

Newsletter

*For Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Inc
To Promote, Protect, & Preserve*

No 70, Spring 2007

President's Report

On my return from a recent trip to Europe I realised just how little we have progressed during 150 years in protecting our environment: but more especially the protection of our significant trees. The pioneers cut and burnt large tracts of bush to carve out farms. Today we are not cutting down large tracts of bush but we are removing many fine homes together with some magnificent specimens of trees in order to build the maximum number of houses per square metre. Failings in the City Plan have afforded developers licence to remove a significant part of the city's heritage. I trust the revision of the City Plan will ensure that specimen trees are given the protection they deserve and appropriate penalties are put in place to deter such destruction.

A specimen tree or a group of trees on a property presents a challenge for any architect. I believe that this type of challenge brings out the best in the designers. There are many examples of buildings which have been fitted around trees. At Cambridge University the new Hawkins Laboratory was worked around a stand of mature trees. Would this happen in Christchurch? The Garden City image is being further tarnished by the building of large homes with little or no specimen planting. These homes require the appropriate planting to soften and complement them.

It was a wonderful sight seeing plantings of conifers and especially the Cedars sweeping the ground with their branches. We have this fixation that we need to prune everything away from the ground. Group plantings of specimen trees can be used to great effect in breaking up large areas or by creating that special feature. The noted British landscape gardener Capability Brown was able to achieve this on a number of commissions. He did not have the services of electronic imagery but had that natural ability in the placement of plants in their most appropriate setting. Today we all enjoy Brown's landscapes and applaud his foresight.

As the city looks at replanting the inner city, Hagley Park, Victoria Park and our major avenues we need to engage landscape designers who have the vision necessary to produce bold and imaginative plantings which will enhance the city. As the population continues to grow within the inner city these plantings may be the only chance many urban dwellers will have of viewing specimen trees. We need to encourage future generations in maintaining these plantings and hopefully adding to them. We may even produce some more Capability Browns! What a legacy that would be.

David Moyle

Editor's note

We are again distributing the Newsletter by email to those members who have given us their email addresses. If you would prefer to receive the Newsletter by mail, rather than electronically, please contact Jean Norton – phone 379 2464 or jeanorton@paradise.net.nz. Alternatively, if you are receiving it by mail but would prefer it by email please give your email address to Bill Whitmore – phone 339 8356 or billpauline@ihug.co.nz

Gardens' News

Jeremy Hawker reports –

The Botanic Gardens Management Plan and the Master Plan for both Hagley Park and the Botanic Gardens have been finally approved by the Christchurch City Council.

Looking back it has surprised me the length of time this has taken and the amount of work that has contributed to this review. The work of the late Curator, Dr David Given, has been the most significant factor in this extensive review, and action plans have been developed to program and implement the numerous projects. That is not to say that work has not been carried out in the meantime, with considerable funds maintaining and improving our infrastructure having occurred; water supply and conservation, park furniture, conservatory maintenance and historic elements have been maintained or improved.

It is now time however to focus on the development of the new Botanic Gardens Centre and importantly to improve and enhance our plant collections. Planning has been occurring for some of these projects, subject to the management plans being approved by Council; over the next year many will be started and some will be completed.

It is timely then to remind ourselves of the vision:

The Christchurch Botanic Gardens is foremost in celebrating and presenting plant diversity through collections and programmes, including promoting the relationships that people have with plants.

Management goals for the Gardens are two-fold:

To protect and enhance the Botanic Gardens existing and historical environmental values, its landscape qualities and its botanical features.

To provide areas for visitor experience/activities and programmes expected of a botanic gardens of international standard that are compatible with the Botanic Gardens inherent environmental and open space qualities.

To be successful will depend on partnerships and a desire to work to our vision with a common purpose, in a transparent and constructive manner.

Botanic Gardens Information Centre Displays

Mudfish Display. Monday 1 October – Tuesday 23 October

Environment Canterbury will be mounting a display within the Information Centre on the native mudfish.

