

Gorge Gazette - October 2021

News about Trelissick Park, the Ngaio Gorge and Streams



Abbreviations:

WCC Wellington City Council

HPPA Highland Park Progressive Assoc.

CVNZ Conservation Volunteers NZ

TPG Trelissick Park Group

WW Wellington Water

BotSoc Wellington Botanical Society

OHS Onslow Historical Society

GG Gorge Gazette

Come to our 30th birthday family picnic

TPG's first meeting was on 17 June 1991. But a 30th birthday family picnic in mid-winter is not a good idea. Ours will be on Sunday 21 November from 12 noon to 2.00 p.m. at Wightwick's Field.

Access: Entrance #2 on Waikowhai Street. Take the track down to Wightwicks Field. Follow the balloons.

Parking: Crofton Downs Railway Station, lower carpark.

BYO: Picnic food and refreshments, rugs, blankets, folding chairs, sunblock, rubbish bags etc. If you can, bring soccer balls, pole tennis, volleyball nets etc for the children and young people.

See our website for more details and our Facebook page later for updates.



Wightwicks Field

Fond memories

Three of our stalwarts have died recently: Gottfried (Friedl) Theiler on 26 August, Olaf John on 30 September and Dorothy Douglass on 13 October. They will be greatly missed.

Gottfried was an enthusiastic working bee 'regular' since the early 2000s. Always a helpful and cheerful presence, with a wide variety of interests.



For many years Olaf was our Wellington Botanical Society representative. We are indebted to Olaf for his useful information and guidance – a botanical oracle.



Dorothy represented HPPA until a few years ago and advocated for park access from Oban Street. She was also a working bee 'regular', bringing delicious blueberry muffins and other refreshments.

Olaf's whau

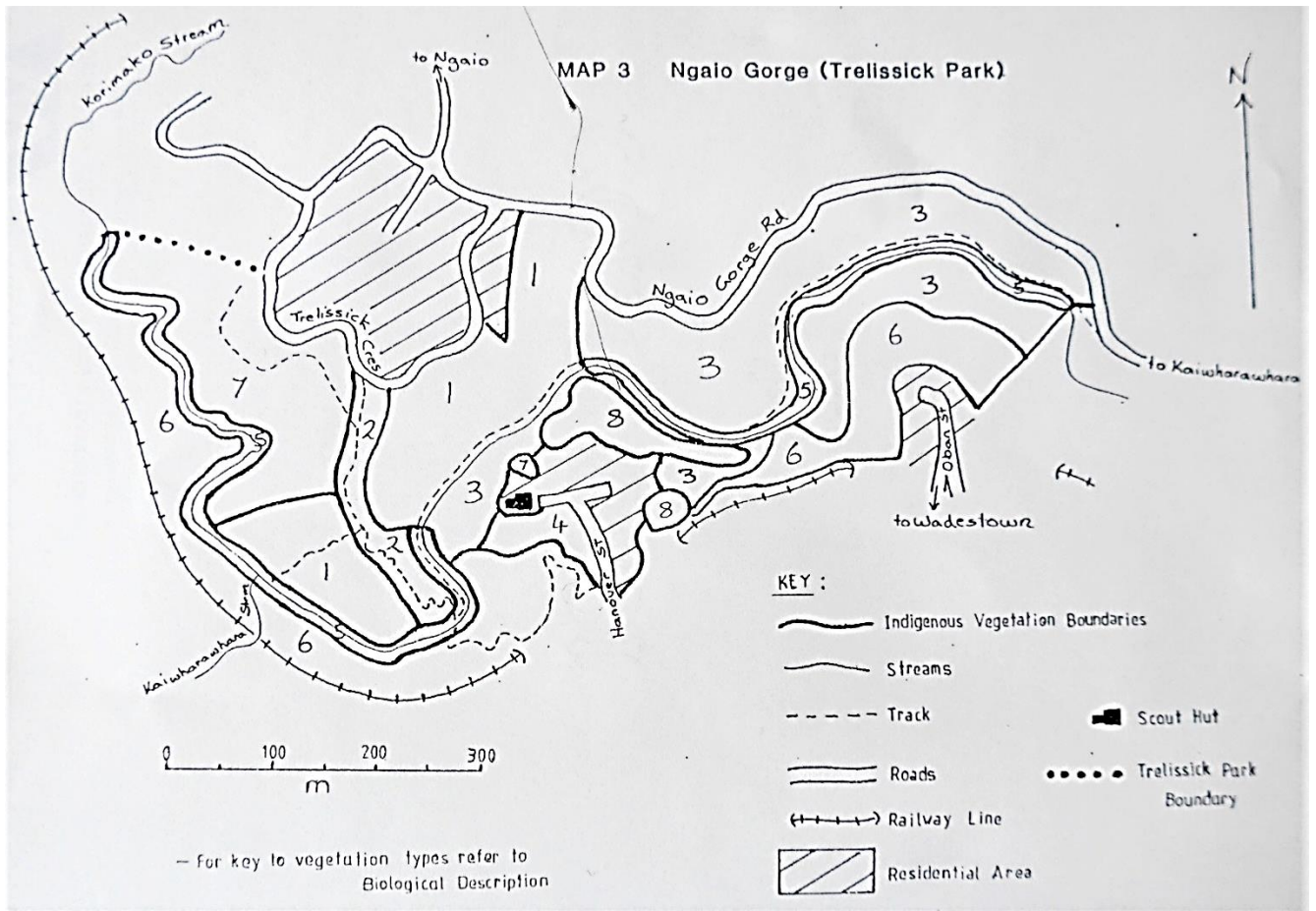
Peter Reimann has a whau tree propagated by Olaf at the back of his section, given as a seedling about 15 years ago. It is now at least seven metres tall, with straight trunk and a wide, healthy canopy - a wonderful and enduring memory of Olaf.¹

