if they are to succeed. If you are at Omaha for Easter or sometime in the fortnight after that make sure you visit the Community Centre and look at the plans. Let us know what you think.

## THE OMAHA BEACH TANIKO WALKWAY PROJECT

The following was written by Dennis O'Callahan to better illustrate what this project intended to achieve.

The Taniko walkway cannot proceed without a generous injection of time from interested people and some well focussed fund raising over and above seed capital already available.

Imagine waking in the morning and going out for a jog or walk. Within a few minutes you are immersed in the beauty of the New Zealand bush, surrounded by mature native trees and birdsong, with fantails flitting around you and wood pigeons swooping overhead. This was Greg Steinbeck's vision when, as President of the Omaha Beach Community Inc, he proposed that a public path should be established through the Taniko Scientific Reserve.

The Taniko Wetland Scientific Reserve is a remnant of the lowland forest which once covered the coastal regions of New Zealand and consists primarily of mature kahikatea trees. When the southern area of Omaha was subdivided the Taniko reserve was set aside and vested in the Department of Conservation. Like many such conservation reserves, the Department does not have sufficient funds to develop and maintain it and has to rely on public support and volunteer workers.

The Taniko reserve is surrounded by a predator fence which was provided by the developers as part of the subdivision. Unfortunately the fence is an early design and is ineffective against most predators but it is effective in excluding the public and as a result there has been little community interest in assisting the Department of Conservation in the maintenance of the reserve. By enabling public access the proposed walkway will focus attention on this neglected asset. The construction of the Taniko Walkway has been approved by the Department of Conservation and endorsed by several public meetings since 2008, including the Annual General Meetings and Planning Forums of the Omaha Beach Community Inc.

The 2.5km walkway will start with a special gate through the predator fence near the roundabout at Omaha Drive and follow the fringe of the forest to another gate at the southern end of the reserve. It will continue through the bush west and south of the 8th Green of the golf course and cross the creek on a wooden bridge near the 8th Tee to link up with the track around the old quarry. From here the existing path continues to Mangatawhiri Road and on past the wetlands to

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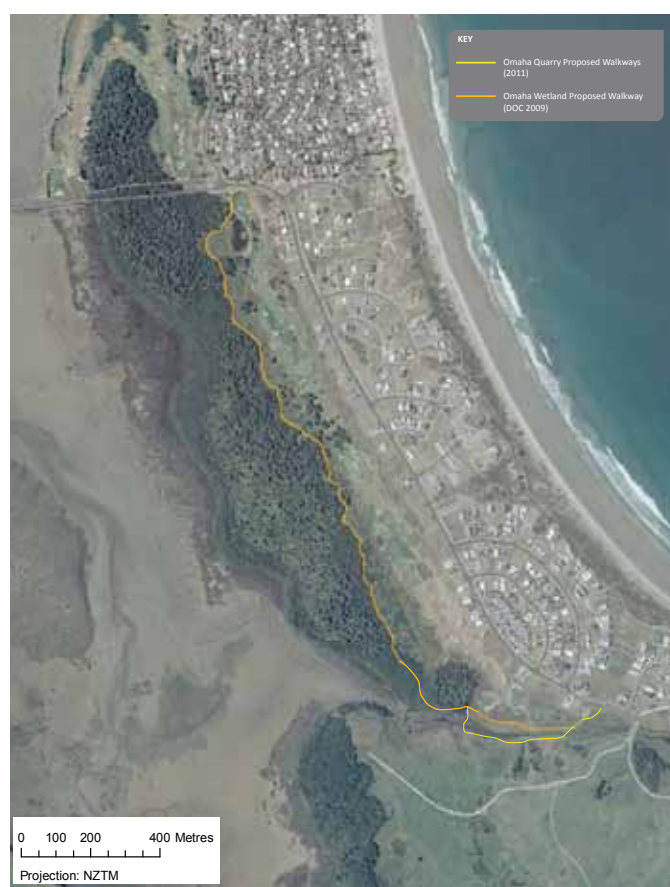
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reach the southern end of the beach making a magnificent walking circuit. This will complement the new community initiated walking and cycle trails from Matakana and Point Wells to Omaha and also the North Omaha shorebird conservation reserve making Omaha a real magnet for nature lovers.

