

Morrin Rout's review of the Railtrail interpretation booklet "The Christchurch-Little River Railtrail" written by Fiona Farrell.

It was an inspired decision to ask award-winning novelist and poet and Banks Peninsula resident Fiona Farrell to write the guidebook for the Christchurch-Little River Railtrail. Her knowledge of and love for the area shines out in the text and will surely tempt the most sluggish amongst us to try out this new attraction. The trip by road from Christchurch to Little River is well traversed and many travellers, intrigued by the spectacular scenery of rocky peaks, sun-bleached hills and the glinting waters of Lakes Ellesmere and Forsyth will have wanted not just to discover more about the history of the area but also to find a way of engaging more immediately with the landscape. The Guidebook will certainly encourage readers to explore the Railtrail either on foot or bike by providing a comprehensive account of the changes wrought by geological activity, the settlement of Maori and European, the coming of the railway and our present-day farming activities. The book highlights the natural history of the area and points out that it is the birds that most visitors find striking. I have always been a fan of the pukeko and, thanks to the Guidebook, I now know that they live in family groups sharing a single nest during the breeding season and that they converse constantly with each other using a 'language' of 25 calls. I'll be listening out as I pass along to see how many of these calls I can distinguish.



"The Christchurch-Little River Railtrail" booklet by Fiona Farrell.

As well as providing a thorough description of the trail itself and useful tips on weather and equipment, the Guidebook also brings to attention the fragile nature of the area and the efforts being made to conserve, restore and protect the lakes and their precious ecosystems. The book has been generously sponsored by the Sustainable Management Fund of the Ministry of the Environment and by Scorpio Books, and there is no doubt that this exciting new venture will not only encourage people to explore the area but will also make them aware of how valuable a resource it is to present and future generations. I congratulate the members of the Christchurch Little River Railtrail Trust for their vision and hard work and commend this excellently written Guidebook to all those who want a new and exciting adventure. Just reading the book will be enough to have you tightening the spokes of your old bike or unearthing the walking boots and heading off to explore the new Railtrail.

Review by Morrin Rout, Broadcaster - Bookenz/Women on Air



The booklet was produced in 2006 by Liz Todhunter for the Christchurch-Little River Railtrail Trust and was printed by Toltech Print.

Copies of the booklet are available from Scorpio Books (79 Hereford Street, Christchurch).

If you live in New Zealand, you can purchase a copy by sending a cheque for \$5 to the Christchurch-Little River Railtrail Trust, PO Box 166, Lincoln 7640. Please include your postal address.

