

Gorge Gazette - July 2025

News about Trelissick Park, the Ngaio Gorge and streams



Abbreviations:

WCC	Wellington City Council	GW	Greater Wellington Regional Council
DoC	Department of Conservation	GG	Gorge Gazette
TPG	Trelissick Park Group	OWBT	Ōtari-Wilton's Bush Trust
S to S	Kia Mouriora te Kaiwharawhara Sanctuary to Sea	OHS	Onslow Historical Society

Membership drawn from Highland Park Progressive Association Inc., Ngaio Crofton Downs Residents' Association Inc., Onslow Historical Society Inc., Ōtari-Wilton's Bush Trust, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society Inc. (Wellington Branch), Wellington Botanical Society Inc., Wadestown Residents' Association.

At last!



Walk upstream from bridge 7 on the vehicle track, look across the stream and behold the birth of the podocarp grove!

See also p.2 of January 2024 GG.

Planting is in full swing elsewhere.

A sprawler

From recent attempts to tame a bushy backyard:

Ngaio (*Myoporum laetum*) is endemic to the Wellington area and a popular 'reveg' plant. A fast grower.

Attractive for birds but beware of its penchant to sprawl.



Photo: Jeremy Rolfe

Sobering reading, but...

Received from Predator Free Khandallah: [7-feral-cat-facts](#).

Comments received:

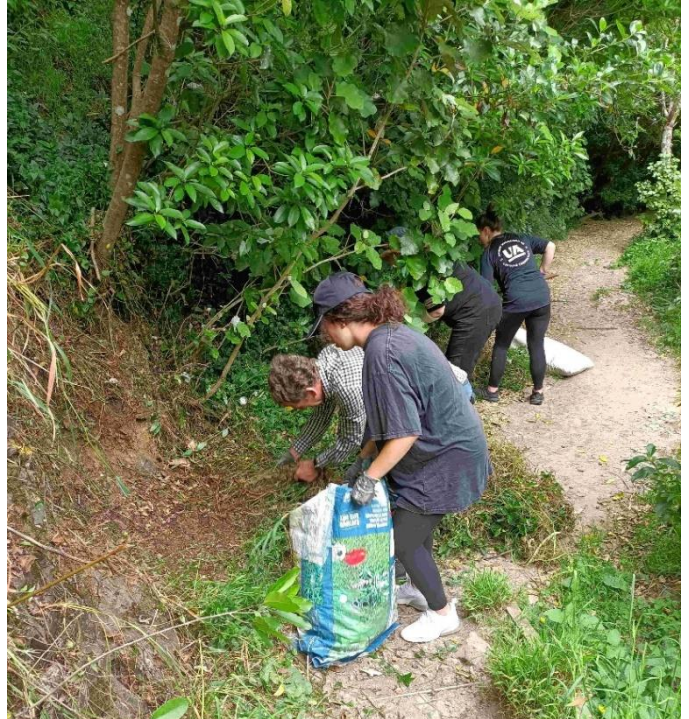
- Important to not lose the support of the general cat-owning public.
- Three cat categories:
 - Domestic*. Most owners are moving more towards chipping, bells, overnight containment.
 - Wild*. Generally domestic cats disposed of by owners. These cats don't have a long life - it's tough to survive.
 - Feral*. Large, very muscular and truly feral.
- Quite good controls via cat traps and removal of non-chipped cats.
- A month-long 12-camera survey was done in Trelissick Park by Olivia Carson (VUW MSc student). The December 2017 *Gorge Gazette* provides the outcome, covering dogs, rabbits, cats and hedgehogs – see [Gorge Gazette Dec17.pdf](#). 30 cat sightings, but some might have been repeats.

Always busy

From Angus Napier reporting at the end of May for a VUW Master's student's thesis on restoration groups:

Over the last 12 months, TPG has had:

- 26 revegetation working bees summing to 567 hours.
- 16 TPG working bees of 2 hours each summing to 250 hours. Average 7.8 people per working bee.
- 4 corporate groups: 134 hours. Ranged from 6 to 15 people and from 4 to 6 hours.
- 6 community groups: 183 hours. Ranged from 4 to 13 people and from 2 to 4 hours.
- 44 hours on track maintenance. About 14 hours of admin and planning.
- 100 hours on admin.: meetings, planning, emails, phone calls, sole forays...



