

## NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS INC.  
NO. 17 P.O. BOX 237 CHRISTCHURCH AUTUMN 1994

### Editorial comment

The Friends' organization in Christchurch is well under way again in 1994 with a number of events having been and gone already, notably the contribution by many to the Annual Floral Festival. Many Friends were involved in passing out flowers on "Wear a flower day" and others involved in guided walks around the Gardens. There was also a marvellous spirit at the meeting with the McHardy's where many people brought finger food and a shared meal was had before the main business of the evening. Ursula provided a stimulating address supplemented by excellent slides on the Flora and Fauna of the Falklands.

It is the people element that makes any organization and in the Christchurch Friends this is the main reason for its success. To all that come along to meetings and to those who are actively involved in the background, seeing that things happen - well done its a successful formula ! We again have excellent speakers and guided walks planned - support the Friends in 1994 by coming along and joining in.

### Fund raising

*Envelope recycling or gift stickers.*

Packets of fifty are on sale for \$3.50. These are ideal both to promote the Christchurch Botanic Gardens and to help recycle at the same time.

*Bookmarks.* These are both attractive and useful showing the Four Seasons of the Botanic Gardens and are only 50 cents. Profit from the book mark sales goes toward the Botanic Gardens Library grant.

*Sales table* A new feature for future meetings is going to be a sales table.

If you have any material to contribute - particularly plants or produce - we would love to have your contribution. *Raffles* - Raffles continue to be a major source of income for the Friends. Keep supporting our raffles, who knows you may be the next winner !

### New members

A warm welcome to the following new members who have joined since the last newsletter was published. Katie & John McCombs, John Oldfield, Jillian Boniface, Jennifer Warren, Eleanor Fowler, Terry Sandford, Margaret Hancock, Bronwyn Baiteary, Rachael Ebbett, Alan Leckie, Nedra Johnson, Joan Belcher, Chris Fourie, Mr. & Mrs. Balint, Ruth Buddicom, Paddy West, Audrey Smith and Marion and Mike Traught. We now have over four hundred members.

### RECENT MEETINGS

The afternoon at Victoria Park on Saturday 27th November with Frank Harvey, learning about the *19th Infantry Battalion Memorial* was attended by about thirty members and was enjoyed by all. A special thank you to Frank.

The *Xmas Social* held on Friday 3rd December for - *Friends & Botanic Gardens' Staff* was well attended (46 members) but disappointingly only 7 Botanic Gardens staff, hopefully we can attract more next year. Those that were there enjoyed the social occasion and this will certainly be included again toward the end of the year.

The 1994 programme started with a very enjoyable evening on the 16th of February when Ursula & William Mc Hardy from Frankfurt joined us for a meal. Ursula showed slides and spoke of their visit to the Falkland Islands. Her excellent slides and enthusiasm for the beauty and wildlife of this remote area was a real treat. Some former residents of the Falklands were with us and were very impressed with Ursula's presentation. Over seventy members came along and we look forward to more evenings with such a good attendance. Thanks to all who brought along food and again to those who helped with the coffees and tea, clearing up and so on.

#### Glasshouse Group

Between the meal and Ursula's presentation on the 16th of February a meeting of those interested in looking after the Friend's glasshouse was convened. Prospective members of this group were shown the facilities, propagation demonstrations have taken place and potting mix has been purchased. The group is now formally established and any others who might be interested in growing plants for the Friend's or wish to use the facility should contact Chris Christie. phone 3324 246.

#### Floral Festival

"Wear a flower day" Many thanks to Natalie Lofts, Deidre Harris, Dick Bowman, Hendrik van den Bosch, Herb Foley, Eunice Bloomfield, Ivy Dempsey, Dorothy Croucher, Margaret Norris, Betty McGowan, Marilyn Cable, Anne Berwick, Natalie Crook, Margaret Teague, Wendy King ton, Stewart Filshie, Ruby Coleman and Adrienne Moore. Members always enjoy this chance to welcome people to the Gardens and to meet many overseas people. This is part of our contribution for the annual City wide Floral Festival.

