



Newsletter

November 2007

Featuring: *Playground opens*
Curator's farewell
Kowhai – Glory of Spring
Meet Jenny Brown
Coming Events...and many more delights

President's report

The mild dry spring is encouraging early flowering in the Gardens, which are looking magnificent as I write this. On the other hand, the trees in the Botanic Gardens are again suffering drought conditions, and some which struggled to survive last summer are beginning to die back again.

It's a pity there were not more at the AGM, both to ensure that the committee that the members wanted was elected but also because of the quality of the talks that followed.

We had a very interesting presentation from Tony Williams, the new curator-manager of the Gardens. He showed slides of his life in England and stunning examples of his work in the United States. His expertise in landscape architecture and planning bode well for the future of the Gardens.

He was followed by Leanne Killalea who had traveled to Canberra, paid for by the Friends, to attend a Conference. She amply demonstrated the value of such visits, being full of enthusiasm for the experiences she had had and the ideas they had sparked and eager to make a start on new initiatives for the Gardens. It was an evening suggesting the Gardens have a bright and exciting future.

Also in planning for the future, we have again been examining the 2nd draft of the Landscape Development Plan for the Gardens. We must have, by now, spent hundreds of hours in study and discussion of this plan, but it has certainly been worthwhile in terms of the future development of the Gardens over the next ten years. Mike Oates and Tony Williams have been only too willing to listen to our concerns, and have been receptive to the historical knowledge and expertise of the Working Group, which comprised Winsome Shepherd, Walter Cook, Richard Nanson, Bill Wieben, Jenny Hickman, Rob Bos and me. The plan is now back in the hands of Tony and the Isthmus Group. The plan does not set in concrete the developments it envisages but will certainly serve as a guiding document for the next ten years. The Working Group, Tony and Mike have my heartfelt thanks for all their time and effort.

I started with the spring flowers in the Garden. I hope you will all take time to enjoy Spring there – and indeed experience it again on the video that the Friends have just produced. The planning process we have been through assures the Friends that there will be many more springs to enjoy in the Gardens.

Monica Dearden

CURATOR'S REPORT

Outgoing curator Mike Oates reports on a year of consolidation in the Garden.

The past twelve months have seen a consolidation of the new staffing structure within the gardens and a focus on the development of robust policies and procedures for the management of plant collections. In particular we have:

- Completed documentation of over 2,000 trees in the garden, including their condition and position in the garden. Information will be stored on the City Council's geographic information system.
- Developed a plant collections policy to guide management and development of plant collections. This will be managed by a small group of staff and outside experts.
- Reviewed plant collections as part of the landscape development plan. This is currently being reviewed by the Friends committee.
- Submitted an application for major funding to computerise all the plant collections at the Wellington Botanic garden and Otari-Wilton's Bush. The application for \$64,000 from WCC was successful and work will start shortly

Events continued to increase in importance with a very busy Summer City season and the very successful Garden Gallery, as well as our more traditional Spring Festival events. We are beginning to see some adverse effects from major events, such as some of the Summer City concerts, and we are taking steps to ensure future events are of an appropriate size for the Garden.

Visitation continues to increase in all gardens. The 27 cruise ship visits this year brought thousands of extra visitors. We made a real effort to increase retail sales this year by setting up a temporary shop during these visits. The results were outstanding and we are now planning to develop a space for a shop during redevelopment of the Begonia House during the next twelve months.

We also focused on way-finding this year and reviewed the main route from the Cable Car to the Lady Norwood Rose Garden and Bolton Street Memorial Park. Several improvements were made, including landscaping at the Cable Car, resiting some mapboards and adding several new directional signs. The changes have made an immediate improvement to visitor enjoyment of the Garden.

It is with sadness that I write my last report as curator. I am moving on in Parks and Gardens and have taken up a new position as Manager: Natural and Botanic Areas. I will still have an involvement with the Gardens under the management of Tony Williams and will watch with interest its continuing development. As an inaugural member of the Friends I would like to thank you for the great support you have given me over the years. It has been a true partnership and one that I know will continue in the years to come.

Mike Oates

Mike has been curator for 10 years and has presided over many changes in the garden, has always helped and cooperated with the Friends. He is still responsible for the gardens in his new position. We will continue to enjoy his goodwill in the future. Monica

Profile of a Gardener - Jenny Brown

Collection Supervisor - Herbaceous Borders

After completing a Bachelor of Arts degree at Victoria University in 1995 it was time to decide what career path I wished to follow. Having an interest in plants, I attended a 6 month course in horticulture at the Hutt Valley Polytech.

In 1997 I gained an apprenticeship in horticulture with the Parks & Gardens Business Unit and enjoyed working in the herb and perennial borders alongside Hannah Zwartz. In 1999 I was appointed Collection Supervisor of the Herbaceous Borders and in August this year I returned after having a year away on parental leave.

The areas I am responsible for include the Begonia House perennial borders, Remembrance Ridge, including the Herb Garden, and the perennial borders on Druids Hill.

The Begonia House Perennial borders, after a huge overhaul in 1999, are now being scrutinized re their appearance in winter.

