



Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga

WINTER 2021

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Fungi (p4)
- Ferns (p5)
- Kererū (p7)
- The pleasure of living by Te Auaunga (p8)
- Tamariki (p9)

Editorial

Matariki has made an appearance and we are nearly through the worst of winter. The awa is about to burst into life again with spring just around the corner. We've been very busy with our community planting days - making use of the winter/ matariki planting season.

In this issue we have some in depth articles about fungi of note and ferns around the creek. There are stories about monitoring work, including rodents, and a

spotlight on kererū seen during the Garden Bird Survey .

There are lovely stories about volunteer planting and weeding days, including thoughts from our tamariki.

We have a piece on the perspectives from a recent awa returnee, and from the artists who made some feature pieces about Te Auaunga for a recent exhibition.

If you fancy helping to build our new nursery, skip to the notices — we need you!

Finally, thanks to the knitters for adding their beanie walking adventure to our world, and gifting some beanies for our volunteers.

There's always something happening at the creek :-)

Enjoy!

Cate Ryan - Editor

Community string knitting adventures

... takes knitting and knitters to unexpected places for the love of our craft for what it can create, but also as a binding thread between knitters and those we knit for. The Beanie Walk was one of several active knitter events supported by



Photo: beanies for FOOC!

Albert Eden Local Board community events fund, and as part of the Urban Walking Festival. In early May we took 12 beanie wearing knitters

and supporters along Te Auaunga / Oakley Creek walkway. The path was new to most walkers, who had no idea it was there, nor its restored beauty. This led to conversations about conservation, archaeological history, birdlife and the value of natural spaces in the city. The native bush and stream also provided inspiration for the colour, patterning and texture for future knitting projects.

One of the walkers is a Chinese opera singer and spontaneously sang *Pokarekare Ana* in the amphitheatre by the waterfall. It echoed around us and drew all participants into

the environment and added another layer to the morning.

These beanies are from our hands, to your (FOOC) heads, with a little bit of love in every stitch They are a small tangible way of making visible our appreciation of your many hours of hard work. Thank you. Sue

Photo (below): The Community String Knitting Adventurers



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Community participation

By Wendy John, Project manager

Winter is the time for tree planting. Since the start of the season, with the support of our local community and a range of groups / organisations / schools etc., we have put over 2700 plants in the ground, and mulched many of them. Participants have included:

- A Rocha
- Powell Street Sustainable Neighbourhood
- Cradock Street community
- Oakley Loop Group
- Conservation Volunteers
- Collectively Kids (see separate article)
- Reach Local
- Stantec
- St Peters College
- Cityside Baptist Church (see separate article)
- St Kentigern College

There's more to planting and ensuring the trees have optimum growing conditions, than just digging holes in the ground ...

While all of the people who come to help put plants in the ground are invaluable, so, too, are the people who work behind the scenes. This includes our nursery team, our Friday volunteers, and a range of other people / organisations who do the site preparation, grow and deliver most of our

plants, provide mulch, remove dead / fallen trees that are in the way. To name a few, they include Te Ngahere, AIM Services, TreeTops and Treescape. And, of course, Auckland Council and our local boards – Albert Eden, Whau and Puketapapa.

Friday working bees

Our regular, Friday Working Bee teams are invaluable for getting all sorts of tasks done on the awa. These include mulching, general tidying up of areas for community plantings, and plant layout, crown-lifting and thinning of some of the smaller weed trees, plant releasing, rubbish removal and the never-ending weed control. A special thanks to these wonderful people who are prepared to take on almost any task and challenge that is set before them.



Photo (above): Friday working bee team

Plant nursery on the move

By Wendy John, Project manager

We have been fortunate to have had the use of nursery facilities on Unitec and, now, WDHB land, since 2005, to be able to propagate some of our own plants. However, with recent changes to the land ownership and plans to develop the site we will soon be 'on the move'. The good news is that we have been invited to re-establish our nursery on some vacant land at Waterview Primary School – thanks to the school and the Albert Eden Local Board for supporting us in this. There is lots to be done to set the new nursery up but, in the meantime, we still need to be collecting and propagating seeds for next year's plantings. Watch this space!



Photo (above): Bev, Lynda, Gina and Sarah working at the nursery

“... thanks for the work you guys do to keep this beautiful place even more beautiful.”
- from Abtin, 'CleanWalk', a group that recently did a rubbish clean up on the tidal reach of Te Auaunga.