Digging Deeper - How well do you know your garden? Tuesday 23 October – February

The intention of this display is to help gardeners and new home owners save time and money by providing them with some key pointers on how to choose plants that suit the conditions within their garden.

Next Discovery Trail for Children

Bookworm Ramble. Saturday 22 September – Sunday 7 October

The next discovery trail will help introduce children to different parts of the Botanic Gardens that remind us of stories we have read. Along the trail route children will discover an imaginary world brought to life by popular story book characters. To take part pick up a discovery trail flyer from the Information Office.

Kerry Everingham, Visitor Services Coordinator

Memorandum marks a new relationship between Sister City Botanic Gardens

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the University of Washington Botanic Gardens and the Christchurch Botanic Gardens was officially established at a small signing ceremony on Friday 8 July. Dr David Maberley, Director of the University of Washington Botanic Gardens in Seattle joined Council Transport and Greenspace Unit Manager Michael Aitken to sign the MOU at the Townsend House in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens.



The idea of a MOU between the two Botanic Gardens was pursued a few years ago during a Mayoral visit to Seattle - one of Christchurch's seven sister cities. It was suggested there would be real value in formalising the relationship between the sister cities' Botanic Gardens in order to facilitate academic and scientific exchange as well as establish partnership projects.

Witnesses of the MOU signing included Botanical Services Operations Team Manager Jeremy Hawker and Brian Palliser, chair of the Christchurch-Seattle Sister City Committee.

Mr Hawker says that after over three years in the making, the signing of the MOU establishes a formal network for the two institutions to build on in developing future partnerships. "The sharing of information, plant materials, research and staff exchanges will be invaluable as the Botanic Garden participates with global partners in protecting, conserving and educating the public about the world's biodiversity".

For more information on the MOU or Christchurch's sister cities contact International Relations Coordinator Dave Adamson on 941 8775, or visit www.christchurch.org.nz/sistercities.

Profile : John Cunningham, Grounds Support Team Coordinator

Have you ever wondered while jogging around Hagley Park who keeps Christchurch's most beloved park in such great condition?

Gardens Support Team coordinator John Cunningham leads a Park maintenance unit of eight who work across all sections of Hagley Park and the Council Gardens to make sure they remain an asset to our garden city for generations to come. This dedicated team not only maintains the appearance of Hagley Park's trees, pathways and playing fields, but they also provide extra support and materials to the Botanic and Mona Vale gardeners. They are the forgotten 'stars' who keep the grass short, lift dangerous trees, pick up glass and rubbish left by boy racers or sporting groups, fix fences, paint the toilet buildings and

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keep the drains unblocked. "We're the grafters, we do the mucky stuff" John says with a chuckle.

John has worked for the Christchurch City Council Parks and Reserves unit since 1982. While his position is a far cry from his painting and decorating apprenticeship, John says he enjoys the job so much he can't imagine leaving this line of work. "I can't think of a better job. The staff here are great and really have this place at heart. That's why we work here for so long" John says.

As coordinator of the Parks and Gardens Maintenance unit, John manages all the contracts for Hagley Park maintenance. This includes pathways, buildings, trees, lawns, signage, safety and structures. In the last 14 months he has also put his creativity to good use installing new seats along Hagley Park's outer pathways. "I choose a user-friendly spot, preferably with a nice vista" John says.

John is also in charge of ensuring sports fields are properly marked, toilets are open at the right times and helps ensure the smooth running of community events in Hagley Park. "Health and safety of the public and the park is paramount. At events I make sure tents and vehicles are in the right places and I rope-off potential danger zones" John

says.

John and his unit monitor the condition of Hagley Park every day, as well as depend on regular users to bring their attention to things they may have missed. Given the breadth and diversity of their work, it is not surprising that every day the team have something different to do, and every season brings its own set of tasks. "Winter can be a frustrating season. We often have to close the playing fields due to high public use and the short turn-around between the summer and winter sport seasons. To protect the fields in bad weather we have to err on the side of caution" John says.

An outdoors man through and through, on summer afternoons John trades in the ride-on lawn mower for a ride on his large road bike, or enjoys mountain biking on the Port Hills. He also gets to appreciate the spoils of his labour supporting his son playing rugby at Hagley Park in winter.

