



Newsletter

February 2003

Featuring:

What Are Friends For?

Guides and Walks

Monterey Pine

Bush Remnant Survey

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This space is for the new president!!!

Meanwhile...ACTING PRESIDENT'S NOTES

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and worthwhile New Year.

Come on members, there must be someone out there that you know who would enjoy the role of president and someone else who would take over the duties of secretary.

With or without a president, the good news is that the FOBG are to have a Valentine's party on Thursday 13 February in the Begonia House Foyer (see notice elsewhere in this newsletter).

We are planning a Spring Breakfast again, to celebrate the flowering of the Magnolias, and combining it with a Floral Art and Plant Naming Display.

There will be another Tulip Sunday/ Plant Sales Day and in November and December Floral Art Displays. Named plants of interest will also feature.

The guides have a very full programme of excellent topics and venues for their stimulating and informative activities.

This should be a great year for us all.

*Richard Nanson
Acting President*

What Friends Are For

Winsome Shepherd outlines the reasons the Friends of the Wellington Botanic Garden exists and looks at future plans.

The Friends wish to:

- 🌿 Enjoy and help others enjoy the Garden and all it has to offer
- 🌿 Add value to what the WCC provides for the public
- 🌿 Promote and support the educational, recreational and scientific functions of the Garden
- 🌿 Assist in acquiring funds for special projects and assets
- 🌿 Promote and maintain the Guide system

The above purpose was first formulated in 1998 and is as valid today as when first promoted.

We need more members and we need more funding in order to carry out new projects.

PLEASE CAN YOU HELP!

New projects can include installation of a trial watering system for Horseshoe Bend Bush; the development of the James Hector Memorial Walk; the formation of a lookout on one of the original triangulation points for the Garden (near Mariri Road and cited in the redevelopment plan for the Garden).

If our Garden is to retain its importance such goals are needed for further development. *You* can help by supporting the Friends by finding new members and seeking donations.

History of the Dunedin Botanic Garden

The Friends of the Wellington Botanic Garden have purchased a copy of the newly-published history of the Dunedin Botanic Garden and will be presenting it to our Botanic Library early this year. The book is well-presented and is a useful addition to our knowledge of the development of New Zealand botanic gardens.

Particularly interesting to us is the early involvement of James Hector and John Buchanan, who were later to lay the foundations of the Wellington Botanic Garden.

Of more recent interest is the restructuring of Dunedin's Council Services, which began in 1989 and which echo our own Council's restructuring.

At the Christmas function in the Treehouse Derek Fry made reference

to a mellowing of these changes, found to be necessary as weaknesses have been showing up.

No doubt more is yet to be told if New Zealand's botanic gardens are to evolve as truly botanical.

The author Eric Dunlop concludes, "The only way we can guarantee that the Garden will have a future is if we are watchful in conserving what has been achieved, and if we persist with the spirit of enterprise needed to bring about new developments. These aims will be best accomplished by curators, administrators and supporters who have an enduring passion for plants in all their wonderful variety and their ability to feed and nurture the spirit."

These remarks apply equally to us and our Garden.

Winsome Shepherd

Guides

The cruise ship season is now well in progress, with 25 ships expected to arrive in Wellington this summer. Visitors and guides alike are enjoying the weather, so much warmer and drier than this time last year. This season's cooler spring has meant that the pohutukawa trees are flowering later than usual, so more of our visitors are able to enjoy their splendour. A visitor from Auckland was even spotted photographing one of our trees!

We are enjoying meeting interesting visitors of many nationalities. This is our first summer in our new navy uniforms, and we are finding ourselves busier than previously, as more visitors are approaching us for information and directions. Our suggestions for what to see and routes to take through the Botanic Garden seem to be much appreciated.

In March the Wellington City Council is organising a "Stepping Out" programme to encourage Wellingtonians to get out and about in our beautiful city. We are offering three walks for this programme.

The first is our monthly Sunday walk "People and Plants: Survivors in Australia, Part One", which looks at how plants have evolved to survive in Australia, and how people have learnt to use them for food, fibre, and timber. The walk is on Sunday 16 March at 11am and the meeting place is in the foyer of the Begonia House. The walk finishes at the bottom of the Treehouse lift at 12.30pm. Most of this walk is on the flat. The postponement date is Sunday 30 March.



Summer City entertains in the Soundshell...