Do we have native bats on the creek?

By Wendy John, Project manager

On a recent visit to the creek, a group of Pt Chevalier Girl Guides think they saw a bat at the waterfall. As reported in a previous newsletter, we did some monitoring, without success. However, that was only one snapshot in time. So, Paul Whitfield, from Manawa Taiaio / Urban Ark, installed a bat monitoring device, overnight. We are awaiting the results. Watch this space!

Image (right - centre): A NZ long-tailed bat (*pekapeka tou roa*; *Chalinolobus tuberculatus*). We know these bats occur in the Waitākere Ranges and as close as Henderson, but we're not sure about Auckland's inner west ([Urban Ark, Manawa Taiaio](#)).

Image (right): Bat detector ([Urban Ark, Manawa Taiaio](#)).



Water monitoring

June / July saw our volunteers undertaking their quarterly water monitoring on the creek. Friends of Oakley Creek also helped to run a training session for a group of Conservation Volunteers Community Works Skills folk, and an AUT Environmental Studies class.

Photo (right) - AUT students and lecturer Dr Dan Breen sample the creek for invertebrates



Predator control

As well as our Rodent Baiting Programme (page 5), there's a lot more happening on the creek to keep the animal pests at bay. Recently David Bowden trained a new group of volunteers to help with trapping etc. Welcome them to our team Chris, Megan, Miriam, Felicity and Gary.

Photo (right) - David Bowden training new trapping volunteers



Featuring fungi ...

By Adrienne Stanton, Committee Member

This year's speaker at our Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auauanga AGM was Dr Eric McKenzie, Mycology Research Associate at Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research. He spoke about his research career and gave a general introduction to fungi – the good, the bad and the ugly. The audience was fascinated and had many questions, including about the currently infamous kauri dieback and myrtle rust.

Did you know that we have our own national collection of fungi? [The New Zealand Fungarium Te Kohinga Hekaheka o Aotearoa \(PDD\)](#) is a treasure chest of dried fungal specimens. It is used to discover and describe our native species, detect how they fit into the global scene and answer questions about plant diseases, biosecurity and trade issues. There are specimens collected from Madagascar to Mongolia, Tonga to Turkey, from snowbanks to sand dunes, bush to bathrooms, pasture to peatland, from caterpillar carcasses to dingo dung, tur-nips to tōtara. There are also specimens collected from Oakley Creek! Eric was Curator of PDD for many years and was able to describe some of these collections.

Most of the Oakley Creek collections were plant diseases on weeds and garden plants collected from Phyllis Reserve by C.F. (Frank) Hill from Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries more than a decade ago. Two of these collections, PDD 78702 and PDD 82021 - both of the leaf spot *Pseudocercospora nogalesii* on tree lucerne - are 'world famous'. They feature in a scientific paper [New cercosporoid leaf spot diseases from New Zealand](#) and specimen splits were deposited in nine other collections around the globe.



Photos (left): *Pseudocercospora nogalesii* (J.A. Cooper, Landcare Research. CC By)

Much more recently, PDD 111072 *Pholiota subflammans* was noted as abundant on damp clay and rotting logs protruding from the Walkway stream bank and collected by P.J. (Peter) de Lange, UNITEC in 2017.



Photo (above): *Pholiota subflammans*. Credit - Peter de Lange: inaturalist.nz/observations/6198241

If you find this interesting and have a few hours to spare (after you have helped at Oakley Creek!) [the New Zealand Fungarium \(PDD\)](#) staff are also looking for volunteers to help out. It is located at Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research in [St Johns](#), next to the old University of Auckland Tamaki Campus. If you think you might be interested and would be available to assist for half a day to a whole day each week or fortnight, please email pdd@landcareresearch.co.nz for more information

“... Did you know that we have our own national collection of fungi?”

Creek ‘fernature’

By Chris Brown, Committee Member

Off the shared pathway, into the bush, along the creek

Awaiting me, an array of ferns,

From tiny and delicate to the tall and towering.

This series of occasional articles is an amateur lover of nature making himself familiar with the ferny world of the forest. The trees provide the structure and shade, and the ferns grow on the walls and floor of the forest; decorative and beautiful.

Ferns are an ancient group of plants (over 3 million years old); reproducing not by flowers and fruit or seeds, but by spores. Spores are easily spotted, when in season, as dark powdery spots on the underside of the fronds. They are contained in a casing, called sporangia, and grouped into bunches, called sori (diagram and photo right).