John counts everybody who uses Hagley Park as a customer. He says the most rewarding aspect of his job is seeing the Park and the Gardens being used for their rightful purposes. "It is a privilege to make Hagley Park and the Botanic Gardens pleasant places to be in and to use. I'm a caretaker for the future, really, as that is exactly what we are here to maintain" John says.



Articles

Moa and Divaricating Shrubs

Moa probably dominated the New Zealand landscape for 4 million years until extinction. They roamed all over the country from coastline to subalpine grassland feeding off leaves and twigs from low trees and shrubs. There were 14 species of moa, ranging from turkey-sized (20 kg) to the largest 250 kg *Dinornis giganteus*. The fossil evidence relates to the last 10,000 years and judging by the numbers that became trapped in swamps, moa were remarkably abundant. Unlike emus and ostriches, moa did not browse on grasses and tussocks. They were big birds, with big appetites using a secateur-like bill and a gizzard full of rounded stones for crushing plant matter, especially woody twigs.

To survive, moa must have spent many hours each day grazing. Their favoured habitats would have been fertile river flats, forest edges and wetlands, rather than deep forest. Highly palatable and nutritious shrubs may have suffered very heavy browsing damage. As a defence against excessive grazing some

plants evolved a range of subtle defences. The evolutionary adjustment may have led to some woody shrubs and twiggy, small-leaved juvenile trees developing distinctive wide branching angles termed 'divaricate'.

A divaricating shrub has a number of distinctive features. They often appear brown, rather than green, thus giving a dead appearance. Some trees pass through a divaricating juvenile stage, changing to a less-tangled, normal growth from above the grazing height of the tallest moa (3m). It is possible that the often dead-looking outer twigs of divaricates would appear unappetizing to moa. The tough, wiry twigs would be difficult to pull off and the many, widely-separated growing points of divaricates would ensure that browsing would be unlikely to lead to the death of the bush.

These divaricating forms are found in no fewer than 17 different plant families. There are over 55 species of divaricate native shrubs and at least seven small-leaved juvenile trees. Altogether this makes up about 10 percent of all the woody plant life. In evolutionary terms a powerful selective force had been at work on the wood plants in this – a selective force that was not taking place elsewhere in the world.

According to the 'moa theory' (first mooted in 1977 by Greenwood and Atkinson), the enhanced nutrient content of divaricate plants growing on fertile alluvial soils would be sought after by moa. Testing is difficult without any moa with which to conduct tests. Chemical tests, however, show that the nutrient content and palatability of *Coprosma propinqua* (divaricate) is higher than that of the non-divaricating *C. lucida*. Plants not only vary in their nutrient content such as nitrogen, but they also use various toxic compounds like alkaloids, tannins and cyanogens to defend themselves from herbivores.

Small-leaved divaricate shrubs can also be found elsewhere in the world - for example at a dry coastal locality in the south of Madagascar, in Patagonia on the drier side of the Andes in southern South America and on dry hill slopes in Greece. However, in these places the majority of divaricates are very spiny, presumably to discourage browsing by soft-muzzled mammals. In New Zealand such spines would have been ineffective against hard-beaked moa and almost all our divaricates lack spines.

Cockayne was the first to suggest that the small-leaved divaricating habit was xeromorphic, adapted to an extremely arid climate. This 'climate theory' concluded that plants would probably have evolved from forest ancestors during glacial periods of the recent ice ages. Climates then would have been drier, particularly in the rain shadow to the east of the Southern Alps. New Zealand's narrow and isolated land mass has a very oceanic climate with short-term fluctuations. Frosty winter nights can be followed by quite warm days. The delicate growing points are within a protective shield of wiry twigs and the divaricate growth form was developed as a defence against drought, wind abrasion and frost damage.

The explanation for the development of these dense stands of interlaced growth form have puzzled botanists for more than a century. To the casual eye these divaricates all look the same and if there were in fact only one species it could be dismissed as chance. In fact there are many different species of this form, most of them quite unrelated. This suggests that some common environmental factor or factors has led to this specialization. What that factor might be is the matter in dispute.

