

Old train tracks find new use



Left to right, West Eyreton School pupils Bonnie Howland, 12, Stefan Anderson, 11, Adam Wardle, 11, enjoying their railway cycle track.

An old railway embankment that has not seen a train in years is proving its value as a cycle track to the pupils of West Eyreton Primary, North Canterbury.

Late last year, the pupils launched a petition to extend the cycle track further along North Eyre Road, so people could bike to the school and the community recreation area from both directions along North Eyre Road.

The school worked alongside the Future West Eyreton group to bring the plan to fruition. The Waimakariri District Council visited and with support from Land Transport NZ, it was ready for term three.

Given the narrowness of North Eyre Road, the Future West Eyreton group has also successfully lobbied to have the speed limit outside the school reduced to 80km/hour. Pupils now feel much safer biking to school, and mum and dad can get out the bikes and leave their cars at home.

ECan supports any move to encourage greater use of cycling and walking, one aim of the Regional Land Transport Strategy, a regionwide council and transport/safety initiative.

Marriage made in Metro-colour

A trainee early childhood teacher ditched the stretch limo for the Number 5 Metro service recently for her Christchurch wedding day. Anna Hamilton (nee Chisnell) is a big fan and daily user of the Metro service. The bus route ran straight past her wedding venue, she said, so why not? She and her entourage, including flower girls in gumboots, arrived on time to meet groom Corie Hamilton at the Botanic Gardens band rotunda.



Holly Gardiner - one to watch

This year's winner of Environment Canterbury's Future Environmentalist award is Holly Gardiner, a Year 13 student at Christchurch's Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti.

"Next year, I plan to go to Lincoln University and do a Bachelor of Environmental Management, majoring in urban planning. Planning for the future is one of the most important things we can do in order to live sustainably," Holly says.



To read more about Holly's achievements go to: www.ecan.govt.nz/eeawards

Inside: Winners of Environment Canterbury's school science fair awards and our Wrybill trophy winner for 2008.

Not-so-bridal save money on Metro

If you have a SuperGold card, you can now use public transport New Zealand-wide at no cost outside peak hours - 9am to 3pm and from 6:30pm to the end of service on weekdays, and any time on weekends and public holidays.



SuperGold cardholders in Christchurch are invited to call the Metroinfo line on 03 366 88 55; Timaru card holders can call 03 688 55 44 for services and timetabling information. Or look up www.metroinfo.org.nz



Out of the armchair



Pat Barrett and his young family are well known to readers of The Press. Pat's stories describe expeditions up river valleys and into the Main Divide, encouraging us all to look beyond the nearest hill. Pat is going to provide Living Here readers with a place or two to visit and explore in this and subsequent issues.

The Cathedrals, Gore Bay

For Cantabrians, Gore Bay, near Cheviot in North Canterbury, is a hidden treasure.

Its seclusion and sheltered aspect have made it a place of retreat for surfing, swimming, beachcombing, delving into the region's colonial past and enjoying the colourful coastal gardens. At the southern end of the bay are two remarkable features, the Cathedrals and Port Robinson. The former is located in a small scenic reserve and is a dramatic example of a 'badlands' landscape - where soft ground has been eroded into pinnacles and short steep gorges.

The best overview is gained from the Port Robinson Road which climbs the hill to the south of Gore Bay. Near the top of the hill road is a small fenced area offering a fine view out over the bay with the Cathedrals jutting up in the foreground. This aspect is especially pleasing in late afternoon when the deeply etched faces of the 'badlands' are highlighted against the backdrop of the bay where Pacific rollers curl in beneath the headlands.



Fact File

- Access:** Signposted on SH1 in Cheviot (94km north of Christchurch) and also at Domett, south of Cheviot.
- Time:** Port Robinson walkway 3-4 hours one way.
- Grade:** Easy
- Map:** N33 & O32



Continued from Page One...

Sustainability projects shine at science fairs

Walk this way in Timaru

Bronte Davenport's walking school bus work won Environment Canterbury's first prize in the junior section of the Sanford Science and Technology Fair in Timaru last month.

