

Featuring: *Profile of an Apprentice*
Native Bush Survey
Seminar Success
Tea Camellia

Your chance to make a difference!

Here's a great opportunity to have a big say in the activities and perhaps even future philosophy of the Friends: be President!

Annual General Meeting **Thursday 28 August** (*note date change*) **7.30pm at the Treehouse**

This chance won't come up again for a *whole year!*

Seriously, though, if there isn't more support, more people willing to take office, the Friends as an organisation will very likely fold up its tent and steal off into the night. Then who will champion our marvellous Botanic Garden and its underpaid and undervalued staff?

The acting President and Secretary say they'll try to keep the formalities to a minimum, so the sooner you volunteer for whatever executive roles are on offer the sooner you'll be able to hear about the work the committee has done this year and then three excellent guest speakers.

First speaker is the very knowledgable and entertaining **Kate Kidman**, who specialises in, among other things, succulents, talking about the conference she attended early this year (her attendance thanks to the Friends).

Also speaking will be **Chris Horne** and **Barbara Mitcalfe**, about the recent survey they undertook for the Friends, on the bush remnants in the Botanic Garden.

Father's Day Spring Breakfast **Sunday September 7, 9am at the Treehouse**

Deputy Mayor Alec Shaw and Mrs Shaw are joining us for our Spring Breakfast. Cost will be \$12 each and we need a minimum of 30 people attending.

We'll serve finger food and **Bill Wieben** will talk on 'Roses and their Perfume'. Bill is writing a book on the topic – just the subject for a beautiful spring morning (we hope).

Book with Doreen at the Treehouse – 499 1400 as soon as possible because numbers will be limited

Native Bush Remnants

The Friends commissioned a report from Chris Horne and Barbara Mitcalfe on this special Botanic Garden feature. Winsome Shepherd tells us what they discovered.

This is an excellent report which confirms observations from the Friends that the remnants are not as healthy as they could be. Possum damage was still in evidence, invasive weeds were present and rubbish from properties sharing the Garden boundaries was obvious, as was broken glass and other rubbish. Karaka and *Pittosporum ralphii* are still spreading.

Moreover, the 1993 Management Plan for the bush has not been enacted.

Your committee made a submission to Council, under the Annual Plan for the next year, asking them to fund a suitably qualified officer to carry out the recommendations given in the Horne/Mitcalfe report and to enact the 1993 Management Plan.

Subsequently, we had a meeting with Paul Andrews and Mike Oates from the Parks Business Unit. Whilst supporting many of the recommendations given in the report,

Paul and Mike did not think an extra staff member was feasible. Money from outside sources could be available. The bush committee were asked to prioritise the Horne/ Mitcalfe recommendations. This has been done, but this committee firmly believes either, that a suitably trained staff member is essential for supervising the work, or, that it should be supervised by an Otari staff member.

The bush committee is planning to publicise a Remnant Walk, with suitable brochures, and to follow Otari's lead and try to involve University students. It is believed Council could do a great deal more to market Otari, the Gardens and the Sanctuary as a package. The dialogue is continuing.

It is nice to know that the grant from the Henderson Trust paid for the Horne/Mitcalfe report and that it has been so fruitful. We look for more resourcing from the Council if we are not to lose these valuable and historic remnants.

In a postscript to Winsome's article, the Friends of Wellington's Botanic Gardens AND the Friends of Otari-Witon's Bush got some good publicity in The Dominion Post in late June. For those who missed the items, some extracts from one of the articles follows:

'Friends of Wellington's Botanic Gardens say unique remnants of virgin bush in the garden are being put at risk because Wellington City Council is not spending enough on the care of them. There is a fear that the Botanic Gardens are being overshadowed by the success – and financial demands – of the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, which is seeking \$15.4 million from the Council for a visitor centre. ...a report commissioned by the friends this year showed "a substantial backlog of work, accumulated over decades, [is] required to restore these eco-systems to health. The council has invested heavily in assisting other Wellington ecological projects. Now it is essential to invest appropriate resources

to the task of restoring and protecting these irreplaceable indigenous forest remnants" the report by Barbara Mitcalfe and Chris Horne says.

