

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

News and Views February, 2005

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 and seminars contact the Treehouse on (04) 499 1400

Sunday, 27 February, 10am – note different time.	Something different: Through the Khandallah Reserve to the TV tower and an area of strange wind shrub vegetation. Note: meet at the carpark at the end of Clark Street at 10am. Bring lunch.. Stout footwear recommended <i>Leader: Dr John Dawson</i>
The first 4 Tuesdays, in March, 7.30 pm.	Seminar Series: For more detail see later in Newsletter
Sunday, 6 March, 2pm	Stepping Out Series: Rare and unusual native plants. All on one level from Wild Garden via Treetop Walkway to the Lookout <i>Leader; Dr. John Dawson</i>
Saturday, 12 March, 9am.	Plant care work party <i>Leaders: Bronwen Wall, Jonathan Kennett, ph 472 5891</i>
Sunday, March 13, 2pm	Stepping Out Programme: Pilgrimage to the giant, 800 year old rimu and other interesting trees on the Blue Trail. Stout footwear recommended <i>Leader: Dr John Dawson</i>
Sunday, March 20, 2pm	Note this is third Sunday of month : «Bludgers in the bush »». Hunting down native plants that climb up or perch on trees to get to good light. <i>Leader:Dr. John Dawson</i>
Saturday, April 9, 9am	Plant care work party <i>Leaders: Bronwen Wall, Jonathan Kennett, ph 472 5891</i>
Sunday, April 24, 2pm	Get to know the native forest plants. An identification work shop followed by a wqlk around the deck and along the tree top walkway. <i>Leader:Dr. John Dawson</i>
Saturday, May14, 9am	Plant care work party <i>Leaders: Bronwen Wall, Jonathan Kennett, ph 472 5891</i>
Sunday, May22, 2pm.	Meet five of our very different tree fern species and hear their story. <i>Leader: Dr. John Dawson</i>
Saturday, June 4, 9am	Planting restarts in the Kaiwharawhara Valley Revegetation site <i>Leaders: Bronwen Wall, Jonathan Kennett, ph 472 5891</i>
Sunday, June 26, 2pm	Explore the Narure Trail through Job Wilton's original forest reserve. <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.

Contact for Trust members.

We do have some email addresses but we are trying to establish a data-base whereby we can contact you quickly and also inexpensively. If you wish to be on this database could you please email Margaret Crimp – m.crimp@xtra.co.nz with your email address. Could you also please tell us whether you would be happy to receive your newsletter online.

Coming soon:

March Seminar Programme

New Zealand forests are rich in small plants in moist, shady places, but because of their small size they are often overlooked. Come along and learn from experts about these intriguing and attractive plants. Please note: Since the last Newsletter there has been a change in the order of the seminars.

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| Tuesday March 1 | Barbara Polly: | Mosses |
| Tuesday March 8: | Rodney Lewington: | Liverworts |
| Tuesday March 15: | Patrick Brownsey: | Filmy ferns |
| Tuesday March 22: | Barbara Polly: | Lichens |

Venue: Otari-Wilton's Bush Information Centre. Time 7.30pm.
Gold coin donation.

Stepping Out Walks: These are part of the Wellington City Council Stepping Out Programme. For more information see diary.

A new home on the web for Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust. Visit us at www.OtariWiltonsBush.org.nz

Gift Ideas

The Otari-Wilton's Bush greeting cards are ideal for as small gifts. These cards, featuring plants growing in Otari-Wilton's Bush, are available singly (\$2.00) or in packs of 4 (\$7.50). Supplies can be obtained from the hosts at the Information Centre 11am -3.30pm Saturday or Sunday, or by contacting Athol Swann or Margaret Crimp.

A gift of Trust membership to your friends is another suggestion. Use the membership form on the back of the Newsletter. The Treasurer will be happy to welcome and inform your friend that the membership was gifted by you.

Report from the Chairman

Well, the holiday season is now over and we are back to our schedules for progress in 2005. The weather has finally relented and we are enjoying the delightful summer conditions where it is a relief from the hot sun to take a stroll in the bush.

The diary of coming events covered in this newsletter indicates that we have commenced a period when there is much activity for the Board. The Board's year of tenure is also rapidly coming to an end and this year we propose to hold our Annual General Meeting within the second week of May – tentatively set for Tuesday 10th May. In this regard, I believe that the strength of the Board is enhanced by introduction of new trustees providing fresh ideas and skills and serving in this capacity can be very rewarding.

I would therefore encourage members who would like to contribute in this way, to contact me or our Secretary for nomination.

