



## Dates to Remember

### Help restore Travis Wetland

Travis Wetland Trust Work Days are an opportunity to help the Travis Wetland Trust and Christchurch City Council restore the wetland. Meet people interested in restoring the native biodiversity of our city, share ideas and do some light physical work. Tasks vary according to the seasons and range from planting, release weed-ing and invasive weed control. Morning tea provided.

**When:** Third Saturday of every month 9am to 12.30pm.

**Where:** Meet at the Education Centre near the Beach Road car park.

**What:** Bring gumboots or boots, gardening gloves and clothing suitable for the weather and season e.g. sunhat, raincoat, warm hat.

#### Saturday Work day dates for 2017/18 are:

- 21 October and 18 November
- 16 December (including Christmas BBQ)
- 20 January, 17 February and 17 March

### A note from the Treasurer

The Travis Wetland Trust financial year began in July and those who have not yet paid a subscription for the 2017-18 year will have a subscription form posted to them.

**Note that the Trust has moved its account to Kiwi-bank 38-9018-0341728-00 .** Please help the Trust continue its work at Travis Wetland by paying an annual subscription and/or making a tax-deductible donation. If you are sure you have paid your subscription, but receive a form all the same, then contact the Trust treasurer so he can correct his records.

Dave Evans

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## Travis Wetland Trust Annual General Meeting

**7pm Tuesday 24 October**

**Travis Wetland Education Centre**

**280 Beach Rd, Burwood**

Following the AGM there will be a brief break for supper and then a panel of trustees will address the past and future of Travis Wetland. There will be plenty of opportunity for the audience to ask questions. The Trust board is currently developing a plan for the next 10 years at the wetland, which prompted a lot of ideas and discussion on how far we have come over the Trust's 25 year life and what do we want to achieve over the next 10 years. Please come along and have some input to the future of Travis Wetland.

The current Travis Wetland Trust board members are: Colin Meurk (president), Sean Ward (chair), Denise Ford (secretary), Dave Evans (treasurer), Grahame Bell, Eleanor Bissell, Sue Britain, Joe Greenaway, Wayne Hill, Deidre Johns and Phil Teague. The board meets monthly at the Education Centre for a couple of hours from 6.30pm on the Tuesday after the work day. There is certainly room around the table for more board members, if you are interested in contributing to the governance of the Trust let one of the current board members know. If you want to test the water before becoming a board member then sit in on one of the meetings, you are very welcome.

**Christchurch  
City Council**



## Anne Flanagan—the saviour of Travis Swamp

- Denise Ford, image made by Grahame Bell



(From left Julie Woodward, Carol Ryan and Deidre Johns with Anne Flanagan and Travis memorabilia.)

In 1984 a consortium going under the name of Travis Country Estate bought 'Travis Swamp' from the Florance family. Their plan was to develop a residential area of about 700 houses on an 80 hectare block. Concerns were raised by residents in the area — issues of loss of habitat for wildlife and fears of flooding. Anne Flanagan the vice-president of the North New Brighton Community Council began a long fight to save the wetland from development. The Travis Wetland Trust was set up in 1992 with Anne as its president. A petition was circulated calling for the Christchurch City Council to purchase the land and gained nearly 7000 signatures. David Bellamy, international environmental campaigner and botanist, supported the campaign and personally met Anne. Sadly, Anne died in 1994 after suffering a long illness. By 1997 the Christchurch City Council had purchased 119 hectares which was gazetted as a nature heritage park. Without Anne's vision and determination the wetland may have been lost to development.

The Travis Wetland Trust had the privilege of members of Anne's family presenting the Trust with memorabilia from her time as a Community Board member and Travis Wetland Trust President. Julie Woodward and Deidre Johns (Anne's Granddaughters) and Carol Ryan (Anne's daughter) presented the Trust with several items; one being a bust of Anne that Hans Muller carved in 1989 in recognition of all the work Anne put into the wetland. The other is a photo of Anne and David Bellamy. The Travis Wetland Trust are thrilled to have these items and the others presented. The photos will be displayed on the walls of the Education Centre and a special cabinet is to be purchased to display the bust and other memorabilia the Trust holds, including the handsome petition.

## Images from Travis Wetland

Grahame Bell



Sacred Kingfisher, *Todiramphus sanctus*



Slime Mold, *Leocarpus fragilis*



White-faced Heron, *Egretta novaehollandiae*





## Trees For Canterbury Spring Planting Day

For as long as I can remember Trees For Canterbury has sponsored the Travis Wetland September planting day donating many thousands of plants over the years. If that weren't enough they always bring a small army of enthusiastic workers to get those plants securely in the ground and off to a good start in their new home. This year the army was even larger than ever before numbering about 160. The BBQ that followed was well attended by the hungry volunteers all glad for something to eat after their

exertions. Many thanks to Trees For Canterbury for their continuing support of Travis Wetland!



