

Gorge Gazette

News about Trelissick Park, the Ngaio Gorge and Streams (Highlighting native snails, from p.2)

(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

TPG Trelissick Park Group

OHS Onslow Historical Society Inc.

DOC Department of Conservation

F & B Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society Inc.

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).

FEBRUARY 2015

A big 'dry' torments us. An endless summer of sunshine and parching wind. Half-hearted showers count for nought. Hangehange and small kanono at the forest margins wither. More sad cases to follow. Perversely, weeds flourish. Welcome to our weather-extreme future.

A Seven(?)-headed Monster



Jonathan Anderson discovered this unusual multi-headed punga, silver tree fern, (*Cyathea dealbata*) off to the right of the Northern Walkway about 50 m down from the transmission tower. Punga is endemic to New Zealand. It is characterised by the white undersides of the mature fronds and peg-like frond bases on the trunk¹. Note that this one has a clean lower trunk, extending down for another metre below the bottom of the photo.

Archival Matters

With thanks to Judy Siers and Stephanie Santaana of OHS, all our records, largely pre-2008, are happily residing along a bottom shelf of the archive room of the OHS premises at 86 Khandallah Road - all labelled and catalogued. They are freely available for viewing in situ to anyone.

A Sunday afternoon visit to OHS is well worthwhile for a fascinating journey into our district's past.

All *Gorge Gazettes* from August 2007 are on our website and also in the National Library.

Our Heritage

Few areas remain for restoration planting so canopy trees have come to the fore.

At working bees, Mike Lear is wielding his long pruning saw to cut back mid-story species to give the slower growing canopy trees more light and 'elbow room'. Since the early 1990s we have planted in the region of three thousand - see Appendix 1 for

species list. Miro are flourishing beautifully, totara show commendable robustness and kahikatea are sending their ragged-limbed trunks skywards. Slow-growing northern rata and matai can easily succumb to smothering weeds.

Russell Robinson kindly donated some healthy titoki seedlings from his bushy Karori section.



Does anyone want some kahikatea? Peter Reimann's home nursery still has 160 from Berhampore Nursery's 2012 surplus seed trays. They will be ready for planting this winter (see photo). Some have already been planted in groups along riparian strips down from bridge 4 and up from bridge 6. We gave others away to F & B and Bell's Track Group. For the rest, we will clamber around the forested slopes, looking for auspicious planting sites.

It is heartening to see many seedlings of some of the canopy species emerging naturally.

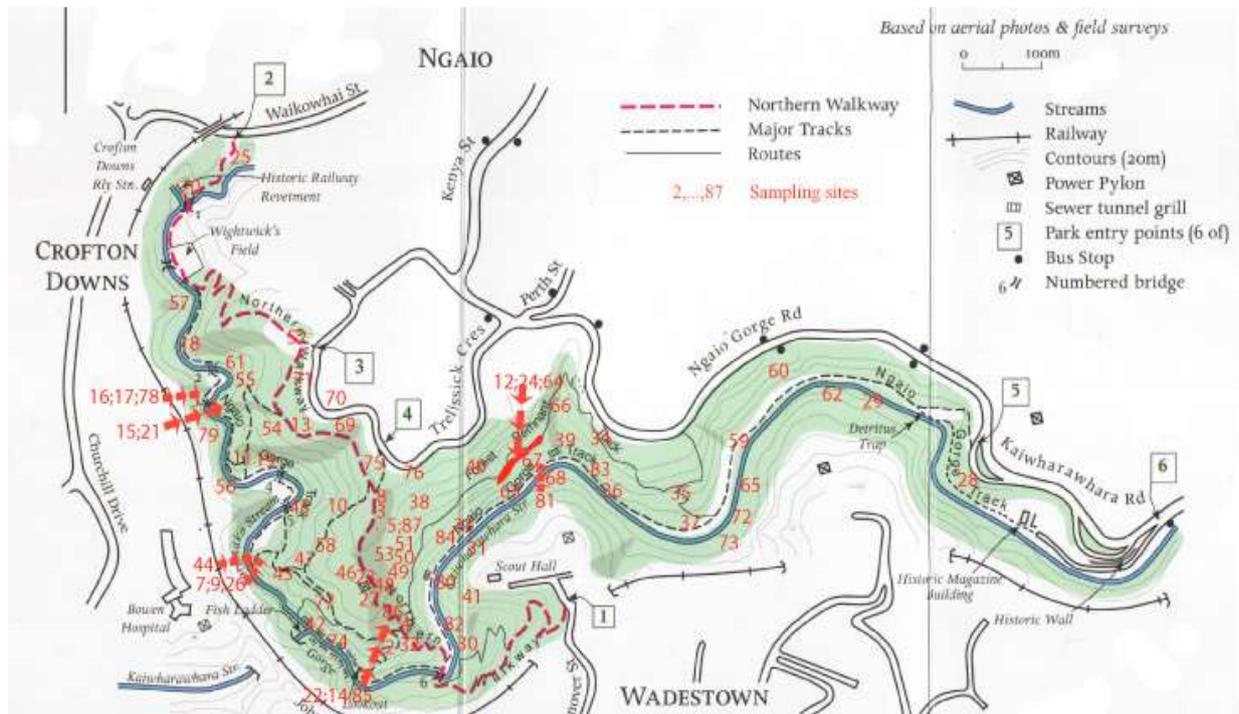
Hidden Beauties - Native Snail Abundance

