

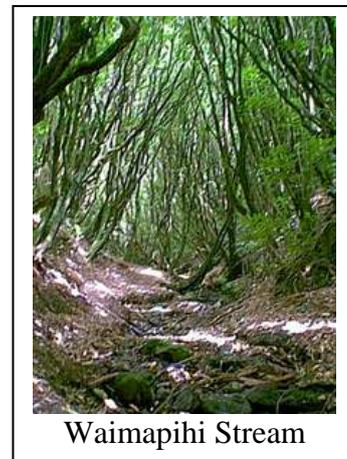


## The Woods are Lovely, Dark and Deep

Robert Frost's iambic pentameter poem is apt to a degree for another gutbusting Winter Classic:

*'Whose woods these are I think I know...'*

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep'*



Waimapihi Stream

Quite often as an organiser I would stop for a moment at a pretty spot but always I had too many things to do so I had to carry on. And the bush is definitely dark and deep and steep.

The map kept on surprising me as I was mapping it - it was a real Jekyll and Hyde map - in many places it is very grotty but every now and then it would relent and I would find a wonderful place.

Some of the memories:

- finding the colourful grotto called 'Spirit Hill' with wind chimes and ribbons in a memorial to various people and a 5 year old little girl called Samantha. Maybe we can add Wayne's spirit to this place as well.
- crawling through a jungle and then suddenly coming out into a lovely open gully with a couple of impressive cliffs.
- helping out an American couple - who were peeling from being sunburnt from an American desert the week before - they were planning on going up a stream - I said that it was complete fight that way and then showed them the walking track about 50m away.
- finding so many interesting man-made features – a car, fridges, old farm equipment which must have been over 100 years old, ruins, marijuana fenced enclosures – it's amazing how much rubbish mankind can make over 150 years and it's an embarrassing indictment on our 'clean-green'

image we portray to the rest of the world. Hopefully one day we will clean up our act.

- Listening to the regenerating native bush with tuis singing up large making a comeback and making our bush come alive again.
- Stunning vistas of Wellington and the harbour from the gun-emplacements
- crawling out of the undergrowth I must have seemed like a caveman or a stalker as I gave the fright of her life to a women jogger running up a track.

Comparing last year with this year is like Chalk and Cheese - last year was flat and fast and 100% running, this year was steep and green and mostly walking. Variety of life is what adds spice and builds character and this map had plenty of character.

The nature of the map and the greenness will inherently cause some unfairness - as some people end up fighting through bush while others nearby find a magical clear path - and judging by the comments many of you choose to go through the tough stuff on purpose just because it was straighter and possibly faster - good on you, Wayne would have been proud of you - but I did NOT intend for you to go through much green and tried to keep the courses going through the walk and fight to a bare minimum.

It's amazing that I got so many raves about the event which was essentially in steep green jungle albeit with some unique control sites, vistas and patches of glorious open native bush.

Thanks to Mick Finn for website and logo design, Alan Horn for helping out all day and general organisation before the event and to the Wellington club for providing help. And to all you who keep on coming back year after year and making it all worthwhile.

One or two maps blew away in the stiff Wellington breeze but we had a few spare so that no one was disadvantaged - the system of putting out maps for a relay on a fence or on poles is flawed and prone to problems like this - I'll think for the classic courses next year I'll ask everyone to bring along a pack and hand out the maps to everyone at the briefing (and ask them not to look at them before they start) - they can then use their pack to hold the maps and also snacks and water if they want.

And to sign off with some more quotes:

William Goldman (the Princess Bride): *'To the Pain!'*

This was one of the most painful maps I've ever been involved with and I'm sure for competitors it must have been up there on their all time 'most-hurtful' event list - I'm sure many of you shed plenty of blood.

Quite often while mapping and planning I fell over and several times I was battered and bruised heavily. And I will always remember this event for going through a whole week (the week before the event) of excruciating pain through toothache and a root canal. It was so bad that it was the first time at the dentist that I welcomed the drill - the only benefit was that I lost weight but I wouldn't wish it on anyone.

