

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
 TPG Trelissick Park Group
 HPPA Highland Park Progressive Association
 VUW Victoria University of Wellington

Website www.trelissickpark.org.nz (includes past Gorge Gazettes)

Facebook* <https://www.facebook.com/TrelissickParkGroup>

* You do not have to be a member to just look - when the registration window comes up, just click on "close".

DECEMBER 2012

After countless years, could our supply of restoration sites in the Trelissick Park battle-ground be exhausted at last? Where are we going to put the 2,400 home nursery plants and the 500 from WCC next year? The plot thickens.....(see Appendix).

A Floral Spring



Olearia cheesmanii has been a spectacular performer this spring around the Wellington area. The Hesters took this photo (at left) at the Northern Walkway entrance, opposite 19 Trelissick Crescent. It was planted a few years ago by Carolyn Theiler and Marilyn Hester, emanating from another in Cummings Park nearby. Who said natives were dull compared with exotics! We could do with more of these.

Marilyn says "it is easy to forget how fragrant and

flowery the common mahoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*) can be - see her photo on right.

Also this spring, rangiora (*Brachyglottis repanda*), laden with masses of small yellow-white flowers, provided random splashes of colour on bush slopes and forest margins. Golden-yellow kowhai (*Sophora* species) provided endless delight for bird and human. Sprays of flowers from cabbage trees (*Cordyline australis*) added a touch of mystique.

More on Our Furry Friends

VUW students Tracy Poole and Lisa Solly have been doing a great job each month helping WCC Ranger Matt Robertson setting out, then retrieving chew cards located all over the Park, and analysing the results. These small cardboard cards, impregnated with peanut paste, are placed at 50 metre intervals along tracks in the Park to monitor rat/mouse/mustelid activity.

Despite mayhem by curious dogs, the exercise has so far identified several gaps in our armoury, resulting in additional bait stations near the lowest entrance to the Park. Also a rat 'hot spot' was found in the forest

below Ngaio Gorge Road and possibly another above the Korimako/Kaiwharawhara confluence. It is believed that there is constant infiltration of rats from residential areas (compost bins and the like). This is one of the hazards of an urban park - especially one bounded by residential areas on all sides.

The Trelissick Park regular "kill team" (Barry Durrant, Steve Mackle and Bill Hester) look after the bait stations and mustelid traps. They helped in the initial set-up of the 60 chew card sites. Tracy and Lisa (along with Matt) will run the chew card activity monthly during 2013, to determine seasonal activity. Bill's photo shows one of the chew cards, behind a mustelid trap.



It is believed the bait stations have kept Trelissick Park free of possums for at least the last decade. We wish it were the same for rats and mustelids.

Also Rabbits.....

The Park also supports a rabbit population. Glen Falconer from GW advises that there are plenty around the whole region at the moment. "This is pretty typical in spring when breeding occurs, along with a big supply of fresh grass, particularly around mown areas, which rabbits love. This influx of rabbits traditionally dies down over January-February when most little bunnies succumb to cats, dogs, stoats, winged prey or disease (RHD)." He says that because last year was wet, with too much grass, rabbits were kept suppressed - one reason being that they don't favour long wet grass. He has expressed willingness to help, but with many reservations.

"...poisoning is a very costly exercise in this type of area, often for a few rabbits. It is costly due to the advertising, signage and notifications that must occur with putting bait on the ground in a public area. By baiting this area dogs would need to be excluded for 3-5 months". He says small rabbits are not able to eat baits and the mothers have limited range due to breeding. They would rather eat the abundance of grass than carrots. "Night shooting in these small areas is also not always successful, as they have so much cover to hide in, you often only get one shot, then the rest are gone for an hour or two." Trapping is another option, "although very hard to do with cage traps and in public areas."

We have canvassed rabbit-thwarting efforts in previous Gorge Gazettes (the diligent wire-haired terrier and protection around specific plant species).¹

Note that wild rabbit is often available from Moore Wilson's - absolutely delicious when roasted.

Fodder from Weeds

While in this culinary vein, Frances Lee has unearthed a newspaper article about a book on cooking with such delicacies as dandelion, chickweed and onion weed.² Fennell anyone?

