



P O Box 28-065  
Kelburn, Wellington

# *Newsletter*

## *November 2005*

Featuring: *Annie's Seat*  
*Lynley and Rob's Trees*  
*Phil's Corker Tree*



Wellington Botanic Garden and Otari-Wilton's Bush  
[www.Wellington.govt.nz](http://www.Wellington.govt.nz)

*What a swell festival it was!*

## President's Patch

Dear Members

At the Annual General Meeting on 25 August we accepted, with regret, the resignations of two long-standing supporters - our Patron, Nola Holmes, and our Auditor, Malcolm McCaw. We thank them both for their significant contributions over many years and wish them well in the future. The position of Patron remains vacant at this time. For Auditor, we were delighted to gain the interest of David Macdonald, a former Controller and Auditor General. David has family connections with the Garden and we welcome his involvement.

A list of the officers and Committee members elected at the AGM is included below. You will note that the position of Secretary remains vacant. Anyone interested in discussing the position is welcome to call me at any time.

Members present at the AGM heard an interesting and informative address by the Hon. Marian Hobbs MP, Minister for the Environment. She talked about the

place of public gardens in the Wellington and national environments, urban design issues and environmental concerns under her portfolio. We were grateful to the Minister for taking time during the election campaign to attend our meeting.

Two other events – the unveiling of the plaque on “Annie’s Seat” and the plant sale during the Spring Festival – are discussed elsewhere in the newsletter. May I just express my thanks to members and Garden staff who contributed.

Work is under way by Committee members on new projects for the garden: signage and interpretation, including at the Pinetum; the native bush remnants; and on the programme for members’ events in 2006. The Guides are in their busy season and a training programme is also under way. We look forward to another creative and fulfilling year for all Friends.

*Ted Woodfield*

## Your New Committee

|                |  |          |
|----------------|--|----------|
| President      | Ted Woodfield                            | 499 6005 |
| Vice President | Richard Nanson                           | 477 4020 |
| Secretary      | <i>Vacant, feel free to volunteer...</i> |          |
| Treasurer      | Elizabeth King                           | 479 5702 |
| Committee      | Brian Absolum                            | 499 0885 |
|                | Angela Hill                              | 479 5580 |
|                | Rosalind Iles                            | 232 7699 |
|                | Florence de Ruiters                      | 938 8801 |
|                | Winsome Shepherd                         | 476 6589 |
|                | Phil Tomlinson                           | 475 8765 |

The position of Patron is unfilled following the retirement of Nola Holmes.

The Honorary Auditor, following the retirement of Malcolm McCaw, is David Macdonald QSO.

Retiring Patron Lady Nola Holmes was President of the Friends from August 1993 to August 1998. She was voted

Patron for the following year, 98/99 and has continued to fill that role since. She has been a very active Patron, attending many Friends’ events and doing a lot to help raise money and assist with planning for the children’s playground, the duck pond development, the Wellington Sculpture Trust, signage and path labels, among other initiatives.

## Botanic Bulletin

Spring certainly caught us on the hop this year. The tulips came up a couple of weeks early, so I was threatening the staff they would have to apply mouth to mouth resuscitation if the tulips looked as if they weren't going to survive to the weekend! The plus side was that the magnolias, tulips and the newly planted azaleas combined to provide an absolute riot of colour in the main garden.

Spring Festival has run well again this year. Laura Wards was unable to complete the work she had started, so Amanda White stepped in. Credit must go to them both for a great two weeks. Unfortunately I had to attend an RNZIH meeting over Tulip weekend so was unable to be present. Reports back indicate that the Friends plant sale went well as did the Dutch community activities. Visitor numbers to the garden appeared to be slightly down on the Sunday. This could be attributable to school holidays and people being away, daylight saving and competing events around the city. However, there were surprisingly large numbers of people in the garden the previous Sunday, so word about the tulips was obviously out!

The playground pines have now been removed, with a significant change in the character of the playground. The views to Mariri Ridge and Spur are great and really highlight the gracefulness of the pines there. The contractors, Treescape, did an excellent job and kept damage to the absolute minimum. We have since completed the retaining wall around the playground and some additional planting. The two remaining barrels have been retained for carving with a children's design theme. We are looking for an available and suitably-qualified carver.

Along with 99 other submitters, the Botanic Garden made an application for Plimmer Trust Funding for the development of a Children's Garden. The concept of this remains somewhat embryonic at this stage and is a subject that has been talked around with staff over the last few years. We await the outcome of deliberations with interest!

We held a meeting recently about the forest remnants and their future management. This was a successful meeting which discussed the priorities now that we have begun the buffer plantings and weed control and highlighted the areas where we are short on information, particularly around reinstatement density of climax trees into the forest areas.