These two view-points can be regarded as mutually reinforcing one another. The pressure to develop a divaricate form would help the plant survive both adverse climates and excessive moa browsing.

Features of Divaricating Plants

Woody plants with:

- * small leaves
- * wide angle branching
- * large number of branches
- * high branch density
- * high degree of branch interlocking
- * tough wiry stems
- * many internal growing tips
- * no spines
- * often distinctly brownish
- * up to about 3 metres in height

References

- Dawson, J.W. and Lucas, P, '*Lifestyles of New Zealand Forest Plants*', Victoria University Press, Wellington, 1993, p.176.
- Gibbs, George, '*Ghosts of Gondwana*', Craig Potton Publishing, Nelson, 2006, p.232.

Russell Moffitt

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Three hundred years since the birth of Carl Linnaeus.

Do you have a puka in your garden? Yes? Now exactly which plant do you mean? Do you mean the rather frost-tender small New Zealand tree with very large shiny green leaves (that botanists call *Meryta sinclairii*) – or the plant with much smaller leaves widely used as a hedging plant, sometimes also called broadleaf (or *Griselinia littoralis* to botanists).

The common bluebell. We all know what it is, or do we? The bluebell in England is a different plant to that given the same name in England. If you live in the USA there are at least four bluebells which are nothing like the English or Scottish bluebell.

If you go into a garden centre and ask for a puka, or bluebells, what will you finish up with? Though botanical names might seem daunting at first, it is not hard to see their value in allowing us to be absolutely clear about what plant we are talking about. Because they are internationally recognized and independent of local common names, botanical names are used by scientists, conservationists, growers and gardeners of all languages and countries, to be certain which species they are talking about. And the same goes for animals and all other living organisms. Imagine the chaos and misunderstanding in a world without it?

Carl Linnaeus was born on 23 May 1707 in a small Swedish village. He was born into a world of confusion where gardeners used common names, and scholars referred to animals and plants by lengthy Latin descriptions that differed widely and had to be frequently changed.

He studied medicine as a young man in the Netherlands. The use of herbal cures linked the fields of medicine and botany and Linnaeus visited England and France meeting many of Europe's most famous botanists. He returned to Sweden and in 1741 was appointed Professor of Medicine and Director of the Botanic Gardens in Uppsala.

Linnean taxonomy

The first step in Linnaeus' endeavours was to create a taxonomic system according to a sexual basis by which living things could be classified.

He divided plants into 24 classes according to the number of their male organs, the stamens – which he called “husbands”. These classes were then further distinguished by the number of the female organs – the “wives”, or pistils.

In this system, plants made love in the flowerhead or “bridal bed” as Linnaeus called it. According to him, one “wife” frolicked with “six husbands” in the lily's blossom; tulip trees enjoyed “20 males or more in the same marriage”. Marigolds were even more promiscuous: their flowers contained husbands that “live with wives and concubines”. The very suggestion of carnal philandering in plants outraged many botanists. King's Botanist and Keeper of the Garden at Holyrood, Charles Alston, called the method “too smutty for British ears” while the Vatican added Linnaeus' books to its “forbidden” list.

While considered scandalous Linnaeus' sexual classification system was a brilliant method for its time. It allowed plant hunters as well as amateurs to identify plants straightforwardly as long as they could count the pistils and stamens. It could be used in the wilderness of the new colonies, in the pleasure ground of English gardens, or in the libraries of learned societies. However Linnaeus himself knew that his sexual system was not ideal – it sometimes separated things that were obviously closely related but differed in just one character, and lumped together others that were nothing like each other but happened to have the same number of parts. It went out of use quite soon, within 50 years of his death.

A contemporary of Linnaeus, Bernard de Jussieu at the Jardin du Roi in Paris was working on a natural system of classification. In time botanists came to support this natural system of classification rather than the sexual system of Linnaeus.

