

Gorge Gazette

News about Trelissick Park, the Ngaio Gorge and Streams



Abbreviations:

WCC Wellington City Council

CVNZ Conservation Volunteers NZ

GW Greater Wellington Regional Council

TPG Trelissick Park Group

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

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

May 2021

What is better than going for an airing in the Park? An oasis of peace and tranquillity.



Next to Kaiwharawhara Stream

Photo: Gottfried Theiler

June 2021 marks TPG's 30th anniversary. We can look back with a glow of satisfaction and remember all the people and groups trying to restore our 24 hectares of valley within the urban jungle to a native bush wilderness. Radical changes in all those years. There is still a long way to go.

Recently...

WCC are upgrading the Northern Walkway down from Hanover Street. The Wadestown Fair and Sea-Week Kaiwharawhara estuary clean-up were blessed with fair weather. Ranger Adam organised new Park brochures and pamphlets. Finn caught 33 rats/mice in six weeks on the slope below Oban Street. TPG's updated Park Five-Year Plan and a dog off/on-leash hiccup

below Oban Street are in the throes. Marilyn is busy clearing the Trelissick Crescent verge and the Korimako Stream bank. Many working bees have come and gone (see Facebook).



The mulch carriers near the Hanover Street entrance (remains of WCC's heap behind)
Photo: Barry Durrant

The 51 Trees

Last year members of the Wellington Interfaith Council and Sathya Sai Group planted heritage trees to remember the victims of the mosque shooting. We chose a delightful flat area beside Kaiwharawhara Stream. Currently, 51 tall stakes dominate. If the mulch supplied by WCC does its job, the stakes will soon be overtopped by magnificent groves of kahikatea, nīkau palms, cabbage trees, lancewood, pukatea, mīro and tītoki.

The Coming of the Raptors

Eva Durrant says:

Just saw a wonderful sight!

A pair of kārearea flying around the valley and perching in our dead gum tree by the kitchen window. As they were coming across the valley, I thought it was two kaka pursued by a kārearea, but as they got closer to our house, I could see the distinctive long tail of the kārearea as the lone kaka veered away. The two birds settled on the gum for a while. How exciting to see these two claim Trelissick Park as their patch!

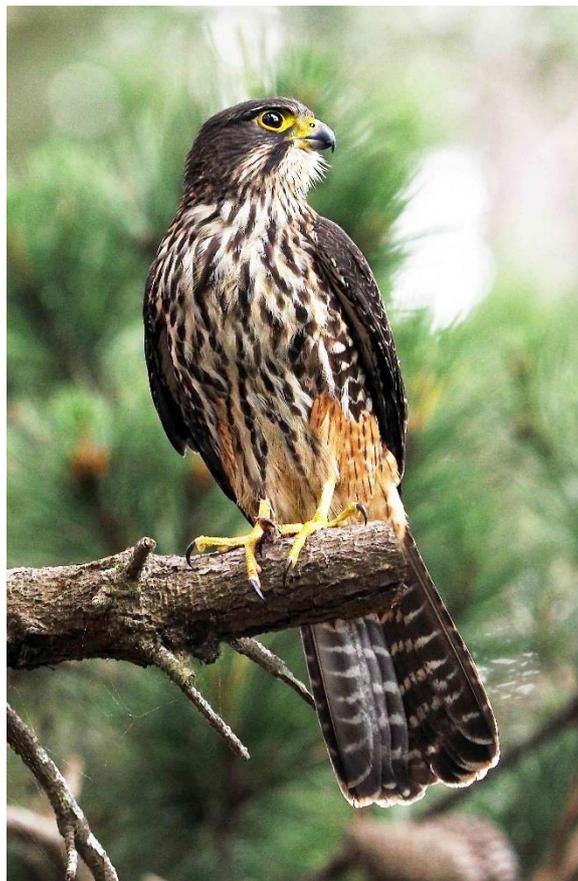


Photo: Barry Durrant

An Unveiling

A memorial seat for the mosque victims, funded by the Interfaith Council, was unveiled in the presence of a large gathering on the second anniversary of that awful day. Photos are on our Facebook page. Now, people walking up the Northern Walkway towards Trelissick Crescent can sit to admire the view and remember.

Buried Treasure

The slope in the Park below the Oban Street houses continues to yield vast quantities of old bottles. Treasury staff filled six bags when they visited in early March. CVNZ in early May harvested a similar quantity – excitement for one member, who took home nearly all the May and March bottles.

Of course, along with the bottles came all sorts of garbage – not so interesting.