While in Tauranga over the weekend I visited the Te Puna Quarry Park. Just outside the city, this is an old quarry being revegetated and managed by volunteers. Unlike usual revegetation programmes, there is no focus on native plants – rather on what is available and what will grow successfully. There is a most amazing display of *Cymbidium* orchids cascading down one of the slopes which almost defies description. You have to see it to believe it! The volunteers have and continue to undertake a remarkable project in the quarry – it's one not to be missed!

On staff matters- the staff remains largely unchanged. Celeste Hevey, who covered for Jerry Lucero while he was on leave, has transferred to provide summer cover at the Begonia House. Helen Carey has returned to New Zealand from her overseas travels and is assisting at the Botanic Garden Store. The team continue to do a great job in the garden and I have had the pleasure of forwarding many positive comments onto them recently.

Temporary signs have been installed at the Cable Car welcoming visitors to the Garden. These will be in place until the Cable Car Tourism Precinct is confirmed and potential redevelopment works are defined. The Cable Car Museum is on target for a November opening of the extension, housing the grip car, and the Botanic Garden will be well represented in the interpretive area.

A quick reminder – The Botanic Garden Store offers a discount to Friends as does the Café. Christmas is coming up and the roses will be out shortly – where else would you want to be found sitting in the sun, sipping on a cappuccino?

David Sole

## Spring Festival Guided Tours

Spring has come, and with heavy rain falling outside as I write this, seems to have gone. [It's OK, Phil, it came back – Ed] Still, at their peak, the tulips were magnificent, and the recently installed Innovation Garden is really attracting more than its fair share of photographers.

For the main period of the Spring Festival, the guides have been busy. Organised tours were run over eight days. Despite the weather affecting some tours, 12 guides showed some 97 visitors the Garden. It is always difficult to predict numbers, but, apart from the glowworm tours, attendance was disappointing in some cases, although trips appeared to be fully appreciated by those who did actually attend. Changeable and unpredictable weather conditions could be partly responsible for this.

For those who did not see the real tulips, the Garden had for sale the most attractive (and delicious!) tulip lollypops - appreciated by not just the children.



The Spring Festival children's glowworm walk was the most popular, with bookings stopped at 86. In the past we have had many people turning up without booking, and this was expected. However, in fact only 60 saw the excellent display on the night. People booking and not turning up seems to be a feature with these walks this year, making the organisation of guides in attendance a challenge.

While they started the year slowly, at present the glow worms are giving one of the best shows that have existed over recent years, making 'walking the paths to see the stars' very worthwhile.



*Logan Paul at the spectacular Cathedral Bank on a recent tour, answering questions.*

In addition to the special Festival Tours, a number of other walks were successfully run, or are coming up, in particular two school visits, one from Hamilton and the other from Fairlie, to see the glow worms.



*While rain showers had to be dodged, Francis Verrity lead a successful tour of the cacti and succulent garden, assisted by Collection Curator Kate Kidman*

The Spring Festival involves a lot of work, but the enthusiasm of visitors makes it all very worthwhile. If only the weather would behave itself!!

*Story and photos by Phil Tomlinson*

## Friends' Plant Sale

The Friends held their annual Plant Sale on Tulip Sunday. After a slow start, the sale went well and made \$350 for the purse.



The plants were well-grown and included some real bargains. Where else would you get a *Daphne bholua* for \$3?!



The stall was manned by knowledgeable committee members and your editor spotted President Ted on duty, keeping an eye out for likely candidates for Friends membership.

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## Guide Memorial Trees

On Father's Day, September 4, a quiet ceremony was held to dedicate two trees to guides who are no longer with us.



Rob Bos and Lynley Lake both died in this last year. Lynley was the youngest person to have completed guide training and died tragically young. We might have expected senior guide Rob Bos to be with us for many years yet, too, but he fell victim to cancer.

Liquidambers have been planted alongside the new rose garden path and two were dedicated to Lynley and Rob, with family members and friends in attendance.



*Lynley's sister and two year old daughter, Viv and Rose, help with the planting.*

*Photo Philip Lake*

## Annie's Seat

A major Friends project this year has been to organise a plaque for "Annie's Seat".

This seat was marked on the first map of the Garden, dated 1875.



*Annie and William Bramley.*

The story is that Annie used to walk up to this spot, close to the nursery where her husband William, Gardener/Keeper of the Garden 1870 -1889, worked. It is a lovely spot, overlooking the bush along Mamaku Way and up to what is, today, Magpie Lawn (a little further up from the children's playground). The conifers and oaks were not there in Annie's time, but the trees in the bush were.

