

Gorge Gazette

News about Trelissick Park, the Ngaio Gorge and Streams

Abbreviations:

WCC = Wellington City Council

GW = Greater Wellington Regional Council

TPG = Trelissick Park Group

Footbridges over the stream are numbered from 1 – 6 going downstream (excluding the old bridge off the side of Wightwick's Field).

SEPTEMBER 2009

September provides a comparatively restful interlude. The frenetic planting season is over and the weeds are not yet bolting.

Changes Afoot

Fiona Glasse has resigned due to pressure of other commitments. To take the load off any further secretaries, we decided on a new position of Projects Coordinator to handle submissions, funding applications and work projects/liaison. A warm welcome to David Grace, who has already become immersed.

Anyone for the secretary position now?

What a Dog!

Trelissick Park, with its bushy track network, open spaces and stream is a canine paradise. On weekends especially, dogs with their humans are to be found in abundance.

The WCC Draft Dog Control Policy was recently open for public consultation. This evoked strongly held and divergent opinions from our volunteers.

Trelissick Park is actually a bit of a "dog's breakfast". The WCC Management Plan for the Park states that dogs are to be either on a leash or under the control of the owner or handler. But the dog policy contravenes this, as it stipulates on-leash for all but the lower part of the Park. Almost invariably dog owners have had their dogs universally off-leash anyway. There have been no serious problems over the years, to our knowledge.

For our new Projects Coordinator, it was a baptism of fire. David did a masterful job of eliciting some coherence for our submission, but we had to leave the divisive issue of "on-leash" or "off-leash" to individual submissions.

We await the final outcome from WCC.

Planting News

Ground cover - The tradescantia spraying left large tracts of bare ground in the forest. These are now host to about 1,300 ferns and 2,000 bush rice grass; also a scattering of kawakawa, kanono, karamu and lemonwood. Many thanks to the GW "Take Care" fund and the Honda Treefund for the ferns. All the bush rice grass came from a single surplus tray from the Otari Wilton's Bush nursery. As we potted, then planted, the thought uppermost in our minds was "will it ever end?"

Canopy species - Heritage canopy species from WCC Berhampore nursery and the Manawa Karioi Society surplus are now "in" - mainly kahikatea, totara, matai, tawa and northern rata, but also a few rewarewa funded from St Luke's Wadestown donation. There were no miro and rimu this year – but we live in hope for the future.

"Reveg." Species

All our annual 500 plant allocation from WCC, along with around 1,000 from our three home nurseries, are mostly enjoying their liberation in the Park. The new planting in the gorse-cleared patches below Trelissick Crescent is struggling, but surviving. The thickly applied mulch tends to push the plants down hill and

some species suffered from wind, frost or rabbits. Many thanks to Robyn Smith of GW for the garish red mesh rabbit protectors.

During the Ontrack tunnel widening on the Johnsonville railway line, heavy vehicles and ballast storage destroyed trees at the lower end of the Park. Ontrack have employed a contractor to plant 2,000 trees, sourced from WCC, to replace these. WCC have also planted several hundred trees as infill from the entrance gate to the powder magazine building ruin and across the stream.

Marilyn Hester and Carolyn Theiler have been experimenting with planting rushes, grasses and sedges in ephemeral streams, or downstream from stormwater outlets to help diminish fast run-off and reduce sediment pick-up and pollution.

People

Adopt-a-spot volunteers Jack Stanton, Sylvia Dixon, Mark Collinge, George and Andrew Symmes, Trevor Mobray, Tararua Tramping Club members, Vernon Mackenzie, Mark Sheriff, Don Foote and Judy Paulin have been doing some sterling work clearing and planting.

The Saphya Sai Service Organisation have adopted a spot across the Kaiwharawhara Stream below the debris trap. On a perfect sunny afternoon more than 20 of their members cleared the spot and put in around 100 plants. This happened at speed and was followed by a sumptuous feast. We were fortunate to discover some eco-sourced toetoe from Kiwi Plants in Stoke's Valley, to help protect the stream bank.

6 – 10 people faithfully come to our twice-monthly working bees, the extra incentive being the delicious home-baked muffins and refreshing hot drinks from our Volunteer Organiser, Dorothy Douglass. We have combined some of these occasions with visits from ANZ-National, ACC and St Benedict's School, achieving wonders. Thanks to all.

The photo shows another use for our ferns – Carolyn (left) and Marilyn, doing their bit for the “350” campaign (the aspirational carbon dioxide parts per million atmospheric limit).