Bronte also won ECan's 2008 Wrybill Trophy, for the best of the best environmental projects seen at both Timaru and Christchurch science fairs. Eleven-year-old Bronte, a Year 7 Craighead School student, surveyed schools and parents and designed her own version of a walking bus stop sign with information about pick up times.

Second prize in Timaru's Sanford Science and Technology Fair went to Oakley Campbell, 12, from Waihi School, who researched how to reduce bathroom product packaging.

Third prize was shared by Year 8 students Jacob Beeman and Lydia Oldfield. Jacob, 11, of Ashburton Intermediate, wanted to see how quickly so-called biodegradable shopping bags broke down. Lydia Oldfield, 12, a Year 8 student at Craighead, investigated if her home property was windy enough to support a wind turbine.

A first prize wasn't awarded in the senior category but 14-year-old Sam Brosnahan of Mountainview High School won second prize for comparing efficiencies of hydro and solar power.



Bronte with her walking school bus sign.



Oakley researched reducing bathroom product packaging.



Lydia's wind turbine won her an equal third place.



Jacob investigated biodegradable bags.



Sam proudly displaying his solar power.

Shorter showers, power saving in Christchurch

Top junior ECan prize winner of the Lincoln University Schools' Science and Technology Fair was Katie Glasson, 12, of Cobham Intermediate, for her energy-saving survey project.

The junior second prize went to Logan Glasson of Westburn School for a pest trap monitor.

Third equal prizes went to Vincent Curd, who found evidence of acid rain around Christchurch, and Vinura Karunasekera, who looked at the grasses which grow best in a climate change scenario. Both pupils attend Cobham Intermediate.

As in Timaru, no top prize was awarded in the senior section but second equal prize went to Emil Martin, 16, of Lincoln High School, who designed a simple shower box attachment, which would switch off the water after a certain number of minutes.

Brad Parker, 13, also of Lincoln High School, was second equal with his tests of reusable supermarket produce bags.



Christchurch winner Katie Glasson has the power!

i For further information on the annual school science fairs: Sian Carvell, ECan Environmental Educator, 03 353 9736 or email sian.carvell@ecan.govt.nz

Impressive stat: Wettest in a while



Rainfall records were broken during the end of August south-east storm, which caused much damage in North Canterbury and around Kaikoura/Hanmer. In the Kaikoura area, the Luke Creek rain gauge recorded 541mm for the month of August which is the highest August rainfall on record since 1968 and is more than four times the August average. The Snowflake rain gauge in inland Kaikoura recorded its maximum amount ever, almost half a metre of rain or 459.5mm over 48 hours, 314mm over 24 hours.

River protection interest shoots up with rainfall

The recent flooding has prompted calls to ECan's river engineers, particularly from North Canterbury through to Kaikoura, about river rating groups and how a communal approach could benefit landowners and reduce the flood risk. ECan, in partnership with landowners, already operates more than 60 such river rating groups. People agree to a level of flood protection and ways to achieve it, with each situation tailored to that group of people and their risk. Talk to your local ECan councillor for more information.



For a copy of our Annual Report, visit our website
www.ecan.govt.nz
or call 0800 EC INFO (0800 324 636)

Pedal promo:
www.spokes.org.nz
last Friday every month
Cathedral Square, Christchurch
Fun Bike Ride, 5.30 pm

North Canty Garden Tours
Gardens of Fernside, 10am - 4pm, Sunday, November 9.
Ten beautiful gardens of the Fernside and Cust areas, plus sustainable living and environmental info and stalls at Fernside School.
For more details, phone: Jude 03 3106445.

The swimming pool effect across Mid Canterbury

Keri Johnston has not seen anything like it.

Two years ago, ponds for water storage were rare. Now the chartered professional engineer handles several enquiries a week, in particular from Mid Canterbury farmers but also coming from Waimakariri and Lower Waitaki.

"People are seeing the benefit of putting in water storage. They need the water and don't want to sustain long periods of water restrictions anymore."

