



Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga

SPRING 2022

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

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Editorial

Spring has unfolded in all its glory along Te Auaunga / Oakley Creek. We look back on a bumper planting season, with 5000 plants in ground that has been well moistened by a wetter than usual winter. Our thanks to all the volunteers who have helped with the planting and all the other maintenance tasks that are never ending.

In this edition we highlight the Railway Heritage Area and the dedication of two volunteers who have taken kaitiakitanga to a new level as they have, over the past two years, transformed a weed choked gully. We invite you to share their vision next time you are in the vicinity of the Soljak Bridge. We also feature an important article on *Syzygium maire*, our precious swamp

maire, and the threat posed by the spread of myrtle rust infection. You are invited to join the fight against this fungal disease by adding information on its spread to the iNaturalist database. We celebrate our spring songbirds with an article on the riroro and pipiwharauoa. We note some exciting discoveries: an ancient fern and some archaeological finds.

I am your new editor, taking the baton from Cate who is focusing on her PhD.

Enjoy!

Gina Hefferan, Editor

Te Auaunga Railway Heritage Area

By Gina Hefferan

What is it that inspires a person out walking to look down into a rubbish filled, weed choked gully and decide "I can fix that!" and then devote their free time over the next two years to doing exactly that?

Allan Woolf and Chris Brown have been quietly transforming the 'railway gully' for more than two years now. It is Te Auaunga's other main heritage area, maybe less well known than the Waterview Heritage Area. It is the site of an old wooden railway bridge, number 9, of which nothing is left but a crumbling basalt embankment. And it boasts a rusting drainage pipe, also disused. On the Oakley

Creek Restoration Plan maps it is labelled MUs (Management Units) 11 and 12. Chris refers to the eastern bank as "MY11, the loveliest part of the creek."

It helps that Allan has horticulture degrees and experience in weed control on plant nurseries, but once he had noticed those weeds, he couldn't unsee them, "You fix what you can". Chris' background is in gardening, but he could immediately see the beauty of the spot. They came to the task separately, but they have become a team, inspiring and encouraging each other. In tackling a common goal, they have forged a strong friendship.



Photo (above): View of the gully two years ago (Allan Woolf)



Photo (above): View of the gully today (Gina Hefferan)

*"You fix what you can"
Allan Woolf*

Their task was a daunting one. First there was the rubbish – it took a whole day of graft to wrestle the worst of it out of the creek – car and truck tyres, the remains of an old campsite, years of beer bottles, water bottles and other random rubbish, at least a cubic metre of it.



Photo (above): Allan with some of the rubbish collected (Chris Brown)

Then there were the weeds! The gully was covered with woolly nightshade and privet, interspersed with wattle, and blanketed in ginger, blue morning glory, Japanese honeysuckle and asparagus fern. The western side of the gully was half covered with a dense tangle of eleagnus. It has taken many months of work to clear the weeds, with judicious use of Metsulfuron for the more troublesome species.

The eleagnus proved to be a formidable foe. It had formed a dense thicket, (more a monstrous wall really - extending roughly 30m down and 10m across the hill and 6m tall) smothering everything and it has wicked spines. It fixes its own nitrogen, spreads easily and will re-sprout from even small root and stem fragments. The battle against this has been something of a roller-coaster ride. Time and again the team would mount a gruelling offensive (blood, sweat and nearly tears), think "done!" ... and return to find that the eleagnus had re-sprouted, the elusive main stems still not found. Allan and Chris believe they've broken its back now. With a few more "cut and pastes" it should be dead.



Photo (above): Allan and Chris on a rare break (Gina Hefferan)

In spring last year Allan and his wife Zahra planted a few native trees that they watered through the summer, bringing milk containers of water during their morning walks on the shared path – a bit of a mission but nice to get a few plants going early. The main planting of the banks has been done over the winter, with plants from our nursery, and the earlier planting is already flourishing. When I caught up with Chris, he was busy planting harakeke on a near-vertical slope.



Photo (above): Planting at last

So, what is it that has inspired such determined mahi? It is love; it is the spirit of kaitiakitanga that positively shines from the two of them.

