

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	NCDRA	Ngaio Crofton Downs Residents' Association
GW	Greater Wellington Regional Council	WRA	Wadestown Residents' Association
HPPA	Highland Park Progressive Association	DOC	Department of Conservation
TPG	Trelissick Park Group	F & B	Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society

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

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

DECEMBER 2016

The extended spring, cold and wet, was a joy for those bent on planting. 1,345 went in. Rain still comes. Weeds flourish.

An Avian 'Domestic'

Barry Durrant took these photos outside his house above the park. The falcon was happy on the dead blue-gum, but it was the tui's favourite perch. 10 tui and 2 kaka arrived. Chased by the weight of numbers the falcon retreated to the safety of a pine tree. The kaka dived while the tui made loud screeching noises until the falcon flew off.



The New Zealand falcon (kārearea) swoops down on a range of animals, insects, lizards and birds, reaching speeds of over 100 km/h. They nest in simple scrapes in epiphytes of large trees or on the ground under rocks, logs or ledges. They are at risk mainly from cats, possums and mustelids. More information and stunning photos are in the New Zealand Birds Online link.¹



Anyone for Perch?

When we sent Barry's falcon/tui/kaka photos to Danielle Shanahan of Zealandia, she said they "made my morning". She went on to say that "we have been pondering getting rid of the perch in our lower lake here to restore some of the balance. But of course it is part of a wider tributary, and so the idea has been bandied around that we could help coordinate a whole-of-catchment waterway improvement effort (allowing fish and eel migration)." The introduced fish in the upper dam were removed a while ago and a feasibility study shows that this is also possible for the lower dam, home to 20-30,000 perch.

Dog Disasters



Fortunately, no dogs died. Recently Illona Keenan of WCC bore the brunt of the angst from free-range dogs eating bait station Brodifocoum pellets, either directly or from spillage. Canine sense of smell and appetite is extraordinary.

The bait stations have now been converted to use block bait, wired in securely and inaccessible to dogs - see photo. Bill Hester and his team report block bait well-chewed by rats. Success! No more spillage and no more sick dogs. It is also better for the environment - night-videos (on our Facebook page) showed rats taking the pellets out to hoard in their nests.

Unfortunately, possums can no longer access the bait. The park has been free of possums for more than 10 years, except for two recent cases, both believed to be infiltrators. We must rely now more on GW servicing of pellet bait stations in the surrounding areas.

Rubbish Sophistication

Full marks to the creators of our latest art installations, gracing most of the entrances. It is our fervent wish that dog poo bags will no longer sully the landscape. Bill Hester has other rubbish bin photos on our Facebook page.



A Plug for Gellicious

57 Kaiwharawhara Road is more or less the last missing link in the ecological corridor from the harbour to the outer green belt. However, Australian wattle, willow, blackberry, wandering willie, bind-weed and climbing dock are not to be entertained. The land belongs to Wellington Water and they were happy for us to be let loose on it. Vagrant possessions and the trees went, thanks to WCC. Huge volumes of part-buried rubbish went (sorry, future archaeologists). Conservation Volunteers did two weed sweeps and Warrick Fowlie and Peter Reimann created a wandering willie heap - surely a contender for the Guinness Book of Records. The near neighbour who manufactures Gellicious Gelato was so impressed he came down to hand out some pottles of Kaffee Eis (photo).



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An enormous pile of remnant wood advertised as free firewood vanished within a couple of hours.

Next year WCC will spray weed re-growth, then we will plant and mulch. Some of our surplus grasses have already gone in, next to the footpath.

Robin White

Sadly, Robin passed away recently. Robin and her husband John adopted one of our original 'spots' about 15 years ago at the end of the flood-plain downstream

of the debris trap. She was a stalwart of the Ngaio community, acting as Secretary of NCDRA. She was involved with restoration of nearby Orleans Reserve and tending kaka procreation in their nesting box.²

Amber is Departing

WCC's Amber Bill (Open Space & Parks Manager) has been a 'rock' over many years, fostering harmonious relations between community environmental groups and WCC. She was particularly involved with us on park access options from Wadestown/Highland Park, the 5-Year Plan, support for extra funding and park brochures. Best wishes for her new job with the Ministry for the Environment.

The Oban Street Access Survey

Initial results of the survey brought to light a huge range of helpful positive/negative comments. There is a long way to go.^{2,3}

What about the Workers?

Unpaid, of course. First and foremost are the birds - hard-working, increasing and unexcelled seed-spreaders (but don't mention exotic and weed seeds).

Bi-monthly working bee numbers average about 10. We had help from Conservation Volunteers opposite the magazine building and Academic Programs International (Victoria University) by the stream below Waikowhai St. Warrick Fowlie and Tim Mclvor continue at their spots below Ngaio Gorge Rd and at the lower Ngaio Gorge Rd entrance. The Sathya Sai Service Organisation re-visited their riparian spot upstream of the debris trap. Marilyn Hester is tackling wandering willie below Trelissick Cres and Richard Grasse above the Waikowhai St entrance. The pest animal team range over the park monthly. Nothing escapes Bill Hester's eye for trouble - weed trees, rubbish, denuded bridge foundations. Thanks to all.

Why we Harp on about Permeable Surfaces and Detention

In November a bit of rain added a post-script to our earthquake. People must be sick of us harping on about new developments needing stormwater slowing provisions. All the stormwater in our 22 km² catchment goes into the long-suffering Kaiwharawhara Stream. The hard surfaces of roads, roofs and pavers mean fast run-off and raging torrents in our streams. The photos say it all. For more on "harping on" see Appendix.



WCC will replace the afflicted bridge 3 early in 2017. The debris trap has been cleared. During the November flood two rock gabions upstream of the debris trap were undermined and fell into the stream. A third gabion slumped. The stream changed course and is jeopardising more gabions. Some of Sathya Sai's plantings opposite were carried away. For Bill Hester's video of the trap see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26sg6u6YtGE&feature=em-upload_owner.

Community Beneficence

Marsden Collegiate Year 7 student Jade Stapleton's science assignment included a need to fund-raise for a volunteer organisation and she kindly chose us. She had a cupcake sale and sausage sizzle. We used the funding to purchase potting mix and fertiliser for potting-on native grasses pricked out from WCC nursery's surplus seed trays. The grasses have since enhanced the entrances at lower Ngaio Gorge Road and Hanover St, around the Trelissick Cres verge, the railway slope opposite Wightwick's Field, an open patch between bridges 4 and 5 and opposite the magazine building ruin. Photos of the work at the

Trelissick Cres verge and Hanover St entrance can be seen on our Facebook page (16 and 31 August). For grass species, see Appendix.

Thanks to Julie Coulson for two silver tree ferns, now adorning the Silverstream between bridge 1 and the historic rock wall and to Kerry Popplewell for sizeable ngaio, mapou, kohuhu and taupata - planted on the railway slope opposite Wightwick's Field.

Seasonal greetings and safe holidays to all.

References

1. <http://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/new-zealand-falcon>.
2. Gorge Gazette, May 2016.
3. Gorge Gazette, September 2016.

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.

APPENDIX

Harping On

Winston Churchill: "If you have an important point to make don't try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile driver. Hit the point once. Then come back and hit it again. Then hit it a third time - a tremendous whack."

Grasses Mostly Now Planted from WCC's Surplus Seed Trays and Home Propagation

Poa anceps	75
Poa cita	96
Carex flagellifera	58
Aciphylla squarrosa	102 (not planted yet - struggling)
Anemanthele lessoniana	139 (home nursery propagated)
TOTAL	470

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.