The walkway through the reserve will consist mostly of a gravel track 1.5m wide with board-walks over some sensitive wetland areas. The Omaha Beach Community Inc expects to raise funding from donations as well as contributions of materials and equipment from local businesses. Schools have expressed interest in providing signage as part of their science projects. Longer term improvements include re-vegetation of the areas between the walkway and the golf course, upgrading the predator fence to provide real protection, trapping of predators within the reserve and re-introduction of suitable bird species.



**Map of Proposed Track – Note the extension to circuit the quarry has been added to the plan but sections near the Golf Course may change slightly.**

## SHELLS ON THE BEACH

There appear to have been many more shells washed up on the beach than usual, particularly near the centre. We asked if this is significant or unusual.

Local expert Dr. Roger Grace says they are surf clams (*Dosinia*). There are two species off Omaha Beach. The large washup followed some big swells as happens at the beach from time to time. The animals live buried about 10cm below the sand surface in the outer surf zone and when big waves disturb the sand they can get washed out and thrown up on the beach in large numbers. They are entirely edible, but as they live out in the surf zone hardly anyone ever collects them. If you are there soon enough after a storm you may be able to pick up freshly beach-cast ones but they would go “off” quite quickly once cast up so you would have to take care. There is no connection to the problems affecting the cockles in the harbour.

## THE OMAHA SHOREBIRD PROTECTION GROUP

Those at Omaha over Christmas will recall that a pair of Northern New Zealand dotterels had nested at Walkway 10 and were sitting on 3 eggs and many people have asked what became of them. Well, on the morning of Wednesday 29 December we found that 2 eggs had hatched and the chicks were running around looking for food. Later in the afternoon the third egg hatched in front of an admiring audience. Unfortunately the chicks did not survive the night and we suspect that they fell prey to domestic cats which were in the area. Some residents reported seeing remains which could have been the parent birds. Perhaps they died trying to protect the chicks. Omaha residents are reminded to keep their cats well fed and indoors at night.

On a slightly more cheerful note, this season on the Omaha spit, as far as we know, 4 fledged dotterel chicks have survived and 2 more are close to fledging. However, when we consider that there are about 15 breeding pairs of NZ dotterels on the spit and that they incubate 3 eggs at a time and will lay up to 4 times if the eggs are lost to predators, 6 fledgings is still not a very good success rate. The losses are due to predation and to disturbance during the 4 week incubation period and the following 6 to 7 weeks until the chicks are fledged.

After the breeding season, many birds flock on the Omaha spit to feed on the rich mud flats of the Whangateau estuary and find partners for the next breeding season. At high tide up to 100 New Zealand dotterels may be seen, together with the smaller Banded dotterels, Variable oyster catchers and Pied stilts plus hundreds of Bar-tailed godwits getting ready for their epic migration to Asia, Siberia and Alaska.

The OSPT conducts intensive trapping for mammal predators such as rats, stoats, weasels, hedgehogs and feral cats. Without this



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there would be no chicks fledged on the spit at all. However there is evidence that many pests get through to attack the breeding birds. There has also been interference and vandalism of the traps which reduces their effectiveness. The best defence is therefore a pest proof fence, backed up with trapping to deal with any predators which get around the ends of the fence.

