

Gorge Gazette

News about Trelissick Park, the Ngaio Gorge and Streams

(Footbridges over the stream are numbered from 1 – 6 going downstream, excluding the old bridge off the side of Wightwick's Field).

Abbreviations:

WCC Wellington City Council
 GW Greater Wellington Regional Council
 DoC Department of Conservation
 TPG Trelissick Park Group
 HPPA Highland Park Progressive Association

AUGUST 2010

Life is never dull in the gorge. Animals misbehaving, landscape sullied, stream banks washed away, weeds engulfing. For all that, Trelissick Park is gradually becoming a "green and pleasant" place to frequent.

Rabbit Grey Matter

Our resident rabbits on the railway restoration site downstream from bridge 5 have learned how to disrobe the fabric mesh around vulnerable plants, for a leafy feast. This called for an emergency string tie-up.

What will be the next rabbit ploy?

Marilyn Hester reports that the rabbit who lives below the Trelissick Crescent entrance has taken to ring-barking kowhai tree trunks. Other menu preferences are young karamu, cabbage tree, koromiko and lancewood. Toetoe is a random choice.

So far only specific areas are affected, but rabbits can multiply. The rejoicing will be great when GW does a night shoot.

People and Planting

The area around bridge 6 has long been like a dog's breakfast. Many thanks to the small group from ACC and to the St Benedict's school children with parents, who are rendering it less so, weeding and planting.



But at the appointed time, 12 hardy souls arrived. The stream was not so bad, but still provided anxious moments. Spurred by the conditions, the weeding and planting was quickly done. A welcome spread with Indian flavours followed, under the token shelter of trees by the car park. Their spot is flourishing and always looks immaculate.



Koromiko - disrobed and stripped

An energetic and cheerful group from the Global Volunteers planted two weed-cleared areas on the slope above the fish ladder - see photo.

We were also grateful for the visit by three young ladies from the Lotteries Commission, allowing the bank across the stream above the debris trap to be planted with toetoe, supplemented by karamu and kahikatea. The toetoe came from the Rimutaka Prison nursery via the Honda Treefund.

The designated afternoon for the visit by Sathya Sai Organisation was a daunting prospect of rain, wind and cold. Would anyone turn up? How would we cross the raging torrent below the debris

George and Andrew Symmes, Sylvia Dixon/Mark Collinge, Eva Durrant and Jack Stanton have been busy working on their spots. Trevor Mowbray has some trees for when he returns.

Carolyn Theiler and Peter Reimann took a group from the Onslow Historical Society through the upper valley and forest remnant area below Ngaio Gorge Road one wet Saturday morning. This was to augment an earlier talk by Maria Archer and Nicci Wood of WCC to illustrate the effects of the changing urban environment on the streams and what action TPG and local Councils have taken to improve this.

More Trees

WCC have just enhanced the lower entrance by planting 500 trees between the road and the stream. Marilyn Hester has finished her magnificent "flood plain" restoration downstream of the debris trap, with grasses, rushes, sedges, toetoe and flax from the Honda Treefund and home nurseries. Peter Reimann's DoC-funded railway riparian area below bridge 5 is filling up - the tally now is approaching 1,100. Malcolm McDonald has been cutting gorse below Trelissick Crescent - a destination for some of the 500 trees supplied by WCC to TPG in July. More trees have been planted for the contractor as restoration and for slope stabilisation after the recent Ngaio Gorge Road strengthening excavation.

GW "Take Care" Application Successful

Trelissick Park has had tremendous benefit from GW's "Take Care" scheme over the past few years, in the form of eradication of large areas of blackberry on railway land, spraying of wandering willie and montbretia, provision of thousands of plants and home nursery requirements. Thanks Robyn Smith and Juzah Zammit-Ross for all that support. TPG have now been awarded three years of "Take Care" funding for follow-up careful spraying of patches of wandering willie and for home nursery requirements.

Weed Departures

Thanks to the Community Max workers, who weeded below the carpark half-way up Ngaio Gorge Road, arranged through Megan Banks of GW.

As reparations for accidental spray bi-kill earlier this year, the contractor has cut two areas of railway land blackberry by the Korimako stream. Spraying of re-growth is to follow. More areas to plant next year.

The "Triangle" Transformed



Less than two years ago, the little "triangle" formed by the junction of tracks downstream from Wightwick's field was a boggy, unsightly mess of weeds and logs. This transformation is all down to Mark Sheriff, Marilyn Hester and Carolyn Theiler.