Our first fern is unusual to look at. It is named kowaowao or paraharaha, or Hounds tongue fern (*Zealandia pustulata*). It has glossy broad tropical looking fronds that vary greatly in shape and size. They emerge from a pale green rhizome, the thickness of your little finger. *Zealandia pustulata* attaches to and clammers over rocks and tree trunks. When young, these fronds are an eye catching pale translucent green



Photo (above) - young fronds of kōwaowao (Chris Brown)

Not far from where I first spied *Zealandia pustulata*, I found a grove of very different ferns. Most, for some reason, had twin trunks emerging from a single stump. Their name, ponga, or silver fern (*Cyathea dealbata*). With their dark textured trunks, silvery stipe (frond stem) and generous umbrella of fronds up to three metres long and one metre wide, that are also silver on the underside. These could not be more different from our first fern acquaintance.

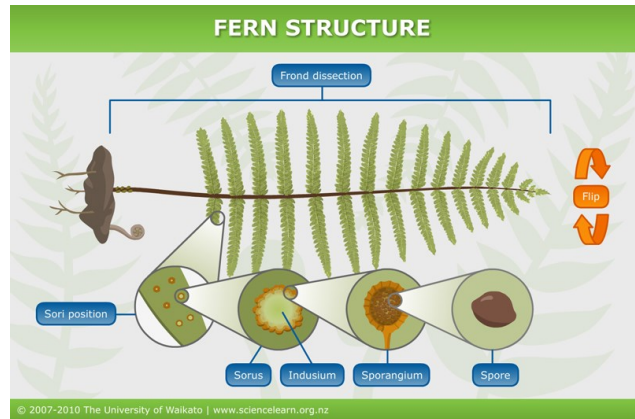


Image (above) - the reproductive structures of ferns, showing spores encased within sporangium, within sori. Each species has a specific pattern of sori ([Science Learn, University of Waikato](http://www.sciencelearn.org.nz)).



Photo (left) - the underside of a silver fern, the sori form neat rows of opposite sori ([NZPCN.org.nz](http://www.nzpcn.org.nz))



Photo (left) - the silvery stipes of ponga/ silver fern., can be found in fern groves on the awa.

Next time I will be writing about the wonderfully named *Doodia australis*, or rasp fern, which I think I have spotted growing near the waterfall.

Rodent control on the creek

By John Stevenson, Committee Member

To keep the rodent numbers down on the creek we undertake rodent baiting four times a year, alongside our regular trapping activities. Our baiting programme is designed to ensure maximum control of the rodents, with minimum use of bait.

The May – June baiting round, this year, has seen a greater amount of bait taken compared to the same period last year. This year the May - June take was 10,094 grams, compared to the average for the previous four years of 6,808 grams taken, i.e. this year is almost 50% above the average.

| | East | West | Total |
|--------------|------|------|--------------|
| May-Jun 2017 | 2354 | 3794 | 6148 |
| May-Jun 2018 | 3248 | 2604 | 5852 |
| May-Jun 2019 | 3388 | 3654 | 7042 |
| May-Jun 2020 | 3332 | 4858 | 8190 |
| May-Jun 2021 | 4956 | 5138 | 10094 |

The take is generally greater on the west side of the creek, even though there are fewer bait stations on the west (24 on west c.f. 27 on the east).

The bait take is generally higher at the late summer (February – March) baiting round, when the average for the previous four years is 10,136 grams.

Table 1 (above): Comparison of the amount of bait taken (grams) per baiting round over the last five years, in different parts of the creek.

The greater bait consumption would tend to indicate high rat numbers, however, this did not show up on the tracking cards in April, with only one card showing rat footprints.

The mouse population, however does seem high with almost all the ink cards showing mice footprints – often almost covering the entire card.



Photo (above): Rodent baiting team extraordinaire - John, Marianne and Helen.