Linnaeus's system of classification bears little relation to the system accepted today. There have been significant discoveries and developments in science that have prompted botanists to continue to alter the system of plant classification. For example after Linnaeus's death Darwin's theories on evolution led to changes on how plants are inter-related. And more recently, with modern technology, we observe characteristics of plants – and similarities between them – not only with the naked eye but at the molecular level. These developments in science challenged the conventional, Linnaean-based hierarchy.

Linnaeus' binomial system

The second step in Linnaeus's endeavours was more popular and far longer-lived. He resolved the then cumbersome naming systems by a brilliant, easy and straightforward solution. He gave every plant a two-word name, like a first name and surname. The "surname" was the genus, such as *Magnolia* or *Kalmia*, which often commemorated a friend or the genus's discoverer. To that Linnaeus added a second word such as *grandiflora* or *angustifolia*, to signify individual species. Thus Weymouth pine, previously *Pinus Americana quinis ex uno folliculo setis longis tenuibus triquetris ad unum angulum per totam longitudinem minutissimis crenis asperatis*, was reduced to *Pinus strobus*. By its very simplicity, binomial naming democratized and popularized botany.

Linnaeus' genius was to understand that a name did not have to include details of the plant's characteristics such as colour, leaf shape or habitat: this information could be looked up in botanical encyclopedias. The binomial name was a label, a point of reference: standardized and universal, it was easy to use and at the same time gave access to more available information.

He was not the first botanist to use binomial names, but was the first to use them consistently, giving us all a simple, logical way of naming plants.

At first, botanists were reluctant to see the advantages of the radical new names. Eventually, however, they began to understand the value of an international naming standard, leaving Linnaeus in an unassailable position; plant names were now decided by him alone. In 1753 he published *Species Plantarum*, universally acknowledged as the starting point of modern plant names. Linnaeus estimated the world's flora at 20,000 species (estimates today vary between 235,000 and 400,000), and either applied or recognized some 9,000 plant species during his lifetime: those with the abbreviation "L." after their name, Linnaeus invented or validated.

Botanists have subsequently built on Linnaeus' naming system so we now have a strict set of rules governing the naming of plants. These rules, the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, regulate the construction of names, the way they are first published, and the

designation of a preserved specimen that fixes the application of the name. All this helps botanists provide name that can then be used by everyone to communicate about plants.

Linnaeus, the man

What was Linnaeus like as a man? From an early age he showed a love of exploring his natural surroundings and fascination for plants. He became a real field botanist who loved going on expeditions. It has been said that he did not actually have a special affection for plants; rather he was a great scholar who was a compulsive cataloguer. He classified; from plants to butterflies to buffaloes.

Linnaeus always seemed to his contemporaries to be in a hurry, as if life were too short to complete the task he had set himself; to bring order to the natural world. He was accused of self-glorification and arrogance, with some justification. For example, later in his life, he recalled his work at the University of Uppsala by using the rather immodest phrase "(I) brought the natural sciences to their highest peak". He was convinced that "God Himself led me with His own almighty hand". It is not surprising that he made enemies who hated him.

On the other hand he was adored by his students for his passionate teaching and was able to establish good working relationships with other botanists. One such man was Dr John Hope, King's Botanist and Superintendent of the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh. Hope gave his students training in Linnaean methods long before their importance for botanical progress was generally appreciated. He took steps to have important works of Linnaeus published in Scotland. His teaching was responsible for the early adoption by almost all Scottish botanists of Linnaean nomenclature and descriptive terminology. In his ambitious endeavour to classify all the world's known plants Linnaeus required as many new plants from around the world as he could get. He relied heavily on plant material sent to him by his peers. Much material was channeled through John Hope who had many contacts around the world, including former students who went out collecting in the new world.

He was able to confer immortality on fellow botanists by naming plants in their honour. For his old teacher Olaf Rudbeck, for example, Linnaeus

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chose the glorious *Rudbeckia*. To celebrate his pupil Pehr Kalm's bountiful expedition to the American colonies, Linnaeus called one of the most coveted North American shrubs *Kalmia*. He also had a powerful tool against his opponents, as he could single out insignificant plants or weeds for them. The first to experience Linnaeus' scorn was Johann Siegesbeck, demonstrator of the St Petersburg Botanic Garden, who had condemned Linnaeus' sexual system as "loathsome harlotry". Linnaeus punished him by giving his name to *Siegesbeckia*, a stinking weed.