A team from FMG last December



More trackside tradescantia clearance – a group from Environmental Protection Authority in March. Note rusty old sewer pipe beside stream.



Conservation Volunteers 31 May. See Facebook page for more, also 21 June visit.

Come and join us! Volunteers and groups are always welcome – see our website 'Home', 'Projects' and 'Contacts' pages for more. Contact us at trelissickgroup@gmail.com.

WCC relies heavily on our volunteers. Volunteer hours 2024-2025 = 2,230.

Introducing:

David Howden – Track maintenance

David is the new organiser for track working bees in the park. As agreed with WCC this will involve:

- filling wet and worn patches of track with gravel
- forming and maintaining drainage channels beside tracks

Rebecca Jackson – Volunteer Coordinator

Rebecca has recently been appointed as Volunteer Coordinator. She brings experience in emergency management, including overseeing a volunteer programme that supported emergency response operations. She chaired the Northern Suburbs Netball committee for two years and has been involved in a range of community initiatives. Living in Ngaio with a dog, she walks Trelissick Park almost daily and is keen to support the amazing work the committee does.

Rebecca will support and coordinate volunteer involvement across our activities. She will work alongside Angus Napier and Ian Duncan (working bees), Kelvin Hastie (Adopt-a-Spot), Briony Ellis and Jim Nicholson (predator control), and David

- repairing dog access cuts in the stream banks that are undermining walking tracks or accelerating stream bank erosion
- maintaining existing steps.

Mitre 10 Crofton Downs kindly donated a wheelbarrow.

Howden (track maintenance). She will also manage our relationship with Volunteer Wellington, who provides corporate volunteer groups — easing the workload carried by Angus.

There are also opportunities for additional volunteer recruitment, including through schools, corporate partners, and community groups such as Scouts and Guides.



More seats coming

Two for sunny Wightwick's Field, one each for the Waikowhai Street and lower park entrances.

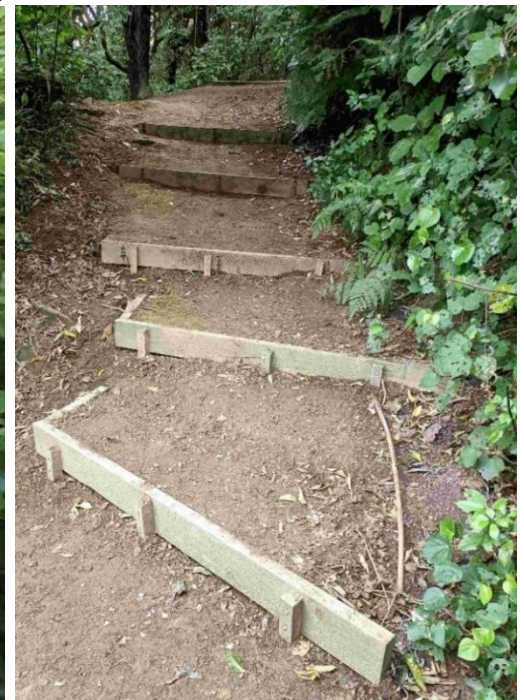
Debates ensued on placement: e.g. sunshine, shading by growing trees, wind ...

Thanks, WCC!

A facelift

The Waikowhai Street entrance: trees pruned by WCC. Murray Pascoe (Ngaio Crofton Downs Residents' Association) is refurbishing the Trelissick Park sign nearby.

Some of the new steps for the Northern Walkway



Organised by WCC's Tim Harkness in March (Christchurch mosque victims memorial seat in background).

Affiliation changes

Highland Park Progressive Association and Wadestown Residents' Association

HPPA and WRA have been in transition for some time and the plan is to wind down HPPA/WRA and

to have a new Wadestown Community group in some form to take their places.

Ōtari-Wilton's Bush Trust

Our upstream neighbour shares the Kaiwharawhara catchment and is part of the Sanctuary to Sea project. It makes sense that the

two groups co-operate in our restoration and protection work in the shared catchment. To this end, ŌWBT has become a core member of TPG.

From the 1940s

This tunnel downstream of the park was intended to be an air-raid shelter for the many people in the surrounding industrial area during WWII. Kaiwharawhara Stream originally flowed on the north side of the valley. The idea was to eventually divert the stream through the tunnel, as in this photo, to lessen the chance of flooding.

Thanks, Murray Pillar, for the historical document researched by his late father, Stan.