The Herb Garden has also had much soil improvement and several trees have been removed because of root problems. I am now in the process of upgrading the Maori Herb/Rongoa Garden, which also has a problem with tree roots.

Druids Hill perennial borders are very hot and dry and currently have a silver/pink theme. Future plantings will include butterfly attracting plants to develop a Butterfly Garden .

On Remembrance Ridge I am keen to develop a memorial garden, made up of plants from places around the world where New Zealanders have fought.

I feel privileged to have the care of these borders. Observing the changes that occur in a year with these plants is very rewarding. I am always open to questions, comments and suggestions. Please call me at the Rose Garden Depot.
Kia Ora.

From the AGM...

Re-elected 29 August 2001 were:

President	Monica Dearden
Vice-President	Bill Wieben
Treasurer	Malcolm McCaw
Minutes Secretary	Rae Fehl
Membership Secretary	Florence de Ruiten
Committee	Walter Cook
	Mary Hutton
	Elizabeth King
	Richard Nanson
	Winsome Shepherd

Guides

During autumn and winter the guides ran several walks, beginning in May with 'Giants in the Garden', which was a tour of some of our largest and oldest trees, with discussion about their origin and the history of the Garden.

We then began a series of Sunday walks as part of the Museum of Wellington City and Sea exhibition, 'Green and Promised Land', on the Story of the Wellington Town Belt and Botanic Garden. These walks, once a week from June 24 to September 2, took in various aspects of the history of the Botanic Garden. Two of the walks were tours of historic graves and were conducted by the Friends of Bolton Street Memorial Park. Although in the winter months, all walks took place without cancellations. Some members of the public became regulars on them.

During the Spring Festival in September we held a 'Spring Flowers' Sunday walk and guides were present in the Garden to assist visitors participating in the 'Downhill to Downtown' lunch time walk. We noticed that, although it was not yet summer, there were already many overseas visitors coming to the Garden.

A series of monthly walks is proposed for next year, at 11 am on the third Sunday of the month.

Seven new guides are currently attending weekly after-work training sessions. We are anticipating a busy summer in the Botanic Garden with the expectation of 32 cruise ship visits to Wellington, beginning December 5 and continuing until May 9. The number of cruise ship visitors to the city is expected to reach about 20,000 this season.

Jenny Hickman

New Children's Play Area



The new Children's Play Area was opened on Saturday 28 July 2001 by Mayor Mark Blumsky. It was designed by City & Community Development Landscape Architects, of WCC.

The concept for the playforts was to create a small village set high up in the trees. Swing bridges linking the playforts provided

for quick escape down the hillside, using long slide or flying fox structures. Special elements of interpretative panels, fences, flowering trees and low grasses set among the existing large pines were intended to reinforce the feeling of being up in the heights.

At least four years ago, when Lady Holmes was President of the Friends, plans were made to redesign the area, and Nola worked very hard to bring this about. She also began to raise funds for the equipment. The eventual time lag, with Council allocating funds, then withdrawing them, then last year funding the new playground in full, means that we now still have a small amount of money earmarked for the playground. When the playground has been in use for a time, and/or there is a need for additional equipment, we can then reassess what our provision should be (seating is one suggestion that has been made).

Despite the blustery, winter's morning the assembled grownups and children greatly enjoyed the opening. No time was wasted in putting the newly installed play equipment through its paces!

Elizabeth King

Kowhai



As spring advanced the distinctive yellow-gold of the kowhai made itself noticed in all sorts of unexpected spots around our city. Even the saddest of city kowhai are glorious in September.

Leanne Killalea
tells the botanical story...

Kowhai, genus *Sophora*, is a nitrogen fixing plant from the Fabaceae family.

Kowhai come in an enormous variety of forms and sometimes this can depend on the growing location. *Sophora microphylla*, for instance, has several geographic variants.

Kowhai are often found growing alongside rivers in the North Island, where the heavy hard seeds drop into the water and are abraded by rocks and/or water, breaking the hard casing and enabling moisture to penetrate to begin germination.

Despite their affinity for water, all kowhai prefer well-drained soils.

Sophora tetraptera and some *S. microphylla* cultivars start flowering at a younger age.

S. microphylla has a distinct tangled juvenile growth habit which it outgrows, developing, as it ages, into a fine tree specimen.

The Stephens Island form of *S. microphylla* is well adapted for salty and windy conditions.

S. prostrata, as the name suggests, grows low to the ground in an attractive tangled mound (but can also reach 1-2m). Its flowers are smaller and tend more towards orange/yellow in colour.

Kowhai are often stripped of their leaves by the kowhai moth caterpillar. These caterpillars are easily removed on young plants by laying sacking around the base of the tree, then shaking it vigorously.

Although bellbirds and tuis dine well on kowhai, beware: all parts of the plant, particularly the seeds, are poisonous.

Cuttings...

❖ **A SPECIAL REMINDER:**

Karori Garden Centre still give members 10% discount on plants – you need only to show your membership card.

