



Escape to the park

Photo: Hywel Griffiths



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Park Provides Covid Balm

The Covid pandemic has heightened my appreciation of Centennial Park. It has been my go-to place, a place of comfort and respite, an antidote to what's happening in the rest of the world.

I've loved the freedom of my long walks over the vivid green of the golf course, loved being able to stride out over the wide open spaces.

I've watched families cycling there, running, kicking a ball around, walking the dog. I've shivered as determined kids waded into the pond after tadpoles and frogs.

The golf course has also provided wonderful opportunities for birdwatching. In the first month of Lockdown I observed a pair of spur-winged plovers hatching and noisily guarding their two fluffy chicks on the rough margins. Flocks of eighty twittering goldfinches fed on the links, rising and falling in clouds as people and dogs disturbed them. For several days a flock of brilliantly coloured yellowhammers busily worked a patch of ground next to a sign saying 'Keep off. New seed.'

Tui and grey warblers, chaffinches and greenfinches have been in full voice, heralding spring and the mating season.

But it is a different scene in the forest heart of the park. Here the tempo is quieter, more muted. With no rush to be anywhere else, and nowhere to go, it's the perfect opportunity to take time to absorb the sights, sounds and smells of the bush. I've found a bright blue egg nestled in moss. I have spotted greenhood orchids in flower on the banks. I have been

alerted by white petals on the track to the native clematis (puawhananga) high above in the treetops. I've smelled the peppery sweet scent of hangehange flowers. I've watched streamwaters swirling around the sculptural roots of kahikatea, have sat on the Mary Hardwick-Smith seat on the Aberdeen Track enjoying the antics of fiercely territorial tui defending their patch of golden yellow kowhai. It is balm to the soul.

Just now spring's display of South African bulbs in the unmown grasslands are revealing themselves in all their glory: sparaxis, aristeia, watsonia, babianas, wild gladioli.

I can only give thanks to the generations before us who preserved, protected and nurtured this space and vow to continue their work.

Liz Goodwin



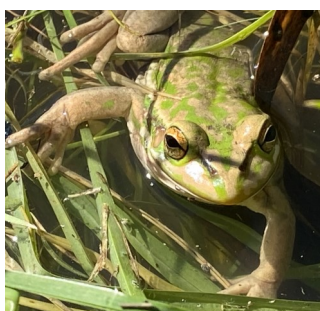
Babianas

Photo: Richard Hursthouse

Liz has been a Centennial Park Bush Society committee member and park volunteer since 2003. On 29 June she received a Hibiscus & Bays Volunteer Award in recognition of her huge contribution to Centennial Park and Auckland's natural environment.

Lockdowns Affect Centennial Park

Auckland's 18 August return to lockdowns and weeks of Covid uncertainty have seriously hampered environmental volunteering. Centennial Park's working bees and vital pest and weed control programmes have been on hold but



Green and gold bell frog in the pond

Photo: Sam Rawstron



Campbell's Bay Urban Sanctuary

unfortunately lockdowns don't stop rats and weeds.

While public use and appreciation of the park's beautiful natural environment have increased, maintenance is falling behind. Weeds grow, tracks need fixing and, worryingly, off-lead dogs are still hammering the stream edges and pummelling new plants and native bush. Please, please help our park by keeping your dogs away from the fragile stream system.

Luckily our two main family planting days - Matariki on 3 July and 7 August... huge thanks to all our fantastic helpers – happened before Delta arrived. We got 1,600 native trees into the ground on those days, bringing the season's total plantings to 1,995 trees. An amazing total of 30,634 natives have been planted by CPBS in the reserve since 2003.

There have been other wins. In July, Morton Rise Track was built in a single day by a small, plucky band - huge thanks to Bunnings employees who helped with digging and metalling. The track zig zags up a slope which Campbells Bay School



Phoenix palm removals free native nikau and rimu

Photo: Richard Hursthouse

students planted in 2018 and which is now a flourishing mini forest. CBUS volunteers recently facilitated the removal of three giant phoenix palms and other pest trees from a stream-side property – to be followed by weed control and planting in winter 2022. Campbells Bay will soon have a Community Catchment Activator, who will connect with stream-owners, assess the streams on their

properties and plan and arrange weed control and planting. Hopefully this person will also have time to help with predator control.

Check out our Facebook page for the results of our Lockdown Photo competition.

Looking after nature in Campbells Bay consumes a lot of time and energy. Your help and support are really appreciated.

Richard Hursthouse

Palm Pain

Phoenix palms, Chinese windmill palms and bangalow palms are becoming a really big problem in Centennial Park. At a weeding event earlier in the year volunteers removed more than 100 seedlings from a 60 m2 area. These three introduced palms were once popular but it is now illegal to plant the first two and buying and planting bangalows will

soon be illegal too. If your palms are fruiting (some palms are male and do not set fruit) please remove them from your property, or at least remove the fruit before they ripen, to prevent birds spreading them into natural areas. If your fruiting palms are next to a stream in Campbells Bay we may be able to help with funding removal.

Richard Hursthouse

Pest Control...then...

I and three others, including Richard Hursthouse and Stan Knight, began trapping rodents in 2010. From 2012, only I and Diocesan student Julia, who was working towards her Duke of Edinburgh Award, were actively involved. It was very simple: spring traps baited with peanut butter, checked at least weekly. Because insects frequently cleaned out the peanut butter I doubled my checks to Tuesdays and Thursdays. By the beginning of 2013, 18 traps were deployed: 12 along the Kohekohe Track, 3 along the Mamaku and 3 along the Baylis. I also kept an eye on 4 Timms possum traps, which also caught an occasional rat or hedgehog.

