

# 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  
TPG Trelissick Park Group

OWBT Otari Wilton's Bush Trust.  
GW Greater Wellington Regional Council

Website: [www.trelissickpark.org.nz](http://www.trelissickpark.org.nz). (includes past Gorge Gazettes)

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

## JUNE 2015

### The Giant Trunk Migration

It is a great mystery. During both cloud-bursts in May the debris trap captured the trunks of forest giants from the raging Kaiwharawhara Stream. City Care kindly removed them. Surely the supply of giant trunks must end soon?

The litter also caught up in the debris trap was a sight to behold.

### Almost a New Lake

During the summer 'dry', Richard Grasse explored the tunnel for the Kaiwharawhara Stream under the railway line, only to find a wide builder's plank jammed across, half way up. He managed to free it, but imagine the upstream Churchill Reserve valley becoming a lake due the plank ensnaring our recent flood debris! Any takers to find future potential tunnel blockages?

Of the tunnel foray, Richard says, "It is quite straight forward. I started on the raised concrete but it required crawling and there were some loose pieces of rock at head height. But it was easy to wade through the stream. It gets noisy as you get in and there is a waterfall half way...and then you see the light at the other end and the tunnel curves around and out. Very easy but quite exciting."

### A Motel for the Park



The photo shows an occupied weta motel, with the lid removed. Bill Hester has attached ours to a large tree about 100 m down and off to the east of the track from the Trelissick Crescent entrance opposite #41.

The hole at the bottom is just big enough to provide safe haven for weta and other insects and invertebrates, such as leaf-vein slugs, spiders and beetles - but too small for birds, rodents and hedgehogs.

The residents don't like being disturbed, so will only be monitored occasionally.

Photo: <http://ento.org.nz/>. See also [www.naturewatch.org.nz/projects/weta-watch](http://www.naturewatch.org.nz/projects/weta-watch).

## **Adapt or Perish**

Thoughts are turning to a dire 'climate change' future after two long, parching summers in succession. Each time it seemed rain would never come and we watched plants wither and die. When rain came it was in deluges.

Nature has always said: "adapt or perish". This time we are trying to plant early in the season to give the roots more time to establish before the next summer 'dry'. Longer term, it seems that changes of flora and fauna are inevitable.

## **A New Discovery**

There's nothing like the joy of a 'reveg' patch. The transformation of a weedy wasteland into a hopeful creation, then nurturing and watching it grow and merge into the surrounding forest. After 24 years of restoration, such places are hard to find now. But a couple of years ago Illona Keenan of WCC organised her contractor to deal with a nightmare of old man's beard, Japanese honeysuckle and blackberry on the lower part of the railway corridor upstream of bridge 6. Recently we bashed down the dead remains and planted an eclectic mix of mahoe, manuka, wharangi, pigeonwood, ngaio, tawa, titoki, kahikatea and poataniwha - 74 in all.



## **Beautification**

While on the subject of creation, here (at the left) is our latest. The lower entrance from Ngaio Gorge Road is no longer an eyesore.

The lower photo, by Mike Lear shows (L - R): Peter Reimann, Marilyn Hester, David Catchpole, Stella Thorp, Richard Grasse and Bill Hester. A harsh and wind-swept life is in store.

## **Access to the Park from Oban Street**

The area of the park below Oban Street is attractive but hardly ever visited. The access story started in 1981 and is still being played out. Currently we are using the legal access across road reserve and between 112 and 114 for servicing bait stations and mustelid traps. WCC are also using it for control of climbing asparagus. Discussions roll on, the aim being amicable agreement all round.

## **A Shocking Discovery**

Just as we were crowing at our last meeting about "no evidence of possums for over 10 years", Bill Hester found a dead one in the park: "A male - will have to assume killed by possum bait, though not proven...Have put picture on our Facebook page along with gentle warning to keep dogs under control in the park. This possum was discovered by a dog - but of a breed where he didn't scavenge the carcass - but was excited by his find."



## The OMB Curse

One old man's beard plant can smother an area of 180 m<sup>2</sup> and grow 10 m in a year. It seeds profusely. Bill Hester, supported by Richard Grasse and Mike Lear, have ranged all over the park and surrounding districts, eyes attuned to the white floral display. With poison gel at the ready, they became adept at clambering up ghastly stony slopes, seeking the offending vines. These are often well hidden within the thickets. This is where a 'spotter' comes in handy. Neighbouring properties adorned with OMB received a GW letter on the subject. OMB is worse this year and seedlings on the forest floor do not augur well.

