

Cultural and Ecological Significance

Hamilton, a city of some 140,000 people, has very few remnants of the original large, semi-swamp lowland forest which covered much of what are now eastern suburbs between 5000 and 19,000 years ago.

However, one of these remnants is very near our home and is the site of regular weeding and nurturing by a small group of devotees. We tackle ridding the forest of tradescantia, montbretia and other garden escapees.

Jubilee or Claudlands Bush (as it is traditionally called) consists of 5.2 hectares of tall kahikatea trees and associated flora and is well provided with boardwalks and so is wonderful place to walk in the early morning with the light (or mist!) filtering through the tall trees.

Recently, Jubilee Bush was the focus of newly-installed signs which explain its ecological, historical and cultural history. It covers about two per cent of the area of the historic forest and is shown on a survey map from the 1860s, which forms part of the sign. The signs also give the remnant its Maori name which is Te Papanui which means 'a bird snarer's seat'. Nga Mana Toopu o Kirikiriroa representative Wiremu Puke says recognising the traditional history of landmarks like Te Papanui enables the public to further understand and value what the location meant to the ancestors of Ngati Wairere.

To celebrate the recognition of our cultural history and the renaming of the Park, I put brush to canvas. These two works represent the birds (kaka, kereru etc) flitting through the tall trees.



