

Newsletter

August 2006

Featuring: *Black Maire Event*
Insider's Guide to Guiding
Submission Goes To Plan

From Roses to Wood



Winter has been a busy time for the Friends

This beautiful black maire bowl, crafted by Graham McIntyre, was presented to Mayor Kerry Prendergast when she attended the black maire planting on June 27

As busy as you all are, you will still have time to attend the

Friends' AGM
Thursday 24 August
7.30pm
The Freehouse
Guest Speaker City Councillor Celia Wade-Brown

PRESIDENT'S PATCH

Dear Members

With the Winter Seminars, the black maire planting event, and the Open Day at the Nursery, June and July have been busy months. Despite inclement weather we have been pleased to see good attendance from members at these events. We appreciate especially the great work done by the Garden staff, in adverse conditions, to prepare the ground area near Mamaku Way for the planting ceremony involving the Mayor on 27 June.

Accompanying this Newsletter are the Notice for the Annual General Meeting of the Society on Thursday 24 August, the Agenda, Annual Report of the Committee, and the financial papers.

You are invited to study the papers carefully and prepare to attend the meeting with your questions and proposals for future activities and initiatives. You are asked to consider also whether you would like to offer yourself or another person to serve on the Committee in the coming year. Please give me a call if you would like to have a chat about ways you might contribute.

I take this opportunity to place on record my thanks to all Committee members for their strong support and commitment to the objectives and interests of the Society over the past year.

Ted Woodfield

BOTANIC BULLETIN

Though we have endured one of the wettest periods for many years the garden has survived remarkably well. While perhaps unwelcome in the weekends and in quite such large quantities, the rain has resulted in a deep soaking of the ground which hasn't occurred for a number of years. Already comments are coming back to me on how vibrant the bush canopies and under-storeys are looking.

Congratulations to the Friends for this year's Rose Seminars. While the seminars over the years have had various foci, they all contribute to the painting of a picture of the fascinating history of the Botanic Garden, as well as discussing current and future practice. I am looking forward to next year's series.

The Capital Works Programme swung into top gear in June with the commencement of the link between the Main and Centennial entrances. Contractor HBD Technic has made

good progress and we are expecting completion in August. The Herb/Rose Garden ZigZag is in the final throes of completion and should be open for use again very shortly. Work has begun on stabilising the slip at Foreman's Landing. This has been crumbling away for a number of years and threatened to remove a large part of the grass area. The 2006/7 development programme will be reduced from the last year and it's focus will include completion of the Sextons Cottage at Bolton Street Memorial Park, the first stage of repairs to the Overseer's House above the Rose Garden, some upgrade works at Truby King House and we expect to start some restoration work on the Joy Fountain. We are also expecting to get on with some interpretive signage associated with the downhill walk.

We have had a number of staff changes of late. Jeff Paris, long time Curator at the main gardens, has taken up a position as Health & Safety and Training Officer with Parks at Newtown.

We are currently working through appointing a new curator. In the Rose Garden we have appointed David Murphy as the new Assistant Gardener and Phillipa Garratt takes on the role of Gardener in the Rose Garden. James Jones has now returned from his secondment to the Hort. Team.

The programme for Spring Festival starting 23 September is pulling together nicely. Spring Festival runs through to 8 October and there will be something for everyone. The print details are being finalised as I write and expect to have the programme publicly available at the end of August.

The Innovation Garden design competition was very successful. We

received 13 entries, some of which had a lot of work put into them. Rachael Matthews, of Hedge Garden Design, was the winner with her 'Ruby Necklace' garden. The plants have started arriving for this and the changeover is expected in late July/early August, to have it in place for Spring Festival. I am pleased to note that whether the gardens are liked or disliked they stimulate a lot of discussion!

Nice to see the early signs of spring appearing in the garden. I must confess the garden seems to go from one favourite time of the year to being a year-round year-round for me!

David Sole

SPRING FESTIVAL

The Botanic Garden and Otari-Wilton's Bush will be bursting with spring flowers, colour and fragrances that you won't experience at any other time of the year.

