



P O Box 28-065
Kelburn, Wellington

Newsletter

March 2007

Featuring: **Art In The Pond**
Irresistible Bulbs
Treasured Tool Sheds



The Friends' Midsummer Event was a delightful mixture of art installation, yummy food and catching up with Friends.

Phil Tomlinson took this great shot of one of Paul Thompson's works framed by a water pickerel bloom.

President's Patch

Dear Members

Our congratulations are extended to Garden management and staff for the splendid appearance of the Garden throughout this demanding summer of contrary weather and for the full programme of events attracting thousands of visitors. Great credit is due to all involved.

We have made our own contributions to enhancing the appearance of the Garden through the new entrances to the Pinetum which were completed in December, and the replacement of a number of the "historic" path markers.

Our members' event in the Begonia House on 21 February, and the opening of the exhibition by photographer Paul Thompson, is reported on elsewhere. Regrettably, given that this was our main summer event, not as many members attended as we had hoped. Those who did come had a most enjoyable evening. Your Committee is always open to comments and suggestions for our programme.

We have welcomed and strongly support the proposed listing of the Stables, Mess Room and Tool Shed in the Garden under the heritage provisions of the District Plan. Background material prepared by the Council is included in this Newsletter.

The Committee is continuing its work on the proposed Bush Walk. A report has been received from consultants Barbara Mitcalfe and Chris Horne. At its March meeting the Committee will consider a submission to Garden management on the design for interpretative walks and associated signage and a brochure. I anticipate we will publish the details in the next Newsletter.

We will shortly be considering the Winter Seminars for 2007. If any member wishes to put forward suggestions for topics please write to or otherwise contact Secretary Frank Wilson.

Ted Woodfield

Newsletter Distribution

Now that our website – friendswbg.org.nz [see Phil's update on page 8-Ed] – is up and running, the Committee is considering how best to handle the future distribution of the Newsletter to members.

We know that many members will be increasingly expecting to access websites for communications and information from organizations to which they belong. Other members will prefer to continue to receive material in the traditional way.

To avoid any difficulties for members we plan to consult you all later in the year. When we send out subscription renewal notices we will include a simple form asking you how you would like to receive the Newsletter in the future. The forms can be returned with the subscription payment.

In the meantime we will mail out Newsletters in the normal way, and also post them on the website so you can have a look at them there as well.

Ted

Botanic Bulletin

Pauline, our reception/administrator, came in to see me today to say that she was receiving great feedback from the visitors in town on the QE11 and that a number were making return visits from past years. Furthermore, the crew from the Statendam told her Wellington Botanic Garden is the 'best garden in the world'...of course this is not news to us! It does however reinforce the importance of a great operating team and the support we receive from the Friends through the Guides and the Friends activities. We are hosting the Wellington International Marketing Group meeting at the Treehouse next week and I shall certainly be taking the opportunity to rub in the contribution that the Botanic Garden makes to the City.

I don't think I can go any further without mentioning the roses this year. The combination of a late cold spring and early summer and the team's ever improving cultural practices have meant an almost seamless display of roses this year with minimal evidence of pest and disease infestation. This year the beds were composted rather than mulched and, along with the continuation of the Integrated Pest Management programme, the soils drenched with seaweed fertiliser to restimulate the soil organisms to create a better soil structure. The results are showing already and bode well for the coming years.

Early March will see the Botanic Garden host the Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) Integrated Pest Management training seminar as part of the professional development programme for staff of Botanic Gardens being organised by BGANZ. We have had such a good response from around the country that there are not even any places left for WBG staff! Leanne Killalea and Kate Kidman will be leading the seminar with Rob Lucas, who has worked very closely with us over the years, providing assistance.

We have released the draft of the Otari Collections review to staff. Modelled on the success of the one prepared for the Botanic Garden it focuses very much on the visitor

experience and the 'big picture' view of the garden, but with specific peculiarities that relate to Otari. I am looking forward to the feedback on the review which fits nicely alongside the work being undertaken on the Otari Management Plan.