Once again the Friends offered Guided Walks in the evenings in the Botanic Gardens also as part of the Floral Festival celebrations. The walks departed from the Information Centre on Thursday 17th, Tuesday 22nd and Thursday 24th Feb. at 7.00pm and lasted one to one and a half hours.

Approximately one hundred and twenty visitors to the Gardens were taken on these "Introduction to the Gardens" walks. Guides included both Friends and Gardens' Staff - they were; Max Visch, Peter Mahan, Neil O'Brien, John Thacker, Ross Lake, Dick Bowman, Warwick Scadden, Richard Doyle, Richard Poole, Dieter Steinegg and Roy Edwards. Daphne Banks, Faye Fleming, Patricia Poff, John Paterson and Adrienne Moore helped with reception duties. Thanks to all involved. Among the number of overseas visitors were Ron and Virginia Green from Seattle. Virginia is a volunteer worker at the Bellvue Botanic Gardens in Seattle, where Maria Adamski spent several months in 1993. They spoke highly of Maria's contribution there and of the talk and slide show she put on about Christchurch and our Botanic Gardens. She even provided pavlova for supper. (Maria is on a year's leave from work at the ChCh. Botanic Gardens and is working and visiting many gardens - see her article later.) Donations and raffle money from the Festival time walks of \$157.90 are a worthwhile contribution to our funds.

#### Customer Service Training 28th Feb. & March 1st.

Warwick Scadden - Curator of the ChCh. Botanic Gardens provided two refresher courses for Friends who work in the Information Centre. Glenda Hamilton from the N.Z. Institute of Management led the sessions.

### Information Centre

A special thanks to Jane English for her work as coordinator of these volunteers (about sixty in all) and for the many phone calls and time she has given over the four years the Friends have now been going for. Bob Peers works with Jane to organize the roster and members now work at the Reception Desk in the Information Centre for four hours each Friday and Saturday. This is a great way for Friends to meet the Public and assist with their interpretation of the Gardens. This help is also appreciated by the Botanic gardens staff.

### Daytime walks

Richard Doyle has led monthly walks to keep members up to date with special features in the Gardens. These walks are particularly for helpers in the Information Centre, but all are welcome. They are at 9am from the Information Centre - the next walks will be Tuesday 5th April and Tuesday 3rd of May.

### 1994 PROGRAMME

Make a note of the following events in your diary now !

### Weekend walks

Max Visch will be taking guided walks on the following dates;

- \* Saturday 19th March "Ilam Homestead" Meet at the Homestead gates - Ilam Road - at 1.30pm.
- \* Saturday 16th April at 1.30pm "Oaks of the Gardens" Meet at the Information Centre.
- \* Saturday 7th May at 1.30pm "Tree Ferns in the Gardens" Meet at the Information Centre. (This will be a joint tour with Neil O'Brien & Max Visch)
- \* Saturday 4th June at 1.30pm "Conifer treasures in the Gardens" Meet at the Information Centre.

### Ashburton Day Trip on Sunday 27th March.

Following the very successful group tour to Dunedin in October, Bob Peers has arranged a day trip to Ashburton. Visits will be made to the Ashburton Domain - a very valuable park with many historic plantings and also several private gardens. We plan to travel by private car and the petrol costs will be shared. Please phone Bob Peers 3516 776 or Adrienne Moore 3515 915 for details.

Wednesday, March 16th at 7.30pm at the Information Centre. Mr John Thacker will talk on Plants - poisonous, noxious or simply maligned. John is a noxious plants inspector with the Canterbury Regional Council and is a member of the Friends. John will show a short video and bring plant samples to discuss. Please come along and bring a friend. John is happy to discuss and identify samples for members. Tea, coffee and biscuits will follow the meeting. Please bring plants and produce etc. for our sales table. *Note: Parking is available in the evenings for Friends functions in the Armagh Street car park. Lights will be on and the gates will be open.*

Wednesday, April 20th at 7.30pm at the Information Centre. Dennis Preston a Landscape Architect from the ChCh. City Council will frame his views on the Christchurch Botanic Gardens 100 years from now. This should be thought provoking and a lively discussion could result. Be there to share this view of the future. Supper will follow the meeting, please bring plants or produce for the sales table. If transport is a problem please contact Adrienne Moore ph 3515 915.