So far \$82,000 has been raised of the anticipated \$133,000 required for a pest proof fence. The fence will have two pedestrian entrances with new information signage. The fence is needed to minimise predation and disturbance. It will indicate to visitors and holiday makers that the Spit is a special place requiring protection. Ideally the fence should be constructed before August 2011 which is the start of the next breeding season. If you would like to make a tax deductible donation, please post your cheque to OSPT, Box 51946 Auckland 2140. Alternatively you can make a direct credit. Details are on [www.omahashorebirds.co.nz](http://www.omahashorebirds.co.nz)

## FLOODING AT OMAHA BEACH

The ponding that occurred in various parts of Omaha Beach following the heavy rain in January has continued to be a concern to residents. While the water levels receded slowly after the January rain events they have partially risen again following more recent rain. The main reported concerns relate to mosquitoes. As explained in a previous update, the ponding is caused by a high groundwater table in the area and unfortunately there is no immediate practical solution to this. Filling the ponds with sand would only divert the problem to another area.

There has been a high level of communication with the relevant council officials by the OBC starting with an inspection of all areas of concern by Graham Painter, Ian Hutchinson, consulting engineer to the council, then with Penny Webster, followed by a complete inspection by Grant Ockelston, the new Manager Stormwater, Infrastructure and Environmental Services and three of his team.

### Council action since 18 February

- Localised scouring at the edge of the boat ramp and in the foreshore reserve south of the boat ramp has been repaired.
- Additional mowing has been carried out in ponding areas where these are accessible in order to minimise mosquito breeding areas.
- The Parks team has agreed to hold off on the use of floatable mulch in reserves where it is likely to contribute to blockage of any stormwater soakage system.
- Surveying and monitoring of groundwater levels has been carried out in order to provide information for future planning and stormwater management. There is also an ongoing groundwater monitoring programme in place to provide long-term data on groundwater in the general area.

### Additional Council action planned

- Council propose to undertake the following maintenance work (subject to any resource consents required being sought and obtained):
- Removal of weed growth within the main southern pond
- Clean out of the forebay where the stormwater enters the pond
- Clean out of the channel downstream of the pond and upstream of the mangroves. We are investigating resource consent issues related to this work.

Note: More extensive maintenance needs will be assessed in due course as part of an area-wide maintenance programme being developed for stormwater ponds and other treatment devices.

- Arrangements are being made to engage consultants familiar with the Omaha area to assist Council with investigation of groundwater issues associated with ponding areas and to undertake further investigations of some of the roadside swales that are reportedly not functioning adequately. They will also provide input into consideration of options for improvement to the stormwater management systems in Omaha. Discussion with residents and other stakeholders would form part of this work. This work is due to commence during April and relevant findings and options will be provided over the following months.

Note: Priority will be given to any short term options that may reduce the issues associated with groundwater ponding.

It has also been brought to our attention that those properties in low lying areas should not allow their water tanks to get too empty as the high water table could lift an empty tank. In other words just as a concrete boat or barge can float so too can a water tank or swimming pool.

Residents may not be aware that even in normal times the groundwater table at Omaha varies from as little as half a metre to a maximum of seven metres. There has been a request to the Council Parks and Reserves people to cut the grass around any ponding areas so as to minimize or reduce this mosquito habitat.

Some of the problems are a legacy of the Rodney District Council's failure to carry out proper maintenance over a long period of time. We have previously reported that the average annual Council spend on stormwater has been \$23,000 over the last eight years. The Council recovery for this particular rate is now close to \$500,000 per year. You can be assured that the OBC will be continuing to pursue both the maintenance and rates issue.

### For further reference refer to our website

<http://www.omahabeach.co.nz/news.php> and scroll down to Stormwater/Flooding update where there is a link to Council Response document.



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### WARKWORTH SUPERMARKET

The ground is now cleared and the project under way.

### STOCKYARD FALLS OPENS

Stage One which includes an 8000m Mitre 10 store opened on the 11th of March. The Mitre 10 hardware store and associated garden shop formerly in Queen St have now relocated to this site. Other stores to open in 2011 include house wares importers Ceratelle Marketing, Siteworks Lighting and Kindercare.. Stage two is currently scheduled for late 2012.