In their quest for native snails in New Zealand, landscape ecologist and malacologist Karin Mahlfeld from DOC, assisted by Frank Climo, are excited about some of the species and their eggs found at 88 sites all over the park. There are at least 1,300 known species in New Zealand, mostly very small and residing in leaf litter, soaks, caves and streams. The sampling procedure is to remove the upper layer of leaf litter, then to scrape the litter underneath into a coarse sieve for collection in a plastic shopping bag. Off-site examination follows. The photo at left shows Frank in action with the sieve inside the plastic bag and Karin at the right at the soak between bridges 3 and 4, where a rare freshwater snail was discovered.



A good insight into Karin's work is at <http://blog.doc.govt.nz/2014/08/29/karin-mahlfeld-snails-ranger/> and New Zealand native snails in general at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/publications/conservation/native-animals/invertebrates/land-snail-posters/> and <http://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/conservation/native-animals/invertebrates/land-snail-posters/land-snails-wellington-region-low-res.pdf>

Trelissick Park sample sites are on the map below:



Diversity statistics:

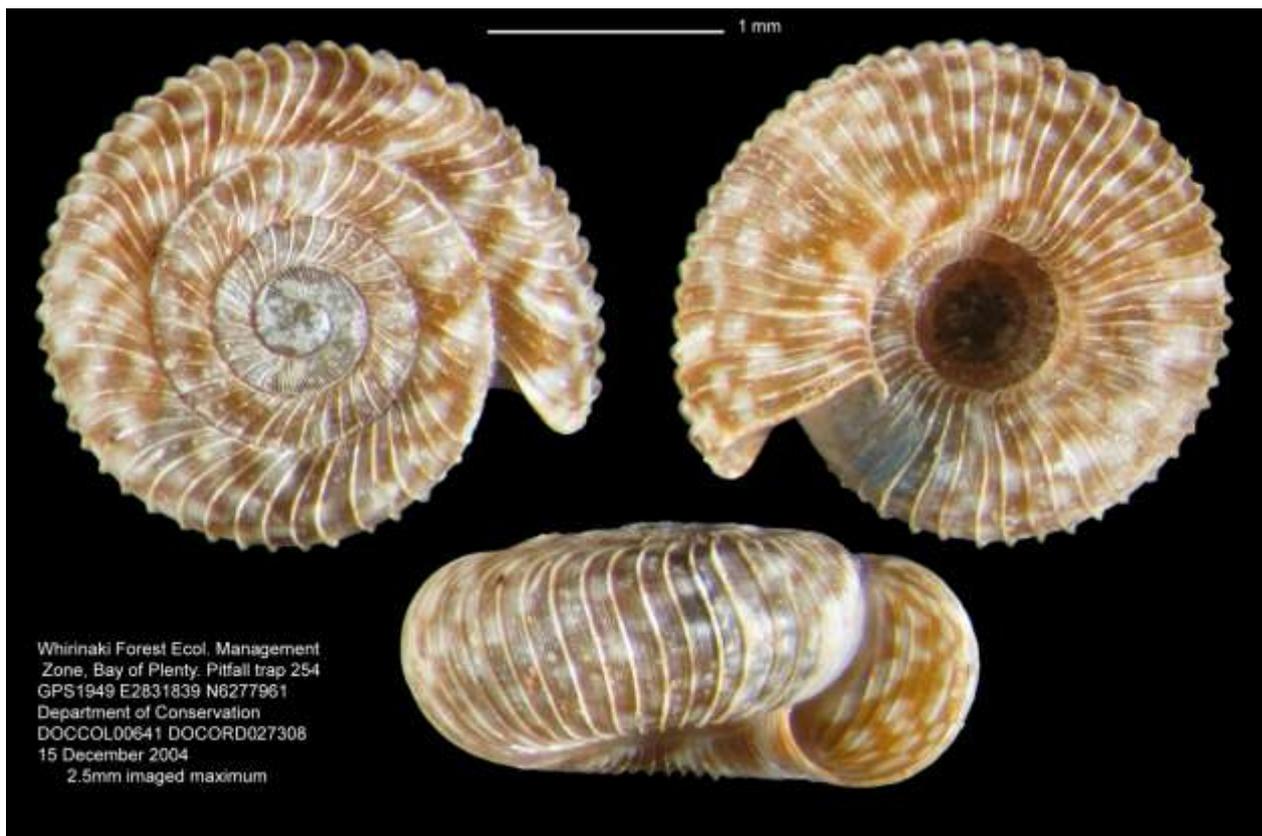
- Total number of species: 53
- Number of species in richest samples: 18-25. (per site)
- Richest sampling site: No. 85 (by the track "crossroads" on the Northern Walkway above bridge 6).