There will also be the usual array of live music, entertainment, glow-worm tours, piñata parties, guided walks, a petting zoo, kite making, plant sales, and much, much more.

For the first time the Botanic Garden will host Earthworks, an outdoor Sculpture Showcase. Based in The Dell, it's a great opportunity to watch eight of the best hard rock sculptors from around New Zealand,

as they wrestle beautiful art works out of large blocks of Taranaki Andesite.

Get your camera out and capture the fun and festivities of Spring Festival you could be in to win a fabulous prize pack. Prizes have been donated by Wellington Photographic Supplies, Bolton Street Hotel and the Botanic Gardens Café.

Down in the Children's Playground, freshly sculpted and transformed, the stump is in need of a suitable name. Kirkcaldie and Stains will be giving a fantastic basket of goodies to the person who comes up with the top name.

Amanda White

ANNUAL PLANT SALE

All members please grow some special, unusual, uncommon or even extraordinary plants for the annual Friends' *PLANT SALE* on Sunday October 1 (Tulip Sunday).

The Botanic Garden is providing special labels to give the plants "class".

Be part of the fun and help raise funds for the work of the Botanic Garden.

Phone Richard Nanson with any queries or if you need help with pots, soil, transport, etc. 477 4020

Oh, and don't forget to bring them along bright and early on the day.

EVENTS: Winter Seminars

The Friends came up with a Rose theme for this year's seminars and what better topic could they have chosen? There was much to learn and food for the soul as well as the mind - you couldn't help but briefly forget this fierce winter and think of spring and the sight and scent of sun-kissed roses in full bloom. Ted Woodfield was there...

We had 40 attending the June event and 25 at July's one. All the presenters had prepared interesting and stimulating material. Walter Cook's illustrated history of the Lady Norwood Rose Garden; Lloyd Chapman, from Trinity Farm, on roses in history and the tradition of plantings in cemeteries and graveyards;

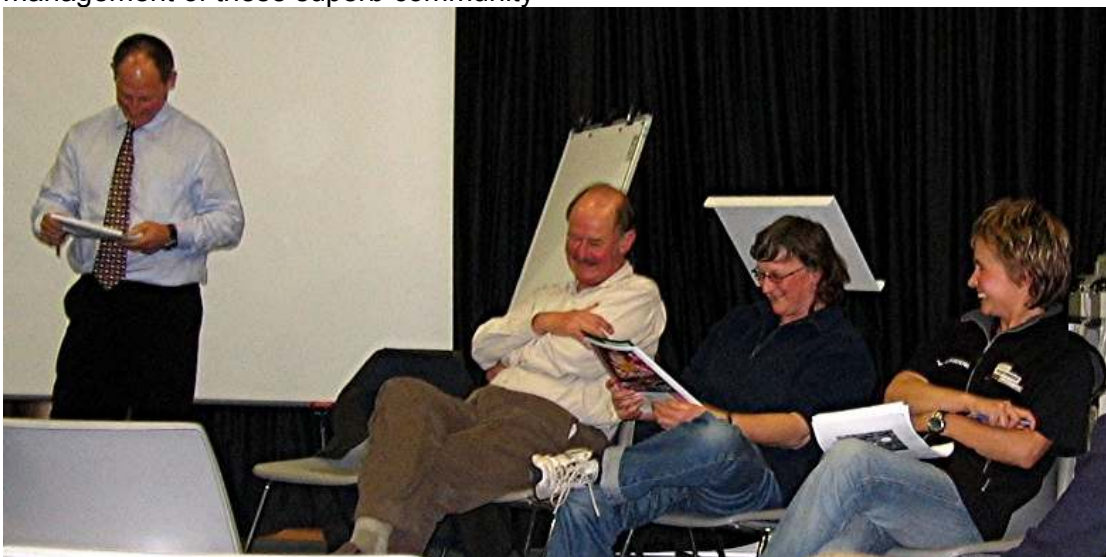


Rodney Read on the evolution of the roses in the Bolton Street Memorial Park, provided excellent background to the later discussion of current and future management of these superb community

assets. Curators for the Rose Garden and the Park - Leanne Killalea and Rachel Solomon - described the cultivation practices currently followed. There was considerable interest in the integrated pest management system, used by the Garden for a number of years, and in the mulching and fertilisation practices.

