



# Friends of Oakley Creek

Te Auaunga

December Update, 2011

Vol. 4, Issue 4

We wish you all the best for the festive season and the new year, 2012!

## An Oakley Creek expedition makes learning English fun ... by Helen Wadsworth

After 10 weeks of classroom based learning, we decided it was time to get outside! Only 3 of the 18 students in my Unitec English Language Class had been to Oakley Creek, despite it being right on our doorstep. It was the ideal place to go - easy, close, fun, beautiful and interesting. In preparation, with the help of Wendy from Friends of Oakley Creek, I showed my students pictures of the flora and fauna we were likely to encounter. We learnt the Maori names and listened to the bird calls on the Radio NZ website. They each took a worksheet with pictures of some plants to try and identify. Luckily, it was a beautiful sunny morning and after a 5 minute walk across campus, we were surrounded by the trees and the sounds of birdcalls and the waterfall, spilling down the rockface.

My students are new New Zealanders from 7 different countries, learning Elementary English. They loved the expedition, enjoyed the cheeky fantails and kept busy trying to find the plants on their worksheet. Of course, lots of photos were taken. Back in class, we talked about the experience and learnt some of the new words that had come up. Then, in pairs, the students wrote emails to their other teacher, telling her about their journey into the urban wilderness.



*Hi Sandra*

*How are you today? This morning we went for a walk to Oakley Creek and we saw a lot of New Zealand birds and plants and a beautiful waterfall. We enjoyed our trip because the day was sunny and hot. Suddenly we saw fantails and we heard the song and it was a very exciting moment. We hope you can visit Oakley Creek.*

*Thank you, Abdu and Eijiro*



**Need an inspiring gift idea?**

**Give a tree to plant on Oakley Creek**

**Just \$20 gives you:**

- a **native tree** to be planted at Oakley Creek Te Auaunga (choice of cabbage tree, manuka, pigeonwood or mahoe.)
- an **attractive commemorative card** with the details of your gift
- **2012 Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga Membership**

To order your tree(s), please send the following details to [info@oakleycreek.org.nz](mailto:info@oakleycreek.org.nz) or 4/65 Woodward Rd, Mt Albert, Auckland 1025:

- a) The number of trees you would like to give for Oakley Creek for yourself /as a gift (select one).
- b) The commemorative card(s) to be sent to you / the recipient by post / email (select choices).
- c) Your name, address and email together with the name, address and email of the recipient(s) (if applicable).
- d) Tree species choice(s) (can be selected by recipient at a later date), and
- e) Further donation? \$\_\_\_

Pay to 'Friends of Oakley Creek' - Kiwibank - A/c 38-9003-0978224-00 with emailed payment advice, or send a cheque to the address above.

## Dates for your diary

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December - 11.00 am - Waterfall Upgrade Opening Meet** at the Unitec students' carpark by the Walkway Entrance.

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December - 12.30pm Friends of Oakley Creek End of Year Picnic** - celebrate another successful year with a picnic lunch at Harbutt Reserve - details below. Please bring a plate of food to share.

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> February - 10.00am - Community Working Bee**  
Bring your family and friends and spread the word - details to come.

See [www.oakleycreek.org.nz](http://www.oakleycreek.org.nz) or contact Wendy John by emailing [info@oakleycreek.org.nz](mailto:info@oakleycreek.org.nz) or ph 815 3101 for more information about these activities.

## Do you like to print your newsletter?

If you would like to receive your *Friends of Oakley Creek Update* at a higher resolution (about 7 MB), for a better quality result, then please let us know at [info@oakleycreek.org.nz](mailto:info@oakleycreek.org.nz)



A blue lichen.

Photo: W. John

## Friends of Oakley Creek Membership

Thank you very much to those who have paid their 2011/12 subs.  
Hint, hint to those who haven't quite got around to it yet!

**Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga**  
**End-of-Year Gathering**  
Sunday 11th December 2011  
12.30noon - 3.30pm  
Harbutt Reserve  
End of Harbutt Ave, Mt Albert

We would like to say a big thank you to all of you who have contributed to the enhancement of Oakley Creek, and invite you to join us in celebrating the successes of this past year.

RSVP to Wendy - 815-3101 or [info@oakleycreek.org.nz](mailto:info@oakleycreek.org.nz)

## SH 20 Update

‡ With the hearings behind us and consent conditions in place for the project, Friends of Oakley Creek, as one of the key stakeholders, is now involved in the consultation process around the 'early works', which includes the realignment of parts of Oakley Creek in Alan Wood Reserve and lizard relocation.

‡ The NZ Transport Agency has created an animated 3D flyover video of the Waterview Connection. It provides a very good idea of how the new motorway will look, from Maoro Rd all the way to the Te Atatu interchange. The flyover video can be viewed at <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/completing-wrr/video-2010.html>

## Election time

If you are having withdrawal symptoms after the excitement of the general election, take a guess which bird has won the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society's annual Bird of the Year vote for 2011. Here's a hint - the winner can often be seen at Oakley Creek! Go to [www.birdoftheyear.org.nz](http://www.birdoftheyear.org.nz) or check the answer at the end of the newsletter.

## ... and speaking of Forest and Bird,

Ann Fenn, Auckland Forest and Bird, has very kindly been putting some of our information on their facebook pages. The link to our website is also published in their newsletter and our activities promoted to their members by email. Thank you very much!

Forest and Bird's Auckland website is <http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/branches/central-auckland>

## Oakley Creek Te Auaunga - talking the walk

Diana Clement wrote an interesting recount of her walk along the length of Oakley Creek for the NZ Herald in October. She described the route, landmarks along the way and memories from her childhood. For example, as a child, Diana always knew Hendon Reserve as 'the horse paddocks'. The walk from Hillsborough to Waterview took three hours - although it is unclear whether this time included the coffee stop at Cosset! As Diana had contacted Wendy a while back to discuss her plan, it was great to see her venture make it into print. You can read it at [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=6&objectid=10759454](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?c_id=6&objectid=10759454)

*Kotukutuku, the New Zealand tree fuchsia, Fuchsia excorticata, is the largest fuchsia in the world. The flowers are initially green and purple, then become pinkish-red as they mature. Kotukutuku has a sweet edible berry, the konini. When it grows in cold places, it is deciduous - which is unusual in the New Zealand flora.*

Photo: W. John



## Waterfall - it's looking good!

The Oakley Creek waterfall area has recently undergone a major 'upgrade'. Often quoted as the 'jewel on the crown' of Oakley Creek, the years of wear and tear have meant that the area has seen better days. Friends of Oakley Creek submitted a proposal to upgrade and enhance the area to the Council back in 2008. It was subsequently approved and given some funding by the then Avondale and Eden / Albert Community Boards to set the project in motion. More recently, the new Albert Eden Local Board granted top-up funding to see the project through to completion.

The area has had a major 'make-over' including a new viewing platform, a low-mobility path down to the space at the bottom of the waterfall, a new park bench and an extensive area of native planting - to further enhance the area.

The project has been managed by Council in close consultation with Friends of Oakley Creek and Margi Watson from the Albert Eden Local Board. We would like to express our appreciation to all of the parties who have assisted in bringing our vision to fruition.

*Right: Lower area - before and after - the park bench and new rubbish bin still need to go in, and the tape around the grassed area will be removed after the grass has settled in a bit.*

*Below: Viewing Platform - before, in process and after.*

*Photos: W. John*



## Monitoring and Pest Control Update



There has been much happening - rodent baiting, rodent monitoring, and regular, weekly possum and mustelid trapping. Alicia Warren held a workshop for the monitoring volunteers so they could learn about identifying the footprints that are recorded on the tracking cards. Thank you to all of the volunteers who have helped out over the year.