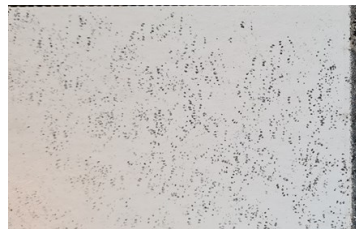
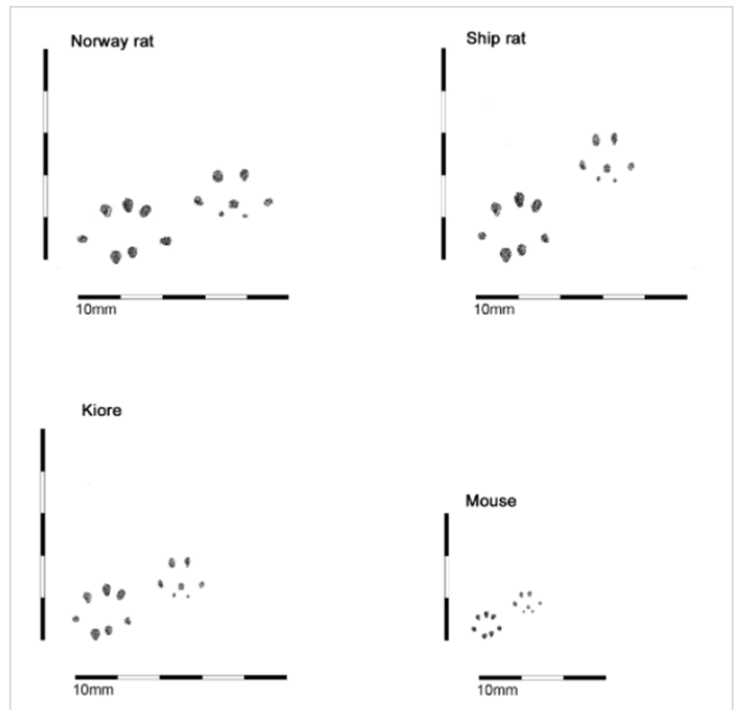


Photo (above): Tracking card with mice prints over entire card.

Image (right): How to tell the difference between rodent tracks using front and back paw prints (Pest_detective.org.nz)

If you are interested in joining our monitoring and pest control programme, contact Wendy info@oakleycreek.org.nz

PAWS AND FEET



Discovering the kererū

By Marin Adams, Committee Member

Birds do fight, which surprised me, as different species had always seemed amicable in our bird bath and would wait patiently for their turn. Whilst doing the Annual Garden Bird Survey, I watched a fight in a large puriri tree. There was not a lot of noise but plenty of movement. At first I thought the tui was dangerously ill. Its feathers were fluffed out in disarray and it was shaking all over. It then came close to the kererū and wrestled with beak, chest and wings. Each time the kererū would retreat to another branch. After a pause, the tui would then follow and wrestle again. After four or five “bouts”, the kererū flew away. I suspect they were fighting over the berries as there were very few left on the puriri.



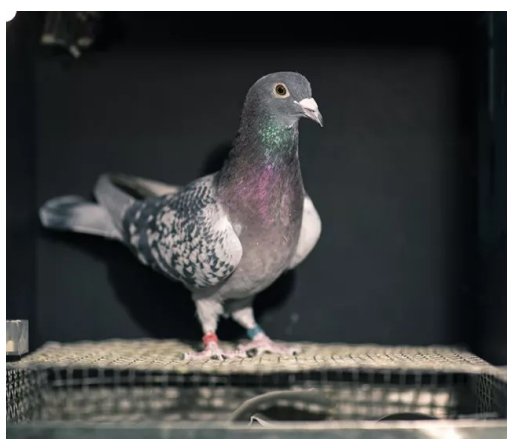
Another interesting thing I learned from observation is that kererū have a song. I was weeding by the creek at dusk and heard a soft kuu...kuu above me. I looked up into the trees and there was a kererū, all by itself, looking as though it had settled for the night. It was a beautiful, gentle sound.

When I first started working on the creek, about seven years ago, I knew little about native birds. I loved the kererū for its beauty but had no idea of its importance in the ecosystem.

Kererū are the only birds left (all others are now extinct), big enough to swallow the large fruits of native trees such as taraire, tawa and karaka. After dining on fruit, they fly to a favourite roost to digest their meal. When they eventually pass that meal, they leave behind a dropping containing a seed and its very own package of fertiliser. This helps seedlings establish in new areas, and keep forests rejuvenated. This role of propagator makes kererū a ‘keystone species’ of lowland forests ([Kererū Discovery](#)). It is so pleasing that kererū are being seen more often flying along Te Auaunga or perched in pigeonwood trees eating. I never used to see them but now they are regular visitors when the berries are ripe.

