

APRIL 2024

# Valley Voice

The Aro Valley Community Newsletter

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**Office Hours:** Mon closed; Tue 12n-5pm; Wed 9am-1pm; Thur closed; Friday 10am-3pm  
**Aro Valley Community Centre** – managed by the Aro Valley Community Council Inc



## The Voice is back

*If you are an older Aro Valleyite you might recognise the appearance of this Valley Voice with a touch of nostalgia. This retro format – specified by my daughter Emily, a graphic designer now in Martinborough – was used until the September 2009 edition, when I was last editor.*

*Since then, the publication of a regular newsletter for the Aro Valley Community Council has been a bit sporadic, and the use of paper delivered to letterboxes is now only one of the means of community communication.*

*But there is a lot going on which affects us – from our water leaks so often in the daily media to the big issues of character, housing, urban form and densification.*

*So the need for a regular publication is still apparent and, in lieu of anyone else, I have agreed to come back to restart Valley Voice.*

*Success, though, will depend on support from:*

- Contributors – writers and photographers – to produce distinctive Aro Valley news and stories
- Businesses whose presence provides so much of the convenience, character and employment in the Valley ...
- ... And, not least, you, the residents.

*If Valley Voice is helpful, let us know and maybe pitch in with an article or comment. If it is not useful ... well, I guess it won't last any better than previous attempts. It's up to you!*

*Brent Efford  
Editor (for now), Valley Voice*

### Contributors please note -

The deadline for the May 2024 Valley Voice is **Friday 3 May**, emailed to [brent.efford@me.com](mailto:brent.efford@me.com) .

Valley Voice is published on behalf of the Aro Valley Community Council Inc, 48 Aro St, Wellington.

**All opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the writers and not of the AVCC unless adopted at a General Meeting.**

Photographs by Brent Efford, unless otherwise credited.

## Aro Fairs Over the Years



Performing at the Aro Valley Fair in 2002

### The story of the Aro fairs shows one way Aro Valley residents embrace our unique community spirit.

This story starts with the 1975 fair at Maturanga School, which was on the site that is now Aro Park. It was recorded in photos Ans Westra took that show the fair's various activities. The 1970s was a time when Aro Valley's reputation as a community with strong people with progressive ideals was forming.

Community newsletters from June and November 1990, and April 1992 show that Aro fairs continues to embodied the strong social conscience of Aro Valley residents. Eg.

- report of a 'Flea market/gala day; and the hope was it would be every six weeks' and "Another annual Gala held" and that it was a chance for local organisations to fundraise and local residents to pick up bargains.
- Pam Whittington, the DCM Community Worker noted 'Our fair' was held and that the charities that used it to fundraise were struggling so four a year would be held to help them out.

Long term residents confirm that regular fairs have continued to be held (weather permitting) since the 1990s. Each fair has had a fantastic posters with unique artwork. The main aims have remained raising funds for good causes, (in particular AVCC, the Aro School and the Pre school), and providing an opportunity for community get togethers.

A constant focus has been locals having stalls, recycling clothes, books, records and household goods, home made food, natural products and pest control, among many others. Over the years the entertainment has varied from horse rides, music by local and, up and coming bands and, the whacky, spontaneous, family friendly Arolympics that were contested by dressed up street teams.

The Aro fairs wouldn't have happened without the energy and input of many wonderful Community Coordinators and AVCC committees, plus many dedicated individuals. The funding from the Council has also been vital to the ongoing success of this fun community event.

Some suburban fairs, eg Thorndon and Island Bay, over the years became bigger and brought in crowds from the wider city. As such, they became less unique and more commercial. In contrast, the Aro fair stayed true to its community roots, using the same site and based on locals' values.

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>> Fairs over the years ... from page 1

My favourite personal memories include:

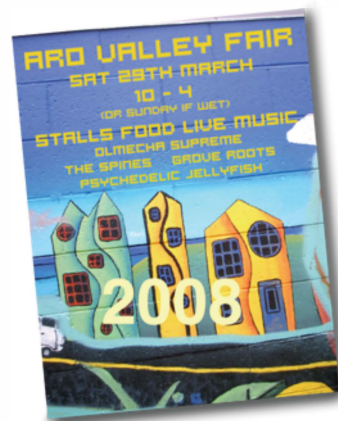
- the brothers who for several years made and sold lemonade
- the kids who were selling their toys so others could enjoy them
- the trio of boys who made biscuits, including vegan ones
- the homemade cakes and lollies from the school and pre school stalls
- hugs and catching up with people I hadn't seen for while
- enjoying seeing the happy faces of the people wandering about the stalls or sitting in the sun absorbing the fun
- the incredible joy of finding a cushion to make which exactly matched one I had made previously.

Unfortunately, because of COVID, hall alterations and weather, the Aro Valley Fair has not been a regular occurrence in the last few years. But here's hoping **13 April 2024** marks a return to regularity.

This article is not a complete record of Aro fairs. If you'd like to add to it please email the Community Centre.