Help! Our beautiful Park needs you

Anne Tuffin and Peter Reimann are looking for help with the running of TPG, such as recruiting, organising/hosting working bees and visits by volunteer groups. We also need more help with bush restoration. Please contact Anne at anne.tuffin@gmail.com if you would like to find out more.

As per 1985

Judy Siers from OHS sent a 1985 document surveying native forest remnants in Wellington.² The map shows Trelissick Park as it then was:



1. Tawa dominant, with rewarewa. Hīnau and kamahi on western side of track from Trelissick Crescent. Tītoki, karaka and māhoe on lower slopes.
2. Regenerating broadleaf podocarps (five-finger, hīnau, rewarewa and tawa, some kahikatea, mātai and tōtara.
3. Karaka dominant, emerging rewarewa and tawa. *Melicope simplex* below the scout hut. *Muehlenbeckia australis* covering much of the canopy in places.
4. Low broadleaf: māhoe, mapou, lemonwood, kohuhu, with some karaka and tītoki.
5. Streamside, with dominant willow and other adventives. Some kōtukutuku, native passionfruit, wineberry, māhoe, tītoki and karaka.
6. Gorse and broom scrub. Some māhoe, rangiora and lemonwood.
7. Māhoe dominant with some hīnau.
8. Exotic pines and sycamore. Some tītoki, karaka and māhoe.



The coming of karma

Walk around Trelissick Crescent and enter the zone of delights! Marilyn Hester's meticulous weeding, planting and mulching over the years around the verge above the park are a sight to behold. Grasses, hebes, mingimingi and other shrubs are thriving.

However, in early September about 10 grasses were removed. More attempts followed - a couple of grasses and two tree hebes hanging from stubborn roots. They dug up a mānuka and kohuhu, each a metre tall, and left them lying on the ground.

They came every night, or early morning, to dig up what was replanted. Marilyn said, "I found a lemonwood, tall as me, that they'd dug out and tossed aside, as well as another mānuka and cabbage tree. The original kohuhu and mānuka were again lying on the ground."

Ranger Adam Groenewegen wrote a letter for residents, seeking reports of nefarious activity.

The perpetrators await karma in their next lives.

Our bête noire

Are we wasting our time with manual tradescantia clearance attempts? Thousands of hours, no doubt, dealing with this ecological nightmare, which spreads as a thick carpet, preventing seedling emergence and irritating dogs.

Well, it is worth it – see lower photo.

Tradescantia grows from stem fragments, so complete removal is essential.