Wednesday, May 18th at 7.30pm. at the Information Centre.

Mr Robert Crowder, Senior Lecturer from Lincoln University will present some thought provoking ideas on Organic husbandry and the Botanic Gardens.

Sunday, June 19th at 3.00pm at the Information Centre.

Midwinter Social Surprise ?

Who knows there may be a few more details closer to the time??

Sunday, 31 July at 2pm in the Information Centre.

AGM. followed by afternoon tea.

More details in the next Newsletter.

Wednesday, 17th August at 7.30pm at the Information Centre.

A questionable, sweet evening ?

A quiz, coffee and cakes evening.

Details closer to the time.

Wednesday, 21st September at 7.30pm in the Information Centre. A well known member of the Friends - Mr

Des Riach will present

Spring bulbs - a mixed bunch.

**OCTOBER - SPRING FESTIVAL**

Wednesday, 16th November at 7.15pm (earlier time) at the Information Centre. Virginia McNaughton will talk about Culinary Herbs - a gourmet's delight.

Herbs may be available for purchase at this meeting.

Friday, December 2nd. at 4.30pm

Christmas Social for Friends and staff of the Botanic Gardens.

*News from other Friends*

Early this year the President of the Friends of the Auckland Regional Botanic Gardens, Kathrina Muller and her husband met with David Given, Richard Doyle, Warwick Scadden, Adrienne Moore and Roy Edwards. A

recent visit from <sup>a member of</sup> the committee of the Wellington Friends - Joanna Moss, met with Adrienne Moore. These two visits provided a chance to share and compare activities. The Dunedin Friends have undertaken to supervise a major fund raising effort toward a new Information Centre in the lower garden in Dunedin. A file of Newsletters from the other Botanic Gardens is available at the Reception desk in the Information Centre.

Committee Vacancies

After the AGM in July, Adrienne Moore will be standing down as Secretary of the Friends. Adrienne has done a tremendous job to date, but has contributed much more than should reasonably have been expected from one person. For this reason the job will be divided into a number of parts. If you think you would like to contribute in some way please phone Adrienne Moore for more details. ph 3515 915.

Committee Contact numbers

|                                    | home     | work     |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| <u>President</u>                   |          |          |
| Roy Edwards                        | 3385 969 | 3252 811 |
| <u>Vice President</u>              |          |          |
| David Given                        | 3516 069 | 3252 811 |
| <u>Secretary</u>                   |          |          |
| Adrienne Moore                     | 3515 915 |          |
| <u>Treasurer</u>                   |          |          |
| Colin Neal                         | 3518 676 | 3794 100 |
| <u>Walks</u>                       |          |          |
| Max Visch                          | 3382 273 |          |
| <u>Info. Centre Helpers Roster</u> |          |          |
| Jane English                       | 3555 289 |          |

Nb. Please use the Armagh Street entrance to the car park for evening meetings at the Botanic Gardens Information Centre. Gates will be open for Friends evening functions.

## Gardens in Vancouver

The trip to Vancouver took us through the wide valley that Bellevue is situated in bordered by the Cascade mountains to the east and the Olympus mountains to the west. The signs of autumn's approach was evident in the changing of leaf colors which made for a very pleasant drive. The only major change in passing over the border occurred in the change over back to the metric system which made me feel a bit more at home.

Approaching Vancouver was fascinating. More what I had expected my first taste of America to be like. Tall highrise buildings, smog and rubbish along the streets. I must explain that Bellevue, originally a satellite of Seattle has grown to become a separate city in the last 30 years or so. It does not have the number of highrise buildings, smog and rubbish (there is a very active campaign against littering) that would be expected of a city in the States. This may change as I travel into other areas.