### HILL ST INTERSECTION

The editor has spoken to Opus Consulting who are working on roading plans for the area. The Hill St intersection work appears to have been deferred pending a decision on the route of the motorway and the connection to Warkworth. It is now reported that work is continuing on the upgrade to Hill St regardless, with a work programme scheduled (optimistically) for the next construction season (2011/12) or more probably 2012/13. The plan presently is to widen the road around the intersection to four lanes going North with two of these turning right at the lights to access Elizabeth St and the roads to Matakana and to Sandspit. Lights will be installed at the Elizabeth St junction and at the Sandspit Rd split presumably to better flow the traffic converging on Warkworth from these two roads.

Presently the motorway access is planned to connect Warkworth from the North and West and presumably Omaha traffic would initially head south before turning to the left at Hill St. This however is some years away and the actual route is still to be agreed.

### MATAKANA VALLEY ROAD CLOSED

Just in case anyone was unaware of the magnitude of the slip on January that closed Matakana Valley Road for nearly 2 months the accompanying picture will give some idea of the size of the damage. Work was delayed pending acquisition of a small block of land needed for the realignment of the new roadway. The roadway should now be open ending the very real problems and access difficulties facing the residents of the road and beyond into the Whangapiro valley.



January slip on Matakana Valley Road

### HIGHLIFE NEW YEAR'S FESTIVAL

Is to return to the Matakana Country Park in 2012 after a break of a year and is presently planned on this location for the 2012 and 2013 years. The festival was held on Waiheke this year.

### TOWN HALL

2011 is the centenary of the Warkworth Town Hall. The Town Hall is a category 1 historic place and is thought to be the only commercial building in the country constructed in part from ceramic brick. But it now needs strengthening to resist any future earthquakes and the local community is to be approached for support.

### MATAKANA FIREFIGHTERS IN CHRISTCHURCH

Four volunteers from Matakana fire station joined up with USAR, the specially trained search and rescue crews in Christchurch. They were deployed in the centre of town, their main task being to assist with recovery of trapped persons. It was an experience they hope they don't have to go through again.

### RADIO TELESCOPE LINK UP

We previously reported the involvement of the AUT Warkworth observatory with the Australian Square kilometre project. AUT have taken over one of the satellite dishes for observation purposes. Recently the new KAREN network allowing hugely powerful broadband connections was tested. Potentially such connections could allow 5000 radio telescopes in Australia and NZ to link and share data simultaneously.

### TAKATU ROAD

Engineer Consulting Group Opus are reportedly disturbed by the state of the Takatu Road. We have previously referred to the dangerous conditions and the heavy traffic load over the summer. Could an improvement be on the drawing board at last?

### MATAKANA INFORMATION CENTRE

The Matakana Information Centre is not just for visitors – they're there to assist locals as well as tourists and holidaymakers. With a great team of 21 volunteers, all living in this region, they can help with anything local. And if they don't know, they'll do their very best to find out

Need help with planning a family invasion or visitors from out of the area? They can advise on everything, from local trades & services, through to a top range of accommodation options and lots of activities to keep everyone occupied, whatever the weather. There is even a wedding page, now on-line, with useful links and contact details.

And if you have a community event coming up, drop in to see them with information and they'll do their best to get the word out.

Conveniently located in the Matakana Cinema foyer, volunteers are on duty between 10am-1pm daily. But the centre is 'open' every day from 9am through to 'last movie'.

Call them up on 422-7433 or check them out on the web, at [www.matakanainfo.org.nz](http://www.matakanainfo.org.nz)

## SUMMER PATROLS

For the third year the summer security patrols ran from early December to Waitangi Day. This year we introduced a more flexible programme which allowed the patrol to end around midnight if the area was quiet or continue if there appeared to be activity likely to cause concern. The flexible programme has been a considerable success and allows us the opportunity to provide patrols on the holiday weekends in 2011 and call out Insite at other times as needed. The restorative justice Warkworth Police head Bede Haughey talked about has commenced with two offenders being ordered to undertake clean up work at Omaha and elsewhere under Chris Martin's supervision. New Year was basically quiet and as expected the only serious incidents over the period involved "the usual suspects".

