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NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS INC

NO. 6

WINTER 1991

EDITORIAL

The Friends will soon complete their first full year as an active Society. Information given in this *Newsletter* provides a very good indication of some of what has been achieved in this first year. A good measure of the effectiveness of a Society is the level of participation of its members in activities. For this reason it is appropriate that mention is made of those Friends, other than those who serve on the Committee, who have given assistance to the Botanic Gardens and who have contributed to the success of activities organised by the Society. Anticipating that there may be omissions of names, incorrect spellings, and a mixture of formal and informal names, it is hoped that these will be pointed out so that we can give acknowledgements where these are due and correct any errors of naming. Identifying people, and learning their names and interests is an important part of any Society.

With this *Newsletter* is the President's annual report, the Agenda for the Annual General Meeting, and a form for nominations of Officers for election to the Society's Committee. Des Riach and Frank Harvey have indicated their intention to resign from the Committee. The Friends have benefitted very much from the service given by these two very well qualified and experienced people. We look forward to their continuing involvement with the Friends and wish them ongoing enjoyment in the many other activities in which they are involved.

INFORMATION CENTRE HELPERS

There has been an excellent response to the call for people to provide help to the operation of the Information Centre. As well as being of benefit to the Botanic Gardens those involved have gained in developing their public relations skills and have learned more about the Gardens and what they offer to the public. Friends involved have been:

Dick Bouman, Mr Ewart, Jane English, Faye Flemming, Colleen Fuller, Cynthia Hampton, Bob Jump, R. Kerr, Marie Lockey, Natalie Lofts, Jane McArthur, Jean McCallion, Betty McGowan, Lisa McGregor, June Mcleod, Peter Mahan, Gwen Montgomery, Adrienne Moore, Neil O'Brien, Chris O'Sullivan, Steve Parker, Mary Plunkett, Pam Rabe, Margaret Royds, Tina Smith, Norah Southom, Pat Stevenson, Margaret Teague, Max Visch, Fiona Wetherall, Thelma Milne, and Helen Watt.

SEED DISTRIBUTION HELPERS

The seed list and seed exchange programme carried out by the Botanic Gardens is a very important way by which contact is maintained with the Botanical Gardens of the World. Through the exchange involved, New Zealand plants are distributed throughout the World and new plants are available for evaluation in our Botanic Gardens. Friends who assisted in the distribution of seed this year were:

Neroli O'Brien, Joan Thacker, Bunty Penny, Fay Halliday, Bob Peers, Peter Mahan, Kath Banfield, Margaret Teague, Doug Olds, Adrienne Moore, and Ann Dickson.

SPREADING THE NEWS

With our growing membership, sending out the *Newsletter* has become a more time consuming task and has had to meet deadlines to inform members of imminent events. This time we are endeavouring to beat the July 1 increase in postal rates and to encourage members to come to the AGM. Friends who have folded paper, sealed envelopes and despatched the mail have been:

Pat Stevenson, Bunty Penny, Gwen Montgomery, Brenda Smith, Andrina Elder and Ann Dickson.

Special thanks are due to Dawn Ross, DSIR, Lincoln, for her work setting out the *Newsletter* and improving its format during the foundation year.

SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL EVENTS

The social side of our activities has been very much enhanced by the people who have provided and prepared food and drinks offered at our meetings. Special thanks are due to Margaret Teague and her helpers for the catering for the At Home lunch and to Deirdre Harris and helpers in providing tea at the Herbarium.

PREPARATION OF MEMBERSHIP LISTS

The Society is very fortunate to have Gavin Halliburton providing his personal computer and computing skills for the management of the membership list.

GARDEN TOURS AND WALKS

Max Visch reports that for the last three months a small but enthusiastic group of Friends have been meeting on alternate Wednesdays at 1pm at the Information Centre for guided tours of the Gardens. The next two are scheduled for the 3rd and 17th of July. Although originally intended to familiarise members helping out on Fridays at the Information Centre, with the location of various amenities, facilities, notable trees and plant collections of interest to visitors to the Gardens, it was felt that the botanical, horticultural and historical aspects of these guided walks would be of interest to other members as well. Each guided tour takes about 1½ to 2 hrs, but members are welcome to join in for only a part of this time if such suits them.

As winter is upon us, evergreens and particularly conifers have featured prominently in our programme. So far we have looked at and discussed:

- Notable Trees of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens
- The Trees of the Children's Playground
- Trees and Shrubs of Economic Importance
- Trees and Shrubs from Bible Lands
- Relic Genera and Species of Early Geologic Periods (eg *Ginkgo*, Dawn Redwood, Redwoods, Monkey Puzzles etc)
- The Cypress Family of Coniferous Trees (*Cupressus*, *Chamaecyparis*, *Thuya* and *Juniperus*)

On July 3 we will visit the *Pinetum* at the Gardens and study characteristics of members of the Pine family.

We do not cancel meetings, but in inclement weather shift to the shelter of the glasshouses. More information on these Garden Study Tours can be obtained from Max Visch, Phone 3382 273.

