

Featuring: *Message from the new President*
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Krupp Gun

September officially starts spring off, and daffodils, tulips and Prunus blossoms come out and get sent down the road by equinoctial gales, or bowed to the earth by incessant rain. Or both. No wonder bluebells bow their heads.

We are made of sterner stuff, as these moments from a very busy Tulip Sunday and Friends' Annual Plant Sale show.



Profile of a President Dr Simon Ewing-Jarvie



Simon Ewing-Jarvie is the newly appointed President of the Friends of the Wellington Botanic Garden. A 43 year old New Zealander who is married with three children, his involvement in the Friends is a welcome addition to a range of public and business positions that he holds.

As Managing Director of Awesome Kiwi Ltd, a medium sized business consulting and investment firm based in Lambton Quay, Simon focuses on assisting large companies that are undergoing widespread change. He is

an executive member of the Paraparaumu RSA, as well as a member of the Kapiti Rotary Club, Kapiti Aero Club, Mana Cruising Club and Wellington Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Simon stood as a candidate for ACT in the 2002 election and continues to participate in national politics, with particular interests in defence, foreign affairs and security policy areas. Simon is a retired NZ Army Lieutenant Colonel with both regular and territorial service, who has served on two peacekeeping missions, in Sinai and East Timor.

While his Ph D is in business, Simon's botanical knowledge is apparently very hands on...he has slept under almost every known type of tree as a soldier, used most forms of foliage for camouflage and has lived in deep holes for extended periods!

Simon hopes to develop a systematic approach to joint planning of Gardens projects with the Wellington City Council, as well as strengthening the membership of the Friends in his time as President.



If you haven't seen it yet, here's a view of the new shop in the Begonia House. Melissa is at the counter.

Spring Festival

The Friends' Father's Day Spring Breakfast was a well-attended (in fact, we might go so far as to say it had a great turnout!) and much-enjoyed event. The food by Blue Carrot catering and flower arrangements by the Wellington Floral Art Club were of the usual high standard and the talk by Bill Wieben, "Roses and their Perfume", was full of fascinating facts – even rosarians learnt new things - and was very well-received.

According to Ruth Donnelly (acting Events and Visitor Services Co-ordinator at the time), this year's Spring Festival events were enthusiastically supported by the public. The fire dancers in the dell (a co-production between the Gardens and the Youth Projects division of Council's Community Services) was "a lot of fun and came together really well," says Ruth.

She says that since spring is not only a time of glorious gardens but also of great celebration across the world, as

many cultures have their own spring rituals, the Gardens tried to acknowledge that through some of the Festival events.

Poets (supplied by the Performing Arts School) were, for the first time, let loose to wander the gardens and spout poetry. After all, spring is often writ-large in poetry.

The Celebrate Spring Country Fair, held on the tree-climbing competition weekend, featured a Pied Piper (actually a Carter Observatory staff member), who roamed from spot to spot, telling tales and playing a flute and drum, and keeping kids enthralled.

Several walks were put on – 66 folk did the evening Friends of Bolton Street Cemetery walk, and "everyone had a great time," says Ruth. Over 50 people went on the Glow Worm walk and experimental mid-week walks were well attended. Otari had very good turnouts for their walks.

Tulip Sunday & Friends' Plant Sale

There we were, on the day before, all shorts, bare arms and barbecues, summer obviously on the way. Tulip Sunday, however, was cold and wet, wet, wetter. The outdoor activities were cancelled, but the Treehouse was packed, and of course the Gardens looked gorgeous in the rain, which always accentuates the colour of blooms.
Elizabeth King reports on the day.

The Friends' Plant Sale took place on the verandah near the lift. Inside, the Dutch community sold appetizing fare with an accompanying complimentary bunch of tulips, and the children, decked out in traditional garb, performed some delightful dances.

Lots of people, swathed in wet-weather gear, made their way to the Treehouse, encouraged by the thought of some warming Dutch fare. The plant lovers amongst them paused to view the goodly array of healthy plant offerings the Friends had potted up in readiness - real bargains at \$2 and \$3 a pot – and more often than not succumbed, leaving

their trophies to be collected until they finished sampling the Dutch goodies. Plants on offer were many and varied - native and exotic, old favourites and the unfamiliar, sun and shade lovers, miniatures and giants.

By having an annual presence on Tulip Sunday (this was just the second year) the Friends aim to build a reputation for quality, special plants. Funds raised help the Friends to extend the financial support they provide to the Gardens.

Start potting now, good Friends, for next Tulip Sunday!

Man In The Tulips

Botanic Gardens guide **Phil Tomlinson** comes down from the trees to look at a spring icon.



A sturdy Persian youth named Farhad, a prince some say, was deeply in love with a fair maid Shirin. One day word reached him – falsely as it tragically turned out - that his beloved had been killed. Gripped by unbearable grief, he mounted his favourite horse and galloped over a cliff to his death. From his numerous wounds droplets of blood trickled onto the ground; from each drop a scarlet tulip sprung, a symbol of his perfect love.

