



Young CPBS volunteers cleaning the Beach Road sign

Photo: Viv Walker

Centennial Park Bush Society Newsletter



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Protecting Nature

Centennial Park Bush Society volunteers protect nature in Campbells Bay by controlling animal predators and pest plants and planting many hundreds of native trees and plants. By doing this we are helping nature look after itself. Native plants thrive when they are not eaten by animal pests, smothered by weeds, or trampled by dogs or humans. Birds thrive when they successfully raise young and fledglings are not eaten by possums, rats and cats. If we control predators, keep dogs out of streams, and keep our cats indoors, the forest and streams will thrive and clean water will flow into our lovely bay.



Pōhutukawa

Photo: Richard Hursthouse

We have significant additional challenges. Extreme weather events, worsened by climate change, have caused severe streambank erosion and undone many of our planting efforts. I challenge you to measure your personal carbon footprint, easily done on-line. It can be sobering. The reality is: "We are

the problem". In addition, almost two years of high rainfall mean we spend many more hours maintaining the park's 4.7km of tracks, instead of controlling pest plants. And we are still seeing too many grand old native trees felled in Campbells Bay. Many new Kiwis don't know which trees are natives. Please think twice before you remove mature native trees. Large trees absorb water and help mitigate flooding and erosion. Many new developments would be greatly enhanced if they were designed around these magnificent trees. Find out which trees are important by going to our website and by walking the Nature Trail. If we all play our part, nature will thrive and we will all be healthier and happier.

None of this work would happen without a large and willing group of volunteers working very hard every week. Volunteering for nature in Campbells Bay is rewarding, fun, great exercise and is making a difference. I would like to say a massive thankyou to everyone who works so hard to make Campbells Bay a better place. Ngā mihi nui tātou and have a wonderful summer.

Richard Hursthouse

Matariki In The Meadow

Clear skies, gumboots and binoculars made for Matariki magic on Saturday 15th July, when 50 well-wrapped Centennial Park supporters gathered in the pre-dawn to watch the Matariki star cluster rise over Morton Meadow. After months of wet weather it was amazing to walk umbrella-less, alongside the dark shapes of friends, family and neighbours, all peering up towards the eastern horizon.



Campbells Bay Urban Sanctuary

Eventually we all saw the tiny sprinkle - one of the closest clusters to Earth and containing over 500 stars.

Te reo teacher Kendall Fricker, who grew up in Campbells Bay, was our tikanga Māori guide, explaining the special significance of Matariki in Aotearoa New Zealand and giving the name and meaning of the nine principal stars. Kendall



Matariki star gazers gather

Photo: Victoria Morris

also led some amazing waiata singing. It was special to be in the park as sunrise started, just being awed by nature.

Everyone helped wrangle two large trees out of their grow-bags for ceremonial planting: a pōhutukawa marking Joe Greig's decades of park devotion and a tōtara to mark Richard's outstanding contribution to conservation and 20 years' chairmanship of CPBS.

A welcome hot breakfast at CB Tennis Club followed, plus whaikōrero, more waiata and an uninhibited performance of the Matariki macarena. Massive Matariki thankyou's all round – especially to Kendall, the wonderful kitchen warriors, Campbells Bay Tennis Club for the welcoming venue and to our awesome rangatahi and their parents. Kia ora everyone for getting out of cosy beds to share this important and uniquely Kiwi celebration.

Jenny Chamberlain

Natural History

The revival of the Centennial Park Bush Society on 1 June 2003 began a new era of environmental volunteering in the park, in Campbells Bay and across the Shore; though the 10 people who attended that first meeting weren't thinking Shore-wide, or even bay-wide. Their sole purpose was to reconvene the CPBS, thereby securing the future guardianship

of the park.

Legendary CPBS founding chair Pat Morton was there, as was retired botany professor Geoff Baylis, son of Gerald Baylis, a 1930s park champion. Five of the ten who gathered are still committee members – including longest-serving volunteer Joe Greig.