When farmers first started approaching her about small-scale storage, the typical pond was 40,000 to 50,000 cubic metres. Now most requests are for ponds of 100,000 cubic metres or more, at around \$2 a cubic metre or \$100,000 to \$200,000.

But, compared to the cost of sinking a bore for groundwater, it makes sense, she says. "We have red groundwater zones (i.e. at maximum allocation) all over Mid Canterbury and it's expensive to lodge a consent application, and then you are not guaranteed success."

On the Mt Somers farm the Keri and her husband Craig manage, a 17 hectare pond was built this past winter and can be filled over five days from their water allocation. Possibly the area's largest storage pond, it will hold more than 300,000 cubic metres of water this summer at a depth of five metres. The property grows dairying feed, but with current irrigation relying on nearby Taylors Stream, Keri says there's little reliability. "It's basically 500 hectares of desert in a dry summer. The cost of feeding-out is phenomenal."



With no local clay resource, storage ponds across Mid Canterbury are being sealed by compaction. This means they are more prone to leakage but Keri says this is being addressed and losses are coming in under 10 percent.

Once a pond is around two years old leakage tends to taper off.



Keri Johnston

Christchurch's rivers: the inside stories on pollution

Five new reports are now available on ECan's website on the health (or lack of it) of Christchurch's two main rivers and their 400 or so tributaries, many of which are commonly thought of as "drains" or floodways.

Four are connected with water quality, ecosystem health and the water monitoring programme – in relation to marine life and people's health. One is on metal concentrations in fish and shellfish. These reports will be updated yearly to show the effects on estuary metals and ecology when sewage is piped from the ponds to the ocean.

Read more: What's New on www.ecan.govt.nz

ASHBURTON A&P SHOW "Future Farming" Oct 31 - Nov 1

ECan contact details

Email:	ecinfo@ecan.govt.nz
Customer Services:	0800 EC INFO
Free phone:	0800 324 636
or Christchurch:	03 353 9007
Website:	www.ecan.govt.nz
Christchurch office	03 365 3828
Timaru office	03 684 0500
Kaikoura office	03 319 5781
Metroinfo Christchurch	03 366 8855
Businfo Timaru	03 688 5544
Pollution hotline	03 366 4663
inside Christchurch	(24 hours)
Pollution hotline	0800 76 55 88
outside Christchurch	(24 hours)
Civil defence	03 366 2359
River and flood infoline	0900 RIVER
(charges apply)	(0900 74837)
River report	www.ecan.govt.nz/riverreport
Latest riverflows	www.ecan.govt.nz/riverflows
Didymo emergency hotline	0800 809 966
Waimakariri/Ashley River Reserve rangers	
flood, harbours, urgent contact	03 353 9725

Ponds work for Rangitata irrigators

One big group of farmers who have got behind water storage using ponds is the Mayfield Hinds Irrigation Society (MHIS) which taps into the Rangitata Diversion Race. A three hectare pond, holding 55,000 cubic metres, was opened earlier this year at Pyes Corner near Lowcliffe.

While it may look like bulk storage for the consented water it receives from the Rangitata River, society chairman David Keeley says the pond is just an interim reservoir. "This is flat land and we wouldn't be able to store enough here for the whole scheme," he says.

Instead, the Pyes Corner pond helps regulate water flows throughout the canals that distribute water to 146 farmer shareholders. More consistent flows and reliability are the result, reducing wastage and cutting bywash water by 70 per cent. Bywash is the left-over water at the end of an irrigation network, often dirty when it returns to the river.

Telemetry and automated controls at the pond are also saving on racemen's time and vehicle use, David says. Around 60 farmer shareholders, including the Keeleys, have also independently built their own ponds.

"Given current meat and wool prices, it's difficult to put a business case together for this kind of development, so dairy, dairy support or cropping options are normally the commercial driver."

The Pyes Corner site is now attracting birdlife where it was once a dry, scrubby corner. But one casualty is wetland plant species. Wetland plant roots, doing what they are designed to do, (suck up moisture) reduce the sealing of the ponds.

