

Newsletter

For Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Inc.

No 35, Winter 1998

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FCBG

PO Box 237
Christchurch

President's Comment

Dear Friends

It is getting cooler and the attractive autumn leaves are disappearing but a lot has been happening at the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. There are new pathways being prepared for the new entrance to the Gardens. These will line up with the Peacock Fountain. A new native garden has been planted in a formal design near the Information Centre.

There are a number of local issues that we are watching closely. Mayor Vicki Buck is very interested in more lighting in the Gardens. The fate of the Nurses Home and the future of the Curator's house and grounds are two other issues.

Friends have been helping in a number of ways and the committee is very grateful for their support and interest. The seed cleaning is both a service and a social occasion. More members are

becoming involved in guiding and in preparing notes to be used by the guides. The potting of cuttings for our annual sale has started on Thursday mornings for the next eight weeks; then it will be Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30 - 12:30.

Our first ever autumn sale was a little disappointing but for those that came there were many bargains.

Our next meeting on June 17th at 7:30pm will feature Colin Neal showing slides and talking about his visit to Bristlecone Pine Forest (California, USA).

The Annual General Meeting is on Sunday August 9th at 2pm in the Information Centre. As always, new committee members are warmly welcomed and a new vice president is needed.

Faye Fleming

Botanic Gardens Jottings

One of the seasonal tasks which currently occupies a part of each Gardener's day is the raking of leaves from lawns and pathways.

It is a time consuming task and while the leaves are taken to Hagley Park for composting, they return in one to two years to act as a mulch, weed suppressant and soil conditioner.

Generally, the soil at the Botanic Gardens is light and free draining. With the incorporation of leaf mould and other composted material over the years, the humus content has improved to provide a rich growing medium for the plants.

Tree Removal

In 1997 approval was given by the Parks and Recreation Committee to remove 32 trees from the Botanic Gardens prior to 30 June 1998. These trees were either dead or in serious decline and by removing them space has been created for new plantings.

A number of the trees were large specimens, the most recent being *Populus nigra Italica* on the Harper Lawn, adjacent to the Rock garden. It has not been an easy decision, to determine whether a tree should be removed which has been such a magnificent specimen for so long and admired by so many people.

The facts had to be acknowledged, when a specimen was in serious decline, would not improve with corrective surgery and could endanger staff or visitors.

Index Seminum

With a visit to the Botanic Gardens in March by three staff from the Tallinn Botanic Gardens, Estonia, we were again reminded of the significance of this international seed exchange through the Index Seminum. Tallinn Botanic Garden is relatively young, some thirty years old and during the past six years a collection of New

Zealand plants has been established from seed collected by the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Staff.

The purpose of this recent trip was to visit a range of natural habitats to study the range of plants and collect seed. Four separate areas were visited and staff gave assistance in locating the more significant areas.

B.G. Recorder Database

The assistance which the 'Friends' have given by engaging Dr. Warwick Harris to evaluate this database and input the data for 100 plus species has been invaluable.

As a staff we have taken the next step of establishing policies for implementation.

Glasshouse Link

A capital budget item for the 1997/98 financial year is the construction of a covered link between the nursery glasshouse 6, 7 and 8 and the potting facility. This will provide a valuable area for repotting plants closer to the individual glasshouses, eliminate the temperature change when taking plants from a glasshouse situation to another site for potting etc. and allow for greater efficiencies.

The construction is due for completion by 31 June 1998.

Warwick Scadden
Horticultural Operations Team Leader

Coming Events

In Brief...		
Guided Walks 1998		
2 June	Tuesday	9:00am
20 June	Saturday	1:30pm
7 July	Tuesday	9:00am
18 July	Saturday	1:30pm
4 August	Tuesday	9:00am
15 August	Saturday	1:30pm
1 September	Tuesday	9:00am
15 September	Saturday	1:30pm
Other Events		
17 June	Wednesday	7:30pm
22 July	Wednesday	7:30pm
9 August	Sunday	2:00pm
16 September	Wednesday	7:30pm

Guided Walks

The following Saturday walks all begin from the Information Centre at 1:30pm and are conducted by Max Visch. Topics may change depending on the weather.