Pat, backed by husband John, professor of zoology at the University of Auckland, had led small, keen bands of volunteer park weeders, planters and track-builders for almost two decades. They created the framework of the regenerating urban forest we know and cherish today. But by 2003, Pat had retired from the chair and working bees were erratic. Pat said she was "shocked", when she reflected on the enormity of the task she had undertaken at the formation of the CPBS in 1979. Twenty four years on, fresh energy was needed.

With Pat's blessing Richard Hursthouse was elected new chair; Max Thomson moved opening a Kiwibank account, using Pat's "jar of leftover membership money"; Pat and John offered to update *Just Scrub* their native forest restoration blueprint, still used today; Richard would meet with Council's parks officer and draw up a list of priorities; regular working bees would resume.

It seemed simple but, as things turned out, the transformative energy released that winter night would far exceed anything any of us could have imagined. The effect of Richard's dynamic leadership is recorded in 20 years' meeting minutes and financial reports (more than 100 sets of each) and 40 editions of CPBS newsletters. Over 20 years he has inspired and organised teams of volunteers to:

- Remove mega invasives, including acmenas, pines, wattles, privets, hakea, rhamnus, agapanthus, ginger etc, giving native trees like tōtara, rimu, kauri, kahikatea, nīkau, kōwhai, ponga and tī kōuka space to survive, mature and seed.
- Control and hand-pull a multitude of smaller weed species - primarily at 1,280 weekly and monthly working bees.
- Plant more than 30,000 natives in the forest, in golf course bush blocks, on several extensive bare clay slips, along stream edges and in satellite reserves like Huntly Road Reserve, Greville Reserve, the dairy garden, Campbells Bay School's Community Forest, Kōwhai Road and most notably the formerly neglected five hectare Park Rise Bush – where a new track was opened in 2011.
- Dig stormwater channels along the edges of, and barrow endless bags of gravel to, 4.7 km of park tracks.



- Continue the ongoing restoration of 6km of streams, including on private property.
- Improve communications through weekly notifications, website, Facebook, Instagram, printed newsletters, park signage, local board presentations, advocacy, tree protection campaigns, local board planning feedback and strengthened relationships with stakeholders, Council and many other agencies and organisations.
- Foster community involvement through family planting days, Matariki celebrations, Family Bush Camps, public AGMs and working bee morning teas.



Kohekohe Track diversion, June 2023

Photo: Richard Hursthouse

- Establish and run a highly effective, catchment-wide pest animal control programme, operated by a team of 38 baiters and possum trappers, involving 254 bait stations and 53 possum traps in and around the park.
- Renew the Nature Trail posts and the NT guide; redesign and re-plant the park entrances and build, install and maintain park furniture including seats, picnic tables, weta motels and bird baths.
- Collect information about the park's bird populations via monthly bird surveys resulting in 182 published reports and sets of data.

Richard's environmental work extends far beyond CPBS. He is a past-chair of North Shore Forest and Bird, a past F&B national board member and still serves on the North Shore committee. He re-ignited and leads the F&B Tuff Crater project. He helped initiate Pest-Free Kaipatiki and Restore Hibiscus and Bays, for which he chairs the steering committee. RH&Bays is a network of 30 Hibiscus and Bays restoration groups working for nature the way we do. Richard initiated and chairs EcoNet, which provides software to help conservation groups and individuals operate more efficiently.

Twenty years' innovative leadership and the hardworking support of hundreds of volunteers are giving our green spaces a chance of survival.

Jenny Chamberlain

Rescuing Our Kororā

Kororā, little penguins, the smallest of the penguin species, were once common along all Aotearoa New Zealand's coastline. Some residents recall them nesting under the floors of old North Shore baches. Sadly, due to habitat loss and predation by cats, dogs and mustelids, their numbers nationwide are in steep decline. In 2017, six bronze kororā, created by sculptor Samantha Lissette and paid for by local residents, were installed at Campbells Bay beach, in recognition of 50 years' bird and penguin rescue work by Sylvia Durrant and Annwyne Standish. Watching recuperating little penguins swimming in the rock pools at the beach used to be a much-enjoyed local activity.