..."It is unique," she [Winsome Shepherd] said. "People may look at the gardens and see the grass is cut, and the verges trimmed and the roses looking lovely, but the remnants are very significant."

...Andy Foster, chairman of the council's built and natural environment committee, was "not aware of an issue of under-resourcing" and had yet to see the report.'

The Dominion Post 27/6/03

Lone Winter Seminar Hugely Successful

The Winter Series Seminars turned out to be just one, with the rapid departure of curator Tony Williams making it too hard to organise the second. But what a big success that one seminar, 'Sensible Organics the Practical Way', was.



The Friends chose their subject well - obviously we're not sick of hearing and learning about organics yet - and more than 50 people enjoyed a day of fun and information. Topics covered aspects which often differentiate organic gardening from the 'chemical' (for want of a better description), focussing on the techniques that make it work - compost, worm culture, organic soil management, permaculture and dealing with pests and diseases.



Speakers were Mary Beckett (above), Jonathon Bussell, Janet Davies, Frank van Steensel, Dan Jones and Dave Treadwell and there were chances to talk personally with the experts.



Exhibitions and stalls filled corners - it's always good to have the chance to buy the things you've just been hearing extolled!

Lunch was, fittingly, organic, yummy and supplied by Blue Carrot Catering. The day was exceptional value for \$10.



Resident Basil had nothing to say about every topic, but was, nevertheless, much admired. It is believed that he did not pay an entry fee. Perhaps that is why he felt free to, rather rudely, sleep through the whole thing.

A participant wrote to thank the Friends for the seminar, saying, "Personally, I learned a lot of new methods I could try out in my own garden.

I particularly wish to thank all those who were involved in the catering. I did not expect to be drinking real coffee and to have a superb lunch."

Profile of a Gardener – Paula Rogers

It seems timely to talk to someone who is at the very beginning of what will, hopefully, be a long-term interest in plants and plant places.

Botanic Gardens apprentice Paula Rogers once did graphic design and desktop publishing for an advertising agency; a creative job that she just loved. But it wasn't enough. The problem was that, however good the job, it was in an office – indoors – and Paula had a yearning to be outdoors.

As a way of achieving this she signed up to do a Whitireia Polytech course in Horticulture. “I knew bugger-all about plants,” she says with disarming honesty, “but I really wanted to get outdoors.”

Following the course she worked in a Palmers Garden Centre, while she prayed that a WCC apprenticeship would come up, since no one else offers such opportunities.

Well, she got lucky, and is now two years through her three-year apprenticeship, and has gained a Certificate in Amenity Hort. and almost finished a Certificate in Landscape Design as part of it. She says you can choose your field of study, from a variety of subjects, such as landscaping, amenity or commercial horticulture (for instance specialist areas like fruit production).

Along with the study comes work in the gardens, of a great and valuable variety. Every three months she ‘rotates’ to one of seven areas – the rose garden, begonia house, main gardens, cable car, Otari, Berhampore nursery and city gardens (street beds such as we see in Lambton Quay).

Her favourite depot is Otari; “I like the natives, bush, birds...it's a peaceful place to work,” she says. She also, surprisingly, enjoys pruning roses, telling me, “It's an art, but I also like the chance to get revenge on the roses.”

The work is often very physical, “but that's what I like,” says Paula, who prefers to go home tired at the end of the day. “That's why I didn't like office work.”



Plants and birds aside, a major reason Paula loves this job is the people she works with. “They're awesome,” she says. “I get to meet heaps of different people [because of the many areas she covers] and learn different techniques. Everyone does things their own way and I choose the way that works best for me.”

An odd aspect to being an apprentice is that you don't see seasonal changes unfold in any one garden. “You might be deadheading the roses,” says Paula, “and the next time you work with them you're pruning.”

Paula has discovered a talent and liking for landscaping, particularly soft landscaping – the art of choosing and placing plants. Hard landscaping holds no fears for her, though; she comes from a family of builders and says she can always call on them for help.

