

Gorge Gazette - September 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

Our core community members are 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. We support Kia Mouriora te Kaiwharawhara | Sanctuary to Sea.

Seeking a baker

Do you love baking and need people to enjoy your biscuits, muffins and slices?

You're invited to bake for our regular working bee volunteers. If you can help, please email Rebecca, our Volunteer Coordinator at trelissickgroup@gmail.com.

Our highly esteemed bakers are much missed. Dorothy Douglass used to supply delicious blueberry muffins. Angela Incledon's baking followed until 2014, then Regine Blattner and Lois Hope around 2016.

(About 20 years ago, next to bridge 6, Dorothy's blueberry muffins were spread on a cloth on the ground ready for the repast. A passing dog scooped them all in seconds!)



Photo: Havva Sivrikaya



Photo: Anne Tuffin

A tree for Stan Pillar

On Saturday morning 12 July a gathering of family and friends walked down from Waikowhai Street to our memorial grove beyond bridge 5 to plant a tōtara tree for OHS stalwart Stan Pillar.

More on Stan is on p.5 of the March 2025 GG.

Flying high

Ian Duncan represented us at the Wellington Airport Regional Community Awards ceremony on 31 July at the Renouf Foyer of the Michael Fowler Centre. TPG was awarded runner-up in the Heritage and Environment category (photo next page). Other finalists in this section included Ōtari Predator Free and Predator Free Ngaio. (The winner was Ghost Diving New Zealand ghostdivingnz.org).

TPG Chair Anne Tuffin says, '... a shout out to all our volunteers, past and present, for helping to restore the natural environment of the Ngaio Gorge/Kaiwharawhara catchment.'



Ian Duncan is at the centre of the second row

A morning with AlSCO

Corporate group AlSCO alsco.co.nz worked tirelessly in the park one Saturday morning in August, clearing and planting around the magazine building, guided by Angus Napier. With David Howden, the TPG track maintenance coordinator, they also deployed the new wheelbarrow downstream of the debris trap to clear a blocked drain under a track bridge and a slip across the track.

Then, a veritable feast to celebrate.

A big thank you to Mitre10 Crofton Downs for donating the wheelbarrow to TPG.



Clearing the slip

[Photos by AlSCO]



Planting upstream of the magazine ruin



The new wheelbarrow donated by Mitre10. David Howden is at the right of the group.

Our wonderful sources for volunteer groups – just boosted

We are delighted with the new relationship with The Sustainable Business Network (SBN). They found Also for us (previous page). Our new Volunteer Coordinator, Rebecca Jackson, will be regularly checking for referrals from Volunteer Wellington (VW) and the SBN. She will liaise with any referred corporate groups and make sure they are appropriately connected with our working bee

and Adopt-a-Spot coordinators. For more on SBN, see sustainable.org.nz.

We always enjoy hosting groups keen to restore the park: VW and Conservation Volunteers have helped us for many years along with schools and scouts/guides. Youthful vigour and enthusiasm!



Tom Mayo to the rescue

Unfortunately, WCC Ranger Adam Groenewegen (at left) is out of action for an indefinite period recovering from an injury. Tom Mayo (at right) has stepped up. Late in August, after a grand tour of the park, he was presented with an impressive ‘to-do’ list.

Best wishes, Adam, for a speedy recovery!



For the passing parade

You must surely have noticed the digital sign at the corner of Crofton Road and Kenya Street, heralding coming events. Rev. Brett Reid of Ngaio Union Church has kindly offered to add a sign for us to aid recruiting for our working bees – example at left.

Why not another sector?

Our submission on WCC’s Draft Coastal Management Plan said that it already includes the Ākautangi and Te Rāngai o Onemutu sectors within the harbour, but they stop at Oriental Bay. Why? Residents in the northern suburbs are currently denied access to their closest marine area, the coastline on the northern side of the harbour. The ecological, recreational and historic values of the area are currently ignored through their absence in the Plan.

We asked that this area be included as Sector 9 in the Plan to afford it the care and management it deserves.

