



August 2001

Styx Mill Reserve Worth a Visit Even in Winter

Styx Mill Conservation Reserve, bisected by the Styx River, comprises some 52 hectares of low lying wetland land to the north of the city.

Some say the original mill, after which the site was named, was a sawmill; others say a flaxmill. Later, when this area became a rich centre for wheat growing, the mill was converted to produce flour. Milling at this site finally ceased about the time of the First World War.

Until the early 1970's the wetlands stayed relatively undeveloped until purchased by the former Waimairi District Council. Following amalgamation of Councils, it became the responsibility of the Christchurch City Council to complete the development of the western end of the Reserve. The 3 lakes that now attract so many wetland birds to the area were completed in 1995.



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".

Details regarding General Meetings for the balance of this year are outlined below.

13 September Perry Royal, Architect
Topic: Ideas for the Styx River

11 October Clayton Cosgrove
MP for Waimakariri

8 November End of Year function at
Pataka as guests of
Maureen & Murray
Johnston

The venue for General Meetings is usually the Papanui Service Centre with meetings commencing at 7.30pm. Speakers and topics are subject to change. It would be advisable to check before attending.

Anyone interested, along with anyone wishing to become a member, is most welcome.

Contacts for Guardians of the Styx

Chairperson John Knox
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During a walk in Styx Mill Reserve Kim Webb and Adele Whiteside discovered this black swan family. Thanks for sharing this delightful photo.

Styx History Group

The Styx History Group is a dedicated group within the Guardians of the Styx Group collecting information about the people, activities, and events that have occurred in and around the Styx area. Some fascinating stories and facts have been uncovered and already one book is in draft form ready to be edited and published.

Dates for History Group meetings in 2001 are:

21 August
18 September
15 October
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:

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

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Guardians of the Styx Report

Living happily ever after for the Styx River is more of a reality now than ever, owing to the 'Guardians of the Styx' working in partnership with the Christchurch City Council's Parks and Waterways Unit. Together we have been promoting the protection, restoration and raising awareness of the Styx river catchment for almost two years, with great success.

Membership of the 'Guardians of the Styx' is on the increase as more people are taking a genuine interest in our natural environment both here in Christchurch, and all over New Zealand. At a recent conference I attended at Te Papa in Wellington entitled 'The State of

Environment Conference - Information to Motivation', it was revealed that the current attitude of New Zealanders toward their environment is one of the best in the world with only two places showing greater concern - India and Australia. Pollution of waterways was the most burning issue for New Zealanders, and survey results show that we feel the environment should have priority over our economy.

The 'Guardians' have several planting days and a river clean up day planned. If you would like to come along and lend a hand, you would be most welcome. Contact details for enquiries are listed in this newsletter.

Recently the Community Trust gave the Guardians a grant of \$20,000. This has proved a tremendous boost as it allows us to make progress towards fulfilling some of our objectives. The money is 'tagged' and must be used for the development of the vision of a Living Laboratory and for on-going restoration work along the Styx River. There is a lot more yet to look forward to with the implementation of our visions, so watch this space!

*John Knox
Chairperson*



CHRISTCHURCH
CITY COUNCIL - PARKS & WATERWAYS

Welcome to this edition of the Styx Newsletter.

2001 is continuing to be an important year for the Styx River.

The Styx Vision document has now been adopted by the Christchurch City Council. A terrific example of what can be achieved when community, special interest groups and City Council work together in partnership.

"Congratulations" to all those involved in this two year process.

How did the chicken cross the road?

When the chicken wanted to cross the road it had four choices. It could go across, under, around or over the road.

These four choices are the options open to planners considering how to get pedestrians across the busy 4-lane highway known as Main North Road. Currently Main North Road carries 21,000 vehicles per day.

However, townships to the north of the city have some of the highest growth rates of any within New Zealand. This coupled with the subdivisions of Northwood Estate, Regents Park, and Redwood Springs supplying 1620 new housing sections will continue to put pressure on Main North Road. The Supa Centre has made provision for 950 car parks. Taking all such factors into account it is predicted that traffic flows on Main North Road by the year 2021 will average 31,000 vehicles a day.