20 June 1998

The Conservatories

18 July 1998

Plants from Bible Lands

15 August 1998

Palms, Dragon Trees and Cabbage Trees

19 September 1998

Spring in the Gardens

2 June, 7 July, 4 August, 1 September

These Tuesday walks begin from the Information Centre at 9:00am and are conducted by a member of the Botanic Gardens staff.

Talks

Wednesday, 17 June 1998

7:30pm in the Information Centre

Colin Neal has visited Western USA on several occasions and will tell us about the oldest living thing in the world - a bristle-cone pine forest.

Wednesday, 22 July 1998

7:30pm in the Information Centre

Plant Propagation - a question and answer session with experts from Christchurch Botanic Gardens and Lincoln University: M. Spurway and W. Derring.

Sunday, 9 August 1998

2:00pm in the Information Centre

Our Annual General Meeting. We will require several new committee members. Following the A.G.M. Max Visch will speak on the swamp flora of the Netherlands.

Wednesday, 16 September 1998

7:30pm in the Information Centre

Kevin Garnett and Roy Edwards will conduct the Annual Quizz. More about this in the Spring newsletter.

Reminders about these events appear during the preceding week in the Christchurch Press Weekend Edition gardening pages under the heading of "Cuttings" and in the Christchurch Star "Around Town" columns.

Recent Events

Bede Nottingham's Talk

24 March - 25 Attended

Bede spoke of the care needed with the timing and targeting the sprays now used. Rust is the biggest problem because it causes the plants to lose their leaves. The humidity is high within the hedges of the rose garden but the shelter from winds is useful. A monthly survey is done on each cultivar to eliminate those more susceptible to problems. Generally plants are renewed after 5 years either replacing the same in fresh soil or using new cultivars.

In response to questions, Bede discussed what mulches, food and watering programmes to use in our home gardens, then his ideas of the best varieties for perfume and colour. The good numbers attending on such a hot day, (34°) shows how keen gardeners are to grow their roses using the new methods without toxic sprays.

See the spraying chart below.

Adrienne Moore

Friends' Day Out – Sunday 10 May

The purpose of our visit to Darfield was twofold; to provide a social opportunity for members, and to take a closer look at an inland township which began on a flat well drained treeless plain in the 1870's.

The day was sunny and calm and it was disappointing that only 13 came along. Two hours were spent at the Selwyn Plantation Board's H.Q. where the manager, Mr W.P. Alholm, described the Board's past and present activities. We were shown some handsome tree specimens and two very interesting plots, a hectare of black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) and some closely planted oaks grown from seed. Then we had a light lunch at the Darfield Hotel (and being Mothers Day a free glass of wine for the women was available). Next we went on a suburban walk with Russell Green taking a

circuit along pathways to small reserves in new residential areas and the Pearson Memorial Park. This area was donated some 15 years ago and Mr Russell is one of the volunteers active in its development as a passive recreation and beautification area. Max Visch was able to provide names for a few of the trees e.g. Serbian spruce (*Picea omorika*).

The outing ended with a visit to the Darfield United Church. This is run by a trust uniting the Presbyterian, Anglican and Methodist Parish churches under one roof. The women of the district took a major part in the construction, furnishing and consecration of this remarkable building. Mrs Molly Townshend's anecdotal description of its features was an enlightening story about life in this pleasant township.

P.S. From West Melton to Aylesbury both pink and red *Schizostylis* are a prominent roadside feature at this time.

Deryck Morse

The Restoration of St. Petersburg

By Maria Ignatieva - 13 May

The dark and cold evening did not deter a goodly number of Friends coming to the Information Centre at the Gardens to hear an address by Maria Ignatieva, lecturer in History and Design in Landscape Architecture at Lincoln University. Her topic for the evening was to be "The Restoration of the St. Petersburg Gardens". Unfortunately a breakdown in communication that evening meant that the Friends' slide projector was unavailable for Maria to show her slides. Instead we viewed a video of the 'restored' city and its art treasures.

