



P O Box 28-065
Kelburn, Wellington

Newsletter

August 2004

Featuring: *Event pix – and lots of them*
Farewell to a Friend
Glow worms
James Hector Memorial

Notice of Annual General Meeting

7.30pm, Wednesday 25 August 2004
The Treehouse

The guest speaker is the wonderful
Bethney McLennan,
Editor of the Dominion Post's gardening page

Spring Breakfast

Sunday 5 September, 9am at the Treehouse.
Te Papa CEO Dr Seddon Bennington will speak
about the man whom the new memorial honours,
Sir James Hector.
Cost \$20 each
Bookings essential – ring the Treehouse, 499 1400

BOTANIC BULLETIN

As we get to finalising the new projects for the coming year, it's time to reflect on those of the past year. The construction of the new pedestrian walkway, from the top of the Centennial Entrance through to the Begonia House and café, has been very successful. It's great to see people actually using the walkway.

The management of the conifer frame work has been another highlight, with the propagation trials and also the genetic finger printing of the pilot group of trees from Druid Hill, the playground and the Mariri spur. The second harvest of cuttings has just taken place for the tissue culture propagation and a further round of cuttings will be taken for grafting in mid August.

We will be removing up to six trees from the playground this year, before the summer, and particularly those immediately adjacent to the playarea. They will be replaced with species from the araucaria family, which will link nicely with those from the existing araucaria collection.

Spring Festival is looming so I hope you've got your plants underway! Starting 18 September it will run through to Sunday 3 October. The focus of the first week will be on the Gardens and the second on Native Week at Otari. We have had discussions with the guides and will be looking forward to their contribution. As it is in the school holidays, we will be involving children and families as much as possible.

Our collection review has finally produced some draft results. The first two releases have been made to the staff, who are in the process of digesting them and providing feedback. To date, it has been very constructive and positive. I have also sent copies off to the Friends for consultation and look forward to the responses.

The James Hector Memorial looks great up on the point of the ridge. Thank you for funding this addition to an historic point in the Garden. The planting of the final Governors' General tree by the Right

Honorable Sir Michael Hardie Boys will complete the work in this area for the present.

As I write this, I look down on splendid sight of the *Magnolia campbelli* in the main drive. I recently brought some friends from Invercargill to look at the Gardens and they were very impressed, especially being able to look down onto the trees from the Treehouse deck. It's not an opportunity that often arises in Invercargill!

Laura Wards, our Visitor Services and Marketing person took leave a short while ago and gave birth to a baby boy. Amanda White is covering for Laura until she returns part time in about 3 months. Amanda will have Spring Festival as her prime focus! Pauline Bradshaw is taking leave for up to 8 weeks from the Treehouse reception. Her position is being covered by Abby Crosby until she returns. Scott Batchelor has come down from New Plymouth to join the crew as the gardener in the Rose gardens, taking up the position that Rachel Solomon previously held

It was with sadness that we learnt of Rob Bos's passing earlier this week. Rob had been a long and forthright supporter of the Gardens and made a significant contribution as a guide. The staff and I extend our condolences and kindest wishes to the Bos family.

The Victoria University Yr2 Landscape Architecture students began their 2004 programme in the gardens this week. It's good to have them back again and to be able to demonstrate the hands on arts of horticulture. They will be working with a range of tutors and staff, here in the Gardens, at Otari and at Berhampore Nursery.

I sign off with the tulips starting to appear above ground beneath those other harbingers of spring, the Michelias, Rhododendron Sir Robert Peel and the early magnolias!

David Sole
Manager Botanic Gardens



Profile of A Gardener

Rob Bos
1930 - 2004

Marius Johannes (Rob) Bos, Botanic Garden Guide and Friend, died on June 17, after a losing battle with cancer.

Starting in 1990, Rob was a founding Guide. He was responsible for training many later Guides, among them Phil Tomlinson, who says he treasured the time he spent guiding with Rob, particularly the evening glow-worm walks. Rob was a hard-working and influential Friends committee member too, his love of and wide knowledge of plants such an asset.

