

# Port Underwood Association

Welcome to the May 2015 issue of the Port Underwood Association newsletter.



*The Homestead and School at Ocean Bay, about 1912, from 'The School at Ocean Bay', Jonathan Harlen (Cape Catley, 1987).*

Summer is over, and it was very dry. We were fortunate in Port Underwood not to have any fires and this perhaps reflects the care people have taken. There was a large fire to the West of Blenheim (Northbank) that had the potential to cause a lot of damage; having seen the damage fires cause whilst living in Australia, I was very grateful for lack of fires here.

This newsletter acts, mainly, as an update on issues that have already been reported on. This includes the outcome of the Oyster Bay resource consent hearing, the progress made by Marlborough Marine Futures as well as a further update by neighbourhood support.

The Association would appreciate comments from members regarding any of the issues raised in this newsletter, or any other issue that relates to Port Underwood. In order to represent members, we need to receive guidance from you about what concerns you and what you want us to do on your behalf. So, please contact us on [port.underwood.association@gmail.com](mailto:port.underwood.association@gmail.com) or direct to committee members.

Best wishes John

## Committee members

President - John Davison	<a href="mailto:jad793@gmail.com">jad793@gmail.com</a>
Secretary and Treasurer – Sara Roush	<a href="mailto:sarakenroush@gmail.com">sarakenroush@gmail.com</a>
Members	
Ken Roush	<a href="mailto:sarakenroush@gmail.com">sarakenroush@gmail.com</a>
Arch Still	<a href="mailto:archandmary@hotmail.com">archandmary@hotmail.com</a>
Davie Lindner	<a href="mailto:davidlindner@yahoo.com">davidlindner@yahoo.com</a>
Greg Phillipson	<a href="mailto:embryo.greg@gmail.com">embryo.greg@gmail.com</a>
Michael Blaschke	<a href="mailto:mj.blaschke@gmail.com">mj.blaschke@gmail.com</a>
Jeremy Ward	<a href="mailto:jeremy@eastbywest.co.nz">jeremy@eastbywest.co.nz</a>
David Whyte	<a href="mailto:clintondale@xtra.co.nz">clintondale@xtra.co.nz</a>

## Contents

<a href="#">Committee</a>	Contact details
<a href="#">Marlborough Marine Futures</a>	A new stakeholder group for Marlborough
<a href="#">Oyster Bay Development</a>	Resource Consent Hearing
<a href="#">Neighbourhood watch</a>	New Rural Police News Letter
<a href="#">Sundry</a>	Freedom Camping Internet and phone connectivity Hydrodynamic surveys

---

## Port Underwood Association contact details:

[port.underwood.association@gmail.com](mailto:port.underwood.association@gmail.com) or  
PO Box 59 Blenheim 7240

## **Marlborough Marine Futures**

The Marlborough Sounds Integrated Management Trust has held its initial public meetings on 8 March and 3 May. Progress has been relatively slow as the Trust seeks to be inclusive and transparent. The second meeting, for instance, was moved back to 3 May to enable attendees to get a mandate from their respective organisations. The meetings have so far sought to find out from the attendees what is wanted from the Trust, to identify the stakeholders that have not been represented at the meetings and also to try and define the structure the body should take. This all takes time.

The Trust is seeking to identify stakeholders that can inform and direct the organization (although I may have over stated the role of the stakeholder group). It is fairly certain that there will be representatives on the stakeholder group from commercial fishing, recreational fishing, iwi and residents' groups. Representatives from other areas, such as forestry, tourism and farming are being sought (and there will be other interest groups represented). There will be more than one representative from each of these areas; for example commercial fishing wishes to have four representatives.

The objective of the Trust is to identify what the various stakeholders want the Sounds to be like to ensure a sustainable future; it is suggested that this will be hard to define, and will no doubt alter over time.

The initial meetings have been attended by John Davison and Ken Roush from the Association, neither of which wish to be members of the stakeholder group, purely due to time constraints. It is not essential for Port Underwood to be personally represented on the stakeholder group (and it would be unreasonable for all residents' associations to send representatives). A member of the Kenepuru residents' association has volunteered, but other representatives are sought. Ken Roush is seeking to identify all the Sounds residents' associations (through the Council) to try and ascertain who would be willing to serve on the stakeholders group. If any of the Port Underwood members wish to be a member of the stakeholder group, please let either Ken or John know and we can forward your name.

