

Gorge Gazette - April 2022

News about Trelissick Park, the Ngaio Gorge and Streams



Abbreviations:

WCC Wellington City Council
TPG Trelissick Park Group

WW Wellington Water
GG Gorge Gazette

The 'good news' story must surely be the unheralded appearance at Trelissick Crescent entrance #3 of the 'Trelissick Stick Library'.

The park is off leash for dogs, beloved not only by dogs but also their owners.

See Appendix for the library catalogue.

Not to be outdone, *Spencer* the cat is the owner of Trelissick Crescent, escorting the Hesters on nocturnal walks, and, as shown, ministering to working bee volunteers.



Photo: Bill Hester

Now for the bad news. The debris trap was built after the devastation at the Kaiwharawhara industrial area during the 1976 flood. This was the result of blockage of the downstream tunnel by all the logs, trees and branches carried down from the 20 km² catchment. Now, one of the iron rails has almost given up the ghost from decades of onslaught.

WW to the rescue?

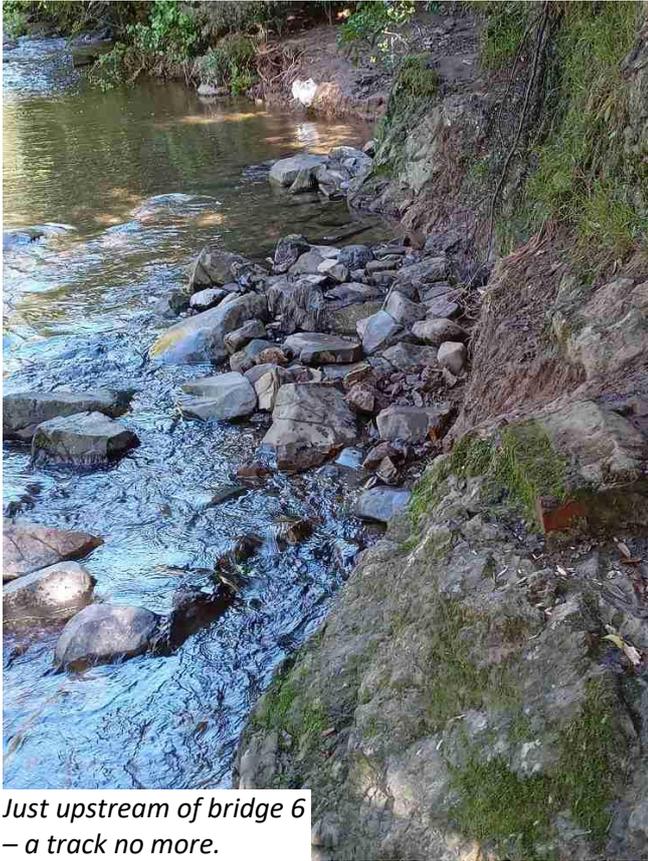


A debris trap 'catch' after heavy rain (February).



After clearance (March) – showing the wonky rail.

The chequered career of streamside tracks



Just upstream of bridge 6
– a track no more.

WCC is closing this washed-out track shown at left. It is a pity because it leads to the wonderful lookout over the canyon – one of the major attractions of the park (photo on the home page of our website). The lookout is still accessible from above - and below for agile rock-hoppers.



Downstream from the debris trap.

At right, WCC propose to re-route the track so that it is above the wall. This will happen later in the year. Meanwhile, the whole of the lower area of the park is closed – a frustration for our restoration efforts and for the legions of walkers and dogs.

WCC's *Tim Harkness* advises that more track upgrades are due between bridges 3 and 4, between bridges 6 and 7, and below Hanover Street. New map-boards at entrances are coming.

Great things from small beginnings

Gifts from leafy western suburban gardens: tōtara seedlings from *Susan Pearce* and a tree fern from *Julie Coulson*. We found that some of the tōtara were averse to being uprooted and potted. The photo shows the smallest of five survivors, 2 cm tall - destined to become a stately 30 m forest giant.