I knew Rob as a member of the Island Bay Garden Group, where he had been treasurer for a decade. He also won the competition cup several times, ran (and brought along treasures for) the sales table, picked up and delivered home the non-driving and the elderly and was, until the hall got carpet and a commercial cleaner, the one person to sweep the floor after each meeting. He was one of the two men who were always there to set up and run our annual fund-raising plant sale (where he went to a lot of trouble to pot up easily-grown succulents, to give away to children as an encouragement to get them keen on gardening), co-ordinated the end-of-year function ticket sales for many years, and thought of ways to increase the club's profile, like putting our flyers in the Treehouse.

The above tells much about Rob, but there was more to him. Much more.

Rob was born in Jakarta, Indonesia, as a child showing himself to be a bright student - schoolwork came easily to him. His mother

died when he was young; his father, a merchant seaman, was often away, so Rob and his brother learned to be self-sufficient. In World War 2 the children were detained, by the Japanese, in a concentration camp. He always had vivid memories of that awful time. Allowed to join their father, the boys spent several years in England, then were sent to live in Holland.

In Holland Rob worked and trained as a landscape gardener, then as a floral artist. In 1951 he came to New Zealand, training here as a male registered nurse. He subsequently met and married Marian. When their three children were young Rob changed careers again, becoming a WCC truck driver, working the night shift.

Retiring at age 62, Rob found time to get involved in many interests, including travel – he made several trips to his beloved Indonesia. He was a member of an astonishing number of organisations – the Friends, Island Bay Garden Group, Miramar Community Centre, NZ-Indonesia Society and U3A. It seems that, whatever organisation he belonged to, he'd end up on its committee. At his funeral the one common thread, in the many tributes offered to Rob, was that, "He was always there when anything needed to be done."

He loved music, studying and teaching Indonesian music, but his tastes were much broader. At his funeral we heard Indonesian, Dixieland, classical music, Enya. In retirement he discovered the delights of the computer and was a keen user of the

Internet, a fabulous tool for a man who had an insatiable appetite for learning.

Rob was a modest man who never blew his own trumpet, and you had to talk to him for a while to find out that he was a qualified horticulturalist. His knowledge of plants was truly encyclopaedic, cliché it may be. When he discovered I was studying botany and having trouble sorting out conifers, he brought a few samples along the next time we met, and explained the distinguishing features. The textbook didn't say you could identify *Thuja* by its smell, but Rob knew. He also knew where all the best specimens were located around our city.

Rob liked unusual plants and was generous, with plants as well as knowledge. If he detected another "odd plant" collector, they were treated to a steady source of the rare and strange. I managed to kill many of the plants he gave me, but still have *Tropaeolum polyphyllum* rambling through the tomatoes. His *Bomaria* and *Haemanthus*, when in bloom, were just stunning. His wife Marian looked after the

pot plants, but Rob gave away bits of those, too, when he thought she wasn't looking.

Rob loved a good debate and hated unfairness. He championed causes and spoke up for others. He kept a close eye on local politics and waded into print when he thought matters were getting out of hand. He was a regular writer "to the editor", his letters being, usually, brief, insightful and to the point.

Rob also knew how to enjoy himself. His compassionate and caring nature came hand in hand with a wicked sense of humour and a keen sense of the ridiculous and absurd. We will so miss that cheeky grin.

Rob Bos – Friend and friend, had the last word. His "Last Letter to the Editor" was to his friends, and, as usual, he didn't mince words on issues he still felt strongly about. But it ended thus: "*I have enjoyed your company. I will be back, you can be sure of that. Cheers, Rob.*"

Charmaine Scott

Friends Plant Sale

Rob Bos was a great man for growing cuttings. So should you be, because we *need lots of plants* for the Friends' Plant Sale, to be held on the Sunday of Tulip Weekend, September 26, 9am-2pm, at the Treehouse.

Angela Hill's Himalayan Daphne, *Daphne bhoulua* 'Gurkha' has strongly (some say magnificently) scented purple flowers in winter, and is an example of the sort of treasure you could pot up. Angela prepared several for last year's plant sale and has grown more this year, so you'll have the chance to buy one (if you're quick). Better yet, bring plants to sell and buy some to take home. Either way, it's a great chance to do something to help raise project funds.