A brief update on our activities follows:-

Kaiwharawhara Revegetation Project

As mentioned in our last report, Greater Wellington Council and the Wellington City Council are keen to see this work continues. An application for continued funding for extending the work downstream in conjunction with the Trelissick Park/Ngaio Gorge Group is currently being progressed.

Education Centre Feasibility Study

The separate Report commissioned by Council on possible marketing initiatives in respect of Otari-Wilton's Bush has now been completed and pending discussions will clarify the next phase of our progression of this Study.

Rata Boardwalk and Viewing Platform

The Hon. Chris Carter, Minister of Conservation, has agreed to officiate at the opening ceremony we are holding on Monday 28 February 2005. The objective in holding this ceremony is to publicize the mature Northern Rata as one of the treasures we have hidden in Otari-Wilton's Bush and thereby increase general awareness and interest in the Reserve as a prized natural environment destination for visitors to Wellington. We have issued specific invitations for the ceremony due to

the limited space available at its location in the 'wild garden', as well as the limited numbers who can be accommodated in the planned short guided walk.

An interpretation panel will be fixed to the platform and in due course a plaque commemorating the project will be erected nearby thus completing the project.

Wilton Bowling Club proposed New Building

In our last newsletter I mentioned that we had written to the Council Chief Executive outlining our concerns at the misleading report presented to the Council subcommittee seeking 'landlord approval' to this project. The response to this was disappointing and in effect deferred action to the hearing on any application presented for resource consent under the Resource Management Act 1991 which must be 'Notified'. To time of writing there has been no such notification.

The Bowling Club proposal is of such concern to neighbours and the Community that a new society has been formed –*Otari-Wilton Environment and Heritage Protection Society Inc*- whose objects include among others "To protect the open space of the recreation reserve, by opposing buildings or other developments which are out of character with the surroundings." Those interested in joining this society may obtain further information via their web site www.otari.org.nz or by communicating by email to OWEHPS@otari.org.nz or mail to OWEHPS 116 Wilton Road , Wilton, Wn 5.

Athol Swann

Candidates for the Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust Board?

The Board has tentatively set the date for the next Annual General Meeting as–Tuesday, 10 May, 7.30pm. We are eager to have a good range of candidates for election to the Board. If you have ideas about how our wonderful Bush Reserve and Native Botanic Garden could be made even better, and would like to be involved in the developments over the coming years, this is your chance. You will need to be nominated and seconded by two members of the Trust and should also provide information about yourself, including why you are interested in Otari-Wilton's Bush and information about any qualifications or skills which could be useful for one or more of our varied activities. If you would like to discuss this before making a decision contact any member of the Board.

To obtain nomination forms: please apply to: The Secretary, Margaret Crimp Ph.475 3263 or to Athol Swann, Ph. 472 8417

An Historical Note and a Question.

The Wellington City Council Year Book for 1941-1946 on page 97 reports - : "An Alpine Garden called the Gresley Lukin Memorial Garden in memory of the late Gresley Lukin Esq., a former editor of the "Evening Post", has been established near the entrance to the Reserve" Gresley Lukin was a Tasmanian who came to NZ circa 1891. He joined the Press Gallery in the capacity of special representative of several papers. He later became editor of the Evening Post.." This alpine garden was planted along side the present Wilton Bush Road entrance to the reserve. It was established here because it was thought that the more severe frosts experienced in the stream valley would benefit alpine plants. However the growth of the indigenous forest plants overwhelmed these tiny plants, and this rockery was abandoned in 1947 in favour of the site by the caretaker's house. A large boulder was placed in this Alpine Garden to honour Gresley Lukin.

Does anyone know what has happened to the memorial boulder?

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With the late arrival of summer this year, we have again had good growth throughout the season which also means more weeds as well. The soil is starting to dry out now but deep down is still moist. Only the shallow rooted plants in the rockery and alpine gardens or newly planted areas need to have a weekly watering as well as the fernery to keep the humidity up.

Work has started on the circular walk to finish the upgrade that commenced last year. A few areas will have small retaining walls added and the remainder will have an edge to define the path. We hope to plant along the edge of the timber to thicken up the existing vegetation which will hopefully keep people "on track". The contractor is Works Infrastructure and already all the holes have been dug for posts. Most of the track will have a topcourse added to a depth of 75mm. All this work is expected to take around eight weeks.

Gordon Purdie, Trust board member, has spotted a nesting kereru in a mahoe above an *Olearia rani* twenty five metres north of the bridge just north of the track to the flax clearing. We hope the contractors won't upset the birds too much, although all the kereru that live in this area are comfortable with people.

