

Spring



is sprung

*Featuring: Meet the new President  
Historic Place registration  
Friends Spring Events  
Man In The Trees - Ginkgo*

## **Introducing President Ted Woodfield**

I thank you for electing me as your President for 2004-2005. Because of a long-planned overseas trip, I have been away from New Zealand during September and October, and not able to participate in the spring events. I am sure that the other officers and members of the committee have made sure that they were a great success.

I am proud to be a Wellingtonian. I was born here and lived in Wilton in the 1940s and 50s, and later in Tawa and Karori. As a student at Wellington College and Victoria University I often traversed the Botanic Garden, enjoying the seasonal changes and observing developments over the decades. In my career as a public servant I was to spend 15 years on diplomatic assignments in London, Washington DC and Canberra, the last as High Commissioner to Australia. In between postings, I was involved in negotiations with our trading partners to secure improved conditions of access for our exports, and led New Zealand delegations in those and at many intergovernmental meetings and negotiations on trade policy issues. I am now retired, and with my wife Janet, live close to the Garden. We enjoy regular walks, especially when our two young grandchildren are visiting.

It has been my good fortune to visit many countries and see their heritage assets – gardens, buildings and works of art. Wellington’s offering may lack



the age and diversity of some other places, but we should be very proud of the excellence of foresight, care and skill that are the hallmarks of the Gardens and many other assets of this fine city. We must ensure that they are handed on to future generations in even better condition.

I look forward to working with the committee, and all members, to advance the interests of our wonderful Botanic Garden. This month the committee will have a planning session to consider projects we might pursue in the future, and ways to attract a growing membership. Your ideas will be welcomed. Please pass them on to any member of the committee now.

*Ted Woodfield*

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## **Garden a Historic Place – It’s Official**

Two years of study, meetings, writing and re-writing submissions finally paid off in September, when the Botanic Garden received registration, from the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, as a Historic Area.

“We are extremely grateful to Winsome Shepherd, Walter Cook and others who worked hard over two years to get the Botanic Garden recognised through our registration process,” the Historic Places Trust stated in their letter of

notification. All of us will wholeheartedly echo those sentiments. We also owe thanks to Monica Deardon, who, with Winsome, made the original application.

Registration is an identification of heritage values and does not provide legal protection, but, in this official recognition of the value of this city asset, a major step has been taken to make sure it is properly looked after in a manner befitting its importance.

## BOTANIC BULLETIN

The magnolias have finished and the tulips have come to the end of their seasonal reign in the Garden. Spring Festival was a success this year, with some big turnouts for events led by the Guides. There were large numbers of visitors to the garden on all three weekends and it was a pleasure to see the families in the Dell on the last day.

As we turn our thoughts from spring to early summer, planning is underway for the new season's plantings. This year, at the point bed by the Founders Gate, we are installing an 'Innovation Garden' which will exhibit cutting edge plant design. The designer is John Powell of John Powell Landscape Architect. It consists of 4 circles of plants and has the title 'Fracture'. Curator Jeff Paris will be taking responsibility for its installation and maintenance. We are looking forward to the comments it may stimulate!

Great news regarding the designation of the Wellington Botanic Garden as an Historic Area. There can be few cities in the world which can claim that their Botanic Garden was designed into the city before it was formally settled and though it took some years to come fully to fruition we can be justly proud that in 2004 we have recognition of the Garden as one of New Zealand's most Historic Gardens. On behalf of the Wellington City Council I extend our thanks and appreciation to the Friends for taking on and pursuing this project.

On 22 October the Garden was assessed by the New Zealand Gardens Trust, for registration as a Garden of National Significance. The NZGT has strong links with Tourism New Zealand and if our application is successful, we will look to exploiting those links, both individually and collegially, with other gardens.

We were unable to remove the playground trees this year as planned and have deferred it to 2005. The August 18 storm meant that the resources were not available to complete the removal process as there was so much damage through the rest of the city. In the Garden we lost a *Pinus muricata*, half of the lilipilli at the

Glen Entrance, more beeches, numerous branches and damage to the lilipilli on the zigzag to the rose gardens. The damage was more serious at Otari and a very large oak has since fallen at Truby King Park.

The Collection review continues, with the staff feedback having been collated and now we await feedback from the Friends. We hoped to have the final document in place around the end of October. Some small works have begun around the garden as a result of the review process, as many of the recommendations related to cultural practice. The outcomes will be in action plans which can be achieved within the next 12 months and a five year action plan to ensure ongoing progress.