Bronze kororā

Photo: Max Thomson



Three of four recently stolen bronze penguins were recovered this year. A fifth penguin, the one by the playground, was damaged mid-October and has been removed. A project is now underway to repair and re-install three penguins: one in a CCTV-monitored location at the beach, one by the playground and a third at East Coast Bays Library. Centennial Park Bush Society will use funds donated specifically for this purpose to complete the work. If sufficient funds become available, a fourth, new statue will be installed at Auckland Zoo.

Signage will outline the story but you can read the full version in *Sylvia And The Birds: How The Bird Lady Saved Thousands Of Birds And How You Can Too* by Johanna Emeney and Sarah Laing (Massey University Press, 2022, \$39.99).

If you would like to contribute please transfer your donation to the Centennial Park Bush Society's Kiwibank account: 38-9001-0816766-00, and include your name and "Penguins" in the payment details. CPBS is a registered charity so your donation is tax deductible. Please email thomson.max@gmail.com so I can send you a receipt.

Max Thomson

Preserving Our Patch

Until June 2022 we resided on William Souter Street, but it became unbearable due to constant infill housing construction and tree-felling and the associated noise levels. We are now new Campbells Bay residents and profoundly grateful for our surroundings. With Centennial Park at our doorstep and the beach close by, we believe it's one of the best spots in the world.

We were lucky enough to purchase a home that came with 520 sq metres of beautiful established native forest. Not long after we moved in our neighbours asked us if we were going to chop our micro forest down. I explained we purchased the property for the forest! It is simply stunning.

We are so grateful to have more than 25 species of mature native trees including rewarewa, pūriri, kahikatea, North Island rata, kohekohe and a grove of 10 nīkau growing outside our windows. The bird life is magical. We have tui feeding on pūriri flower nectar and majestic kererū eating the berries. Riroriro, silvereyes, piwakawaka, kōtare, ruru, thrushes, rosellas, greenfinches and mallards are the most delightful and welcome visitors. They say people surrounded by trees and birds enjoy better mental health.

We are working to further restore areas of the forest.

Seedlings found on the dirt pathways, or around our house, we transplant directly back into the forest where they have space to grow. We constantly weed out invasive exotics like arum lilies, acmena, wattles, ginger and bangalow palms. We plant native grasses, like *Carex dissita* into wet areas to help purify water flows. King ferns are also enjoying this shady damp space.



Kererū outside the window

Photo: Viv Walker

Predator control is well underway and we have had no signs of rats this year, so we are winning the battle! I set plastic rat traps with honey from our beehives, I run a CBUS halo baitline four times a year and operate a bait station on the property. A possum trap is also set, ready to catch a lurking - thus far elusive - possum.

It's a big project, requiring work and patience but it is hugely satisfying. One day, we will stand back and gaze in awe at the trees and the urban sanctuary we have helped create for nature to thrive.

Viv Walker

A Bird-friendly Garden

I would like to issue a challenge: to create an attractive and biodiverse native garden, irresistible to birds, wildlife-friendly



and a calming and relaxing haven for family.

And, while you're at it, another challenge: allow your garden to be a bit messy. Leave twigs and leaves to build into a mulch, a protective layer conserving moisture before eventually decomposing and improving soil health. Birds love foraging amongst the debris of decaying leaves.



A bird-friendly border...



can be yours in two years

Photos: Liz Goodwin

No matter how small the space – a deck with pots will do – you can make a difference. Don't underestimate the importance of many small patches of urban green, joining to make bird corridors from one forest area to another.

Birds need food, shelter and water. Some will visit your garden seasonally, others will stay, depending on the food you provide. Leaves, flowers, nectar, fruit, seeds, insects, slugs, snails and worms are essentials. Some birds eat one food exclusively; others will try a bit of everything.

Predator control and safe places for nesting and drinking will also encourage birds. A reliable supply of clean water for drinking and splashing around in, as part of preening routines, will keep birds coming back. A shallow dish or birdbath close to trees or shrubs, where birds can wait their turn safely, out of reach of ambushing cats, is perfect. This dish should be kept scrupulously clean and frequently topped up. Birds can be noisy and entertaining bathers, jostling for position and flicking water around.