A Word from Frances

Frances Lee wishes to thank those volunteers who continue to do so much valuable work in the Park. She says "many trees have already been planted this season - some in bare areas after a spraying programme. The growth of previous plantings has been amazing to watch and it is wonderful to see more and more cleared areas now supporting a variety of native trees.

"Our Chairman, Peter Reimann, has been relentless in the work he has done in such things as guiding commercial companies seeking environmental work, and in caring for his home nursery and receiving trees which have been gifted or purchased with grants. He can often be found - on his own - carrying trees down into the Park for planting. We also owe him so much for the many varied jobs involved in leading our Trelissick Park Group. Other highly motivated volunteers are Marilyn and Bill Hester, and Carolyn Theiler, who spend hours each week weeding, planting, collecting rubbish as well as organising their home nurseries.

"Then we have those who come regularly to working bees twice a month, and to "spotees" who have their own plots to plant and nurture.

"We are so grateful to all these people for the time they devote to Trelissick Park - making it a real environmental gem so close to the CBD of Wellington and accessible to many."



A Native Alien

In a way, it is a pity that karaka (*Cornocarpus laevigatus*) is frowned upon in this park. Some exist below the Ngaio Gorge Road and randomly elsewhere. They are easy to find because of the many seedlings under the tree. They can grow to 15 m, with a 60 cm trunk. "The leaves are dark green, leathery, 10-15 cm long x 5 cm wide. The flowers are small, 4-5 mm in diameter and greenish. The berries are large, bright orange 2.5-4 cm long. Flowering is from late winter through spring, and berries ripen from mid-summer through autumn."¹ The berries were a source of food for Maori. The outer flesh is edible, but the kernel is poisonous.

Because the seedlings germinate so freely, karaka can form groves and take over from other species. One such area downstream from bridge 3, recently cleared of weeds, was shaded by karaka. One recent morning, Bill Hester and Peter Reimann had a karaka murdering session. However, one particularly fine looking specimen was spared - see photo. Subsequently, it took only an hour to plant 70 trees there, during a working bee.

Art in the Park - The Alcatraz Gate

Ontrack have installed a magnificent gate to guard the entrance to their footbridge giving access across the stream to the railway above the magazine building ruin. This fine example of steel bars and razor wire must surely rank in merit alongside the other new artistic edifices gracing our city.

In conjunction with Ontrack, David Grace has put a padlock in series with the two other padlocks to give us access to the new plantings provided by Ontrack after the recent railway upgrade. This padlock idea was simple, but in the throes of execution, David will assert that "if anything can go wrong, it will."

Track from Oban Street

Many thanks to David Grace and Barry Durrant for recent investigations, following work by Andy Hollings and before that by Chris Horne and Margaret and Keith Maynard. David's survey of households in Highland Park and Wadestown for potential usage provides justification for the track. The long story continues.....

The track will also give access to the large infestations of wandering willie, climbing asparagus and other weeds on this side of the stream.

A New Seat

Barry Durrant's spot is the grassy area on railway land between bridges 4 and 5. It is warmed by winter sunshine - just the place for a seat to provide that moment of quiet contemplation or refreshment. This is going to cost around \$1,500 and we are seeking donations. Please make cheques to "Trelissick Park Group" and address it to our treasurer, Frances Lee, at 24 Orari Street, Ngaio 6035. Otherwise, give her a call on 479 2600 for the bank account number for direct payment.

The seat comes with a plaque. Any ideas for words?

References

- 1 John Dawson, Rob Lucas. "Nature Guide to the New Zealand Forest". Random House 2007.

Contacts

Chairman & Adopt-a-Spot: Peter Reimann (04) 938 9602, peter.reimann@paradise.net.nz

Working bees: Dorothy Douglass (04) 472 8558

Wellington City Council (reporting slips and fallen trees across tracks, other problems): (04) 499 4444

Greater Wellington pollution hotline: 0800 496 734

Website: www.trelissickpark.org.nz

Working Bees - Check with Peter before coming – changes may occur (Dorothy will be away)

Sunday 5 September, 1.30 PM Trelissick Crescent

Tuesday 14 September, 9.30 AM Hanover Street

The Gorge Gazette

Compiled by Peter Reimann about every 4 months - all contributions and suggestions gratefully received.

Come and participate in the transformation of Trelissick Park or give us your ideas – all welcome. Thanks to all who contributed.