

DECEMBER 2020



Hi from Julie

I've just changed the calendar over to November as I write this. The end of the year is galloping into sight and what a year it has been.

Our Annual Christmas party is coming up on **11th of December**. Once again we are visiting the Richmond Working Men's Club but this time we should be in their lovely new building. Reg will be supplying his tunes so put on your dancing shoes, and join us for a delicious Christmas dinner and a turn on the dance floor. This year we are having a "Christmas" theme so bring out the Santa hats, flashing earring or Christmassy clothing and join in the fun. The meal will be \$10 again so easily the best value Christmas meal you will find.

Our holiday programme will be running again with lots of picnics, walks and visits to the lovely local parks and waterways. We are spoilt for choice here in Canterbury. Look out for the December programme and book your spot.

Julie



Julie and John Kirwan at opening of new Comcare premise

Christmas Lunch

Richmond Club, Avalon Street

Friday 11th December at 11:30am

Please make your own way to the restaurant, if possible, as there will be more members needing a ride than we are able to provide transport for. It's a Christmas theme, come dressed a little or a lot for the Christmas theme.

Lunch will be followed by entertainment.

Bookings are essential and payment of (\$10.00) is required by *Friday the 4th of December*.

Talk to staff if you need more information.



Christmas Day

Will you be on your own on Christmas Day?

Some Step Ahead staff will be opening Step Ahead's Stanmore Rd house for a **Christmas Day** get together. The day will run from **11:00am – 2:00pm** for members who would otherwise be on their own. Puriri St pickup at 10.30am. If it's a sunny day we will have a few games in the park and share a Christmas BBQ. Cost will be \$4.50 but you must book in so we know how many people are coming. We will look forward to having a fun time with lots of laughs and good company.



Holiday Programme

Step Ahead is only closed for the statutory holidays. Between Christmas and New Year and for the first week in January we have a holiday programme planned. We will do lots of day trips, visiting our favourite destinations. Hopefully the weather will be kind to us and we'll be able to take advantage of all the opportunities the great outdoors offers in the warmer weather, e.g. walking, swimming, biking, tennis, cricket etc. There is also plenty of opportunity to relax and read a book in the shade or sun. Do not miss out, come along, be with other members and enjoy the company, the ride, the scenery and activity.



Healthy Eating/Healthy Life Style

Some of you will be familiar with the 6 week Appetite For Life courses, run by Pegasus, having attended them yourselves.

If there is enough interest Step Ahead could offer a similar course focused on healthy eating and lifestyle.

Alternatively Pegasus could host a one off introductory session to the Appetite For Life programme, and members may then choose to enrol in one of the scheduled courses.

If you are interested in either of those options please talk to Di or any of the staff.



Avoiding Holiday Stress

The Christmas season is meant to be a time of joy, but for many people it can be a time of stress, anxiety, disappointment or loneliness. Christmas comes with high expectations of perfect, happy families enjoying celebrations and gifts, but not all of us are able to live up to these ideals. For those who have recently lost a loved one, Christmas can intensify feelings of grief and sadness. Some people experience feelings of isolation, financial pressures or increased family conflict that can make this a very stressful time of year.

However, there are some steps you can take to help manage stress and anxiety during the festive period.

Take care of money worries: Buying gifts and attending social get togethers can be expensive. Plan ways to reduce spending. For example, organise a 'Secret Santa' among the adults. Set a budget and stick to it. Organise a BBQ in the park or a party at home where everyone brings a plate of food.

Dealing with family tension: Plan how you will manage any feelings of anxiety or depression that may arise.

Drink in moderation. It may be tempting to drink too much during the festive period, but alcohol can contribute to stress, anxiety and depression.

Managing loneliness: Connect with friends and family. Even if you're separated by distance, you can stay in touch with loved ones online or by phone.

Volunteer. Why not lend a hand to a local organisation over Christmas? There are lots of charities who need help. You'll connect with people and feel good about making a positive contribution.

Attend community events. Find out what's on locally and get involved. Whether it's Christmas carols or local markets, getting out and about can help relieve loneliness.