The committee are happy to collect donated plants, even seedlings that still need to be potted up – phone Winsome Shepherd 476 6598, Angela Hill 479 5580 or Rosalind Iles 232 7699.



Guides - Annual Report 2004

The summer was, once again, the busiest time of year for the guides, greeting visitors to the Botanic Garden, and offering them advice and guiding when required. We had fewer requests for guided tours for groups than usual, and six of those that were requested were cancelled due to, either lack of interest on the part of members, or because of the wet weather in the spring and late summer.

The Sunday walks continued throughout the year on the third Sunday of the month. Some were moderately well attended, but others were less so, again because of the weather. The guides also held walks during the Spring Festival, Herb Awareness Week and the City Council Stepping Out programme. The visitors who attended our walks all enjoyed them and found them worthwhile.

After several dry seasons the glowworm numbers had declined, and glowworm tours were suspended until May this year. The two tours held so far have been very well attended.

During the year two more guides have completed their training programme, and have joined enthusiastically in our activities. Another guide trainee began the training programme recently.

We received considerably fewer donations than last year, with a total of \$538.40 (Tour Groups \$258, Glowworm tours \$93.25, Sunday Walks \$92.35, Spring Festival, Herb Awareness Week and Stepping Out Walks \$50.50, Cruise ship season \$44.30).

We have taken 261 visitors (excluding cruise ship and other summer visitors) around the Botanic Garden (Group Tours 147, Sunday, Spring Festival, Herb Awareness and Stepping Out Walks 62, Glowworm Tours 52) and another 75 visitors around the Truby King Garden. The guides have spent 402 hours guiding visitors in the Botanic Garden (Cruise ship season 345, Guided walks 30, Glowworm tours 18, Group Tours 9), and another 18 hours at Truby King.

The guides have spent 154 hours attending meetings, 138 attending training and revision sessions, and 329 hours travelling to and from the Botanic Garden, a total of 1041 hours of commitment. This does not include the time spent at home researching and preparing information for the walks.

Thank you to all the guides for their commitment and enthusiasm this year, and to the staff for their support.

Jenny Hickman

Glow Worm Tours

The glowworm numbers significantly reduced in the Garden during the recent droughts, and this caused the tours to be suspended. The insects have made a remarkable recovery, and the regular scheduled tours have recommenced.

The two tours run attracted 43 and 19 people respectively. A feature has been the reluctance of people to make bookings, which makes arranging guides more difficult, especially when you do not know the number who will turn up. For safety we need to ensure there are a sufficient number of guides. We have a number of regular Garden guides who have expressed interest in being involved in these enjoyable tours, and therefore we expect to be able to continue to offer this service to the public.

We now run regular scheduled tours, although special tours can be arranged for groups with sufficient numbers.

Scheduled tours:

Friday 16th July 7.30 pm
Saturday 21st August 7.30 pm
Friday 17th September 7.30 pm
Saturday 16th October 8 pm
Friday 19th November 8 pm

For further information and bookings please phone the Treehouse 499 1400

Phil Tomlinson

Pinetum Addition

In May the Governor General, Dame Silvia Cartwright, officiated at a ceremonial tree-planting in the James Hector Pinetum. She was ably assisted, in the planting of a Bishop's Pine, *Pinus muricata*, by local schoolchildren.



Photo by Sharon O'Connor

We're not resting there – the gubernatorial tradition will continue (and end, for now) on August 4 this year, when the Rt Hon. Sir Michael Hardie Boys will add another pine to the collection. All Friends are invited to attend the James Hector Pinetum at 11 am that day (short notice but do try – the last occasion was enjoyed by all who were there). The Pinetum is near the Mariri Road entrance.

Donations to Friends Tax Deductable

Please note members that the Friends have legal donee status. This means that gifts of money from individuals and public companies qualify for certain tax advantages. This can act as an incentive to members giving the donations, either with their subscriptions, or for a specific project like the James Hector Memorial Lookout.