Another thing I noticed while working on the creek is that birds seem to be very timely. A kingfisher would appear in summer at 4pm each afternoon. It led me to check out whether birds could tell the time. And yes, I found pigeons can indeed perceive time – as well as space. “Birds are known to perform “exceptionally well” at certain tasks that in mammals are linked to cortex function, according to the study. And pigeons have proved time and again that they are capable of cognitive achievements typically associated with mammals’ more complex brains. Previous research has shown that pigeons can recognize human faces, solve statistical problems, and even distinguish between real English words and nonsensical gibberish ([Live Science](#)).

“Kererū are the only birds left (all others are now extinct), big enough to swallow the large fruits of native trees such as taraire, tawa and karaka.”



Brainy birds - new research shows that pigeons can discriminate the abstract concepts of space and time — and seem to use a region of the brain different from humans and primates to do so. ([LiveScience](#). Image credit: Kathryn Gamble)

The pleasure of living by Te Auaunga

By Jim Geekie

My eight year old son and I first moved in to the Mount Albert area in autumn 2001, and we took it upon ourselves to explore the local area. We were pleased to discover a creek, with a walkway and a waterfall, near our new place. At the time, I knew this only as Oakley Creek; I'm now trying to get into the habit of referring to it as Te Auaunga, in recognition of the rich history of the place that long predates European settlement.

Photos (below): Tauhou - silver eye, eastern rosella (nzbirdsonline) and tui (Danli Lan), spotted dove (nzbirdsonline)



Photo (above): Te Auaunga walkway (Danli Lan)

We became regular visitors to the creek. The path was a bit on the rough side in some areas, though always passable, even if this sometimes involved a bit of scrambling around some sections. When I wandered a little off the track near the Great North Road end of the creek, I was surprised to discover a little mound that seemed to consist predominantly of broken sea shells, despite being some distance from the sea. This was a shell midden, evidence of earlier Maori occupation.

I was always on the look-out for signs of bird life. I recall seeing and hearing tui on a regular basis as well as the occasional piwakawaka and tauhou. blackbirds, song thrushes, goldfinch, house sparrows and, of course, the ubiquitous mallards were also commonly spotted on our walks. Eastern rosellas made their presence known, though mostly I recall hearing them as they loudly and – so it sounded to me at least – irritably, flew off as we approached. The other sound I heard, much more rarely, was the ruru, calling after dusk. I would guess this was, at best, something I heard once or twice a year.

In February 2021 I returned to Auckland after nine years in the UK. My first morning back home, I headed out for a walk to Te Auaunga, familiar, despite the passage of time. I noticed some significant changes. I saw the new cycle path, and then followed the creek all the way up to Frost Road. In the Phyllis Reserve it was apparent to me that a lot of work had been done clearing, then replanting natives. I was rewarded almost immediately with a view of half a dozen or so eastern rosellas. They allowed me to watch them for a few minutes before they took off, seemingly in a rush to be elsewhere. I walked as far as the Mason Clinic, on the way, I'd spotted countless tauhou and tui and a number of friendly fantails. I also caught glimpse of a male pheasant, a couple of kotare (kingfisher) and quite a few spotted doves.

I've since been able to explore the creek further, on foot and by bicycle. I'm particularly fond of the new section of the pathway that now follows the creek on the western side of Great North Road out to Motu Manawa-Pollen Island marine reserve. There's something impressive about the juxtaposition of the natural beauty of the creek underneath the mammoth concrete roadways above. This area is also rich in birdlife: pukeko and white faced herons being abundant in the area, both of which seem quite unperturbed by the noise and busyness above.

One welcome difference I've noticed is the increased presence of ruru. I now hear them at least two or three times a week, often alongside the lighted cycle path (I wonder if they're drawn here because of the insects drawn to the lights?). I don't know if this reflects a genuine increase in numbers or if I've just become more attuned to listening out for them. I've yet to actually see one, though I live in hope that one of these evenings I'll be rewarded by a sighting, though if truth be told, the beauty of the creek is reward enough in itself.

Te Auaunga and our tamariki

Collated by Marin Adams - Committee Member

“After we planted the flax, we patted the soil down with our hands like this (demonstrates). Then we stomped with our feet.”

“But you have to take the plant out of the container first like this” demonstrating how to upend the pot and tap ... hard! (photo - right)

“Then you have to loosen all the roots.”