James Jones's team have been quietly working away on the bush areas and in particular the Salamanca and Glen Slopes. Honeysuckle and Old Mans Beard have been treated in the last two weeks and there has been continuing removal of exotic trees from the forest areas. Of note this year have been carpets of *Prunus avium* seedlings which has been noticed both here and at Otari. We are shortly to have a wax tag survey undertaken by Greater Wellington to assess possum and rat numbers in the Garden. There will be two 200m transects in the Botanic Garden and another in Bolton Street Memorial Park. It will be interesting to see the results that this throws up.

Work continues on the design work for the replacement of the Botanic Garden nursery building with modern, easier to maintain and ergonomically more suitable structures which will make much more efficient use of the available space at the nursery. We are expecting the initial designs to be completed shortly and to be in a position to apply for resource consent for the project. At this stage construction is scheduled to commence in autumn 2008.

Laura Wards, our Visitor Services Officer, has resigned and we are currently in the process of recruiting for her replacement who we expect to be on board in 4-6 weeks. We are also recruiting for a Retail & Functions Assistant for the shop. It will be good to get those two positions filled and the new people bedded into their roles.

In the meantime – the planting of the tulips looms!

David Sole

Art In The Pond - Friends Mid-Summer Event

Tuesday 21 February at the Begonia House – a sparkling confection of flowers, music, food, drink and “The Philosopher’s Garden” photo installation by Paul Thompson. With the backdrop of the rose garden in full bloom, what more could be asked for on a splendid evening?



Members and guests were welcomed by President Ted Woodfield, who invited Paul to talk about his exhibition. Posing the question “What is creativity”, Paul sought to provide an answer through the background to the installation.

“Firstly, the location – a lily pond in a conservatory. There are strong connections between the two. Conservatories are not new; they were originally called orangeries, and were used by wealthy people in Europe as places to grow exotic fruit like oranges.

The great rise in the use of conservatories happened during the 19th century, when the Duke of Devonshire’s gardener, Joseph Paxton, designed bigger and better glasshouses, leading to the greatest of them all, the Crystal Palace in London, where the Great Exhibition of 1851 was held.

Paxton said he got the idea for glass arches from seeing a young girl on a giant water-lily leaf in Kew Gardens, and thinking about the marvellous strength of the branching ribs. Thus inspiration, combined with mathematics and the ready availability of the new materials of flat glass and steel, was enough to prepare the way for conservatories for all - not just an aristocratic elite.

The conservatory, like the English railway station with its arched glazed roof, is a real

symbol of Victorian engineering. But that very idea of engineering came from somewhere else. At its roots was the Greek way of thinking – mathematical, scientific and enquiring.

The ancient Greek philosophers discussed and debated ideas about the world in garden settings and often held their academies or schools there. One of their foundation enquiries was about how the world was made. They thought it was composed of five elements – earth, air, water, fire, and the materials of which the Heavens are made.

These elements are what the photographs in the exhibition are about. Another great Victorian invention was photography. A Victorian camera was very much like a little box (or a larger box) on a spindly tripod – somewhat like the photo-installation in the pond.



So here we have linked conservatories, lily ponds, Greeks, the elements, engineering, gardens and the camera – a rather complex set of associations but one that seems, to me, clear, interesting and fascinating. In fact so fascinating that it led to me creating this work, and thinking that the Begonia House was a most appropriate space to display it.”Paul expressed his gratitude to the Manager of the Garden and the Friends for supporting the exhibition and hosting the event.

David Sole, Manager of the Garden, said that exhibitions of this kind fitted very well into the concept of the modern Botanic

Garden as encompassing art, education, research and associated programmes as well as recreation. He and his team had been pleased to work with Paul in bringing the project to fruition.

Councillor Ray Ahipene-Mercer, Arts and Culture Portfolio Leader in the Wellington City Council, in declaring open the exhibition, congratulated the Friends, Garden management and Paul Thompson for their collaboration in arranging the event. He spoke of his personal interest in creative arts, restoration planting in the city and the Botanic Garden, and paid tribute to the work of voluntary organizations such as the Friends.