The second coming

Many have been praying for this. Bridge 4 is about to be reincarnated after the original was swept away last year. WCC has awarded the contract to Outsiders Ltd, who built bridge 7 two years ago. Work is due to start in April or May. The large items, such as the main beams, will be helicoptered in from the grass slope below Trelissick Crescent entrance 3. *Peter Reimann* has moved some trees to make room for the approach track.

A tourist attraction?

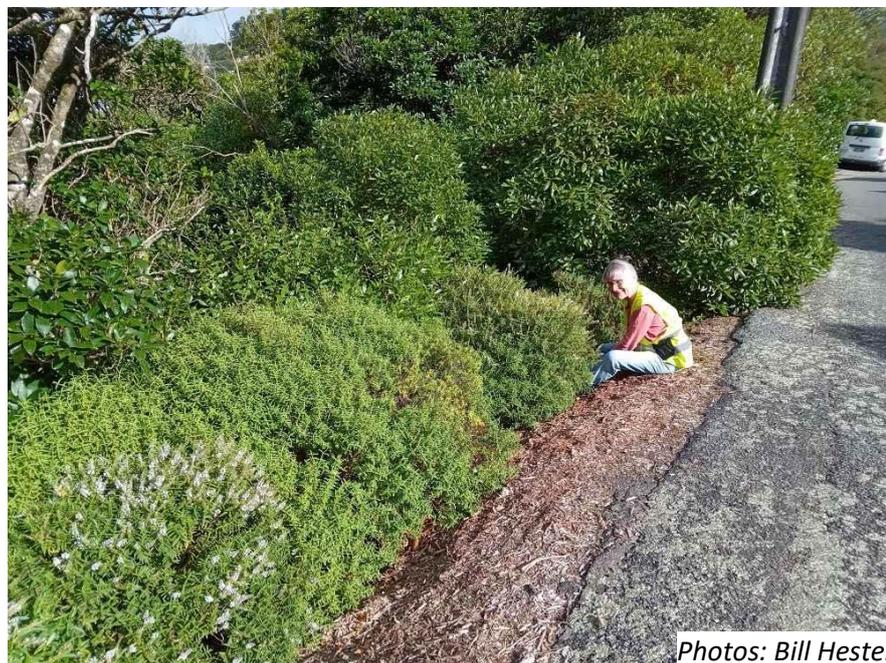


The Trelissick Crescent verge, bordering the park, is nearly ½ kilometre in length. We used to curse people who dumped rubbish and garden waste into the park along the verge. 'We will build a wall', we said. A thickly vegetated wall.

Now, thanks to the hours of dedication lavished on the verge by *Marilyn Hester*, helped occasionally by others, the verge, lined with hundreds of plants, is a sight to behold. As well, it is achieving its original purpose. An appreciative stroll will reveal many species such as gossamer grass (*Anemanthele lessoniana*), *Carex* species, flax (*Phormium tenax*), koromiko (*Veronica stricta*), tree hebe (*Veronica arborea*), tauhinu (*Ozothamnus leptophylla*) and mingimingi (*Coprosma propinqua*).

Marilyn says that the area has been completely mulched with wood chip, needing to be replenished at least once a year, to get more native grasses established and shade out weed regrowth.

The planting objective has expanded to include removing all the tradescantia and *Cyperus eragrostis*. A thick growth of native grasses will also stop weed from blowing and rain-washing into the park from residences on the opposite side of the road. TPG is



Photos: Bill Hester

grateful that Otari Wilton's Bush has given us access to its mulch pile: a dozen 20 kg bags needed for every 15 metres of weeding. By delaying weed regrowth, the mulching saved Marilyn hours of labour.

Inexorable blackberry

We were thinking last January that a 'no-mow' philosophy had swept over the land. Joyfully, we left our meadows to look after themselves¹.

Then we discovered that not only had WCC elsewhere unleashed their weed-eaters, but blackberry was reclaiming our meadows. After a 'weed-eat', order was restored, and *Jonathan Anderson's* podocarps were no longer enveloped. Ah! Perfect timing for the blackberry harvest (pre-slaughter).

