

# George Aitken honoured with memorial walk at Waikawa



**W**hile the humble George Aitken himself would have probably shied away from the spotlight, the Waikawa community remembered a special man recently.

Councillor Julie Keast and Southland District Council graphic designer Macaela Hawkins joined George's daughter Chrissy and a gathering of friends in February to unveil a memorial sign in his honour.

It marks a forest walk which he initially created for local children and is now enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. It's testament to his unwavering dedication to the Waikawa community he proudly called home.

Your quintessential southern man with a knack for DIY, George Aitken was a hard-working character who thrived on helping others.

After retiring to the area in 1993, he witnessed the joy local children had exploring and spent many hours slicing back the growth to develop the track and improve access and visibility.

Those strolling will discover labels identifying the native trees which were established by volunteers from the Waikawa and Districts Museum where George could often be found cataloguing exhibits.

Growing up in Invercargill and Waimahaka, George worked as a nurse at Ashburn Hall, a psychiatric hospital in Dunedin, before returning south after his wife Nola passed away. The couple had four children.

Settling in Waikawa, George devoted his time to an array of community groups, including the Waikawa Fire Brigade. His commitment to the Rural Fire Service is now sadly etched in history as he passed away on Christmas Eve 2002 while attending a callout at Curio Bay.



**Next time you find yourself at beautiful Waikawa, head to the domain and go for a stroll along the George Aitken Walk.**

**Cr Julie Keast, George Aitken's daughter Chrissy and Council graphic designer Macaela Hawkins with the new sign.**