Transit New Zealand, recognising this trend, have already begun the process of widening this arterial route into Christchurch to a four-lane highway.

So why would the chicken want to cross the road?

One of the five visions adopted by the community, and approved by the Christchurch City Council for this area is a 'Source to Sea Walkway Experience' along the Styx River Green Corridor. As a New Zealand first, it will enable people to experience and learn about the river system along its entire length. It is probable that sizeable walking groups, university and postgraduate students plus school classes of up to 35 children, may wish to cross Main North Road. By widening Main North Road to a four-lane highway between Farquhars Road and the new Northwood Estate, how can pedestrians, sometimes in sizable groups, cross the road safely?

Planners have discovered that the chicken and pedestrians (cyclists) have the same four options – to go across, under, around or over the road.

Across the road offers the cheapest option. Unfortunately it also has the greatest potential for danger both to pedestrians and vehicles. Self-activated traffic lights could be installed either at the existing intersection, or by making a new intersection 50 to 100 metres north of the current one. The potential for nose to tail accidents, or the impulse to jay walk leaves one with an uneasy feeling that 'across the road' may not be in the chicken's best interests.

Several 'under road' options have been explored. To walk from Styx Mill Reserve through to the Redwood Springs Reserve also involves crossing Styx Mill Road.

This too has now become an obstacle to walkers, as the main users of the road are heavy vehicles moving to and from the Transfer Station.

Using the current Styx River Culvert, or making a new walkway culvert, have both been excluded as there are space and safety concerns. A third option would be to build a new purpose built under bridge.

Disadvantages to this option include water safety issues associated with children, a sense of enclosure that may disturb some people, and the limited amount of informal surveillance presenting a risk of stranger danger. The cost for a purpose built under bridge is estimated to be \$1.8m.

'Around', opens up the possibility of somehow using the existing Railway Bridge situated closer into the city as a crossing point. This option would need the co-operation and approval of Transrail. Would people detour away from the river, or again would they be tempted to give jay walking a try? Safety issues arise and this option alone would still not solve the problem of pedestrian access across Styx Mill Road.

Continued overleaf



Main North Road looking south towards Styx Mill Road and the railway overbridge.

The idea of combining this option with an underpass on Styx Mill Road is estimated to cost \$840,000.

Maybe the chicken could soar over the road? An overbridge? Strategically sited this would also do away with the necessity to cross Styx Mill Road. But does one want an overbridge intruding into the landscape at such a main entry point into a City? Could such an overbridge be made into a highly visible feature, say a work of art, or a symbol of arrival maybe?

And so the concept of an overhead bridge in the shape of a waka was born. Allowing for combined pedestrian, cycle and wheel chair access this ‘canoe’ bridge would bed its stem in the wetland area to the east of intersection reminiscent of dragging this river craft out of the water and up on to the bank. The 90+ metre structure would be supported for approximately three quarters of its length, then fly metres into the air projecting itself over Main North Road and providing the access required.

Problem solved but at what cost?
Bridge construction is estimated to be \$1.25m.

Disadvantages?