With two days to see as many parks and gardens as possible we started our tour half an hour after reaching the hotel. Because we had been driving for three hours we decided to walk to our first destination which was the Dr Sun Yat-Sen Chinese garden.

The walk took us through the jungle of concrete and iron towards the edge of Chinatown. The main street was very tidy and all the buildings were painted red in the typical Chinese fashion. If you were not looking for the garden it could easily be missed as it is just off the main street through an archway that led onto a lawn. The garden is completely surrounded by a white concrete wall. The free public section is entered through a round opening in the wall called a moon gate. We left this area for later and headed into the Classical Chinese Garden paid our entry fee and arrived in time for a guided tour by a docent.

The Dr Sun Yat-Sen Garden is the first classical garden ever constructed outside China and was financed co-operatively between Canada and the People's Republic of China. The garden is modeled after private classical gardens developed during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Construction began in March 1985 and was completed in April 1986. The materials, tools and techniques used to build it were much the same as those used centuries ago with most of the materials shipped from China, which includes the courtyard pebbles.

The garden is built on the Taoist philosophy of yin and yang which is the balancing of opposites such as light and dark or small and large. There are four main elements in the Classical Chinese garden:

- Buildings - pavilions, covered walkways, terraces and lookout platforms
- Rocks - reflect the rugged landscape and are also used as sculpture
- Plantings - plants and flowers are symbolic of human virtues
- Water - depicts the reflective yin principle, in tranquil pools and gentle streams

Buildings play a major part in the garden. This garden has two pavilions, a Ting and a scholar's study. The walls were made of concrete, painted white, with timbered roofs and exposed beams. Tiles covered the roof with a center piece at the apex shaped either round or square (different on each building) to depict the yin and yang principle. The covered walkways around the perimeter of the garden never lead in a straight line as the Chinese believed the evil spirits walked in straight lines. Off the walkway in various areas were terraces and lookout platforms made from pebbles laid in concrete in beautiful patterns that defined each area. The pebble colors are often black symbolizing the bat and for good fortune and white for the plum blossom this reflects the yin and yang concept. The living quarters are usually located on the south side of the garden which is entered through the moon gate; directly opposite is the main pavilion on the north side. Everything in the garden is oriented for a purpose. In the walls of the walkway are leak windows (leak a view) which all had different lattice patterns. Some were geometric others plain again the typical balancing of opposites is used.

Rocks which play a very important part in the Chinese garden are placed so as to replicate the rugged cliffs by the sea and are complete with caves. Many of the rocks are used as sculpture in combination with a plant. They also formed a major outline around the waters edge and defined the islands. The rocks are often drilled and then set on the beach so the tidal action of the waves will wear the rocks away before they are placed in the garden. Pitted and convoluted limestone rocks are highly prized.

There are very few plants in a Chinese garden and the ones that are used are usually symbolic such as the simple planting behind three windows in the scholar's garden. Called "The Three Friends of Winter", the pine, bamboo and winter-blooming plum celebrate strength, grace and renewal of life. The willow is another plant commonly found in the garden with the leaves being used to make a tea for headaches. This tree is never planted next to a ladies bedroom as it may mean the loss of that lady. The plants in the garden looked very much older than the seven years the garden has been open. Many of the pines have been pruned to look old, as the pine symbolizes longevity. Very few flowers are ever used.

The water always looks dirty. This is done on purpose with the bottom of the pools and gentle streams lined with clay to make the water reflect better.

Exiting the Classical garden through the gift shop we went back to the public garden which displayed many of the elements of the first garden though not as formal and as refined. It also contained many more plants. The Classical garden is designed to incorporate the borrowed views of this adjoining park.

The following day took in the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden and the Nitobe Memorial Garden which is also situated on the grounds of the University. The UBC Botanical Garden was established in 1916, covers 70 acres and is the oldest garden associated with a University in Canada. The gardens are funded through the provincial government and like most areas, is contending with huge funding cuts.

