



against Fletcher Development's proposal to subdivide and sell off the top part of Stokes Valley in 1981, that we really learned about organised opposition. This struggle involved a hearing at which Russell spoke, and the result was that the proposal did not go ahead and that Hutt County Council bought most of the land for reserve purposes.

We no longer stand back, but put in submissions or comments about all schemes or management plans where we think it is important for us to have input. Late last year our Conservation sub-Committee was almost swamped beneath a deluge of management plans for local reserves which all came up for review.

When the time has seemed right, we have organised public meetings. Of these, the evening with Sir Edmond Hillary in 1980 and the evening entitled "Which political

party will save the forests?" prior to the 1984 General Election were so well supported that it was 'standing room only'. Our support of Conservation Week has always been strong, but it will be difficult to reach the standard set in 1983 when we had a week-long display in a hall in central Lower Hutt. Anyone who was there will remember the beautiful tie-dyed silk waterfall which was the centre of the display for "Water Means Life".

Many hours of our time have been spent on issues concerning the Hutt River estuary and the Petone foreshore. For more than two years a small group of members under Stan Butcher's leadership did regular bird surveys at the estuary and the rivermouth in order to justify our claim that the mudflat there should be given protection as a wildlife reserve. At long last the Wellington Harbour has acknowledged the wildlife values of the estuary, which has the only mudflat in Wellington Harbour. Our next aim is to get the Harbour Board's reclamation designation for the mudflat lifted. Proposals for boat launching ramps on the foreshore and the management of the East Petone Foreshore Reserve are problems that we tackle month after month, and we will be working on these well into the 1980s. . .

My particular interests have been in forming close liaison with the Parks and Reserves Departments of our local Councils, and with the local news media. This has meant a good supply of plants for local projects. We are invited to have input into local reserve proposals, and local papers give our efforts and opinions good coverage. We now tend to initiate projects, rather than wait to respond to initiatives from others. This has proved to be successful and in

the case of our 'Bushfires' leaflet distributed last November, led to the Lower Hutt City Council's Head of Parks and Reserves offer to sponsor the printing costs. The pamphlet encourages people to safeguard gorse as a nursery plant rather than burn it.

An article cannot really do justice to all the things that Lower Hutt Branch has been involved with in the last eleven years. Perhaps I will simply extend a warm welcome to you to call on us when you are in Wellington and share in some of our activities. Some of you will have this opportunity when you come to our Summer Camp-out in January 1988. . . see you there. 🦋

Summer Camp

The Lower Hutt branch summer camp out is to be held at the Boys Brigade campsite, Wainuiomata, between January 5-14, 1988. For \$5 per head per night members and their families can camp out on this 240-ha site, with ample space for talks and meetings. Local branches will host an interesting programme of day trips and evening talks. Members will be able to select the period over which they intend to stay at the camp.

We hope family groups from all over the country will be able to share some of the summer activities in the Wellington region — there will be room for caravans, camper vans and tents.

Those interested in attending should send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the Secretary, Lower Hutt Branch, PO Box 31097, Lower Hutt.



Veterans' and Disabled Person's picnic, 1986. With the "experts" providing litres of billy tea and the birds singing in the surrounding bush, even the blind or immobile have an enjoyable day up at Kaitoke. Photo: Jack Richards