St. Petersburg is Russia's second largest city with a population of around 5 million. It was founded by Peter the Great in 1703 and was the Capital of Russia from 1712 until 1918. The city is a major industrial and commercial centre and its port on the Baltic Sea is one of the largest in the world.

<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Use</i>
June	August	After pruning	Lime sulphur
September	October	From bud movement at 14 day intervals General Fungicide	Super sulphur
November	November	For rust/black spot at 14 day intervals	Systhane (Myclobutanil)
October	December	Spot spray if large numbers of aphids appear	Pyrethrum or other insecticide
December	May	For powdery mildew. Spot spray	Baking soda with oil
		For rust only. Spot spray.	Systhane

BEDE'S SPRAY PROGRAMME

Seaweed is added to sprays from September to May as a fertiliser and a deterrent to aphids.

Before World War II, St. Petersburg was a city rich in baroque and neoclassical architecture. Its many palaces, cathedrals and public buildings were famous for their ornate interior decorations, sculptures and paintings. The city was also noted for its extensive system of canals, its many bridges and gravity fed fountains. The broad tree-lined avenues, large parks and gardens gave it an aspect of spaciousness.

All of this was almost totally destroyed during World War II as it withstood a siege by the German Army for 900 days. Almost a million people perished of injuries, famine and disease. Early in the conflict wherever possible, art treasures were removed from the buildings and stored underground for safekeeping until the end of the war.

The video also showed how, after the war, the city was restored at great cost to its former glory, so that it is once again the City of St. Petersburg its citizens can be proud of.

Max Visch

Two accounts of member Tony MacRae's talk were received. It was worthwhile to print both - Editor.

Creative Use of Plants in the Home Garden

Few of those at Tony MacRae's talk could have realised just how many plants, normally seen in large gardens, could be adapted for use in pots.

The camellias are a most versatile species - "Yuletide" is conical, making also a good standard. "Tania" is an ideal ground cover but the smaller-leaved "Bellbird" makes a fine bonsai.

Several hollies, ivies and boxes lend themselves to life in pots, both as trained forms and as standards. Surprisingly, other larger species that are commonly seen in parks and large gardens can still grace our smaller suburban homes. *Magnolia grandifolia* is one of these if grown in a good sized pot.

Native species are especially amenable to life in containers. The cabbage tree, trained as a single stem, lancewood hybrids of varying colours and planted in groups, miro, snow totara and karakas with their glossy leaves, are just a few species worthy of our attention. The many grasses and sedges available with wonderful shapes and colours must also be considered.

Tony and his wife gave a stimulating talk supported by many live specimens from their collection.

Neil O'Brien

Tony MacRae on Creative Uses of Well-known Shrubs in the Home Garden

After almost 30 years in the retail nursery world, Tony has much experience and knowledge to share. With his wife Wendy, he led us through the many healthy plant samples brought to inspire us, encouraging new ways to use mostly familiar plants.

Camellias are favourites with the MacRaes, with so many different growth habits that lend themselves to hedges, *C. sasanqua* 'Yuletide', standards, wall shrubs, weeping specimens *C. rosiflora* 'Cascade', ground covers *C. sasanqua* 'Tanya', and *C.* 'Quintessence', pots and even bonsai. They move easily, respond well to pruning, and by choosing suitable varieties, the garden could have camellias flowering for seven months.

The small leaved *Ilex* (Hollies), offer alternatives to *Buxus* (Box) for hedging, or shaping, e.g. *Ilex crenata*, *I. crenata* 'Convexa', *I. crenata* 'Helleri', *I. aquifolium* 'Angustifolia'.

Lonicera nitida is a fast growing alternative to box, is very trimmable and the variegated form useful for lightening darker spots.

Tony showed innovative uses if Ivies (*Hedera*), one of his favourite plants, but warned not to let ivy get out of control. The old saying about ivy is "first it sleeps, then it creeps, then it LEAPS!"