Karin says samples from the original forest remnant yielded the most diversity (the original forest remnant sites includes those on the slopes east of the Northern Walkway from site 13 down to the valley floor as far as sites 35/37). She says larger snails like *Wainuia urnula* are prone to rodent and bird predation - see photo on her blog.

Common minute species in the Trelissick Park area are, for example, *Charopa coma* (Gray, 1843) and *Cavellia buccinella* (Reeve, 1852) - as in the photos below. Note the 1 mm scale.



Charopa coma (Gray, 1843) (Image by DJ Roscoe, DOC)



Cavellia buccinella (Reeve, 1852) (Image by DJ Roscoe, DOC)

A complete list of species and an interactive community map with text and images will be online next month on the DOC website. We aim to provide a URL in the next Gorge Gazette, via Karin.

Appendix 2 has more on snails in the Wellington area for comparison of diversity.

Down in the Park

Wadestown Scouts - With boundless energy, Wadestown Scouts led by Andrew Bahr, cleared some wandering willie from below the Hanover Street entrance, one darkening December evening.

Weedy Forays - Bill Hester and Richard Grasse have swept the Kaiwharawhara and Korimako stream banks for Himalayan balsam. As the seeds wash downstream, they ranged up to the tip face above Otari Wilton's Bush, Churchill Reserve and Cummings Park. Peter Reimann has despatched some patches of wandering willie and buddleia. In our travels, we are alarmed to find legions of young old man's beard.

Our last working bee was at the "flood plain" upstream of the historic powder magazine, on a beautiful sunny morning, witnessed by the passing parade of two and four-footed beings. GW was also doing their monthly stream sampling.

The spraying season - The spraying contractor, guided by WCC's Illona Keenan, poisoned Asiatic knotweed and is currently dealing with wandering willie along forest margins. We also showed Illona some climbing asparagus beside Barry Durrant's track in the park below Oban Street and later on she found a badly infested area on a steeper face, further east. Bad news! Climbing asparagus is a perennial with ferny foliage and early summer flowers, followed by fleshy orange berries, spread by birds. Further dispersal is by tubers. It is shade tolerant and eventually everything up to 4 m is smothered².

Cyberspace Matters - Bill Hester is doing a wonderful job with our Facebook page (see link at the top of this newsletter). This is graced with photos of the upgraded Northern Walkway track, Frances Lee and the newly-named "Frances Lee Track", working bees, birds, animal pests, the new paved area at the Trelissick Crescent entrance and various videos of the park. A browse is highly recommended - photos say it all. Angela Incedon has just agreed to become Bill's back-up for the website and Facebook page.

Officialdom - See minutes of our meetings on the website to complete the 'picture'.

References:

1. Andrew Crowe, *Which Native Fern*, Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd.
2. DOC, *Plant Me Instead*.

Contacts

Chairman & working bees: Peter Reimann (04) 938 9602, peter.reimann@paradise.net.nz
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 website for details.

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.**

APPENDIX 1

Canopy Species Planted in Trelissick Park Since 1991

Miro (*Promnopytis ferruginea*)
Mata (*Promnopytis taxifolia*)
Rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*)
Totara (*Podocarpus totara*)
Northern rata (*Metrosideros robusta*)
Kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*)
Titoki (*Alectryon excelsus*)
Rewarewa (*Knightia excelsa*)
Tawa (*Beilschmiedia tawa*)
Hinau (*Elaeocarpus dentatus*)
Pukatea (*Laurelia novae-zelandiae*)
Black maire (*Nestegis cunninghamii*) - 5
White maire (*Nestegis lanceolata*) - 5

Sources - WCC nurseries at Berhampore and Otari Wilton's Bush, F & B Nursery, Taupo Native Plant Nursery (Wellington sourced seed), Manawa Karioi Society Nursery.