Practical advice on rose growing and handling was given by Father Paul Shanahan and Clive Hamilton from the Wellington Rose Society, and Ron Clare contributed on this theme with regard to old roses and the work of the Heritage Rose Society. The manager of the Garden and Park, David Sole, summed up on both days with his usual succinct, thoughtful and insightful commentary.

The Friends extend, to the presenters and to all who attended, our grateful thanks for their support; and to Winsome Shepherd for her work in putting the programmes together. We plan to publish, later in the year, the main papers presented at the seminars.



David Sole's summation amuses Lloyd Chapman, Rachel Solomon and Leanne Killalea.

EVENTS: Black Maire Planting

The Mayor of Wellington, Kerry Prendergast, planted a black maire sapling in the Garden on Thursday 27 June 2006.

The site, selected by Garden staff, was off Mamaku Way, close to the sole remaining mature black maire.

The President of the Friends, Ted Woodfield, welcomed the Mayor and others present. These included members, and students and teachers from Kelburn Normal School who had been especially invited.

David Sole, Manager of the Garden, spoke about the importance of the native bush remnants and restoration planting.



Barbara Mitcalfe, who with her colleague *Chris Horne*, had found the seedlings in the course of their 2003 survey of the bush areas for the Friends, spoke about the discovery, and the significance of black maire in the original bush in the Wellington region.

Peter Tijssen (Plant Collections Officer) described how the seedlings had been collected and propagated in the Garden Nursery. Over 40 saplings were now available for planting out. It was announced that two of the saplings are to be donated to Kelburn Normal School, for replanting in the bush gully, adjacent to the school, that students have been tending for some years.

The Mayor congratulated the Friends and the Garden staff on the work on this project and the milestone achieved. To mark the event the President presented a black maire bowl to the Mayor.



Peter Tijssen with the sapling, Ted Woodfield with the bowl.

The bowl had been crafted by a Hutt Valley wood turner, Graeme McIntyre, from wood recovered from long-felled trees in the Turangi area. The bowl had been purchased and donated anonymously to the Friends, by a member, for this occasion. The Mayor expressed her appreciation for the gift and said it will be displayed in the WCC Council Chambers.

Assisted by Garden staff, the Mayor then planted the black maire sapling to general acclaim.

Photos by Anne Mitcalfe

Guides' Activities

Ever wondered what the Garden's voluntary guides are there for? What do they really get up to? Jenny Hickman gives us an insider's guided tour (pun intended).

Some members of the Friends are Volunteer Guides in the Botanic Garden. The role of the guides is to enhance visitors' experience of the Garden. We do this in a number of ways.

One of the most important is to conduct groups of visitors around the Garden, telling them about the history of the garden and its plants. We have tour groups from overseas, from around NZ, and from the Wellington area. They include Horticultural Societies, Garden Groups, Farm Forestry Associations, conference groups, corporate groups, groups from U3A, Probus, churches, primary, secondary and tertiary students. We work with the group before their visit to plan a tour tailored to meet their needs in terms of the time they have available, the interests of the group, and their mobility. We do not have a set charge for our tours, but a donation to the Friends is very much appreciated.

We also run a series of regular walks on the third Sunday of the month. These are on special topics, such as 'Birds and Insects,' 'Garden History,' 'Fabulous Fuchsias,' 'The Begonia House,' 'Growing Roses,' 'Heritage Roses,' 'Giant Trees,' 'Food from Trees,' 'The Native Forest,' 'Amazing Australian Plants,' 'Use of NZ Native Plants for Food and Medicine,' 'Trees from the Jurassic' and many others. These walks are advertised in the "Feeling Great" brochure.

We also run walks for special programmes such as the Spring Festival ('Tulips, Bulbs and Blossoms,' 'Sensational Succulents,' 'Orchids for Everyone'), Herb Awareness Week ('The Herb Garden,' 'Herbal Trees,') and the Wellington City Council's 'Stepping Out' programme ('Sculptures,' 'Garden Plaques,' 'Beautiful Bark,' 'Downhill Walk

to the City'). These walks are advertised in special brochures for these events.