The patrol logs are always interesting reading and the following selection gives a feel for the patrol activities.

Loud revving and tyres squealing at the surf club speak to group and tell them to cut it out

Speak to a group of youths at the Southern end of the beach takeaway rubbish around vehicle. Tell them to clean it up.

Complaints received at noisy party at ... spoke to occupants asked them to keep it down all compliant

Fighting in .... Break up fight and take some participants back to surf club to diffuse tension

Camper van found in surf club car park. Unaware that they were not allowed to camp there. All good and leaving in the morning.

Call out from resident advising husband pursuing 2 offenders who have just ripped off two copper lights from the outside of their house.

**Editors Note** This was a particularly successful mission ending in the involvement of the police and the capture of the offenders and their identification as having been involved in theft from 6 other Omaha properties,

And this year's best

"Distressed young lady found walking down ... towing two suitcases on wheels behind her. Patrol establishes she has had an argument with boy friend and intends walking to Auckland Airport. Boyfriend located, counselling session at the martins' both parties return home to review things in the morning

Hope it worked out!

## TSUNAMI EVACUATION PLANNING

The Japanese earthquake and subsequent tsunami caused warnings to be out in place for the NZ Coastline particularly the far North. Happily it was determined early on that there was a very low

risk of damage to property from strong wave action but a general warning to stay clear of the beaches remained in force for most of Saturday the 12th. At Omaha and in the Whangateau irregular tide movements were observed with the tide receding and then returning at short intervals. By and large the warnings were observed and those using the beach (and there were many walkers and a few swimmers) appeared vigilant.

The impact chart published the next day seemed to show that the strongest effects passed well to the North of NZ.

Four earthquakes in the Pacific region have now resulted in tsunami warnings in New Zealand over the past two years. Together with the two severe earthquakes in Christchurch this has resulted in heightened public awareness of the need to be prepared for such emergencies.

A tsunami originating from a distant place such as Chile or Japan can take many hours to arrive and the expected severity will be known well in advance of its arrival. However an earthquake close to the New Zealand coast could cause a tsunami of potentially much greater severity which would arrive in 15 to 30 minutes. The first warning would be the earthquake itself and there would be little time for Civil Defence agencies to respond. Immediate evacuation to high ground would be the best response.

The OBC has set up a committee to develop a Neighbourhood Response Plan in conjunction with the Auckland Council Civil Defence coordinator. This new Response Plan will incorporate the establishment of a community based telephone alerting network to ensure that residents in vulnerable areas receive warnings and if necessary assistance with evacuation. You can already subscribe to receive Civil Defence alerts directly to your cell-phone by text message. To register, text OPTNRDCCD to 2678.

In the case of tsunami the siren system will sound as follows:

### **ALERT SIGNAL, DASH-DASH-DOT-DOT FOR 15 MINUTES.**

- Evacuate beaches.
- Listen to radio or TV for information.
- Prepare to evacuate if required.

### **EVACUATE SIGNAL, DOT-DOT-DOT FOR 15 MINUTES.**

- Evacuate immediately to nearest safe high ground.
- Directions and traffic control measures will be provided.

### **ALL CLEAR SIGNAL, CONTINUOUS TONE FOR 5 MINUTES.**

- Return to home if not affected.
- Follow directions of the emergency services if your area has been affected.

A Tsunami Public Alerting Information Guide was issued last year by the Rodney District Council. We were opposed to that plan because it proposed a primary evacuation route over the causeway and along

## Looking for the best holiday tenants for your beach property?

We achieve the best tariffs, the best tenants, and above all offer the best service to you.