## Crack Willow

- Dave Evans

Two species of willow predominate at Travis Wetland – grey willow (*Salix cinerea*) and crack or brittle willow (*Salix fragilis*). I wrote about grey willow in the October 2007 Travis newsletter, which can be found on the Travis website under About Travis / Past Newsletters. Grey willow is particularly unwelcome at Travis because both male and female of the species are present in New Zealand and hence it reproduces prolifically through its wind-blown seed. However, almost all the crack willow trees in NZ are from one male clone and so it is unable to spread through seeds. The tree is named for the sharp noise made when a twig is broken off and as the species name implies this happens easily and cleanly. As with other willows crack willow grows readily from a loose twig in contact with the soil, so the species spreads well vegetatively. Twigs are easily carried by flowing water to new sites where crack willow can establish.

There are several stands of crack willow at Travis, but its stronghold is the "Central Willows". There are also prominent stands across the road from the main car park at the end of Beach Rd and at the northern end of the board walk. The trees there are quite old, but are not spreading rapidly the way grey willow would. Generally speaking we don't try to control crack willow at Travis and when one is cut down it's usually because there is a danger of the tree falling on someone. Crack willow is classed as a pest in NZ and may not be sold or distributed. However, in some ways crack willow is welcome at Travis because it provides a canopy that shades out introduced grasses and makes the establishment of native plants easier. The trees also provide perches for birds from which they can drop the seeds they have eaten onto receptive soil. Old crack willows provide nesting sites. In the Central Willows where a large bough that was obstructing a track was cut off kingfishers have burrowed into the trunk to make their nest. The Central Willows are also an important visual feature of Travis Wetland and so we are

in no great hurry to see them gone, even if they are classed as a pest plant.



*Crack willow in the Central Willows coming into leaf*

*Image by Dave Evans*



*Crack willow leaves and flowers.*

*Image by Grahame Bell*

## The Giant Willow Aphid

- Grahame Bell

The Giant Willow Aphid (*Tuberolachnus salignus*) was first found in Auckland in December 2013 and has now spread through the country. Willow trees are its primary host plant. It is a pest for honey producers, some sheep farmers and willows on river banks; heavy infestations of giant willow aphids can weaken trees and kill branches.

The aphid have sucking mouth parts which they use to pierce the plant and then suck up the sap. The aphid excretes excess sap creating what is called honeydew. A sooty mould fungi grows on the honeydew that is excreted covering willow leaves and other vegetation turning them black. The honeydew also attracts other insects namely ants, bees and wasps. A type of sugar in the honeydew can cause problems for honey producers.

Adult giant willow aphids are one of the largest aphids in the world with a body length of 5.0-5.8 mm. All giant willow aphids in New Zealand are known to be female they can be winged or wingless. When a colony of aphids is disturbed or feel they are in danger such as waving a hand near them, they lift and wave their hind legs.

This aphid was first sighted on willow trees in Travis Wetland April 2016. The main concern regarding the giant willow aphid at Travis Wetland is that wasps feed on the honeydew and can be present in large numbers. There is an increased danger of people being stung. The wasps eat native insects and compete with honey bees and native birds for food.

It will not be practical to control the giant willow aphid by insecticides at Travis Wetland. The only predator of the aphid in New Zealand are ladybirds which have been ineffective until the discovery of the harlequin ladybird; again, in Auckland. This ladybird is also an introduced organism and is considered an invasive species in many countries. Both adults and larvae readily feed on the giant willow aphids and could appear to be a useful biological control. However, the ladybird has a huge appetite and can out compete native ladybirds. Wasp parasitoids of giant willow aphid are known in East Asia and one has been identified as a candidate for release into New Zealand. Rigorous host testing will be required before any release of this parasitoid into the country.

Be aware this summer when you are walking around the Wetland, especially near willows, that wasp populations could be high.



## Bird observations at Travis



Image: Michael Ashbee

On May 20 while photographing Pukeko in the pond behind the Travis information center Mike Ashbee had a close encounter with a Marsh Crake.

The end result was by far the best image of a Marsh Crake taken at Travis. The bird stayed around for about 15 minutes, moving in and out of cover. Thanks to Mike for the use of the image.

The Marsh Crake is one of the most secretive NZ birds, which seldom ventures out of its preferred dense wetland habitat into the open. Consequently it was astounding when in August it showed itself again to the people on a sanctuary symposium field trip visiting Travis Wetland.

### Travis Wetland Trust Meetings

The Travis Wetland Trust board meets monthly on the Tuesday following the work day, from 6.30pm — 8.30pm at the Travis Wetland Education Centre. The board extends a welcome to all who wish to attend.

### Travis Wetland Contacts

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