

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

JULY 2011

20 years - a good excuse for a celebration. We sped through our June meeting in time for the arrival of



illustrious guests from past and present, for morning tea. Plenty of reminiscences, renewals of old friendships, gastronomic delights and a visual feast of history around the room.

Quoting from David Grace's article for "City Life News": "The person most honoured was Frances Lee, described as the "power-house" of the group for the full 20 years and – now in her 80s – still fully involved. Praising her passion, one speaker said: "If you are going to have someone like Frances around, you want to be on her side."

The photo shows all four chairmen, with Frances Lee (David Rowe, Richard Northmore, Peter Reimann and John McInnes).

Derivation of the Name "Trelissick"

The Onslow Historian - Vol 37. No.4 - 2008 - contains an article about Juliet Daniell by Megan Hutching, with details of the Daniell family. The following material is based on that article.

"Edward Daniell came from a large Cornish family in England but, with a brother "ruining the family fortune", the family property of "Trelissick" had to be sold. Edward came to Petone, Port Nicholson, in 1840 with his wife and one son (an older son was left in England). They lived in Abel Smith St (then called Te Aro) where Juliet was born - until 1845 when they moved to Ngaio (then called Upper Kaiwharawhara) where they had a house built and called it "Trelissick". The house was probably in the vicinity of the current Trelissick Crescent but does not now exist. Edward had a track made from the coast at Kaiwharawhara to his property - which then continued to a sawmill about 1 km further away. At 13 years old Juliet was sent to England in 1855 with her brother to be educated and only returned briefly to New Zealand in 1881."

This issue of the Onslow Historian has some interesting material on Juliet Daniell's life in New Zealand (and after) and can be purchased from the Society for \$5. A few years ago a road from Old Porirua Rd to a new subdivision was called Captain Edward Daniell Drive. Through Google, information can be obtained about "Trelissick" near Truro in Cornwall, which still exists as National Trust gardens.

Despatches from the Wilderness

Taking advantage of the perfect cold/damp weeding and planting conditions, we are chewing our way through spots in the valley wilderness. The Park has a plethora of micro-environments: riparian, steep hillsides, rocky faces, sunny or shady, exposed to the windy blasts, grassy flats, frost-prone, well-drained or boggy, fertile or stony, clothed in forest or weeds. "Where shall I work today?" We are spoiled for choice: wonderful views, bird-song, the babbling stream, the peaceful forest.....

One could continue in this lyrical vein, but each spot has a legacy. Here is a sample from the work being done by some of our adopt-a-spot, working bee, corporate and school volunteers - as our planting tally approaches 1,000 this season.

Saved by toetoe - The Sathya Sai Service Organisation's streamside sandy "island" above the debris trap gets swept by flood-water after rain. The recipe is plenty of toetoe, which bend to the flow and have erosion-quelling roots. Even this could not stop the planted bank falling at their other spot downstream.

Uprootings by the roadside - At the Ngaio Gorge lay-by (planted in February by BNZ volunteers) the persistent illegal camper in his van was finally uprooted by Ranger Paulo Fuiono. Marilyn and Bill Hester also uprooted agapanthus and Peter Reimann fennel re-growth.

Adversity? - David Grace's stony slope below the railway opposite the magazine building is exposed to full sun and wind. That anything grows there is a miracle. Infill planting vs weed growth - the battle rages. A case for working bee and corporate group help.

Dangerous liaisons - Peter Reimann has completed a second weed-scour this year through the DoC-funded railway riparian restoration site below bridge 5. Removing wandering willie from under a grove of stinging nettle (*Urtica ferox*) provided an element of frisson - see photo. Buddleia has been springing up with great enthusiasm - easy to pull out so far.



Marilyn's new site - Marilyn Hester also has re-scoured her "flood-plain" below the debris trap. With characteristic verve, she is now restoring the old girl-guide's and Ngaio School spots on the Ngaio side of bridge 4. Climbing dock, wandering willie and montbretia are gone. We think the *Dianella intermedia* (formerly *D. nigra*) from WCC will do well in the semi-shade there.