It is divided into different sections each headed by a curator who works both in the garden and teaches at the University. There are eight gardeners which includes two nursery staff. There is usually one apprentice taken on every three years. The last one was finishing about the time we visited and because of funding cuts she would not be replaced with another. Research is also carried out here mainly in the area of producing new plant material hardy to the local area. New plants are propagated to grow in the gardens and cuttings are taken by the commercial sector to grow for the public. These cuttings serve as a source of revenue for the gardens.

Public lectures take place at the gardens which is another source of revenue. There is no formal programme for school groups although they sometimes are given tours and educational talks.

Volunteers play an important role in any garden over here. They run the gift shop, take the entrance fee, propagate plant material to sell in the gift shop, collect and package seed also for the gift shop and arrange flowers for the University using the flowers from the garden, also for a fee.

The gardens have a large administration, gift shop and lecture area at the entrance to the gardens. These open into a large Asian garden which features second growth coastal forest and a large collection of Rhododendrons (over 400 species). In this area Asian vines, trees, shrubs, perennial's, primula's, poppies and lilies are also found. From this garden a Moongate Tunnel under the main road leads to the rest of the gardens.

First is the food garden containing all sorts of vegetables, fruits and nuts. Most impressive was their display of espalier fruit trees in differing forms and angles. From here we moved on to the Arbor containing a collection of climbers and to the Physick Garden which was enclosed inside a yew hedge and contained a number of descriptive remedies to cure the rarest of diseases. Outside this was an incredibly large Alpine garden with plants arranged according to the continents of the world. There is even a Australasian area featuring a number of New Zealand alpine plants among Australian eucalyptus!!! The next area was the winter garden with both single and double, white and pink autumn crocus out and a number of plants which will flower in the coming months. Heading back we passed the perennial border still in bloom which contained many plants we grow but displayed informally.

The entire gardens had potential and with more funding it could be better maintained. From here we travelled about three kilometers down the road to the Nitobe Memorial Garden.

The Nitobe Memorial Garden covers an area of 2.4 acres, was opened in 1960 and dedicated to the memory of Dr. Inazo Nitobe. The garden was designed by a Japanese landscape architect, Professor Kannosuke Mori, who stayed on in Canada to supervise the construction and placement of trees, stones and shrubs. Many of the native trees and shrubs were used and are trained and pruned in the typical Japanese fashion.

The garden consists of a large informal Stroll Garden and a Tea Garden with a ceremonial Tea House. Though not large the area consists of many traditional Japanese elements that combine to make it seem larger than it really is. The central area features a waterfall which flows into a large pond with an island. This then bottle necks into another pond and then flows as a stream to a wetland area. At each bottle neck a bridge crosses the water. Each bridge is made differently, a total of six styles in all from a steeping-stone river crossing to a 77-log earth bridge. A gravel path leads you around the garden and allows you to view the 14 different lanterns. The lawns are meticulous as are the moss areas with not a leaf out of place. There is even a person whose job is to go around and pick up any leaves that fall on the path. The shrubs are clipped, the trees molded and bound with bamboo sticks to train them into position.

Just outside the gate is the Asian Center of the University. Though not directed there we took a stroll around on a beautifully landscaped path that complimented the garden we had just walked through. There was a dry water fall and stream, sculptured pines and Ilex crenata 'Convexa', a Japanese bell and a bank of maples changing color.

On our last day we packed up early and drove through Stanley Park which covers an area of 1000 acres with 200 acres developed for recreational purposes the rest being heavily forested. The main garden area consists of perennial beds with a large range of annuals and a rose garden with 3500 bushes and 80 varieties. In main Stanley Park is a recreational park consisting of beaches, tennis courts, golf, jogging paths, a zoo, aquarium, summer theater, refreshments and restaurants, broad vista, natural wooded areas, wildlife, and the Lost Lagoon, a haven for marine life and many kinds of birds such as the Canadian geese and Trumpeter swan. Much of this we did not have time to see. Two to three days could easily be spent exploring this park.