Helen Carey, Curator Alpine & Theme, is leaving us in November to travel overseas. Helen will be a loss as she has made a great contribution to the Garden in her roles here. Gardener Jason Corlett has resigned to work closer to his home on the Kapiti Coast and Will Stothart is assisting at the Nursery over the summer. Laura Wards, Visitor Services & Marketing, returns to work on 18 October, part time until Christmas, with Amanda White continuing for the remaining time through until Christmas. Amanda will be planning and managing Truby King Open day, Rose Week, and the European Christmas carols.

This year Leanne Killalea and Jeff Paris will be travelling to Auckland, to assist the Auckland Regional Council Botanic Garden team assemble their Ellerslie exhibit. This will be a great opportunity for them to experience the process (and the pressure) of such events and will contribute to the way we prepare and manage our displays through the Garden. We hope to make this a regular event, with different staff attending each year.

Enjoy the remaining pleasures of spring!  
*David Sole*  
*Manager Wellington Botanic Garden.*

## Friends Spring Events



Sir Michael Hardie Boys had plenty of pint-sized help when he planted “his” Bishop’s pine, *Pinus muricata*, at the beginning of August. Photo Neil Price, WCC.



Friends and guests on the Pinetum trail. Photo Neil Price, WCC

On September 1, a great deal of work, fundraising and consultation culminated in the unveiling of the memorial cairn to **Sir James Hector**. Almost a century after his death, 17 of his descendants came to the highest of the Garden’s original triangulation points to take part in the unveiling.



Photo Neil Price, WCC

At the **Spring Breakfast**, held in early September, the theme started with the unveiling of the James Hector Memorial Lookout continued. Te Papa CEO Dr Seddon Bennington gave us a real treat by talking about Sir James in detail, and with the thorough approach of a professional. As at the unveiling, the presence of Hector descendants was great fun. All three brothers were there, one coming down from Hamilton for both events, another from Eastbourne. The breakfast, enjoyable for the company and food, was a picturesque event as well; a gorgeous, big flower arrangement, by Sharron Thorpe from the Floral Art Club, graced the room and Winsome Shepherd's table arrangements of daffodils among curved forsythia branches were pure spring.

For those who were unable to attend, we hope to publish a transcript of Dr Bennington's talk in a future newsletter.

The **Plant Sale** was held on the Sunday of Tulip Weekend, which was, for a change, a beautiful spring day. We had three tables of plants and could have done with more, particularly a greater variety. The Friends on duty enjoyed talking to locals and visitors alike. A good number bought plants which were sold for \$3 each. Next year more members need to be encouraged to pot up perennials when they divide those in autumn, and seedlings. Many thanks to those who contributed and helped.



*Photo David Sole*

## **AGM**

This year's AGM was held at the Treehouse on August 25 and attended by a good number of Friends, Guides and committee members.

It was a particular pleasure to host Alan Mason, great grandson of Thomas Mason, who was a member of the Botanic Garden Board from 1877 to 1891. At the end of Thomas's tenure, the Board ceased to exist, as the Garden was vested in the Corporation of the City of Wellington (WCC), by an Act of Parliament. Alan has a continuing, lively interest in the Garden, despite living in Palmerston North.

Guest speaker Bethney McLennan spoke about gardening books, from an old English home garden and vege book, still full of valuable

information, to the latest publications. One of her personal favourites is an old Brett's Garden Guide, which she heartily recommends to this day. Bethney's talk made reference to her childhood and the influences on her early life, including her own garden as a child and her lifelong love of plants.

The Friends are sorry to lose outgoing President Simon Ewing-Jarvie, who brought a new energy and dimension to activities. He only promised one year and has had to stick to that promise, because of his business and other interests. The Friends are lucky again, however, with new President Ted Woodfield, who, along with considerable experience and talent, shows great goodwill toward the Garden.

## The Friends of Wellington's Botanic Garden 2004-2005 executive is:

Patron	Lady Nola Holmes
President	Ted Woodfield
Vice President	Richard Nanson
Secretary	Rosalind Iles
Treasurer	Elizabeth King
Membership Sec. Committee	Florence de Ruyter Winsome Shepherd, Angela Hill, Gwenda Sutton, Kerryn Pollock

### Profile of a Gardener – Kerryn Pollock

*New committee member Kerryn tells us why she became a Friend – and committee member.*



I think my interest in gardening probably arose from taking part in the creation of a series of community gardens on land designated for the inner city bypass, a project which I have actively opposed for some time. Making the gardens was a lot of fun and I made many friends through taking part, and began to appreciate how fulfilling the cultivation and care of plants could be.