Often, we do an initial rake, then laboriously pick out all the broken fragments from the raked area. It all goes onto a heap in the shade on the ground (for bacterial action). It's best to produce a plateau, then to jump up and down on top for compression – and vapourising built-up ill-feeling towards this evil weed.

A black plastic covering stops spread from the heap.

After three or four years under the plastic: a transformation to wonderful mulch or potting mix.

But: return visits for 'mopping up operations' over a few years are recommended.

Pigeonwood, kawakawa and ferns emerging from the railway slope opposite Wightwick's Field, once carpeted with tradescantia.



A salute to the aliens

Kākābeak

The planting of kakabeak (*Cyananthus puniceus*) in the park is verboten. It is extinct at some sites in the north but is widely cultivated.

Eva Durrant took this photo of a kākābeak in her garden above the park, harbouring a flock of kākā, enjoying the flowers.

The shape of the flower resembles the beak of the kākā. But this does not extend to the colour of the beak, which is grey - see [Birds Online](#).

Tree lucerne

Tagasaste, *Chamaecytisus palmensis* lives alongside Kaiwharawhara Stream up from the debris trap. It has never invaded other areas and as it flowers during winter it is an important food source for bees and birds (especially kererū). It is also nitrogen fixing, drought tolerant and controls erosion with its deep roots. Plenty of reasons to leave it be!

Karaka

Although a fine-looking tree, a salute is ill-deserved and karaka the subject of much ire in previous newsletters³. It is very invasive, and the fruit is poisonous to dogs.



Photo by Phil Bendie

Wood rose – any sightings?

This was discussed at a recent Sanctuary to Sea meeting at Zealandia. Wikipedia says “*Dactylanthus taylorii*, commonly known in English as wood rose and in Māori as te pua o te rēinga, is a fully parasitic flowering plant, the only one endemic to New Zealand.

The host tree responds to the presence of *Dactylanthus* by forming a burl-like structure that resembles a fluted wooden rose (hence the common name). When the flowers emerge on the forest floor, they are pollinated by a ground-foraging species of native bat.

It was harvested extensively as curiosities and is now a threatened species.⁴

After the deluge⁵

Bridge 4, washed up against bridge 5, was helicoptered out. A new bridge should appear next year, subject to materials availability. Track erosion is due to be fixed by WCC in summer.

The Korimako Stream log-jam was cleared. WW is replacing undermined sewer line foundations further upstream, using a helicopter.

Sad news - WW’s contractor cleared a flat area for storage, destroying nikau palms and heritage trees carefully planted and nurtured by Marilyn Hester and Carolyn Theiler from 2010. Ranger Adam Groenewegen is seeking reparation.

Also...

The estuary – It is part of the ecological corridor, so we are involved with workshops organised by

References

1. whau.nzpcn.org.nz
2. Shona C Myers. *Native Forest Remnants of Wellington City*. DSIR Wellington, June 1985
3. GG March 2020, August 2010
4. [wood rose](#)
5. GG August 2021

Website and Facebook

www.trelissickpark.org.nz (includes past Gorge Gazettes and park map).

<https://www.facebook.com/TrelissickParkGroup>.

Both are maintained by Bill Hester.

Working bees

See website 'Projects' page for dates, locations and health and safety information.

Contacts

Peter Reimann	(04) 938 9602, nz.peterreimann@gmail.com
WCC (reporting problems)	(04) 499 4444 or WCC Fix-It
GW pollution hotline	0800 496 734



Zealandia with KiwiRail, CentrePort and Boffa Miskell concerning the new ferry terminal. The new berth will be very close to the estuary.

Interlopers – Rabbits still frolic. Bill Hester’s team still catch rats and find bait eaten.

Working bees re-started recently at Covid-19 Level 3, then 2. SPCA staff and partners (with dogs of course) enjoyed clearing their spots near bridge 5. CVNZ came twice and performed miracles below Oban Street.

Planting - We have finished for this year (475 in the ground).

Award - Peter Reimann was one of the recipients of an Absolutely Positively Wellingtonian Award.

See our Facebook posts for more on our activities.

Thanks to all our volunteers, supporters, staff from WCC and weed control contractor Kaitiaki o Ngahere.

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.