

# NEWSLETTER

## FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS INC

NO. 8

SUMMER 1991

### EDITORIAL

The old year has been seen out and the new one in. Economic experiences of many people in 1991, and the predictions of more of the same in 1992, has led to the greeting of "looking forward to 1993" rather than "Happy New Year". However the Friends can look back in satisfaction on what they achieved last year and look forward to new and interesting ventures in 1992. A notable development during 1992 was the warming up of social interaction between the Friends. I certainly have met many interesting people who would not have been met but for the foundation of the Friends. While all these new contacts have involved a common interest in plants and gardens, there have as well been interesting discoveries of connections in families and friends, shared experiences in regard to careers and occupations, accounts of travel and interesting hobbies, and so on. Frequently social events have become an important part of the variety of activities we have developed to cater for the various interests of the people who are the Friends.

While the Society continues to attract new members, a number who joined in 1990/91 have not yet renewed their membership. I know that there is temptation to procrastinate paying subscriptions, and at times good reasons why they are overlooked. However there are also times when there are reasons why an association with a society has to be ended. If you find yourself in this situation please let us know why you are leaving rather than just let your membership lapse. It is an important goal of the Friends to meet the members' interests in activities and to balance these with the assistance the Friends gives to the Botanic Garden.

On a hot day early in the New Year I went to the Gardens with three generations of my family. The youngest generation splashed in the paddling pool in the children's playground with sons of other pre-schoolers. Two of the younger members of the middle generation hired canoes and paddled on a vessel congested Avon through the garden. The older family members strolled through the Garden and sat on the lawn in the shade of the splendid trees and took in the scene. From these activities the thought occurred as to how many of the thousands of people in the Gardens that day could be attracted to take a closer interest in the Gardens other than to splash, paddle, walk, sunbathe, cool off in the shade, etc., and in so doing gain a greater appreciation of the plants all around them. I think that without exception, the current members of the Friends have an intense interest in plants and gardens. But how representative is this interest of the Friends amongst the tens, or is it hundreds of thousands, of visitors to the Gardens each year?

This question led to the thought on how the Friends might reach out to people who are not plants people and help the Gardens to better cater for the recreational and cultural interests they have. One way we can do this soon is to give help to the Floral Festival. Perhaps another would be to help in the development of a children's garden, a real kindergarten, close to the children's playground. Last year I was involved as a witness in a *Cannabis* case. It was a curious feature of this case that the

woman police officer who discovered the *Cannabis* seedlings amongst a 'common or garden plant' was able to accurately identify the illegal plant but was unable to name the other plant from a photo as a viola or even as a pansy! Perhaps she thought it was some sort of a fiddle? I will leave the "Kindergarten in the Botanic Garden" as a thought for 1992 which could be well elaborated by the fertile minds of the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens.

### GARDEN WALKS

Having established the garden walks as a successful part of the Friends activities in 1991 they are to be continued in 1992. Members are encouraged to join in the walks on alternate Saturdays leaving from the Information Centre at 1.30 pm. These are usually led by Max Visch, but Gardens staff will also be asked to speak about their particular areas. Dates on which walks will be held are:

Saturdays 1, 15 and 29 February, 14 and 28 March, and 11 and 25 April.

For enquiries on further details of these walks contact Max Visch Ph. 3 382 273.

### ACTIVITIES

A very enthusiastic group of about 60 members joined Dieter Steinegg and Max Visch on 20 October for a walk around some of the notable trees in the Gardens and were told of their characteristics and tree surgery needs. The interest shown in this meeting means that another meeting on trees, with emphasis on the training of young trees, will be held in the future.

This event was followed by the plant sale. Those who stayed behind at the Information Centre had to hold off members of the public eager to buy plants until the Friends on the walk got back. A total of \$ 347.60 was raised, and thanks are due to the many Friends who contributed goods for sale and made purchases. Another plant sales stall will be held in Autumn and we may open it up more directly to the public. So please pot up from now on as you work in your garden. This is one of the more enjoyable ways to raise funds. Friends can share plant treasures and information about growing plants from the wealth of gardening knowledge possessed by the Friends.

On November 6 nearly 40 of the Friends shared a very enjoyable lunch time meeting with a group of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens Friends. The Adelaide Friends threatened to kidnap Max Visch to guide in their Garden as they were quick to recognise what a treasure trove of plant knowledge and fun we have in Max. A very enthusiastic letter of thanks was received from their tour leader, Mrs Simpson, after the visit. Christchurch Friends visiting Adelaide can be assured of a warm welcome if they contact their counterparts there. The success of the occasion was very much due to the planning skills of our Secretary, and Adrienne extends grateful thanks to those who responded so generously with food and time to entertain the Adelaide group.