The exhibition will be open until the end of March.



Members who were not able to attend the event are encouraged to take time out to visit the Begonia House and see it for themselves.

*Ted Woodfield
photos Elizabeth King & Phil Tomlinson*





Pinetum



The Pinetum in the Botanic Garden was designated to mark the historical role of conifers in the Garden. In the book *Botanic Garden of Wellington* (co-authored with Walter Cook, 1988) Winsome Shepherd wrote, “The establishment of a permanent Pinetum would serve as a reminder that Wellington played a major role in the early distribution of conifer in New Zealand.”

The Pinetum, as established today, reminds us of the importance of conifers in the Garden – today’s skyline is largely from those original conifers. As well as containing some of the earlier planted species, the Pinetum has had some newer plantings.

The Friends are working to give it greater attention. We have established a tradition of inviting each new Governor General to plant a tree within – a reminder of the early days when the Governor of the colony was also chairman of the Botanic Garden board.

The two entrances, plus the James Hector Memorial, have been donated by the Friends.

Story and photo by Rosalind Iles

[The Friends have a Guided Walk on Monday March at 2pm to visit the Sir James Hector Memorial and investigate the history of the Pinetum starting at the Duck Pond. Our apologies that you will probably not have been given enough notice (if any) via this newsletter]

BULBS 2007

Once again the Friends are making gorgeous spring bulbs available at great prices and Angela Hill has been hard at work sourcing the best and brightest. For sale this year are tulips, two of which are new to the Botanic garden, crocuses, from Nelson a beautiful selection of scented narcissi and from the Kapiti coast attractive smaller bulbs such as freesia, ixia, hooped petticoats etc.

Tulips: 5 bulbs for \$5.00

Francoise: Long creamy-white flower. Pretty combined with **Roi du Midi** and **Dynasty**.

Roi du Midi: New to the Botanic Garden and described as lemon yellow.

Dynasty: Another one new to the Garden - Soft pink with lighter edge.

Princess Irene: Clear marigold orange, each petal distinctly figured with several shadowy violet flame-shaped marks. Lower growing and excellent in pots and tubs.

Ile de France: Rich wine red. Unaffected by inclement weather. Underplant with *Lamium maculatum* 'White Nancy' or blue forget-me-nots.

Spring Green: Ivory white and feathered green.

Donna Bella: Rich cream with a carmine patch. Short growth, ideal for pots.

Species Crocus: early to flower and produce many flowers per bulb: 10 bulbs for \$5.00

Cream Beauty: Rich cream

Firefly: Pale lilac

Sunkist: Golden yellow

Daffodils from Nelson

Jonquilla: Multi-headed, scented, pale colours.

Triandrus: Highly scented, 2 or 3 heads a stem, white.

Cyclamineus: One head per bloom, upswept perianth.

'Lucky dip' (doubles, singles, mixed colours), the very best from the grower, but in excess of their requirements.

The Nelson growers have been in business for 60 years and were recommended by a

very knowledgeable member of the Wellington Botanic Garden staff.

Prices as follows: 5 Jonquilla, Triandrus or Lucky Dip \$6.00; 10 \$10.00; 15 \$14.25; 20 \$18.00

Cyclamineus 3 for \$6.00

From the Kapiti Coast

Freesia burtonii: NZ-raised, fragrant white flowers with yellow markings, produced abundantly.

Narcissus bulbocodium (hoop petticoat): yellow & ideal for pots or naturalising in grass or rock gardens.

Babiana disticha: pale blue to violet fragrant flowers.

Ixia: starry flowers carried on spikes.

These bulbs have been grown by a Kapiti coast member of the Friends WBG and flower well.