The second is "West Way Wanders," a tour of the interesting trees along West Way, including ginkgo, rimu, kauri, and several species of oak, pine, and redwood. The walk is on Tuesday 25 March at 10.30am, meeting at the Founders' Entrance, and finishing at the Duck Pond at 12 noon. Most of this walk is on the flat. The postponement date is Wednesday 26 March.

The third is "A Walk on the Wild Side," a tour of the less frequented nooks and crannies in the Botanic Garden. This walk is on Thursday 27 March, at 10.30am, meeting at the Founders' Entrance and finishing back at the starting point at 12 noon. The postponement date is Tuesday 1 April.

The Wellington City Council will be promoting these walks, and we hope they will be well supported by the Friends and members of the public.

Our programme of guided walks has now been finalised and is included in this newsletter. The walks vary in the amount of walking involved, and we shall try to indicate this in advance. There is a moderate amount of walking in our first walk "Insects, Birds, and Plants" on February 16.

Once again, I would like to thank the guides for their support and enthusiasm. I hope everyone has an interesting and rewarding summer.

Jenny Hickman



...and lights up the Friends' Duckpond Pavilion

Man In The Trees – *Pinus radiata*

Another chapter from **Philip Tomlinson's** notes for his highly successful guided walk. As noted in the last instalment, Dr James Hector recognised that large scale removal of forest would cause timber and firewood shortages and exposure of farmland to extreme weather. Tree species from around the world were imported to be trialled in the Botanic Garden...

After the trees had been trialled, those that showed potential were sent to all parts of NZ for further trials. One timber species proved to be extremely successful, ahead of all the others, in all parts of NZ, for its rapid growth and good timber, and that of course is the **Monterey Pine**, or *Pinus radiata*. The species that proved to be very successful as a shelter tree was the **Monterey cypress**, or *Cupressus macrocarpa*. Both of these trees come from the Monterey Peninsula in California, where, with their stunted and windswept appearance, they bear little resemblance to the massive pine and macrocarpa trees we see in NZ today.

Monterey Pine comes from three distinct unconnected areas of central coastal California, named from one locality, the Monterey Peninsula. It is now rare in its natural habitat, because of fungal disease and the encroachment of towns and cities. In recent years genetically improved trees have been imported back into California from New Zealand, and these are now cross hybridising with the native stock, raising questions of the status of the native genotype in its natural habitat.

The Garden trees, being from wild collected natural stock, are therefore important as a store of this natural genotype, and effort is required to preserve this important resource for future generations.

Pinus radiata

Pine resin was used in California long before the territory became part of the United States. The origin of the name "California" may be linked to pine trees and the resin they produced. Padre Arroyo, one of the early priests who

converted the Indians of California to Christianity and ultimately wrote a vocabulary of the California Indian languages, told an officer of Captain Beechey's expedition in 1826 that the word "California" was a corruption of the Spanish word **colofón** meaning "resin". He indicated that it was suggested by the numerous pines, *Pinus radiata*, that produced resin around the old Spanish capital of Monterrey.

Amongst the first Monterey Pines brought into NZ are these in the Botanic Garden, dating from seed imported in 1869. The 'founder' of the Garden, James Hector, and Alfred Ludlam, who was also involved with the garden from the earliest days, may both have had *Pinus radiata* in their possession from 1865. Plants may well have been planted in the Garden from around that time, although documentary evidence for this is not available. Certainly records show *P. radiata*, (as *P. insignis*) were field planted in June 1871 (24, plus 48 shortly after) with seed regularly purchased from 1870. From 1871 to 1872, 361 *P. radiata* were planted.

The first NZ introduction in 1859 had been made in Canterbury, by the Acland family at Mount Peel Station. This was only some 30 years after its discovery by European collectors, in 1830. In the early days they were referred to as *Pinus insignis*.

Monterey Pine is a three-needled, fast growing tree and can reach 30 m (100 feet). It adapts to a variety of conditions but does not like extreme heat and drought. It is rather shallow-rooting and inclined to blow over in very strong winds. During the Wahine storm in April

1968, many of the Botanic Garden's Monterey Pines were blown down.

The natural variation in the trees can be seen from plants in the garden; some, excellent timber specimens and some, where you would be lucky to obtain a straight matchstick. With our trees now some 130 years old and reaching toward their usual maximum age of around 150 years, the preservation of this genetic heritage is becoming a matter of urgency. In a production forest trees are usually harvested between 20-40 years old.