One of our main activities is to act as hosts at the Cable Car Entrance and in the Rose Garden during the summer, on the days when cruise ships are here. We welcome visitors and provide information on what there is to see in the Botanic Garden and how to get there, as well as general information about Wellington and NZ. We wear a navy uniform consisting of shirt, hat and jacket so that we can be recognised easily by the visitors. Our visitors appreciate the information the guides provide about the Botanic Garden and about New Zealand. They also enjoy the opportunity to talk to the locals, and we enjoy meeting visitors from around the world. Two American visitors fell on their feet this summer, when they asked Pat how they would get from the Garden to Otari-Wilton's Bush. As it was a Saturday, and buses were running infrequently, she volunteered to drive them there. After their visit there was still time available before their ship sailed, and she asked them what they would like to see. They said they were not interested in the city but would like to see the countryside. Pat then drove them up the coast to Paekakariki, and back to Wellington via Hayward's Hill.

The Botanic Garden provides suitable habitats for glow-worms, and some of our most popular tours are walks in the evenings to see the glow-worms during the autumn, winter and spring. During the dry summer months there is a marked decline in the number of glow-worms present, but the populations build up again after autumn rain.

As well as our guiding activities in the Botanic Garden, we provide guides for tours of the Sir Truby King Garden on their annual House and Garden Open Day.

We also have meetings and a get-together with morning tea to plan our forthcoming activities, sometimes followed by a walk or talk from a member of staff.

Currently we have a membership of 19 active guides, and four guide trainees. Training of new guides takes place over the winter months, before the busy summer season. Trainees are provided with a Training Manual and receive training, which involves about eight to ten two-hour sessions in the Garden. If you are interested in plants, the Botanic Garden, and enjoy meeting and talking to people, guiding is a worthwhile and rewarding activity. During the training,

and forever more, you continue to discover new plants in the Garden and interesting information about them. If you would like to join the Guides or assist the guides with hosting during the cruise ship visits, we would love to hear from you. Please phone Pauline at the Treehouse on 499-1400, and she will put you in touch with us.

My thanks to the guides for their enthusiasm and their contributions to our guiding activities throughout the year, and to the Botanic Garden staff for their friendly support and information, which is always given willingly.

Jenny Hickman

Membership Update

Welcome to new members Mary Thompson and James Crook- fresh from the UK and keen to meet and get involved with locals and issues. James is a keen bird watcher – the feathered kind! – and Mary an avid gardener. Also a warm welcome to Jane Humble who joined the Friends after attending the Heritage Rose Seminar.

We are pleased that after our membership drive last year, many have

renewed and are actively taking part in events the Friends organise.

Thanks to all members who've renewed promptly. A few more renewals are eagerly awaited to keep funds ticking over.

A reminder that your membership card entitles you to a discount for food at the Begonia Tea House and goods in the Begonia House shop.

Florence de Ruiter

Friends' Submission on the Long Term Council Community Plan 2006/07 – 2015/16

While we welcome the recognition given to the contributions of the botanical gardens to achieving the long-term community outcomes set out in the Plan, we consider even stronger acknowledgement should be made of the special factors that mark **the Wellington Botanic Garden** as deserving additional, continuing, high levels of support. These factors are

* it is a permanent, protected, part of the urban landscape; unique in being so close to the city centre;

* it is **the** focal point for the recreational and environmental interests of a high proportion of the population of Wellington;

* it is the second most visited site (after Te Papa) for visitors to Wellington from within New Zealand and from overseas;

* it contains significant heritage pre-European native bush remnants, and several protected buildings;

In terms of a "sense of place" the Botanic Garden represents Wellington as much as, if

not more, than any other civic amenity or identifiable feature in the city. The objective must be to ensure the highest standards are realized in the preservation and maintenance of the resource and in its presentation to citizens and visitors. Continuous improvement is a fundamental element in good stewardship of such a resource.