## Plant Novelties from WCC



This year, Anita Benbrook organised an abundance of 8 species of native grasses, most destined for forest floor ground cover. One novelty is the epiphyte kahakaha (*Collospermum hastatum*). We will have to look for forks of trees. If not, they do manage on free-draining sites on the ground on logs or rocks. The photo is by Beverley Davidson on [www.oratianatives.co.nz](http://www.oratianatives.co.nz).

Amongst the healthy looking array of trees was poataniwha (*Melicope simplex*), tawa (*Beilschmiedia tawa*), pigeonwood (*Hedycarya arborea*), kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*) and pate (*Schefflera digitata*) - all sorely needed in the park. 30 kawakawa (*Macropiper*

*excelsum*) will provide an understory for the forest.

## Zeal Emanates from Crofton Downs

What is it about Crofton Downs that spawns such people? Is it the air that wafts down from the pristine forest of Huntleigh Park?

One is Kelvin Hastie, who galvanised residents into installing a multitude of Victor rat traps all around Crofton Downs and nearby suburbs, in league with the Halo Project - see <http://halo.org.nz/>. Now the park also has a defensive array of Kelvin's traps on railway land down the Korimako valley, helped by Bill Hester.

The other is Andrew McLellan, relentlessly pursuing the issues connected with a large housing development application on unstable land in the valley up from Silverstream Road - upstream of our park.

An enormous amount of time and effort is needed on such 'causes', to great effect so far.

## What Else?

Historic Walls - The historic walls beside the vehicle track from the lower park entrance are looking magnificent. They are now on the WCC weed-spraying schedule.

Ngaio Gorge Road - Here we go again: more Ngaio Gorge earthquake strengthening is planned for the upper end. To our chagrin, a large titoki tree might have to go.

Wandering Willie - WCC's contractor has been spraying and TPG removing manually. The aim is to stop incursion into the forest remnant areas. Manual removal might be laborious, but it does give the native seedlings underneath a chance to prosper.

Beach Clean-up - Malcolm McDonald once more organised our Kaiwharawhara estuary clean-up, as part of "Sea Week". On a beautiful sunny morning, 20 people harvested 18 bags of rubbish, also sundry loose items and weeds. We place much value on this part of the ecological corridor.

A Sign for Eels - Long-fin eels are known to live in the Trelissick Park streams. WCC's Myfanwy Emeny says that as a result of a recent issue at Otari Wilton's Bush where an eel was found with a hook in her snout, WCC are getting an interpretive sign installed. Another sign will be installed in our debris trap area

to raise awareness about eels. Everything on the sign also relates to short-fins, but the focus is on long-fins as they are more threatened. The life-cycle of the long-fin is amazing - read all about it after the sign is installed and on [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Zealand\\_longfin\\_eel/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand_longfin_eel/).

TPG Goes to the Zoo? - Wellington Zoo 'Bush Builders' is organising a new precinct about NZ wildlife and the people working to protect it, called 'Meet the Locals'. It is one of the largest projects the Zoo has taken on. Oli du Bern and Amy Hughes from the Zoo recently interviewed Peter Reimann as part of this - see <http://www.wellingtonzoo.com/content/development/meet-the-locals.aspx>. Curiosity abounds.

A Walk in Trelissick Park - Peter Reimann acted as tour guide for OWBT's Sunday programme. He was worried because more than 70 people came to the previous *Fungal Foray*. 'Expect the unexpected' always operates on such occasions. People turned up at the meeting place with dogs on leashes. Confusion reigned. Then they said they were from the dog walkers' group, leaving only 7 for our walk. We covered the restoration work in the Korimako valley and the wonders of the original forest remnant.

### **For Those Who Plant Trees**

In 2006 Kerry Popplewell found this poem by P.G.D. Pennington on the toilet wall of the Dolgoch YHA in Wales. She says: "although I found it at Dolgoch, I think I must have located it later on the internet as I don't see how I could have copied it from where I did find it!" Although it evokes Wales, the sentiments are universal.

We planted the trees today  
in the sight of the crags  
and in the shadow of the kite's wings.  
It was an act of grace.  
Not so graceful as the arc of the red bird's flight,  
but an act of grace and defiance  
none the less.  
Some small atom of dust to fling  
in the eyes of the world's destroyers  
with their bombs  
and their pledge to kill.  
It will solve no problems  
for a starving world  
serve no material benefits  
but to those who come after it will show  
that we had a belief that sustained us.  
And so, today, we planted the trees  
underneath the wheeling wings  
with the breeze in our faces,  
and in our minds  
the thought of the shading leaves  
and the generations to come.

### **Contacts**

Chairman & working bees: Peter Reimann (04) 938 9602, [peter.reimann@paradise.net.nz](mailto: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.

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.