Over the period 1869 to 1879, over 56 pounds of seed was imported from a number of American suppliers, which was distributed around NZ, with many plants raised in nurseries in the Garden. Seed from Matamata was used for initial planting of the pine forests in the central North Island, establishing our forestry industry, and it is likely seed for those plants was from Wellington importations. From 1870 to 1885, some 500,000 *Pinus radiata* seedlings were distributed throughout the country from the Wellington Botanic Garden.

Pinus radiata was originally brought into the country as a shelter and firewood tree although by the end of the

19th century its timber capabilities were becoming recognised. It was not until shortly after the First World War that significant timber planting occurred. Due to many years of selection, for the best trees for rapid growth rate and quality of timber, the trees seen in the pine plantations today do not resemble these trees in the Garden. These trees are the progeny of unselected natural stock, and contain a wide range of genetic variation, which is why it has been such a successful tree from which to select the desired characteristics for our timber industry.

It is an important timber tree in several parts of the world, and the number one timber tree in NZ.

Overseas it is valued for shade and as an ornamental, in particular providing barriers to wind and noise. It is also used for Christmas trees. In Kenya it is used for resin production, producing one of the highest quality resins of all pine species, although not in great quantities.

Next issue – *Pinus pinea*

VALENTINES DAY FUNCTION



DATE: Thursday 13 February
PLACE: Begonia House Foyer

TIME: 5.30-7.30pm

**For those with or without Valentines, or those just seeking
- come and enjoy an evening of Cuban 'Buena Vista' music with
guitar-playing Roberto!**

Drinks and nibbles a certainty. The weather - who knows! Charge \$10 each

Profile – Amber Wilkie

Parks and Gardens Marketing and Visitor Services Coordinator

Recently taking over a large chunk of Leanne Killalea's previous job, Amber Wilkie comes to Parks and Gardens from the City Gallery, where she was Marketing Coordinator for two years



As with any new job, this one involves a steep learning curve for Amber, but at least the surroundings are familiar. In a neat piece of synchronicity she used to visit the Treehouse often – her mother Sue was a Treehouse receptionist. “When I was at varsity I used to walk up the hill to catch a lift home with Mum,” says Amber.

After gaining a BA in Art History and Classical Studies she went to the UK, doing office management for a design company. On her return to NZ, “Marketing found me,” she says, and what she enjoys most about it is that it’s a very creative job with lots of people contact.

Her role here is mainly focused on marketing for the Botanic Garden and Otari as well as all the other sites and activities of Parks and Gardens as a whole. She looks at goals and objectives (such as identifying target audiences), works through promotional strategies and plans, handles advertising, press releases, visitor research including visitor surveys and people counts, keeps signage and fliers up-to-date, assists Recreation

Wellington with their promotions (Summer City being an obvious and topical venture), audits current marketing campaigns to see if they’re working and if that isn’t enough, updates the Botanic Gardens website!

She looks after all the events for the Botanic Garden and Otari, in particular Spring Festival, Rose Week and the Christmas Carols evening.

Needless to say, researching her own job is still going on. She started three weeks before Rose Week so has hardly had time to breathe in since (but still managed to cheerfully find the time to talk to me for this article –Ed).

A Wellingtonian who loves her city, Amber is rapt to have the chance to promote “the great facilities we have here,” as she puts it. She doesn’t have a horticultural background but enjoys gardening. Anyway, “The gardeners here are the real experts,” she says.

Amber can’t always be found in her Treehouse office. She spends one day a week, usually Friday, ‘in town’ at the WCC offices.

Spare time? Amber and her partner have just bought a house which they are doing up and she loves to haunt second-hand shops, collecting 40s and 50s furniture. During the times in her life when she has a little more time to spare, Amber designs and makes jewellery. Unfortunately for the rest of us, she only does one-off pieces and, “I keep it all to myself,” she says firmly.

Bush Remnant

Barabara Mitcalfe and Chris Horne have been commissioned by the Friends to do an updated survey of the bush remnant in the Wellington Botanic Garden

The Friends of the Garden are concerned that the health of the Botanic Garden's bush remnant is such that it will not survive in its present richness unless pukatea, titoki, maire and hinau regenerate.

The seedlings germinate on the forest floor but do not grow more than six inches or so high.

Documented and preserved since the 1860s, this bush remnant was given its own Management Plan in 1993 – an important document, but one which has not yet been acted on because of a shortage of funds for staffing.