Next time you're in the area, look down from Te Arawhiti o Te Wai o Rakataura / the Sojak Bridge and share the vision. Then pay your respects to Rakataura, the great navigator of the Tainui canoe whose pou is at the end of Trent Street. And when you get back to the bridge, head off the beaten track, drop down into the eastern side of the gully and follow the stream – enjoy the way the soundscape changes; check out the old quarry; find the grove of twin ponga and admire the drystone walls, at which point there's a gentler slope back to the path. But wear your stoutest shoes, pull out a few wattle and privet seedlings as you go, and take some rubbish home with you.



Photo (above): Chris with harakeke (Gina Hefferan)

Planting Working Bees

By Wendy John

With the rain doing its bit and keeping the soil nice and moist these past few months, we have been able to get lots of plants in the ground later in the year than is usually the case. Thanks to the support and amazing mahi of all of our volunteers, including our Friday team and those who help with our monthly working bees, we have now planted

roughly 5000 plants. This year 2400 of those have been supplied from the Mayor's Million Trees programme. This has meant we have been able to use some of our Local Board funding to have contractors do some catch-up work on the control of weeds that is difficult for volunteers to do e.g. gorse, Japanese honeysuckle etc.



Photo (above): Mayors Million Trees planting crew in action



Photo (above): Friday Team, Prue, Martin & Ka



Photo (above): Holly & Ellie doing William Pike Challenge

Te Auaunga 'Community Group' Activities

By Wendy John

This past quarter has been a busy one on the awa, with the assistance of our regular and not-so-regular groups.

Conservation Volunteers 'Local Team' were back with us and did a great job of infill planting and weed and rubbish clearance under the Te Piringa Bridge.

Our **A Rocha** partners joined us again recently to do some infill planting and plant releasing in Harbutt Reserve. As always,

volunteers were rewarded with a bowl of Sarah's delicious lemon dahl when the work was done.

A large group from the Pt Chevalier Girl Guides joined us again to do some more planting and mulching on their adopted site in Waterview Glades. (See page 6)

We had another successful working bee with the **St Judes Scouts**, who also did some infill planting, weed and rubbish removal. They

have constructed a new set of steps to make it easier for the scouts to get down to the creek on their land.



Photo (above): P1020691- CVNZ Local



Photo (above): P1020916 - St Judes Scouts



Photo (above): P1020914 – St Judes Scouts Leader, James Flocchini

"Koia kei a koe, you are awesome!"
Sandra

Outreach Activities

By Sandra Maclean

The Waterview Heritage Area continues to feel the love from our regular Tuesday sessions, plus a plethora of groups who have come down to help. **OneTwoSix Church, Conservation Volunteers Migrant Group, Rainbow Riders, St Lukes Brownies** and our in-house weed busting group, aka 'Jean & Keith & friends,' have all helped us make great progress. Activities have focused on madeira vine and privet control but have widened out to include planting and mulching.

Thanks to funding from the Whau Local Board through Whau Wildlink, we have weekly Monday sessions on the awa running at a new site. With this funding we will tautoko residents at **Odyssey House** on Bollard Avenue to restore the bush within their premises. This will be no easy task as they have 240m of Te Auaunga flowing along their eastern boundary and 0.6ha of weed infested bush next to it. It's going to take a lot of resources to make a real dent in the madeira vine and jasmine, but we

are really excited to be tackling this long-neglected piece of bush.

At **27 Powell St** we are working with residents from the development to restore the esplanade reserve below their properties. Several families came out to help at our first weeding bee and we are looking forward to getting people skilled up so in time they can care for their bush under their own steam.

Mt Roskill Community Police with our support, have finished preparing a large part of their site on Stoddard Road which they will be planting up this season.

Moth plant, privet and woolly nightshade have been controlled on lots of private properties with a focus on O'Donnell Avenue, Waterview Apartments and a particularly gnarly site on Blockhouse Bay Road to which we have devoted just short of 30 volunteer hours, but it's still not done! Thanks to everyone who has supported this fabulous work.



Photo (above): Conservation Volunteers Migrant Group



Photo (above): Mount Roskill Community Police volunteers

Corporate Groups

The **Gallagher Security** team joined our Friday group to help plant the last of our Mayor's Million Trees in Waterview Glades. It was great to have their support and 'muscle' to get the planting done.



Photo (above): Gallagher Security volunteers

Pest Control

By Wendy John

Along with our weekly trapping, we have recently completed the spring rodent baiting sessions (5 weeks) – just in time to get the rodent numbers down before the bird breeding season commenced. Trapping around the ‘heritage oak trees’ is currently underway. And pest control in Howlett Reserve, Water-view (along the tidal reach of Te Auaunga) has recently extended to include Waterview

Esplanade Reserves, along with the addition of rat traps across the whole area.