To discuss the rental options for your beach house.

**Call Maureen Travers 09 422 7559 or 021 104 4960**

**OMAHA HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION LIMITED**

## PROMOTING A SAFER OMAHA

several kilometres of low lying road. As we saw during the cyclone over Anniversary Weekend, parts of this were subject to flooding and would clearly be subject to potential inundation in the event of a local tsunami event.

Since the establishment of the Auckland Council we have been working with the new Emergency Management Controller for the area in developing an emergency plan.

Such a plan is not simple because while we can allow for a minimal mid week winter population on the one hand, on the other, there is the potential for several thousand people at the peak summer holiday period. Each situation has to be managed quite differently so far as traffic flows are concerned. We can rely on the sirens, the local emergency services and the police plus of course the news services. OBC view is that in a real emergency (short notice period) there would not be time for any evacuation across the causeway and beyond and the only two escape areas, are the Caroline Heights/Shamrock Crescent ridge line for the north or the hill for the South (where procedures must be in place to open the access road). It is unlikely that the hill road could cope with vehicle traffic at the height of summer.

The OBC invites community involvement in the Neighbourhood Response Plan. If you have any suggestions or wish to participate please contact the OBC by email to: [us@omahabeach.co.nz](mailto:us@omahabeach.co.nz) or write to PO Box 123, Matakana 0948.

### LOCAL FIRE BRIGADE REPORT

“To the end of March we had attended 40 calls for assistance, which is about our average call rate. We have had fewer vegetation fires over this period because of the wet summer.

Back in February we experienced extreme weather during the last two weeks of the month, with the third week giving 150mm of rain and the last week 240mm. This amount of rain was enough to cause major slips and flooding in the greater area. On the night of the big wet, the volunteers were busy at Point Wells pumping out flooded houses, when they received the call that flooding was happening at Omaha in The Southern Isle and Ruby Cove. A truck was dispatched to assist and found six cars in The Southern Isle about to be flooded with water up to the door sills. Residents had to be woken up to move them to higher ground.

About 1.00am the rain intensified and, on returning to the station, we found water flooding into our car park. By 3.00am all the paddocks along Omaha Flats were under water and the station had 250mm of water right through the engine bay and social room. As dawn broke it took about five hours for the water to drain away.

Fortunately we were fully insured and repairs are now well underway. Gib board and pink bats insulation has had to be removed to allow the walls to dry out and the kitchen has had to be dismantled. By the time this goes to print we hope to be fully repaired

We are again calling for more volunteers. If you think you could help us, please call John Badham 09 422 2340 and have a chat about what the commitment is. Age is not an issue as long as you are reasonably fit and above 18 years of age. You will meet a whole new group of friends and like-minded mates. You may even get to drive a fire truck!”.

## LOCAL INTEREST

### MUD AND COLOUR MAN THE MORRIS AND JAMES STORY

**The artist, the potter and the pottery company he built.**

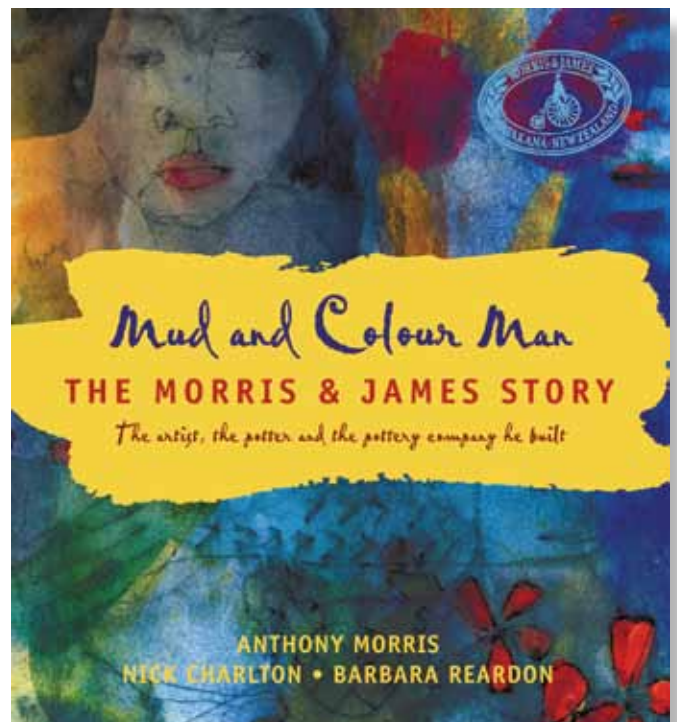
*By Anthony Morris, Nick Charlton and Barbara Reardon*

