

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

News and Views October 2004

Check the web site to keep up-to-date with events: www.owb.co.nz

For all walks meet at the Information Centre, Te Marae o Tane

For information re walks contact the Treehouse on (04) 499 1400

Sunday, 17 October 2pm (note change to third Sunday)	Identification workshop devoted to the special forest plants. – vines and epiphytes (perching plants). 2 hours . Leader <i>Dr. John Dawson</i> .
Saturday, 13 November, 9am.	Plant care work party <i>Leaders: Bronwen Wall, Jonathan Kennett, ph 472 5891</i>
Sunday, 28 November 2 pm	Follow the trail to the giant rimu and other interesting plants. Stout footwear recommended <i>Leader: Dr John Dawson</i>
Saturday, 11 December, 9am.	Plant care work party <i>Leaders: Bronwen Wall, Jonathan Kennett, ph 472 5891</i>
Sunday, 26 December 2 pm	Visit the kauri plantation, then go to the head of the adjacent valley to see tall original pukateas, gully tree ferns and ancient mahoes. 2-2.5 hours. Stout footwear recommended <i>Leader: Dr John Dawson</i>

To Contact the Trust Board

📍 *Postal Address:* 160 Wilton Rd, Wilton, Wellington 5.

🕒 *Chairman:* Athol Swann, *Phone* 472 8417 *Email* athol.swann@paradise.net.nz

🕒 *Secretary:* Margaret Crimp, *Phone* 475 3263 *Email* m.crimp@xtra.co.nz

🕒 *Treasurer:* Johanne McComish. *Phone* 476 2925 *Email* mccomish@paradise.net.nz

The trustees welcome individual communications from members on any matters relating to Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve or the Trust, particularly from those who would like to assist and participate in our activities.

Report from the Chairman

With half the 2004/5 year completed, it is appropriate to pause to consider what we have achieved to date and what we want to achieve in the remaining six months with time relentlessly racing by.

As a support group to the Otari- Wilton's Bush management team, much of what the Trust provides is community encouragement for advancing improvements and greater appreciation of the wonderful natural environment easily accessible to residents and visitors to our City. In this regard, my general overall impression is that the influence of the Trust has continued to be positive and this is likely to be maintained.

With regard to the specific projects the Trust has undertaken I report as follows:-

Kaiwharawhara Revegetation

The four year planting programme initiated by a grant from the Greater Wellington Regional Council, has now been substantially completed with a total of some 30,000 plants in place. As mentioned in our last newsletter, we received a further grant from Wellington City Council to contract the Kennett Bros to manage the remaining plantings, the after-care and monitoring of plant growth of the various species. This work will continue for the balance of the year and the Greater Wellington Regional Council has indicated, following the success of this project and particularly the assembly of a willing and proficient team of volunteers, that the Council is willing to extend the programme to other areas within the Reserve. Identification of these areas is in progress.

Education Centre Feasibility Study

The first phase of this study is now completed with the analysis of the feedback from the questionnaire assembled in a report from our consultant. Some very good suggestions have been received from likely users and our members, not only in relation to the Education Centre, but also on other features of the Reserve which we will progress in due course. The Report confirms that the Trust has strong Community support to undertake negotiations with the Wellington City Council to develop an Education Centre with other Visitor Centre facilities improvements. We will be progressing this with the Council managers to develop options for building plans and thus determine the optimal project dimensions within realistic funding possibilities.

I would like to thank all those members and likely educational users who contributed their ideas and time in completing the questionnaire. Those who would like to have copies of the Feedback Report conclusions and recommendations or the more detailed full report, can obtain these by contacting the Trust Secretary- Margaret Crimp.

Rata Boardwalk and Viewing Platform

Visitors to the Wild Garden area will note that apart from some additional path work and an interpretation panel, this project is now completed with excellent protection for the ancient Rata – we hope it recognizes this by flowering profusely around Christmas.

Funding assistance for the project was kindly provided by The Community Trust of Wellington, although at a level lower than requested. However, the Trust Board decided to proceed with the construction having received a generous donation from funds remaining on wind up of the Onslow Horticultural Society (an organization which had ceased operating many years ago). To recognize these contributions and other significant donations (\$500 and over) specific to the project, as well as the Trust's role, the Board proposes to place near the platform, a bronze plaque with contributor's names recorded. A handover ceremony is also being planned. We welcome further donations

towards the expected total cost of \$9000 for this project, and members or other supporters who would like to make a significant donation with acknowledgement on the plaque, still have time to do so – just contact any Board Trustee or mail to the Treasurer Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust, 160 Wilton Rd, Wellington 5.

Open Day Sunday 19 September

The Trust involvement to support this regular annual plant sale activity involves manning the tills, providing the teas, coffee and cake stall, guiding tours, card sales and running a fundraising raffle.

We were blessed with much better weather this year with the result that our funds were boosted by some \$1000. (previous year \$640).

Congratulations to the winners of the raffles – Kay Poynton who claimed the box of plants, kindly donated by the Otari staff, and Margaret Pointer, who claimed the painted pot kindly donated by Mary Nawalowalo.