Our local Powell Street Sustainable Neighbourhood Group have taken trapping to the next level, with a super-duper self-setting possum trap being installed next to the creek in their ‘neck of the woods’. Thanks to Wes for the loan of it. We look forward to hearing about the catches.



Photo (above): Ian & Wes (Roger Munn)

Water Monitoring

By Wendy John

Our spring water monitoring is almost completed. We had some interesting finds at the May Road tributary including a back-swimmer (*Anisops*) and some miniscule snail eggs in a case.

Te Auaunga – Oakley Creek was the chosen location for Wai Care to film their new educational video recently, with our chairperson, Wendy, taking part in it. It will be great to see our awa getting some wider exposure.



Photo (above): Wai Care Film Crew

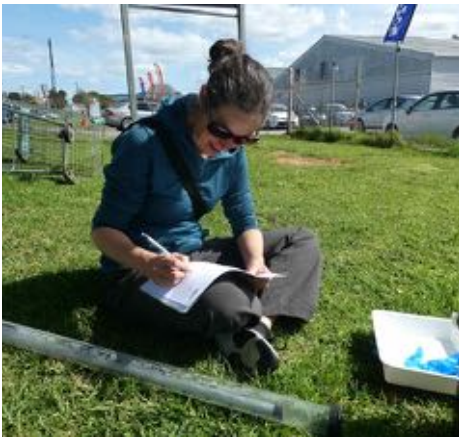


Photo (above): Water Monitoring at May Road, Lynda Burnside



Photo (above): Backswimmer



Photo (above): Water Monitoring at Kukuwai Park, Rutu Jani

Nursery Update

By Wendy John

Things are moving slowly with the build of our nursery at Water-view Primary School. We had our new ‘eco-shed’ set up on the site earlier in the year, and signage recently installed on it. The next phase will be to construct a covered work area. We have had a good turnover of plants this past season, thanks to the help of our three wonderful regular volunteers – Gina, Bev and Margaret.



Photo (above): EcoShed stained by Nick and John



Photo (above): New nursery sign (Margi Watson)

*"Tree planting was amazingly awesome."
Marianna*

Christ the King School Visitors

By Gina Hefferan

A class of 9 year olds from Christ the King School who visited Te Auaunga in July, are still clamouring for a return visit and "more science" a month later.

The school has adopted Valonia Reserve under Auckland Council's 'Adopt a Park' scheme. Teacher Kimberley Sullings had planned the first session with the Community Programme Ranger, Anna Baine, originally just for planting and rubbish clean-up. Despite the rain, and a shortage of spades, the children tackled the infill planting with gusto. Rocio was pleased to learn the "Pukeko Method," which is apparently "how to plant them so that the pukeko could not rip them out."

Fortuitously the children were able to combine their planting with some water monitoring with the help of Nicky Elmore, a Council Sustainable Schools

Advisor. Wendy and I lent a hand. In small groups they tackled six different measures of water quality. They were entranced by the abundant life in the creek and astounded by the blue/ violet transformation of the dissolved oxygen test. Despite the rain, which had started again in earnest by now, they found that nitrate levels were low. There was quiet satisfaction in being able to use the tests to demonstrate the health of the awa. As Marianna put it, "It was amazing to see the tiny, microscopic creatures that lived in the stream and find out how we could tell if the stream was healthy."

My abiding memory came at the end of the visit: one small boy, dripping wet, in perfect stillness, eyes focused on the water, palpably reluctant to leave and return to the classroom.



Photo (above): Christ the King School group



Photo (above): Focused on the water clarity test

Point Chevalier Girl Guides

By Gina Hefferan

Another local group caring for the awa this winter was the Pt Chevalier Girl Guides with the Manawanui Brownies. Four years ago, these units adopted an area of the west bank downstream of Te Piringa Bridge. They have faithfully cared for it ever since. This winter they did some infill planting, weeding, mulching and rubbish clearance. They spoke of the satisfaction

of identifying plants that they themselves planted in previous years and finding them double in size. They understand the importance of mulching and controlling weeds to give the young plants a fighting chance of survival. They also view their work on the awa in its wider context, of doing their bit to combat climate change by reducing our carbon footprint.

