

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
 HPPA Highland Park Progressive Association

JULY 2012

We are governed by the seasons. The sun, ever loath to appear, is low to the horizon. With few sunny exceptions, all is gloom, damp and frigid - "the winter of our discontent."¹ Just right for planting.

The Rabbit Saga (Continued)

We have previously told of our attempts to out-wit our long-eared friends. A new ally has emerged - a killer wire-haired terrier. One shake and it's over. Who would have thought of such an unintended consequence of the recent change to "off-leash" for this Park?

People

Dorothy Douglass is moving to Island Bay, so sadly will no longer be representing HPPA for us. We all owe her a debt of gratitude for her dedication and contributions over the many years of meetings and working bees. The photo was taken by the magazine building ruin the other day, sampling the last of her famous home baking for working bees (Dorothy at the head of the table). What a gem she is.



Robyn Smith of GW has moved from the Take Care Team to the Biodiversity Implementation Team. We have really benefitted and enjoyed working with Robyn over the years - she has made a huge difference in Trelissick Park from her support with funding, advice on problems, plant supply, pest control.....Jo Fagan has taken over from Robyn.

We also said goodbye to Joe Girasol - one of our working bee stalwarts. We wish him well for his new life in the Philippines.

Ilona Keenan, has joined WCC as Pest Management Officer. We have already taken her on a guided tour.

Welcome also to Steve Mackle, who has enthusiastically taken on the servicing of the bait stations in the Kaiwharawhara valley. (Bill Hester does the Korimako Valley).

The Cyberspace World

As well as our website, we are now on Facebook. Bill Hester thought this a good place to put photos - see <https://www.facebook.com/TrelissickParkGroup>. You don't need to join up to just look.

We recently attended the launch of the Nature Space website, set up by DoC. Visit this for a wealth of information on restoration groups throughout New Zealand (including ours). This site also has an excellent resource for restoration information, such as planning, funding sources, planting, pest control and monitoring - see www.naturespace.org.nz.

Thanks once again for Deidre Burke's donation for the website subscription.

More on Animals

The score from our 15 mustelid traps since September 2008 has passed 100.

WCC Ranger, Matt Robertson, aided by Bill Hester, Barry Durrant and Steve Mackle, are setting up chew blocks throughout the Park. These are small cardboard squares impregnated with peanut butter, nailed to

tree trunks - see photo on Facebook. The chew patterns/extent of possums, rats, mice and mustelids identify pest animal type and activity over a set period of around 5 days. This will allow location of the bait stations and traps to be optimised. This method is said to be more effective than tracking tunnels.

Matt has also been working on setting up a monitoring data-base for Trelissick Park traps and bait stations on Google-docs for analysis and updating, available to the WCC, GW and TPG people involved. This will supplement the chew block data, so that we know what animals are at large, where they are and what resources are needed.

See video clip on Facebook for a unique glimpse of a nocturnal rat poisoning itself at a bait station and having a bite of the chew block on the side.

From the Nurseries

We were delighted to receive some large nikau palms along with titoki, wharangi, tree fuchsia and *Dianella nigra* among our delivery of 500 plants from the WCC Berhampore nursery.

Earlier, we received by courier from the Taupo Native Plant Nursery 346 plants from the Honda Treefund, via Jo Fagan of GW (Wellington-sourced seed). Jubilation again as there were some tawa, pukatea and large kohekohe included.

Thanks to Nicky Oliver Smith of WCC for the 7 kamahi and 6 ngaio out-growing their large bags - all doing well on the gorse-cleared slope below Trelissick Crescent.

Lauren Bamford of WCC also provided surplus seed trays of kahikatea, lemonwood, flax, cabbage tree and carex secta. Peter Reimann managed to transfer some 1,600 of these to mostly root trainers. The photos show the legions of kahikatea (foreground left photo) and lemonwood (right photo) in his back-yard nursery, waiting for planting in the next year or two.



Weedy Visits

Everyone loves planting, but when it comes to weeding.....There is a tendency to resort to such euphemisms as "plant care" or "releasing". Perversely, restoration is made up of maybe 99% preparation and weeding time (covering 3 - 4 years) and 1% planting time. This autumn/winter we have always included some plants for our working bees, by way of amelioration.

Restoration concentrated on areas below Hanover St, across the stream opposite the magazine building ruin and the gorse-cleared slopes below Trelissick Cres. The only upset was when a free-range dog happened by and scoffed all of Dorothy's blueberry muffins, leaving only crumbs for us.

The St Benedict's School Enviro Group came again to help (see photo on website). At the BNZ "Closed for Good" day wonders were achieved at 3 difficult sites in the Park (photo also on Facebook).

The Waikowhai St entrance, suffering from the cursed flax yellow-leaf disease, has had a face-lift. Annalise Hames from Crofton Downs School has taken on the maintenance there as a school project, aided by her father. Alexandra Harper has transformed the area next to Bridge 2.

Marilyn Hester is removing pasture grass and planting in the Korimako valley. Peter Reimann has finished planting the Japanese honeysuckle slope above the fish ladder. George and Andrew Symmes have continued planting their spots in the Korimako, with home-reared plants. Bill Hester is developing contortionist skills removing old man's beard, cherry and sycamore on steeply wooded slopes.

Kaiwharawhara Estuary/Surrounds Study Aftermath

Frances Lee is pleased that Wellington Civic Trust is taking over the follow-up to the study, between the motorway and the harbour. See previous newsletters on website for further background about the study.



Quiz Time - Evergreen Buckthorn or What?

Just before reaching the transmission tower going down the Northern Walkway is a large bushy clump (on the right of the track), about 2 m tall, putting on a spectacular display at the moment - see photo. Positive identification has evaded us. The leaves are 5 - 10 cm long by 2.5 - 5 cm across, leathery, smooth/glossy on top and matt underneath. The berries are 4 - 5 mm diameter. Any advances on evergreen buckthorn?

Birds - excellent for spreading exotics/weeds from our urban paradise into the Park.....

Another Shade of Red

One of the delights of walking through the bush in the rain is how colours are accentuated. The greens are greener and there is a freshness to the air. There are surprises also - see photo of our matai tree at the "crossroads" (further down the Northern Walkway from the transmission tower).

References

1. W. Shakespeare. "Richard III".

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

Website:

www.trelissickpark.org.nz

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.

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.



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.