



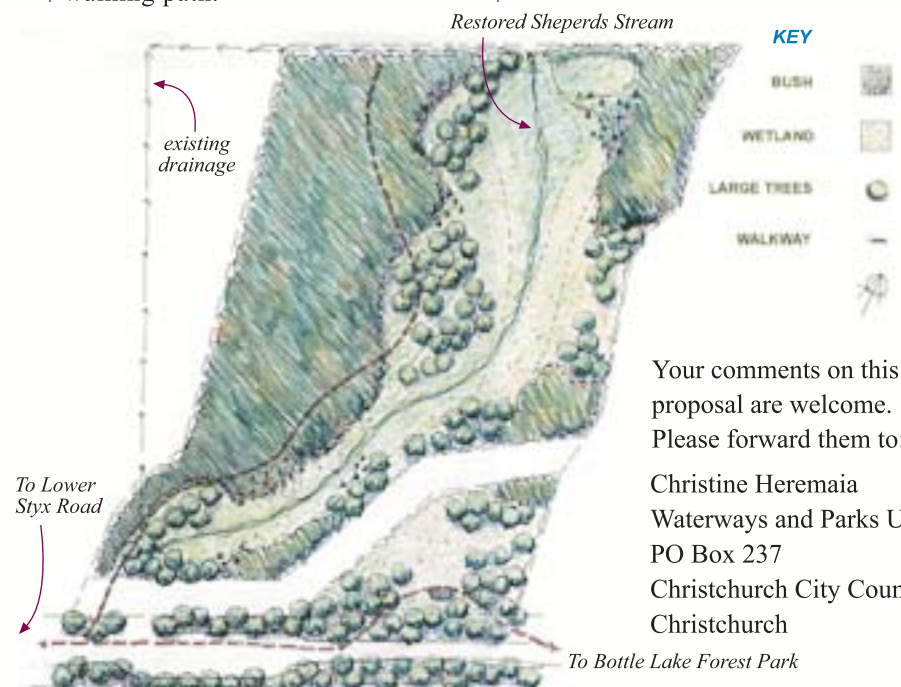
February 2001

## Restoration of Sheperds Stream

Last year the Christchurch City Council purchased a low lying piece of land at 206 Lower Styx Road adjacent to Bottle Lake Forest Park. This area is part of the historical outlet from Bottle Lake. In earlier times this was a wide meandering stream that ran along the base of the sand dunes linking Bottle Lake to the Styx River. The former Christchurch Drainage Board channelised it and today it forms a drain running alongside farm fence boundaries.

The interdune wetland characteristics associated with this area makes it too wet to graze during winter months. It is proposed to enhance the wildlife habitat of the wetland, and restore Sheperds Stream within this location. See concept map below.

This land purchase links to an existing unformed legal road that will provide walkway access into Bottle Lake Forest Park. A viewing platform and rest-area overlooking the wetland will also be provided for people using this walking path.



### Guardians of the Styx

The objective of the group known as The Guardians of the Styx is "to promote the protection, restoration, and raised awareness of the values of the Styx River and its environs – culture, landscape, recreation, drainage, heritage and ecology".

#### General meeting dates for this year are:

8 February	12 July
8 March	9 August
12 April	13 September
10 May	11 October
14 June	8 November

Meetings commence at 7.30pm. The venue is usually the Papanui Service Centre, but it would be advisable to check before attending. Meetings usually include a guest speaker. Attendance is free. Anyone interested, and new members are most welcome.

#### Contacts for Guardians of the Styx

<b>Chairperson</b>	John Knox
Tel	379 9904
Email	j.knox@xtra.co.nz
<b>Secretary</b>	Matthew Turnbull
Tel	332 7290

### Styx History Group

The Styx History Group is a dedicated group within the Guardians of the Styx Group collecting information about people, activities, and events that have occurred in and around the Styx area. Already some fascinating stories and facts have been uncovered and eventually some will be published in book form.

#### Dates for History Group meetings are:

20 February	17 July
20 March	21 August
17 April	18 September
15 May	15 October
19 June	20 November

If you would like to help with this task, or know of anyone that may be able to contribute information, this group would welcome hearing from you. Please contact either:

<b>Chairperson</b>	Dennis Hills
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<b>Secretary</b>	Stephanie Humphries
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### Editorial Contact

The newsletter is compiled, printed and distributed as a service to the community by the Waterways and Parks Unit of the Christchurch City Council.

If you have any suggestions, comments, or enquiries regarding subjects mentioned in this newsletter, please contact:

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### Welcome to this edition of the Styx Newsletter.