Make plans for Christmas Day. Develop a plan in advance to avoid feeling depressed or stressed on the day. Perhaps make yourself a special breakfast, buy yourself a gift in advance so that you can enjoy on the day, attend a local church service, or take a stroll through the local park to give yourself a treat.

Recognising and changing behaviours that contribute to your stress will help you get through the Christmas period. Remember to stay healthy – eating well, exercising and getting enough sleep can help you cope with Christmas stress.



Member Staff Liaison Meeting Summary

Stanmore – 29th October 2020

Highlights from last month

Stone Carving starting again
Mosaics
Christian Fellowship Group
Art Exhibition
Computer Training
Music Group
Art Group trip to Darfield
Beginners Tramp and Day Tramping
Craft and Art Groups

New Programme Ideas

Appetite for Life Course
Stand up Paddle Boarding
Making Sushi and Rice Balls
Members versus staff games
Belly dancing
Kite Making and Flying
Trip to Wellington

Staff Notices

Holistic Wellness Group visit to Herb Farm cancelled
AGM next Tuesday. All welcome
Geraldine Fete next week
Open House on the 19th November
Horse Riding on 25th November
Visiting the White Flipped Penguins at Taylors Mistake on 27th November
Christmas Meal and function at Richmond Working Men's Club on 11th December



Board of Trustees

At the AGM on Tuesday 3rd of November we reluctantly accepted the resignation of Adele Wilkinson. Adele has been the Trust Board Chair for eight years and has seen Step Ahead through some very challenging times. It is sad to see her leave. Steve F who has been a member representative for six years also left the Board. Thank you so much to both Adele and Steve for their contributions to Step Ahead.

Evelyn Nelson was elected the new Step Ahead Trust Board Chairperson at a meeting immediately preceding the AGM. We are delighted to have Evelyn as the new Chair. Her skills, knowledge and experience of the Sector will be a bonus for Step Ahead.

Rae H and Val S have kindly volunteered to become Member representatives, joining Merrin who is staying on the Board for another year.

We are also lucky to have John Poppe, Mark Todd, Joyce Harris, and Bruce Hughey remain as Trustees and we look forward to working with them during another productive and rewarding year with Step Ahead.

If you would like a copy of the Annual Report or the Performance Report for the year please either call in and pick up a copy (available in the main lounge) or send an email request to <mailto:info@stepahead.org.nz>.



Island Hills Country Station Track

On Friday November 6th the tramping group visited this interesting track, (formerly the Hurunui High Country Track). The track has recently been re-named and branded after being closed for over a decade. The track features a two to three day commercial walk staying overnight in huts but we were fortunate in that Shaun Monk who runs the track and organises adventure tours and hunting on the property kindly allowed us to do a day tramp for free.

We arrived at Island Hills station at the back of Balmoral Forrest at around 11:00 am and Shaun drove us in his converted four wheel drive ex mine vehicle about half an hour into the bush clad hills to begin the trip. On the way up Shaun gave us lots of information about the history, geography and biology of this intriguing high country hill property.

The station covers 7000 hectares which includes vast un-grazed mountain areas and boasts a 600-hectare QE II Open Space Covenant, the largest of its type in the Canterbury district. The bush is mostly beech forest with the less regenerated parts of the property in Manuka. The Shands who have owned the property for generations lean heavily towards a conservation and biodiversity approach to farming which emphasises regeneration of native bush. One of the ways in which conservation values are adopted is the placement of many predator traps along the tracks. The public can sponsor the cost of these which helps keep pest numbers down. We noticed that there was abundant bird life with all sorts of native species present.

Because of very acid soils the farmed area does not carry very many cattle and sheep for its size. The main income for the farm is actually honey and there are now 2000 hives with six full time honey workers. Much of the honey is exported but they also sell Manuka, honeydew and clover honey directly from the Island Hills website. The livestock part of the property is secondary to this activity with Shaun hoping to see the trekking business becoming more prominent. He has been hugely busy over the last year cutting and improving tracks and facilities which he hopes will improve the properties income.

Shaun drove us up to a shortcut where we accessed the main walking track. Shaun said he was happy to carry some people over a creek to avoid getting their feet wet and Anna took him up on the offer. That made her day! We had a very pleasant two or three hours walking through mainly beech forest. In places there was beautiful moss underfoot and we crossed a number of footbridges over streams.