It will probably take a year or two to sift through the remnants on that slope.



The best of them - awaiting a home brewer

Treasury and CVNZ then descended to achieve miracles on the stream banks near the new bridge.

On the Stream Bandwagon Again

TPG's submission on the WCC Long-Term Plan repeats our past concerns about fast stormwater run-off from hard surfaces in the 20 km² Kaiwharawhara catchment. All the stormwater ends up in our streams.

We advocate for new developments and infill housing to be biophilic, for a neutral effect on stormwater runoff, e.g. using swales, wetlands, planting, green walls/roofs, soakage areas, permeable surfaces, stormwater detention and roof water tankage.

Our streams quickly become destructive/raging torrents 2m deep during heavy rain. With the extremes of climate change, this will get worse. How many more bridges will we lose? (Two already – see these 2016 photos).



The original bridge 3



Old bridge opposite Wightwick's Field

To read our submission see:

https://treilissickpark.org.nz/Newsletters/WCCLongTermPlanSubmission_7May2021.pdf

John Foden

Sadly, John Foden died on 23 March. He had a bad stroke seven years ago, which confined him to Cashmere Home. We are indebted to John because about 20 years ago he produced an excellent map of Trelissick Park, which WCC used on map boards and brochures.

He also set up neighbouring Bell's Track Group, bent on restoring the weedy valley at the head of Awarua Street in Ngaio to a native bush wilderness.

Seeking Biodiversity

WCC's Jonathan Anderson must know every tree and plant in the Park from his years of spare-time roaming, much of it off-track. He collects seeds for the Berhampore nursery, deals with weed trees and non-endemics, prunes around slow-growing canopy trees to give them more light and plants and maintains podocarps and other species. A Park walk with Jonathan is an educational treat. Some of his observations:

- Kārāriki feeding on fallen seed on the ground below an adult totara on the track below Ngaio Gorge Road – 7.45 p.m., Sunday, 21 February.
- Red admiral butterflies seem less common than in previous years. It is linked to the ongaonga or tree nettle, *Urtica ferox*. As it is a stinging, poisonous plant it would need to be planted remotely or fenced in a damp area with good light. There is a heavy plant growing on the streambank beside Bridge 2.
- For increasing ground cover, instead of ferns concentrate on other ground cover species that are easier to establish in light shade or full sun, such as NZ bluebell, *Dianella nigra* and NZ iris, *Libertia ixioides*. Both occur naturally in low numbers in Trelissick Park. Other possibilities include more bush rice grass *Microlaena avenacea* and even the dreaded hook

grass *Carex* species. There is a species with very fine leaves and another with medium sized leaves already growing in the Park.

- To increase biodiversity, Jonathan has listed below local natives that are missing or in low numbers in the Park, for us to source.
 - Puka, *Griselinia lucida* (a single wild tree)
 - Tutu, *Coriaria arborea* var. *arborea* (2 existing trees)
 - Ramarama, *Lophomyrtus bullata* (none known)
 - Rohutu, *Lophomyrtus obcordata* (1 tree, 1 dead tree)
 - Black maire, *Nestegis cunninghamii* (no wild trees)
 - White maire, *Nestegis lanceolata* (2 existing trees)
 - Willow-leaved maire, *Mida salicifolia* (none – closest: Makererua-Orleans Reserve)
 - Toro, *Myrsine salicina* (1 existing tree, 1 dead tree)
 - Heketara, *Olearia rani* var. *rani* (none known – closest: Huntleigh Park)
 - Kōwhai, *Sophora microphylla* (the gorge has its own wild population of 50-60 trees in the lower half of the Park)
 - Turepo, milk tree, *Streblus banksii* (10 -15 mature individuals in the Park and lower valley)
 - Swamp maire, *Syzygium maire* (none)
 - Kiekie, *Freycinetia banksia*. The closest plants are in the Rangiora Avenue area of Khandallah.

Some of the above are probably rare or missing because the Park is at lower altitude and generally drier than other forests at slightly higher altitude. It will influence the presence and frequency of some species e.g., toro, ramarama, heketara.

The Wall Survives



History abounds in Trelissick Park – read about it on our website. The December *Gorge Gazette* described the disruptive two-year slip stabilisation and parking improvement project. Hidden behind high fences, we worried about the historic wall next to the vehicle track from the lower entrance.

During a clandestine visit on a quiet Sunday morning – the wall is still there!

Working Bees

See website 'Projects' page for dates, locations and health and safety information.

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.