The Board thanks all those who assisted in making this such a successful event.

Cleanup NZ projects

Many thanks to those who turned out to assist with the two projects. It was worth running these exercises as, in spite of having cleaned up these two areas for the last few years, there was still enough rubbish to fill quite a few bags. Some rubbish was too big for a bag – for example a washing machine bowl pulled from the Kaiwharawhara Stream!

Other activities of likely interest to members include:-

Website

The Trust is in the process of establishing a website with the objectives of:

- Providing additional publicity for Otari-Wilton's Bush complementing the Council website;
- Publicizing the Trust as a Community support organization;

- Providing an information link to volunteers and members; and

- Disseminating educational information on flora, animals, insects, birds etc found in Otari-Wilton's Bush.

The Domain name of the website is OtariWiltonsBush.org.nz and the content is being progressed with the generous help of Mark Nelson.

Education Board Land at back of Otari School

The Wellington City Council has negotiated the purchase of this land surplus to the school needs and it will be added to the Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve. The Trust Board welcomes this purchase which will enable better track access to the upper stream area and other improvements to be planned and progressed in this area.

Wilton Bowling Club proposed New Building

There is little to add to the information provided to members in our brief newsletter of 26 August 2004. To date there have been no approaches for consultation with neighbours and no public notification of an application for consent under the Resource Management Act 1991.

Athol Swann

More Words from the Valley

It seems only a couple of weeks ago that we had the end of planting tree party (a fantastic event), and yet we've just ticked off our third month of plant care.

There's good news and bad news about this year's planting. The good news is that everything that needed to get planted, the previous years' plantings have been chugging along – in some cases steaming along – and the volunteer numbers have been on the up and up. We've also had Global Volunteer Network groups coming along once a month to weed and monitor sites.

And the bad news? Our big disappointment has been the arrival of rabbits in the valley. Those little critters have wrecked havoc on many of the tender seedlings we've planted. Now it's all thinking caps on, and with a vengeance. We've tried enticing them with baited carrot, but the rabbits are clever as well as cute – we're guessing whoever created Bugs Bunny knew what they were on about! So, if anyone has any bright ideas on how to curtail the habits of those buck-toothed butchers ... feel free to share them with us!

Oh, and there is one last piece of good news ... planters will still be needed next winter, filling in gaps where the bunnies and frost have inflicted their worst. And before that ... once a month, second Saturday of the month, come join us for a fun-filled morning of plant care (meeting 9 a.m. outside the information centre).

See you there!

Bronwen Wall

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH NEWS

October 2004

Extreme weather in August has caused more anguish for staff. The wild garden and the fernery were particularly hard hit again. The February storm took out a hinau in the wild garden and this time it was a rewarewa just behind the large rock stack at the back of the alpine garden. The tree was completely uprooted and after cleaning up the damage, the back steps of the alpine garden had to be repositioned. Most of the rewarewa trunk is now part of the garden. In the fernery a tawa fell over and on its way down, it crushed two smaller mahoe and ripped a large epiphytic *Griselinia lucida*, puka, from the neighbouring tawa. Initially I thought the fallen tawa had also crushed a wonderful stand of *Blechnum fraseri*, but luckily only one was broken. Other ground ferns have been crushed and will take time to recover. The fernery is now considerably lighter and will be less humid during the summer months. We will be keeping a close watch on the ferns to see how they fare.

Arnold and Ruth Dench, famous for their native plant garden and alpine collection in Newlands, have generously offered to have their collection duplicated by us and added to our collections. This

is a long term project which involves cataloguing the plants and then propagating them. When ready to plant, they will be mostly used in the alpine and rock gardens.

Much of August and September was spent cleaning up storm damage and getting ready for the annual open day and plant sale. This year we organised the plants into categories such as bird attracting, plants suitable for exposed sites, clay banks, dry shade, moist shade and climbers and garden gems. This proved easier for the public to find the right plants and for staff to be able to offer advice. Trust members helped in many ways, from offering guided tours to manning the tills, running a raffle, cake stall and a display. Volunteers also helped staff label the sale plants and tidy the collections. We are very grateful for the Trust's continuing support. The following weekend, a trial "green" bus took visitors from the Cable Car entrance of the Botanic Garden to Karori Sanctuary and onto Otari-Wilton's Bush. Around 30 people went on the tours offered by the Trust and others took the opportunity to look around.

The three old, rusty park benches around the Cockayne Lawn have all been replaced with new macarapa seats and are complemented by new wooden rubbish bins that look far too good to be rubbish bins. A donated seat has been installed between the flax cultivar garden and the new Canterbury border.

The car park plantings have been improved by replacing *Carex forsteri* with *Libertia peregrinans*. The rengarenga lilies in the garden adjacent to the Kauri Lawn have been removed after severe frost damage. The wooden edging will be replaced with a sturdier one, the path will be asphalted and new planting of *Libertia peregrinans* will complement the kauri.

The hebe species garden has been rejuvenated and an enormous amount of work has gone into the rock gardens. Over half of them have been worked on, removing plants which were past their best and reconciling over crowded areas. It is well worth a look and although these gardens will always be a work in progress, what is being achieved is worth the effort.

