

Gorge Gazette

Issue Number 3 January 1996

A newsletter to all those who care for the Ngaio Gorge

Published by the Trelissick Park-Ngaio Gorge Working Group
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Explanation

This third now-and-then newsletter of the Working Group reports on 1995 and looks forward to 1996.

Tree planting

About 3000 trees were planted in Trelissick Park during the past winter. Ngaio School made a big Arbour Day effort on the edge of the grassy ridge off Trelissick Crescent, and a number of volunteers have turned out on various planting mornings and afternoons. The Working Group is grateful to all who have helped – indeed extremely grateful.

Bank work

Between the double gates/stile on Ngaio Gorge Road and the Northern Walkway bridge more rock embankments have been put in place, in accordance with the design recommended in the "Williams Report" of 1993. The banks protect the sewer line, and the servicing access to it, as well the scenic footpath. One of the paradoxes about Trelissick Park is that it is both a wilderness reserve and host to a most important sewer.

Public outcry

The bank work aroused some sharp public outcry because of stream-bed devastation caused by bulldozers and diggers. However, following consultation between the contracts section of Culture and Recreation (WCC), some other members of the Working Group and the contractor, big rocks were brought in and carefully placed in the stream bed to enhance appearance and provide better habitat for in-stream life. Now, after some months of winter flow, the stream is beginning to look very natural and much more healthy.

Freshwater fish

Brown trout of about 6 to 10 inches are back in moderate numbers and can be seen by anyone who cares to tread quietly along the stream early in the morning or at other times when quietness prevails.

In-stream life

Lifting stream bed stones doesn't yet show much invertebrate bottom-dwelling life, for fish to feed on, though a few patches of mayfly and stonefly larvae can be found. Some midge too.

Keep stream free

The Working Group wants to try to keep machinery out of the creek except when really necessary and to avoid any work during the spawning season. One or two shags are fishing the stream again – a sure sign that fish are present in reasonable numbers.

Water quality

In July the Working Group heard from Dr. James Goff and Paul Pilotto who are working on sedimentation in Wellington Harbour and the streams leading into it. In brief, the figures they furnished suggested that where each tributary meets the Kaiwhara or the Korimako (Ngaio Stream) there appeared to be over-high levels of arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead and zinc, though not to any danger point. But Dr. Goff also said that their testing station Number 35, which is at the lower end of the Kaiwhara's middle gorge, was the cleanest of all their Wellington stream test sites.

Seats

Seven new wooden post and rail seats have been located in Trelissick Park. There is no intention of "prettying" this park but so appreciated for many years have been the old post and plank seats on the Northern Walkway (one on the Wadestown side and one on the Ngaio slope) that the Working Group decided that a few more places to rest, or sit and look at the view, would be worthwhile. Culture and Recreation staff agreed and money was found within this year's budget.

The lower Kaiwharawhara

The Working Group is concerned about the state of the lower Kaiwhara (from the lower end of Trelissick Park to the sea) and is hoping to spur landowners, occupiers and various other interested parties to get together to talk and act about the future of the stream and the stream environs. If you are interested please tell one of the Working Group.

Plastics factory

The plastics factory site purchased last year will be cleared of some of its non-historic buildings soon. This is the first step of a long term plan to make this site the downstream entrance to Trelissick Park. That will be terrific when eventually it's finished.

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Wildflowers – by Ted Williams

This season has brought a profuse and varied wildflower crop to the Gorge. A walk along the lower stream path and road will delight your eyes. You'll see: in the grass, the yellow corn marigold (*Chrysanthemum segetum*); at the foot of the road bank, the pink, or red or white common valerian (*Centranthus rubra*), the purple linaria (*Linaria purpurea*), and the red campion (*Silene dioica*); in the ditch, yellow monkey musk (*Mimulus guttatus*), and the stinking pink herb robert (*Geranium robertianum*). In addition there is the white shrub-daisy (*Argyranthemum frutescens*), the mauve woad-leafed daisy (*Senecio glastifolia*), and, near the stream, the Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*). Very visible too are foxgloves, monbretias, honeysuckle and mullein.

Rubbish

Ever thought of carrying a plastic bag, or something of the sort, to pick up rubbish that washes down the streams or blows about in Wellington winds? White and coloured plastic and old bits of metal look terrible on the paths or in the creeks. Could you take away as much as you can manage?

Subdivisions

A total of 45 new houses is planned on the northern slopes of the Ngaio Gorge – some at the old chicken farm and some off Kabul Street. The Working Group opposed these developments on the grounds that they constitute visual encroachment and increase the rate of run-off into the Kaiwharawhara Stream.

Adopt a Spot – a request to “spotees”

If your spot contains young trees they will probably need “releasing” now (unless you released them in November) because of the profuse growth of blackberry, grass, young gorse and other encroachers over the past month or two. And during the summer watering might be needed. Could you?

Adopt a spot – thank you

The members of the Working Group are very grateful to all “spotees” for work this past year. Thank you very much.

Adopt a Spot – an opportunity

The “Adopt a Spot” scheme is a great local outlet for expressing conservation concerns. A person, couple, family, group, organisation or whatever adopts a piece of track, a length of stream, part of a bank etc. Caring for it and protecting it is the task. Are you interested? If so contact one of the Working Group.

Emergency phone numbers

If you discover vandalism, pollution or anything like that, please act straight away – from a cell phone if you carry one.

Useful numbers are:

Police: Urgent 111
Central 472-300,
Johnsonville 478-3583
City Works (all hours) 499-4444

Volunteer work days

This summer we are arranging some work days to do a bit of clearing, releasing and the like.

10 am Saturday 20 January – double gates Gorge Rd.
10 am Thursday 25 January – double gates Gorge Rd.
10 am Saturday 3 February – grassy ridge Trelissck Cres.
10 am Tuesday 6 February – grassy ridge Trelissck Cres.
10 am Saturday 10 February – grassy ridge Trelissck Cres.
10 am Tuesday 13 February – grassy ridge Trelissck Cres.
Bring gloves, slasher, hooks, grubbers and stuff like that. Bring your visitors too? Why not? Wouldn't they like to go back to Auckland, Sydney or London with some Ngaio Gorge blackberry thorns embedded in their arms? If you want to know more, please phone Barry Allen – number at foot of page. He's the volunteers' organiser.

Trips talks tours

Members of the Working Group are willing to walk through any part of the gorge or Trelissick Park with small groups (families, neighbours or friends, visitors, members of an organisation). Please phone one of the people listed below.

Waitangi Day trip

The Onslow Historical Society again will run a walk through the Gorge on the 6th. of February. Time and place will be published in local newspapers. If you need more information please phone Judy Siers.

Working Group

The Ngaio Gorge-Trelissick Park Working Group is made up of the following representatives:

John McInnes (Chairman)	Wellington Fish and Game Council	479-5710
Frances Lee (Secretary)	Ngaio Progressive Association	479-2600
Barry Allen	Highland Park Progressive Association	473-0541
Gary James	Wellington Branch Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society	476-4292
Jay Davison	WCC Culture & Recreation Division	801-3600
Garth Dixon	WCC Culture & Recreation Division	801-3600
Judy Siers	Onslow Historical Society	479-6896
Ted Williams	Wellington Botanical Society	479-7664
Gwenyth Wright	Private Landowners' Group	472-5527
Richard Northmore	Wadestown Residents' Association	473-6476
Margaret Maynard	(Co-opted Minute Secretary)	472-4425