

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

News and Views March, 2006

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

First Saturday of each month	Be at the information centre at 9am. Plant care work party, 4 March, 1 April, 6 May. Planting from 3 June (planting starts later after a very dry summer) <i>Leaders: Bronwen Wall, Jonathan Kennett, ph 472 5891</i>
	March Seminars, Tuesday nights in March, 7:30pm Otari-Wilton Bush Education Centre. The theme will be “Working botanists in Wellington.” What do botanists really do when they're at work? Come along to the Otari-Wilton Bush seminars this March and discover how four Wellington botanists are helping to tackle weed problems in reserves, manage natural ecosystems and investigate the role of plants in climate warming. Details see following page.
	Otari-Wilton's Bush walks Jan – March 2006. For all walks, meet at the Information Centre, Wilton Road.
Saturday 4 March, 10.30am	Meander on the Nature Trail at Otari-Wilton's Bush with poetry readings by Dinah Hawken (Poet in residence at Otari, 2004), Gina Garvey and Megan Fleming.
Sunday, 23 April, 2pm	A Historical walk to significant sights in Maori and Pakeha history at Otari-Wilton's Bush. From the Waharoa near the car park to the Wilton Gateway and a view of the Wilton Homestead, then down to the “Black Bridge” and from there to the Flax Clearing. A mostly easy walk along the original dray roads. 2 hours. <i>Leader: Sandra Clarke</i>
Sunday, 28 May, 2pm	A pilgrimage to the Giant and Ancient Rimu with many interesting plants to delay us along the way. A good track but with a number of steps. About 2 hours. <i>Leader: John Dawson</i>
Sunday 25 June, 2pm	See and hear the stories about plants of special interest in the Rock Garden, and in the garden beds near to and below the Lookout. An easy ramble. 1 – 1.5 hours. <i>Leader: John Dawson.</i>

Contacts:

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.

Newsletter: Vera Burton *Phone 479 4440 Email davee@paradise.net.nz*

Annual March seminars - Wellington botanists at work

What do botanists really do when they're at work?
Come along to the Otari-Wilton Bush seminars this March and discover how four Wellington botanists are helping to tackle weed problems in reserves, manage natural ecosystems and investigate the role of plants in climate warming.
Seminars, Tuesday nights, 7:30pm Otari-Wilton Bush Education Centre

Speakers:

7 March: Mick Parsons, Otari-Wilton Bush .
Weeds and their management at Otari-Wilton Bush.

14 March: Dr Carol West, Dept of Conservation.
Southland botany

21 March: Dr Sean Weaver, Victoria University.
A personal tale of plants, politics and people.

28 March: Susan Timmins, Dept of Conservation.
Weeds -a national problem

Book review

“ PLANT ME INSTEAD” – Plants to use in place of common and invasive environmental weeds in the lower North Island” published by the Department of Conservation – Wellington Conservancy – 2005. 162 pages -- Copies are \$10:00 each. (hardly covering the cost of printing)

The plants are grouped into five main types, in colour-coded sections:

Grasses -- Ground cover -- Trees & shrubs -- Creepers & climbers -- Aquatics.

For each weed species there is a picture and description -- on the facing page are coloured photos of plants you can plant in that particular site instead.

This is very cleverly presented and includes a wealth of information.

These are on sale in most bookshops and can be purchased from DoC

Manager's Otari Report

Hi everyone.

There's a lot happening at Otari at the moment and we are gearing up for some of the bigger projects heading our way soon.

There has been some great work achieved by our Thursday volunteers in our nursery to assist with re-vegetation work coming up in a few months. Planter bags have been weeded, seedlings potted up and milk cartons given new roles as reveg containers. A big thank you is deserved; we really value your efforts.

I recently attended a meeting with the Trust Board and Amber Bill regarding the current review of Otari's Management Plan. Amber Bill is Wellington City Council's Planner for Ecology and Biodiversity and is managing the review of the Management Plan. Some great ideas came forth at the meeting and there was consensus on several themes which was good to hear.

The Circular Walk and Troup Picnic area redevelopment is due to begin shortly. The Circular Walk from the lower collections area to the Troup Picnic area is being extended and re-graded. This work is intended to create step free access along the Circular Walk to a standard that is useable to a wider range of the community.

This section of the Circular Walk will not be available to pedestrians from 1 March 06 though until 30 April 06. Access to the Troup Picnic lawn will still be available via the Churchill Drive entrance and the Ian Galloway park entrance.

We are looking at making slight design changes to the Alpine Garden (near the main car park) in an attempt to minimise damage to plants here from adventurous mountaineering types who clamber up onto the garden. The staff here are eagerly awaiting the designs that are currently being drawn up.