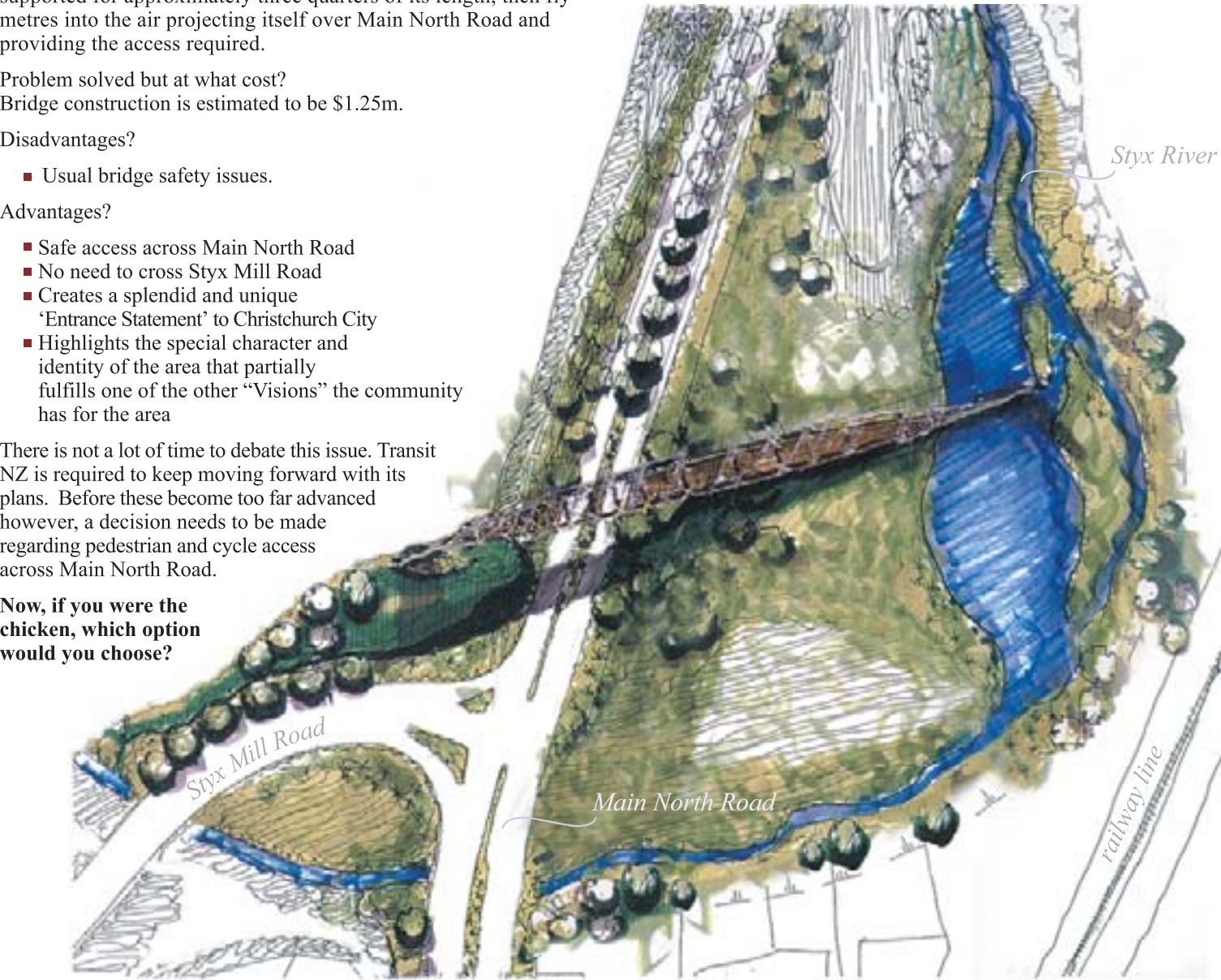
- Usual bridge safety issues.

Advantages?

- Safe access across Main North Road
- No need to cross Styx Mill Road
- Creates a splendid and unique ‘Entrance Statement’ to Christchurch City
- Highlights the special character and identity of the area that partially fulfills one of the other “Visions” the community has for the area

There is not a lot of time to debate this issue. Transit NZ is required to keep moving forward with its plans. Before these become too far advanced however, a decision needs to be made regarding pedestrian and cycle access across Main North Road.

Now, if you were the chicken, which option would you choose?



Artist’s impression of waka bridge rising from wetland to Styx Mill Reserve above Main North Road.



If you enjoy good company, fresh air and moderate exercise you may want to be involved in...

Community Planting Days

26 August Nurweek Park, Top end of Harewood Road 1 - 3pm
30 September Ouruhua Domain, Kapatone Stream 1 - 3pm
Bring your spades, gumboots and friends.