With preparation, careful plant choices and good timing, the magic of a bird-friendly garden can be achieved surprisingly quickly. In June 2021, I was involved in planting a 1.5 x 30 metre border alongside a Campbells Bay driveway. We waited until winter rains had soaked the ground then dug a decent hole for each plant, tipping in compost and fertilizer, placing the plant in the hole and then covering the whole border with a thick layer of mulch. For a natural, layered effect we chose a mix of grasses, shrubs, underplantings and taller trees. Nearly all survived and flourished, no doubt helped by summer and winter rains. In just two years the growth is amazing. Many seedlings have sprung up beneath the plantings, obviously deposited by visiting birds.

Among the plants we chose are: kōwhai and cabbage trees, olearia, corokia, griselinia, wharangi, coprosma repens, muehlenbeckia and various grasses and hebes, some planted in swathes and some singly. But there are many others which would do equally well: flaxes, pseudopanax, dianella, mahoe...

Are you up for the challenge?

Liz Goodwin

Pest Control Progress

Predator Control in Centennial Park and the surrounding area is improving each year. Our 36 PC volunteers aim not so much to eradicate rats, mice and possums but to contain them to low levels, allowing native species to breed and thrive, bird and fish numbers to increase, and plants to seed in the bush and along stream banks, giving shade and shelter.



Our volunteers use traps for possums and bait for rats and mice. The devices we employ have been cleared for use in urban environments, where pets and even children may encounter them. We follow Auckland Council's best practice guidelines and any risk is outweighed by the good done, and by the reduced transmission of pest-spread disease.

Inevitably though, questions arise about how best to undertake pest control. As well as reading up on best practice and research, and belonging to several pest control networks, this year we conducted a few small projects to test options. One finding was that humans (and dogs and cats) visit our traps and bait stations more than we expected. This may well just be curiosity, but when human feet walk over paths created by rats and other pests, it means pests are less likely to reach the devices. We'd rather they got caught or ate the bait!

Periodically, we monitor progress using peanut butter-baited tunnels. Furry visitors leave footprints on inked cards. It's a one-night sample, but, like an election poll, it allows us to estimate rates. When results are compared to previous measures, we can assess trends. In the park, levels of rats visiting the tunnels is usually low - under 1% - and about 10% in the halo, with a target of under 5%. However, occasionally evidence shows clusters of rats, inside or outside the park. While we try to increase our efforts when these are encountered, rat trapping or baiting in private properties can be very effective if several houses act cooperatively. If you have a rat problem and want to tackle it, we can help with advice and equipment. The more people involved the faster progress will be.

We also monitor birdlife, during monthly bird counts - another way of assessing the impact of our efforts. In the last two years especially, tui counts have noticeably increased. Not all native birds have higher counts though, for reasons unknown. Streamlife is also monitored regularly, with recent encouraging results for less common small species.

The forest's canopy is growing and thickening. The path and stream edges are better covered than they were. More birds are choosing to live and breed in Campbells Bay. The progress is encouraging.

Joanna Broad and Lori McPherson

Kōwhai Care

Kōwhai Road forms one of the boundaries of Campbells Bay and the Centennial Park Bush Society's CBUS [Campbells Bay

Urban Sanctuary] project. Bush Society volunteers planted, and continue to care for, many of the road's 63 signature kōwhai trees. Twenty-seven of these trees are located on the berm bordering the golf course. Most of these trees are thriving because CPBS volunteers have weeded, mulched and staked them, over many years.

The road's remaining 36 kōwhai trees are on berms adjacent to private properties. Of these, those that are mulched are doing the best. The remaining kōwhai are struggling and sadly a couple have died. Repeated weed eater use has ring-barked and is killing some. Many are old, graceful trees which deserve to be cherished.

Centennial Park Bush Society suggests that all 36 berm kōwhai have the grass removed from their root zones and mulch applied. Some require staking, especially where they are vulnerable to ocean breezes. CPBS volunteers are keen to work with you on these kōwhai. We can supply mulch, stakes and ties.