Prices as follows: *Freesia burtonii* \$2 bag of 10 bulbs

Narcissus bulbocodium \$3 bag of 10 bulbs

Babiana disticha \$3 bag of 10 bulbs

Ixia: yellow \$2 bag of 10, white tinged pale blue 10 for \$3.00

If you're tempted and who wouldn't be, email Angela fergiehill@clear.net.nz and she will send you an order form (or phone 479 5580 if you'd like a snail-mail copy)



Angela promoting the bulb sale during the February members' event

Garden on the Web

The Friends website went live on 26 November 2006. Since then some 900 people have visited the site, viewing 5,700 pages. While little promotion has taken place, people from 20 countries have visited, mostly from NZ and the US, but with significant numbers from Australia, Switzerland, Germany, France, India and the UK. There are even visitors from the Cocos Islands, Poland, and Samoa!

The site was established for the Friends and for other visitors. It is your site and your comments of what you want, and what is cool and what is not, is important. All your comments would be appreciated in order that the site can be made even better. Do not forget the official Council site for the Garden. Our site is designed to complement the official information and, in many cases, to provide more information that can be accommodated there. Hopefully together we can encourage more people to appreciate and enjoy our fantastic Garden.

The site will continue to develop. I have recently added all the available papers from the 2005 seminar on the Bush Remnant and the 2006 Seminar on Roses. These are excellent papers, and well worth looking at. With the Mitcalfe/Horne report, also on the site, the material on the bush remaining in the Garden is an interesting historical resource.

We will be adding the past newsletters once processing is completed. This again will be a great historical resource, as there is much valuable material in them. As Ted has noted, we are also considering publishing the newsletters primarily on the web, but printed copies will be available to those who do not have a computer, or who would prefer hard copies. No final decisions on this aspect have been made at this stage.

Philip C. Tomlinson Webmaster
information@friendswbg.org.nz

Glow Worm Tours

Tours for 2007 are planned for the following dates, but *please note these dates are subject to confirmation and to sufficient glow worm numbers and weather conditions*

Phone the Treehouse Visitors Centre 04 499 1400 or, on the day, the Wellington City Council Contact Centre 499 4444

Check the Friends web site friendswbg.org.nz for updates of the current program – any changes will be posted there.

Friday 13th April 8 p.m.
Friday 4th May 7.30 p.m.
Friday 8th June 7.30 p.m.
Friday 6th July 7.30 p.m.
Friday 3rd August 7.30 p.m.
Friday 7th September 8 p.m.
Friday 5th October 8.30 p.m.

For groups of 10 or more people, please contact the Treehouse for your own tour on an evening other than a scheduled tour.

Botanic Garden Heritage Buildings

The Wellington City Council is considering additions to the heritage listings in the District Plan. These additions include the Garden's 90+ year old Stables, Mess Room and Tool Shed. The WCC prepared this fascinating historical and construction information to support the intended listing; photos are by Phil Tomlinson and Dale Such.



The historic significance of these buildings is relatively modest, with their major role confined to the service of the Botanic Garden's work. However, the buildings have been used continuously for much the same purpose since 1915, and there are few other WCC utilities that have lasted for such a long time. They have some rarity value for this. Although not the oldest buildings in the gardens they have strong public recognition by virtue of their age, their location alongside the camellia garden, and for their intriguing appropriateness in their garden setting.

The buildings have considerable architectural value, as they are very good examples of Arts and Crafts style design. The high quality materials used in their construction have aged beautifully, making them very fit buildings for their isolated garden setting off Glenmore Street, where they can be seen in the round against a rich and diverse green hill-side background. The buildings make a strong positive contribution to the garden setting and are enriched by that setting.

The informal grouping of the three buildings adds to their picturesque quality and, in the wider context of the Botanic Gardens, they are part of a diverse and important group of heritage buildings. They have strong aesthetic values for these reasons. They are authentic buildings of their period, with high amenity value both for their

appearance and their continued usefulness in the management of the Gardens. The former stables building is an example of a relatively rare surviving building type, dating from the period when the horse was a vital means of transport and motive power in Wellington.

History

The site of Wellington's Botanic Garden was included within the public reserves set aside by the New Zealand Company in 1840. The gardens themselves were first separately allocated in 1844. A Crown Grant in 1848, and the purchase of Wesleyan Reserves land in 1874, brought the area of the gardens largely to their present extent.