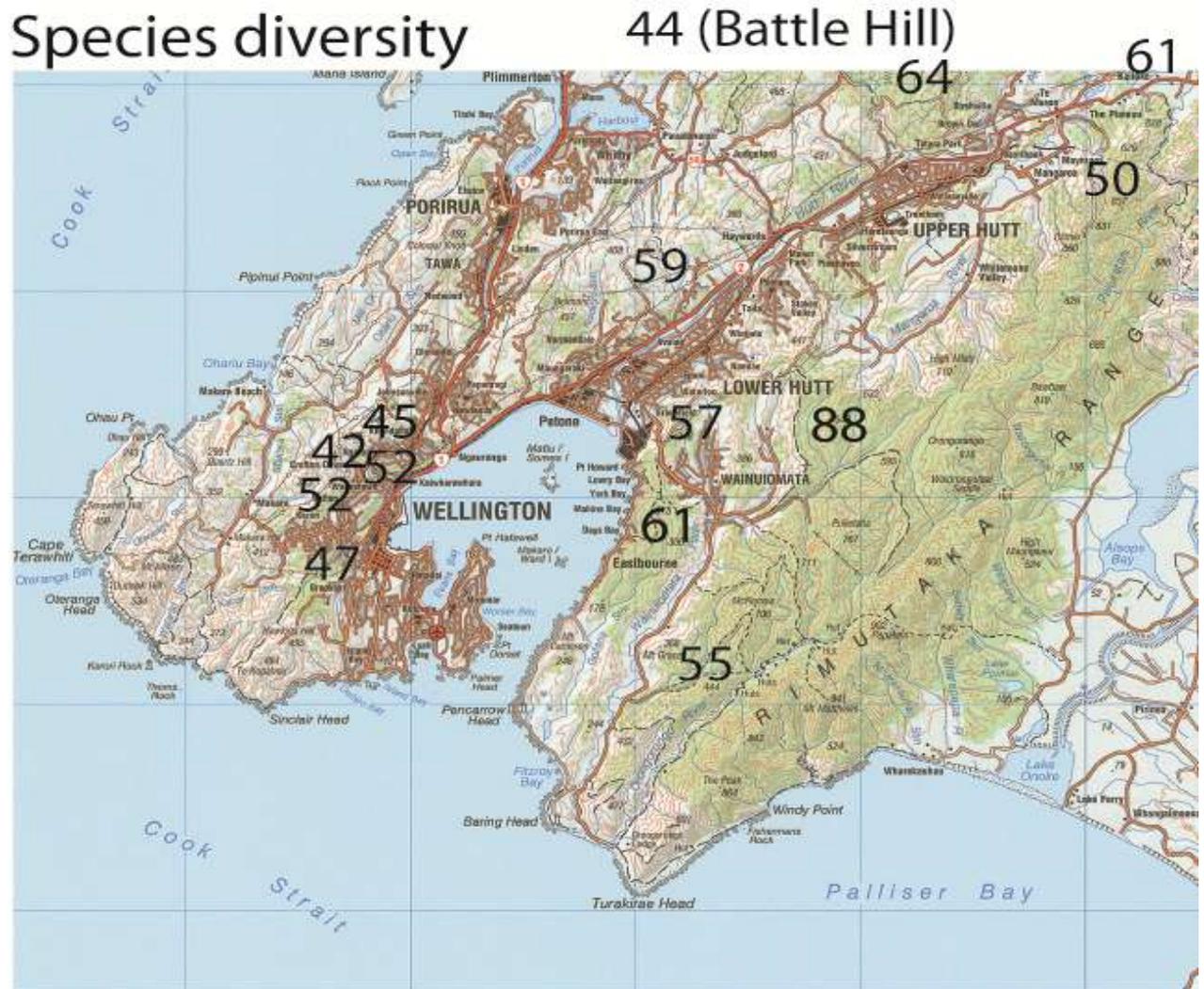
APPENDIX 2

Native Snail Species Diversity in Wellington Area (as per map next page)

Battle Hill Farm Forest Park	44
Kaitoke Regional Park	61
Akatarawas	64
Belmont Regional Park	59
Tunnel Gully/Pakuratahi	50
Wainuiomata Waterworks Reserve	88
Haywards Park (Whaiwhetu) Scenic Reserve	57
Khandallah Park/Mt Kau Kau	45
Huntleigh Park	42
Trelissick Park	53
Otari Wilton's Bush	52
Zealandia	47
East Harbour Forest Park	61
Catchpool area	55

Karin Mahfeld says that "On our last trip an additional species was collected from one of the replanted areas [between bridges 2 and 3 and beside the zig-zag track below the Trelissick Crescent grassy slope]. This means that the total number is now 53 instead of the 52 [shown on the map below] and currently exceeds the number of species found in Otari Wilton's Bush by 1! However, numbers are still changing,

especially for Khandallah Park, where ongoing sampling is increasing the total number of species for that area."



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.