Kōwhai Road kōwhai

Photo: Richard Hursthouse

Once staked, mulched and protected your berm kōwhai will require only an hour or two of your attention every year. Please keep the grass away, re-apply mulch as needed and give young kōwhai 2 litres of water a week in long dry spells. Easy! Mature kōwhai will reward you with magnificent flowers and tui.

Please contact Centennial Park Bush Society on: bushsoc@gmail.com with your name, address and phone number and together we will make sure Kōwhai Road lives up to its name.

Richard Hursthouse



Leads Please

Meet Tilly, a CBUS On-Lead Ambassadors. She's a strong and highly active two-year-old rescue bitsa who lives part-time in Campbells Bay and part-time on a farm in the Waikato. The thing Tilly loves best, apart from her family, food and



snoozing in the sun, is running like the wind while chasing her ball on the beach and in the open meadows of Centennial Park. But when she's walking along public footpaths, or the park's tracks, or near the stream-edges, or anywhere environmentally sensitive she is on-lead. Always. That's because if Tilly got into the streams she'd do what dogs naturally do: she'd drink the water, splash around, stir up silt, disturb native fish, wreck the plantings, cause the stream banks to collapse and generally be a total environmental pain. Tilly wants to please. She is always working on becoming the best On-Lead Ambassadors she can be. Please keep your dog fully controlled and on-lead like Tilly.

Lydia, Matt, Claudia, George and Damon

Pupuke's Big Win

In October, Pupuke won Golf Club of the Year Award at the 2023 National Golf Awards. Pupuke, founded in 1914, is one of Tamaki Makaurau's oldest golf courses. The award is for the club's innovative post-Covid repositioning as an

environmentally enhanced green space and community hub. The club's new-look marketing, diversified golf offerings, strong relations with local schools and focus on fostering a multicultural approach have attracted scores of new players to the sport. Pupuke's close ongoing collaboration with Centennial Park Bush Society and support for the society's large-scale plantings of native trees on areas unused by golfers have earned Department of Conservation accolades. Pupuke supports pest animal and stormwater control programmes. Manager Matt Owen says Pupuke's head greenkeeper is "always looking for areas that can be used by CPBS for planting or improving stormwater run-off".

Pupuke's renewed 33-year lease, signed with Auckland Council, started on 1 January 2023. It means, says Owen, the club can plan for major projects such as the \$300,000 irrigation system installed this winter. "We can also look at doing work on the clubhouse and putting together a 10-year plan. We are likely one of the last clubs to get such a lengthy extension, with Council looking to bring in five to ten-year [lease renewals] from now on."

Jenny Chamberlain



King's Birthday planting on Pupuke Golf Course took place on Saturday 3 June, 2023. More than 100 people attended, including volunteers from Rotary, Rangitoto and Carmel Colleges and CPBS volunteers. 800 native trees were planted and a good time was had by all.

Wet and Wild

Five keen bush trappers inadvertently experienced Centennial Park in full flood fury on 9th May when Auckland



Council's community programmes ranger Anna Baine led us on a Nature Trail walk. It's one of 25 walks Anna guides annually, covering a different Auckland park each time - the most popular being through the Otuatua Stonefields Historic Reserve in Mangere.

Anna is impervious to wild weather and seldom catches colds so, after a health and safety talk, we set off at 10am in what initially seemed a routine Auckland downpour, with brollies, raincoats and gumboots deployed and the most sensible of us wielding walking poles. Over the next hour the rain became torrential, the tracks became streams and the streams merged into fast-flowing rivers. Anna, bare-headed but undeterred, shouted her interesting commentary over her shoulder to beat the sound of roaring waterfalls and regularly asked, "Are you okay?". We were. We circuited in 90 mins and arrived back at the Pine Tree Carpark, totally soaked and absolutely awed by the power of the elements. After we left, a Civil Defence flood warning pinged onto mobiles and at 1.30pm a local state of emergency was declared by Auckland Mayor Wayne Brown – the second for 2023. Few walks are as wild as this one but, if you'd like to join intrepid Anna, check the Our Auckland events or Auckland Parks Facebook pages... and pack a jacket just in case.

Jenny Chamberlain



We acknowledge the support of:

THANK YOU!!

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