There are about 150 species of tulip, which are native to Central Asia – from the Pamir Alai Mountain Ranges near Islamabad close to the border of Russia and China and in Azerbaijan and Armenia. From there they spread to the Balkans, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland and France. While Holland is often thought to be the home of tulips, the nearest native species is some 500 miles from that country. Most of the bulbs cultivated in Holland originated from this area which encompasses the old Ottoman Empire. They grow naturally in mountainous regions, and are often covered by a thick layer of snow during the winter.

The old Ottoman Empire cultivated tulips from around 1000 AD. From 1522 to 1566 the Sultan Suleiman II spent vast fortunes on these plants, and around this time selection and hybridising of tulips commenced. In 1544 the Austrian ambassador sent tulips to Vienna, the first time they were seen there. They were introduced into England in 1578, 21 years after the first illustration of the flower appeared in Europe.

In 1559 Conrad Gesner recorded the earliest known instance of a tulip flowering in cultivation in Europe, in a garden in Augsburg. Gesner is said to have received these bulbs from Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, ambassador from Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I to the Ottoman court of Suleiman the Magnificent. Busbecq reported these highly coloured flowers were called *tulipam* by their Turkish admirers, but since the native word for these plants is *lalé*, supposition comes into play that Busbecq was told the flowers (or even the bulbs) resemble the *dulban* (the turban). In 1573 Clusius

became court gardener to Maximilian II in Vienna, remaining in that position until 1587. He later became a professor at the University of Leiden in Holland, where he introduced and popularised the tulip.

The botanist Carolus Clusius took bulbs with him when he fled Austria because of religious persecution and settled in Leiden, Holland in 1593. He was involved in the study of medicinal herbs. He cultivated the plants, which attracted much attention, but would not part with any. One night a number of determined locals raided his collection and stole bulbs which they then grew, and it is from these that the Dutch tulip industry commenced. Tulip mania swept Holland from 1610 to 1637, when individual tulip bulbs were sold for a small fortune. Records exist of 3 bulbs being sold for the price of a good home.

Holland is today the major producer of bulbs, producing some 3 billion each year, two thirds of which are exported.

The original 'broken stripe' tulips are now known to have been virused. Today genetically stable look-alikes are available. 1860 saw the introduction of a fragrant tulip, with the commonly cultivated Darwin tulips introduced in 1889. The enormous red tulips known as the Darwin hybrids introduced in 1943.

Currently some 25-30,000 tulips are planted annually in our Botanic Garden. To reduce disease risks and because of the manual costs of preserving the bulbs from one year to the next, new bulbs are planted each year.

Profile of a Gardener - David Sole Manager, Botanic Gardens and Otari-Wilton's Bush



Another circle becomes complete with the appointment of David Sole to the position of Botanic Gardens Manager. When David trained as a gardener in the late 1970s current staff members Neil Christensen, Geoff Paris and Peter Tijssen were contemporaries.

David's career began with street tree planting and maintenance, and, of course, general horticulture. During his time with the City Council he gained a National Diploma in Horticulture (Hon).

In 1986 he left to run his own, very successful, business, Sole Gardening and Landscaping Ltd, working across the board, from extensive landscape rehabilitations to tiny domestic jobs. Many of the high-rise city buildings constructed in the 80s and 90s had their grounds landscaped and planted by David and his team. He also ran a team of tree surgeons for about seven years, an "early 'proper' tree surgery company," he says.

A member of the RNZIH throughout, David has always kept in touch with the Gardens - WCC horticulture trainees who have wanted to do landscaping papers have achieved their unit

standards by spending time working with Sole Gardening and Landscaping.

As if running his own business wasn't enough, David also spent several years on the executive of the Landscape Industries Association of NZ, and sat on the Horticultural Training Industry board for seven years, helping to establish new qualifications and unit standards for the industry. In 1997 David decided to concentrate on his business and relinquished these roles.

So why give up this successful business now? "It's time for me to have a change," says David. "I want to broaden my experience and this particular job is almost unique." He says there's no other job quite like it because of the huge range of environments and challenges it contains, from the rose garden to the Bolton Street cemetery to Otari to Truby King House.

Without having been in the job yet, he's not sure how much direct impact he will have, feeling that he needs to understand the culture first. He is eager to get his teeth into the strategic and management plans. "I also want to bring the skills I've developed being in business and working in the private sector back into that (public) environment," he says.

David is a long-term Wellingtonian who is enthusiastic about his city. He has maintained a close watching-brief on waterfront developments and says he is very conscious about public environs; in terms of both aesthetics and practical usability.

David is married with three teenage children and, in what little spare time he has, enjoys 4-wheel-drive touring.