Next week flax suitable for weavers will be planted at the northern picnic site. These plantings will be available for permitted users to harvest and are part of a Council wide project to provide flax weavers with areas they can sustainably harvest.

A new propagation house is about to be purchased for the nursery. This will be a 6m x 4m plastic skin house with a roof vent, benches and misting system for cuttings. Staff and volunteers are looking forward to utilising this for the collections and revegetation work.

If you reside in Wellington, you may have noticed that the Otari staff have burst into print. A series of six articles have been written and published in the gardening section of Saturday's Dominion Post. Subjects covered have been edge effects on bush, *Hebe speciosa*, *Euphorbia glauca*, *Melicytus crassifolius*, *Clematis paniculata* and *Peraxilla tetrapetala*.

Robyn Smith

Curator manager, Otari-Wilton's Bush

The Creek

Old Wadestown residents called it The Karori Stream, meaning that this was the stream from Karori. Similarly there was a Ngaio Stream. This was confusing as there was another Karori Stream just over the hill. At school (Wadestown C1938) we were taught that the stream through the bush was the Te Mahanga. This joined the Korimako stream which flowed down from Ngaio to form The Kaiwharawhara. Our teacher evidently followed Elsdon Best. Unfortunately early photos taken in 1878 are labelled, Kaiwarra. The popular 1897 "Cyclopaedia of New Zealand" Vol 4, notes that "the Karori supply taps the Kaiwarra stream". Louis E. Ward who was The Hon. Sec. Geographic Board New Zealand writes (1930) of The Kaiwharawhara stream winding its course from above Mitcheltown across Karori Road, through Wilton's Bush, between (at times) the golden bloom clad hills by Ngaio into the sea at Kaiwharawhara...

The spelling Kaiwharawhara was adopted by The NZ Geographic Board in 1950, but there has been no ruling on the name of "the creek". Until recently map makers have been reluctant to use any labels. Only the headwaters above the upper dam at The Sanctuary are officially The Te Mahanga. But for more than a century it has been "the Kaiwhara".

We called it "the creek", a usage noted by Harry Orsman. The stream, boosted by some geological capture, follows the softer rock of Wellington secondary faults to the harbour. Deep, heavily wooded, it must have been a grand sight. There is evidence that the catchment was heavily hunted for food. One usage of Te Mahanga is "to snare".

The catchment was soon to be stripped and the flow interrupted. Pipe, culvert, and water tunnel put much of the stream underground. The Karori Reservoir (1875) was for a time Wellington's only water supply. Access to Karori was via "The Devil's Bridge" on Old Karori Road. When the council pound and yards were built this area was culverted.

The torturous route to Karori was improved by the construction of a large earth dam to form "The Deviation", (Chaytor Street) in 1885, matched 25 years later by a third road to Karori, Birdwood Street. The wooded gorge in between was used as a not very well controlled rubbish dump and finally grassed after the war to form Appleton Park.

Biggest obstruction is Ian Galloway Park, our immediate neighbour to the south. Tip construction and standards were better but there is still seepage and leachate. Below the horseshoe bend, now occupied by Cardinal McKeefry School was a deep gully, a farm house and one or two small paddocks. A chicken farm perhaps. A steep winding road led to the valley floor. This was the exit point for a few families who used carbide lamps to fish the stream during the depression. The creek was now underground from Karori Tunnel to Otari.

The construction of The Manawatu Rail link in 1880-82 significantly altered the lower course. A water tunnel, perhaps 2 metres in diameter was dug under the rocky spur below Wadestown Road. The stream swings to the right and empties to a small waterfall to join The Korimako, forming The Kaiwharawhara. Sewer pipes were laid through the water tunnel in 1913. They formed a smooth path just below the water level. This was an adventure and the main route for Wilton Road youth to "the eighteen", the legendary swimming hole between Wadestown and Ngaio. Older bathers came down Hanover Street, or from Trelissick Crescent, now very much a part of The Northern Walkway.

Contributed by John Riseborough

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

Membership Application Form

Our membership year is from 1 April to 31 March. New members joining after 1 January will have the membership accredited to the following year. Membership entitles you to receive our newsletter and receive notification of all forthcoming activities at Otari - Wilton's Bush.

I wish to join the Trust
 (name of new member)

Postal Address

Telephone ().....(Home) E-mail.....

Billing Name and Address
 (if different from above)

Subscription:	Corporate	\$30	
	Double/Family	\$15	
	Individual	\$10	
	Student/Unwaged	\$5	
Donation:		\$	
Total Payment :	(please enclose your cheque)		\$

The Trust is registered as a Charitable organisation and donations over \$5.00 are tax deductible. We will automatically send you a receipt for tax purposes. We regret we cannot process payments by Credit Card.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please indicate the areas of interest to you from the following list:

- Work parties
- Weekend hosting at Otari Information Centre
- Fund raising

Please send your application to: The Treasurer,
 Otari-Wilton's Bush,
 160 Wilton Road,
 Wilton,
 Wellington.