Olives make a very tough hedge, and a newer broad *Griselinia littoralis* 'Broadway Mint' is worthy of space. *Podocarpus nivalis*, (snow totara) grown as a standard, shows off its weeping form.

For indoors, seedlings such as cabbage trees, lancewoods, and New Zealand cedar (*Libocedrus plumosa*) give striking effects when potted up. Experimenting with different light levels indoors can produce different results.

No-one had seen before, a pot, planted with a bush lawyer, (*Rubus x barkeri*) trained on a frame.

We were left with many new ideas to try, for variety and pleasure in our home gardens.

Adrienne Moore

Botanic Gardens Management Policy

On Wednesday 18 March 1998 Warwick Scadden addressed an attentive audience in the Information Centre on the future direction of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Policy. Here he has summarised the important points.

Introduction

This set of policies are undoubtedly most significant in setting the future direction of the Botanic Gardens. Prior to the establishment of the Management plan, direction of the Gardens was steered by professional judgement, political involvement and to some extent by the desires of well meaning individuals within the community.

Through the public consultation process a wide range of professional organisations, special interest groups, botanic gardens staff and interested members of the public have had input into the document which was approved by the Christchurch City Council in March 1995. The process was a long one; the first draft was produced in 1989. It is essentially a working document, able to be reviewed every five years.

Many of the issues addressed have been in practice for several years, so the policy in parts is an endorsement of these practices.

Time Frame

The policies provide firm guidelines for future development of the Garden and while some aspects will take several decades to complete, others will be achieved relatively quickly.

GOALS

Primary Goal:

To promote understanding and appreciation of the world's flora, its botanical attributes and uses, including special areas devoted to Southern Hemisphere plants.

Secondary Goals:

1. To assist visitors in their understanding and appreciation of the beauty, variety and complexity of the plant world.
2. To promote an understanding and appreciation of New Zealand, and particularly, Canterbury's flora.
3. To conserve and promote conservation of rare and endangered plants and promote the environmental importance of plants.
4. To promote a greater understanding of the way plants relate to their environment and the origins of our ornamental plants through educational displays and interpretation programmes.
5. To receive and distribute information, plants and other material to and from botanical institutions worldwide.
6. To introduce and display new and uncommon plants species and cultivars suitable for cultivation in Canterbury.
7. To display and promote understanding and appreciation of different uses of plants.
8. To contribute to a greater understanding and use of plants through scientific research.

Functions and Operations

- Plant acquisition, propagation and dissemination
- Plant records
- Science and research
- Education and public use
- Revenue generation
- Satellite gardens and botanic networks

Circulation

Currently the layout of paths within the Botanic Gardens lacks overall structure and is largely a patchwork of routes laid out at different times for different purposes. A system is to be developed which will be a coherent circulation network to serve Garden visitor needs and management requirements. Walks named Victoria, Banks, Avon, Cockayne, and Woodland will have specific themes linking geographical collections.

Spatial and Vegetation Character

At present there is considerable duplication of trees within the gardens. The principle objective is to display representative tree species from the temperate world for:

- education about the plant world
- horticultural information
- amenity appeal
- research

Trees will be planted to represent geographical areas:

- North American Region
- European Region
- Southern Hemisphere Region

Open Space Zone

Objective: To conserve open spaces in the Gardens in order to aid visitor orientation, allow clear views of significant trees, the river and other garden features where desirable, and to allow sunlight to reach the ground layer.

Themes have been established for the numerous existing lawns.

Clear objectives and policies have been established for the lake areas, Avon River corridor, Rock garden zone and the various amenity/cultural areas, open woodland zone, dense woodland zone and conservatories.

Conclusion

The Botanic Garden Management Policy document is a vital document in taking the Botanic Garden forward. It has benefited from the wide input and there are clear policies set down as to how the Botanic Gardens advances.

To accommodate adequate flexibility, the opportunity exists for a review at five yearly intervals.