*"You see these massive trees and you realise they were the ones you planted."
Sophie, guide*

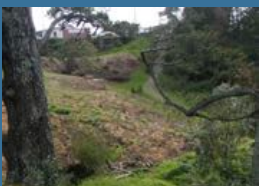


Photo (above): Their adopted Waterview Glades site on planting



Photo (above): Pt Chevalier Guide group



Photo (above): Their adopted Waterview Glades site now

Greetings *Syzygium maire*

By Ngaio Balfour

List of Māori names from the Ngā Rauropi Whakaoranga data base.

Maire tawake
Maire tawhake
Whakoukou
Whāwhākou
Tuhuhi

Common name
Swamp Maire

“Yes Michael, I should have worn gumboots. What does the arrow on the GPS mean?”

I first met *Syzygium maire* during fieldwork in a swamp with my marvellous mentor Michael.

Tena rawa atu *S. maire* (thank you greatly *S. maire*). You taught me resilience as I walked in circles searching for you, falling in knee-deep mud and tumbling through waist-high grass. As you seemed to wait calmly, being one with the world.

Ecology and habitat

Syzygium maire are adapted to water-rich soils; their extensive root networks stabilise riverbanks while feeding from the water using intricate oxygen-generating aerial roots. Reflecting their connection to water, *S. maire* inhabit coastal and lowland riparian (riverside) forests in Te Ika-a-Māui, though they can occasionally be found in mountain and cloud forests in Northland and Western Waikato.

Syzygium maire's creamy white flowers form between November and July. Fruits turn from green to red between January and December.

Human relations:

Syzygium maire has been valued by many throughout the history of



Photo (above): Flowers of *Syzygium maire*, Te Auaunga - Oakley Creek



Photo (above): Aerial roots (pneumatophores) of *Syzygium maire*. (iNaturalist, bca1003, 2018)

Aotearoa. Māori used the fruit to make sweet treats for children, and the wood and bark to form a dark dye. The bark was also used as a treatment for ringworm. Māori and Pakeha used *S. maire*'s strong and durable wood for timber. For more information see the Ngā Rauropi Whakaoranga (Maori plant use) database.

Gems of genetics:

Syzygium maire is endemic and Aotearoa's only native species in the *Syzygium* genus. The species is therefore highly significant for national and global biodiversity.

Risks, Restoration and Research

Habitat loss and pests

S. maire is now threatened by habitat loss and mammalian browsers. Once abundant lowland forests of Te Ika-a-Māui have been devastated by Aotearoa's forest clearance and wetland drainage.

Restoration

Restoration projects aid the *S. maire* protection by including the species in riparian planting. In turn, *S. maire* benefits the restoration project, providing habitat for biodiversity, filtering water, and stabilising the soil. Keep a keen eye out, and you will find several *S. maire*, along the banks of Te Auaunga.

Myrtle rust

In 2017, the globally invasive fungal plant pathogen *Austrorhynchium paccidia* traversed from Australia to Aotearoa in high-altitude winds. The pathogen infects numerous species in the Myrtaceae plant family, causing the disease myrtle rust. As the disease spreads across the country, infection severity increases for many myrtle species, including *S. maire*. Myrtle rust targets young plant tissue and can lead to foliage loss, dieback, reduced reproduction and plant death. *Syzygium maire* is classified as nationally critical due to the combined threat of myrtle rust and habitat loss.

Research on Myrtle rust

Dedicated science and conservation teams across Aotearoa and internationally are working towards understanding and combating the disease. However, tackling an air-borne pathogen is an immense challenge. For example, research exploring how seeds can be stored long-term in 'seed-banks' to safeguard against extinction and loss of genetic diversity has uncovered that *S. maire* unique seed ecology is highly problematic for long-term seed storage.

Please look up the "Beyond myrtle rust webinar series" for information on past and current research on Myrtle rust, including innovative solutions under investigation.

How do we all act to protect and restore *Syzygium maire*?

iNaturalist!

You can provide critical information on the distribution of *Syzygium maire* and myrtle rust infection by contributing to the iNaturalist database. Researchers use iNaturalist for projects such as identifying sites for field work, un-



Photo (above): Myrtle rust on leaves and fruit of *Syzygium maire* at Unitec, Mount Albert, Auckland (plants now removed)



derstanding the species ecology, and tracking disease invasion.