Most of the rock garden has now been mulched. We have used a mixture of AP40 domestic basecourse and 75mm cribwall backfill. There is still some to do and unfortunately Rewi Elliot has returned to his studies at university so we will need to find a new staff member. Eleanor Burton has resigned to stay home with baby Ryan.

A building consent and resource consent have been applied for, for the new propagation house. When the consents are granted we should be able to get it installed by the end of March. The Thursday morning volunteers will be very pleased to be able to work in a warm dry environment in winter. We should also get a good strike with cuttings as the bench will have bottom heat and there will be an overhead misting system.

I was very lucky to spend ten days botanising in Western Canterbury just after Christmas with the Wellington Botanical Society. We climbed two sides of Mt Somers, Mt Hutt and Little Mt Peel where we saw a wonderful array of alpine and scree plants. We also botanised the Cameron fan and Hakatere Flats, part of Lake Clearwater, Spider Lakes and part of the Rakaia River. We also went to a private restoration site called Washpen Falls which is well worth a visit. I obtained a collection permit from the Department of Conservation and collected various cuttings and seed which will eventually become part of the collections here.

Robyn Smith, 18 February 2005

A Word from the Valley

You know, I may have mentioned this before, but if I haven't, I've certainly thought it and it certainly should be said. The volunteer efforts down on the reveg project are phenomenal. Every tree that has been planted, every weed that has been pulled, every piece of carpet that's been laid, every stake, every bucket of water, ... every bit of effort that's been put in has seen another plant move a little bit further along the timeline of survival. Jonathan and I only account for four hands; many more hands have made this possible, and I'd love to be able to name everyone involved here,

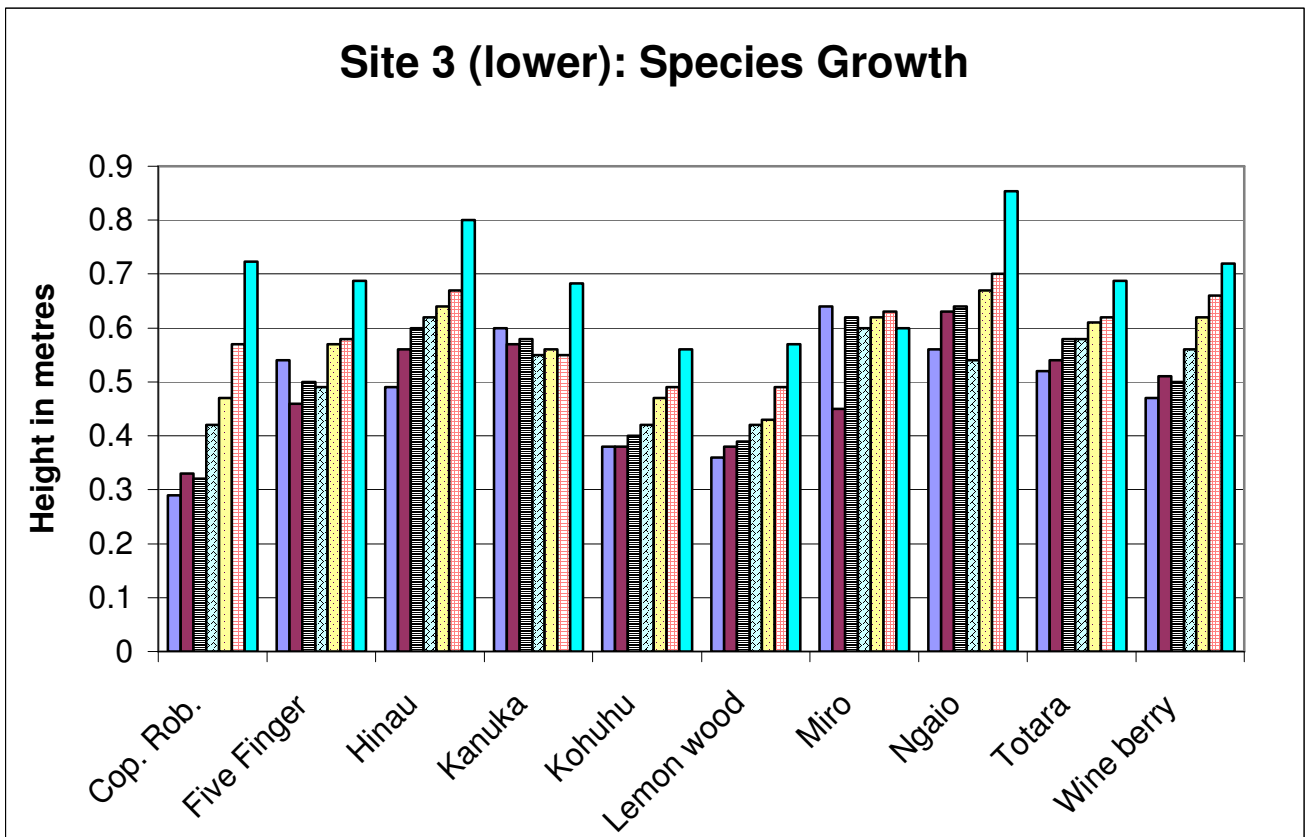
but that would be cheating because we have a strict word limit on this piece and those names alone would far exceed that limit.