Warwick Scadden

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Recent Events cont'd

Tree Maintenance Issues in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens

On Saturday 21st March at 9:00am, Marty Bennetts spoke to an enthusiastic group of about twenty Friends about his role as an arboriculturist in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. Marty emphasised the primary role was to ensure trees were healthy and the public safe from potentially dangerous trees. A large number of questions were asked of Marty during the session including why certain trees had recently been removed from the gardens. Marty noted that a number of trees were suffering from a fungal disease called *Armillaria*. He stated that trees of a certain age or under stress often succumbed to this disease. *Armillaria* spp. are soil borne fungi, commonly called shoe string root rot, honey fungus or armillaria root rot. *Armillaria* spp. attack a wide range of tree species world wide, often appearing to cause the most damage to trees of low vigour. Marty noted some of the symptoms of the fungus are the shoe string like mycelium seen on the tree roots and trunk. Other symptoms on the tree include yellowing leaves, leaf drop and general decline in tree vigour. Harris (1992) suggests progress of armillaria can be halted by exposing the roots collar and large tree roots to the air. Other means of dealing with the problem include selecting resistant trees and maintaining tree vigour by fertilisation. Where trees are removed, infected wood and roots should be burnt and infected soil sterilised if possible. Marty also spoke about the need for good formative pruning and tree training. Thank you Marty for a very informative session.

Roy Edwards

A Visit to the North West Scottish Isles

On Wednesday 13 May at 7:30, Tony Burnett spoke to a large group of 'Friends' about N.W. Scotland. Following a brief introduction and using a map, Tony illustrated his address with the many slides he had taken. These were superb and startling in their clarity.

The small tour party included a geologist and a special expert on nature. The weather (May '98) was clear and sunny. Beginning at Oban on the mainland, the group travelled to Tobermory, on the island of Mull. Iona and Staffa were among other islands visited.

Some of the slides were accompanied by Mendelsshon's music. Close up and telephoto slides of nesting seabirds, such as puffins, razorbills and guillemots on sheer cliffs were outstanding.

The island of Skye gave added opportunities for Tony's camera skills; the Cuillin Hills and the new graceful, futuristic bridge from Kyle of Lochalsh to Sky were beautifully photographed.

Inverewe Garden on the coast north of Sky was also visited and photographed. Noted for its many New Zealand and exotic trees and plants, able to grow because of the warming effect of the North Atlantic Drift. This beautiful garden was a suitable end to a memorable evening. Thank you Tony.

Editor

Bits & Pieces

Annual General Meeting

Members are reminded that this will take place on Sunday 9th August at 2:00pm before Max Visch's talk. Nomination forms for the committee can be picked up from the desk at the Information Centre. If there is someone whom you wish to nominate, do pick up a form.

Subscriptions

These are now due, if you have not paid yours, please do so.

It has been found necessary to review subscriptions in view of the fact that postage, printing costs, and stationery costs are 73% of the total subs.

General

During the past year some \$8,000 has been spent by the 'Friends' on setting up a plant database. This has been a Turning Point 2000 project. Much remains to be done; but our first president, Warwick Harris, has completed a database of 100 trees in the Gardens, using the International Botanic Gardens Recorder software package.

A hundred herbarium specimens, together with photographs have been prepared and mounted. Some of these will be exhibited at the A.G.M. on August 9th.

Thanks to Sally Gebson and Wendy Bell for installing the new list of members and label printing setup on the 'Friends' computer. Sally holds a back up disk.

The system for handling new membership applications has been set up with the treasurer Colin Neal collecting the mail, issuing the receipt and welcome letter.

Report by M. Adamski

Gardens Work: Beds on the Armstrong Lawn to be recut this week for spring bedding. Info Centre border also due to be planted this week with NZ plants in a formal setting. Peonies to be moved to the back fence border in the Species Rose Garden. 13 Camellias to be relocated to near the Band Rotunda. The Eucryphias donated by the Friends to be planted as a collection on the South side of the Art Gallery with the Southern Hemisphere plantings. The north side of the gallery has Northern Hemisphere shade plants and under-plantings of Hosta cultivars and species. Hydrangeas to form the link.