Calvin and Hobbes by Bill Watterson:

*'Calvin: My elbows are grass-stained, I've got sticks in my hair,  
I'm covered with bug bites and cuts and scratches.*

*I've got sand in my socks and leaves in my shirt.*

*My hands are sticky with sap, and my shoes are soaked,  
I'm hot, dirty, sweaty, itchy and tired.*

*Hobbes: I say consider this day seized!*

*Calvin: Tomorrow we'll seize the day and throttle it!*

Cheers,  
Bryan Teahan

**P.S.**

- click here for pictures of the event:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/Orienteering.Wellington/WinterClassics>

- click here for a video of the event:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7v1gJU3s1gM>

Some comments from competitors (from maptalk.co.nz and personal emails):

**Michael Wood:**

'Wayne would've loved it. Dunno what he would have thought about today's race clothing tho. In winter he just wore two singlets... '

**Pete Swanson (Winner Wayne Cretney M40):**

'That was one hell of a race - 7.3kms in 2 1/4 hrs!!! Finished covered in scratches, cuts, bruises, even gorse scratch to one eye, but loved every minute of it!

Absolutely brilliant, and huge thanks to Bryan and the team for putting this on - a worthwhile event, and keen to come back for more (should be recovered in 12 months time! :-)'

**Jamie Stewart:**

'yeah likewise! I was learned by Jason and Bill (never even got close to them) but enjoyed every minute of it...

Shows what can be achieved in a crappy wild terrain map, maybe the age of flat open orienteering is over and we will head back to the jungles...

Our course was over 10kms, around 1000m climb and ensured that I spent the afternoon completely broken...just like you should be after an orienteering race!

**Mick Finn:**

'Am mightily impressed with that map!! This event and area will become the standard for a southern hemisphere Blodslitet I reckon!'

'ditto on the map Jason! A real-inner city gem. Good news is that Bryan is keen to bring it back to Wello next year...or something very similar'

**onemanfanclub:**

'Wayne's spirit lives on in at least one of the younger course 1 runners. Overheard post race:

JBW: "...and then I went through this way, and..."

Bryan: "But I mapped that as fight!?!"

JBW: "Yes, it was."

**Jason Markham (Winner Open Men):**

'This Classic was certainly tough. I made several poor route-choice decisions up steep slopes, despite Bryan's warnings, and I paid for them mentally and physically.

What I liked most about this year's event was the city location. I got to explore an area I have rarely visited. I didn't have to drive for hours to take part and I can go back there to train whenever I like. The map is also accessible- it only took me 30 minutes to collect the dozen furthest controls - which is an advantage for event planning. And the event centre had parking and all the basic facilities of a sports venue. I agree the Wellington terrain is tough but we are fortunate to have several areas like this around the city.'

**Yvette Baker (Winner Open Women):**

Many thanks for all the hours you must've put in to organise it. It was great to visit an area of Wellington I haven't been to before, and great to get a map in my hand and 'race' again, albeit with more walking and bush bashing than a Brit is used to!

**Greg Thurlow (Winner Challenge):**

Great course, so much up and down... I tried (to get them all) but Not quite that good! Sorry I couldn't end up collecting controls, ended up working till midnight last night.

(Some comments from his route choice notes:)

- Completely missing 112 must have been the sight of Jamie that put me off...
- went out the bottom here deviating from plan the track was too tempting
- track went straight in, couldn't believe my luck
- totally stuffed this one – person with camera put me off

- from top, particular dodge vegetation bank that I nearly fell down
- turned wrong direction when got out on track – schoolboy mistake
- nearly took someone out on the track on the way there as was reading my map round a blind corner at speed
- saw Michael, someone actually saying hello
- after this crawled through the boxthorn, lovely
- was sorely tempted to light the after burners but was surprised how much the hurt was going on when I had done a lot of walking rather than running
- real dodgey down into creek was not that happy all by myself...
- off hammering along the track now, anything off track went off the plan now
- caught Ramesh, dropped Ramesh, caught Ramesh again
- and finished by climbing over the fence...oops

From 160 went pretty much like a dream, great feeling to actually string them together...doesn't happen to me very often on an o map.  
I reckon it was easier doing the Rogaine as I could get most controls off tracks rather than having to straight line it.....