*Left: Jagjeeta Kaur, rodent monitoring; centre: Rowena Gilchrist and Phil, rodent baiting; and right: this tracking card has footprints left by a lizard on the bottom left corner - the line is where the lizard has dragged its tail.*

## Want to improve your world? Take a look at [www.change.org](http://www.change.org)

Radio New Zealand recently interviewed Nick Allardice, Deputy Global Campaigns Director for Change.org, which is a platform for people-powered campaigns for social change. The website hosts online petitions, providing best practice guidelines and examples and analysis of successful campaigns. Their mission is "to build an international network of people empowered to fight for what's right locally, nationally, and globally".



Tradescantia



Asparagus fern



### Sun, rain ... weeds!

Please help to keep these 'nasties' out of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga and out of your garden - to prevent their further spread. If you see any of these weeds when you are visiting the stream, take a moment to pull them out - every little bit of weeding will help.

Photos: Moth plant seed, W. John; others, A. Stanton



Morning glory



Bindweed, 'convulvulus'



Woolly nightshade



Moth plant



## Te Auaunga hikoi

In mid-October, Matua Abe Rangi, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi, led a group of Unitec Landscape Architecture students and their lecturer, Leslie Haines, on a hikoi around Oakley Creek to talk about Māori perspectives on the land. The hikoi started above the Unitec Residence bridge, where there is a sign commemorating the landing site of Te Mataatua waka. Matua Abe related the story. The Mataatua, having travelled from Hawaiki with the other tribes, visited the Waitemata in about 950 AD, before leaving to explore to the south and settle in Whakatane. Puhi, the canoe chief's younger brother, is said to have resented being told to live on the low ground at Whakatane to guard the harbour and waka. So he and his niece, Wairaka, travelled north again, returning to Te Auaunga to replenish their food supplies. Wairaka was thirsty and stamped her foot, causing a spring, Te Wai Unuroa A Wairaka, to appear - this is the source of the Wairaka Stream which flows through Unitec into Oakley Creek Te Auaunga. Wairaka stayed in the area and Puhi journeyed on, further north.



Photo: W. John

Matua Abe, a Mataatua descendent, set the scene. He described how visits by Māori to Te Auaunga would have been seasonal - timed for the Matariki harvest. Pou (posts) would have been erected on the beach to proclaim the group's presence and their claim to the harvest, from the surrounding bush and shore. Waka would have been dragged upstream to be hidden in the bush.

Walking on downstream, Matua Abe described the traditional uses of some of the plants and animals found along the creek. Detailed knowledge was required. Kawakawa leaves were collected for medicine when they were most full of holes - that is, when the insects were voraciously eating the plant. Birds were only killed when they were fat. Nikau palm hearts were harvested to eat, but this practice kills the nikau palm, so it should only be done today in a Man Vs Wild survival situation - nikau grow slowly and are not as abundant as in early times. But cabbage trees can resprout - in fact, such harvesting of their edible shoots and roots will eventually create rings of trees, which can still be seen while travelling through the country. The basalt rocks found along the creek would have been used as hangi stones as they do not crack open with the heat like river stones.

On entering the bush and at the end of the hikoi, time was taken to acknowledge and listen to the forest. A big thank you to Matua Abe for sharing his knowledge with the students and Friends of Oakley Creek Te Auaunga.

### What is this?



Puzzle solutions are at the end of the newsletter.

### Translation trouble?

The following words all mean one thing - what is it and can you match each to its language?