Site 3 is a prime example of what is possible in revegetating an area if the effort is there to put in. We ear marked this extremely steep, blackberry riddled site for Global Volunteers because ... well because they are all young foreign people who are only in New Zealand for a short time so none of them would have to face such a tricky site for more than two days at the most. Regularly, once a month the plants on that site get weeded, monitored and watered (if they need it), and they're beginning to respond to such consistent attention. The monitoring graph below shows the steady growth over the months – something that's hard to discern with the naked eye.

With a total of 21 sites planted now, obviously we can't give every seedling the attention those on site 3 receive, but every little bit counts. So next time you're walking down the valley, if you see a yellow daisy or a pink-flowered Himalyan balsam within reach, yank it out for us, will you? A weed in time saves nine.

Bronwen

P.S. Plant care work parties will be continuing on the second Saturday of the month, meeting 9 a.m. at the Otari Information Centre



Another Word about the Valley

If you have not been along the valley lately it is worth taking a stroll along there to see, as well as the plant growth, the wonderful information posters that Bronwen and Jonathan have erected at each site. These show in a glance how very successful the Revegetation project is. *The Editor*

More about the valley:

Looking ahead: Excerpts from Proceedings of a meeting of the Kaiwharawhara Stream Revegetation Project Management team

Planting 2005

We discussed again the sites and number of plants required.

1. The restored zones 1 to 21 will need about 1500 plants.
2. Areas downstream from zone 1 to the Troup Picnic area will need about 1500 plants.
3. North Churchill Drive will need 2500 plants.
4. Under the umbrella of 'Project Kaiwharawhara' we discussed the possibility of restoring three or four areas within Otari and its streamside. Robyn Smith is on leave at present, and so we will have to leave any decision about this, until she returns.

Note: During the work-parties in 2005, it is intended that when plants have been planted, and there is time on hand, time will be given to weeding in other zones that need plant-care. Preparation of planting zones by the planting work-parties, will also be needed in 2005.

Funding for 2005:

WCC Environmental Grant

This Grant from the WCC has sustained management of the 'project' at all levels, over the last three years, and largely accounts for the project's success.

By the 28th February, 2005, the Trust will 'report-back' to the Grants Team Leader – Deborah Hope. This is quite a comprehensive and detailed account of a description of the outcomes achieved, and expenditure etc. as outlined in our application. We intend to include photographs of the volunteers planting and photographs of the 'interpretation panels'.

The Trust is again applying to the WCC for an Environmental Grant to support this year's continuance of restoration, in the areas mentioned above. The 'groups' opinion is that we should make a joint application with the Trelissick Park / Ngaio Gorge Working Group, because the intention is to undertake restorative work which overlaps into the Working Groups area of interest, and care.

The Trust's application for a WCC Environmental Grant is to be submitted by the 28th. February, 2005. This is a request to assist with the cost of spraying and the preparation of ground for planting, the cost of plants, the cost of materials such as stakes, fertilizer etc. and any costs associated with plant-care and monitoring work-parties. We are keen to have work-party on-site leaders who have botanical knowledge, restoration experience and those special skills necessary to recruit and retain volunteers. In the past every work-party has been an on-site learning experience for the volunteers, and the intention is to ensure that this 'educational' opportunity continues.

Hopefully the Trust will enlist funds, to purchase services from the Kennett Bros. company to provide leadership for the on-site activities mentioned above. It is not the intention of the Trust to employ staff from the Kennett Bros. company, but to purchase their on-site services. This has different implications for insurance, H & S issues, ACC etc..

The overall off-site management of the 2005 project will largely be taken up by the 'collaborative group' [GWRC, WCC, Otari staff, and the Trust].

GWRC *Community Environmental Care Programme*: The Regional Council has indicated that they are supporting the present work as part of their support of 'Project Kaiwharawhara'.

Nevertheless, the Trust intends to apply in September 2005 for funding and support under their 'Community Environmental Care Programme'.

The Trust considers that, in recent years, this programme has been most successful assisting in the understanding of the environment and ecology of the local Kaiwharawhara Stream, and is eager to see this continue..

