

Gorge Gazette

News about Trelissick Park, the Ngaio Gorge and Streams



Abbreviations:

WCC Wellington City Council

GW Greater Wellington Regional Council

CVNZ Conservation Volunteers NZ

TPG Trelissick Park Group

F & B Forest and Bird Protection Society

GG Gorge Gazette

August 2021

Sod's law

Rain all morning, driven by a bitter southerly. The forecast said it would continue. How many times have we postponed a working bee, only for sunshine within an hour of emailing the postponement? The gospel according to MetService ... hmm. Next time the Norwegians will be consulted. Trampers use this oracle: <https://www.yr.no/en>.

How boring would it be without confusion?

The sign at the new Oban Street entrance says, 'Dogs must be on a lead at all times on reserve tracks'. But the signs at the other park entrances say, 'Dog exercise area'.

The current off-lead areas are on: dogs exercise areas – basically along all the park tracks.

Dog owners, knowing that the park is 'off-lead', are confused by the sign at the Oban Street entrance.

We have advocated for the extension of the off-lead dog exercise area from bridge 7 up to the park entrance at Oban Street, with the signage changed accordingly.

WCC's Myfanwy Emeny says that this will be part of the review of dog exercise areas and the dog policy at the end of this year.

Reminder to dog owners: please always keep dogs in sight and under control - for safety of small children, fledgling kaka and ground-feeding birds.

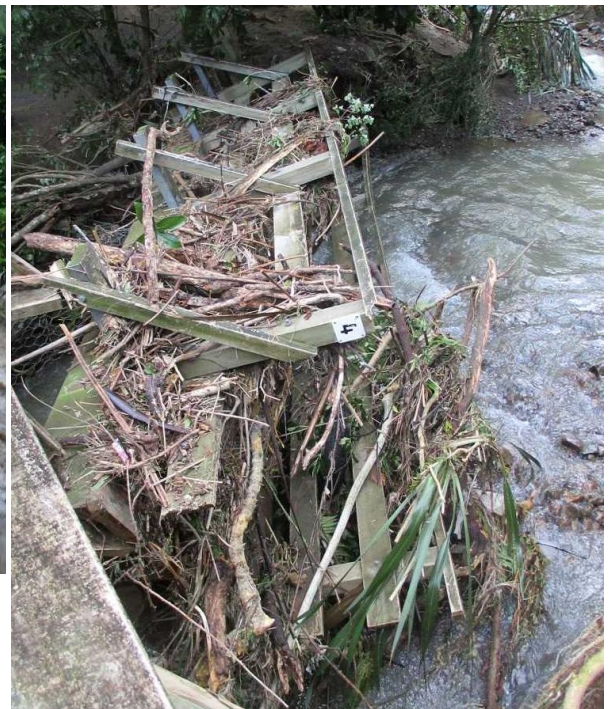


When the heavens opened



Left: Bridge 6

Photo: Barry Durrant



Right: Bridge 4 against bridge 5

Photo: Bill Hester

Saturday 17 July: Bridge 4 wrenched from its foundations and washed against bridge 5. A huge logjam in Korimako Stream below Waikowhai Street also affecting sewer pipe foundations. Stream banks washed away. Track damage. Catch the drama on our Facebook posts from 18 – 20 July – in particular, the video in a comment under the 11.51 a.m. 18 July post entitled ‘Wightwick’s river’.

WCC plans to remove bridge 4 by helicopter. The track there is closed until a new bridge is installed in 2022.

Lacebark: good or bad?

A kind person brought some dubious lacebark to plant on the erstwhile rubbish tip below Oban Street. WCC’s Anita Benbrook says *Hoheria sextylosa* is our local species, *H. populnea* is the northern species [verboten here]. Both are called houhere and lacebark. “Telling them apart is a bit tricky.”



H. sextylosa has a narrower/thinner leaf, deeper serrations and has a slightly divaricating stage, (filiramulate) when young. Any shoot off the base of a trunk will revert to the filiramulate stage. Adult plants are much taller and have a weeping form.

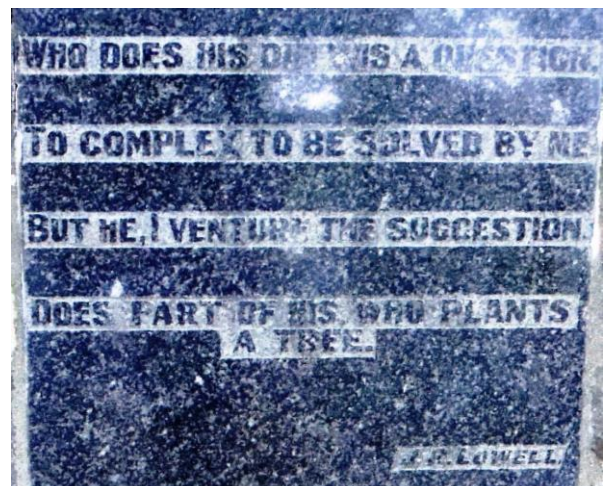


H. populnea has a wider leaf, fewer serrations, and a slightly purple back to the leaf.

A tribute

Within the urban jungle of Auckland lies Fowlds Park. Gottfried Theiler discovered that it harboured a poem written by American James Russell Lowell in the 1800s:

WHO DOES HIS DUTY IS A QUESTION.
 TO COMPLEX TO BE SOLVED BY ME.
 BUT HE, I VENTURE THE SUGGESTION.
 DOES PART OF HIS, WHO PLANTS
 A TREE.