So said some four year olds, who attend Collectively Kids, and had been to Te Auaunga earlier in the week. It was clear that some serious learning had taken place. And there were not only practical skills learned, but also understandings.

“Birds need somewhere to live.”

“We saw ducks (two ..no three ..no four) and the water is their home. They need the water to be clean ‘cos it’s their home. Ducks love the creek.”

“We feel pouri (sad) when the water is dirty.”

And there was fun and physical skills:

“We climbed on the oak tree. It had fallen over.”

“When I think of the degradation of our environment and the challenges our tamariki will face seeing them so enthusiastic and engaged at Te Auaunga gives me hope for the future.” Marina, owner of Collectively Kids.



Photo (above): Tamariki scramble over oak tree logs

Mahi during Matariki

By Agnes Granada

Earth Action Trust, also known as Nuku Nuku A Papatuanuku, reminds us that Mother Earth is the source of everything. Agnes is the coordinator and has filed this description of the work of their team at Te Auaunga during Matariki.

Te Auaunga is the largest creek in urban Auckland. Whilst heavily modified, it has a number of important ecological features such as having the city’s only natural waterfall. The TeamUp 2 CleanUp team of Earth Action Trust was happy to contribute to the work of Friends of Oakley Creek, even in a small way. On 11 July 2021, the team picked up the litter on the adjacent footpath as well as the stream banks and bush edges. The surrounds of the creek, from a distance, look deceptively clean, thanks to well maintained shrubs and bushes. Yet lots of litter was found hiding in the bushes. The kaitiaki team of Earth Action Trust enjoyed the natural scenery of the creek while cleaning up, so much so that a volunteer of Samoan descent suggested to go back to also clean the water. Watch this space!



Photo (left): Earth Action Trust litter clean-up team, at Te Auaunga

A Rocha and cityside: working together

By Beulah Wood

Look at that bunch of children and parents with spades and buckets. They're above Te Auaunga (Oakley Creek), and it's a Saturday afternoon. The children are from Cityside Baptist Church and they're celebrating Matariki with some mid-winter tree planting.



Photo: Lily shows us how it's done



Photo: Saul and Joel get planting



All hands to the task - Dieneke with seedlings



Watch them working with such goodwill - clear a small patch, plunge the spade in hard to make a hole, pop in a little tree, fill some soil back, step around it firmly. It's good there are a few big people to help, and some manageable tasks for those of shorter stature. Let's talk to them.

Elijah (photo: left): 'Planting is good because you're helping the world against climate change. And it's more fun than sitting at home.'

Estelle (photo below left): 'I'm keen there should be enough trees. My grandparents live near Oakley Creek. We played beside it.'



They move on to the next tasks—a stake by each seedling to mark it, then guarding it against weeds with mulch around its base. Here are some more voices:

Dieneke: 'It's a great opportunity, learning as well as doing. We're working together like an old-style working bee, with the children pulling their weight too. It does need an enthusiast to lead the initiative with children.'

Saul: 'I enjoy tree-planting and normally do it once a year. It's good to get outside and join a group effort. We could come back in five years and say, "I planted that tree." Projects are exciting, often bringing areas back from neglect or damage. It's very satisfying.'

The children's full energy winds down a little as they trundle back and forth with buckets of mulch, but Wendy, who has guided many plantings, is still impressed. 'It's amazing, especially when I hear these young people talking about helping the environment. That keeps me going. We could get contractors, but they finish and go. No ownership. This is lots better for this place - land to enjoy and come back to.'

A Rocha organisers are satisfied too. This was a perfect way to mark a new year for a church's grouping of children and parents and gave lots of learning. They'd do it again.



Photo (above): A Rocha and Cityside happy faces after planting

The Cove

By Marin Adams, Committee Member

Not all volunteers are from the Te Auaunga catchment. Caroline comes from the foothills of the Waitakere Ranges but she shares with local volunteers a love of nature. So how did Caroline come to be propagating putaputaweta, parataniwha and many other natives, and planting them at the side of Oakley Creek?

“I once read an entrancing and lyrical article about Oakley Creek by Kennedy Warne in the NZ Geographic. I have a great passion for native plants. From the moment I read the article I wanted to work on Oakley Creek. Years later, quite by chance, I visited Marin, who lives in Avondale, and walked down to look at the small creek that ran at the bottom of her property. I couldn’t believe it when I found the stream was in fact The Oakley Creek. I have now realised my long-term dream and work, with Marin, to restore the streamside. In doing that I am restored.”