Pasture grass is not to be entertained - Further up, Trevor Mowbray has started planting one of our seemingly infertile slopes.

But, rooting out all the pasture grass has revealed ideal well-drained soil, complete with worms. This slope provides a graphic illustration of the suppressing influence of pasture grass. Just above the "infertile" area is a healthy thicket of lemonwood, planted a few years ago on bare ground after the blackberry had been sprayed. The pasture grass area lower down had no blackberry, so was not sprayed. There are several other patches in the Park of planting within pasture grass, with disappointing results - compared with great success from planting in areas laid bare. Clearing only around the plant is not really the answer: the grass quickly grows back. Also, rooting out all grass and weeds encourages natural seedling regeneration.

Broom hedging - Jack Stanton over the years has had difficulty on the thin, dry soil on the ridge on the railway side of bridge 4. He has been experimenting with "hedging" the broom there to help keep the roots of his plantings shaded, slow wind-induced transpiration and trap leaf litter. Manuka and kanuka have been slow to establish, but he says ngaio has flourished. No problems with his planting on the flat below.

A planting lesson - Late in April, 9 people from IAG Insurance, in an amazing display of vigour, carted and planted 170 trees into 2 sites in the bush below Trelissick Crescent and into the ex-blackberry railway riparian site between bridges 3 and 4. The plan had been that this would occupy late morning/early afternoon. But all was completed in under 2 hours, before lunch. Fortunately, there was an area of bracken and weeds down from bridge 5 for them to expend more energy in the afternoon.

The adopt-a-spot scene - All a bit of a lottery. A few spots languish: mainly due to other commitments, or departures from Wellington..... Others blossom, like the 3 sites of George and Andrew Symmes near bridge 2, Eva Durrant's bank in the gorge, Judy Paulin's above the stream-side seat below Hanover Street.

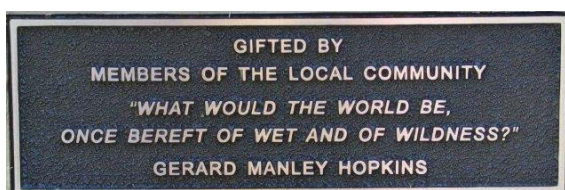
Some sites are overwhelming and need outside assistance. On the Ngaio side of bridge 6 is an area once carpeted in wandering willie and montbretia, later strewn with cut willow branches/logs. A daunting prospect for the spasmodic adopt-a-spot visits over the years. Now a concerted effort of weeding and infill planting by St Benedict's School, with our regular working bees, have wrought a vast improvement.

Autumn sycamore spotting - Plaudits to Bill Hester with his saw. No sycamore is safe under his watch.

St Luke's Wadestown

We are very grateful for another generous donation from St Luke's Wadestown. We rely on such donations to keep us afloat.

The Plaque and the Seat are Finished



Here is the final version of the plaque kindly reinstalled by Buzz Graham of WCC for the new seat on the open grassy area between bridges 4 and 5. Many thanks for the generous donations from Wadestown Resident's Association, Highland Park Progressive Association and 10 individuals.

Barry Durrant is shown in the photo at his "spot", exuding satisfaction.



Visit the Original Forest Remnant

This lies on the slopes below Ngaio Gorge Road and the eastern end of Trelissick Crescent - a pristine forest of tawa, rewarewa and some kahikatea, totara, titoki and hinau. Karaka is intruding somewhat. It can be traversed by "the forest remnant track" (see map on the website). Take heed of the warning signs because the track is rough and narrow, sometimes with cliffs down to the gorge below. Wellington Botanical Society members Olaf John and Chris Moore are impressed by the fern species they found along the track, some rare (see Appendix).

It is wonderful news that the WCC/GW contractor sprayed the wandering willie on the steep areas above, bordering Ngaio Gorge

Road and Trelissick Crescent (helped by abseil ropes on the steep slopes). The buddleia on the earthquake strengthened excavations has also been cut. All this will help to protect this precious forest remnant.