We had lunch at Bush Stream Hut (pictured) before walking out via another short-cut to be picked up by Shaun. On the drive back to the homestead, he gave us a brief history of the property.

Shaun told of us that back just before the Second World War there was this city bloke who wanted to try his hand at high country shepherding and who became both skilled and fit in the hills. This man learned the ropes from Dan Shand's grandfather and his two brothers. He went off to war with two of the brothers. Only this man and one of the brothers survived the war. He was one Charles Upham (VC x 2).

Arriving back at the homestead we had a cuppa and Anna got to feed the motherless lambs some milk from a bottle. We arrived back at Step Ahead after a great day out around 5 pm.

We took some videos from the tramp which you can view on our website and on our Facebook page.

See also www.islandhillsstation.com.

Chris



Laser Tag

A group of 6 of us set off for our first game of Laser Tag. Talk about "Laugh Factor"!

Barb led the way with Mel, Teresa, Kristina, Hana and Michelle (me).

Some walked slowly, some very fast. The scene set. The room was like an industrial movie set – dark but not so dark you couldn't see, stepping into another world, partitioned off with lots of places to hide, fluorescent paint – very futuristic.

We put on Power packs (lightweight like a slim line life jacket) and with laser guns in hand and lots of anticipation building, set off thru the doors. The twenty minutes of firing laser light guns at each other's' backpacks went so fast, everybody was "ducking and diving" sneaking up, or firing from a distance. Everybody laughing constantly. I'm sure we all got in touch with our inner child, had the best laugh and are keen to go back – who else is up for a game? Come join us.

Michelle C



Shell's Christmas mosaic

4WD Island Hills Farm Tour

Awesome farm whose main income is from bee keeping and breeding as it doesn't have the grazing to raise cattle. They are working through biodiversity to preserve the land for future generations 🍷 One of the biggest thrills of the day was getting carried across the river by the tour guide. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to visit, it was an absolute highlight in my year 🍷.

Anna P



Anna's found this beautiful Orchid while tramping at Island Hills Station



Walnut shell pin cushion made in Ashburton with Craft with Fiona



Lake Clearwater tramp



2020 Craft Groups

Craft at Step Ahead in 2020 has been both popular and creative. We have had Rachel join Barbara at Stanmore Road, helping to run the Wednesday craft group as we observed the sessions increase from fortnightly to weekly with the members requesting "More Craft please". Rachel is a qualified jeweller which is a huge asset to us, and the members have made some beautiful pieces of jewellery which they have been very delighted with. Rachel has introduced many new craft activities such as flower pressing, postcard making and fabric painting. She has also been taking craft activities at Puriri Street which the members have been enjoying. The fabric painting has been hugely successful and is now a reoccurring item on the craft activity list. Barbara has made body oils several times with the members which is always popular and relaxing. The oils are also proving to have skin anti-irritation benefits for some which is a bonus. There have been other craft activities such as wind chimes, decoupage, flax flowers and driftwood succulents.

Rachel, Karen and Karin have been offering some diverse and wonderful craft activities at Puriri Street for the members who attend the craft groups there. Leather craft, Resin craft, Fabric painting, quilt making, tie-dyeing, and jewellery making are just some of the craft activities that the members have gained skills in and shared their enthusiasm and participation in with others. I know I share with the members in saying a huge Thank You to all of the co-ordinators for the time they spend and the enthusiasm and passion they put into organising the craft groups so that they can make these activities affordable and enjoyable for members.

In Ashburton Anna has been enjoying having a volunteer called Fiona come in and share her skills and enthusiasm for craft with the members recently. They have had some sessions and have enjoyed the projects they have made. She will be continuing to come in 2021 and they are looking forward to continuing their craft journey and learning new skills.

Craft has been a great way to relax, have a chat with others while learning new skills and save money, rather than pay for things at shop prices. We welcome new members to come and join our craft groups. Definitely no experience needed, just a willingness to give it a go.



Step Ahead Trust

P O Box 32 025
167 Stanmore Road
Christchurch 8147

Phone 389 4001
Freephone 0800 688 732
Fax: 389 4042

www.stepahead.org.nz

info@stepahead.org.nz