Our last port of call was the VanDusen Botanical Garden. My main interest in visiting this garden was to look at the Sino-Himalayan area and I was not prepared for what I was to find. If you are ever in Vancouver for only a short time this is the place I would highly recommend to put at the top of the list.

The history of this garden goes back to 1911 when this area was covered in tree stumps. A number of Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.) executives leased the 104 acres from the C.P.R. and cleared the land for a golf course. This club remained on the site until 1959 when the C.P.R. judged the area to be too valuable for a sports club (worth by now \$500,000) and decided to lease another area of 160 acres for a new golf club. They proposed to subdivide the area which was met with resistance from the public and a number of groups were set up to urge the City to buy the golf course. The club moved out in 1960 and the City took over 28 acres operating it as an 11 hole, par 44 golf course. In 1966 interested groups laid the groundwork for extensive site surveys and the idea of a Botanic Garden was born. In 1970 a agreement between the Vancouver Foundation, City of Vancouver and the Government of British Columbia was signed to develop the Garden. One third of the necessary 4.3 million dollars came from each group with additional land of 5 acres being donated by the City of Vancouver. On 30 August 1975 the Garden was officially opened by Mr W.J. VanDusen, Chairman of the Vancouver Foundation who had agreed to let his name be used, (He had anonymously funded one-third of the cost through the Vancouver Foundation). The area now covers 55 acres (22 hectares) and is almost completely developed. It is owned and operated by the Board of Parks and Recreation, City of Vancouver with support from the Vancouver Botanical Garden Association (V.B.G.A.).

The Garden services include a library, an education program, guided tours, garden gift shop and a restaurant. There is a strong volunteer program. Volunteers are required to belong to the V.B.G.A. and their activities include garden tour guides, labelling, gift shop, library, marketing, special events, plant sale committee, floral arranging, master gardeners, bulletin, seed collecting, slide sorting and cataloguing and recording volunteer hours.

The gardens charge an entrance fee of \$4.50 and it is well worth it. Perhaps one of the features the garden is most famous for is its 21 sculptures. The majority of the stone sculptures were carved on the site during the summer of 1975 at the International Stone Sculpture Symposium. Its hard to know where to start in describing this garden. The formal entranceway which has a fragrance garden, herb garden, rock garden and rose garden are all fairly small areas compared with the Christchurch Botanic Garden but very formally presented, highly maintained and displaying a variety of plants. In the transition into the more informal areas you can still see a hint of the old fairways. There are collections of Sorbus, Fraxinus, Lillium, Abies, Aesculus, Rosaceae, Taxus, Sequoiadendron, Malus and Prunus, Taxodiaceae, a stunning display of Ilex, Acer, Tilia, Quercus, Fagus, Hydrangeas, Camellias and Magnolias.

There are also a number of special gardens which include a children's garden with topairies of Sasquatch, Ogopogo, the Lake Okanagan serpent and a dragon, groundcover plants, perennials with a hedge as a backdrop and shaped in a semi-circle, a Canadian Heritage garden with fruit and vegetable garden and medicinal herbs. This area also contains a walled in area with the busts of Carolus Linneaus, Archibald Menzies and David Douglas and a design of the national emblem, the maple leaf, on the ground done with plants. There is also a cool and relaxing meditation garden and a maze. The Sino-Himalayan garden presented some wonderful ideas with a stone garden at the top leading to a waterfall with a pond at the base and a meconopsis dell to the side. The area also displayed a large number of plants from the Himalayan area on a hillside that managed to cover every situation from full sun to cool damp areas. Other areas included a Heather garden, Mediterranean Garden, Southern Hemisphere Flora including hebes and groundcovers from New Zealand, Bamboos and Viburnums.

With time running out to get back to Bellevue we had to leave the gardens there. On reflection there are many areas in the VanDusen Botanical Garden I missed and I needed to spent another day there to discover it all.

My last image of Vancouver is the rush hour traffic crawling along at 0 to 20 miles an hour leaving town.

*Maia Adamski*  
Nov 93