**Nigel Corry (2nd Challenge):**

Great course too, many thanks for organising the three hour event - extremely enjoyable ferreting up and down all those bush clad streams and gullies!

**Glen Warner (3rd Challenge):**

Cheers, was a great course with some fantastic control placing's.  
I'm enjoying getting back into the Rogaine'ing after a couple of years off.

Great map  
Fantastic Controls  
Loved it

**Liz Nicholson( Involved in at least 20 Winter Classics – Winner W40 six times, winner Open Women, Winner Course 3 and 4, planner and organiser)**

Even though I took forever to finish the course, I still enjoyed it. The area is really great. You made a great job of the mapping.

(That's what I like to hear – you all had a great time, enjoyed it, despite the pain).

## History and Information about Aro Valley and Brooklyn Area

### Polhill Anti Aircraft Batteries

<http://capitaldefence.orconhosting.net.nz/remgon/wgtnrem.htm>



An Anti Aircraft Battery built for the Second World War.

-4 octagonal shaped emplacements with ammunition storage recesses and wings for magazines/ war shelters.

-A Command Post with control room, plant “shed”, observation post and war shelter/ready room.

-nearby a water tank built in the hill for the battery.

### George Denton Park - Highbury

[http://www.wotzon.com/profilepage.php?comp\\_id=1002718](http://www.wotzon.com/profilepage.php?comp_id=1002718)

At the top of Highbury Road is George Denton Park, a small green area and children’s’ play area, where you’ll also find one of the main entrances to the walkway that links Highbury with the Brooklyn Wind Turbine and beyond to Red Rocks on the south coast.

Highbury is largely surrounded by green hill tops and valleys and on its western boundary is the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary:

[http://www.wotzon.com/profilepage.html?comp\\_id=1002568](http://www.wotzon.com/profilepage.html?comp_id=1002568)

### Polhill Track

[www.tracks.org.nz](http://www.tracks.org.nz)

Just out the back of Te Aro, Polhill, like Mt Vic, is just minutes from the CBD.

Most of the trails are very short (less than 700m) with a few exceptions that are between 1-2 km (like Planet Ride, the Roller Coaster and Squatters). Polhill is not a fully continuous network of tracks but, if you plan ahead, your ride shouldn't be too disjointed.

Most of the Polhill trail network would suit riders with some experience (intermediate). There are easier links like Dogs, Planet Ride, Sawmill, Smash Palace or the Karori Sanctuary Fenceline (Wrights Hill).

There are access issues. WCC does not actually permit riding on Polhill because you will have to cross privately owned land at some point. Several of the land owners aren't happy chaps. Also, if you do choose to ride here quite a few single tracks can become overgrown and tree's that are felled may not be taken away.

The overall proximity of Polhill (10-15 mins) makes it a good candidate for a moonlit weeknight ride or a better place to spend your lunch hour than the office cafe.

There are lots of access points. You could start from:

- the steps that lead up to the Fenceline in Waiapu Rd (Karori Wildlife Sanctuary),
- Brosnahan Terrace in Mitchelltown,
- the back of George Denton Park in Highbury Rd,
- Ashton Fichett Drive in Brooklyn, or
- at the top of Mt Pleasant Rd.

