

# Interview with Julie Thomson

**1 March 2017**

Julie has been a tireless worker for the Motuihe Island Restoration Trust since she first became involved in 2003/4. Her particular interest and expertise is in education and biodiversity as Julie has been a biology and environmental science teacher at Epsom Girls Grammar School until her retirement at the end of 2016.

Julie had an interest in Motuihe as she organized annual visits to the island to enable students to carry out rocky shore studies. John Laurence and Michael Wood were invited to speak to the school by the Principal to talk about the opportunities available for hands on learning that the restoration of the island presented to secondary school students. Julie was developing a new course in environmental science so was keen to get involved. Her year 10 students visited the island and John Laurence led them on a guided tour, after that Julie was “hooked”. The first project her students were involved with was building nesting boxes. Also EGGs was given their own planting area which made student trips to the island to plant trees very special.

After attending some Trust meetings as an observer, Julie was invited to a weekend training camp for regular volunteers. They stayed two nights sleeping on the floor of the woolshed. Ronnie Harrison cooked a BBQ. That group learned a huge amount, particularly from Helen Lindsay who was an expert on native plants, and they became the leaders of the regular volunteers for the next decade. Julie became a trustee until she took a break in 2016 due to work commitments.

With several educational and monitoring projects underway, Julie will continue to make a significant contribution to the restoration of Motuihe Island.