A link to this interactive map can be found [here](#). Open it in your web browser to discover the occurrence records for *Syzygium maire* and myrtle rust in Aotearoa. The map was created using data GBIF, an open-source database which combines data from iNaturalist and national vegetation monitoring surveys.

Protect the ngahere!

The forest is an interconnected being. Any action you take to protect and restore the ngahere will aid the protection of *S. maire*. Your local conservation group is a fantastic resource for this.

Spread the word (and not the disease)!

Look up "Beyond Myrtle Rust Resource for Gardeners" for more information on what species to plant, what not to plant, and how to manage and prevent infection.

And, please, do go and tumble through grass, fall in the mud, or enjoy a walk down Te Auaunga - Oakley Creek to greet the marvellous *Syzygium maire*.



Photo (above): Fruit of *Syzygium maire*, Waititiko - Meola Creek



Songbirds of Te Auaunga

By **Marin Adams and Robin Child**

*Ka tangi te wharauora, ko nga karere a Mahuru
(The shining cuckoo cries: it is the message of spring)
Whakatauki*

Each year I sit in the bush by the creek to do the NZ Garden Bird Survey. I am often frustrated by hearing birdsong but not being able to identify its source. The presence of these birds goes unrecorded in the survey.

When we moved to live by the creek, I heard a song that was new to me. Repeated notes with the last note sliding down (<https://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/sites/all/files/14%20-%20Shining%20Cuckoo.mp3>). It was the Pipiwharauora, the Shining Cuckoo. At that stage I did not know of the intimate connection between the Shining Cuckoo and the bird with the shimmering song, which I gradually learned to recognize as the Grey Warbler (<https://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/sites/all/files/30%20-%20Unknown%20Title%20-%20Unknown%20Artist.mp3>)

I have now lived five years by the creek, and spent many hours planting and weeding, but until this year, I had never seen either bird. They were all around me but invisible. This year I was lucky. Whilst doing the hour-long observation, I saw a flock of sparrows sitting on the bare branches of a deciduous tree. One of the "sparrows" caught my eye as it looked different from the others. It had an erratic, bobbing, way of moving, rather like a fantail. It was silent, so I got no sound clues. I went to the Department of Conservation website and found the bird was Riroriro, the Grey Warbler. I have yet to set eyes on the Pipiwharauora. Both birds are very little.

In Tahiti I visited the site where the voyaging waka set out on their journey to Aotearoa. I learned of the role of the Pipiwharauora in the history of the Pacific. Translated, Pipiwharauora means "far voyaging bird". Dr Tuapiki from the University of Waikato indicates that tūpuna considered a variety of environmental factors – including the sun and stars, the movement of wind and clouds, ocean currents, and bird and whale migration, and seasonal patterns - when choosing when to sail long distances. The timing of the Pipiwharauora's flight south was one sign that winds were favourable to make the long journey south.

Not only is the Shining Cuckoo notable for its ability to traverse the Pacific Ocean, but it is also remarkable for the efficiency with which it rears its young. The fostering story below is told from the perspective of the Riroriro.

"It took the Grey Warbler/ Riroriro nearly a month to construct her nest. She wove together twigs, grass stalks, tree-fern fibres, tree roots, mosses and cobwebs. The entrance, a small hole about three centimetres wide, was near the top of the nest and the lining was a layer of soft feathers.

As August neared its end, she laid one white egg with brown speckles. After two days she laid another egg and then continued until there were four.

When the nest was unattended, a female shining cuckoo laid her egg in the nest and then flicked one of the Grey Warbler's eggs over the edge. After three weeks the eggs hatched. Then the fledgling shining cuckoo, using its back and wings, levered the baby grey warblers over the edge of the nest. Surprisingly the parenting birds showed no sign of distress and dutifully fed the surviving fledgling until it matured. It took 40 days instead of the usual 28, to raise the Shining Cuckoo to maturity."

Robin Child

How is it that Grey Warblers are still plentiful despite this predation? Only forty-five percent of grey warbler nests are invaded, and the breeding period of the Grey Warbler is much longer than that of the Shining Cuckoo.

