



Newsletter 9 ♦ Sept 2011 ♦ ISSN 1178-4393

### **From the Chair**

*As many of you will be aware, our last Chairperson Stephen Hamilton has resigned after leading our Society magnificently for four years. He and his family were farewelled by the committee with warmest wishes, appreciation and sadness.*

*I stepped up to the post in the absence of any contest! I believe the Society's continuation is important: for improving Hammond Bush, for our sense of community, and as a watchdog for the quality of the Riverlea environment.*

*I realised immediately that I would be unable to take on the load that Stephen did. He did it all, from filling bait stations and delivering newsletters to speaking to media and Councillors. My resulting call for help via email was resoundingly answered and all the roles filled. Thank you to everyone who offered to help.*

*I hope to see you many of you at the Hamilton Gardens on October 1st when all Riverlea supporters are invited to join Wiremu Puke for a tour of the Te Parapara garden. His talk on the garden at our AGM was captivating, and for me the October tour is unmissable.*

Andrea Graves, Chairperson

### **The Hamilton-Byrnes**

Our previous Chair Stephen Hamilton and his family moved to Darwin last month. His wife Giselle Byrnes, a distinguished historian, left Waikato University to take up the role of pro vice-chancellor of the Faculty of Law, Education, Business and Arts at Charles Darwin University.

### **New Chairperson**

Our new Chair, Andrea Graves, has lived in Hudson Street, Riverlea, for six years. She has been a committee member from the Society's inception and was heavily involved in the asphalt plant campaign. She works part time as a science writer and is married with two children.

### **Change of address**

Please note below our altered address and telephone number.



*RES supporters planted 1000 trees in Hammond Bush in June.  
Photo: Gerry Kelly*

### **AGM**

Our AGM 19 May was well attended. All office holders were re-elected, albeit temporarily in the case of Stephen Hamilton. We thanked and farewelled valued committee members Martin Thrupp and Geoff Pooch, and welcomed new ones Susan Thomason, Robert Welch and Don Burns. There are nine committee members.

Guest speaker Wiremu Puke (Ngati Wairere) of Nga Mana Toopu was fascinating. Wiremu designed the Te Parapara garden at the Hamilton gardens to retain and revive traditional Maori garden practices. He explained that Te Parapara is a recreation of original Maori gardens, and the only one of its type in existence. Thanks to his ethnographic research it is authentic, from the tools used to create it to the crops, carvings and palisades.

### **Te Parapara Tour**

At the AGM Wiremu kindly invited everyone to Te Parapara to learn on-site about the garden. This opportunity is for all Riverlea supporters, and the tour will be on Saturday October 1 at 10am. If it is raining it will be held the following day, also at 10am. Please direct questions about the arrangements to [riverlea.soc@gmail.com](mailto:riverlea.soc@gmail.com).

### Working bees

In June we held a super-charged working bee in Hammond Bush. Over 30 people attended including several children. Everyone went home after an hour because all 1000 trees were planted!

With the planting season finished we turn our attention to removing weeds, which choke our native plants. Please try to come on the last Saturday of each month from 1 to 3pm: it is only a short block of time and it's disheartening to those who do come if there are only a few people. However, we always feel pleased with what we achieve and there is inevitably good conversation and company.

Susan Thomason has kindly volunteered to co-ordinate the working bees for the next year. Thank you to Susan and to HCC's Gerard Kelly who directs us so cheerfully and knowledgeably.

### Signs in Hammond Bush

We are working with the Hamilton City Council to design and place signs announcing the entrances of Hammond Bush. Artist Adrienne Grant is helping to create attractive signs that will possibly serve as a template for all HCC's natural areas.

### Peacockes development: a sand mine

A company called Southside Sands has applied for resource consent to operate a sand-winning operation in the Peacockes area.

The Society lodged a submission opposing the application, particularly because no environmental assessment had been carried out. The proposed area borders the river slightly upstream of Hammond Bush. The river is an important corridor and feeding ground for the bats, so we believe such an assessment is vital. Over 400 submissions were made.

Stephen Hamilton attended the Glenview community's public meeting and was able to provide advice on forming an incorporated society to oppose the application. The Glenview residents are worried about the large trucks that would travel their residential streets.

Another incorporated society has been formed on the Tamahere side of the river.

Recently Southside Sands applied to skip the council hearing process and take the matter straight to the Environment Court. This will be decided by city councillors on September 22.

### Bellbirds

It has been over a year since the bellbird release in Hamilton. Unfortunately there have been no recent sightings; the birds are either absent or unreported because they sound quite like tuis

and don't look particularly distinctive! See [www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/Projects/Hamilton-Halo](http://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/Projects/Hamilton-Halo) for more.

### Predator control

Spring and the nesting season are here. Terry Hume has kindly volunteered to replenish the bait stations in Hammond Bush, and will do so early in October. Remember backyard trapping or poisoning is also valuable.

Do not feel guilty about having a cat: some experts believe their rat-eating habit means they have a net benefit for birds.

### Bat monitors

This is a good time of year for finding bats. They are hungry after their torpid winter period and will hunt at dawn and dusk for flying insects. Bat monitors are simple to use and can now be borrowed from Robert Welch (ph 858 2314; [decnz3@clear.net.nz](mailto:decnz3@clear.net.nz)).

### Website

Our website needs attention! Please be patient... we are working towards a new one that is easy for us to update and maintain.

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*I would like to renew/add my financial support to the Riverlea Environment Society Inc. with a tax-deductible donation.*

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*Thank you for your support*