2001 is going to be a important year for the Styx River. As you will see from the lead article, the 40 year Vision document for this area was released just prior to Christmas. Your comments on this community plan are now being requested. If you haven't seen this document please do get one as your ideas are important, both for the future of the River and all creatures living within its environs.

Enjoy your reading.

## Vision for the Styx Community Planning for the Future

This book is the result of more than two years of extensive community consultation and participation. It highlights both the concerns and the opportunities presented by the Styx River and its environs.

From issues raised by individuals, groups (e.g. the Guardians of the Styx), Tangata Whenua, Community Boards and Christchurch City Council, a series of interrelated visions have evolved. These issues and visions are outlined in this book.

If you have not received a copy and would like one, they are readily available free of charge from Libraries, Service Centres, or by phoning Tracy on 371 1319.

Your comments and support are being sought, along with suggestions as to how you might like to be involved.

The closing date for comment is 28 February 2001.

Dennis Hills, Shirley Papanui Deputy Chairperson and Local Member of Parliament, Clayton Cosgrove reviewing the plan.



A vision is an informed bridge from the present to a preferred future

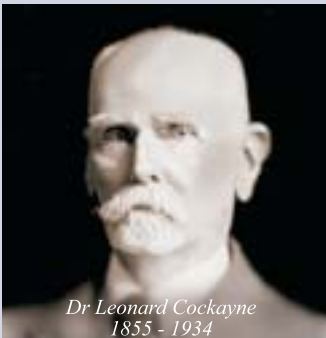
There has been steady progress on the research for the three books which are planned for publication. The first, a general history/information book, should be produced next year. This will be followed by a collection of reminiscences of long-time residents in the area, and the final book will be stories of some of the families who settled in the Styx catchment prior to 1900.

The first book will cover, in general terms, the geology of the area, the hydrology (where the water comes from, and where it goes), the flora and fauna, the history of occupation (both Maori and European), and will conclude with a mention of the draft 40-year asset management plan launched in December, 2000.

The response to items in the newsletter, in newspapers and on TV has been wonderful. There are enough contacts to keep the main researchers busy visiting people for several months, in addition to the formal research of electoral rolls and other records. Some of the contacts from residents or family members of pioneers have come out of the blue. Recently a man turned up at the door with photographs of the Redwood area taken prior to the building of the railway overbridge, and a photograph of Thomas Preston who farmed in what is now Prestons Road.

One set of written reminiscences of a Styx/Brooklands resident in the early 1900s included a photograph (with many people identified by name) from the wedding of Annie Sandford and August Gottermeyer. The notes say, "when the time came for the group photograph it was realised that the bride did not have any flowers to hold so someone gathered a bunch of lupins, and this served as a bouquet and does not look too bad in the photograph". By the way, Brooklands was at that time known as Sea View.

Over the coming weeks, we expect to sight much more information about Dr Leonard Cockayne, the eminent botanist, mentioned in an earlier item. It turns out that his Styx property was called "Dilcoosha", not "Dilroosha" as we had been told. Similarly, it was not at Brooklands, but at the top of Highsted Road near the Styx Mill Reserve. Dennis Hills Chairperson



# Invader from the North Island could infect the Styx River



*Egeria densa* (left) and *Elodea canadensis* (right). The ruler is in mm. *Egeria* looks similar to *Elodea* (which is already widespread in Christchurch waterways) but *Egeria* is significantly larger.

## Learning from Each Other

Five tutors from Nepal recently visited the Styx River area. These people were in Christchurch as guests of the Christchurch College of Education and were primarily here to gain knowledge regarding new teaching subjects and methods.

Their visit to the Janet Stewart Reserve to view first hand a New Zealand conservation project was, for them, a highlight of their visit.

They were aware that pressure is being placed on the forests of their region as a source of fuel supply for local people. This, coupled with the ever-increasing tourism trade, is affecting water quality within their picturesque Himalayan region. Water contamination by both humans and animals in the region of Kathmandu is a major health concern, and the Nepalese Government is currently active in its endeavour to educate people about water quality issues.

Guardians of the Styx representatives met with these tutors at the reserve and even language barriers could not deter the sharing of environmental concerns and issues as they relate to both countries.



A meeting of cultures at Janet Stewart Reserve. Nepalese tutors and John Knox enjoy their visit to Janet Stewart Reserve.

There is a new plant in town. *Egeria densa* aquatic weed was found last year in Kerr's Reach on the Avon River when it was spotted by the operator of the council's weed harvester machine.

*Egeria* is a South American plant that has become widespread in North Island streams, rivers and lakes. Its prolific growth makes it a significant weed in New Zealand's water systems. This plant crowds out other species and the volume of plant material produced also raises water levels. In hydro-lakes *egeria* has to be regularly controlled to prevent it from interfering with inlet pipes.