After hours Paula loves walking, jogging, swimming, socialising and hanging out with her partner and their two ginger boy cats.

Paula has found her apprenticeship really valuable. “I'm so pleased I did it,” she says. If she hadn't, “who knows where I'd be today? Maybe gone back to office work,” she says with a shudder.

As to where it will lead, she's not sure, intending to wait and see what opportunities come up. Her dream job would be as a ranger on Mana or Kapiti Islands, “having my own little island to look after,” she says. And she just might get it.

Man In The Trees – *Camellia sinensis*



The Camellia is, arguably, the plant most likely to be found brightening up the New Zealand winter garden. In honour of its heart-warming appearance at this time of the year, the most economically-important camellia features as this issue's star from Philip Tomlinson's guided walk notes. And what a lot there is to tell about it, although we only have room here for a portion of the tale.

Tea is the beverage made from the processed leaf of *Camellia sinensis*. The tea plant should be called *Thea sinensis* even though it is a cultivated member of the *Camellia* family, as *Thea* was the first name given to it.

The tea plant is the only *Camellia* whose bud leaves produce the delicate flavour most discerning tea drinkers are accustomed to experiencing. The leaves of the plant are the important part. These are called the **flowery orange pekoe leaf** (the bud leaf), the **orange pekoe leaf** (the second leaf from the top) and the **pekoe leaf** (the third leaf from the top). In combination, these three leaves are called the 'flush' or the "**fine pluck**." From the fourth leaf down, the pick or pluck is called the "**course pluck**." Modern mechanical harvesting in many cases has lessened this distinction.

The tea plant, which is a broad-leaved evergreen, grows best in areas where weather patterns range from temperate to tropic locations.

The story of tea began in ancient China over 5,000 years ago. According to legend, in 2737 BC, the Shen Nong, an early emperor, was a skilled ruler, creative scientist and patron of the arts. His far-sighted edicts required, among other things, that all drinking water be boiled as a hygienic precaution. One summer day while visiting a distant region of his realm, he and the court stopped to rest. In accordance with his ruling, the servants began to boil

water for the court to drink. Dried leaves from a nearby bush fell into the boiling water, and a brown liquid was infused into it. As a scientist, the Emperor was interested in the new liquid, drank some, and found it very refreshing. So, according to legend, tea was created.

In the fourth century AD, tea was already a popular drink in China. "Te" developed through three main stages: boiled tea, mashed or beaten tea and infused tea. In 610 AD tea was first taken to Japan, where it assumed a major role in Buddhist ritual. A returning Buddhist priest Saicho, who had seen the value of tea in China in enhancing religious meditation, brought the first tea seeds to Japan. As a result, that priest is known as the "Father of Tea" in Japan. Because of this early association, tea in Japan has always been associated with Zen Buddhism. Tea received almost instant imperial sponsorship and spread rapidly from the royal court and monasteries to the other sections of Japanese society. Tea was elevated to an art form resulting in the creation of the Japanese Tea Ceremony. The Tea Ceremony requires years of training and practice to graduate in the art...yet the whole of this art, in all its detail, signifies no more than the making and serving of a cup of tea. The supremely important matter is that the act be "performed in the most perfect, most polite, most graceful, most charming manner possible". The tea ceremony, whose aim is to help the spirit find peace, has effectively straddled centuries and borders.

In the eighth century, tea became a royal beverage in China, adopted by the nobility as an elegant pastime. Poet Lu Yu, at the height of the Tang Dynasty, wrote the first book of tea. The Indian History has a mention of how Marco Polo, the great traveller, carried tea from China to the court of the famous Indian Emperor Harsha Vardhana.

At this time, information concerning this then unknown beverage began to filter back to Europe. Via the caravan routes, tea penetrated all Mongol lands, Muslim countries and Russia, before reaching Europe. Since Europe had long periods with no contact with the Orient, it therefore got to know about tea relatively late, when it was brought by an Arab trader named Suleiman. Earlier caravan leaders had mentioned it, but were unclear as to its service, format or appearance!