Once a fortnight the two of us go down to “the cove”. A small enclosed area of flat land at the base of a steep cliff near Powell Street, that was previously littered with rubbish and covered in weeds. Caroline and I are both in our seventies and being retired, can spend our days doing things we love. So we weed, plant, talk, water and mulch. We listen to tui, fantail and see the occasional kereru. We have the sound of the creek and all those things combine to give us a great sense of wellbeing. We end the day with a hot meal, grateful for the opportunity Te Auaunga gives us.

The cove feels like ours, though it’s not, of course. We have a strong commitment to keeping it healthy and in turn, the cove enriches us. We are excited about how well Caroline’s seedlings are growing and how the Cove is gradually starting to self heal with little trees and ferns emerging from the leaf mould. We feel energized and fulfilled.

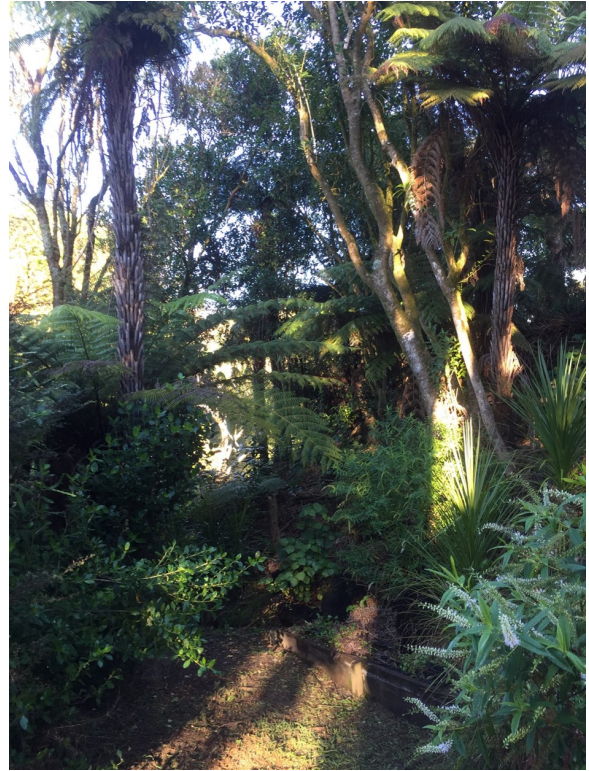


Photo (above): Entrance to ‘The Cove’



Photos above (L-R): Epiphyte planted in an old punga – *Astelia hastatum*; Caroline and Marin pausing from their planting; sedges planted on the floodplain, *Carex lambertiana*.

Te Auaunga - kinship korero

By Ngaio Balfour

This autumn, the artists Eleanor Cooper and Xin Cheng exhibited an exploration of two water bodies in Tamaki Makaurau, Te Auaunga and Pupuke Moana. Eleanor and Xin intertwine sound, speech, written reflection, and photography, leading us into a web of interspecies kinship. Below are excerpts from the exhibition which was held in the Te Tuhi Art Gallery. I have focused on the artists korero on the kinship of the puriri moth. Thank you, Eleanor and Xin, for your beautiful mahi!

On Fri, Dec 11, 2020 at 12:45 Xin Cheng wrote:

..... I still remember the moment when I saw a real peripatus for the first time near Arthur's Pass ... I felt a similar sense of wonder when we asked Wendy John about the puriri moths in Harbutt Reserve. She knew that patch of the bush like the back of her hands, and she was showing us one of its secrets. Do you remember that moment?

On Sat, 12 Dec 2020 at 10:49, Eleanor Cooper wrote:

That's right! We'd heard a rumour of the puriri moths in Te Auaunga/ Harbutt Reserve before that day from Nathan Brown-Haysom, a microbiology student. I remember him saying how the moths spend years as caterpillars living in burrows in puriri trees before emerging to live for just two days as moths. The amazing thing was that the caterpillars had actually protected some puriri trees by doing this - the trunks would become so laced with caterpillar burrows that during the logging of lowland forest around Tamaki Makaurau, these puriri trees were considered commercially worthless and often spared.

But yes, during that morning at the Friends of Oakley Creek planting day, we asked Wendy about the moths. It was as if she had a map in her head of the exact location of dozens of moth burrows in the forest, since she was able to immediately lead us over to the edge of the planted area ...