Further information regarding Marlborough marine futures can be obtained from:  
<http://www.marlmarinefutures.co.nz>

## **Oyster Bay Development Proposal**

It is disappointing to inform you that the Oyster Bay development proposal has been approved by the Marlborough District Council. Our thanks to David Whyte who attended the hearing and spent a lot of time putting together the association's representation on this matter. The overall impression is that our representations were just ignored. In addition, the decision seems contrary to the Council's position on subdivisions. There is a distinct impression that there is little point in making submissions when they are ignored; consequently no appeal is being submitted. As an alternative a letter will be written to the three councillors representing the Sounds area. We will report back on any reply made.

## Sundry

**Freedom Camping** – The Association has made a submission in respect of Freedom Camping in response to the Council’s proposed changes to the bylaw. The submission stated that there was no apparent reason for the relaxation of the freedom camping restrictions in Port Underwood as there are currently campsites on Department of Conservation sites at Rarangi, Whites Bay, Robin Hood Bay and Whatamango Bay. Also, it was submitted that the whole of the Port Underwood Road and Tumbledown Bay Road should be included in schedule 1 of the bylaw to specifically prohibit freedom camping in these areas.

**Internet access** - Marlborough District Council is undertaking a survey in respect of internet access and mobile phone reception. It is suggested that internet and mobile phone coverage in the Port Underwood area is not adequately provided for under the central government rural broadband initiative. We believe that a strong response may assist the Marlborough District Council to act on our behalf to improve access. The survey can be completed at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/InternetConnectivity> and needs to be completed by 18 May.

**Hydrodynamic modelling** – Hydrodynamic modelling is being undertaken by the Council. The Pelorus hydrodynamic model is to be presented to the Council’s Environment Committee and then put to full Council. When adopted it will be posted on Council’s coastal webpages at <http://www.marlborough.govt.nz/Environment/Coastal/Hydrodynamic-Models-of-the-Sounds.aspx>. The modelling for Queen Charlotte Sound has been completed. It is interesting to note that the modelling undertaken shows (according to the council) that the effects of marine farming is unlikely to fundamentally change the Queen Charlotte Sound ecosystem.

When considering this view the following points need to be considered:

- The Tory Channel acts as a significant flush mechanism for the Queen Charlotte Sound. Areas without the dramatic flushing system will perform significantly different. (the modelling found that the Tory Channel could replace the water in the Sound in three days);
- Despite this the Queen Charlotte Sound exhibits a seasonal stratification;
- Whilst the flushing time for tracers released by the study took less than 11 days in central Tory Channel, it takes around 40 days for tracer released in the Inner Queen Charlotte Sound;
- The report suggests that fish farm derived nutrients are lost through export to the Cook Strait;
- Relative changes in concentrations tend to be the greatest in shallow side bays and shallow inner sounds areas;
- The study does predict an increased nutrient and phytoplankton concentration, but states that the “elevated concentrations are not **alarmingly** high”;
- Mussel induced plankton depletion is **larger than initially anticipated**, but the report did not regard it as **alarmingly** severe;
- The study **cannot** discount the possibility of a longer-term evolution towards eutrophy (although it believes that restrictions and flushing means that this will not occur); and
- No sensitivity trials have been undertaken to justify the beliefs expressed in the report.

The report's tone is accepting to marine farming, but the comments made in the executive summary raise significant concerns. It has to be questioned whether a study can state that significant concerns are not raised when it accepts that farming does create change, (even if not fundamental change) and highlights elevated concentrations of nutrients and phytoplankton when fish farming, and that mussel farm phytoplankton depletion is both larger than anticipated and severe (even if not alarmingly severe). Also, where the waters are not subject to such a significant flushing process it has to be questioned whether marine farming should be permitted or extended without there being significant scientific surveys.

## **Neighbourhood support update/Sara Roush**

Unfortunately, we had several burglaries just before Easter including 3 houses that we know of and a logging site. Mostly food, money, jewellery, alcohol, pots and pans, blankets and towels were taken from the homes and diesel from the logging site.

Our networking system worked well with suspicious cars, persons and unusual activities occurring in the area at that time being recorded and forwarded to me. There have now been several more burglaries in the Queen Charlotte Sound. A person that we had labelled as being suspicious in Port Underwood was also seen in the area of the burglaries in Queen Charlotte Sound. So, we now have a suspect that the police are looking for in conjunction with the burglaries in both areas. He is a well-known burglar that has just arrived back in the area after 10 years of being away. We forwarded his picture and details to everyone on our PUA email list. Hopefully they will catch him and it will be the end of our break ins.