The rubbish end of the ecological corridor

Amanda Dobson once more arranged a litter clean-up and survey at the Kaiwharawhara Stream estuary on 26 March. A great collaborative effort between Kia Mouriora te Kaiwharawhara/Sanctuary to Sea network, Sustainable Coastlines, Victoria University, Kiwi Rail/IREX, Interislander, Enviroschools and Trelissick Park Group, with whānau and friends of those groups.

Photos of the litter and participants: see [Litter collection & audit](#).

Data analysis of the vast and diverse collection from the northern bank: see [Litter survey results](#).

The south bank yield was similar.

Huge quantities would have been swept out to sea. Our careless catchment...



Down in the valley

Conservation Volunteers spent an athletic day with tradescantia on the slopes below Hanover Street.

An ACC team worked like beavers at the bridge 4 site, clearing the stream and along the upstream bank².

Bill Hester and *Peter Reimann* then removed the remains of the old gabions washed into the stream.

WCC Ranger Adam Groenewegen chain-sawed karaka next to the track from Oban Street.

Kaitiaki o Ngahere controlled climbing asparagus and Japanese honeysuckle.

Warrick Fowlie chased karaka, gorse, montbretia and rubbish. He inherited a huge clump of swamp flax, which he divided. We planted some at a working bee on the streamside flat below Waikowhai Street. More is destined for the slopes below Oban Street after the rains come.

The 51-tree mosque shooting memorial spot - *Kumar Kumareswaran* organised a visit by the Interfaith and Sathya Sai Groups³. The stream is eating into the bank – some trees were moved further back.

Rats – *Philippa Cox* does a monthly round of the DOC200 traps - nine rats so far this year. It's not yet time to look at the score for the self-resetting A24s below Oban Street (six-monthly service period). *Bill Hester* says the predator team continues replenishing the bait stations and the rats continue to partake.

Food for our manu

A WCC contractor removed some huge pine trees spanning Kaiwharawhara Stream. The logs are stacked beside the track. *Adam Groenewegen* says it is desirable to leave them as they will be habitat for invertebrates as they rot, and subsequently food for our manu⁴.

Gone to kererū heaven

Jonathan Anderson found a young dead kererū beside the lower forest remnant track with only a few loose feathers around it on the ground. It's the second one he has found over the years.

WCC's *Myfanwy Emeny* says, 'Could well have been a dog as often one bite is fairly undetectable from the surface but fatal. Any other predator is likely to have taken it away or eaten at least part of the bird. Sounds like a juvenile fresh off the nest, easy prey sadly.'

With plenty of karaka and tree lucerne in the park there is no shortage of kererū⁵.



Photo: Bill Hester



Consuming karaka fruit. Photo: Geoff de Lisle

It's a wonder that they survive

Andrew Cutler took this photo of a long-fin eel at 6 p.m. on Christmas day, from the peaceful viewing spot in the middle of bridge 7. It was the second eel he saw that day. The other one was about 60 cm long – further upstream.

With our silt-laden streams that rage during heavy rain, why does aquatic life not get swept away? Andrew says, 'Another good reason for WCC and others to limit runoff - look at the silt in the photo!'

To make matters worse, there has been a sewer leak at both ends of the pipe crossing downstream from bridge 6 – the subject of protracted correspondence between WCC and WW.



References

1. GG January 2022
2. Facebook photos/posts 13 January
3. Facebook photo/post 19 February
4. Manu: any winged creature including birds, bats, cicadas, butterflies...
5. [New Zealand Birds Online](#)



Misty morning in the park. Photo: Barry Durrant

Contacts

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GW pollution hotline 0800 496 734
Website: www.trelissickpark.org.nz (includes past Gorge Gazettes and park map)
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TrelissickParkGroup>

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

Appendix

From the stick library catalogue

Shakespaw. Romeo & Chewliette/As You Bite it/Macpet	The Hound who came in from the Cold. Le Carré
Six Stinking Cats. E. de Bone-O	Dogol. Dead Soles
Fetch-22. Howler	The Bone People. Hulme
Wimpering Nights. Brontë	Chump. The Art of the Meal
To the Doghouse. V. Woof	Rover's Fetchsaurus
Dogs are from Mars. Cats are from Venus. John Grayhound	Encyclopaedia Biteannica

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.