Unfortunately, even after several night time visits to the moth burrows I didn't manage to hear any nibbling sounds. Instead, I repeatedly experienced the vibrations of trains on the Western Line nearby traveling through the ground, up the trunks of the trees, along the wires of the contact microphone and into my ears. I remember laughing in the dark thinking that maybe the train was a kind of suburban caterpillar anyway. "



Photo: A puriri moth's home in a privet tree - well camouflaged (Xin Cheng)



Photo (above): "We are like reverse locusts" said one planting volunteer, "as we revegegtate a grassy area" (Xin Cheng)



Photo (above): Xin Cheng sorting bindweeds for the exhibition.



Kowhai (*Sophora microphylla*) begins to flower in late winter, early spring. Watch out for it beside Te Auaunga / Oakley Creek



Join in the fun with iNaturalist! When you find interesting plants, birds, fungi, insects or anything natural, log them on iNaturalist Te Auaunga and watch our knowledge grow! <https://inaturalist.nz/projects/oakley-creek-te-auaunga>

Seasonal gallery

Winter on the creek

Watch out for native trees beginning to flower in late winter / early spring including the spectacular kowhai. On iNaturalist we can see that a range of fungi are popping up all over, and if you look hard you'll find some of our smaller native fauna such as crab spiders and looper caterpillars.



Photos (left to right): [Earthstars](#) fungi, [fluted birds nest fungus](#), [chip cherries](#), an endemic [crab spider](#) and a [Looper caterpillar](#) on red mapou.



Winter flowers



You may have seen the flower spikes of kawakawa (*Piper excelsium*) popping up around the creek. The photo to the left, and below left, is of a female plant, since the flowers (hard to see, I know), are white. The male plant (see close up below, right) has black flowers that look like black specks ([Science Learn](#)).



Notices

Monthly Community Working Bees: First Sunday of each month. The next one is on Sunday 5th September, 10.00am to 12.00pm in Harbutt Reserve. Follow the flags to find where we are.



Friday working bees - Every Friday 9.00am to 12.00pm. If you're interested let us know and we'll include you in the Friday email list.

New Nursery - land has kindly been made available by Waterview Primary School. But **we need a Project Manager or Registered Builder** – preferably a volunteer, to manage the setting up of our new nursery. Do you know anyone with building industry experience who could manage the setting up of the nursery? The work will include drainage and fencing, water connection, laying paving, constructing a shade house and installing a storage shed. If you can help, please contact Wendy – 027 232 6454 or John – 0210 267 0062 or wendy.john@FriendsofOakleyCreek.onmicrosoft.com)

The Great Kererū Count - 17 to 26 September: Have fun and take part in this survey to help keep on top of what's happening with our beloved kererū, winner of bird of the year, 2018. [See here for more info.](#)

Membership - Friends of Oakley Creek needs your support. If you haven't already done so, please pay your subscription. It only costs \$10 per year. The number of subscribers can give funders an idea of the level of community support we have. So your subscription is more than just financial help. Plus, an additional donation towards the establishment of our new nursery would be very welcome. Our Kiwibank account number is 38 9003 0978224 00. Please put your full name in the Particulars column.

Thank you!

Snippet from history: Quarrying on the creek

By Wendy John, Project manager

Recently our resident archaeologist, Brent Druskovich, was checking an area for some extra planting on what is termed a quarry plateau, where some very early basalt quarrying was done in years past. We noticed some unusual markings in the rock and we consulted with a local geologist, Hugh Grenfell. His feedback was:

“This is certainly a drill hole into a lava flow (from Mt Albert), and likely used to place explosives. Sometimes multiple parallel holes were drilled and the rock split using metal spikes or wedges. Doesn't seem to be the case here though. The hole is too deep also probably. Interestingly there doesn't seem to be any shattering of the rock from a blast. May have been a very small charge or this hole wasn't used and simply opened up from another charge.”

More recently, I found a piece of basalt with a hole in it. Hugh's response to this was: “It certainly is a nice piece of fresh vesicular basalt with a drill hole!”



Photo (above): Basalt rock with drill hole in it

Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga

Chairperson:

David Bowden

Treasurer:

Sarah Woodfield

Secretary:

Marin Adams

Committee:

Wendy John, Adrienne Stanton, John Stevenson,
Cate Ryan, Ngaio Balfour, Chris Brown

Newsletter Editor: Cate Ryan

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/>

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