The Mayfield Hinds Irrigation Society has been delivering water from the Rangitata River via the Rangitata Diversion Race since 1947, and today services 32,000 hectares of farmland. It is the largest, privately-owned irrigation scheme in New Zealand and although originally designed as flood/ border dyke irrigation, today most farms are spray irrigated.

ECan Rakaia Cr Angus McKay and David Keeley at the Pyes Corner Pond.



Most ponds require resource consent

To develop a pond, farmers need a consent to dam (hold) water from ECan, land use consent from ECan and a building consent from their local council (if the water depth is more than three metres and holds 20,000 cubic metres of water or more). So check both councils before you book a bulldozer.

For eco-sourced native seed/plants:

Wai-Ora Nursery, part of Wai-Ora Forest Landscapes
48 Watsons Rd, Harewood, Christchurch
03 359 2458 8am-4pm weekdays



**Clean
heat
project**

Do you live in Timaru, Ashburton, Christchurch, Rangiora or Kaiapoi?

ECan's Clean Heat Project can help you switch to cleaner forms of heating and insulate your home.

Call 0800 ECWARM (0800 32 9276) or visit www.cleanheat.co.nz



Speargrass alert: home of the Canterbury Knobbled Weevil

It might seem an unlikely hero, and it would struggle to compete with the more interactive Hector's dolphin, but the Canterbury Knobbled Weevil is just as in need of help and protection.

Hadramphus tuberculatus was thought to be extinct since the 1920s, until it was rediscovered in 2004 at the Burke's Pass Conservation Reserve, South Canterbury. The large 11-16mm weevil, mainly nocturnal, was once common in native grasslands containing its host speargrass.

Surveys by Lincoln University and the Department of Conservation (DOC) between 2005 and 2008, found just 28 weevils on or under speargrass in the 13.5ha reserve. With numbers so low, ECan, DOC and Lincoln University got together to develop a predator control programme to improve the weevil's chances.

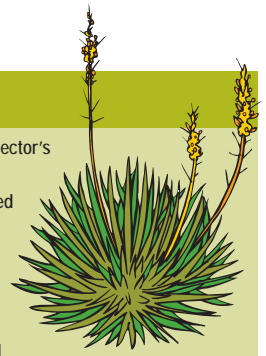
A trapping programme targeted hedgehogs, feral cats, ferrets, stoats and weasels. The smaller predators like rats and mice were controlled by rodent baits. Another possible predator, the possum, is already controlled in the area as part of ECan's Bovine Tb control work. Pigs are another threat as they root out the speargrass roots.

Scientists from Lincoln University are still monitoring the population as well as checking other sites containing speargrass in the region which might host the weevils.

Mike Bowie from Lincoln University would welcome information or photos of any sightings of the weevil, best seen on flowering speargrass on summer mornings.

Less endangered, large weevils also feed on speargrass. Fortunately the larger size and black and white stripes of *Lyperobius* (more common) weevil means they are easily distinguished from the smaller, brown Canterbury Knobbled Weevils.

Mike's phone is 03 325 3838 ext 8388 or email bowie@lincoln.ac.nz



Taramea Speargrass



Mike Bowie, Knobbled Weevil researcher and Lincoln University lecturer, with Mackenzie College student Katherine Hill. Katherine used her \$3000 Royal Society scholarship last summer to study the endangered Canterbury weevil and help raise awareness of its close-to-extinct status.

Water management - your feedback needed: www.canterburywater.org.nz

If you have been waiting for the opportunity to have your say on the future of water in Canterbury then now is your chance. Feedback and data on uses and benefits of water in this region are now open for public scrutiny and engagement. This data came out of a series of stakeholder workshops as part of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy.

The strategy aims to ensure that water in Canterbury is being managed fairly and sustainably and to build an agreement that goes beyond the adversarial approach inherent in water allocation by resource consents.

The process is owned by the Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Canterbury's mayors, ECan's chair and the councils' chief executives) with about 250 people from stakeholder groups contributing to the feedback gathered so far.