Development and maintenance of the gardens began in earnest in the 1850s. The key form of motive power for this development was the horse. Horses did heavy carrying and general work and had to be housed and fed. The first stable was located not far from the present stable, in what is known as the sunken gully. There were other gardening buildings nearby. It is not known exactly when they were built, though it may have been around 1893, when the Wellington City Council voted £5 to provide "shelter ... for the horse at the Botanic Garden." (W. Shepherd and W. Cook, *The Botanic Gardens, Wellington: A New Zealand History, 1840-1987* (Millwood Press, Wellington, 1988), pp.17, 25-26)

Even as late as the 1910s, horses were still considered to be important for work in the gardens, and current facilities were dilapidated, so new stables, tool sheds and mess were planned in 1911. Nothing happened, however, and it took a desperate plea three years later from Botanic Gardens supervisor, George Glen, for any action. In 1914 the City Engineer, William Morton, drew up plans. Tenders were called and the

successful bidders were Mitchelltown builders French and Hampton. The specification called for the reuse of existing joinery where possible.

Work was completed in early 1915, at an estimated cost of £339. Within two months a urinal and flush toilet were added to the eastern wall of the stables. Horses remained in use until the end of World War II and thereafter the stables were used for a variety of purposes, including a workshop. The mess, like the tool-shed, has always been used for the same purpose although, for the first few decades, gardeners were expected to stay on the job during lunch, not return to the mess.



The interior fabric of the mess room has been modernized, while parts of the stable and tool house buildings have been converted into a staff toilet and hazardous chemicals store. However the buildings, particularly the tool shed and stable, are remarkably intact, given their utilitarian function. The buildings have always been in the public eye and have long been a feature of the gardens.

Today they are very close to the entrance of the Treehouse building, a modern public facility. The potting shed, a similar building designed by the City Engineer and constructed in 1924 by E.S Knight, can be found in the nursery behind the Treehouse and administrative buildings.

Description: Setting

The three buildings known as the Gardener's Sheds are located in the lower reaches of the Botanic Gardens on the Glenmore Street side. They are set well back from the formal gardens adjoining the road and past the camellia garden in a

small gully below the contemporary visitor centre. The path to the visitor centres wends its way past and above the buildings, enabling them to be seen largely in the round. The immediate area is lushly and diversely planted and although many of the plantings are native to New Zealand it nevertheless has, with the many mature trees, a strong sense of a carefully managed "English" informal garden around these buildings completely appropriate to their Arts and Crafts character. The buildings make a strong contribution to, and are enhanced by, their garden setting. The wider context includes the visitor centre itself and the potting sheds beyond (one of which is of a similar vintage to these sheds), and in the broader garden area, a wide range of old buildings of a variety of types, styles and sizes, all bound together by their common association with the development of the gardens and tranquil garden settings.

Buildings

There are three buildings in the hollow below the Treehouse Visitor Centre that are now known as the Gardener's Sheds. They are uniform in their design, being good examples of the Arts and Crafts style that was popular early in the 20th century. The mess building is on the south side of the path, and the stables (now a tool-shed) and a utility building are on the north side. Together they make a coherent group, giving a picturesque quality to the area alongside the camellia garden.

Materials are appropriate for the garden setting – walls consist of a brick plinth and unpainted roughcast stucco infill above, with Marseille tile roofs (a variety of brands including "Turtle" and "Les Mille B. du A.").



The roofs are gabled, and they have wide eaves and rafter and purlin ends exposed.

The timber window and door joinery appears to be original.

The mess building is L-shaped in plan, with the main door in the north elevation, a large window that lights the mess room on the west elevation, and a fireplace and chimney on the back (south) wall. It has been heavily modified internally over the years and includes a crude modern fireplace to the old chimney. The stable building is rectangular in plan, with a small lean-to on the back elevation. The east end has a loft door in the gable end with a lifting beam set in the wall above. One of the loose boxes retains its original clinker brick-on-edge flooring, while other floors are now concrete. It remains generally original in form and materials; new work is confined to modern internal partitioning.

The Potting Shed appears unchanged from 1924, with tiled roof on timber framing,

roughcast walls above brick and timber joinery.