I graduated from Victoria University with an BA honours degree in history in 2001, and this interest in gardens eventually led me to a book called 'Science and Colonial Expansion: the Role of the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew' by Lucile Brockway. The idea that gardens and plants played a significant role in the development of British imperialism fascinated me, and I wondered whether such a theme was relevant in the colonial New Zealand setting. Winsome Shepherd's

excellent history of the garden initially confirmed that it was.

When considering further studies, I decided that I wanted to combine a study of this nature with the theme of environmental change through human activity, another interest of mine. The result of this was an MA thesis entitled 'Botanical Colonisation and Environmental Change: Exchange and Distribution, Botanical Utility, and the Wellington Botanic Garden, 1869-1891'. I submitted my thesis in May of this year, and recently learned that I had been awarded a distinction.

The garden is a unique landscape within the general Wellington environment, and I think that there is scope to connect this status with the current debate surrounding the value of open spaces and public parks within the urban environment, which is currently exemplified by the controversy regarding the Illot Green in the city. Through my involvement in community gardens and bypass related projects, I know many people with a keen interest in this subject, and I hope that as a committee member I will be able to draw attention to the fact that the garden is one of the most important open public spaces that Wellington city has, and that joining the Friends is one way of acknowledging this fact.

*This newsletter is 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, but can be extended if absolutely necessary!*

## Dancing with the Tulips - Spring Festival 2004

*Phil Tomlinson reports on this year's expanded Spring Festival, held in the Botanic Garden from September 18 to October 3.*

In recent years Tulip Sunday has been spoilt by bad weather, and this extended festival ensured some fine weather and took advantage of the school holidays. The cold, wet weather slowed the opening of the tulips this year, but with several warm sunny days the display rapidly produced its usual splendour.



A colourful brochure was produced and the more extensive publicity included a Volkswagen Beetle appropriately painted in spring livery. With organiser Amanda White's smiling face, it featured in several newspaper photographs, with other publicity attracting more visitors.

The guides provided walks on many days of the Festival:

Sunday 19 September, the 'Tulips, Bulbs and Blossom Walk', our normal Sunday Walk, attracted more guides than visitors.

Monday 20, the 'Glow worm Walk' attracted the largest number of visitors we have ever had, over 80. It was a magnificent evening, and despite only three guides being on duty, the walk seemed to bring a lot of pleasure to many

people. The use of our new portable public address system more than proved its worth on this occasion. People seem to decide at the last minute whether to come, and if the evening is nice, they arrive in force.

Wed 22, 'Dinner in the Garden' attracted 14 and a nice meal was had by all!

Tue 28, 'Tales of Rock Gardens, Oddballs and Earthquakes' received excellent advance publicity on the DominionPost' gardening page. Unfortunately, it was slightly damp (snorkel required!).

Wed 29, 'Dinner in the Garden' attracted 16

Thurs 30, 'Insects Birds and Plants' - cold and wet kept everyone at home.

Fri 1 Oct, 'Native Forest Remnant Walk' – just two visitors.

Run over the extended period, the festival was successful, and with good days visitors were attracted. Additional publicity also assisted. During the school holidays, walks attractive to children were popular, and thought needs to be given for walks suitable for them for next years Festival.

These walks had to be organised at relatively short notice. Thanks to the guides who were able to do so, and to all those that came in support. Despite the unfortunate weather on several days, I believe the event was worthwhile for all involved.

### Guides

You can see from the above what a brilliant, selfless job the Guides do. Their aim is primarily to facilitate visitor enjoyment of this magnificent garden. All are volunteers, who gladly contribute time and resources to do so. More guides are needed if we are to maintain and

expand this valuable service, and if anyone is interested in joining the enthusiastic group of people, or know of anyone who may be interested, contact the Treehouse 499 1400 and we will happily provide further information.

## Man In The Trees – Ginkgo biloba

*Continuing with his series on Botanic Garden trees, Phil Tomlinson profiles a tree both very, very ancient, and trendy now - for its claimed ability to enhance the failing human memory, although if memory serves me correct, recent studies have not proven this claim.*

The **Maidenhair Tree** is the only living tree from its group of Gymnosperms. Originally comprising some 18 species, they are about 225 million years old. They were common 150 million years ago, during the ages of the dinosaurs. It was found through Asia, Europe, and North America. About 7 million years ago it disappeared from the fossil record in North America, and by about 2.5 million years ago, from Europe. It is mentioned in Chinese literature in the 11th Century.