The first European to personally encounter tea was the Portugese Jesuit Father Jasper de Cruz in 1560. Portugal had been successful in gaining the first right of trade with China and it was as a missionary on that first commercial mission that Father de Cruz tasted tea.

The Portuguese developed a trade route by which they shipped their tea to Lisbon, and then Dutch ships transported it to France, Holland, and the Baltic countries. It was not until about 1610 that tea really started a large-scale expansion of consumption in the Western World. The East India Company established relations with the Far East, introducing tea into Holland first in 1610, then to France in 1636 and finally to England in 1652/4. (*Later than coffee, which had been introduced into England in 1650*)

Because of the success of the Dutch navy in the Pacific, tea became very fashionable in the Dutch capital, The Hague. This was due in part to the high cost of the tea (over \$100 per pound), which immediately made it the domain of the wealthy. Slowly, as the amount of tea imported increased, the price fell as the volume of sale expanded. Initially available to the public in apothecaries along with such rare and new spices as ginger

and sugar, by 1675 it was available in common food shops throughout Holland.

By 1650 the Dutch were actively involved in trade throughout the Western world. Peter Stuyvesant brought the first tea to America to the colonists in the Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam (later re-named New York by the English). Settlers here were confirmed tea drinkers. And indeed, on acquiring the colony, the English found that the small settlement consumed more tea at that time than all of England put together.

Tea has been the cause of more than one war, but the most important single war was probably the American War of Independence. This was brought about by a single act, now called "The Boston Tea Party" and occurring on the 16th of December 1773

Great Britain was the last of the three great sea-faring nations to break into the Chinese and East Indian trade routes. The first samples of tea reached England between 1652 and 1654. Tea quickly proved popular enough to replace ale as the national drink of England.

Iced tea was invented at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904, by an enterprising British salesman who realised that fair goers were not attracted to hot tea in summer weather.



James Hector Memorial Lookout

*James Hector, the father of our Botanic Gardens, was appointed as 'scientific adviser' to the NZ government in 1865. He had three aims in mind for the Garden: that it should be a trial ground, a scientific reserve and a place of recreation and enjoyment. **Winsome Shepherd** reports on the Friends' efforts to raise a memorial to this remarkable man.*

Before he left, Tony Williams gave the committee permission to ask Charles Gordon (WCC Landscape Architect) to draw up some sketches for a proposed memorial at The Rock (Mariri Road entrance), one of the original triangulation points for the Garden.

The idea is for a stone cairn, which would be vandal-proof, but would allow children to climb over it, and adults to sit, take in the view and absorb the ambience of the Garden. The memorial would encourage

Garden visitors to walk up the West Way, look at the developing James Hector Pinetum, and appreciate even further the history of the Garden. As funds or endowments to the Garden become available (hopefully), various special garden attractions along West Way can be developed, thereby taking some pressure off the lower part of the Garden.

There is plenty of scope to further develop the Botanic Garden and members are urged to encourage legacies or donations to the Friends for enabling such development.



Tulip Sunday September 28

Keep nurturing the plants you're growing for the Friends' plant sale and bring them to the Treehouse on the day, preferably before 10am.

The Guides will be out in force for this well-attended event, hopefully guiding the public to the plant sale.

Guides

We have been out training two new guides, on Saturday mornings at 10am. We gave away one recent Saturday as too cold and wet for training. Very cold or wet days are not conducive to good learning! Another two people have expressed an interest in training to become guides.

Attracting people to our Sunday walks is an ongoing problem. Numbers on the walks fluctuate greatly; it seems to be very hit or miss as to whether anyone spots it in the Dom Post (Saturdays, in the 'Going Out' column), Feeling Great pamphlet and sometimes Contact. Because of the cost

of advertising we rely entirely on free mentions.

We are going to get together, when the weather improves, to look at planning a bush remnant walk, to promote the Garden's native bush.

This is the best year for flowering of kohekohe trees in the Botanic Garden that I have seen in my five years as a guide. Dr John Dawson told me that the flowering has been prolific at Otari-Wilton's Bush as well.