Track type/distance summary

Single track: 7.85km

Total: 7.85km

## **Brooklyn**

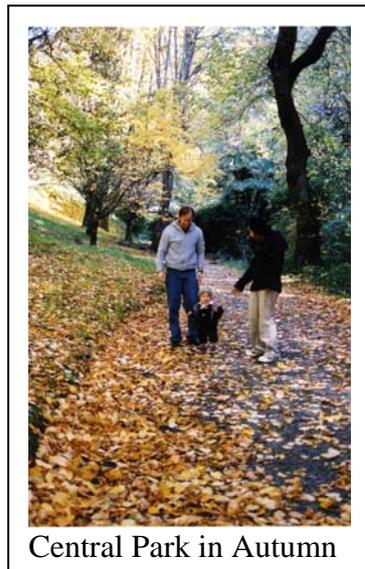
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,\\_New\\_Zealand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,_New_Zealand)

## **Parks and Town Belt**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,\\_New\\_Zealand#Parks\\_and\\_Town\\_Belt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,_New_Zealand#Parks_and_Town_Belt)

## **Central Park:**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,\\_New\\_Zealand#Central\\_Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,_New_Zealand#Central_Park)



Central Park in Autumn

Central Park (named after the area of the same name in New York separates Brooklyn from the city.

Established in 1913 on Town Belt land, the park features a set of wrought-iron gates at its main entrance: the then Mayor\_of\_Wellington, John Pearce Luke gifted them in 1920.

During World War II American forces established a military camp in the park between 1942 and 1944. In October 1942 building work started with an initial requirement to accommodate 416 men of the US Marine Corps. The partly built camp could accept some occupants by 22 November 1942, and by July 1943 it could accommodate 540 personnel.

## **Tanera Park**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,\\_New\\_Zealand#Tanera\\_Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,_New_Zealand#Tanera_Park)

Tanera Park lies to the north and north-west of Central Park on the opposite side of Ohiro Road. The park, sometimes wrongly called Ohiro Park due to its proximity to Ohiro Road, has a number of sports facilities, including soccer, cricket, and artificial surfaces as well as a block of changing-rooms.

In 1991 the Wellington City Council set aside some of the park as trial to help low-income families and community-organisations to grow their own vegetables. The gardens, currently (as of 2008) including 33 plots, have become known as the Tanera Community Gardens; the Mokai Kainga Trust manages them.

## **Polhill Gun Emplacements**



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,\\_New\\_Zealand#Pol\\_Hill\\_Gun\\_Emplacements](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,_New_Zealand#Pol_Hill_Gun_Emplacements)

The well-preserved Pol Hill anti-aircraft gun emplacements date from March 1942: built for the capital's defence in response to fears of Japanese air-raids or invasion. Once completed the battery had accommodation for 109 army personnel.

The battery stands slightly north of the Wind Turbine within the new Panorama Heights subdivision, on a site allocated as reserve land. The site backs on to the firebreak running around the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary.

## **Sugarloaf War memorial**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,\\_New\\_Zealand#War\\_memorial](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,_New_Zealand#War_memorial)

Brooklyn's World War I war-memorial overlooks northern Brooklyn from the top of Sugarloaf Hill. It lists the names of the 48 Brooklyn soldiers who died in that war.

Soon after the war ended in 1918 a movement to build a memorial began, with the funds raised in two years. The Brooklyn Returned Services Association (RSA) chose



as a monument a carved marble statue depicting a soldier with hat in hand, looking towards the harbour heads through which sailed the troopships bearing those who would not return. Colonel George Mitchell D.S.O. M.P. unveiled the memorial on 22 September 1922.

For around 16 years a board of trustees maintained the memorial, before passing it over to Wellington City Council. In 2003 a major nine-month restoration project took place, which involved re-securing the structure to the concrete pads that it stands on as well as cleaning, restoring plasterwork, removal of rust and replacing parts that had over the years gone missing.

The inscription on the elaborate pedestal reads:

The motherland called and they went and these men died for their country.