Linnaeus' two-part Latin naming system has assured him a lofty place in the world of botany.

Reference:

In a class of his own. Andra Wulf. Garden, May 2007

What's in a name? Ida Maspero. The Botanics, Issue 28, Spring 2007

What's in a name? Gail Vines. Kew magazine. Winter 2006

Bill Whitmore

The Australian Botanic Gardens

Most visitors to Melbourne would be familiar with the Royal Botanic Gardens close to the centre of the city but for the last year there has been another Botanic Gardens established out on the fringes of the City at a place called Cranbourne. A visit to the lookout over these gardens will reveal the Melbourne City sky line so far away - as the crow flies it is evidently 45km.

As a visitor without a car (who wants a car in a city that does cater for public transport) it is a long way because the excellent public transport system stops at Cranbourne and there is no way of getting the last kilometres to the Gardens without walking or taking a taxi. Everywhere this topic was a bone of contention. Something needs to be done and no doubt will have been done by the time you are ready to visit this truly amazing garden.

The first impression was that the Cranbourne Gardens had been influenced by those truly amazing developments at the Eden Project in Cornwall in the UK. It was not surprising to hear that the Eden team had been involved at the very beginning. The Cranbourne site was also a quarry, but more of a sand pit which as a result of its free draining nature allows for the very wide

incorporation of plants from the estimated 45 bioregions of Australia. The scale of the project is huge. Set in about 350 hectares of wild Australian bush you are invited to drive slowly to the car park at the Gardens so as to avoid running over the snakes, wombats, and kangaroos - not that I saw any of these fauna on a rather chilly autumn day.

Set in the middle of this wilderness is the garden: many hectares in extent it radiates from a red heart which represents the dry interior of this vast Continent. In sculptured elegance the desert merges into the rivers and well-watered eastern biomes while out to the west are the dry rivers and channel country merging into the sandy deserts. Throughout the whole area is a bewildering array of indigenous Australian flora related to the particular biome you are wandering through. The excellent signage is bold and in keeping with the environments being exhibited. No visit would be complete without a visit to the lookout above the gardens, where my favourite signage was located: it warns ".....There is a high risk that lightning will strike the lookout during a thunderstorm....."

Impressive also was the overall enthusiasm and helpfulness of the staff who all knew the exact amount of rainfall that had occurred the previous day and the climatic credentials of the area. While it is all still embryonic, being in the making for only the last 3-4 years and opened for only one year, it is a remarkable effort and certainly worth putting on the visiting list when next visiting Melbourne. There is no doubt in my mind that this is a Botanic Garden that will become a regular feature of any future visits to Melbourne.

Bob Crowder



Friends' Groups

Report on Annual General Meeting, 26 August 2007

The following report on the Annual General Meeting held on 27 August is supplied for the benefit of members who could not be present.

Presidents' Report.

The Annual Report by David Moyle was sent to Members with the Notice of Meeting. At the meeting he supplemented that report with appreciation to Jeremy Hawker and his staff for assistance to the Friends and with thanks to Committee members and others for the work done by them during the past year.

Subscriptions for year commencing 1 July 2008.

To assist with Committee and individual planning subscriptions are now set one year in advance. Because subscriptions were set as from 1 July 2007 at the following increased rates – Student \$10, Ordinary \$16, Affiliate \$16, Family \$22 the Meeting approved the Committee recommendation that there should be no increase in subscriptions from 1 July 2008.

Committee.

Having held the position of President for three years David Moyle was not eligible for re-election. Vice President Don Bell was nominated for election to the position of President and was unanimously appointed by the Meeting. David Moyle was re-elected to the Committee as Immediate Past President.

