

Newsletter

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

No 50, Autumn 2002

INSIDE

What is new?

"On the 23rd June, 1911, an oak-tree was planted by Mrs. H. J. Beswick near the south bridge to commemorate the coronation of King George V. In 1917 Lord Liverpool planted a Spanish chestnut near the South Domain Bridge. This ceremony was the initial step towards the proposed rock garden.

2 Recent Events

There are probably several other trees of historic interest in the Domain which are not properly identified and it is to be hoped that the Board will act on the proposal made in 1910 to find them out and keep a record of them, making plans of the Domain to show their position, as suggested in the proposal.

4 Articles

On more than one occasion these and other trees and plants have been named and labelled by the various curators, but a section of the public, with a wanton disregard of their privilege in protecting one of the most beautiful assets of their city, constantly destroy these labels either by removing them altogether or throwing them about in other parts of the gardens. Over and over again in the minutes of the Domain Board has this destruction been referred to; it is probably only the more solid nature of the labels in front of some of these memorial trees that has preserved them from the same treatment. This is a serious disgrace to the perpetrators, as is also the deliberate removal of many plants from the beds, which also has been reported from time to time. The public should be made to realize that the beauties of the Domain are theirs to enjoy and to protect in every way."

7 Snippets

Insert

Coming Events

From 'A History of Hagley Park - Christchurch' 19th August 1919. By Miss E. M. Herriott M.A.

Subscriptions Due

If your subscription has not been paid please post to:

The Treasurer
Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens
P.O. Box 2553
Christchurch

Student	\$ 6.00
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Commencing July 1st 2002 to June 30th 2003.

FCBG

PO Box 2553
Christchurch

A Warm Welcome
to the following
New Members

F. Purcell
D. Goode
J. & B. Chapman

Recent Events

Bus Trip of the Avon River

On the 10th of November, 2001, 50 members of the Friends of the Botanic Gardens went on a Bus Tour of the Avon River.

We were unable to see the actual source of the Avon River as this spring, in the midst of a residential area, is now piped. So we started the trip from the very beautiful Corfe St. Reserve, where the Avon emerges from a lush canopy of trees, to trickle along the side of the grassed banks. Max Visch and Dennis Preston, our Botanical experts, spoke of the various Native and Exotic specimens here before we boarded the bus again to head to the Ilam Homestead garden, Dennis giving us a very interesting history of the property on the way. We walked, as Max pointed out many trees of interest, through the Azaleas and Rhododendrons, crossing the Ilam Stream and the Avon River, stopping to see where the Ilam flows into the Avon.

From here we turned into the Canterbury University grounds and along University Drive following the Avon to Clyde Rd. where we turned left and crossed the Okeover Stream which joins the Avon behind the houses to the east. As we drove along Kotare Rd., on the way to the Homestead at Deans' Bush, we could see the line of trees indicating the course of the river. At the Homestead Dennis gave us some historical information on the area, and we saw very old pear and walnut trees as well as the trees planted by the Deans brothers. The size of these trees was amazing and Max was busy with lots of information and answering many questions about them.

From here we moved on to go past Christchurch Girls' High School as Max gave us a little history of the School and the trees. We saw the lovely view up the River into Mona Vale, just before we came to Fendalton Rd., and then on along Harper Ave. to Park Tce with Dennis telling us of the Millbrook Reserve and how it was opened in 1924 as a result of the efforts of a gentleman nicknamed "Riverbank" Owen, due to his efforts to beautify the river. The land was originally part of the Helmore Estate. As we continued along Park Tce., Rolleston Ave., Cambridge Tce., Cashel St. and Oxford Tce. to Armagh St. we continued to be entertained and

educated by the knowledge of Dennis and Max. A walk through Victoria Square, where the watering ramp and the Le Lievre Willows were among the points of interest, took us back to the bus in Colombo St.

From here we followed the river along Oxford Tce. past the Lombardy Poplars, the Bricks Wharf memorial, the Brick Barrel and spring, the Bangor St. Pumphouse and then on to Avonside Drive to Avonside Girls' High School noting the various trees and river plantings on the way and at the school. Continuing along Avonside Drive we saw where the Dudley Creek enters the Avon at the end of River Rd. and soon came to Avon Park. Here we made a little detour along Kerr's Rd. and Wainoni Rd. back to Avonside Drive so we were able to see the original course of the river where it flowed around what is now Porritt Park, before the Kerr's Reach cut was made. Afternoon tea at Avon Park at 3.30pm was very pleasant as we set up tables under the trees – a change in the weather, which was showery right up until 1pm., meant the shade was welcome; the afternoon was glorious.