Jock Fleming

Draft Open Space Access Plan

In mid February, 2004, the Lands and Boundaries sub-committee put in a submission to the WCC on this Draft Plan. Sections 8 & 9 were: Track Classification & Track Specification, and our submission addressed a number of items.

On 17th. December,2004, the track building team -- Grant Preston-Thomas / Derek Pope / and myself , on request. met up with Joanna Gillanders [WCC Reserves Curator] and Bunny Warren [WCC Technical Advisor - Tracks etc.] We met at Otari. In the Trust's submission to the Draft Open Space Access Plan we had stated that:

'The Trust would welcome the opportunity for 'local involvement' to assist with the improvement and maintenance of tracks under supervision, understanding that everyone is working to the same overall plan.'

This was pretty well the basis of the discussion we had with Jo Gillanders.

Reporting the outcome.

1. Track Design.

Earlier in the 'draft' document, mention was made of the weakness of Wellington's Track network [page 6]. The Trust appreciates the difficulties that present day officers of Council have inherited. Many of the tracks in Otari-Wilton's Bush have been built with little consideration given to either the avoidance of obstacles, or the inclusion of the best features, in the area. It is quite obvious that the knowledge and expertise associated with modern track building, was not available or used, when some of the tracks were formed.

Outcome: Comments accepted and acknowledge.

2. Criticism of earlier track standards and specifications.

It would appear that the classification and specifications given in the 'draft' document, have been drawn from the DoC and Standards New Zealand, publications. A genuine criticism of these is that both are based on 'predominant' user groups. This qualification 'predominant', excludes the encouragement of non-users, to extend their usage for the benefit of their health, quality of life, and appreciation of the natural environment.

Not discussed nevertheless there was an indirect acknowledgment of this issue.

3. Professional approach.

The Trust are very keen to support Council, to adopt a more professional approach to the building, maintenance, and restoration of the tracks they own and administer on behalf of the community, in Wellington.

Outcome: Accepted

4. Appointment of a Council Officer.

The Trust have recently had experience assisting with the building of a 3.2 km. track between Wright's Hill and Makara Peak. Both the design and construction was managed by professional persons, who were fully responsible to the WCC. From this experience the Trust are of the opinion that the more professional approach, mentioned above, should include the appointment of a Council Officer, whether part-time or on contract, who has had 'field' experience and knowledge of track design, construction and maintenance.

Community support groups would then have a contact person to manage design, construction, and maintenance of tracks. At present it is unreasonable to expect Council Officers employed for other roles, or 'field' staff who have other core duties, to undertake the responsibilities, now expected to meet the standards being adopted by Council. It is not considered that 'rangers' have these specialised skills, knowledge and experience.

Outcome: Since they have recently increased staff in their section, the WCC are now in a position to nominate a contact person. Staff will also be available to make on-site surveys with the volunteer groups and mutually decide on such matters as design / gradient / and the avoidance of steps etc.etc.

5. Cooperative effort.

Track construction, between Wright's Hill and Makara Peak is an example of the accomplishment of a cooperative effort between Council and community volunteers, when managed by professional persons, outside Council.

The minimal cost to Council for this major construction, is witness to the value of such a cooperative effort.

Outcome: Acknowledge

6. Community volunteers.

Many volunteers have an innate ability, together with experience and knowledge of track building. There must have been about a hundred volunteers working at different times over the short period of only a few months it took to construct the Wright's Hill - Makara Peak track over difficult terrain. This track surpasses many others in Wellington, for its ease, enjoyment and outstanding vistas.

Outcome: The ability of many volunteers is accepted - but there is a provision here that volunteer groups must keep the 'contact person' in their WCC section fully informed about progress, difficulties, the need for materials, extra assistance etc.

This is all great news and is quite a turn around. All credit to Grant Preston-Thomas, who has persisted to battle the proprietorial attitudes of previous Council Officers. He certainly deserved his Conservation Award from DoC, given a year or two back. On the immediate agenda is helping out our neighbours in Trelissick Park, with Jonathan Kennett as big chief, then on to repairing the track between the Cemetery and Otari - deviating it away from the 70 odd steps. Grant has already surveyed the deviation, which will be checked out by the 'contact' person and the volunteers in the not too distant future so that everybody agrees with what is to be done and what materials we might need [boarding, gravel etc.]

Jock Fleming

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:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work parties | <input type="checkbox"/> Weekend hosting at Otari Information Centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fund raising | |

Please send your application to: The Treasurer,

Otari-Wilton's Bush,
160 Wilton Road,
Wilton,
Wellington.