Charles Graham was nominated to join the Committee along with past Committee members who had again offered their services. These members were all elected to the new Committee which now comprises:

President -	Don Bell
Vice President -	Position Vacant
Immediate Past President -	David Moyle
Treasurer -	Lesley Godkin
Membership Secretary -	Ruby Coleman
Minute Secretary -	Jim Crook
Committee Members -	
Nancy Boundy, Charles Graham, Bill Whitmore and Elizabeth Wolff	
Ex Officio -	Jeremy Hawker

Don Bell paid tribute to the work done by David Moyle over the past three years and made him a presentation on behalf of the Friends.

Talk by Operations Manager.

Jeremy Hawker, Botanic Gardens Operations Manager, gave a most informative talk supplemented by slides about development of the Botanic Gardens Management Plan which had finally received City Council approval. He outlined the manner in which projects would be progressed and answered questions from members.

Jeremy Hawker then gave details of work done to date on various projects within the Management Plan and discussed designs that had already been drawn up in conjunction with Lincoln University for creation of three small gardens displaying various ways in which native plants could be used in home gardens. Because this worthwhile project could be separately identified as a Friends' project and the cost met from within existing accumulated funds the Meeting gave approval in principle for the Committee to authorise the expenditure once final costs were known.

Notice of Bus Trip.

E.Wolff gave preliminary notice that on 10 November there would be a bus trip to Oxford gardens for members.

Afternoon Tea .

On completion of formal business afternoon tea was enjoyed by all.

Guiding Group Report

Although it has been winter, the Guides have not been idle. Under the valued leadership of Faye and Neil Fleming, we have had our usual monthly training mornings at the Petanque rooms. These are always well attended and knowledge is freely shared. We are a close knit group and meet socially as well. Our Soup and Whist evening at Neil and Faye's home recently was greatly enjoyed.

We prepared for Heritage Week by researching "Plants of the Pacific" for daily talks in Cuninghame House and, being the flexible people that we are, when Cuninghame House was closed for painting,

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moved our talks to the Petanque rooms. However, the cold weather and the change of venue resulted in very poor attendances.

The June walk, "Art in the Gardens", very ably researched and led by Faye Fleming and Barbara Brailsford, was most enjoyable. Many were surprised with the numbers of art works and intrigued by the stories and backgrounds of the artists.

The July walk, "The Beauty of Trees in Winter; buds, bark, cones and catkins, was guided by Don Bell and Daphne McConchie and took place on a very cold, rain-threatening, afternoon. There was much to see and many contrasts. The stateliness of the *Aesculus hippocastnum* (horse chestnut) and the *Fagus purpurea* to the quirky *Corylus avellana contorta* (Harry Lauder's walking stick) and the Camperdown elm; the soft buds of the Magnolias and the fat sticky buds of the horse chestnut; the distinctive bark of *Acer griseum*, *Betula utilis* the totara and the matai and the *Liriodendron tulipifera*; the *Ulmus glutinosa* laden with catkins and little cones. To finish off the walk, Don referred to the perfect tree (the piece of art representing the cabbage tree behind the Information Centre) as *Cordyline rusticana* -it doesn't require water, fertilising, pruning or mulching and the leaves never fall.

Daphne McConchie

Propagators' Report – Autumn/Winter 2007

The Propagators have been working steadily over the last three months. The winter has been relatively mild, with no snow in our area, although we had some very sharp frosts in July. The cold even burnt some small plants in the tunnel house though the little propagation bay was not affected, nor were the succulents which are kept on the side benches, high enough to be out of danger. Some perennials were put at ground level in the succulents tent and these continued to grow well. No *Macropipers* were damaged outside under the tree and we had put the swan plants in the quarantine house so they were alright. Watering was not a problem during Autumn-Winter, though Don adjusted the irrigation rate several times.

Of the bulbs, some *Narcissus bulbocodium* (hoop-petticoat daffodils) have already flowered and quickly sold, but there should be plenty for the 22 September Bulb & Early Plant Sale. We hope

other bulbs will be in flower on the day.