*Judy Buchanan*

To see some photos from previous fairs, go to <http://www.arovalley.org.nz/aro-fair.html>



### Regular classes & activities ~ March 2024 ~

Day	Time	Class	Price	CONTACT
Mondays	8:30 - 9:30am	Tai Chi with Yi Ching	Koha	<a href="mailto:community@arovalley.org.nz">community@arovalley.org.nz</a>
Mondays	6:30 - 8pm	ON - Ungu Capoeira	\$15 casual \$100 for 10	027 367 1567 <a href="mailto:kate.turner.espe@gmail.com">kate.turner.espe@gmail.com</a>
Mondays	6:30 - 7:30pm	Language Class	Tbc	<a href="mailto:info@foreignlanguages.co.nz">info@foreignlanguages.co.nz</a>
Tuesdays	12am - 12:45pm	Chair yoga with Kristin	\$8/\$10 or koha	022 694 1197 <a href="mailto:kristingiorgi@gmail.com">kristingiorgi@gmail.com</a>
Tuesdays	6 - 7pm	Community free yoga	Free	<a href="mailto:mark@hotmetal.nz">mark@hotmetal.nz</a>
Wednesdays	8:30 - 9:30am	Tai Chi with Yi Ching	Koha	<a href="mailto:community@arovalley.org.nz">community@arovalley.org.nz</a>
Wednesdays	1 - 2pm	Dance 4 Us With Dance Therapy NZ	Gold coin (If possible)	(09) 636 3029 <a href="mailto:admin@dancetherapy.co.nz">admin@dancetherapy.co.nz</a>
2nd and 4th Wednesday of the Month	2:30 - 5:30pm	Aro Valley Knit & Stich with Judy	Free or Koha	<a href="mailto:community@arovalley.org.nz">community@arovalley.org.nz</a>
Wednesdays	6:30 - 7:30pm	Olin Yoliztli - Traditional Dances of Mexico	\$10	<a href="mailto:laura@olinyoliztii.com">laura@olinyoliztii.com</a>
Wednesdays	6:30 - 7:30pm	Language Class	Tbc	<a href="mailto:info@foreignlanguages.co.nz">info@foreignlanguages.co.nz</a>
Thursday	4 - 6pm	Trash Planet Beat Clinic	Koha	<a href="mailto:contact@olmecha.com">contact@olmecha.com</a>
Fridays	8:30 - 9:30am	Tai Chi with Yi Ching	Koha	<a href="mailto:community@arovalley.org.nz">community@arovalley.org.nz</a>
Fridays	10:30 - 12pm	Community Singing With Jo Shirley	\$10/\$70 for The term	<a href="mailto:jshrigley@gmail.com">jshrigley@gmail.com</a>
Fridays	12:30 - 1:30pm	Handstand Workshop	\$20	021 996 782 <a href="mailto:nicolas@oni.co.nz">nicolas@oni.co.nz</a>
1st Saturday of the Month	10 - 3pm	Arts & Crafts Market with Art Collective		<a href="mailto:hello@twotwenty.co.nz">hello@twotwenty.co.nz</a>
Sundays	6 - 7pm	Community free yoga	Free	<a href="mailto:mark@hotmetal.nz">mark@hotmetal.nz</a>
Sunday Fortnightly	2 - 4pm	Aro Valley Jazz Jam with Aro Valley Jam Band	Drop in & play or listen	<a href="mailto:community@arovalley.org.nz">community@arovalley.org.nz</a>

### Local musos to star at Aro Valley Fair

The food, the stalls ... and the music.

There is something for everyone at the Aro Valley Fair on **Saturday 13 April, 10 – 4**.

The variety-packed programme lined up by our Community Co-ordinator and music expert Ahmen Mahal is:

- **Aro Valley Jazz Band:** Aro Valley's premiere Jazz Jam band!
- **Te Aro School Kapa Haka group**
- **Perry Osborne:** Wellington Roots Singer Songwriter
- **Moringa Dancers :** "West African Inspired Dance Wellington"
- **Kingston High All Stars:** "5 piece desert blues/rock band"
- **Imon Bass/Trash Planet:** Imon Bass + guests
- **Toby Sussex:** "Indy folk singer song writer"
- **King Home Boy:** "King Home Boy, Being Maori."
- **Marika Pratley:** "Live electronic Bangerz for Bubz"
- **Taikoza:** "Wellington Taiko ensemble"
- **Shan Jordan:** "Wellington Singer Song writer"
- **The Way Side:** "Blues Rock band"

# Aro Valley's biodiversity with tales from Zealandia and Orokonui Dunedin



*Above: Kākā feeding station Orokonui showing the fantastic bush regeneration following pest removal*

*Right: Kākā looking down on Aro Valley from the author's balcony*

*Photos: Claire Freeman*

In July 2023 I moved to Aro Valley and have been awed by the immense variety of biodiversity and species present in the Valley. Most notable are the invertebrates, my house, is home for many spider, moth and beetle species and I've found tree weta in a drawer and inside a shopping basket. Outside the noise from cicadas echoes around the property as do calls from tui, and kākā who feast in the native trees and roost in the garden's large Pohutukawa that can be seen across Aro Valley. The presence of these species is due in no small part to the geography of Aro Valley where the steep slopes proved difficult to farm. Thus many indigenous tree and plant species and their host invertebrates remained and continue to provide food and provide refuge for the Valley's faunal inhabitants. My own garden includes species such as ngaio, puriri, coprosma spp, silver fern, mahoe, pateua, and cabbage trees, species long since removed from most city gardens but fortunately still present here in Aro Valley.