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Christina Troup, 'Small forest birds - Cuckoos', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/FlashResources/theBush/smallerForestBirds/12502/images/12502-02.gif>

Phillipa Hadlow, Conned by a Cuckoo https://www.biograpview.com/portfolio_page/conned-by-a-cuckoo/



Photo (above): Grey Warbler/Riroriro (Bartek Wypych, [nzbirdsonline](https://nzbirdsonline.org))



Photo (above): Shining Cuckoo/Pipiwharauora (Rob Lynch, [nzbirdsonline](https://nzbirdsonline.org))

Ancient fern discovered at Te Auaunga / Oakley Creek

“A relic from a time when dinosaurs roamed the earth”

A living fossil of the plant kingdom has recently been found in a grove of tree ferns. To get an idea of a similar lineage, think of the tuatara in the animal kingdom – a relic from a time when dinosaurs roamed the earth and ferns were the dominant form of vegetation on planet earth. Fern ancestors first appeared over 300 million years ago. Flowering plants appear in the fossil record only 125 million years ago.

It always helps to have a keen-eyed botanist in the party while exploring in the bush. I was with Wendy John amongst a grove of towering mamaku (*Cyathea medullaris*) and ponga (*Cyathea dealbata*) when Wendy let out a whoop of delight. After many years of searching, she had spotted a tiny bright green fern growing on a jet-black tree fern trunk. *Tmesipteris lanceolata* or fork fern, is a member of what are known as the fern allies, in the order Psilotaceae, a group of primitive vascular plants from Gondwana long before Aotearoa separated. While it is not a rare or threatened species it is not often seen in our heavily modified urban environment.

Fern allies are a small group with very reduced physical features ... no true roots or leaves ... and their spore bearing structures are fused into groups of two or three. Our wee discovery is an epiphyte ... a plant that grows on the surface of another plant and gets its moisture and nutrients from the air, rain and debris around it.

Looking around we found a number of other ferns growing on trunks ... it didn't matter if the trunks were alive or dead, vertical or fallen over and lying on the ground. As long as there was sufficient shade and moisture, there were ferns upon ferns.

This was not the first time I had been with Wendy when she discovered a plant not formerly seen

growing along the creek. But the first time for me to come into contact with a living plant whose ancestry lies in a time almost beyond imagination ... here on our awa.

One last thing ... it's springtime ... so keep an eye out for the striking red foliage of new fronds of various ferns, particularly the beautiful rasp fern (*Doodia australis*).



Photo (above): *Tmesipteris*, fork fern (Wendy John)



Photo (above): New growth of *Doodia Australis* (Chris Brown)



Photo (above): *Osmundaceae*, fossil fern (Cetaceous), Wyoming USA, 71 million years old

Archaeological Update

By Brent Drusovich

It was March 2016 when I last wrote in the Friends of Oakley Creek Newsletter on archaeological happenings around the awa. This article is about the July public planting which had some unexpected results, neither of which I can claim are due to my work. Friends of Oakley Creek committee members, David Bowden and Adrienne Stanton both discovered midden deposits in an area of the creek where previously it was thought to be devoid of evidence of Māori occupation. Neither site appears to be particularly well preserved and they are likely remnants of what were once larger sites, or possibly part of what was once a single larger site, the land between them having been quarried away.



Photo (above): Brent with Johnson and Leslie with their find

The sites themselves are unremarkable to look at, the upper site being a thin layer of midden exposed for an approximate 1m length with occasional shell scattered up to 3m further south, it is buried in the profile by some 40cm of topsoil and quarry material. How far back this midden may be found is unknown. It was noted that the obvious species present were Cockle/Tuangi, which so far have been found to be the dominant species collected from all of the Oakley Creek midden. The second midden is potentially even smaller; the nearby rocks across the slope face however may disguise its size to some extent, the use of a gum spear failed to find any further subsurface shell, in the immediate vicinity and it appeared to be confined to a .5m² area. All of the shell in the second deposit was very crushed which may indicate it has already been all but destroyed and possibly transported a short distance by the earth and "rock" works associated with the former quarry. Nevertheless, despite their unspectacular appear-

ance they are important as it increases our knowledge of the physical range of Māori sites alongside the creek.

The reason for my presence there on the day was to attempt to gain some understanding of the age of the quarrying that had gone on. Research has indicated that it postdates the construction of the railway (1880), as the quarry is confined by the railway alignment, suggesting it was active after it was built. Examination of aerial photographs suggest it predates 1930 as it doesn't show on the earliest aerials of 1940 or any later ones, therefore implying that by 1940 it had been abandoned for some time for the vegetation to have grown back over it. As yet I have been unable to find any conclusive evidence of when the quarry operated, though we do know that other quarries were active in the vicinity of Soljak Place prior to 1900.



