

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

GG Gorge Gazette

GW Greater Wellington Regional Council

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

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/TrelissickParkGroup> (you do not need to be a member to look).

DECEMBER 2013

Our last working bee for the year was a sunny affair in the Korimako valley. The photo, by Gottfried Theiler, shows some of our party of 14, enjoying delicious pre-Christmas fare, provided by Angela Inclendon and Regine Blattner, after our weeding session.



A Plaque for Frances

Cr Andy Foster suggested that a track in the park should be named after Frances Lee. At our last meeting, we agreed that the track leading off the Northern Walkway (below Trelissick Crescent) down to just upstream of bridge 4 should be named 'The Frances Lee Track', with a plaque at each end. Frances is happy with this choice. It is a well-used and quick access to the Koromiko valley, through well-established and attractive bush. There is also historical interest, as the upper part appears to follow an old benched track. Referring to the gridded map via our website, the track goes from 020047 to 015039.

This goes some way to acknowledging the lengthy and outstanding contribution that Frances has made to Trelissick Park since 1991.

The Predator Score

The 'killing team', servicing traps and bait stations, consists of Bill Hester, Barry Durrant and Steve Mackle, aiming for monthly checking and replenishment. It is felt that regular monthly servicing is sustainable for the volunteers and also is appreciated by the predators.

The final score for our 14 traps for the year is 8 rats, 1 stoat and 1 hedgehog.

This year, bait stations have increased from 21 to 33. Most were installed in a new area below Oban Street in Wadestown. They quickly killed a large number of rats in that area. We also added a few stations in other 'rat popular' areas which seemed to be infiltration spots into the park.

There has only been one possible possum sighting in a decade - a great success in GW's elimination efforts. The vast majority of bait is taken by rats - as confirmed by night-video cameras at popular sites.

Bill Hester says it is believed that rat populations are relatively under control, with most new rats coming from the nearby residential suburbs. Hence our efforts are focused on protecting the boundaries of the

park - difficult in a narrow urban park surrounded by railway land and residential compost bins. We know that bait hoarding can occur by rats - so have been reducing bait replenishment to lower levels. We are awaiting approval by WCC to trial 'block bait', which would further reduce bait hoarding and unintentional introduction of excess bait into the environment.

Thanks to these efforts and some migration from Zealandia, Wellington is a bit of an oasis for birds. Hearing the dawn chorus is becoming quite something. For NZ birds and their calls, don't forget that fantastic website www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz.

That Pesky Scour

On 6 May the raging Korimako took out part of the streamside track down from Wightwick's Field¹. A vestige remains for the wary feet of the passing throng. WCC's David Halliday employed an engineer to look at installing a rock-filled wire-mesh gabion, but the price estimate and later re-estimate were far too high for these straitened times. Early next year, a WCC contractor will remove the mahoe trees there and cut into the bank to widen the track. We all know this is not the ultimate solution, but TPG had to agree with WCC that at present there is no other option.

A Search and Destroy Mission

Crofton Downs School children enjoyed their walk through the park earlier in the year¹ and were keen to re-visit. Teacher Louise Gusterson, aided by some parents, organised a wandering willie search and destroy mission for the Korimako valley. This weed now lies in heaps for eventual decomposition. The photo, by Jack Stanton, shows the group on Wightwick's Field, with Peter Reimann in flight. Later on, a picnic lunch occurred there.



Entering the Realm of History

A few months ago, The Onslow Historical Society were casting around for someone to write a history of the Trelissick Park Group for *The Onslow Historian*, to be published in 2014. Not much to write, you would think, just pulling out a few weeds and planting a few trees. More than 24,000 words later, Peter Reimann has developed an admiration for authors who painstakingly research biographies and histories. It was fascinating, covering the 23 years of trials and tribulations, along with some earlier history. Our 20 hectares surrounded by suburbs, bordered on one side by a railway and a busy road on the other, with a sewer system and stream through the middle is a recipe for trouble. Add to this a legacy of early logging and farming. Frances Lee provided valuable input and comment. Judy Siers, who was a WCC Councillor for much of the period, is currently doing the review and will then organise publication early next year.

Success at the Debris Trap

That unhealthy elongated pool on a bed of silt, upstream of the debris trap has all gone, thanks to removal of the rocks at the trap.² At last we have a proper stream, riffing cleanly over a bed of pebbles. On the principle of 'a little and often' we are manually removing branches and debris from the trap to avoid the build-up that impedes fish passage.

A recent fish survey was encouraging. Frances Forsyth of Wildlands reports plenty of shortfin eels, abundant redfin bullies and one trout upstream of the debris trap. She is suggesting a stream walk from the estuary to Ngaio to look for other barriers impeding fish passage and to check on gravel and silt movement towards the estuary.

Our Albatross

Wadestown and Highland Park residents have only one access into the park (from Hanover Street). A survey of residents by TPG's David Grace in 2010 showed majority support for a track down into the park from Oban Street. Barry Durrant has investigated a route and looked at designs for a footbridge across the Kaiwharawhara Stream. The idea for such a track was raised with WCC in 1981 by Keith Maynard of Wadestown Residents' Association. It was later listed as an access policy in the WCC Trelissick Park Management Plan of 1995. TPG advocated in vain at various times thereafter for this track - very expensive because of the footbridge. TPG have to find the funding. Are there any philanthropists around?

We wonder why a footbridge is necessary for such a normally gentle stream over a flat gravel bed. There are precedents for bridge-less crossings of similar streams on well-used tracks.



From the Coal-face

David Hames has been keeping the Waikowhai Street entrance plantings weed-free, also the Sathya Sai Service Organisation at their difficult spot upstream from the debris trap. Michael Courtney from Rabo Bank spent his corporate volunteer day weeding the Trelissick Crescent verge plantings and clearing the debris trap. It is pretty rewarding walking through the park these days, if you ignore the weeds.

Peter Reimann's home nursery is awash with kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydoides*) and otherwise well endowed for next year. So we only ordered 100 plants from WCC - infill for shady forested areas and 'heritage' canopy species.

Maybe one of these days our longing for more rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*) will come to pass. We have but few, the one pictured being next to Bridge 3.

Thanks and Happy Christmas

To our wonderful volunteers, those in WCC, GW, others involved with us, kindred groups and friends....

References

1. GG, June 2013.
2. GG, September 2013.

Contacts

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

Working Bees

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

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