With the support of Manager-Curator Tony Williams, the Friends are paying over \$2,000 from their funds for an

update on the condition of the bush following eradication of possums; recommendations for replanting some of the species noted in Buchanan's 1875 list; recommendations on eradication of the non-endemic species *Pittosporum ralphii* and karaka which are spreading rapidly and consideration of the installation of summer watering mechanisms (for over 100 years the catchment area has received a restricted amount of water).

In commissioning this new survey the Friends hope that the City Council will **increase funding for the Gardens for this specific purpose**, which is necessary if the remnant is to continue to be viable.

Winsome Shepherd

Cuttings

- 'The Interisland Line Summer City' festival has been full-on in the gardens, with daily concerts and events in the Soundshell and Dell and the lovely Gardens Magic Lighting display, designed by Mike Farrand and installed by the MJF lighting team. The bubble machine really is magic.
- Despite bad weather, November's Rose Week was a success, with good attendance both at the rose garden and at the series of free talks, demos and walks on offer.
- Also despite bad weather, stopping it being held in the Soundshell, the annual Volunteers' Christmas Party was enjoyed by all who attended. Where would we be without the Treehouse?!
- The *Hippeastrum* collection has been added to by a donation of named cultivars from Beryl Brown of Titahi Bay, including a NZ one 'Snow Goose'
- New books in the Botanic Garden library include 'Remarkable Trees', 'Fragrant Trees & Shrubs', 'Succulents', 'Hippeastrums', 'Auriculas' and 'Environmental Histories of NZ'
- New Garden staff include Amber Wilkie (profiled in this issue), retail manager Eljay Maulder, Volunteer coordinator Myfanwy Hill and assistant gardener (nursery) Corey Turner
- A Magnolia and black beech have been removed from the Main garden after declining for a number of years
- A series of walks will be held in March for the 'Steppin' Out' promotion aimed at encouraging walking and highlighting the walk opportunities available to Wellingtonians.

Coming Events 2003

On now till February 22

The ever-popular *Interisland Line Summer City*. Highlights include midweek outdoor concerts with local and national performers and special Sunday Showcases. Pick up a free programme from the Treehouse Visitor Centre or the Begonia House.

Thursday 13 February, 5.30-7.30pm

Friends' Valentine's Day function, Begonia House Foyer. \$10 per person

February 16, 11am

GW

'Insects, Birds, and Plants'. A moderate amount of walking is involved, some uphill.

February 17- 23

New Zealand Herb Awareness Week, Botanic Garden

March

Steppin' Out – Walk Promotion Month. For further information or details of walks, pick up a copy of the "Feeling Great Steppin' Out" brochure at the Treehouse Visitor Centre or Wellington Information Centre

March 9, 2pm

Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust Sunday walk – 'Jungle Walk'. The New Zealand forest owes much to its tropical past. Explore the jungle elements of our rainforest. Stout footwear required. \$3

March 16, 11 am

GW

'People and Plants: Survivors in Australia. Part One.' Survival in Australia has been difficult for both people and plants. This walk looks at how plants have evolved to survive in Australia, and how people have learnt to use them for food, fibre, and timber. A moderate amount of walking is involved, but mostly on the flat. Meet in the Foyer of the Begonia House (postponement date Sunday 30 March)

March 16, 2pm

Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust – 'Upstarts in the Bush'. A fascinating walk where you will be introduced to the amazing range of plants that grow on, up, or down

the trees at Otari-Wilton's Bush. Stout footwear required. \$3

March 23

Wellington Rose Society Autumn Rose Show. Lady Norwood Rose Garden

Tuesday March 25, 10.30am

Friends of the Botanic Garden
'West Way Wanders' - A tour of the interesting trees along West Way in the Botanic Gardens (postponement date Wednesday 26 March).

Thursday March 27, 10.30am

Friends of the Botanic Garden
'Walk on the Wild Side' - A tour of the less frequented nooks and crannies in the Botanic Garden (postponement date Tuesday 1 April)

April 20, 11am

GW

'Autumn Foliage': a family walk to discover what you can make with colourful fallen leaves. Little walking involved.

May 17

Berhampore Nursery Open Day
This popular annual event includes a plant sale, tours, demonstrations and displays.

May 18, 11am

GW

'People and Plants: Survivors in Australia'. Part Two. More walking involved than in Part One, and uphill walking included. Meet at the Duck Pond.

June 15, 11am

GW

'Trees in the Service of Man': a continuation of our "Man and Trees" walk in 2002. Meet at the Duck Pond. 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.