Ngaio Gorge Road update

See [Ngaio Gorge stabilisation](#). Summarising, all is going to schedule, with stabilisation of the two slip sites due to start in October, including:

- installation of rock anchors, netting and bund at the main slip area
- installation of an attenuation fence, anchoring, and drapery at lower slip area.

Work on the road, footpath and parking will be from June to October 2022.

It is also worth watching <https://youtu.be/4ooh1vdfPeA>.

The upper entrance remains open for the duration. The update says vaguely, “Later on - the lower site entrance [to the park] will open.” The closure of this entrance has affected access to a most popular part of the park and has had impact on predator control in that area. There will be much catch-up maintenance and planting to do when public access is resumed.

Doug's bounteous tree

The March 2020 GG reported on Doug Tennant's kowhai tree with 'birds doing their seedy business aloft, resulting in natives emerging below'. More recent produce: pigeonwood, karamu, taupata, lancewood, flax, kawakawa, tree fuchsia and mapou.

Rarities from F & B

WCC's Jonathan Anderson listed species in the May GG to increase biodiversity. Richard Grasse volunteers in the F & B nursery and provided some: puka (*Griselinia lucida*), heketara (*Olearia rani*), toro (*Myrsine salicina*) and turepo/milk tree (*Streblus banksii*).

How about the fish?



*Debris trap after the 17 July flood, later cleared by Wellington Water
Photo: Peter Reimann*

Despite periodic flooding mayhem over the years, somehow native fish, eels, and invertebrates remain. But it was so bad on 17 July, one wonders how could they not all be swept away? Time will tell.

WCC's Daniela Biaggio has sent a preliminary report co-funded by WCC and GW, using NIWA databases to input and manage all fish barrier work in Wellington catchments.

The preliminary report includes all the barriers in the Kaiwharawhara catchment. It identifies a 150 m culvert for Kaiwharawhara Stream under the oil tanks downstream of the park, needing to be modified first, as it

causes the greatest biodiversity decline between fish sites upstream. The report states that the lower section of Kaiwharawhara Stream has the greatest biodiversity of all monitored streams.

We are looking forward to the modification of this 150 m culvert (see photo on p. 3 of the February 2021 GG).

Otherwise...

Warrick Fowlie deserves a medal for periodic clearing of the debris trap, sometimes in a similar state to that shown above.

The new Five-Year Plan is on the 'Current Issues' page of our website. (If you can't find it, press 'F5' to refresh the page). This includes a list of all the work done in the park since 1991.

The 17 July flood washed away four of the 51 trees planted to commemorate the mosque shooting victims. Anne Tuffin cleaned up the mess and the Interfaith and Sathya groups visited to restore the area and replace the four with pukatea from our home nursery. Some of Finn Illsley-Kemp's streamside planting down from bridge 7 also suffered.

Marilyn Hester's Trelissick Crescent verge looks wonderful and Anne Tuffin continues to soldier away below Hanover Street. Andrew Cutler planted mixed tree species on the NW slope below Oban Street. Total planting so far this year is 430.

Bill Hester has just discovered that the planks, posts and some of the vegetation in the logjam in Korimako Stream below Waikowhai Street came from a huge slip below a house, just

upstream of the park, during the 17 July flood. There were also a few downed trees which have been removed from tracks by TPG.

We are grateful for two recent weeding and planting visits from Conservation Volunteers and some help from St Benedict's School during a TPG working bee - all on the slopes below Oban Street, yielding more bottles and rubbish. Photos are on our Facebook page.

Anne Tuffin has taken over from Frances Lee as TPG's representative on the CentrePort Environmental Consultative Group.

A salute to the fallen

We are mourning the possible loss of the best of the rimu we planted in 2006 – another legacy of the 17 July flood. Originally, we thought of re-planting further back, but WCC's Anita Benbrook says, "It's probably best to try and winch it upright using a turfer winch and securing it back upright. It may survive but rimu don't usually survive mass root disturbance so there would be little point in digging it right out and moving it. Building up the corner of the bank with stones may be an option?"



Rimu downstream of bridge 3

Photo: Bill Hester

On a happier note

Trelissick Park has been nominated as one of the five 'top and leading bush walks in Wellington' – see [5 Best Bush Walks](#).

Animal pest control

Our team of five continue with regular servicing of traps and bait stations. Two weasels were recently captured by the traps - the first mustelids in more than a year. For more, see December 2020 GG and minutes of TPG's June meeting, both on the website.

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. Recent addition: [historic Oban Street information](#).

Working bees

See website 'Projects' page for dates, locations and health and safety information – and our Facebook page for photos.

Contacts

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WCC (reporting problems)

(04) 499 4444 or

<https://forms.wellington.govt.nz/s3/Council-Fix-It-Contact-form>

GW pollution hotline

0800 496 734

Thanks to all our volunteers, supporters and staff from WCC and GW.

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.