Anne Tuffin and Mike Oates spoke to support our submission, which is on the ‘Current Issues’ page of our website.



An inaccessible gem: the northern beach of the Kaiwharawhara reclamation.
Photo: Peter Reimann

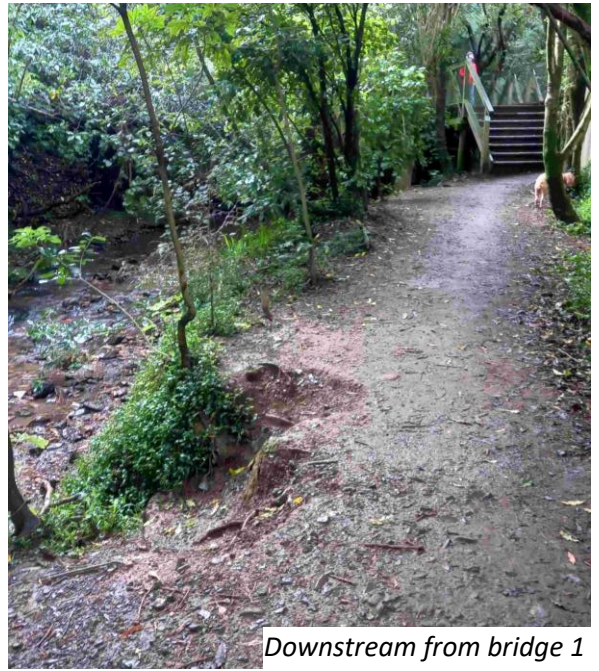
More largesse

- Mitre10 Crofton Downs for the loan of a trailer for carting mulch.
- WCC supplied 30 orange hi-vis vests, branded: WCC VOLUNTEER.

Trelissick Park - a fragile environment

We are working closely with WCC Parks and Reserves staff to find ways to protect and fix the streambanks and streamside tracks from erosion caused by large dogs creating 'runways' by running in and out of the water. Sadly, some of last year's riparian plantings were also trampled by enthusiastic dogs. We ask that dog walkers keep dogs restrained where the banks are soft and where native plants are growing. They can safely enter the water at shingly beaches or where the banks are rocky.

We warmly invite dog owners to join our track maintenance working bees to help fix streambank damage. Contact trelissickgroup@gmail.com.



Downstream from bridge 1

Good riddance!

Jonathan Anderson advises that Treescape, in conjunction with Illona Keenan of WCC, eliminated some weed trees from the park:



The cut willow stump in the photo at left is in the middle of the above photo, up from the Wightwick's Field grass. Photos: Jonathan Anderson

- Willow in Wightwick's Field
- Cherries on the cliffs above the stream opposite the track in the gorge (roughly across from the upper of the two sewer tunnels)

- The Treescape arborists also descended by rope from below the scout hall in Hanover Street. More cherries are to be removed along the railway between the Hanover St tunnel and Crofton Downs station.

And still they come

Briony Ellis advises that the 17 DOC200 and 10 Victor trap scores for 2025 up to 29 August were as per table at right. This does not include the 15 self-resetting A24 Goodnature traps below Oban Street.

Most prolific was D16 – one of Warrick Fowlie's, with four (one of which was the stoat), and Shelley Kininmonth's Scots College Victor traps 1, 4 and 6 – all with four catches each. Thanks to all the trappers!

Hedgehog	1
Mouse	9
Rat	40
Stoat	1
Total	51

Rat facts – They are able to spawn **up to 12 pups every 3 - 4 weeks**. See [Rat reproductive cycle](#).

Correction

The link to feral cat facts at the top of p.2 of the July GG was from Predator Free New Zealand.

Park-user survey helps shape new signs

From Anne Tuffin:

A big thank you to those of you who recently gave us feedback on your experience of the park, especially your thoughts about park signs. Some people said that many way-finding signs are confusing, and that track junctions are the best places to say where each track is heading. You noted that many signs are obscured, poorly positioned, or past their use-by-date and that new signs could provide information about forest regeneration and the history of the area.