The names of the soldiers read as follows:

W.H. Archer J.E. Armstrong H.L. Birkett F.A. Brill H.T. Brewer  
R. Cochrane R. Crawford L.L. Davidson H.C. Doney W.C. Drummond  
C.I.M. Dryden B.H. Driver F.H. Dunner B.F. Elliott W.S. Evenden  
W.Mc. A. Calpraith C.P. Greeks R.S. Greeks C. Crindrod A. Hadley  
C.M. Herzoc J.J.C. Herzoc A.F. Hill J.L. Howie H.M. Jones  
D.M. Lawson J.R.R. Leys W.H. McKenzie C.E. Makeham J.C. Mill  
A.C.H. Millar A.J. Wilson R. Mollinson A. Moore K.R. Murray  
R. Newman W.C. Pickering C.H. Rose J.D. Rutherford J.D. Shaddick  
R.A. Sinclair Arthur Smith Alex Smith E.P. Smith J. Teaze  
J.B. Walter A. Watters F.S. Westwood

## **Buildings**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,\\_New\\_Zealand#Buildings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,_New_Zealand#Buildings)

Architectural styles

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,\\_New\\_Zealand#Architectural\\_styles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,_New_Zealand#Architectural_styles)

Brooklyn features a number of different styles of buildings, although very few of the older cottage style remain. One of the oldest recorded in the general area stands in Nairn Street in the neighbouring suburb of Mount Cook. It dates from 1858, and hosts The Colonial Cottage Museum. Brooklyn itself contains examples of many building styles including:

Villa (Simple villas) - from c. 1895  
Bay villa - from c. 1910  
California bungalow - from c. 1920  
State House - between 1930 and 1940  
Bungalow - from c. 1960

Villa (Simple villas)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,\\_New\\_Zealand#Villa\\_.28Simple\\_villas.29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,_New_Zealand#Villa_.28Simple_villas.29)

The Simple Villa, a style of home built from around 1895, often appears in the form of structures larger than the cottages and Victorian style properties built prior to this time. They generally consisted of a hallway with two rooms off each side and an indoor bathroom at the end. Often a "lean-to" attached to the back of the house would allow for a storage area that might include a wash-house. With the design of the property having the chimney within the house (as opposed to attached to an exterior side wall) fireplaces in the sitting room and kitchen could both use the same chimney — a configuration known as "back-to-back". Brooklynites built these homes from timber — with most of the period features (including architraves, skirting-boards, doors and windows) purchasable as standard items from timber merchants.

Buildings of special interest

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,\\_New\\_Zealand#Buildings\\_of\\_special\\_interest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,_New_Zealand#Buildings_of_special_interest)

The Sutch House, designed by Ernst Plischke and built between 1953 and 1956, stands on Todman Street). The house shows influences of the Austrian Neues Bauen (New Construction) movement to which Plischke had belonged in the 1930s. Wellington architect Alistair Luke restored the Sutch House during 2003. It later received the New[clarification needed] from the one that was owned and lived in by Ernst Plischke. In its day it ranked as one of New Zealand's most radical house designs. It remains one of the country's most iconic residences with its modernist design and has won a New Zealand Institute of Architects Resene Award for Enduring Architecture.

Tower Studio (located on Karepa Street), a purpose-built five-level Tuscan tower, takes its inspiration from the towers of San Gimignano in Tuscany. It overlooks the native bush reserve in Brooklyn with an open belvedere offering 360° views.

## **History**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,\\_New\\_Zealand#History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,_New_Zealand#History)

Pre-European

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,\\_New\\_Zealand#Pre-European](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,_New_Zealand#Pre-European)

In pre-European times Maori knew the Brooklyn hills as Turanga-rere, translated as "the waving plumes of a war-party". One interpretation[citation needed] suggests this may refer to "all trees on the hills waving in the wind like hair adornments on warriors dancing the haka".[citation needed]

Brooklyn and the wider Wellington region then and now[update] hosted a number of iwi, or tribes, all represented through a Charter of Understanding with Wellington Regional Council signed in July 2000:

Te Ati Awa  
Muaupoko  
Rangitane o Wairarapa  
Ngati Raukawa  
Ngati Toa (Ngati Toarangatira)  
Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai

European settlement

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,\\_New\\_Zealand#European\\_settlement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn,_New_Zealand#European_settlement)

European settlement began in the area during the 1840s. In January 1842 the ship The London commanded by Captain Attwood set sail for its second voyage to Wellington from Gravesend in Kent. It carried 700 tons of cargo, 137 adults and 39 children. On 1 May 1842 the ship arrived in Wellington, with John and Louise Fitchett and their seven children amongst the passengers.