Friends Correspondence

Articles suitable for publication dealing with aspects of the Botanic Gardens would be welcomed by the Editor. These should preferably be fairly short, about newspaper correspondence length or a little bit longer. Letters for printing would be welcomed, as would suggestions and requests for plant material.

Send these to P. Mahan, 156 Saywers Arms Road, Christchurch 8005.

Feature Articles

The Death of a Tree - 19 May 1998

Early this morning, the huge Lombardy Poplar - *Populus nigra 'Italica'* on the south side of the Harper Lawn opposite the rock garden was felled by Council - and Garden staff. Only a few people were there to witness the end of this splendid craggy old tree.

Lombardies as is the case with most poplars are comparatively short lived trees and this particular one had been living on borrowed time for quite some years. It is not known when and by whom it was planted and the advanced state of decay of much of the trunks core made it difficult to count the annual rings and establish its age.

Dieter Steinegg, the Garden's tree surgeon, estimated its age to be at least 110 years. This may not be considered old for some trees such as the Common Oak, a Yew or a Wellingtonia but is a very ripe old age for a poplar.

When at last the tree came crashing down it hit the ground with such a mighty thump that the sound of it must have been audible for miles, or so it seemed to me. The presence of several large bracket shaped fruiting bodies of the parasitic fungus *Ganoderma* on the trunk gave an indication of the advanced state of decay of its supporting tissues. It was obvious that the tree was becoming increasingly unsafe. During high winds the large buttress roots could be seen to

rock in the ground and Dieter considered that instant collapse of the tree was a distinct possibility.

That morning I measured its growth at breast height and came to a figure of 7.83 metres (25 feet). No doubt this figure is somewhat inflated by the massive spreading buttresses which towards the end of its life seem to support most of the weight of the trunk. We all felt sad that this much admired tree had to go but it became too risky to leave it much longer.

The many bumps, galls, ledges and other excrescences on the trunk and its buttresses frequently provided convenient seats for young children. For this reason too it became one of the most photographed trees in the Botanic Gardens. It will be greatly missed.

Max Visch

The Royal Oaks

Members of the British Royal Family have played an important part in stocking the Christchurch Botanic Gardens with Oak trees, especially with specimens of the Common or English Oak *Quercus robur*. Of the nine Common Oaks found within the Avon loop of the Gardens, five were planted by or on behalf of members of the British Royal Family.

The story of these trees starts with the death in 1861 of Prince Albert, much loved husband of Queen Victoria. Albert's influence on Queen Victoria had been immense and his early death from typhoid left a much bereaved queen.

That same year, the Reverend Richard Taylor of the Putiki Mission Station near Wanganui received four acorns from Queen Victoria with the request that trees raised from it be planted as memorial trees to commemorate the death of her beloved husband. The acorns came from the King's Oak in Boscabel Wood near Wolverhampton. They were duly planted by the Reverend Taylor and by the winter of 1863 the young trees were ready for planting out into their permanent position. One of the trees was retained at the Putiki Mission. Another went to Rotorua and the third tree was planted in the Dunedin Botanic Garden. The remaining tree was sent to Christchurch

where it had the honour of being the first tree planted in the Government Domain as the Gardens were then called.

In the meantime it had been decided to use the trees to celebrate the wedding of Prince Albert Edward to Princess Alexandra of Denmark. This took place on July 9th 1863. This date is generally regarded as the foundation date for the establishment of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. Yet it wasn't until almost a year later when a public meeting was held in the Town Hall on the 10th of May 1864 that the suggestion of forming a Botanic Garden in a loop of the Avon River in Hagley Park was decided on. The author measured the diameters of all the Common Oaks in the Gardens and found that the Prince Albert Edward Oak is by far the largest of all the Royal Oaks. It now has a diameter of 144cm.

In April 1869 the then Duke of Edinburgh, while visiting Christchurch, was asked to plant a Common Oak near the centre of the Front Lawn later renamed the Armstrong Lawn. This oak became known as the Prince Alfred's Oak. Although only slightly younger, it has a diameter of only 103cm. The Duke specified that the tree was never to be touched with knife or axe and although in later years it was in great need of it, Mr Armstrong, the first curator, would not allow it during his time of office. Since then however, it has been pruned and shaped and looks much the better for it.