* Individuals who give cash donations of \$5 or more may claim a rebate. The maximum rebate claim is the smaller of 33 1/3% of all gifts to the Friends, or \$500.

* A public company may claim deduction against an assessable income for any cash donations it makes to the Friends. The maximum deduction allowed in an income year for gifts made to any single donee organisation cannot be more than the greater of 1% of the company's assessable income, or \$4,000.

There is a further limitation - the deduction for the total gifts made in an income year cannot be more than the greater of \$1000, or 5% of the company's assessable income.

Winter Series Seminar – Organics

There would seem to be no shortage of aspects to this topic, so last year's theme was revisited, with another very popular and informative day in June being greatly enjoyed by Friends and guests alike.

This year's topics were Organic Soils, taken by Esther Dijkstra,



Permaculture, itself containing a huge range of topics, with Sonia Moore and Sylvia Freen (above) who also provided a comprehensive list of books and websites, for those whose interest was piqued, to follow up on, and Plant Care with Frank van Steensel.



Participants were treated to workshops on 'Bugs and Biological Controls' with Kate Kidman



and 'Compost, Worms – Making Leafmould' with Dave Treadwell, two very well-informed, interesting and expert tutors.



Since last year's lunch was so yummy, Blue Carrot Catering were asked to do the honours again. Richard Nanson wasted no time in filling his plate.

Photos Elizabeth King

A Poem Lovely As A Tree

If you see a woman roaming the Botanic Gardens, talking to the trees, don't be concerned.

Dinah Hawken is doing a three-month stint as the Garden's first poet-in-residence.

And, anyway, she'll be more likely to talk about the trees than to them. Dinah hopes to finish a

poem about three old trees in the Garden, one of which is an oak, near Glenmore Street, that dates from the 1870s.

Since she also teaches a course at Victoria University, 'Writing The Landscape', Dinah's students are also spending time in the Garden.

Sources Joyce Kilmer, the Dominion Post.

Winter Series Seminar - Digital Photography

Does the lead item, "Say Cheese", in July 21st's Dom Post 'The People Page' ring a bell? Maybe you recall the four colour action shots of seminar participants, or mention of "Click, click, whirr" and "paparazzi stalking visitors to the Botanic Gardens". We give grateful thanks to the Dom Post for promoting a Friends activity so delightfully.



Photo Chris Dearden

After our President opened the Seminar, Olaf John, a retired Wellington professional photographer and polytech tutor with 50 years' experience, began the day with two highly informative sessions – *Understanding the differences between digital and film photography*; and *Choosing your digital camera and understanding its capabilities*. Olaf did a wonderful show & tell of the cameras he had worked with and results he had achieved.

Advantages of digital cameras include: no buying film or process, no poisonous chemicals, immediate viewing of photo with ability to reject & reshoot, ability to download to PC to store, edit, print & email. He explained various technical advantages relating to colour, film speed, zoom, depth of field, close focus, auto & manual exposure. Disadvantages he alerted us to included the DC's greater susceptibility to dust, moisture and heat, the expense of batteries & memory cards, and of high pixel cameras for quality work. Olaf's advice on choosing your camera included assessing the price & capability of the cameras

on offer carefully, shopping around, and avoiding buying a camera with features you are unlikely to want to use, that you'll pay for unnecessarily.

An appetising finger food lunch followed, and it proved a very convivial break, full of photography and camera talk.

The afternoon programme had been designed to involve children and run a competition. In the event, the only child to surface was the President's cute little daughter, Jessica, aged three, who obliged as a subject for a shot or two in the Treehouse! As a result, the adults had a field day, and adjourned to the Begonia House to try their cameras under Olaf's guidance. The photos say it all!



Richard Byrne, Olaf John and Committee member Gwenda Sutton. Photo Elizabeth King



Photo Chris Dearden

The final session was a collaboration between Olaf & Simon, accessing (via Simon's Laptop and a projection screen) the Consumers' Institute web site covering recent international tests of DCs and NZ price surveys. A Consumer subscriber present obligingly provided their pin number, which enabled participants to learn how their DC purchase or prospect were rated, and reasons for the ratings.



