

Gorge Gazette

News about Trelissick Park, the Ngaio Gorge and Streams

(Footbridges over the stream are numbered from 1 – 6 going downstream.)

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> (for more photos of the activities below)

JUNE 2017

Natives not Colourful?



Native passion vine (*Passiflora tetrandra*) is a sight to behold - good news for the birds, who break open the fruit to eat the seeds. Food is short in winter. A few of the native species offering winter food for birds are listed in the Appendix. In our urban areas they also have the benefit of bird-feeders and garden exotics, such as banksia.

Five-star Accommodation for Rats - and Other Stories

Yes, we do look after our rats. TPG are obsessed with the wandering willie scourge and vengefully pull it out to build heaps covered with black plastic. They produce wonderful compost after three or four years - good for potting mix. There was an old and sunken black plastic relic at the Northern Walkway zigzag above the Korimako Stream, which Peter Reimann decided to rejuvenate with fresh takings. On yanking off the plastic, he was stunned to find two rats, looking even more stunned. Married couple, no doubt. What a wonderful dry and warm abode! He has probably ruined it for them now, with all the green/damp additions, later supplemented by Marilyn Hester.

Bill Hester reports that in June half of his bait stations were empty. The consumption pattern seemed to indicate less infiltration from the urban perimeter. Barry Durrant caught a record five rats in May, including one of estimated 220 mm body length, the biggest he has seen.

Not to be outdone, Peter Reimann's cat is now bringing in two or three mice per week, often dining on either the top or bottom half. Thankfully, birds and lizards are off the menu.

The Second Coming

Before 1840 our bush was clothed in magnificent podocarps and other canopy giants. Now we are making amends for the rampant loggers by planting countless totara and kahikatea, many matai, also tawa, pukatea, miro, rewarewa and hinau.

The 16 rimu we planted in 2006 are looking beautiful, as are two other larger ones. This year we were delighted to receive 30 from the WCC nursery. Anita Benbrook says "they're quite precious as we probably won't have any more ecosourced rimu for a while as we haven't seen a mast seeding season for a couple of years". Des Smith from Bells Track Group says they should be planted in groups of at least five to allow pollination. We didn't achieve that always, but the rimu is all concentrated in the Korimako valley and only as far as just below Northern Walkway Bridge 6 in the Kaiwharawhara valley. Maybe the pollen will travel?

Now we are clearing around any canopy species hampered and shaded by the branches of faster growing neighbours.

Access to the Park below Oban Street

Last year HPPA/WRA/TPG surveyed residents on their potential use of a new access track into Trelissick Park from Oban Street, Wadestown. 223 responses were received and 167 also provided written comments. 84% supported the proposal and 16% did not.

The survey report and our comments on the responses have been submitted to WCC, along with proposed steps towards implementation. We are seeking provisional agreement to proceed.

This access was first suggested by WRA in 1981 and listed as an access policy in the 1995 WCC Trelissick Park Management Plan. It will open up a wonderful new and attractive 4 hectare area for the public to enjoy and for restoration. That is the reason for our persistent advocacy over the years. Surely 36 years is enough!

The report can be accessed from the TPG website 'current issues' page.

Finished at Last!

These three photos, at 57 Kaiwharawhara Road, say it all. The background for our 'off-grid' landscaping adventure is in our newsletter of December 2016. It was all sparked by Frances Lee, appalled by the mess, which sullied the ecological corridor. Conservation Volunteers¹ achieved wonders, aided by WCC's Tim Harkness, TPG's Warrick Fowlie and Peter Reimann. The Living Room shop next door kindly let us use their 'facilities'. Most of the 400 plants came from WCC's nursery.



The Duke Comes to the Park

In spirit, at least, in the form of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Alexandra McKendry completed her work beside the stream below Waikowhai Street. Her sister Georgia is now working on the other side of the stream for her award requirements. A large number of plants went into both areas. Dugal Thomson has just taken on the area of railway land across the stream from near Wightwick's Field to rectify its grim history of a destructive slip, errant chainsawing² and carpeting wandering willie.

Other News

Bridge 3 is Coming - The replacement for Bridge 3 with undermined foundations is going through resource consenting, design and contracting processes.

Bridge 2 Gabions - David Halliday of WCC organised gabions to protect the foundations of Bridge 2.

Fish Passage - The fish and eels are still waiting for passage into and up the tunnel for the Kaiwharawhara Stream under the railway line. WCC have the funding, but finding a contractor is another matter.

Ngaio Gorge Road Planting - After weeding, Warrick Fowlie and Peter Reimann added infill plants to the recently earthquake strengthened Ngaio Gorge Road opposite #51.

Anyone for Stream Sampling? - Liz Gibson from Mountains to Sea Wellington³ has been organising fortnightly sampling of the Korimako Stream by Ngaio School at Cummings Park. It will be interesting to see the changes over time and think on causes. Peter Reimann came down to observe a couple of times - please contact him, if anyone would like to help. The youngest generation always inspire.

The Silverstream Road Housing Development - The saga of the silt/sediment from the excavations described in our December newsletter is being addressed. Our breaths are bated. The huge earth wall looming over the end of Silverstream Road: remember Abbotsford?

More on 'Spots' - Congratulations to Richard Grasse, who won an Otari Award for his work there. He is expanding his spot above the Waikowhai Street entrance. The totara he planted will dominate the area next century.

Tim McIvor's lower Ngaio Gorge Road entrance looks magnificent, including mulched native grasses. He had many plaudits from those passing and from Facebook.

Warrick Fowlie continues to enhance the minor entrance from upper Ngaio Gorge Road and has started down in the valley. He released enveloping neighbours of the northern rata, planted in memory of the Green Party's Rod Donald. Now we will have to look out for the dreaded myrtle rust⁴.



The Sathya Sai Group came again to fix up their flood-swept spot across the stream above the debris trap. If only the stream always looked as peaceful as above.

The Plant Score - Nearly 750 so far this year. More to follow...

The New Zealand Biosecurity Institute⁵ Visit - After their conference, WCC's Illona Keenan organised a field trip through the park to learn of our 'ups' and 'downs' since 1991. 16 from regional and city councils in the southern half of the North Island enjoyed the morning, hosted by TPG's Bill Hester and Peter Reimann. They finished with some vigorous weeding at the end of the vehicle track in the Kaiwharawhara valley.

Sustainable Coastlines - Oliver Vetter and Te Kawa Robb of Sustainable Coastlines⁶ recruited more than 15 keen young helpers to weed and infill plant at our June working bee above the stream near the magazine building ruin. What such groups achieve in a short time is truly remarkable. Delicious fare and hot drinks followed. Soon they will be bringing some pupils from Thorndon School to plant further up-valley. Their mission is "Enabling people to look after the coastlines and waterways they love".

References

1. <http://conservationvolunteers.co.nz/>
2. GG, July 2014
3. <http://www.mountainstoseawellington.org>
4. <http://mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/responding/alerts/myrtle-rust>
5. <http://www.biosecurity.org.nz/>
6. <http://sustainablecoastlines.org/>

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

Bird Food in Winter (with seasonal variations)

Kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*)
Fivefinger (*Pseudopanax arboreus*)
Native passion vine (*Passiflora tetrandra*)
Tree fuchsia (*Fuchsia excorticata*)
Karamu (*Coprosma robusta*)

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.