

# Gorge Gazette

A newsletter to all those who care for the Ngaio Gorge

Issue Number 4 August 1996

Published by the Trelissick Park-Ngaio Gorge Working Group  
Written by John McInnes, Chairman

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## Wet – very wet

This winter the streams are running high over long periods. Stream banks and walking tracks have coped well but are suffering now. Look for instance at the stream-bank erosion in Cummings Park and the terribly channelled, slippery, muddied state of the Northern Walkway just before it enters Wightwick's Field on the eastern side.

## Spawning access

The continual high but not flooded state of the Kaiwharawhara has probably encouraged trout to run upstream to spawn. Access through the pipes and past other obstacles is easier then. But high water in the spawning areas upstream may cause redd destruction. Only over the next few months will results become apparent.

## Do you like sycamores? Don't read this then.

Sycamores can be pretty trees in a garden. But they have escaped into the gorge and in places have just gone mad. They are invasive and overpower native species. The Working Group is trying to prevent their even greater spread.

## Greenwood Trust funds sycamore removal

The Greenwood Trust has given money to the Working Group to conduct the first part of an experiment in sycamore eradication which does not use poisons. The Working Group is grateful. Some 38 man hours have been spent ring-barking larger trees and cutting down or uprooting seedlings and saplings.

## Visually in the Park

The trees marked for destruction are all in private property on the south bank of the stream at the entrance to the lower gorge. Although the sycamores are not technically in Trelissick Park, visually they are. They are on rough land falling steeply into the stream and the stream is the park's border. From their elevated positions these trees invade the park by air!

## Protective covenant?

The property owners on whose land this sycamore experiment is taking place were willing to co-operate by allowing the work to be done. These owners are also investigating placing their stream-bordering-land under a protective covenant with Queen Elizabeth II National Trust to preserve the gorge from encroachment by developers.

## Tree planting

Tree planting has been and will be happening through winter/spring. Here are the dates still to come. All help is welcome.

10 am Saturday 10 August – grassy ridge Trelissick Cres  
1 pm Friday 16 August – grassy ridge Trelissick Cres  
10 am Mon. 2 September – grassy ridge Trelissick Cres  
10 am Sat. 7 September – Waikowhai Road entrance  
10 am Sat. 14 September – Waikowhai Road entrance  
1 pm Sat. 14 September – Waikowhai Road entrance  
10 am Saturday 12 October – double gates Ngaio Gorge

If you want to know more, please phone Barry Allen. He's the volunteers' organiser. Or ring Gary James. He's the tree planting organiser. Phone numbers are listed on page 2.

## We lost this!

Council hearings on land classification are important and time consuming. The Working Group through its secretary Frances Lee, makes written submissions and personal appearances on many relevant matters. The June 1996 report on Open Space Hearings recommended that the Kaiwharawhara reclamation – Point Kaiwharawhara – be rezoned from "Open Space B" in the Draft District Plan, to "Central Area and identified as Operational Port." A further recommendation stated that discussions should be held between the Council, landowners and DOC "with the object of finding appropriate means to protect the mouth of the Kaiwharawhara Stream from the effects of future development." The Working Group will continue to watch developments on the reclamation, having lost its submission supporting the retention of Open Space B zoning. The stream mouth is important as the entry point of the fish and bird corridor up the valley.

## Wightwick's Field – unsuccessful here too

The Working Group unsuccessfully applied to have Wightwick's Field made a "Conservation Site," like the rest of Trelissick Park. It stays "Open Space B."

## Advance Briefs

### Stream day

Saturday 7 December. Get wet cleaning up the stream. Double gates, Gorge Road 10 am.

### Plastics factory site

Work on cleaning up and planning to make this the lower entrance to Trelissick Park is proceeding.

### Meeting about the gorge, for Highland Park residents

Monday 4 November, St Luke's small hall 7.45 pm. There'll be slides, talks, discussions about the gorge.

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**Native Birds of the Gorge – by Gary James**

**Tui**

Primarily a forest species, the tui also ranges over settled areas, feeding on insects, nectar and fruits. Best identified by white tuft under its chin.

**Morepork**

The morepork has a distinctive “more pork” call heard at night. It feeds on insects, small mammals and small birds. Best seen at dusk or dawn.

**Kingfisher**

This long-beaked bird sometimes fishes in the Kaiwharawhara for small trout, but is equally happy on a telephone wire above a goldfish pond in a Ngaio or Wadestown garden. It loves the big green stick insects too.

**Kereru (Wood Pigeon)**

One or two pairs are now frequenting the gorge. Tree planting will gradually provide more young leaves and fruit as food for these scarce, large, heavy-flighted birds.

**Spotted Shag**

Shags make odd forays inland to hunt trout and on good days get so heavy with fish that they can barely fly. They fish early in the morning below the gorge.

**Grey Warbler**

These small twittering birds feed on insects and make pear shaped nests suspended well above the ground. Common during summer throughout the park. More often heard than seen.

**Shining cuckoo**

These migrants lay their eggs in grey warbler nests. They are sometimes seen and heard in the gorge area during September-February.

**Fantail**

The fantail flits around low branches in the lower and middle gorges, catching insects in flight. It builds a fibre and moss nest covered with cobwebs.

**Silver Eye (Wax Eye)**

These cute little birds eat insects, but also nectar and small fruits. They nest in cups of woven grass suspended from twigs. Often seen in groups of 8-9.

**Adopt a Spot – an opportunity**

A person, couple, family, group, organisation, or 2 or 3 friends, adopts a piece of track, a length of stream, part of a bank etc. Are you interested? If so please contact a Working Group member.

**Adopt a spot – thanks!**

The Working Group offers its thanks to “spottees”. We hope it’s fun for you as well as hard work. We want it to be. Ring a Working Group member if you want to change your arrangements.

**Emergency phone numbers**

If you discover vandalism, pollution or anything like that, *please act straight away* – from a cell phone if you carry one. Your intervention could be crucial.

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

**Tree planting**

Our management programme aims to revegetate and extend the forest edges with hardy colonising native species. We use “natural succession,” and then accelerate this process by planting a wide range

of species, to give a continual supply of bird food throughout the year. So far 16,000 natives have been planted and there are another 5 years of the current programme still to go, planting 3-4000 trees per year.

**Native vegetation develops through stages.**

First, colonising species grow and create a sheltered and shaded environment, and then their fruit and nectar attract native birds such as kereru which carry seeds of taller native tree species. These taller trees eventually overtop and shade out the smaller trees and shrubs and in time replace them to create the final canopy of the forest.

**How the volunteer and “spottee” work helps**

To assist the growing process we have to knock back many aggressive introduced weed species. Most of our plantings by volunteers fill in open ground along tracks and streams, to help close up the natural canopy. Areas such as steep banks are left in gorse to allow the natives to come though naturally, because changing these difficult-access-areas requires too much effort. Gorse is an ideal nurse crop and if left undisturbed for 15 years or so, will then be smothered by the growing native plants which have come up within it.

**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 Nixon	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 (on leave)	Co-opted Minute Secretary, Adopt a Spot Organiser	472-4425

*Please phone as needed.*