Make sure you visit Otari to enjoy the last of summer before it goes.

Take care,

Rewi Elliot.

Book review

“Phil O’Shea” Wizard on wheels

published by the Kennett Bros. in association with Whitireia Publishing 2005

Authors: the Kennett Bros.(Jonathan Kennett and Bronwen Wall. 120 pages

Well illustrated. Cost: \$16.95

This is a great yarn – the first of a series “New Zealand Cycling Legends”

The prologue says it all.....’we often lamented the fact that the stories of outstanding champions had to be condensed to fit a single page.....Their lives are fascinating..... On their hard path to sporting stardom they all suffered pain and defeat, as well as euphoria and victory. Their inspiring feats deserved more.

The reviewer, who knows nothing about this sport, is waiting for the next in the series.

JF

Report from the Chairman

The period of relaxation after the end year 2005 rush is over, the schools have opened, and we enter a phase of the calendar year when we must press on with the projects and tasks we would like to see accomplished in 2006. These include the programmed events we are involved in each year as well

as other one off projects. Of special note are the following:

An interesting series of seminars for March which I am sure you will already have noted from the Diary of Events

As mentioned in our last newsletter, 2006 is a significant year for Otari-Wilton's Bush: it is 100 years since the first block of land was classified as a Scenic Reserve, and we are planning Centennial commemorative celebrations commencing in August. More on this later.

This year also marks the completion of the 1996 10 year Management Plan for the Reserve, and Council managers must complete a new plan as required under the Reserves Act 1977. We have the opportunity to provide input for this and as a preliminary to determining specific action items for inclusion, we have presented our overall vision for Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve. viz.

- *The pre-eminent Collection of Indigenous Plants in New Zealand, and as such, is a National resource for scientific studies and education in natural sciences, conservation and indigenous plant horticulture.*
- *A Centre for the conservation of indigenous plants not only from the Wellington area, but also regionally and nationally.*
- *A key part of the Kaiwharawhara catchment ecosystem and also serving as part of a corridor for bird movement from Karori Wildlife Sanctuary to the mouth of the Kaiwharawhara stream.*
 - *An important Recreational Area for Wellington City residents and visitors to the city, both for its plant collection, and the recreational opportunities that it offers, being close to the City Centre and also being part of the Outer Green Belt.*

Among the priority action which we consider should be included in this management plan are

- Expanding resources for collection management particularly in the area of rare and endangered plants.
- Provision of a dedicated Education Centre based on NZ native flora, and associated with this, provision of visitor facilities of modest scale as normally expected at a reserve rated as a 'Garden of National Significance'
- Clarification of reserve boundaries with inclusion of areas which provide protective buffer zones and can be effectively managed as part of the Reserve. Associated with this is the need to clarify protective policies in relation to pest plants, pest animals and fire risks, particularly for owners of neighbouring properties.
- Providing an additional entrance with car parking adjacent to Ian Galloway park.
- Implementation of an effective marketing strategy for the Reserve as a key visitor attraction for Wellington.
- Formation of an Advisory Group. (an item in the 1996 Management Plan which has not been implemented)

Finally, the date for our next Annual General Meeting has been tentatively established as 9 May 2006. and the present Board's year of tenure ends then. The strength of any Board is enhanced by the introduction of fresh ideas, and if you would like to contribute in the capacity of a Trustee, do not hesitate to contact me or Margaret our Secretary for a nomination form.