The Friends have worked since our inception to draw attention to the historic and heritage features of the Garden. This culminated in registration of the Garden in 2005 as a Historic Area by the Historic Places Trust. To fulfil the implicit obligations of that registration it is imperative that the Council in the Long-Term Plan gives care and maintenance of the heritage features the highest priority. Our first recommendation relates to that matter.

Our other recommendations support specific proposals in the draft Plan relating to the upgrading of the Treehouse, the Nursery, and the Cable Car Precinct; and propose two additional provisions relating to environmental education programmes and performance measurements.

Recommendation One

Identify the pre-European native bush remnants in the Botanic Garden as a heritage showpiece for citizens and visitors, and make a specific funding allocation covering

*** the resources required for continuing care and custodial management of this resource to ensure there is no further deterioration, whether natural or human-induced, threatening their survival;**

*** enhancing visitor appeal and increasing public awareness by improved directional and interpretative signage, and new features such as specially designed “walks”**

*** publicizing the resource in promotional activities.**

The heritage bush remnants deserve much greater awareness among Wellington citizens and visitors. No other New Zealand city has such a resource so close to the centre. The areas suffered from benign neglect for many years. Recently, responding to initiatives by the Friends, increased attention has been given, within the constraints of overall resources, to the

protection of the bush from invasive plants and animals, and with buffer planting. This is good, but more remains to be done, with a measure of urgency, to ensure these features can be enjoyed by generations of Wellingtonians to come.

The key priority now is to establish and implement comprehensive programmes for **all** the bush remnants, particularly the removal of pest, and other invasive, plants, and restoration planting. A specific funding allocation should provide for engaging specialized expertise to give direction to and supervise the remedial and restoration work in the native bush remnants. This is essential, in our view, to save the resource from further degradation and loss. The development of interpretative walks would greatly enhance the visitor experience.

What we propose is fully consistent with many of the long-term outcomes set out on pages 162 to 164 of the draft. Acceptance of the proposal would lead to identifying, on page 168, this activity as a proposed development in 2006-7.

Recommendation Two

Confirm the proposed future developments in the Garden involving the upgrade of the Treehouse and the Nursery and the walkways in this area. (Page 168)

The Treehouse facility, including the associated buildings, is the information and administrative centre for the Garden. It also serves vital educational, social and community roles. It is the meeting place for the Friends and has a valuable Library. It needs to be made a more welcoming and user friendly facility by landscaping the area to provide more obvious and attractive entry and to accommodate large groups of school children and others; and by providing new and/or improved space for the Library and for the Friends, and for the display of historic materials about the Garden. We support projects to achieve those ends.

We support also redevelopment of the Nursery at the Botanic Garden. We regard this facility as vital to the propagation and growing-on of propagules from the bush remnants for planting back in those areas. The successful propagation of black maire in the Nursery is a fine example of such activity. Adequate space and resources must be

retained in the Nursery for similar work in future.

Recommendation Three

Allocate additional resources for environmental education programmes to be provided through the Treehouse facilities in the Botanic Garden.

There is recognition in the draft Plan (page 168) of the important role the botanical gardens play in conservation and environmental education, but no specific programmes are identified in this section. The Friends of the Botanic Garden contribute to this work now through our Guided Walks, Seminars and other events. We see a need for increased activity directed towards students of all ages. The Treehouse facilities in the Botanic Garden could be more fully utilized for programmes arranged by the Garden management as well as interested community organisations. These could focus on the horticultural and conservation work already undertaken by staff in all the botanical gardens. Additional resources for the engagement of appropriate staff to develop and manage educational programme should be approved. The scope for synergy with the EnviroSchools project, referred to on page 176, should be examined.

Recommendation Four

Accelerate the work identified on page 135 to improve marketing and enhance the visitor experience in the area at the top of the Cable Car.

Enhancement of the visitor appeal of the Garden is vital to achieve several of the outcomes set out in the Plan. Attractive, well-designed and welcoming gateways are fundamental to attracting more, and repeat, visitors. The Cable Car/Upland Road

approach is that used by most out of town visitors to Wellington. The present layout is outdated, unattractive and confusing, falling short of the standard desired for such a significant resource and detracting from the earlier landscaping at the lookout.

