

Gorge Gazette

News about Trelissick Park, the Ngaio Gorge and Streams

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

Abbreviations:

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

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

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

SEPTEMBER 2016

Life on the Edge

Edge dwelling is not for the faint of heart. Along our nearly 6 km of edge, natives struggle against wind, sun and frost. Parched soils abound on the elevated sections. Rubbish and garden waste gravitate across and exotics waft in from the suburbs. Birds cross to deposit alien seeds. Rats and stoats come in to plunder. Ref.1 is an excellent treatise on the effect of the edge (20 - 100m), also the size and shape of bush patches. In the middle, beyond the edge, it is safer. Our park is a long and thin urban park, with more edge than middle, so we have our 'backs to the wall'.



Fixing this predominates, but 'image' matters also. Visitors may have noticed vastly improved entrances. Tim McIvor has transformed the lower Ngaio Gorge Road entrance (photo), the Hames family and Richard Grasse: the Waikowhai Street entrance. BNZ initiated work on the lay-by entrance on Ngaio Gorge Road in 2011. The bedraggled Hanover Street entrance was the latest for 'the treatment'. Over the years, we have improved both Trelissick Crescent entrances.

Homage to the Giants

Standing spellbound under a large ancient tree evokes feelings hard to describe. Wonder and awe? The largest living things on the planet and home to ecosystems of epiphytes, ferns, mosses, lichens, insects and much more.

A pilgrimage to the giant pukatea in the gully of Orleans Reserve in Ngaio is good for the soul. Otari Wilton's Bush has an 800 year-old rimu. There are kahikatea of similar or older age near the Tauherenikau racecourse in the Wairarapa and other enormous trees all over the Orongorongos and Tararuas. Our big totara and matai next to the Northern Walkway and kahikatea in the original forest remnant* are flourishing and we have planted innumerable podocarps. But we will have to wait a few more centuries to match such wonders.

For more, visit the giant northern rata in the Akatawaras² and an inspirational 'Ted Talk', on the redwoods of the Pacific north-west³.

* The original forest remnant occupies the slopes below eastern Trelissick Crescent and upper Ngaio Gorge Road. For the 'Forest Remnant Track' see map via the home page of our website.

The Generations

Our ages go all the way.

Pre-School - Even if they do not remember, a bushy osmosis, perhaps. Recently, Amanda Dobson from Enviroschools⁴ with care-givers hosted 3 - 4 year-old toddlers from Te Puna Reo O Nga Kakano for a muddy morning planting nikau and grasses in the valley near the Northern Walkway bridge 6.

The Youthful Zone - Here lie enviable displays of dexterity and fitness. In June eight pre-teen girls with teacher from Thorndon School planted in an hour over 100 trees and grasses between the Northern

Walkway bridge 6 and the downstream memorial seat. Thank you Oliver Vetter of Sustainable Coastlines⁵. He also recruited a large group from Volunteer Fitness⁶ to replace the dead flax with natives, opposite the powder magazine ruin and to enhance the debris trap area with grasses (photo at right). Rain-soaked, they soldiered on, spurred by the promised sausages, sizzling under an awning.



Lingering still in this zone, Alexandra McKendry from Marsden School has finished planting her streamside 'spot' below Waikowhai Street, for her Duke of Edinburgh award (photo at left). WCC Ranger Tim Harkness has a school group coming to pick up rubbish. Rubbish 'experts' Bill Hester and Warrick Fowlie had no problem suggesting 'hot spots', such as the slopes under the Oban Street houses, below the Wadestown Scouts hall and Crofton Downs station. Conservation Volunteers⁷ kindly raked and piled wandering willie from beside the vehicle track from the lower entrance. Some dogs get irritated by this weed so will be grateful. The very sight of it is enough to irritate us.

Approaching the 'Middle Ages' - Six BNZ staff on their 'Closed for Good Day' diligently cleared, planted and mulched the Trelissick Crescent verge, removed wandering willie beside the vehicle track in the valley and cleared the debris trap. The Sathya Sai Service Organisation⁸ once more 'fixed' their flood-prone spot across the stream up from the debris trap - a 'ghastly' to 'gorgeous' transformation, thanks to their persistence.

The 'Vintage' End - Our bi-monthly working bees embrace most ages - but with a leaning towards the 'vintage' end. We like to think wisdom and experience counters dexterity and fitness, somewhat. 'Vintage' as in good wine.

For much more on our activities, with photos, see our Facebook page, regularly updated by Bill Hester - link above.

A Bountiful Year

WCC's nursery exceeded expectations and supplied 660 plants. Moreover, they all looked wonderful. It was good to see many varieties of grasses for much-needed ground cover, also some maire and pukatea. F & B's nursery supplied another 90 trees and grasses. The planting score is approaching 1,000.

Coprosma linarifolia

Gary James of F & B said this is "locally rare". Well, slightly less rare, thanks to those he gave us (photo at right). It is a non-divaricating shrub which grows up to 8 m tall, with leaves 1.5 - 3 cm long x 2 - 5 mm wide.

It is found in lowland to mountain forest and shrub-land in the southern half of the North Island and throughout the South Island, particularly in the east⁹.

Ours are destined for semi-shaded forest areas.

The Bridge

In the last newsletter we gave some details of the proposed 21 m suspension bridge in the lower Kaiwharawhara valley needed to open up the access to the park from



Wadestown/Highland Park via Oban Street. This will be a collaboration between WCC, HPPA, WRA and TPG. A sequence of actions has been agreed, including residents' survey, hydrology assessment of stream banks, planning below the Oban Street end, price estimate and funding, project plan and resource consents. Given success with those actions construction can then start. Not so daunting if thinking one step at a time. HPPA and WRA are on the first step and planning for the residents' survey.

The Killing Team

Welcome to Andrew McIver who has joined Bill Hester, Barry Durrant, Michael Courtney and Steve Mackle servicing the bait stations and traps arrayed over the park. With back-up from WCC's Illona Keenan, Bernard Smith and GW's Bruce Brewer, our rats and stoats have reason to be afraid - and birds to rejoice.

References

1. Helmut Janssen. *Bush Vitality: A visual assessment kit*. Horizons Regional Council, 2004.
2. <http://register.notabletrees.org.nz/tree/view/976>
3. http://www.ted.com/talks/richard_preston_on_the_giant_trees
4. www.enviroschools.org.nz
5. www.sustainablecoastlines.org
6. <https://www.facebook.com/volunteerfitness>
7. <http://conservationvolunteers.co.nz/>
8. <http://sathyasai.org/>
9. John Dawson, Rob Lucas. *Nature Guide to the New Zealand Forest*. Random House, 2007 reprint.

Contacts

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