The young colony established a district of Ohiro (Owhiro) in the early 1840s from the land surrounding Port Nicholson (officially renamed Wellington Harbour in 1980). Settlers could access the new district only via the steep Ohiro Road from present-day Aro Street. The land became subdivided into many blocks. In 1852 John Fitchett purchased a number of these blocks and established a dairy farm called Ohiro Farm, known also as Fitchett's Farm. A township named Fitchett Town formed in the 1860s; it gained its new name "Brooklyn" in 1888 when the then land-owners, Aston B. Fitchett (son of John Fitchett d.1875) and R.B. Todman, offered the main subdivision for sale. The offer included 208 lots of Fitchett's Farm next to Brooklyn.

In 1899, after the sale, a further subdivision took place, and the main roads of Mitchell and Todman Streets took form. These were then intersected with Reuben, Bruce, Laura and Charlotte Avenues, Tanera Crescent, Apuka Street and Sugar Loaf Road (the site of the War Memorial). In 1902 Brooklyn was extended further up the Brooklyn Hills when Ashton B. Fitchett sold additional lots of land. Both Karepa and Apuka Streets were extended onto this newly available land.

As Brooklyn became more popular, Wellingtonians proposed a tramway. As the existing route to Brooklyn via Aro Street and Ohiro Road had excessively steep gradients, an easier tramway route was cut through the town belt by Central Park. Opened in 1906, this route later became today's Brooklyn Road. The tramway closed in 1957, and the City - Brooklyn route is now served by numbers 7 and 8 buses. The number 7 (City - Brooklyn - Kingston) route is electrified as part of the Wellington City trolley bus service.

Brooklyn takes its name from the borough in New York City, which in turn recalls the Dutch city Breukelen. When a syndicate led by J.F.E. Wright (a Wellington Provincial Councillor between 1861 and 1863, and then for Karori and Makara

between 1873 and 1876) subdivided Brooklyn, it named a number of its streets after former US Presidents

### **Waimapihi Reserve**

<http://wellingtonbotsoc.wellington.net.nz/tripreports/2007/Waimapihi.html>

This 70-ha reserve is situated adjacent to the historic central city suburb of Aro Valley in a steep upper catchment area previously depleted by heavy livestock grazing. A group of eleven members compiled a list of 94 vascular species, many of which would not exist without the community restoration work of the past 25 years.

Although small, canopy species such as tawa, titoki, rewarewa and nikau are now well established. There were some unexpected "finds" that have established such as the crepe fern, *Leptopteris hymenophylloides*, and *Sophora tetraptera*. The latter is one of many commemorative plants in the reserve.

### **A Vanished Stream**

[http://homepages.paradise.net.nz/tombeard/vicino/history\\_tearo\\_waimapihi.html](http://homepages.paradise.net.nz/tombeard/vicino/history_tearo_waimapihi.html)

On thing that has always struck me about Wellington is the absence of rivers, especially compared to Christchurch where the Avon is the focus of the city. I read on a plaque at Te Aro park that a stream once flowed through here, and I was intrigued to find what traces remained after 160 years of earthquakes, reclamation and urbanisation.

The Course: I'm not sure of the exact course of the Waimapihi stream, but by reading plaques, books, the council's Te Aro Heritage Trail and some early maps, it's possible to piece together a rough idea. The stream still rises in the southwest, among the hills that separate Brooklyn from Karori. From there, it flowed down the Holloway Valley and Aro Valley before snaking out across the formerly waterlogged Te Aro flat. In the 1860's, it passed through the intersection of Ghuznee St and Cuba Mall, beneath a footbridge that was christened, not without some irony, "London Bridge". Finally it reached the Te Aro beach at about the point where the Plaza International and James Smith carpark now stand.

