

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	WRA	Wadestown Residents' Association
GW	Greater Wellington Regional Council	VUW	Victoria University
HPPA	Highland Park Progressive Association	DOC	Department of Conservation
TPG	Trelissick Park Group	F & B	Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society
NCDRA	Ngaio Crofton Downs Residents' Association	GG	Gorge Gazette

Website www.trelissickpark.org.nz (includes past Gorge Gazettes and Park map)

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/TrelissickParkGroup>

MARCH 2018

Matters of Gravity

The Park is in a valley, so things fall into it - gravity in action. When 'low-life' humans are involved, this is gravity of the swearing kind.

We are forever fishing out rubbish from the Park¹. We have pictures of Bill Hester's collections on our Facebook page. WCC kindly remove it from our 'dump' below Trelissick Crescent entrance 3.

Kelvin Hastie alerted us to about 15 black plastic rubbish bags chucked down the cliff below Waikowhai Street, near his house. It took three of us nearly two hours to haul these up, using a rope and cradle. In the process, one crashed down to the stream, so we floated it out.

Trelissick Crescent is a favourite launch pad. Warrick Fowlie has been scouring the slopes below. Another rope and cradle job.

As a novel extension of our 'adopt-a-spot' scheme, Brenton Early adopted all the streams in the Park, to rescue the garbage before it goes out to sea - mostly plastic, we expect.

New Inhabitants

Peter Reimann was showing new Conservation Volunteers NZ manager Kellie Brenner and her offsider Natalie Jones our problem areas when we spotted a pukeko on railway land near bridge 6. Has anyone seen one of these in the Park before?

Christine Comerford, who lives on Trelissick Crescent above the original forest remnant, reports a thriving community of red fronted kakariki in her corner of the park - she asks does anyone know if they've been in the park for long?



Photos of kakariki and pukeko from nzbirdsonline.org.nz by (L to R) Oscar Thomas and Craig Steed

Kereru Deaths

WCC's Jonathan Anderson found two dead kereru in the Kaiwharawhara valley. The first, in early January, was in the stream, with no visible signs of injury. It could have been killed by a dog. The second was in the bush close to the path. Jonathan says there was a patch of feathers in a hollow about 3 m away from the body. The bird was on its back with the breast and main body cleanly eaten down to the sternum, possibly including some internal organs. He would like to think a falcon was responsible but suspects a stoat is more likely.

A 'Sanctuary to Sea' Diversion

The 'Sanctuary to Sea' track² goes from Zealandia, through Otari Wiltons Bush and Trelissick Park. Thereafter it becomes lost and the 'sea' is mythical. The Churchill Drive section between Otari and the Park is tedious, with intrusive traffic noise. Seeking excitement, Richard Grasse, Warrick Fowlie and Peter Reimann waded through the tunnel for the Kaiwharawhara Stream under the railway, then through Churchill Reserve and the tunnel under Churchill Drive. They climbed out at the lower end of Otari. The tunnels were surprisingly easy, with no obstructions and fish-friendly. Take a torch and beware of rain. The streams rise quickly.

It was gratifying to see that WCC's Daniela Baggio's contractor has reinstated the fish ramp at the railway tunnel exit. She asks that those passing clear any debris from the ramp.



Churchill Reserve is highly recommended for any academic studying weeds. Fresh fields for a restoration group.

The other 'Sanctuary to Sea'

Early this century, it was called 'Project Kaiwharawhara', promoted by GW, then WCC. The Kaiwharawhara catchment covers more than 20 km² - all the way from Zealandia/Karori in the south and Kandallah in the north, down to the harbour and bounded by the outer green belt and Te Ahumairangi Hill. As an urban catchment, it is beset with problems. But solutions abound.

Zealandia's Danielle Shanahan and Pascale Michel have now taken this over, with great enthusiasm re-naming it 'Sanctuary to Sea'. They want to expand Zealandia's horizons, as explained by Danielle in her interview on RNZ's 'Nine to Noon'.³ TPG has been involved in Zealandia's 'Sanctuary to Sea' meetings along with many other interested parties, such as community and environmental groups, consultants, local authorities, DOC, BotSoc, students and VUW.

A New Stream Health Monitoring Kit

Liz Gibson from Mountain-To-Sea-Wellington is currently working with NIWA to develop a new stream health monitoring assessment kit. Various community groups and volunteers will trial this new kit over the coming months in the Kaiwharawhara water catchment, including five from TPG.

Minor Track Matters

Our minor tracks add to the charm of the Park and we owe much to the late Grant Preston Thomas and his team of volunteers for their work on some of them.

Recently, Warrick Fowlie re-benched the 'reveg' track that zig-zags down the forested slopes below Hanover Street to the streamside memorial seat. We have used this track countless times for planting and weeding.

John McInnes re-benched and cleared the lower ends of the track which descends from below Trelissick Crescent to the track traversing the canyon section of the lower Korimako Stream. This should encourage more to this attractive area.

However, our real 'gem' is the Forest Remnant Track, which traverses below Trelissick Crescent and upper Ngaio Gorge Road. Here are magnificent tawa, rewarewa, kahikatea and totara - escapees from the loggers of old. There are warning notices at the entrances saying the track is of 'tramping track' standard and needing suitable fitness. Currently, WCC have closed the western part of the track, deeming a stream crossing and track edge unsafe. WCC are looking at remedial measures.

Update - the Track from Oban Street

WCC's research team are finishing a survey, using some of the material provided by TPG. It will go out for public consultation very shortly, with the aim of having all feedback analysed by April. Bated breath...

Pre-empting our Earthquakes

The strengthening of Ngaio Gorge Road above the Park up from the lay-by is finished (see photo). WCC Ranger, Tim Harkness, is arranging for the contractor to plant the cleared slope below. Work on a new section further uphill has started.

Ngaio Gorge Road is said to be a strategic link to the north and such strengthening will increase the chance of it staying open after a big earthquake. However, huge landslides happen in earthquakes and the slopes above the road are extremely steep. Major landslides closed the road even without an earthquake!

The Aftermath

There is life after tradescantia (wandering willie). The photo shows natural regenerating seedlings above Heke Reserve, 25 years after initial manual clearance and about 3 follow-ups. The area is graced with legions of kohekohe and ferns (not shown), also some kawakawa, titoki and kanono.



Other News

WCC's Illona Keenan is organising contractor Kaitiaki o Ngahere Ltd to spray tradescantia thickly carpeting the lower slopes below the Northern Walkway down from Hanover Street.

Doug Tennant kindly donated some seedling cabbage trees, rewarewa and lancewood from his garden.

Parking for visitors to the Park from Ngaio Gorge Road is dire following the

conversion of the lay-by to a traffic lane. TPG is advocating for the old grassed lay-by further down to be turned into a car park.

There is much more on our Facebook pages, such as work by Conservation Volunteers, our bi-monthly working bees, stream and rubbish problems, the Christmas-decorated rimu tree, tui fighting in the stream...

References

1. GG, July 2014
2. <https://wellington.govt.nz/recreation/enjoy-the-outdoors/walks-and-walkways/beyond-the-city/karori-wildlife-sanctuary>
3. http://www.radionz.co.nz/audio/player?audio_id=2018630397.

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 and a copy of the working bee programme.

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.