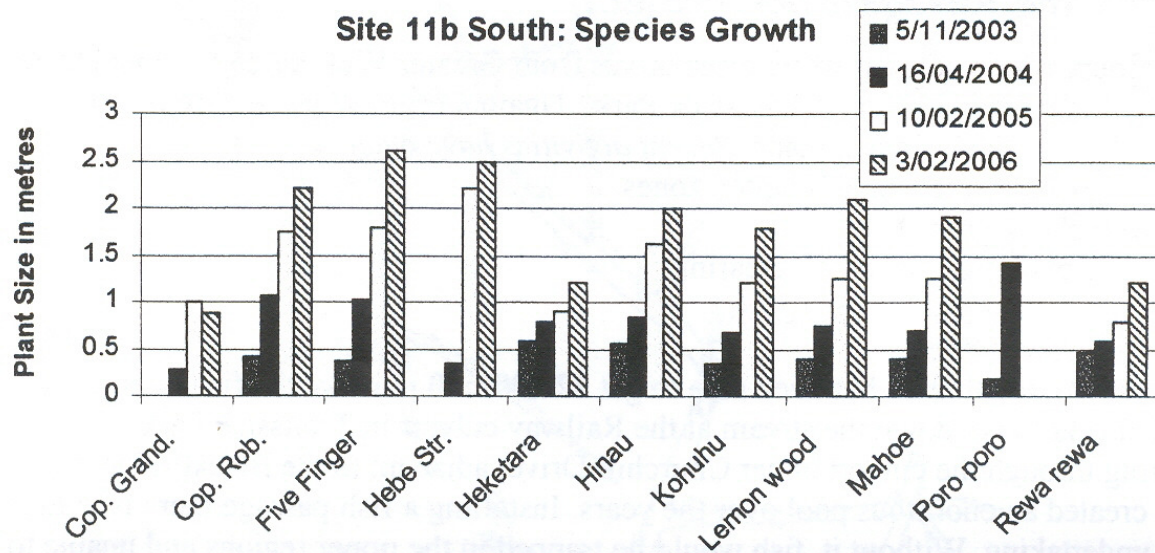
Athol Swann

Words from the Valley

Strange as it may seem, summer is the time when we start thinking about the winter planting season. Summer is when the areas that need planting have to be cleared of weeds in preparation. You might have thought we'd finished with planting down in the valley, but as any home handyman worth his salt would know, you just have to start one task to discover a multitude of others. We still have a little in-filling to do on sites 6 to 10, and then there's site 0 - a new site for a recently discovered area of weeds heading back towards the Troup picnic area. If we find many more of these "hidden" weed areas, we're going to start numbering into the negatives! Jonathan's aiming to have a monitoring post up on this site very soon, so anyone walking down in the valley will know where site 0 is.

We also hope to start planting out the road reserve area across from the northern car park at the base of Black bridge Road. This is an area that has been wasteland for a number of years, and we're all keen to see the flow of bush continue down valley.

Is it worth it? Is it working? We think so, and our monitoring graphs certainly seem to support us on this one. Take site 11b for example, planted out in 2003:



The Blackbridge Road site will also soon be the home of a fish ladder that will help native fish travel up through the tunnel under Churchill Drive and into Otari Wilton's Bush. It should make the whole stream walk a more exciting experience.

In the meantime, don't forget the 'plant care' parties, held the first Saturday of every month. They have been a great success over summer, but the fledgling forest could always do with more help.

Bronwen and Jonathan

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

The Board has tentatively set the date for the next Annual General Meeting as–Tuesday, 9 May, 2006, 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

Report of the Lands and Boundaries Sub-committee:

The Trust is waiting to hear back from the WCC decisions that have been made to acquire, include within Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve, and gazette as 'scenic reserve' under the Reserves Act, land areas that are adjacent to our Reserve.

These decisions are related to the outcome of 'implementation' of the **Wellington's Outer Green Belt Management Plan – May 2004**"

Jo Gillanders is at present working on the 'Implementation Plan'. It will be published in draft form for us to comment.

Report from the Revegetation Project

The 'Reveg' group, which consists of representatives from Greater Wellington Regional Council, WCC, Otari staff, the Otari Trust and Trelissick Park / Ngaio Gorge Working Group had a meeting on Friday the 3rd. Feb. 2006 In summary: Recent activities have been:

Continue plant-care, and watering of planted zones

Monitoring survival and growth.

Preparing sites for planting – spraying, clearing

Looking ahead ; Fish passages.

Mike Oates has **advised** that he has been able to get **\$20,000.00** to make the fish passages at Blackbridge Rd. and lower down the stream at the Railway culvert in Trelissick Park.

Water bursting through the culvert under Churchill Drive, adjacent to the Blackbridge Rd. Junction, has created an enormous pool over the years. Installing a fish passage there is going to be an enormous undertaking. Without it, fish would be trapped in the upper regions and unable to migrate to the harbour and back up to the headwaters and tributaries in the Kaiwharawhara catchment area.

The lower fish passage at the junction of the Koromako stream tributary that comes down from Khandallah fortunately hasn't eaten away into its fall site, and will be a far smaller problem to install the fish passage at that culvert outlet.

These two fish passages are very much a part of the restoration of the whole of the catchment --

Project Kaiwharawhara.

Planting The intention is to have the culverts in place within two months, so that planting can be done at the Blackbridge Rd. site. The installation at the Churchill Dr. / Blackbridge Rd. junction will entail the bringing in of heavy machinery, which will stir up the site where we intend planting this year. Given that the installation will be in place in two months, planting in that region should go ahead in mid May 2006. Jonathan Kennett is preparing a map of the areas within Trelissick Park / Ngaio Gorge, where planting is needed.