Which Ngaio is it?

"Tasmanian ngaio is very similar to New Zealand ngaio (*Myoporum laetum*). The main difference is the almost universally green, sticky leaf buds of the Tasmanian ngaio, whereas the New Zealand ngaio usually has black buds and leaves dotted with glands. Also the Tasmanian ngaio has smaller flowers (7-8 mm) than the New Zealand ngaio (10-15 mm). Impact: where naturalised, Tasmanian ngaio competes with the New Zealand ngaio as the natural habitats are very similar. Tasmanian ngaio is commonly planted in the mistaken belief that it is the native species." ¹

New Zealand ngaio thrive in the valley and surrounding suburbs. They suffer badly from frost



when young, but usually bounce back when it gets warmer. Recovery is helped by reducing leaf area.

"It is a small tree up to 10 m tall with a trunk 30 cm or more in diameter with rough and furrowed bark.....The flowers are white spotted with purple and occur from mid-spring to mid-summer. The berries ripen through summer and autumn. Berries are red purple, 6-9 mm long."²

Climbing Dock (*Rumex sagittatus*)

Another valley scourge. Fine examples are to be found on the forest margin on the slope above the fish ladder (at the confluence of the Kaiwharawhara with the Korimako Streams) - see photo.

"A scrambling or low-climbing perennial with shoots up to 3 m long and large arrow-head shaped leaves. Small green, pink or reddish flowers are produced as

massed panicles at the top of the plant spring or summer, followed by yellow or reddish fruits. Climbing dock effectively disperses by its papery-winged seeds that have wings, via its tubers and rhizome fragments through soil and water movement. The plant...replaces low canopy species, prevents establishment of other species, and provides support for more aggressive vines to succeed."³

Marilyn Hester has developed eyes highly dock-tuned. With the help of husband Bill, many bags have been laboriously removed from the park.

References

1. <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/files/pests/plants/nppa/nppa-accord-manual.pdf>
2. John Dawson, Rob Lucas. "Nature Guide to the New Zealand Forest". Random House, 2007.
3. Department of Conservation. "Plant Me Instead". 2005.

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 Dorothy before coming – changes may occur

Sunday 7 August, 1.30 PM Trelissick Crescent
Tuesday 16 August, 9.30 AM Trelissick Crescent

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

Ferns in Forest Remnant Area

Adiantum radianum (maidenhair fern)
Adiantum fulvum (maidenhair fern)
Arthropteris tenella
Asplenium bulbiferum (hen and chickens fern)
Asplenium oblongifolium (shining spleenwort)
Asplenium polyodon (sickle spleenwort)
Blechnum chambersii (lance fern)
Blechnum fluviatile (creek fern)
Blechnum filiforme (thread fern)
Cyathea dealbata (silver treefern or ponga)
Doodia media (rasp fern)
Hymenophyllum demissum (filmy fern)
Lastreopsis hispida (hairy fern)
Lastreopsis glabella (similar to *hispida* but with smooth stems)
Lastreopsis velutina (velvet fern)
Leptopteris hymenophylloides (single crepe fern)
Pellaea rotundifolia (button fern)
Phymatosorus pustulatum (hound's tongue fern)
Phymatosorus scandens (fragrant fern or climbing hound's tongue)
Polystichum richardii (common shield fern)

Jonathan Anderson of WCC says: "One fern that I'm sure is present but has probably been overlooked, because it is so common, is *Cyathea medullaris*."

"*Adiantum fulvum* is on a DOC list (of a few years ago) of plants that are rare or threatened in the Wellington area (possibly the Wellington Conservancy). It is listed as only occurring in Trelissick Park. I can confirm there is a good sized population in the Park, both above and below the forest remnant track, extending as far down as the stream track. I have also found isolated plants in the lower Ngaio Gorge, above Old Porirua Road, and in the Makererua Street Reserve. I assume they have colonised from the main population in Trelissick Park."

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.