Clean Up the World Day

23 September Meet at Brooklands Boating Reserve
Lower Styx Road at 1pm
All welcome. Enquiries to John Knox Tel 379 9904

First Cutting of Toetoe at Janet Stewart Reserve

The Christchurch City Council in partnership with Te Korari established a Pa Harakeke on Janet Stewart Reserve on the Styx River. A Pa Harekeke is a grouping of flax and toetoe plants that have been especially grown for cultural purposes (ie weaving). These plants have been nurtured over the last five years by a range of people including members of Te Korari, and maintenance staff. Wai-ora Forest Landscapes and Erena McNeil who gave hours of voluntary time assisted with their translocation from Landcare at Lincoln. Earlier this year Te Korari and Nga Puna Waihanga, the Maori Artists and Writers, made the first cutting of the toetoe flower stalks.

The first taonga (treasured possession) according to Maori tradition, are given away. The collected materials of toetoe were used at a Nga Puna Waihanga workshop to make tukutuku panels.

Tukutuku panel weaving is a traditional Maori art form that is used in the decoration of meeting house walls, and in other panel art works. Toetoe are used as the vertical strips stitched into the back of the panel of weaving.

Weaving a tukutuku panel at the workshop.



Harvesting toetoe at Janet Stewart Reserve.

More than 70 people as far away as Greymouth and Fairlie, have been involved in the making of nineteen tukutuku panels expected to be completed by 11 August 2001. The weaving has been taught by Mae Taurua, one of the few remaining tukutuku weaving masters.

These panels have been gifted to the Christchurch City Library and will be blessed during the opening of the new Maori Resource Section where they will be on permanent display.

Toetoe. He tamariki i roto i te wao nui a Tane.
Toetoe. Children in the sacred forest of Tane.

Tane, the God of the Forest, in his long search for a mate, made love to Ngaore, the tender one. The result of their union became the toetoe, whose head of soft, feathery plumes now permanently droops in remembrance of the shameful time when Rata was scolded for cutting a tree without first uttering the correct karakia (prayer).

Styx History Group Report

The first book is nearing completion. With so little written on the Styx area (which is why this book is necessary), research has covered documents that would not otherwise have been considered. Recently, when skimming through published biographies and family histories in the library of the NZ Society of Genealogists, I found the earliest eyewitness account relating to the Styx area. The recollections of James Ashworth of "Harleston", Sefton (1918) at first sight seemed to have no relevance to the Styx area, until this was spotted:

“In February, 1854 we went to live in Purau, but we left about 11 months afterwards, owing to some slight grievance. My father and I came over the Plains to do harvesting. We carried our swags to Christchurch and then on to near the present site of the Belfast township, to a place known as ‘Jacob’s Hut’ where Mr Robert Duncan afterwards lived. There we worked for a Mr Treleaven on land just north of the Styx. All the work was done with sickle and scythe, but the wheat brought 10/- a bushel. It was carted down through Styx and sold in Christchurch. While we were at Belfast, my father took ill and twice during his illness I walked from Belfast to Lyttelton to and back to get medicine. I was about 11 years old at that time. When my father recovered we went back to Lyttelton”.

Actually, he was only nine at the time, and had started working with his father carting sand in England at the ripe old age of six, then in Australia shifting railway ballast at age seven. If you think you had a tough childhood...



Dennis Hills
Chairperson
Styx History Group

Become a Member of the ‘Guardians of the Styx’

The Guardians of the Styx welcomes new members.
I would like to become of member of the Guardians of the Styx community group.

Family Name	Telephone ()
First Name	Email
Title Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr/Other	Current Subscription \$5.00
Address	Donation \$ _____
.....	Total Enclosed \$ _____

All donations are eligible for New Zealand charitable donation tax rebates.
Please send your membership request to Guardians of the Styx, PO Box 5142, Papanui, CHRISTCHURCH