More history

Published by OHS, *The History of Trelissick Park Group - Part One* (Volume 39) covers from 1991 to 2000. *Part Two* (Volume 40) covers 2000 to 2013. See the 'History' page of our website.

Beyond 2013? OHS has agreed to another collaboration with TPG. Catherine van Hale and Peter Reimann are sharpening their pencils.

Catherine is also busy archiving.



The 'Alcatraz gate': another chapter?

In the September 2024 GG we recounted the story of the KiwiRail emergency access bridge opposite the magazine building, mysteriously barred in 2009 by what we called the 'Alcatraz gate' – thwarting our restoration efforts. KiwiRail says this bridge needs replacing. Abseil Access aims to complete it by 18 July.

The lower part of the slope up to the railway is within the park. If the gate is to be locked, we will need an access arrangement.

For kiwi arrivals

Eventually all the DOC200 traps will be the 'longer' ones, to avoid possible kill of a kiwi when they start venturing into the park.

However, a bigger danger to Kiwi will be the off-leash dogs.



iNaturalist brilliance

As of 5 July, we have 1461 observations, 433 species, 286 identifiers and 148 observers. Log in and browse via 'Community' and 'Projects',

searching for 'Trelissick Park'. Fascinating and educational.

WCC's Fixit form

If you see e.g. something broken or graffiti, go to [Report a problem - Wellington City Council](#).

On the soap box: plastic

Trelissick Park lies at the lower end of the huge 20 km² catchment. We receive all the weeds, rubbish, pollution and fast stormwater runoff from the surrounding suburbs – borne on wind and gravity. The banes of our lives.

Nate Rigler (S to S) advises that 17m³ of rubbish and weeds were recently removed from the stream-sides along School Road (downstream from the park) with help from Hypha Fitness and Woods Waste.

Dog poo bags

Dog walkers: reminder. Please dispose of poo bags at the bins at entrances or take them home!

What we leave behind [originally featured in Zealandia's member newsletter – abridged].

By Dr Nate Rigler, Project Lead - Kia Mouriora Te Kaiwharawhara Sanctuary to Sea | Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne

For thousands of years, flowers have been a foundation of human communication. But within the past half-century, flowers have increasingly been substituted by an environmentally harmful imitation: plastic. The normalisation of plastics has been steady and insidious. Our awareness of plastics' versatility and ability to mass produce it cheaply has outpaced our awareness of the harms plastic inflicts on the environment and our health. However, we know more about plastics now than we did 50 years ago and it's up to us to challenge their ubiquitous normalisation in our lives.

This is especially pertinent to the aims of the Kia Mouriora Te Kaiwharawhara Sanctuary to Sea initiative, which seeks to restore the mouri or lifeforce of Te Kaiwharawhara whitua water catchment in Wellington City. There are roughly 39,000 people living within the boundaries of Te Kaiwharawhara whitua but this number nearly triples if we account for the nearly 83,000 people buried within Karori Cemetery.

In cemeteries, plastic flowers left on graves are subjected to all the same elements as living organisms—wind, rain, sun, and the force of movement. But unlike living things, plastics do not decay in death and return to soil. Instead, plastics disintegrate. Plastic flowers become brittle; the fibres of synthetic cloth and stems fray into micro, then nano, particles which contaminate whole ecosystems. Additionally, just as water moves with



Across the stream from Wightwick's Field

the contours of the earth from surface to stream, to sea, so do plastics. We know this because we find frayed bits of plastic flowers all along the Kaiwharawhara Stream and on the beaches beside its estuary.

Despite all of this, we know we can't talk about the environmental impacts of plastic flowers left behind on graves without acknowledging the loving intentions that brought them to the location in the first place. This Matariki mā Puanga, Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne has decided to focus our intentions on the whetū (star) Pōhutukawa, who welcomes the recently departed.

Reducing plastic flowers on graves is one step of many we can take, and crucially this kaupapa initiative invites us to reclaim past practices of visiting with environmentally friendly tokens of our love. It restores the dignity of real flowers. It allows us to innovate new ways of relating to our dead.

What we leave behind reflects who we are in the present, how we choose to honour the past, and how we set our intentions for the future.

Contacts

trelissickgroup@gmail.com

[Trelissick Park Group website](#)

[Trelissick Park Group | Facebook](#)

WCC: (04) 499 4444 or [WCC Fix-It](#)

GW pollution hotline: 0800 496 734