The pressure on water use in Canterbury shows no sign of abating. Management of the resource has been identified as the biggest long term issue facing the region. Between 1999 and 2006 irrigation water use increased by almost 50 per cent in this region. Around 65 per cent of all New Zealand's hydroelectricity storage is in Canterbury.

This initial feedback is the first stage of building some consensus and a strategy around water management, with as wide an audience as possible.

A set of draft fundamental principles have been developed for public comment. They include:

- Sustainability - so that future generations benefit from water's multiple uses as much as we do.
- Kaitiakitanga - cultural, traditional guardianship by Ngai Tahu of lakes, rivers, waterways and wetlands.
- Region-wide buy-in. While it is a non-statutory document, the understanding is that the strategy will be integrated by local councils into their legal processes.
- Instream values - integrating water quality and quantity.
- Valuing all uses eg water for swimming and cultural value has as much importance as for growing food.
- Effective, efficient water and land management and biodiversity values.
- Access of all Cantabrians to high quality drinking water.
- Maintaining the essential character of waterways and Canterbury's braided rivers.
- Safeguarding public access.
- Agricultural stock is excluded from lowland waterways and lakes.

What do you think of these principles? Give us your feedback and/or comment on the wider document: www.canterburywater.org.nz or phone 0800 677 748.

How smoggy was your town this past winter?

Canterbury towns' air pollution levels this winter were similar to 2007, although the smoggiest days in Christchurch, Kaiapoi and Rangiora were less polluted than in 2007.

The weather plays a huge part in pollution.

The windier it is in the evening, the less likely it is to be smoggy. The frostier and calmer it is, the more likely it is to be polluted. We cannot change the weather, but the thing we can change is how we heat our homes. Solid fuel heating - woodburners and open fires - are the main contributors to winter smog and associated respiratory and cardiac illnesses.

The National Environmental Standards for healthy air set the standard at 50 micrograms of pollution particles per cubic metre of air, as averaged over 24 hours, with one breach or less per year by 2013.

For more details on air pollution: www.ecan.govt.nz/todaysair www.cleanheat.co.nz



Lincoln Landscape Architecture – Oct 24-27 Students exhibit in town:

Landscape Architecture Exhibition: **Watch This Space**, Christchurch Art Gallery, Worcester Boulevard Friday to Monday 10am - 5pm

Final year work of Landscape Architecture students of Lincoln University, incorporating many sustainability principles.

Dirty weekend in October

Interested? www.ngia.co.nz/weedbusters



your councillors



Ross Little
North Canterbury
Phone 03 314 5841
ross.little@ecan.govt.nz



Jo Kane (deputy chairperson)
North Canterbury
Phone 03 312 7863
jo.kane@ecan.govt.nz



Carole Evans
Christchurch North
Phone 03 387 0847
carole.evans@ecan.govt.nz



Jane Demeter
Christchurch North
Phone 03 359 2399
jane.demeter@ecan.govt.nz



David Sutherland
Christchurch East
Phone 03 331 6007
david.sutherland@ecan.govt.nz



Rik Tindall
Christchurch East
Phone 03 332 1069
rik.tindall@ecan.govt.nz



Angus McKay
Rakaia
Phone 03 302 8660
angus.mckay@ecan.govt.nz



Alec Neill
Christchurch West
Phone 03 342 4253
alec.neill@ecan.govt.nz



Pat Harrow
Christchurch West
Phone 03 359 5851
pat.harrow@ecan.govt.nz



Eugenie Sage
Selwyn/Banks Peninsula
Phone 03 942 1251
eugenie.sage@ecan.govt.nz



Hon. Sir Kerry Burke (chairman)
Christchurch South
Phone 03 372 7225 (w) or 03 355 8104
kerry.burke@ecan.govt.nz



Emeritus Prof. Bob Kirk
Christchurch South
Phone 03 348 5576
bob.kirk@ecan.govt.nz



Bronwen Murray
South Canterbury
Phone 03 680 6608
bronwen.murray@ecan.govt.nz



Mark Oldfield
South Canterbury
Phone 03 688 2262
mark.oldfield@ecan.govt.nz