Photo Elizabeth King

Altogether, it was a most rewarding and enjoyable day, that brought in keen photographers, and a teacher or two, from as

far north as Otaki, as well as Friends. This has prompted us to add a new membership category to our Application Form - "Community Groups and Schools, subscription fee \$25.00".



Monica Dearden proves the value of the seminar with this shot

Interest in a follow-up seminar given by Olaf was canvassed successfully, so watch this space!

Elizabeth King

Membership update

As we go to print, we have a membership list of 111. This is made up of 53 individuals, 46 Family, 12 Student/unwaged and 6 Life members.

Numbers are down significantly from years past. We need new and more blood if the Friends are to grow and survive. We urge you to proactively seek people to join the Friends of Wellington's Botanic Garden, to ensure the future of Wellington's heritage and to promote the enjoyment we all have, especially the young families who use the Gardens.

Current and past committees have been a great mix of people with innovative ideas. We need you and your friends to keep this mix and to keep the activities vibrant and fresh. Come forward now to put your mark on Wellington's future.

Some of the activities offered:

- unusual Plant sales
- practical seminars
- become a guide to the Gardens
- Spring / Summer celebrations

For those of you who have not yet paid their sub, there is a Final Reminder form with this newsletter.

James Hector Memorial Lookout

The memorial is finished and will be unveiled, by Te Papa CEO Dr Seddon Bennington, on **Wednesday September 1, at 11am**. This is the Friends' biggest event of the year, being the culmination of a long-term effort. *We'd like to see lots of Friends there.* The memorial is situated inside the Mariri Road entrance, at the highest triangulation point (should be easy to spot, then!), and within the Pinetum.

Coming Events

August 4 (Wednesday)- 11am

Tree planting by Sir Michael Hardie Boys, in the James Hector Pinetum. Members please attend (if you get this in time!)

August 15

GW

“Sensational Succulents”

Meet on the Treehouse veranda. The Garden features a specialist collection of succulents, and this walk is led by an expert in these plants. See the many shapes and sizes, and learn how they have adapted to what is often described as a stressed habitat in their natural environment. Here is an opportunity to ask questions on their culture etc. if you are experiencing difficulty growing them yourself. Little walking involved.

September 1 (Wednesday) 11am

James Hector Memorial Lookout Unveiling

Te Papa’s Dr Seddon Bennington officiating –all Friends are urged to attend.

September 5 (Sunday) 9am

Friends’ Spring Breakfast.

Guest speaker Dr Seddon Bennington will speak about Sir James Hector. Ring 499 1400 to book

September 19

GW

“Spring Festival Walk (Tulips, Bulbs and Blossom)”

Meet at Founder’s Gate Main Entrance. A long term feature of the Garden has been the tulip display in the main Garden. Come and see this year’s effort. The massed spectacular display of some 28,000 bulbs and their many colours is a sight to remember. In addition to the tulips there are many other bulbs and of course the blossom of many trees adds to the overall

effect to herald the start of spring. Remember to bring your camera. Moderate walking involved.

September 25/26

Tulip Weekend and

Friends’ Plant Sale (Sunday only)

October 17

GW

“Early Flowering Heritage Roses”

Meet at Seddon Memorial at Entrance to Bolton Street Memorial Park. The Bolton Street Memorial Park contains a nationally recognised collection of heritage roses. Come and see them at their spectacular best, and learn more about these plants that have a fascination of their own. The Park is Wellington’s first cemetery, and this walk provides another way to experience a piece of our history. Little walking involved.

November 21

GW

“Growing Roses in Wellington”

Meet at fountain in the Lady Norwood Rose Garden, which is one of the gems of the city, and of the Garden. Here is an opportunity to wander amongst some 110 different beds, with over 3,000 plants and to learn how they can be successfully grown in the city. All rose types are on display and you can benefit from our experience about which varieties can be most successfully grown in the city. Come armed with your questions to stump the experts! And don’t forget your camera. Little walking involved.

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