Although altered internally, principally by modern partitioning, the form and exterior detail of these buildings is largely original. They have technical interest as the materials and workmanship evident in the structures are of good quality for their time and in authentic condition.

Recommendation for Listing:

Although the Botanic Gardens is reserve land and listed as a heritage area these buildings are of sufficient architectural, technical and historic value to be protected with a District Plan listing. The listing should protect the form, scale and materials of these unique buildings, and should protect the gully area that they are set in from further building development that could impinge on these buildings or their setting.

Heritage Value Assessment Matrix	Representative	Importance (Local/Regional/National)	Rarity/Uniqueness	Authenticity
Historic Value				
Age	•	•	•	•
Association (events, people etc)	•			
Social Value				
Public Esteem/Community Value	•		•	•
Symbolic, commemorative, spiritual, cultural				
Amenity/Economic Value				
Aesthetic Value				
Architectural (Form/Fabric /Style)	•	•	•	•
Townscape or Landscape Value	•	•	•	•
Scientific Value				
Technical	•			•
Archaeological				
Setting/Surroundings				
Contribution to Setting	•	•	•	•
Contribution of Surroundings/Group Value	•	•	•	•

The Friends have made a submission fully supporting the inclusion of these buildings.

Coming Events

Sunday 11 March 10.30am

The Herb Garden

A guided tour of the Herb Garden, looking at fragrant, medicinal, culinary and domestic herbs and their uses. Meet at the Rose Garden Fountain. Little walking involved. (60 minutes). Herb Awareness Week walk.

Monday 12 March 10am

The Herbal Use of Trees

A guided tour, looking at the herbal uses of the leaves, bark, wood and resin of trees in the Botanic Garden. Meet at the Duck Pond. Easy walk (90 minutes). Herb Awareness Week walk.

Sunday 18 March 10.30am GW

A New Zealand Native Plant Food, Fire, Fibre and Pharmacy Trail

An easy walk, looking at the traditional uses of native plants. Meet at the Cable Car entrance (75 minutes). Herb Awareness Week walk.

Thursday 22 March 10am

Downhill Walk to the City

A guided tour through the Botanic Garden and Bolton Street Memorial Park, from the Cable Car Entrance to the City. Meet at the Cable Car Entrance. Moderate Walk (70 minutes). Stepping Out walk.

Monday 26 March 10am

A Wild Food Challenge

A walk through the plant 'supermarket' to gather items for a virtual meal. Meet at the Cable Car entrance. Energetic walk (90 minutes). Stepping Out walk.

Thursday 29 March 10am

An Entertainment Guide for Grandparents

A guided tour to show aspects of the Botanic Garden that may be suitable for people to entertain their grandchildren. Meet at the Founders' Entrance, Glenmore Street. Moderate walk (90 minutes). Stepping Out walk.

Sunday 15 April 2pm GW

You Can't See the Wood for the Trees

A walk that looks at trees in the Garden and the timber products we obtain from them. Meet at the Duck Pond. Easy walk (90 minutes).

Monday 23 April 10am

Ships and Trees

A fascinating story of man travelling across water, and some of the trees that made this possible. Meet at the Duck Pond. Easy walk (90 minutes).

Sunday 20 May 11am

GW

Gondwanaland Plants

Looking at the New Zealand native plants that evolved from the Gondwanaland flora. Easy walk (60-90 minutes).

Monday 28 May 10am

Time and Space

A walk to view sculptures and sundials with the opportunity for contemplation and participation. Meet at the fountain in the Rose Garden. Moderate walk, with some uphill sections (60-90 minutes).

Sunday 17 June 11am

GW

Our Native Forest

A guided tour through the areas of native forest in the Botanic Garden. Moderate walk (90 minutes).

Monday 25 June 10am

Dinner in the Garden

Come for a virtual meal in the Main Garden, and discover the many products that trees provide, such as chocolate, salads, sugar, ink, chewing gum and food wrap. Meet at the Duck Pond. Moderate walk (90 minutes).

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