Back on the bus we back-tracked a little to cross the river at Gloucester St. and turned right into Locksley Ave. to continue along the side of the rowing course and on to the Whitebait spawning area near the Bassett St. bridge. On along New Brighton Rd. past the Postmistress's Cottage memorial to Corser's Stream where those who wished left the bus to walk along among the Native planting to Brooker Ave. to board again. Then we continued along New Brighton Rd. past the Cockayne Reserve where Dennis told of the work of Leonard Cockayne, and on to the Kibblewhite St. parking bay. The last walk of the day was along the path to Bridge St., a very nice amble while the bus went on the road round to Bridge St. to pick us up. From Bridge St. we went to Linwood Ave. and back along Avonside Drive and Kilmore St. to the Garden's car park, arriving at 5pm.

My thanks, and the thanks of all on the bus, go to Max and Dennis for the work they put into researching the trip with me, and their presentation, and to John Knox, our driver, a very knowledgeable person, also.

Alison Fox

Viewing the Alpines and Rock Plants

In the middle of December a group visited the two rock garden areas and the Alpine House.

There is a difference between alpine plants, which grow at higher altitudes, usually above the bush line or in the high country and rock plants, which grow in low rocky areas. The later often grow at sea level, for example, *Convolvulus mauritanicus*, which grows near the shore in N. Africa, is in the garden. It is a prostrate spreading perennial with flatly – open trumpet flowers of a lovely clear blue. There is a good specimen outside the alpine house beside the main path.

In the Cockayne native alpine garden, *Mazus radicans* was a most attractive plant with low growing white and purple flowers that have been likened to a host of butterflies resting on the foliage. *Bulbinella angustifolia* with its bright yellow flowers was also prominent. Walter Brockie was responsible for building up the collection in the 1930's and 40's. Most of his collecting was done in the Canterbury area.

The Rock Garden: officially opened by Lord Galway in 1939, occupies part of what was originally a horse paddock. It is on a southward-facing slope. Spring and early summer are the best times to view it. We missed the many *Crocus* and *Narcissus* species, but *Dianthus*, *Campanula*, *Potentilla* and *Rhodohypoxis* species were flowering; as well as *Androsace*, *Phlox*, evening primrose and *Muscari*.

Rhodohypoxis is a fine little plant to grow. Originally from the Drakensburg Mountains in South Africa it was introduced to England by Mrs Susan Garnett-Botfield in 1927 and created a sensation when seedlings were exhibited at the Chelsea Flower Show. Her daughter Ruth carried on the breeding work and raised further varieties. Between them mother and daughter raised 15 – 20 varieties that are still in cultivation. *R.* 'Albrighton' is red with good stems. *R.* 'Margaret-Rose', which I have grown for many years, has large flowers of pale pink. *R.* 'Ruth' has white flowers and is considered an improvement on the original white *R. baurii platypetala*.

Rhodohypoxis with its six petals arranged in two overlapping sets of three looks well grown in a long trough with white plants at one end, deeper red at the other end and various pinks between; or they may be grown in separate pans. Flowering starts in spring continuing through out the summer.

The Foweraker Alpine House had a long list of flowering plants. One I will mention is *Lewisia*. The genus is confined to N. America and includes many colourful, low growing plants with flowers ranging from white to deep rose, apricot and orange. Some are evergreen, others may die down completely underground after flowering. All form rosettes and like plenty of sun in a well-drained rich soil. The outstanding beauty is *L. tweedyi* but *L. cotyledon* and its colour varieties are easier to grow.

With autumn on the way March and April are good times to pay a visit.

P Mahan.

Plant Sale

The plant sale at the Open Day at the Gardens went off very successfully. The weather was fine and sufficiently warm to entice considerable crowds. The central position of our stall, near the Information Centre among the Proteas, was an advantage and drew the helpful attention of the MC. We contributed \$322.80 to the coffers of the Friends and have sufficient numbers of plants left over to offer to potential buyers among you who may be in need of Autumn plantings. The NZ natives have done especially well this wet year.

We were only a small cog in the overall Open Day attraction but our stall drew the attention of a number of overseas visitors, particularly some from Chicago who help a very much larger City Gardens. We also raised the Friends profile in Christchurch which may result in increased membership.

However it is a little disappointing to report that the helicopter overhead bombing the Children's Area with chocolates missed us entirely, so we cannot tell you whether they were soft-centred or hard.

Helen Constable

Articles

The Maritime Pine

Between 6000 and 4000 years ago the sands and gravels brought down from the Southern Alps by the Waimakariri river had built out the Pegasus Bay shoreline as far as central Christchurch. The evidence for this is a series of low sand-hills, the remains of ancient sand dunes in Hagley Park and the Christchurch Botanic Gardens.

Most of these sand-hills were leveled in the early days of settlement or excavated to supply sand for roading and fill.

Three sand dunes occurred in the front part of the Gardens. Only the one known as the Pine Mound has survived to the present day. The other two had to make way when the Museum and McDougall Art Gallery were built. Perhaps these two sand dunes supplied the material to fill the huge gravel pit that took up much of the front lawn area and which had to be filled in before the area could be landscaped, sown in grass and planted.