Frances Lee and "The Welllys"

Along with three others, Frances Lee was a finalist for Wellingtonian of the Year in the "Environment" category. Her citation read: "For nearly three decades, Frances Lee has worked tirelessly to transform Trelissick Park in the Ngaio Gorge into an attractive natural wilderness, recruiting, motivating and inspiring volunteers". Well done and well deserved, Frances! 450 people came to imbibe, dine, be entertained and view the award presentations at the Amora Hotel.

Ngaio School

Plans are afoot to refurbish the school's arboretum and to de-weed and plant the gully area on the southern side of the school, working in conjunction with WCC, parents and children. With similar problems to nearby Trelissick Park, Marilyn Hester and Peter Reimann visited to proffer suggestions.

The Ever-diminishing Pest Plants

Earlier in the year, Megan Banks (GW), Illona Keenan (WCC) and TPG collaborated to identify problem weeds and their locations.

Megan then organised Dave Williams to tackle the weed tree species - mainly buddleia and wattle. This is under the last year of the GW "Take Care" funding.

Meanwhile, Kaitiaki O Ngahere have been working on old man's beard, wandering willie and some other weed species in the Korimako and Kaiwharawhara valleys. This work is jointly funded every year by GW and WCC for KNEs (Key Native Ecosystems).

Wanted - Someone to Help with Organising

The "old guard" has been around for far too long. We need "new brooms". Or is it "fresh blood"? Let us know if you are interested, so that we can work out something mutually suitable.

Thanks to all Our Volunteers and Both Councils

To all involved with the 20 working bees and 6 meetings, volunteers who have adopted spots or work throughout the Park, corporate and school groups, together with staff from WCC and GW - what fantastic people and what a year! It's so rewarding working in such a collaborative way. Many thanks and happy Christmas.

References

1. Gorge Gazettes, July 2012, December 2010, August 2010, May 2009 - all accessible from our web-site.
2. Michael Daly. "Find It Eat It". New Holland Publishers.

Contacts

Chairman & Adopt-a-Spot: Peter Reimann (04) 938 9602, peter.reimann@paradise.net.nz
 Working bees: David Grace (04) 476 7563
 Wellington City Council (reporting slips and fallen trees across tracks, other problems): (04) 499 4444
 Greater Wellington pollution hotline: 0800 496 734

Working Bees - Check with David before coming – changes may occur.

Usually 1st Sunday of the month at 1.30 PM and 2nd Tuesday at 9.30 AM. See web-site for updates.

APPENDIX

Potential Restoration Sites for 2013 (There are sure to be more.....)

(Map references - see Park gridded map accessed from the home page of the web-site)

Remove grass behind bollards by Waikowhai St entrance and plant	011080
Infill plant at Waikowhai St entrance (Hames' spot)	013080
Infill plant true left bank upstream of bridge 1	010073
Weed, clear, then plant across stream from the track "triangle" (down from Wightwick's Field)	008062
Infill plant "Japonica" site by the Northern Walkway above the transmission tower	029030
Infill plant Alexandra Harper's spot by bridge 2	012052
Clear, then plant on slope above/behind "karaka" spot by bridge 3	012048
Infill plant the various Japanese honeysuckle sites on slope between the transmission tower and the fish passage (at the Kaiwharawhara tunnel exit)	025030 area
Clear, then plant gorse-removed areas by the minor track branching from the Northern Walkway	028035
Clear then plant large area up-slope from bridge 5 (access from the abovementioned minor track)	024035
Clear, then plant bank downstream of old Tararua Tramping Club clearing beyond bridge 5	015032
Clear then plant riparian shelf on Wadestown side upstream of bridge 6	037016
Re-plant Judy Paulin's spot above the streamside memorial seat, destroyed by slip from railway	043017
Infill plant various small areas below Hanover St down to stream	
Clear, then plant riparian strip across stream opposite Rod Donald northern rata memorial tree	076032
Infill plant on the Sathya Sai Service Organisation "island" up from the debris trap	095049
Infill plant slope across stream opposite the magazine building	110032
Various riparian sites Marilyn Hester has in mind for our 70 <i>Carex secta</i>	
Plant our 500+ kahikatea throughout forested areas, if ready	

Membership drawn from Highland Park Progressive Association Inc., Ngaio Progressive Association Inc., Onslow Historical Society Inc., Private Landowners Group, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society (Wellington Branch), Wellington Botanical Society, Wadestown Resident's Association.