Spring traps (in contrast to bait stations) provide countable bodies. Despite the basic nature and limited scope of spring trapping the numbers were impressive: 77 rats and 28 mice in 2010; 41 rats and 18 mice in 2011; 56 rats and 28 mice in 2012. On average, the Baylis Track traps did a little better than other sites and may have done even better had traps been set near the track's current highly active bait station locations.

These early totals showed the park had a rodent problem which justified the systematic and sustained bait station system we currently operate. Five of the present park bait-lines were set up in May 2013 by Kelvin Floyd from Te Ngahere. Line 1 was set up by Richard Hursthouse and Joe Greig and Line 7 was added later.

Peter Aimer



Bangalow palm seedlings – hundreds pop up in the park

Photo: Richard Hursthouse



Peter at his July "retirement" party
Photo: Karen Brook

Peter retired from the Bush Society committee in June 2021 but is still an active pest control volunteer.



...and now...

Fast forward to today - baiting occurs four months a year with stations left empty between pulses. The evolving programme has 27 volunteers who operate 9 bait-lines (88 stations) in the park, supported by 16 bait-lines (141 stations) in surrounding properties. A few stations have consistently high bait takes, even after a month-long pulse, so we're trialling a few strategies in a select group, hoping to rid the locality of rats, at least for a period. If successful, the extended scheme may be adopted when certain criteria are met.

Covid-19 lockdowns have delayed, or put on hold, two pulses in both 2020 and 2021. Should lockdowns continue we ask residents with stations and bait to please use them to help protect our regenerating bush and its birds.

Following requests, we hope to hold an early December workshop for current baiters and anyone interested. Please contact Jo Broad on 021 045 5000 to express your interest or suggest a speaker or topic.

Jo Broad

...and...Bye Bye Possums

Sustained trapping has significantly reduced possum numbers within the park this last quarter. The Campbells Bay Urban Sanctuary (CBUS) Possum Gang maintains 39 traps within the park and 15 in a halo around it. Our focus is now on reducing possums in private property bush pockets within the CBUS catchment.

Our most recent initiative involves 6 traps set in a stand of beautiful old native trees in View Road. The intention is to sharply impact the possum population and then we'll move down to 3 traps, managed within the pulse regime, once that target is achieved. The Gang has removed 35 possums in the last 12 months and 62 since the programme began. If you have a stand of natives needing possum protection, or you just have possum problems please contact John Kinloch: 027 4966447

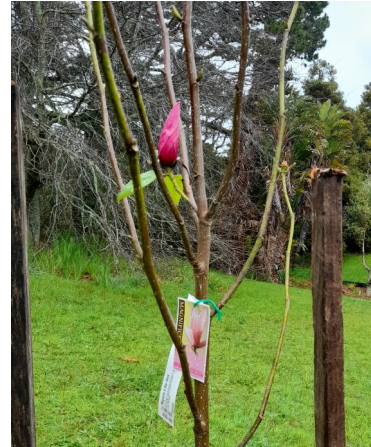
There is no cost to home owners for this work although donations to the Bush Society are always welcome.

John Kinloch

Arboretum Update

Centennial Park's Arboretum is a showcase of specimen native and exotic trees. Following guidelines outlined in a March 2021 Arbor Connect report (commissioned by the Bush Society), volunteers have begun restoring the mauri of

this area by improving growing conditions and planting more trees. In mid-July two kowhai and three magnolias (Star Wars, Still Me and *Magnolia delavayi*) were planted along the Magnolia Walk and three Robert Lane liquidambar were planted in the liquidambar clearing near Morton Way. A tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) was planted in September. A team of 9 volunteers will water these trees, plus 26 additional specimen natives planted across the reserve, over summer.



Star Wars magnolia

Photo: Jenny Chamberlain

Riparian Repairs

Huge thanks to Viv Walker, Nadine Hollier and the Forest Guardians rangatahi for their ongoing mahi protecting delicate stream edges from paddling pooches. Here's a sample of their work near the Kohekohe and Mamaku Track junction. Recounts Viv: "First we planted small karo and cabbage trees. Then we put up the fencing. The gap where dogs exit on the other side of the bridge is fairly small, so we made natural fences of old logs, sticks and fallen ponga fronds." This job took the group two hours and they received lots of positive comments from passers-by.



Photo: Viv Walker



Nature Trail Posts

Our brilliant new Nature Trail posts were precision engineered by committee member Stuart George in his garage. They are works of art. Ranging from 0.6m to 1.7m long, and sitting 500mm above the track, they were cut from 60 metres of durable house pile timber – each one measured to suit its particular site and designed to be easily seen. Following shaping and sanding, Stuart routed and painted numbers on both sides and glued and screwed specially designed Metal Image plaques to the tops. In addition to their Nature Trail number and plant name each plaque has a QR code, linking it to the plant description and photo on the Campbells Bay Urban Sanctuary website. The time-consuming project has had its challenges. Says Stuart: “The hardest part was routing out numbers by hand and because the timber was damp from the treatment process the router wasn't working well. Also a facemask was necessary which makes my glasses fog up, and you still get unhealthy dust everywhere.” Luckily, Stuart had the timber before lockdown so he was able to make progress and, when he ran out of paint, Max Thomson, who has refreshed the paintwork on our current posts for many years, came to the rescue. When lockdown rules permit, these new posts will replace the old rotting ones. Meantime, when you're next on the Nature Trail check out the smart new post at number 1. Ka pai Stuart.



We acknowledge the support of:

THANK YOU!!

A special thanks to our supporters:

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 Pupuke Golf Club
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Committee: Liz Goodwin, Joe Greig, Sue Rawstron, Victoria Morris, Fiona Davies, Jo Broad, Stuart George, John Kinloch and Vivienne Walker.

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Find out more and **sign up to our mailing list at**

<https://campbellsbayurbansanctuary.org.nz/>

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