We have set up a project team which includes Ahumai Ltd, a Māori led taiao consultancy based here, to develop some new interpretation signs for the park. The team has identified themes and narratives for these signs and possible locations. Over the next few months the team will refine the narratives and then start to design the visual layout of each sign, working closely with Tim Harkness from WCC Parks Sport and Recreation so that the signage is consistent with WCC policies.

The TPG is grateful to the **TransPower Community Fund** and to **Frances Lee** for funding this exciting project.

Departure imminent

Occasionally, wastewater overflows from the Ōtari Wilton's Bush lower car park grill and ends up polluting the nearby Kaiwharawhara Stream. This is because the downstream pipe under Churchill Drive is only 300mm wide. It should have been 450mm.

Ōtari Manager Tim Park says Wellington Water has funding allocated to resolve the issue and is investigating five options for resolving the overflows.

An adopt-a-spot tale

About 10 years ago, Joan adopted a spot in the park at the top of the track from Hanover St. A little later Anne started helping her and occasionally they have been joined by other friends who lend a hand with weeding and planting. They have finally cleared the 'Hanover Track' of tradescantia (wandering willie) from the park entrance all the way down to the stream. Joan and Anne think of it as a 'fire break' stopping trad from moving across the track and starting new patches.



Friends helping clear the last patches of tradescantia from the track

If you're interested in caring for a spot in the park and seeing it improve over time, email treliessickgroup@gmail.com and we will help you get started.

Update from Nate Rigler (S to S)

Downstream from Trelissick Park, about one hundred trees have been planted at Te Kaiwharawhara estuary at the Spotlight site. WCC propagated these trees from seed collected from the plants growing at the estuary mouth which were removed for iRex development. Ahumai Limited, who led this work on behalf of Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika, are glad to maintain the whakapapa of these plants where they belong.

Further upstream, whakaweku (bundles of dried bracken fern) have been installed at the outflow of Appleton Park to help conservationists monitor for toitoi. These native fish have quickly spread from their translocation site at the upper Zealandia reservoir downstream into Birdwood Reserve. Currently, we're unsure whether toitoi can survive past the Appleton Park tunnel, so we're working with our neighbours to find out. Let's keep our fingers crossed we find some!



Photo by Zealandia at release 2023



Looking for toitoi at entrance to Appleton Park culvert.

Photo: Kari Beavan

Te Kaiwharawhara has the privilege to welcome to our team Laura Konijnenbelt from the Netherlands. Laura has started her six-month long internship with us to support businesses involved in Te Ohu Kaiwharawhara. Email sanctuarytosea@visitzealandia.com if you or any businesses you know would like to get involved. Toitū Te Kaiwharawhara!

A new generation in the park

Don't be surprised to hear the excited voices of young children in the park alongside the Korimako Stream. It's likely to be a group of children from Crofton Downs Primary School - Te Kura o Korimako.

The kura is wanting the children to learn how to be guardians of the stream and the surrounding bush. They will be coming regularly into the park to learn about the environment and how to care for the Korimako Stream, from the Waikowhai St entrance to the confluence with the Kaiwharawhara at the fish ladder - the future generation of local environmentalists!

If you are walking your dog along this section of track and come across a school group, please put your dog on-leash as some children can be frightened by exuberant canines. We want the children to feel safe while they are in the park.



Teachers from the kura Kirsty Ferguson (left) and Hilary Lintott (brown coat), TPG volunteer Mike Oates and EnviroSchools facilitator Chandra Littlewood (right) planning activities for the children in the park. Photo: Anne Tuffin

Barry Durrant's award-winning press photos on display at Tākina

Barry's press photos are on display at Tākina as part of **Kindred Spirits**, 'a curated collection of award-winning New Zealand photographers highlighting notable moments in New Zealand's photographic history and international coverage.'

These and other New Zealand photo collections are an adjunct to the Exhibition see – [World Press Photo Exhibition 2025 – Wellington - Tākina](#). The exhibition runs until 5 October.

Barry used to be in the TPG animal pest control team. He also cut the track down to the valley from Oban Street.

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

More photos

See the TPG Facebook page (link at left).