The Friends hosted descendants of William and Annie Bramley at a special function on September 18 to unveil the plaque. As it was a very wet day, the entire function was held in the Treehouse. A pleasing number of Bramley descendants attended, including one family of four generations and another of six!

Janet Woodfield provided a lovely morning tea, after which President Ted Woodfield welcomed the guests and asked historian Winsome Shepherd to say a few words about Annie's Seat.

Members of the family were all given a copy of the plaque wording. Ted read out the words, thus officially unveiling 'Annie's Seat'.



Some descendants did brave the rain and made a pilgrimage to the seat.



*Jonah Bramley-Davis, Ihaia Bramley-Davis and Bayden Tracey at Annie's Seat. Photo Ross Giblin, courtesy of The Dominion Post.*

Adding to the day's success, Beverley Price (Randall) and her daughter, descendants of William Randall, original owner of the cottage the Bramleys lived in, was present and spoke briefly.

The unveiling was a very special occasion, one warmly appreciated by the Bramley family.

## Profile of a Gardener – Phil Tomlinson Friend and Guide

Phil's interest in gardening began as a child growing up on a North Canterbury farm. His father liked trees and his mother loved flowers. Both were very active in the local horticultural society. Phil recalls having a garden at school and entering plants in local shows. A keen orchid grower, Phil remembers where his fascination with the genus began – he saw some “strange flowers” at one of these shows. “Twenty years later I found out they were cattleyas,” he says.



Perfect recall dimmed slightly by the mists of time, Phil nevertheless thinks his entries in local shows did quite well, winning a few prizes. He says he usually grew flowers, and tells a tale that might partly explain his success. “There was an old lady in Cheviot who drove a great, big Buick,” he says. “She absolutely hated Newman’s buses and used to stop at our place to wait for the bus to go through before continuing her journey.” She grew show daffodils and gave some to Phil to plant, along with some of her champion dahlias.

The family farm was a mixed farm growing grain crops such as barley and wheat. Or paddocks might be sown with ryegrass or clover. In any event, the local seed merchant used to sell a vegetable seed mix, Phil’s Dad would put aside a few rows in the paddock for these seeds and, “there’d be all sorts of vegetables in a couple of rows,” says Phil.

On a farm, “you just lived with trees and plants,” says Phil, “and cropping was your livelihood.” This enterprising young man procured a couple of muscovy ducks when he was eight or nine years old. By the time he left school he was producing several hundred a year for sale. The feed cost nothing, being seconds of grain from the farm, and Phil ended up supplying most of north Canterbury with muscovy ducks. “Well-fed, free-range muscovys are absolutely beautiful,” he says. “One thing I do miss from the farm is the poultry – ducks and geese.”

On leaving school Phil went to Lincoln University, then ended up in Wellington when he was offered a job at National Mutual (now AXA) helping to run the rural mortgage portfolio, eventually managing the \$80million portfolio. He eventually got involved in commercial property and was, in fact, one of the first people to gain a dual rural-urban valuer’s qualification.

He’s been growing orchids since the late 1970s, “something I’ve always been able to grow in Wellington,” he says. A member of the Capital Orchid Society, he was editor of the national magazine ‘Orchids in New Zealand’ for seven years and of the ‘Journal of the Wellington Orchid Society’ for about a decade. “I did it temporarily while one chap went overseas,” he says, “and I never got rid of it!” He goes on to say, though, that, “something like that makes you do research and build on your knowledge. It gives you an incentive to learn.” He’s still keen on orchids, (favourite is the Lycaste genus) but having lost his greenhouse and having a dog and two cats - a bitzer, a marmalade cat called ‘Piggy’ and a Siamese - “the orchids are not looked after as well as they once were. Cats like to sit on Catts! But I like to have animals around the house,” he says.

After a couple of decades with National Mutual, including 12 years as chief valuer, the property section closed down and Phil found himself jobless. Someone said to him, “There’s a meeting in the Treehouse about the Botanic Garden. Why don’t you come along?” “Well,” says Phil, “I didn’t realise it was a guide recruitment ‘con’ and before I knew it, I was a

guide.” He has become more and more involved. He says that he’s lately been helping Jenny out, doing odd bits, “and it’s got worse from there.”

Before becoming a guide, Phil used to talk to the gardeners while he was walking to work. “Now the contact with staff is one of the real pleasures of being involved in the Garden,” he says. “You always get someone on a tour who asks you something you don’t know and the staff at the Garden are always only too happy to answer questions - their knowledge base is vast.” Staff also keep the guides informed as to what’s being put in and taken out of the garden and, “it makes our job so much easier,” says Phil.