It always helps to record any unusual activities, persons, or vehicles as that information can be useful later.

## **Secretary/Treasurer Sara Roush**

Thanks to all of you who have paid their PUA subs for 2015. We do appreciate your continued support. For those who haven't paid yet, you can send a cheque for \$20 to the Secretary, Port Underwood Association, P.O. Box 59, Blenheim 7240 or if you prefer a direct deposit can be made to The Port Underwood Association Westpac Bank Blenheim 030599 0216931 00 Please put your name and Bay for references.

## **Snippets from the Past**

### **The School at Ocean Bay written by Jonathan Harlen is dedicated to the Crump Family and the school that has been compared to an early Outward Bound School.**

Jack (a "missionary clergyman") Crump and wife Alice with four daughters bought Ocean Bay farm in 1905. A son was born in 1906. They wanted to educate their children at home and with government assistance opened a boy's boarding school with 8 students in 1909. The school quickly gained a reputation for "high scholastic standards and a good record in field sports" and within two years had a total of 50 students enrolled. It remained at 50 until closing in 1924. Not only did the boys have their school room education but were also

trained in outdoor skills both at sea, in boats and swimming, and in the bush with survival skills and plant identification.

Alice had her work cut out for her as she was in charge of the cleaning, washing, mending and cooking, as well as nursing, accounts, and the operation of the phone and post office.

Jack was principal of the school, but did not teach, as his main responsibility was taking care of the farm and animals. He preached every Sunday and took care of the boys medical and dental problems and as principal he was responsible for the disciplining of the students.

The book goes into great detail of what the students would get up to and what life was like back in the early 1900's before the road. There are also many interviews with the past students in their elder years which make for fascinating reading.

The school was later dismantled and partly used to build two baches in Ocean Bay.

The picture on the front of our newsletter is of the school and homestead at Ocean Bay approximately 1912.

---

One of the boys who went to the School at Ocean Bay was Bill Platts (now deceased) who later on purchased land in both Ocean Bay and HakaHaka Bay. His wife Patsy Platts has contributed the following.

### **How we came to Port Underwood by Patsy Platts**

Much of the story of Ocean Bay has been told in "The School at Ocean Bay" by Jonathon Harlen. My husband Bill Platts was a pupil at that school during 1921-22, and often talked about it. One day in 1957 he happened to notice a small paragraph in 'The Press' which mentioned that a road was being built from Whatamango Bay across the hill to Hakahaka - previously the only way had been by walking track, or else by launch from Blenheim.

We had been thinking of finding somewhere to build a holiday bach, and he had always wanted to return to the area, so decided at once to go and have a look. We recruited 'Granny' to look after the children, and drove to Blenheim for the weekend in May 1957. Next day we drove to Whatamango and up the hill as far as we could. The road was only about half way up the Picton side by then, so we walked the rest of the way, but found the old farmhouse in Hakahaka uninhabited. Bill remembered that when he was at Ocean Bay School, Walter Guard had been the only day boy, walking from Oyster Bay to Ocean and back every day. So we carried on to Oyster Bay and found Walter at home with his wife Rita. They told us that Reg Daken owned Hakahaka, but was now living in Whatamango, and was thinking of selling sections once the road was built. So on our return journey we called on the Dakens who said they would let us know when the sections had been surveyed, which they did towards the end of the year.

And that was how we managed to buy the best section in Hakahaka for £200 (pounds), and

build the bach in 1958 for £700. Since then it has had many additions, and the road has of course been extended all round the Port, and sealed in parts. And the Cook Strait Cable has been built.

The Guard family were wonderfully helpful to us newcomers, taking us and various friends with small children for picnics in the Dreadnought to bays across the other side of the Port. They also taught Bill how and where to set nets and crayfish pots, and often took us out in the Bonita in the early morning to pick up their pots in Cook Strait.

Our children grew up swimming in the safe water of Hakahaka Bay, and wandering all over the hills. They would take their lunches and disappear for the day and we never worried about them. We have been so lucky to have such a wonderful place to spend most of nearly every school holidays for so many years, and now our children and grandchildren appreciate it too.



*1957 - Hakahaka New Road*



*1958 - Bach and Fences*

Thank you Patsy for this contribution. We would love to receive any other stories from the Port Underwood past.