We support the intention to fund improvements in the "Cable Car Precinct" with three provisos

- * the project include provision of facilities for the Guides/Hosts, provided by our organisation, for shelter, and safekeeping for their possessions, maps, brochures.
- * the project incorporate appropriate signage, with associated information brochures, directing visitors to clearly designated "walks" – bush, sculptures, Downhill to the City – and other features in the Botanic Garden.
- * the timetable for the work be accelerated for completion in the 2007/08 year rather than 2008/09 as proposed.

Recommendation Five

Include additional performance measurements to those set out on page 169, to cover

- * numbers/ proportion of visitors from out of town
- * visitor satisfaction

These additional measurements would be desirable to focus attention on the economic contribution of the Botanic Garden, and the other gardens, as visitor destinations in the City, and the "satisfaction" levels, as further means of identifying factors needing rectification and to support ongoing expenditures for operations and capital development.

GLOW WORM WALKS

These delightful tours to a secret and magical night world are back on. Bookings are essential as places are limited, so ring 499 1400 to book, then meet at the Founders Entrance at 8pm wearing sturdy shoes and carrying a torch. A gold coin donation will be appreciated. Dates are:

FRIDAY 25 AUGUST	7.30pm
FRIDAY 29 SEPTEMBER	8pm
FRIDAY 6 OCTOBER	8pm (special family tour as part of the Spring festival)
FRIDAY 27 OCTOBER	8.30pm

Coming Events

Sunday 20 August **GW**

"On the Rocks - a Gardener's Cocktail"
A tour of the gems in the Rock Garden.
Light walking: 1 hour.

Friday 25 August Glow Worm Walk

Sunday 17 September **GW**

"What's for Dinner?" For fun and plenty of walking, bring your imagination on a trip to the tree "supermarket" to gather items for a virtual meal. Moderate walk: 1½ hours. Meet at the Cable Car Entrance.

23 September – 8 October **SPRING FESTIVAL**

Saturday 23 September **Otari Open Day & Plant Sale**

Monday 25 September

Tulips, Bulbs & Blossoms. Take a stroll through the Main Garden and find out more about the fantastic tulips and other spring flowers. Bring your camera! Meet 10.30am at the Founders Entrance (gold coin donation) 1½ hr guided walk.

Tuesday 26 September

Sensational Succulents. Check out the garden's amazing collection of succulents and learn how they have adapted to their environment. Meet 11am at the Treehouse (gold coin donation). 1hr guided walk.

Thursday 28 September

Spring in the Begonia House. A 1-hour guided tour through the breathtakingly beautiful Begonia House. Meet 11am in the Begonia House foyer (gold coin donation).

Friday 29 September Glow Worm Walk

Sunday October 1

Tulip Sunday/Friends Plant Sale

Monday 2 October

Orchids – from the planter to the vase. Enjoy a promenade past the amazing array of orchids resident in the Begonia House and learn all the ins and outs of how to nurture these precious blooms. Meet 11am in the Begonia House foyer (gold coin donation).

Wednesday 4 October

On The Rocks – A delightful guided tour of the little gems of the rock garden. Meet 11am at the Treehouse (gold coin donation).

Friday 6 October Glow Worm Walk

15 October

GW

"Early Flowering Heritage Roses" Discover the early flowering heritage roses in Bolton Street Memorial Park. Light walking: 1 hour. Meet at the Entrance to Bolton Street Memorial Park.

Friday 27 October Glow Worm Walk

19 November

GW

"The Lady Norwood Rose Garden" The Lady Norwood Rose Garden is one of the gems of the city and of the Botanic Garden. Here is an opportunity to wander amongst 110 different beds with over 3,000 plants and to learn about the roses. Don't forget your camera. Little walking involved: 1 hour. Meet at the fountain in the Rose Garden.

GW = Guided walks, held on the third Sunday of the month at 11am. **Bookings are not required** and 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. For enquiries please phone the Treehouse Visitors Centre 04 499 1400