ACTIVITIES

The three meetings of the Friends held since the last *Newsletter* have all been very well attended and very much appreciated by both contributors and participants.

Early in April Brian Molloy gave an excellent presentation on the history of Riccarton Bush and led those attending on an informative tour of the Bush. As well as an illustrious past, Riccarton Bush has an exciting future with a well thought out management plan in place and the concept of a 'Living Museum' for Riccarton House. Brian's knowledge of the Bush has been carefully built up with the objective of producing a book about this unique and remarkable natural asset. Preparation of this book is well advanced, and it was clear from the response Brian received from his presentation that it will be a book of great interest to the Friends.

The At Home Soup Plus Lunch proved to be a very enjoyable occasion for all those who attended. The idea of a Lucky Number with a plant as a prize worked out very well indeed, and the raffle of plants is proving a good way to raise funds. The Society has been fortunate to have had plants donated for this purpose by the Gardens and the Horticulture Department of Lincoln University. At the lunch, interest in the plants provided for these purposes was very much enhanced by the description of them provided by Roy Edwards. The variety of soups and other foods provided a tasty and ample meal.

It was very encouraging for the Herbarium Keeper, Dr Murray Parsons, and Assistant Herbarium Keeper, Bryony MacMillan, of the DSIR Land Resources, Botany Institute, to have such a large number of the Friends make the trip out to Lincoln. Many of the Friends will now be much better informed about the function of a Herbarium and aware of the important link between the Botany Institute Herbarium and the Botanic Gardens provided by the historically important Armstrong collection. All must agree that this collection is under excellent care along with the other specimens in the important National collection contained in the Herbarium.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Committee has been endeavouring to plan a year's events in advance and this should be possible for the next year. We have a variety of events scheduled up to the New Year. The questionnaire to the Friends has brought forward a useful number of new suggestions for other events.

'Annual General Meeting' Sunday 14 July at 2pm. Botanic Gardens Information Centre. The intention is to keep the formal, although necessary part of this meeting, as short as possible. This is to leave plenty of time for afternoon tea, plant description and associated lucky plant and raffle, and the visit to the Show Houses. Please bring the enclosed Agenda and Report to the meeting, and ensure nomination forms are given to the Secretary before the meeting.

'Canterbury Blossoms Through the Woods' Sunday 1 September at 4.30 pm. Botanic Gardens Information Centre. All members of the Society will receive an invitation to attend the opening of this exhibition of Fine Furniture Fashioned From Canterbury Woods which is being jointly organised by

The Christchurch Botanic Gardens and L'Etaq College-Studio. As well as the opportunity to see the elegant furniture, the occasion will provide the enjoyment of Canterbury food and wine, and music played by young Canterbury musicians on wood constructed instruments. The enthusiasm of Remi Couriard, Director of L'Etaq College, for this event, is certain to make this a very interesting and lively occasion.

'The Development of New Plant Resources for Horticulture Students at Lincoln University' Saturday 28 September at 2 pm. Lincoln University Horticulture Department. This will be an excellent opportunity for Friends to see the facilities available for the teaching of horticulture at Lincoln University. Roy Edwards, whose knowledge of horticultural plants is now well known to the Friends, will lead this meeting which will include a look at the developing *Magnolia* collection. Afternoon tea will be provided.

'Tour of the Historic and Notable Trees of the Botanic Gardens' Sunday 20 October at 2pm. Start from Information Centre. This tour will be led by Dieter Steinegg, Botanic Garden Tree Specialist and Max Visch, Tree Enthusiast. A sale of plants provided by Friends will be held at this meeting.

'Old Roses' Sunday 24 November. It is suggested that you bring a picnic lunch for 12.30 pm to enjoy before the meeting which will start at 1.30 pm. Mary Plunkett is planning an interactive discussion about Old Roses including their colour possibilities and plants they combine well with. She is offering to help identify Old Rose varieties brought to the meeting.

'End of Year Social Function' Friday 6 December at 4 pm. At the Information Centre. A chance for the Friends to meet socially with Garden Staff.

COMMITTEE BRIEFS

The Friends now have a logo and associated motif depicting kowhai. These were selected by the Committee from an excellent range of designs prepared by Frank Harvey.

It has been agreed that the Friends will contribute \$2000⁰⁰ towards the cost of lighting of the approaches to the Information Centre. This contribution will come from the funds accumulated by the Friends in the 1990/91 financial year.

The Botanic Gardens has offered the Friends the opportunity to have a stall at the 'Spring is Here' festival that is centred on the daffodils and band rotunda for the four Sundays of September. This provides a good opportunity for fund raising and ideas and help from Friends to realise this opportunity are requested.

It has been decided that the subscription for the 1991/92 year will be the same as that for 1990/91. This decision will place more importance on fund raising activities. For the October 20 meeting it is requested that Friends pot up plants from their gardens soon so that they are well rooted, and preferably in flower and named at the time of the sale. Baking produce, gardening magazines and other items that Friends can offer for sale will be welcome. Further enquiries about the sale can be made to Barbara de Lambert.

REMEMBER: AGM and SHOW HOUSE VISIT, SUNDAY 14 JULY 2pm