Scientists thought it had become extinct, but a German, Engelbert Kaempfe, discovered it in China in monasteries and in palace and temple gardens, where Buddhist monks had cultivated it since 1100 BC. Seeds were first imported into Europe in 1700. It is now thought to be extinct in the wild; the populations that do exist are probably from dispersions of seed from cultivated populations.



Medical use dates back to 2800 BC in China. The earliest record of medical use states that aging members of the royal court were suffering senility. As the emperor looked out of his window, a voice whispered, "The tree you are looking at will restore the minds of your

relatives and friends". He instructed his staff to pick some leaves and create a brew out of them. This tea was served to those affected several times a day. Within weeks they had regained their lost memories. The seeds are more frequently used than leaves, however. It may be the oldest living seed plant. Individual trees can live longer than 3000 years. The plant contains a high chemical content, giving it strong disease and pest resistance and facilitating its longevity. In the 1923 Tokyo earthquake and subsequent fire, many Ginkgo trees survived while others trees died. A temple was saved because of the many Ginkgos that surrounded it. The branches and leaves are thought to secrete a sap that acts a fire retardant.

At the end of the Second World War II Ginkgo trees one kilometres from the epicentre of the atomic bomb blast were the first trees to bud without major deformations after the blast. Those trees are still alive.

There are male and female trees. Male trees only are usually cultivated, as the female produces seeds which smell of vomit when they fall on the ground and decay. It is widely grown as an ornamental (male trees). The seeds provide a food source when roasted. The leaves are used by the Chinese and Japanese as a herbal medicine to treat mental disease, skin and head sores and freckles. The Chinese still use extracts to treat asthma, stomach pain, skin diseases and anxiety. The powdered leaf is inhaled for ear, nose and throat disorders. Boiled leaves are applied to chilblains, and the leaf is also used as a wound plaster. The tree is widely cultivated to meet the demands for medical preparations.

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I've had a tremendous amount of help and cooperation for this issue. Following a call for info on Friends events, photos and items flooded in – thank you to everyone who sent pictures and stories. Charmaine.

## Cuttings

- ❖ Friends events for 2004 are completed. The committee are keen to hear comments and ideas on events, both past and future, to give them a wider basis on which to make decisions on the 2005 programme. Ring Rosalind Iles 232 7699 or Elizabeth King 479 5702
- ❖ 2004 Friends' events might be concluded, but that doesn't mean no one's working on anything. The Friends are participating in the monster Collection Review that the Garden is undertaking. Every collection, from the main garden to the duckpond to the threatened species border to the Bolton Street memorial park, is under scrutiny. The staff have done their hugely comprehensive study of present attractions, detractions and actions needed in each area, the guides have looked at the result, and now, on behalf of the Friends, Rosalind Iles, Jenny Hickman, Winsome Shepherd and Angela Hill are considering and commenting.
- ❖ The Friends are also taking part in forming policy for signage and interpretation in the Garden.

## Coming Events

**November 21**

**GW**

*"Growing Roses in Wellington"*

Meet at fountain in the Lady Norwood Rose Garden, which is one of the gems of the city, and of the Garden. Here is an opportunity to wander amongst some 110 different beds, with over 3,000 plants and to learn how they can be successfully grown in the city. All rose types are on display and you can benefit from our experience about which varieties can be most successfully grown in the city. Come armed with your questions to stump the experts! And don't forget your camera. Little walking involved.

**November 22 - 28**

**Rose Week**

Packed full of talks to answer any query on roses, with the finale being:

**Spring Rose Show** on Sunday 28

**November 27 (Saturday) European Carols**

7pm at the Soundshell

**December 18 (Saturday) Pasifiki Christmas**

**Celebration** 6pm at the Soundshell. A truly Pacific feel, with the massed voices of community choral groups representing Kiribati, Samoa, Tokelau, Niue, Fiji, Tonga and the Cook Islands. Special guests, Benjamin Makisi and Ben Lumis.

**January 16**

**GW**

*"Fabulous Fuchsias"*

Meet at the Duck Pond. Along Glenmore Street in the Main Garden is an extensive collection of fuchsias and this walk will feature these fascinating plants. Not only will you see the many specimens, but also you will have the opportunity to learn more about their origins, culture, etc. Little walking involved.

**February 20**

**GW**

*"Insects, Birds and Plants"*

Meet at the Duck Pond

**Herb Awareness Week** (last week of Feb.):

Sunday 27: Herb Garden (Meet at the Herb Garden)

Week Day: Trees as Herbs (Meet at the Duck Pond)

**March:**

**Stepping Out Programme:**

Week day: Walk on the Wild Side (day to be confirmed)

Sunday: Native Forest Remnant Walk, (Meeting place to be confirmed)

**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**