Photo (above): A close-up of the welded rivets

The site consists of a main quarry area of approximately 18 x 19m, which has a long quarry bench running away from it for roughly 130m. Along this quarry bench are a number of other quarry faces and minor drives, including in places obvious locations of drilling where explosives would have been inserted to blow the basalt apart. It was hoped that the plantings would encounter some subsurface artefacts that would give a better indication of the age of the site. And to a certain extent it did, the pictured iron is old, with welded rivets. However, it is uncertain as to what it may have been, possibly the base of an iron box. Unfortunately, there were no makers marks or anything which could give a better understanding of its age. It is an artifact, however, that at least fits in with the presumed age of the site, it just doesn't give us the detail.

Membership

By Ka Meechan

Would you like to become a member?

If you are reading this newsletter you are interested in and curious about our work, thank you. Perhaps you've joined one of the monthly working bees or a corporate planting day; or you are thinking about one of the weekday working groups.

Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga is an incorporated society and registered charity run by volunteers. It relies on the commu-

nity for financial support as well as volunteer labour.

Your annual membership fee helps support our mahi on the awa throughout the year. We keep members informed of progress and forthcoming activities through this quarterly newsletter.

Individual membership \$10 until 31 March 2023 or \$20 until 31 March 2024

Family membership \$20 until 31 March 2023 or \$40 until 31 March 2024

We welcome new and returning memberships and appreciate additional donations. Donations over \$5 are tax deductible.

For more information including an enrolment form and bank account details follow this link: [Membership | Oakley Creek](#)

Seasonal gallery

The rewarewa is in flower now. Its distinctive red flowers are beloved of birds and bees.

Other sightings on the creek include pukatea, karo, kūmarahou and cabbage tree all magnificently in bloom.



Photo (above): Rewarewa flower, *Knightia excelsa*

From left to right: pukatea, *Laurelia novae-zelandiae*; karo, *Pittosporum crassifolium*; kūmarahou, *Pomaderris kūmaraho*; and cabbage tree, *Cordyline australis*.



Seasonal gallery - Fungi

We've included a second seasonal gallery in this edition to draw attention to the fascinating fungi visible at the moment. You'd need to be excep-

tionally vigilant to have noticed the Ruby Bonnet, as you can see from the last image, taken by John Stevenson.

From left to right: Fluted Birds Nest, Cyathus striatus; Hairy Curtain Crust, S tereum hirsutum; Ruby Bonnet, Mycena viscidocruenta.



Notices

Monthly Community Working Bees: As per normal, our monthly working bees are held on the first Sunday of each month. During the summer months – November-February time is 9.30am-11.30am, and for the rest of the year it's 10.00am-12.00noon.

Tuesday Working Bees: Tuesday mornings 9.30am to 12.00pm. This exciting project is well underway and is looking for some more regular

volunteers. For more information contact Sandra - 021 166 7647

Friday Working Bees: Friday mornings 9.00am to 12.00pm. We work in different locations on Friday mornings, depending on the need at the time. If you're interested let us know and we'll include you in the Friday email list so that you can join us when you are free.

Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga

Chairperson:

David Bowden

Treasurer:

Matt Hill

Secretary:

Marin Adams

Committee:

Wendy John, Adrienne Stanton, John Stevenson, Cate Ryan, Chris Brown, Gina Hefferan

Newsletter Editor: Gina Hefferan



Newsletter Photos: Unless otherwise credited, all photos are by Wendy John

Newsletter contributions and comments are welcome – email info@oakleycreek.org.nz

We welcome more members (\$10.00) and/or donations towards the work we are doing to protect and restore our wonderful urban 'taonga' – Oakley Creek Te Auaunga. Donations over \$5.00 are tax deductible.

Contributions can be made directly; our bank account number is 38-9003-0978224-00.

You can also find us at <http://oakleycreek.org.nz/> and <https://www.facebook.com/OakleyCreek>

We gratefully acknowledge the support of Foundation North, The Trusts Community Foundation, Auckland Council, Albert-Eden, Pukatea and Whau Local Boards and the Community Organization Grants Scheme (COGS).