Jenny Hickman

Cuttings

Winsome Shepherd says our application to the **Historic Places Trust** for registration of the Garden is starting to move, as their officers have begun examining the Garden and its buildings. Your committee is hopeful of a successful outcome, which will establish even further the significance of our Garden and the need to nurture its history.

The **James Hector Pinetum**, at the southern end of the Garden boundary, off the Mariri Road entrance, was inaugurated on Arbor Day, 23 June 1992. The first officially planted tree was a *Pinus sabiniana*, planted by the Governor General Dame Catherine Tizard, aided by Peter Hector, great grandson of Sir James Hector. Sadly, the tree known familiarly as "Dame Cath's pine" died. The good news is that a replacement is now on hand and about to be planted. For those who were wondering, *Pinus sabiniana*, (common name DiggerPine, which is now rarely used because it is derogatory. It has nothing to do with Australasia) is a Californian species not commonly found in New Zealand. According to Griffiths, it grows to 25 metres and has 12-25 x 9 cm, ovoid, nut brown, pendulous cones with scales to 5cm.

The **Begonia House** upgrade should have been completed by the time you read this. The building stage is finished and interior fittings and the toilets were the last areas to be worked on. The project got a little behind schedule as there are many, many underground services in the area, some of which had not been taken into account. The first private function is booked for mid-August.

Camellia Valley is well-worth a visit right now. Over half its camellias were hat-racked (very severely pruned) a couple of years ago, to allow more light, space and air movement around the specimens. The project has been very successful; only four of the 300 hat-racked camellias died, and the rest are regrowing well.



Contrary to popular belief, the drastic pruning was not done to control petal blight - it only infects flowers and as spores can travel many kilometres, reinfection from suburban gardens is immediate. Infected flowers are already evident in the Garden and staff are carrying out weekly pick-ups of fallen flowers to try to reduce the blight's spread.

Rose pruning has been taking up the thoughts and energies of the Rose Garden staff lately. Because of the mild late autumn conditions, they had to wait a bit longer than usual, mainly because the roses were looking far too good. The Gardens tend to prune before the rest of us do, probably because there are so many to get through. Accepted wisdom seems to be that pruning too early could cause trouble with late frosts on tender spring shoots. According to one long-serving staff member, however, they have never had any problems of this nature.

Further to last issue's item on *Pinus pinea*, we've dredged up another recipe for its nuts (I use that word advisedly). A symbol of fertility, *Pinus pinea* has been considered an aphrodisiac since ancient times, being used in the following way: "Eat 20 almonds, 100 pine nuts and a glassful of thick honey before bedtime, for three nights." Quite frankly, struggling to get that lot down might be enough activity for one evening. The Friends and their editor take absolutely NO responsibility for any consequences to anyone trying this recipe!

Coming Events 2003

August 17

GW

'Historical Nooks and Crannies.'

A moderate amount of walking, including uphill walking.

September

August 28 (Thursday)

NB date has been changed

Friends Annual General Meeting - speakers Kate Kidman, Barbara Mitcalfe and Chris Horne.

September 7 (Sunday)

Friends' Father's Day Spring breakfast, speakers Councillor Alick Shaw and Bill Wieben on 'Roses and Perfumes'.

September 14

Open Day Otari-Wilton's Bush

September 21

GW

'Spring Festival Walk.'

Easy to moderate walk, on the flat.

September 28

Tulip

Sunday

and Friends' Plant Sale

October 19

GW

'People's Pines: Part of the Past.'

Meet at the Duck Pond. Moderate walking, some uphill.

November 16

GW

'History and Herbs: a Tour of the Herb Garden.' This walk looks at the history of the making of the Herb Garden, and the use of herbs for fragrance, medicine, cooking, cosmetics, dyes, and insect repellents. Little walking involved other than the walk up to the Herb Garden.

November 16 - 23

Rose Week

Lady Norwood Rose Garden

GW = Guided walks, held on the third Sunday of the month at 11am. Unless stated otherwise, the walks begin at the Founders' Entrance, Glenmore Street. If it is wet there will be a talk at the Treehouse Visitor Centre instead.