❖ We have a new Newsletter Editor in Charmaine Scott. Charmaine is an occasional contributor to the NZ Gardener. She is willing to gather material for the Newsletter, as well as editing our articles. We hope Members will contribute to the newsletter (*so far, so good – Ed*). She can be reached on 383 6285 or thecats@globe.net.nz. Monica

❖ Tulip Sunday, held on 30 September, attracted 3-4,000 visitors, despite overcast and cool weather. Blazing tulip beds (of course) giveaway flowers, food, entertainment and, in keeping with the Dutch theme, Netherlands traditional costumes and even a windmill made the event enjoyable for all.



Vice President Bill Wieben, with his wife Donna, celebrated his 60th at Wellington's Town Hall on 6 October. Timothy Hurd, QSM – National Carillionist, Brevet Ensign, Director Alf's Imperial Army Tuba Corps, and rabid Daimler enthusiast – gave a wonderful pipe organ concert to the assembled company, thereby fulfilling a longstanding ambition of Bill's. With coffee and cake to follow, it was a delightful, unique birthday celebration! Many happy returns, Bill, from the FRIENDS.

Botanical artist Sue Williams



*Winsome Shepherd reviews
a delightful illustrated talk*

The Shell Room at the Tree House was almost full to capacity for the illustrated talk given by Sue Williams on 23 September. Sue, wife of the British High Commissioner, whose term of office expired at the end of October, entitled her talk “A Portable Career”. This delightful and sometimes quirky summary describing the development of what was her latent artistic talent began, perhaps, in Manila, where she studied Chinese brush painting.

The control and discipline necessary with this painting style laid the foundation for the gradual development of what has now become her speciality, that of a very sensitive botanical artist. As well as her technical ability there is a delicate and emotional quality in her work, as for example shown in “Seedlings found growing on the trunk of a mamaku fern”, on display at the Botanica exhibition at Victoria University’s Adam Art Gallery.

Commissioned to execute a series of stamps to commemorate New Zealand’s bee keeping industry, Sue told us of the difficulties experienced when designing to fit inside a hexagonal shape. Her completed designs were passed around as were her designs for the botanical issue of stamps for Pitcairn Island 2000. In all examples one can detect her special emotional sensitivity.

We are sorry to lose Sue as she and her husband, after their short stay here, return to London where jointly they plan to further develop their artistic talents. Martin Williams is interested in wood turning and intends, among other ambitions, to make a harpsichord.

Good luck to them both and thank you Sue for a memorable afternoon.



*Keep an eye open for Sue Williams’ Xmas
Cards. This is a small section of her card
“Five Kiwis, Four Fantails, Three Pukekos,
Two Keas and a Tui in a Pohutukawa Tree.”*

Coming Events 2001

October 21 - 2pm

Cockaynes vision for Otari-Wilton's Bush

Then and now. Visit the flax clearing and early plantings of Kauri. Find the fascinating on this walk. Moderate fitness is required. Meet at Te Marae o Tane, Otari-Wilton's Bush Information Centre.

Your guide is John Waugh

\$3

Tel 04 499 1400

Booking Essential

November 11 2.00pm

On and Off the Track

An invigorating walk taking in many secret places and plants, be prepared for wet feet! Otari-Wilton's Bush Information Centre, Te Marae o Tane

Your guide is Chris Horne

\$3

Tel: 04 499 1400

November 14 7.00pm

Blossoms and Bloomers

Gerry Krueger, old fashioned rose expert and entertaining speaker from Seattle, talks about old roses and garden structures. Treehouse Visitor Centre, Wellington Botanic Garden

\$5

Booking is not required

November 18-25

Rose Week...

Sun 18

Spring Rose Show Wellington Rose Society.

Begonia House Foyer 10.00am – 4.00pm

Heritage Rose Ramble

Anderson Park car park 2.00pm

Tues 20

Heritage Rose Rambles

meet at the Anderson Park car park 11am & 2.00pm.

Wed 21

Encouraging Good Bugs to your Garden

meet out front of the Begonia House 12.00 midday

Thurs 22

Rose Care & Deadheading demonstration and talk

Meet at the fountain 12 midday

Growing Roses with fewer sprays

Meet at the fountain 1pm

Sat 24 & Sun 25

'Children's Rose Garden' - The Dell

A painted garden of rose pictures assembled in the Dell.

Competition for 5 – 10 year olds

'Art Among the Flowers' exhibition by the Wellington Art Society. Begonia

House (paintings for sale) 10.00am – 4.00pm

Coming Events 2002

January 1

The Summer City programme of music and Garden Magic lighting begins. Brochures will be available from the Garden.

February 20

(Post-)Valentine's Day function. Details in the next newsletter



A good reason to be a Friend, or even a friend of a Friend, is that you can enjoy this in your own garden. The scale is smaller than the Botanic Garden tulip display but the beauty is just as great .

Friends of the Wellington Botanic Garden
President Monica Dearden, phone 934 6542
Newsletter Editor Charmaine Scott, phone 383 6285 email thecats@globe.net.nz
Printed by NS Services phone/fax 970 5036