Bach	Croatian
Torrente	Dutch
Potok	Filipino
Kreek	German
Sapa	Indonesian
Vaitafe	Italian
Vung	Latin
Sungai kecil	Māori
Pūkaki	Samoaan
Vestibulum	Spanish
Cilfach	Swahili
Arroyo	Vietnamese
Mkondo	Welsh

### Has the sun fallen from the sky?!



'The creek - We know not where it came from, nor where it went ..... but it is always busy, talkative and 'full of surprises!'' Freya Matthews

Photo: W. John

### You are here



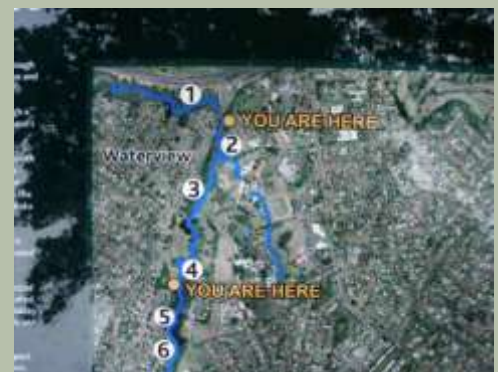
The sign says it twice, to make sure we get the message:

*You are here.*

*You are here.*

So be here, OK?

By Kennedy Warne



## Weed Watch

This section of the newsletter features details about weeds that threaten the native plants along Oakley Creek. You can help by tackling these at the stream and in your garden, if present. In this issue:

### *Allium triquetrum*, Amaryllidaceae - Onion weed, Three-cornered garlic, Angled onion



As its name suggests, onion weed is closely related to chives, spring onions, shallots, garlic, leeks and of course, onions. Onion weed is completely edible too - you may like to try some deep fried onion weed flowers! However, because Oakley Creek is an urban stream, draining polluted runoff from roads, and because many areas have been used as rubbish dumps in the past, it is probably inadvisable to eat onion weed from the creek banks.

Onion weed originates from the Mediterranean. A monocotyledon, onion weed has fleshy grass-like leaves (20 - 60 cm long) and three sided flower stems - hence the species name, *triquetrum*. The small white bell shaped flowers appear in spring. They are very similar to snowdrops, except for a small green stripe on the petals and, of course, their scent. Crushed onion weed plant parts smell like garlic and may cause tainted milk if eaten by cows. As well as producing viable black seeds, onion weed plants form small bulbs and then many bulbils, allowing underground vegetative spread. The Bay of Plenty Regional Council reports that in a single season onion weed clumps may quadruple in size.

Onion weed readily establishes in disturbed sites. While it does not smother our plantings at Oakley Creek like the various vine weeds, it does form dense monocultures which prevent natural regeneration by native plants. For this reason, our community working bees are targeting onion weed over the summer, in addition to those weeds that threaten the young planted natives.



Above: Bulbs and bulbil;

Right: Seed and flower stem

cross section. Photos: A. Stanton

**Control:** Bulbs should be pulled or dug out during damp soil conditions to minimise soil disturbance. The bulbs should be removed from the site or crushed and mulched. Note that some herbicides do not affect onion weed and applying these will result in the onion weed spreading further, replacing other plants that have been killed. Likewise, disturbing the soil by weeding out the bulbs may provide beneficial conditions for further spread, hence the need to weed when the soil is easily worked. In gardens, onion weed can be covered with dense mulch matting or black plastic, or regularly mown, but note that the bulbs will take several years before they are depleted and stop re-sprouting. Removing flower heads before the seed are produced is highly recommended.

## Mud, mud, glorious mud?



The water and 'sludge' in Cabbage Tree Swamp bog, along the lower part of the Oakley Creek Walkway, looked as though it may be polluted, leading to a call for it to be tested. Morphum Environment checked for phosphate (left) and the Auckland Council pollution hotline officer tested for nitrogen. The results were mixed.

There may have been a sewage overflow at some point, but a lot of what was there was organic.

The Auckland City Parks team (far left) has since been in and dug some channels to help drain the area.