Living in Aro Valley has for me raised questions about urban biodiversity and ecosanctuaries, Zealandia in Wellington and Orokonui Ecosanctuary in Dunedin, both of which I have been involved with in different ways. My first encounter with Karori Wildlife Sanctuary as Zealandia was formerly known, was in 1997. Then I walked through parts of the bush that would later be included into the Sanctuary and saw a few tui amongst the predominantly exotic birds but little else. I was fortunate to later work with one of the initiators of Karori Wildlife Sanctuary Dianne Campbell-Hunt, when she moved to Dunedin where she helped us set up Orokonui Ecosanctuary. This Ecosanctuary unlike Zealandia is located some distance from the city rather than being inside it. Its area of 307ha is predominantly coastal Forest, (Zealandia is 225 ha) and is protected by a 9km fence (Zealandia's is 8.6 km). The Ecosanctuary has been gifted the Māori name Te Korowai o Mihiwaka (the sacred cloak of Mihiwaka after the prominent hill overlooking the sanctuary).

In both sanctuaries for me the most noticeable benefit from the fence has been the regeneration of the natural habitats, especially the ground floor flora. The value of the fence is most starkly apparent when comparing the richness of the vegetation inside and outside the fence, a contrast easily seen from the Polhill Reserve on the upper slopes of Aro Valley. In these two ecosanctuaries there have been species reintroductions with contrasting success. Tieke or saddleback have been introduced in both. In Zealandia they can easily be seen inside and occasionally outside the fence. In Orokonui their introduction was marred by tragedy when after establishing successfully, a stoat was able to penetrate the sanctuary and decimated the whole Tieke population. It is still not fully known how the stoat entered the sanctuary but may have been due to snow compacting on the fence allowing access by climbing over the top cover and electric wire.

The stoat was eventually located and trapped with the help of a stoat detection dog, but it was too late for the Tieke. There have been no known incursions since and further Tieke reintroductions are being considered.

More successful in Orokonui has been the kākā reintroduction. South Island kākā are classed as a threatened – nationally vulnerable species. They were first introduced in 2008 after being lost from the area for around 150 years. A small population of kākā were established in 2008 and included captive bred birds. Two of these were Mr and Mrs Roto who had raised 8 captive bred chicks at Dunedin Botanic Gardens before being released with two of their chicks at Orokonui. They raised the first (going on to raise 5 more) free nesting kākā chick for over 100 years in Otago. Mr Roto was rescued from Lake Rotoiti Forest in 1993 when his mother was taken by a stoat, but sadly died aged 11 when a log rolled on him. In February this year the Ecosanctuary asked the public to help them count kākā to establish the population size. Though the population has held its own and grown it has not had the massive growth seen in Wellington. Here from an original fourteen captive bred kākā released in 2002, numbers by 2015/6 were over 750. Kākā continue to increase in numbers and spread across the city.

I have asked many times why has the success of kākā breeding been so much greater in Wellington compared to Orokonui? Is it the warmer climate, the different sub-species, the fact that Wellington's gardens and slopes still contain rich sources of indigenous plants and food sources. A colleague of mine suggested it could be that in Wellington kākā could raise more than one brood a year. Is it just that kākā are happier here and happy birds are better at creating families, who knows?

Both sanctuaries have been beacons of light in what is too often a dark conservation tale in New Zealand and show what can be achieved with dedication, minimal resources and vision. When I first wandered around what is now Zealandia I could not have envisaged that the air would so soon be echoing with the calls of kākā, or that one day I'd be lucky enough to live here and have kākā visiting me on the deck of my Aro Valley home.

*Claire Freeman*

*... is an environmental planner specialising in urban biodiversity and was involved in the Orokonui Sanctuary from its inception and on its Trust Board. She currently undertakes urban biodiversity research with colleagues from Zealandia.*



## No Arolympics this year, but ...

**Jaqui Tutt reports:** Due to unforeseen circumstances the AVCC is unable to host the Arolympics this year.

We have received a message of encouragement from Sergio Velcro of the AVOC - (Aro Valley Olympics Committee) -

*"Big news coming about the 2078 bid - stay focused on your preparations - special limited edition Aro Olympic training DVD's are available at the Garage Project".*

Which means that scenes like this, from past Arolympics, will be repeated at some stage – just not this year! (Photos: Jaqui Tutt).