On hearing that four more trees were to be planted in the Gardens that day by other invited guests, the Duke insisted on planting them all. Of these, only the large Wellingtonia - *Sequoiadendron giganteum* - has survived to the present day.

In June 1893 another Royal Oak was planted, this time by H.P. Murray Aynsley, Chairman of the Domain's Board and the occasion was to commemorate the marriage of King George V. This well grown tree is located on the southeast side of the Armstrong Lawn. It has a diameter of 124cm.

August 1902 saw the planting of the fourth Royal Oak, located south east of the Rose Garden on the central lawn. It has a diameter of 121cm and commemorates the coronation of Edward VII, the former Prince of Wales whose marriage

in July 1863 initiated the start of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens.

In June 1911 an American Red Oak - *Quercus rubra* - was planted by H. Beswick to mark the coronation of George V, but you will look for it in vain. It died in 1966 and nothing of it remains.

The last Royal Oak was planted by Queen Elizabeth II in February 1963 to celebrate the centenary of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. It stands in the southeast corner of the Stafford Lawn.

One may ask why this partiality for the Common Oak, when there is such a huge selection of English and other trees to choose from. Only in more recent times have other kinds of trees been planted by members of the Royal Family such as the purple form of the Norway Maple in 1954 and a Tulip tree in 1986, both planted by Queen Elizabeth II. Perhaps the Common Oak no longer has the significance it once had.

The Common or English Oak is native to Europe and a uniquely British tree. Whereas such trees as the Sycamore, Horse Chestnut, Sweet Chestnut, Robinia, most Elms and the Common Walnut are all immigrants to Britain, the Common Oak is native to that country. No tree is as much loved or held in greater esteem by the English as the Common Oak. In Lowland Britain it dominated the countryside since the dawn of history and through its timber played a special part in that history itself. The very strong, durable and versatile timber was the ultimate in building material before steel girders were developed. The ships of the Royal Navy were built of Oak timber and many parks were especially planted to supply the Royal and Merchant Navies with suitable timber. In shipbuilding, special timbers were required for the keel, curved sides and masts. Wood naturally grown in the right shape was far stronger than a built up curve hence the continued look out for open grown trees with their widespread crooked branches. Only the keel and masts were usually made of different timbers.

The importance of Oak wood for the Royal Navy is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that the building of a classic 74 gun ship would use 2,600 tonnes of oakwood for the hull alone. Overall such a vessel might require 700 large oak trees. Such usage by the Royal and Merchant Navies soon led to great scarcity of oakwoods, and perhaps also to a preference for the planting of the Common Oak by members of the Royal families.

Max Visch

Sculpture - Archery Lawn Pond

Members will be aware that during the past summer, one of the temporary items of sculpture was installed within the surrounds of the pond on the Archery Lawn

This sculpture has attracted considerable positive comment and now the sculptor, Sam Mahon, has suggested it could become a permanent feature.

Several steps are necessary namely:

1. Obtaining the views of the Botanic Gardens staff and those Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens.
2. Seeking approval and funding from the Art in public places committee.
3. Seeking approval from the Parks and Recreation Committees.

Within the Botanic Gardens staff, there is significant support for the sculpture becoming a permanent feature.

We now need to know what the majority feeling is of members of the 'Friends' and the easiest way of achieving this is for each of you to telephone Wendy Bell or Anne Dobbs at the Information Centre, phone 366-1701. Please give your name and state whether you agree, don't agree, or are not sure, for the Sam Mahan Sculpture to become a permanent feature in the Archery lawn pond.

Warwick Scadden

Horticultural Operations Team Leader

10 FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS

Contact Numbers

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Treasurer	Colin Neal	359-8080
Membership Secretary	Ruby Coleman	355-8811
Newsletter	Peter Mahan	354-1550
Walks/Guiding	Max Visch	338-2273
Garden Tours	Deryck Morse	332-6184
Ex Officio	Warwick Scadden	366-1701
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the