On 24 November a good number of Friends enjoyed a picnic

lunch on the Murray Aynsley lawn and were joined by others before sharing Mary Plunkett's enthusiasm and knowledge of old roses. For many of those who attended this was their first visit to that part of the Botanic Garden. The event was a further illustration of the wealth of information and opportunities for recreation contained in the Botanic Garden which can be unlocked by finding people who can reveal these. Mary has kindly prepared notes on old roses which are attached to this *Newsletter*. These notes provide an easy introduction to what is, for the true enthusiasts, a large and all absorbing interest.

The final function of the year was a very happy occasion when Friends joined with garden staff for drinks and an interesting variety of seasonal delicacies. Formalities were kept to a minimum with an exchange of greetings between Kevin Garnett on behalf of the staff and Warwick Harris for the Friends. The success of this event was again due to the organisational abilities and generosity of Adrienne and her helpers. We can look forward to this being an annual event to allow Friends and staff to get to know each other better.

#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

'Visit to Sanitarium Gardens', Sunday 9 February 1992 at 6pm. Meet at Gardens 54-64 Harewood Rd. This is an excellent opportunity to visit these gardens and to be guided through them by Ian Godfrey.

'Chicago Botanic Garden: A Public Resource for the Greater Chicago Region.' Monday 23 March 1992 7 30 pm at the P.C Browne Room, Canterbury Horticultural Society South Hagley Park, 57 Riccarton Ave. Dr Roy Taylor, Director of the Chicago Botanic Garden, recognised internationally as a leader in the operation of botanic gardens will give this talk. The cover charge is \$2 and the meeting is open to all interested in plants and gardens, so bring your friends and gardening companions.

'Autumn colours in the Botanic Gardens' Sunday 3 May at 2pm starting at the Information Centre. Kevin Garnett will lead us through a walk to reveal the splendour of autumn foliage and back to the Plant Sale emphasising ground cover and shade plants that will start at 3 30pm.

A meeting will be held in June. The Annual General Meeting will be held at 2pm on Sunday 26 July.

#### FLORAL FESTIVAL

Helpers are needed for the Floral Festival for the following events. Could those able to help please contact Adrienne Moore, Ph. 3 515 915.

**Wear A Flower Day:** Helpers are needed to distribute flowers at the 6 Botanic Gardens entrances on the morning of Wednesday February 19.

**Toast Rack decoration:** The plan is to brighten up the Toast Rack. Flowers and guidance on how to do this will be given to volunteers for what will be a satisfying activity.

**Free guided tours on the evenings of 19 and 26 February:** Members will be providing guided tours to the public departing from the Information Centre at 7pm. This is a chance to invite your friends and potential members to share and learn about the treasures in our Gardens.

#### PROJECTS

Our project for the 1991/92 year to raise funds for a sound system to aid the use of the Information Centre has had a very happy outcome. The system has been gifted in recognition of what was seen as the worthwhile efforts of the Friends to assist the activities of the Garden in meeting the needs of Christchurch citizens and visitors to the city. The Friends are very grateful to the donor for this gift.

The Friends are now considering the purchase of a V.D.U. unit for the Information Centre. This will particularly aid the education, interpretative and extension function of the Gardens.

#### POT POURRI

Please collect suitable material for use by the Friends to make pot pourri to sell to raise funds. Useful plants for colour, scented flowers or leaves, include delphiniums, larkspur, geranium, pelargonium, lemon balm, lemon verbena, hydrangeas, eau de cologne mint, spearmint, lavender, honeysuckle, cornflower, dianthus ie papery type flowers and scented leaves and not fleshy ones. Dry these separately and store. We also need suitable fabric to make bags.

A meeting with Frank Harvey and Christine Dann to discuss pot pourri is to be held on Sunday 19 January at the Information Centre at 3:30pm. If interested please phone Adrienne 3 515 915.

#### BITS AND PIECES

**WEA Course: Christchurch Botanic Gardens - The Inside Story.**

This commences 11 February 1992, 1- 2 30 pm for 8 weeks. Enquiries to WEA.

**Information Centre Helpers:** A refresher course and training session is planned for March. Details will be given later.

**Triskele Foundation :** This foundation is leading the project to create a drinking water spa in the Gardens. Friends interested in supporting this project can obtain details from the Information Centre.

Thankyou to Dawn Ross, DSIR, for formatting this *Newsletter* and those for 1991.

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS

This will be the last *Newsletter* sent to non financial members. Please pay outstanding subscriptions C/- Mrs A. Moore, 15 Glandovey Rd. Christchurch 5. Single subscription \$10, Family/partner \$15. The financial year ends 30 June 1992.

**Remember Sanitarium Gardens meeting Sunday 9 February.**