"I'm excited and really looking forward to this new challenge," he says. "I think I can really bring something to it."

Library Volunteers

The Friends would like to make the wonderful library in the Treehouse available to members, but in order to do so, must have trustworthy volunteers in attendance.

We hope to have the library open from noon to 2pm on Thursdays and Saturdays in the second and fourth weeks of the month. To do

this we need six more volunteers to take turns looking after the library at these times.

Imagine browsing through valuable botanical books in a pleasant environment and enjoying borrowing privileges, for just a couple of hours of your time.

To volunteer or get further info, phone Gwenda Sutton on 473 0847 or email gwenda.s@ihug.co.nz

Friends Project Proposals

On Sunday 12 October, the committee held a planning session at the Treehouse to identify projects and to consider their priorities. However, we don't have the market on good ideas cornered! The list as it currently stands is shown below. Please let us know your views on the relative priority of these (high, medium, low is fine) as well as any others you think should be on the list.

- a. Preservation of bush remnants
- b. Development of our programme for this coming year
- c. Exotic replacement (cloning)
- d. Development of joint approach with Otari, Karori etc as eco-destinations
- e. Recognition for the historic aspects of the Botanic Gardens
- f. Enhancing our membership including development of a children's category
- g. Building up the profile of the Friends
- h. Building up the profile of the Botanic Gardens
- i. Development of a publicity programme, especially for the Guides
- j. Completion of the Hector Memorial
- k. Improvement of conditions for gardening staff
- l. Improved profile in Treehouse
- m. Conference attendance by Guides
- n. Wollemi Pine project (potential to bring one from Australia)
- o. Improved alignment with WCC planning processes
- p. Consideration of selling advertising in our newsletter

Thanks, keep the gumboots and broly handy!

Simon Ewing-Jarvie

The Botanic Garden Battery and the Krupp Gun

On Saturday September 27 this year there was a small ceremony to dedicate the Botanic Garden's 'new' old gun.

The **Garden Battery** area was developed as a military post (battery) in the 1890s, during what was known as the Russian Scare. It was part of the city's coastal defence system. The battery was the last of six to be built. The other five, between it and the harbour entrance, were designed to protect the city from invading vessels. This one was built to provide cover for an area outside the range of guns at Ngauranga, Kaiwharawhara and Point Halswell.

The gun planned for it was stored in the underground gunpowder and ammunition store nearby but was never installed in the gun emplacement itself. The battery was disestablished in 1904 when the threat of invasion ended.

The Krupp Gun was manufactured by Fried. Krupp AG, Essen, Germany, in 1907 and remained in service in the German army during the First World War, 1914-1918. The crest of the Prussian Foot Guards Artillery

Regiment can be seen on the top surface of the barrel.

The gun was captured near La Vacquerie, northeast France, on 29 September 1918, by the New Zealand division. Two battalions of the Wellington Regiment were engaged in this action, which was part of an Allied attack on the Hindenburg line of defence. At the end of the First World War, this gun and many other captured arms were sent to New Zealand as war trophies. In 1920 this piece was gifted to the City of Wellington in honour of the soldiers from the Wellington district.

For almost 50 years the gun was displayed at Newtown Park. It is thought to be the only one of its kind remaining from about 190 manufactured.

The Krupp gun can be found at the top of the Botanic Gardens, next to the old observatory and 100 metres from the cable car.

Cuttings

- ❖ The Guides put on two extra walks for the Spring Festival, 'Orchids – Flower of Romance and Mystery' with Phil Tomlinson and 'Tales of Rock Gardens, Oddballs and Earthquakes', led by Monica Dearden. The guides are gearing up for the cruise ship season at present.
- ❖ There will not be a guided walk in December this year – there's too much Christmas shopping to do!
- ❖ By the time you read this, the tulip bulbs will have been lifted and biffed out to make room for the next crop! They are left beside the beds for a day so the public can take a few home, and they certainly do.
- ❖ The new main garden toilets are now up and running, so to speak, and are very flash compared to what we used to have.



Like the Eveready bunny, the Iceland poppies round the rose garden just keep going and going and going...

Coming Events

November 16

GW

'History and Herbs: a Tour of the Herb Garden.' This walk looks at the history of the making of the Herb Garden, and the use of herbs for fragrance, medicine, cooking, cosmetics, dyes, and insect repellents. Little walking involved other than the walk up to the Herb Garden.

November 16 - 23

Rose Week

Lady Norwood Rose Garden

November 30 European Christmas Carols

January 18 2004

GW

'Floral Focus' – a look at the floral displays in the Gardens, including the perennial borders. An easy, wheel- and pushchair-friendly walk.

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.

The Friends of Wellington's Botanic Gardens newsletters are published four times a year, at the beginning of February, May, August and November. Deadline for contributions (all of which are most welcome) is one month prior to publication.