The Remnants: Nothing remains of the Waimapihi Stream anywhere in the Te Aro flat, nor through the developed part of the Aro Valley. The stream disappears underground at the head of Holloway Rd, joining the anonymous flow of storm water through concrete pipes to the harbour. But if one ventures up the Aro Valley to the Waimapihi Reserve, it's possible to walk beside the headwaters of the stream, and imagine it as it would have been in pre-European times.

The stream and its surroundings are not entirely untouched by humans. But some of the human activity here has left signs that are perhaps eerier and more intriguing than the works of nature.

### **Waimapihi Reserve**

As one leaves behind the wooden cottages and shacks of Holloway Rd, passing the wooden pallisades at the entrance to the Waimapihi Reserve, the first sighting of the

Waimapihi stream is a little disappointing. A sluggish trickle crosses through some swampy and malodorous ground before falling through a rusty grating into the sewers.

On the right bank, through some well-kept gardens, is an old shed known locally as "The Lighthouse". The map in Holloway Rd had called this an "interpretive centre", but it was locked, and looked like it had been unused for some time.

### The Forest

Upon entering the forest, the change in mood is breathtaking. It feels like stepping into a green tunnel: the mahoe trees that reach up from the banks to close above your head are covered in green moss, and the leaves of the mahoe and punga filter dappled green light over the whole scene.

The wind that moans in the canopy above you seems to be miles away, and the leaves that carpet the ground absorb your footfalls. Even the birds seem hushed, and the tiny stream itself makes only the quietest of trickling sounds among its rocks and pools. It almost feels like being underwater.

It's easy to lie back among the leaves and watch the light change as it falls through clouds, leaves and branches. It feels peaceful, but also a little eerie or out of place. It doesn't feel like the New Zealand bush: more like an Old World forest, or even something out of Middle Earth. Perhaps someone should tell Peter Jackson.

One of the strangest things about being here is knowing how close we are to the city: only about 3km from Courtenay Place. Apart from the occasional bridge across the stream, the forest seems almost untouched. But when we did come across overt signs of human impact, they were more surprising and moving than we could have guessed.

### The Waimapihi Witch Project?



Just as we thought the forest was thinning and the magic was ending, we came across a bizarre assortment of artefacts. There were crude tripods strung together with rags; ribbons tied in the foliage; candles and logs that had been alight in the not too distant past; and a wind chime fashioned from scrap metal. We trod very carefully: in all seriousness, these looked like the trappings of some strange ritual. The forest took on a new chill.

But not all of the objects were so outré. There were also plastic butterflies and fish among the trees, along with paper flowers and wooden cats. The assortment came to seem not sinister, but almost kitsch.

It wasn't long before the answer became clear. Attached to one of the trees was a plaque dedicated to one "Fletch": Stephen Fletcher, born 1967, died 1994. So the site

did have a ritual purpose, but one that was perhaps more personal than mystical. It seems that Fletch's friends or family still return to this spot to remember him, and that the odd paraphernalia are simply part of this remembrance.

We found later that this place is known as "Spirit Hill". I don't know whether this name preceded Fletch's memorial, why Fletch died so young, or whether he may indeed be buried nearby. There are many intriguing questions, but such curiosity seems banal beside the devotion of Fletch's loved ones.

Maintained by Tom Beard ([tom.beard@paradise.net.nz](mailto:tom.beard@paradise.net.nz))

## **Tuis**

<http://www.wellington.govt.nz/news/display-item.php?id=1991>

News – Features Wellington City Tui Numbers on the Increase 15.09.04

Wellington City is home to a growing number of tui.



Annual bird counts have been taken since 2001 and are now being conducted twice a year at the Botanic Garden, Burrows Avenue Reserve/Wrights Hill, George Denton Park/Waimapihi Reserve/Polhill Gully, Khandallah Park, Johnston Hill Reserve/Karori Cemetery, Mapuia Reserves, Otari-Wilton's Bush, Redwood Bush and Trellisick Park.

Citywide, 273 tui were counted in the five minute counts last October compared with 209 in October 2002. Autumn counts have risen from 115 in 2002 to 188 this April. The highest tui counts are being recorded in spring at Otari-Wilton's Bush.