The Perennials Team have been working alternate weeks during the cold weather but will be busy from September. With 7 volunteers they achieve a great deal quickly. There have been a few early flowering plants for sale all winter and there is a good stock which will be ready for the 27 October Big Plant Day Sale

Trees, Shrubs and Natives have been selling steadily; stock is much depleted but the quarantine house has 2 bays of cuttings rooting quickly on the new heat pads. With spring warmth some newly potted plants will be saleable by October. There should be good variety of species, native and exotics.

The Succulent Collection, especially those in big boxes of pumice, are increasing in size and should develop dramatic flowers as summer advances. They are well suited to so many Christchurch gardens, especially in rocky areas, and are popular for their architectural look.

As usual, if anyone is interested in joining one of the Propagating Teams please phone 980-9358. We have had a couple of new members recently but can always find interesting occupations for willing hands. We are also still glad of donations of clean, washed pots, in green or black. Other colours are alas not usable.

Helen Constable 980-9358 hrcon@paradise.net.nz

Transport to meetings

Your Committee has been advised that some members have difficulty in getting to monthly meetings because of lack of transport or because public transport to the regular venue at the Horticultural Centre is inconvenient. If members have these difficulties the Committee suggests that individuals should attempt to make arrangements for transport with other members in their local area who normally take their vehicles to meetings.

Any members in this situation that do not know other members in their local areas who might be able to help with transport should advise the Membership Secretary, Ruby Coleman, 355 8811. She may be able to supply names of local area members who could be contacted for possible assistance.

Subscription renewal

Our financial year runs from 1 July to 30 June each year so our new 2007-8 year has begun. We do not send invoices, so, if you have not already done so, please renew your subscription now by filling in the form recently posted to you with the notice of the AGM. It would be appreciated if you would fill in both sides, including offers of help and email address if applicable.

Thinking of Christmas already –a request from Alison Fox

With the Committee planning the Christmas Party and Fun Raffle, I am putting forward a thought for you. I would be happy to accept any contributions for the Raffle so I am giving you plenty of time to think about it. Ring me on 942 4989 to arrange for a pickup. Thank you.

Alison Fox

Coming Events

Bus trip to three gardens in the Oxford district area

The first visit is to a well-constructed native garden in the Oxford Township. Following this we visit a large rural garden known as “Ribblesdale”. While there we will also have our lunchtime break; tea and coffee will be available at an extra \$2 a head and there will be comfort stop facilities. Plants may be purchased. Another attractive garden rounds off our visit before we head back towards the city.

The bus will leave HMS Pegasus, 419 Montreal Street North at 9am, and return at 4pm. To book please use the form attached to the Coming Events programme..

Elizabeth Wolff

Two slide shows - “Glorious gardens of the UK”

Tricia Carr will be presenting two slide shows at the WEA, 59 Gloucester Street, on “Glorious gardens in the UK”. Some of these gardens will be familiar to people by name even if they have not seen them. Others are also really beautiful but hardly mentioned. Tricia will be known to those Friends who have joined with her when she has led Friends’ guided Saturday walks in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens.

The dates are:

Glorious Gardens part I: Thursday 1 November, 11.00am

Glorious Gardens part II: Thursday 29 November, 11.00am.

12 FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS

Contact Numbers

President	Don Bell	343-6699	Ex Officio	Jeremy Hawker	941-7580
Vice President	Vacant		Helpers		
Immediate Past President	David Moyle	358-8914	Plant Sale	Helen Constable	980-9358
Treasurer	Lesley Godkin	388 0043	Newsletter mail out	Jean Norton	379-2464
Membership Secretary	Ruby Coleman	355-8811	Botanist	Bill Sykes	366-3844
Minutes Secretary	Jim Crook	358-5845	Guided Walks	Max Visch	338-2273
Outings/trips	Elizabeth Wolff (03)	313-5046	Guide Co-ordinator	Pat Whitman	384-3475
Newsletter Editor	Bill Whitmore	339-8356	Enquiries	Info Centre	941-6840 x 7590
Other Committee Members	Charles Graham	348-5896	Administrative Assistant	Sylvia Meek & Fay Jackson	
	Nancy Boundy	388-6345	Newsletter layout	Maria Adamski	

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