

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	DOC	Department of Conservation
GW	Greater Wellington Regional Council	F & B	Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society
HPPA	Highland Park Progressive Association	VUW	Victoria University
TPG	Trelissick Park Group	GG	Gorge Gazette
NCDRA	Ngaio Crofton Downs Residents' Association		
WRA	Wadestown Residents' Association		
Website	www.trelissickpark.org.nz (includes past Gorge Gazettes)		
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/TrelissickParkGroup		

SEPTEMBER 2017



Dinner Anyone?

Ah! Kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*). Richard Grasse produced this delicious looking dish. This tree is common in Khandallah and Huntleigh Parks and is unique because the hanging interflorences come out of the trunk. John Dawson¹, says "The seed capsules develop for about a year and come to look like hanging clusters of large green grapes. They become dry and brown eventually and split open to reveal 3 large seeds, each enclosed by a bright orange to red fleshy structure known as an aril. The larger native birds eat the arils, and the seeds are scattered in the process." For more, see our GG of June 2013.

With arils removed, the seeds are now planted in trays. Miracles to follow?

Great things have Small Beginnings

If there were to be a competition for the most beautiful large tree, the pukatea (*Laurelia novae-zealandiae*) must surely be a contender. We have recently received some seedlings from the F & B nursery to supplement those from the WCC nursery planted in damp places in earlier years. The 3 photos show its development - the largest one being a magnificent specimen in Orleans Reserve in Ngaio - note the characteristic plank buttresses.



Mourning Glory

We planted the rimu in 2006. It used to be well back from the brink, but soon the stream will claim its next victim. If the rimu can hang on until its next winter dormancy, maybe we can rescue and re-plant it?

Just upstream, Bridge 3 foundations were undermined. Toetoe and flax were also swept away. Riparian planting does not always work.

Getting on our soap-box again, this shocking stream-bank erosion will inevitably get worse unless we target the causes:

- Removal of bush cover with on-going housing developments, including insidious infill housing
- Need for neutral stormwater effects in housing developments, eg with more permeable surfaces and stormwater detention
- More adoption of 'biophilic city' provisions
- Tackling climate change – weather will get much more extreme.

Urban catchments - ugh! Plaudits to Danielle Shanahan/Pascale Michel of Zealandia for igniting catchment issues. The two 'Sanctuary to Sea' meetings so far this year were well-attended, with wide-ranging expertise and a 'can-do' atmosphere. Cautious optimism emerges. Meanwhile, we are helping Katherine de Silva with her VUW masters study looking at the Kaiwharawhara habitat and riparian issues/needs.



Gorge Updates

Bridge 3 and Korimako Track - Everyone is delighted with the new Bridge 3 and track up-grade to Wightwick's Field (photos on Facebook page). The old bridge went and TPG planted trees in the gaps.

Pest Warfare - Barry Durrant is not popular with the rat population, with 26 trapped this year. WCC's Bernard Smith has supplied three new DOC 200 traps and about five mechanisms, all in stainless steel. Some were wearing out and rusting after 9 years. Bill Hester and his team continue with the bait stations.

Wandering willie is always a big problem. WCC's weed spraying contractor Kaitiaki o ngahere has done a follow-up. Noticing some of TPG's manual removal they said: "pretty awesome group, they get a lot done!" Apparently, fowls have a penchant for it. WCC have also been doing trials on beetles from Brazil².

Train travellers might notice fewer poplar trees below Crofton Downs station. Richard Grasse and Peter Reimann took advantage of a railway outage. Bill Hester has continued chasing cherry and sycamore.

Planting - Surely we must have run out of areas to plant after 26 years and around 90,000 planted! No chance - more infill is needed, mostly ground-cover and lower-storey plants in forested areas. This year's score is 970. WCC supplied 500, with the rest coming from the nurseries of F & B and Peter Reimann.

Thorndon School Returns - What a pleasure it was to host Thorndon School again in June, arranged by Oliver Vetter and Te Kawa Robb of Sustainable Coastlines. Nine pre-teens came, along with teacher Rosalie Hill (15 June Facebook photos). They finished clearing the site at the end of the vehicle track by the Kaiwharawhara Stream and put in 37 plants, all in little more than an hour. The NZ Biosecurity Institute had kindly weeded this site after their recent visit.

Then Came Tamariki from Te Puna Reo - Amanda Dobson from EnviroSchools brought along two very young tamariki to our Tuesday working bee in July to help us move mulch to the area planted by Thorndon School (18 July Facebook photos). The mulch came from the huge pine tree that fell across the stream and track last year, cleared by WCC.

Recent 'Spot' Activity - Warrick Fowlie enhanced the entrance from upper Ngaio Gorge Road and is tending the slopes below, down to the stream. Kelvin Hastie started planting his forest area below Waikowhai Street. Richard Grasse extended his spot next to the railway bridge. Tim McIvor - next page...

Park Access from Oban Street, Wadestown - Following a meeting with WCC, TPG drafted a consultation document addressing all the issues raised. Now we are waiting for WCC to initiate the consultation. The wheels turn slowly.

Our Last Epiphyte

The kahakaha (*Collospermum hastatum*), from WCC in 2015, had a chequered career, despite our tree-climbing efforts, cloth supports and attachments³. Some vanished, some survived. A few more more came in 2017. At the July working bee at the end of the vehicle track by the Kaiwharawhara Stream, a stump of a tree-fern with a hole in the top provided the ideal solution - still looking good two months later.

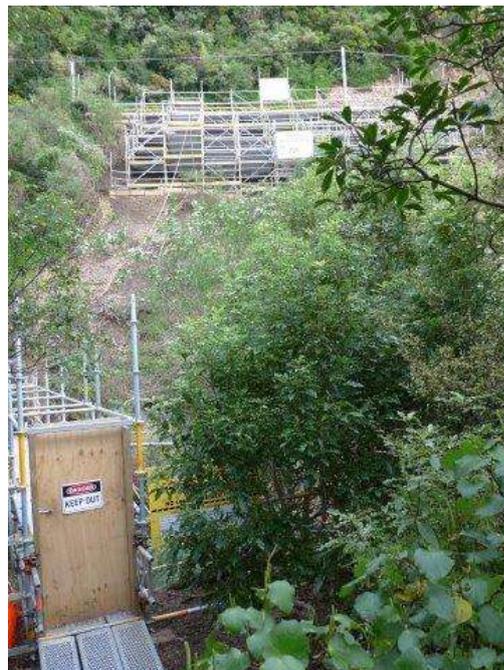


Trouble at the Fringes

Sagas continue unabated. Winter deluges caused two major slips above Ngaio Gorge Road. Now the lay-by has become part of the road and we can't park there to access the Park. A large rock from the lower slip crashed through the fence and down through Tim Mclvor's lovely 'spot', narrowly missing the shed (19 August Facebook photos, and below).

Earthquake strengthening continues further up the road, heavy machinery grinding inexorably into the unstable slope above the Park.

On the other side of the valley, a huge slip jeopardised the railway line. Abseil Access built a temporary bridge across the Kaiwharawhara Stream to get to the slip-face for stabilisation work (26 July Facebook photos, and below).



References

1. John Dawson, Rob Lucas. Nature Guide to the New Zealand Forest. Random House New Zealand.
2. <https://wellington.govt.nz/your-council/news/2015/06/brazilian-beetle-baby-boom-at-botanic-garden>
3. GG June 2015, GG September 2015.

Contacts

Chairman & Adopt-a-Spot: Peter Reimann (04) 938 9602, nz.peterreimann@gmail.com
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.

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.