As lusciously illustrated as it is a good read, this is a book to love and a gift to treasure ... just like a piece of Morris & James pottery.

From the rough clay of Matakana, north of Auckland, Anthony Morris and his then wife, Sue James, created one of this country's leading potteries. From terracotta flooring tiles to huge clay pots, brightly coloured bowls, platters and wall art, Morris & James has been a firm favourite of New Zealanders for close over thirty years. That the pottery survives and thrives — the last substantial craft-based manufacturing pottery in New Zealand — is no mean feat in the face of global competition.

Now, with Nick Charlton, design director for Morris & James and Senior Lecturer in Product Design at the Auckland University of Technology, along with long-time friend Barbara Reardon, Anthony Morris tells his story, a very New Zealand tale, in the new book 'Mud and Colour Man: The Morris & James Story'.

We have a copy of the book to give away to a lucky OBC Newsletter recipient. Refer to Page 2 for details on how to enter the draw.



SO WE CAN KEEP IN TOUCH PLEASE ENSURE WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS – SEND TO [us@omahabeach.co.nz](mailto:us@omahabeach.co.nz)

## CLUB NOTES

### OMAHA BEACH GOLF CLUB

Email: [gm@omahagolf.co.nz](mailto:gm@omahagolf.co.nz) .New Website  
[www.omahagolf.co.nz](http://www.omahagolf.co.nz) Phone: (09) 4227551  
John Phillis General Manager

#### NEW NAME

“Community Centre” has been replaced with the word Club. The Omaha Beach Club gives a refreshing new identity focusing that all OBC members are entitled to use the facilities and are welcomed at anytime. Please make use of your Club Card which can be used at the bar where you will receive discounted rates and can be used for Café or Golf shop purchases. Don't forget Free Wireless Internet is available still at no charge.

#### INDOOR BOWLS

Every Thursday at 6:30pm a mixed social group enjoy a game or two of indoor bowls held at the Omaha Beach Club. Anyone can play and bowls are provided. Ring Len Browne 4227476, or just roll up and join in.

#### GOLF COACHING FOR BEGINNERS

Ever thought you would like to have a go and felt daunted about trying now is your chance to learn from the beginning. The Club is conducting coaching classes for both ladies and men. This is an excellent opportunity at no cost to come along in a small group and try, you will find it rewarding knowing you can now use this wonderful facility at your doorstep. Every Monday at 1 pm for Ladies and 3 30 pm for Men. Wednesdays there will be a 2pm tee off for 9 holes for men, contact 4227551 ext 1 to register. The offer is open to everyone, clubs and accessories are provided at no cost.

#### CLUB HIRE

This year two weddings and a birthday have been held at “The Club”. They were a great success and the layout of the venue is excellent for this type of event. Please call the office to make enquiries on hiring. There are significant discounts for OBC members.

#### RECENT EVENT

In March Omaha again was proud to host our 13th Pro Am golf tournament The tournament was an outstanding success despite the difficult weather on Saturday. Feedback from the Professional and Amateur players was extremely positive and this event brings significant recognition to Omaha.