*Egeria* looks quite similar to the widespread Canadian pondweed (sometimes also called oxygen weed), but it is much larger. The dark green leaves are around 4 cm long and mostly come off the stems in groups of four or five. The [left-hand] photo compares the smaller Canadian pondweed with *egeria*.

The Styx River is one of many potential sites for the new weed. It only takes a very small segment (10 mm) of the *egeria* plant with a root node to establish it in any waterway. It may even be too late now to prevent its spread to other waterways in Christchurch. The sneaky, invasive nature of *egeria* means it is very likely that it will

spread further and become widely distributed in the high country lakes of the Canterbury area and beyond. The cost of maintaining waterways and lakes could be substantial and the biodiversity of our aquatic ecosystems will be reduced. Surface reaching *egeria* plants will interfere with many aquatic activities such as rowing, fishing and visual values.

To minimise these financial and environmental costs, the Christchurch City Council is attempting to contain *egeria* before it becomes wide spread. Underwater surveys have been carried out by NIWA divers to verify the extent of *egeria* plants in the Avon River, and to see if it has invaded the Heathcote and Styx Rivers. Reports so far suggest that the *egeria* is apparently confined to the Kerr's Reach on the Avon River.

While it will be a difficult, if not impossible task to eradicate the *egeria*, it is important to contain it in the Avon River for as long as possible and to use every opportunity to educate people in the potential risk from transfer of plant fragments.

The public can help by being vigilant in cleaning all weed from their boats and fishing equipment when travelling between waterways and lakes, not only within

Christchurch but also when travelling further afield.

Staff of Christchurch City Council and Environment Canterbury keep a particular look out for *egeria* to ensure that any other infestations are located as soon as possible. If you think you know of any *egeria* plants in Canterbury, please contact one of the Biosecurity Officers at Environment Canterbury immediately - telephone 365 3828.

## It's official

Mayor Garry Moore (standing, right) joins with Yvonne Palmer (Chairperson of the Shirley/Papanui Community Board) John Knox (Chairperson of the Guardians of the Styx), Chrissie Williams (Chairperson of the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board) and Warwick McFadden in officially signing the Sister Relationship with the Styx River, Alabama USA.



### Guardians of the Styx Report

It goes without saying that 'The Guardians of the Styx' group have sent some positive ripples in all directions in our inaugural year. I must thank all our committee members, plus others involved, for their support, contributions and encouragement made to our cause. It is really appreciated, especially by the Styx River and all of the natural wildlife there.

Several special events have happened over this last year with the 'Guardians', the most significant being that the group was directly involved with input and the release of the document 'Vision 2000 – 2040, The Styx'. This visionary document was publicly launched to over 200 invited guests at Styx Mill Basin Reserve on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December, in what could only be described as a fantastic afternoon for the whole of the Styx River catchment. The 'Vision' document has been featured in editorials in most Christchurch newspapers.

In 2000 we also set up a 'Sister River' link with Baldwin County, Alabama, USA. 'Guardians' committee member, Warwick McFadden made

a diversion whilst in the States to make a presentation to the Commissioners of the Baldwin County on behalf of the group, which from all accounts was a huge success.

Other activities undertaken by the 'Guardians' include a riverside planting and clean up day attended by many. We were now registered as an Incorporated Charitable Trust and have applied to the local Community Board for a conservative amount to assist with our work. The Community Trust has received an environmental funding application from the 'Guardians' for a substantial amount to assist with some of our major projects in 2001.

Each of our monthly meetings has featured some really interesting guest speakers talking about a variety of topics associated with the Styx catchment. The Styx History Group is well towards completion of their research into the history of the area with Dennis Hills steering the ship there with that most important project. We all look forward to the final outcome and books.

Most members attended the AGM of the 'Guardians of the Styx'. At this meeting the outcomes of our achievements were presented and ambitious plans and goals for 2001 were set. It has been great, and much appreciated, that we have been able to use the Christchurch City Council, Papanui / Shirley Community Board boardroom in the Papanui Service Centre for our monthly meetings.

Recognition now as one of Christchurch's leading conservation groups proactively associated with the city's natural areas has happened just about as fast as the Styx river flows in the rapids. This was capped off by the by the recent feature editorial on the 'Guardians' by Christchurch's largest circulating newspaper, 'The Mail'. So the ball is well and truly rolling now with our vision for the Styx. There is plenty more good news in store as we take care of the 'Spirit of Place' with the River. I know you will all be there to help us see it through - Thank you.

John Knox                      Chairperson