Phil enjoys the whole gamut of the role – being out among the plants and the birds, the contact with the staff and people - “I like guiding and that’s why I’m in the Friends,” he says. “I like to get out and kick the odd bit of compost - I’d rather be out doing it than be working behind the scenes.” Nevertheless, he has finally been prevailed upon to become a Friends committee

member. Phil believes the biggest problem facing the Friends and guides is finding people prepared to ‘give’; to do the work. “You actually have to be prepared to give to get the real benefits out of it,” he says.

Phil, his wife Rosemary and one of his two daughters live near the Garden, but it’s not an all-consuming interest by any means. There are many others, including photography, stamp collecting, reading, computers. He runs an orchid website and says many orchid people were scientists, taking a technical approach and having enquiring minds. “I find the same thing now with the guides,” he says.

It was possibly an unfair question for a man who loves the great variety of trees in the Botanic Garden, but we had to ask what his favourite is. “My favourite is probably the large cork oak,” he says. “It’s such a fascinating tree and the wood pigeon frequently present on an upper branch always gives a great welcome.”



*Phil in his element, guiding in the Garden*

## Man in The Trees – Cork Oak, *Quercus suber*

*Continuing on with our seemingly boundless series on the Garden's trees, it's an opportune time to feature **Phil Tomlinson's** favourite from the Garden.*

The six magnificent Cork Oaks were one of the trials carried out by the Botanic Garden Board, for commercial viability.

The first plantings of cork oak in the Garden were probably made about 1873, on the slope near the Swan Pond, as the Duck Pond was then called. These have since been lost, but we do still have six cork oak trees in the Garden. Judge Gillies of Auckland, who gave nine to the Botanic Garden in 1878, probably donated these ones. They had been grown from acorns from a cork oak which had come to Auckland as a seedling from Kew.

The production of cork from trees grown in New Zealand has never become a commercial enterprise. There are cork oaks in other parts of New Zealand, but Peter Tijssen says that our cork oaks are better at producing acorns than the other trees.



The thick, furrowed bark of the cork oak is the main source of commercial cork, most of which is produced in its native countries of Spain, Portugal, and North Africa. In Spain and Portugal it has been grown commercially in

groves for well over 1,000 years. Some groves go back to Roman times.

The bark is harvested in a great sheet every eight to 12 years. A mature tree produces enough bark for some 4,000 corks at each harvest, although with the modern use of compounded corks, this number is now greater. The tree quickly recovers and soon grows new layers of bark.



These are trees with character, with their short, sturdy, often gnarled and twisted trunks. They grow to a height of 15 metres (60 feet), with broad spreading canopies.

This is an evergreen oak, which does not mind frost but does not like damp, wet weather. It is still comparatively rare here and would do well in the drier areas of New Zealand.

*Story and photos by Phil Tomlinson*

## Coming Events

### 20 November

**GW**

*"Giants in the Garden"* Discover the 'giant' trees from around the world that have been growing here in the Botanic Garden for over 130 years, and hear their stories. Moderate walk: 1½ hours. *Meet at the Duck Pond.*

### 21-27 November

*Rose Week*, including:

**Monday 21** and **Friday 25** Growing Healthy Roses, noon - 1pm, Lady Norwood Rose Garden, meet at the fountain.

### Tuesday 22

Gardening without chemicals, noon to 1.30pm Begonia House, Lady Norwood rose garden, meet at the fountain.

### Wednesday 23

11.00 – 12.00 Heritage Rose Society walk Following the Heritage walk, Guest speaker Donal Duthie will introduce The Alberic Barbier Rose, unofficial emblem of Wellington. Meet at the Seddon Memorial entrance to Bolton Street Memorial Park.

### Thursday 24

Dead-heading Rose demonstration, noon to 1pm Lady Norwood Rose Garden, meet at the fountain.

### Sunday 27

Spring Rose Show 10am to 4pm Begonia House Foyer. Organised by the Wellington Rose Society. Heritage Rose Walks 11.00am and 2.00pm - Fascinating heritage rose walks

with guides from the Heritage Rose Society. Meet at the Seddon Memorial entrance to Bolton Street Memorial Park.

### 10 December 7-10pm

*'Kaleidoscope of European Carols – Soundshell.* Proceeds to the Red Cross. Rain date 11 Dec.

### January – February

*Summer City* – various events and concerts in the Garden and around the city. See [www.wellington.govt.nz](http://www.wellington.govt.nz) and click on 'Events' for more info.

### February 19

**GW**

*"Insects, Birds and Plants"* A walk that looks at insects and birds and their relationship to the plants, both endemic and exotic. Moderate walk: one hour.

### March 19

**GW**

*"Downhill walk to the city"* A great walk that includes the main features of this historic and fascinating garden. Moderate walk: 1½ hours. Meet at the Cable Car Entrance.

There will be extra 'Stepping Out' guided walks in March – details in the next newsletter.

**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*