We all congratulated the winner Leighton James and the three way tie group for second. Another Professional Dale Clarke broke the course record with a second day round of 62 however this is

unofficial as it was clean and place. We even had a hole in one by Neill Reid from Peninsula. The Amateur winners were Best gross Men James Eng and Ladies Emily Eng. Best Nett Men Terry Bridge and Ladies Jan Manoonpong.

#### NEW YEARS EVE HIGHLIFE CONCERT

The golf club has been invited to organise and run the premier camp ground. The planning is well underway and will be at the same 2009 location at Rathes. We are very pleased to be part of this major attraction to our region and to be able to provide a safe, enjoyable campsite for the concert goers.

#### GOLF COURSE TOILET

You may have noticed a small building being constructed near the 9th Tee. This is the second toilet/shelter which has been paid for by the former Rodney District Council. It has been a long process finding a site which is as far away as possible from neighbours on the course and is also compliant with DOC regulations as it is very close to their scientific reserve.

It will initially look like a tree house but over the next two weeks piles of sand will be built up to the floor level and then extensive planting of natives will be undertaken to screen the eastern side.

#### CHANGES TO THE FIRST HOLE

The Friends of Omaha have raised the funds to re-locate and enhance the first green. The development is in line with the Pitman Plan that the club is following and we are very thankful for their support. Continuing these improvements will ensure that we will maintain the increase of visitors to Omaha. The club fully supports this initiative and membership forms are available at the office. You can also email [richard@brabant.co.nz](mailto:richard@brabant.co.nz) for more information and/or assist in providing funding support.

#### OMAHA BEACH TENNIS CLUB **Contact** **Amanda Brown [seanamanda13@hotmail.com](mailto:seanamanda13@hotmail.com)**

Amanda Trail and Rachel Clark are coming back at Easter (Friday 22 - Monday 25 April) to run our Adult Tennis Fit and junior coaching clinic as follows:-

**Adults – 8.30-10.00am**

**Juniors 6-8 years – 10.00-11.00am**

**Juniors 9-13 years – 11.00am-12.30pm.**

If you or your children are interested in participating please let me know as we limit numbers to six per court.

The Omaha Tennis Club AGM will be held on Sunday 24 April in the community centre at 2.00pm. All members are welcome.

# WATER

ARTESIAN & SOLWAY  
FILTERED  
WATER

0800 638 254 or 09 422 3700



'Send a patrol' – Insite's Chris Martin in deep water. Flooding at the Fire Station. Orcas visit Omaha Beach.

**OMAHA BEACH OUTRIGGER CANOE CLUB** Michelle Quintal Ph: 09 425 8384 or 0274 242864 or email [dmquintal@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:dmquintal@slingshot.co.nz)

Omaha Outrigger canoe club paddles 2 days a week, on a Tuesday evening, from 5.30pm for around 1 1/2 hrs, winter hours will be a 5pm start. We also paddle Sundays starting at 11am. This is all dependant on the weather.

**Please contact Rik 422 6066 for more information.**

We are a small club looking to build up our numbers so please feel free to come down to the boat ramp to have a look or paddle. We have been successful in getting funding for a W2 (2 person ) waka and a trailer to tow our W6 waka, so we will be able to venture further afield to competitions out of our area which we have not been able to do.

The men from our club entered a team for a race held at Omaha recently by another group

**MAIL**

Please do check the address we have used to post you the newsletter. We have to be certain that our address list is accurate in order to continue to receive the postal concession. If a correction is needed please call:

**Glenys McBain 021 543348**  
**OBCdatabase@gmail.com**  
**OBCDataBaseManager@woosh.co.nz**

Photos: OBC Photo Library, Kim Fisher, Denis O'Callahan, David Hanson, Lauraine Jacobs. Editor Kim Fisher

	<p><b>Household Water Deliveries</b></p> <p><b>425 8454</b></p> <p><b>0800 747 928 or 027 556 6111</b></p>	 <p>Purpose built 11,000 litre stainless steel tank</p>
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