Rats are Athletes

Barry Durrant says that some rats like to build their nests at the middle of the top of tree ferns. His dog is no match for their lightning agility. The last trap round rendered nothing, but Bill Hester advises that the brodifucoum in the bait stations is still vanishing.

“....perchance to dream”

For years we have been dreaming about a leafy track winding down through pristine bush from Oban Street in Highland Park to the Kaiwharawhara Stream. The foundation for this dream was the 1995 Management Plan for the Park. As a stalwart advocate for this track, full marks for persistence must go to Frances Lee - but thwarted at every turn. It would need a new bridge over the stream. Now we are thinking about the funding “route”. Perhaps there are some emergent philanthropists around? This would open the Park to Highland Park and

Wadestown residents whose only access at the moment is from the remote Hanover Street.

The Kaiwharawhara Estuary

The estuary saga continues (see last issue). As we said, the ecology does “not rate much against the commercial realities of port and ferry operations”. Ownership and leasing arrangements are complex and it is hoped that one day the “Sanctuary to the Sea” track will end there and the “Great Harbour Way” cycle path will traverse the area.

As a step in identifying the issues and how to proceed, Frances Lee has been attempting to get some funding for a study. So far she has had some setbacks, but also glimmers of hope.



Meanwhile our Group had a working bee at the estuary, which is at the northern end of the Interislander vehicle marshalling area. It seems that this marshalling area is becoming increasingly hallowed ground. This time, we could only cross it after completion of access formalities with the Interislander Duty Manager, involving phone calls, form filling and orange safety jackets. It was one of those brilliantly fine, crystal clear Wellington days – just right for weeding, removing rubbish and planting some ngaio, wharangi and toetoe as infill for the original 2002 GW planting.

Pikopiko or Common Shield Fern (*Polystichum richardii*)



Our ferns have come from Fern Factor Ltd in Christchurch and NZ Fernz Ltd in Westport. 72 *Polystichum richardii* have just been delivered. This fern is named after the French botanist, Achille Richard. We will keep most for next year, as these are too small to plant now. They are hardy and can grow pretty well anywhere. The fronds are dark, shiny and leathery – rather prickly. The stalks are black. “There are narrow scales, with fringes of hairs at the base, covering the stalks. The blades are 10-50 cm long x 4-25 cm wide and the primary leaflets 2-13 cm long x 1-5 cm wide.”¹ “The sori are arranged in two rows each side of the midrib and halfway towards the margin.”² “The young fiddleheads were, and still are, cooked as a green and eaten by many Maori.”³

Buddleia

Much of our buddleia comes from the railway corridor adjoining the Park. It is “a deciduous shrub to 4 m with willow-shaped leaves and distinctive dense spikes of fragrant blue/purple flowers [during] summer/autumn. Produces large amounts of seed that are dispersed by wind and water. Further spread occurs by vegetative regeneration. Buddleia tolerates a wide range of conditions and invades areas such as forest, revegetation areas, scrub, cliffs, riverbeds and open sites where it establishes quickly and forms self-replacing thickets. In river beds, buddleia can alter the water flow, causing silt accretion and flooding.”⁴ A good example of a buddleia invasion is across the stream between bridges 3 and 4 (see photo). It may look beautiful to some – but not to us. To see huge and depressing buddleia invasions, visit the Orongorongo valley.

This is one of our many weeds, which fall victim to the saw and Vigilant gel.



Contacts

Chairman & Adopt-a-Spot: Peter Reimann (04) 938 9602, peter.reimann@paradise.net.nz

Working bees: Dorothy Douglass (04) 472 8558

Wellington City Council (reporting slips and fallen trees across tracks, other problems): (04) 499 4444

Greater Wellington pollution hotline: 0800 496 734

Website: www.trelissickpark.org.nz

Working Bees (Check with Dorothy before coming – changes may occur)

Sunday 4 October, 1.30 PM Waikowhai Street

Tuesday 13 October, 9.30 AM Trelissick Crescent

The Gorge Gazette

Compiled by Peter Reimann about every 4 months - all contributions and suggestions gratefully received.

Come and participate in the transformation of Trelissick Park or give us your ideas – all welcome.

Thanks to all who contributed

1. John Dawson, Rob Lucas. "Nature Guide to the New Zealand Forest"
2. Muriel E Fisher. "Gardening with New Zealand Ferns"
3. Andrew Crowe. "Which Native Fern?"
4. Department of Conservation. "Plant me Instead"