Left: Taryn Pearce and Ron McDowell, Morphum,

Photos: W. John



## Wildlife encounters



*A female pheasant has a good view. Meanwhile, this male tries to join in the soccer at Metro.*

*Waxeye nest, lined with moth plant 'down'.*



*White tailed spider at the nursery; damselfly larvae, found below the waterfall; 'You have how many children?' Photos: W. John*

## Art flow

### New Pt Chev mural features Oakley Creek



*Photos: W. John*

The Pt Chevalier Community Centre has an exciting new mural for the carpark wall, which was facilitated by local artist, Zoe Nash. The community put forward ideas and images to be incorporated into the design. A considerable number of the pieces include Oakley Creek.

### Oakley Creek rock art



### Who Goes There?

Graffiti 'Casper / ghost buster' on a Water Flow Monitor box



*Toetoe flower unfolding; nikau, new growth*

*Photos: W. John*



A Local CVNZ Team worked at the Cradock St bridge site.



'Here it comes!'  
Te Ngahere workers passing plants across the creek.



Left: Collectively Kids planting group after a hard morning's planting and far left: Nola's second-to-last day request was a walk along Oakley Creek Nola is fourth from the right.



Left: Auckland Tree Council - Trees in the Environment Course - as part of their course, some of the participants came for a guided walk along Oakley Creek

Right: Heritage Festival Guided Walk



Taryn Pearce, Waicare, Katherine Reid, Morphem Environment and Jagjeeta Kaur - water monitoring.



Pete Pattinson, NIWA, checking water flow monitors pre-motorway construction.



Before, during and after the **October Community working bee** - what a difference many hands make! The volunteers did a great job of digging out heaps of onion weed as well as other weeds, then laying down the mulch, supplied by Auckland Council.



**November Community working bee**  
- at Phyllis Reserve bridge.

**Steep bank planting (right)** - Ian Elikei, Mark McKean, from **Envirotech**, and David Bowden, **Auckland Council**, after planting manuka to start to get some ground cover and shade on an esplanade reserve strip opposite Phyllis Reserve that had been sprayed for weeds. Not a site for volunteers!



Have a happy summer!

## Puzzle Solutions

### Election time

The 2011 Bird of the Year is the pukeko. Can you spy this one sitting on its nest? It was on the steep slope during the manuka planting described above.



### Translation Trouble?

These words all mean creek or river. The correct languages are:

Bach	German
Torrente	Italian
Potok	Croatian
Kreek	Dutch
Sapa	Filipino
Vaitafe	Samoan
Vung	Vietnamese
Sungai kecil	Indonesian
Pūkaki	Māori
Vestibulum	Latin
Cilfach	Welsh
Arroyo	Spanish
Mkondo	Swahili



## What is this?

It is *Cyperus ustulatus*, the native giant umbrella sedge, in seed. Sedges have solid triangular stems while grass stems are round and hollow



**ASB Community Trust**  
*Te Kaitiaki Patea o Tamaki o Tai Tokerau*  
supported by **ASB**



Ministry for the  
**Environment**  
*Manatū Mō Te Taiao*



**The Tindall Foundation**  
*Contributing to a stronger New Zealand*

We gratefully acknowledge the support of ASB Community Trust, Ministry for the Environment, WWF-New Zealand, The Tindall Foundation, Auckland Council, Community Organisation Grants Scheme (COGS) and The Lion Foundation.

## Next Newsletter

News, articles, contributions and comments for the next newsletter are welcome and can be sent to [info@oakleycreek.org.nz](mailto:info@oakleycreek.org.nz)

## New Members Welcome, Donations Too!

We would 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 into our bank account:

Friends of Oakley Creek - Kiwibank - A/c 38-9003-0978224-00

or cheques, made out to 'Friends of Oakley Creek', can be sent to: 4/65 Woodward Road, Mt Albert, Auckland 1025.



**Friends of Oakley Creek**  
Te Auaunga

Chairperson: Wendy John Treasurer: Jane Shand Secretary: Richard Nightingale

Committee: Heather Docherty, Ross Ihaka, Dorothy Maddock, Helen Mellsop, Alicia Warren.

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