Planting sites in Otari

The area adjacent to the 'Education' land is quite big – this is to be planted in 2006. In addition there is quite a bit of in-filling to be done in the zones that have been planted over the last five years

Other issues

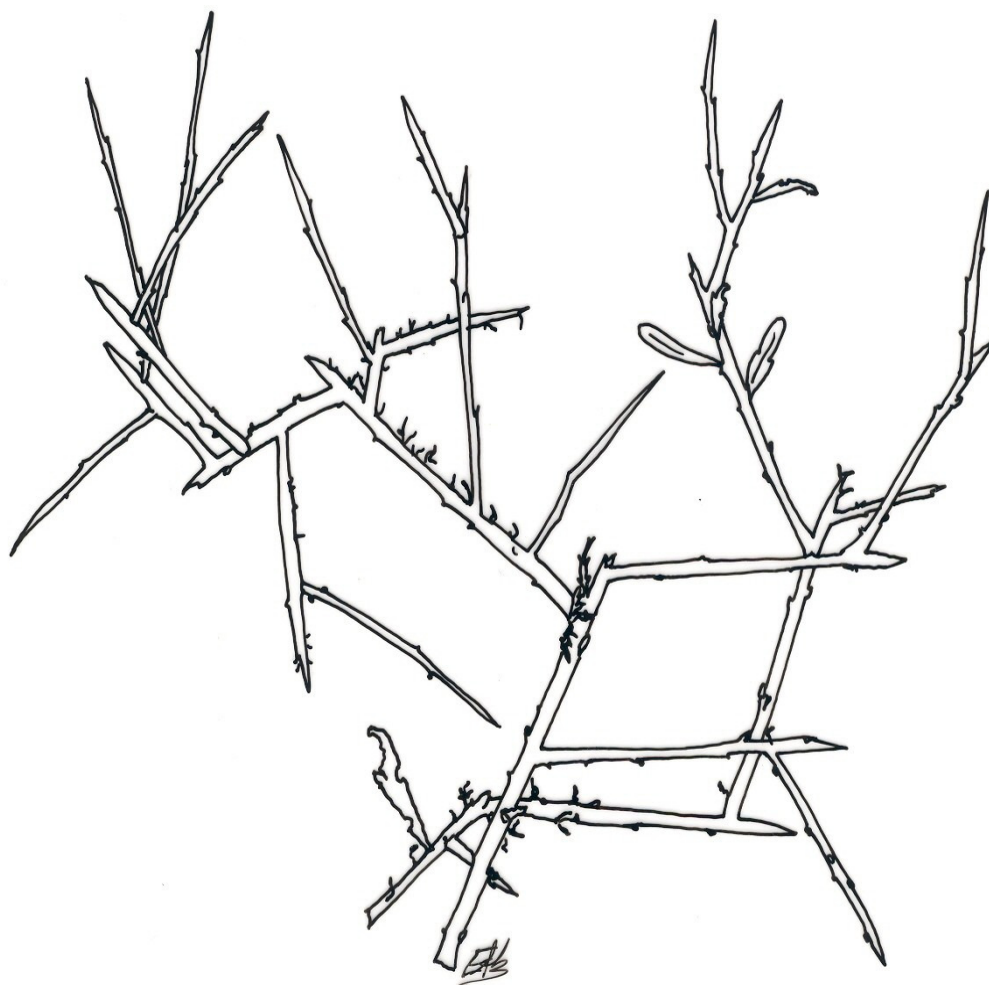
The reportback of the revegetation activities and monies spent (2005) has been submitted to the WCC's Environmental Grants Committee.

A further joint application by the Otari Trust and the TP / NG Working Group, has been submitted for funding of the Kennett Bros. professional services. Their supervision and management in the past has been critical to the success of the 'project'.

Richard Northmore has retired from the 'revegetation group' and has been replaced by Peter Reimann, who is now the new Chairman of the TP / NG WG.

Jock Fleming retires at the end of this month as the Trusts 'link' co-ordinator. Wilbur Dovey is his replacement.

JF



***Melicytus flexuosus* (syn. *Melicytus angustifolius*)**

This is a grey shrub with a dense divaricating habit. It can reach about 3m, though it is very slow growing. It has very few leaves, mostly hidden in the middle of the plant, and the flowers are small and inconspicuous.

It is found from the central North Island south to Stewart Island, in local populations. It grows in river beds and forest margins, and seems to like good light and good drainage, so makes an interesting addition to a rockery.

Melicytus flexuosus can be seen in the General Rock Garden at Otari.

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.