All these sand dunes were covered in fern and the occasional Matagouri and it is of interest to note that some bracken fern *Pteridium esculentum* still survives to this day on the southern base of the Pine Mound.

It is not known precisely when the Pine Mound and several other dune remnants in the Gardens were planted with the Maritime pine *Pinus pinaster* but it is likely to have been in the 1860's or early 1870's.

The species was already well established in parts of the North Island and was offered for sale by Wilson's Nursery in Christchurch in 1863.

The number of Maritime Pines originally planted on the mound must have been much greater than the 11 mature trees that are now left.

Old Maritime Pines are very beautiful trees, easily recognised by their deeply fissured, red brown

bark, long stout needles and shiny brown cones. It is also this species that creates such a wonderful display of trunk and canopy silhouettes along Harper Avenue.

The Maritime Pine occurs naturally along the coasts of southwestern France, Spain, Portugal and North Africa. The tree has been cultivated for hundreds of years in Southern Europe. Widespread planting has obscured the precise boundaries of its natural distribution.

In New Zealand early settlers experimented with many kinds of exotic trees to provide shade, shelter, fuel and timber and it seems that the "pinaster pine" as it is also known, was the first successfully introduced exotic conifer in New Zealand.

It soon became naturalised in the far north of this country and by 1830 was so common that many people believed it to be a native species.

Some material was sent to the English botanist Loddiges who accepted it as a new species of pine and promptly named it *Pinus nova-zelandica*, not realising what he had been sent was none other than the well-known European *Pinus pinaster*. Of the hundred or so species of true pines only *Pinus merkusii* has crossed the equator in Indonesia. Pines are a Northern Hemisphere group of conifers.

The pinaster pine grows well on sand and soils of low nutrient status and as a result has been much used in the stabilization of shifting sand dunes in southern Europe. Perhaps this was also why it was planted on the Pine Mound and elsewhere in Hagley Park and the Gardens.

In 1789 the French forester Bremonnier was given the task to find ways of stabilizing millions of acres of sand dunes in the Landes in southwest France – an area open to strong westerly winds from across the Atlantic. After some initial trials he succeeded in doing what was thought to be impossible by planting up huge areas with the maritime pine and sowing broom seed in between the rows.

Millions of acres of unproductive land were brought into cultivation in France and later also in Portugal. Immense forests were created providing employment for thousands of people. The timber has been used for mine props, carpentry, telephone poles, railway sleepers etc., but the most important product obtained was resin, with large quantities being extracted from the trees annually by tapping and distillation. The resin forms the basis for the production of turpentine and rosin - surely the Pinaster Pine is a most useful as well as a beautiful tree.

Max Visch

Norfolk Island Botanic Garden

The Norfolk Island Botanic Garden was founded in 1986 to provide a place to grow Norfolk Island's unique flora and to encourage the native birds. A 4.9-hectare remnant rain forest was added to Mrs Pat Moore's garden, which was owned and managed by her for many years before she returned to New Zealand in her later life. The garden is steep on one of the little hills that abound in Norfolk Island. There were just 178 native plants when the Island was colonised in 1788. The Island is of course the home of the Norfolk Island pine and forty other endemic plants, which can be found nowhere else growing naturally.

The Park is really a rain forest, for the most part very dense with lots of creepers and shy undercover plants quite an exciting place in which to walk - dark- with steep tracks and wooden steps- not very big and totally different in style and layout to any other Botanic Garden I've visited.

A little gem on a large gem which is Norfolk Island and really attractive scenery. A couple of swimming beaches, high cliffs accessible by walking - no taxes, poverty or unemployment just 1800 inhabitants plus of course tourists.

A terrible history of convicts and brutality until the 1850's but now a haven in the middle of the sea.

Ruby Coleman

Experiencing Trinidad

Yes, it is a beautiful Caribbean Island, blue water, white sand, tropical forests, diversity but, unfortunately poverty, corruption, poor housing and unemployment take away some of the enjoyment.

Trinidad is only eleven kilometres from the Venezuelan coast, but a rough stretch of water it is. Once sugar was the mainstay of the economy and indentured labourers came from Africa, later India and China to work on the plantations. This has all changed today and oil, gas and ammonia are the main exports and many people have left their villages to chase the money from the oil fields. One rather interesting place in South Trinidad was the 'Pitch Lake' one of three in the world supplying asphalt for roading.

About one million people live here and there is a colourful history with country being ruled by the Dutch, French, Spanish, British and now independent. The cultural mix is colourful with a huge diversity in food, religion, music, trees and architecture.

We joined a number of tourists to visit the Caroni Swamp in the early evening to watch the Scarlet Ibis returning to nest. Quite an amazing sight, but to protect the bird's environment the boats did not go very close. Binoculars were a must. Apparently the scarlet colour is caused by the birds eating shrimp!!! As well as the National bird, we saw herons, white flamingos, egrets, plovers, snakes and alligators.

The Port of Spain (the capital) Botanic Gardens have a wide collection of tropical trees and plants. Getting a guide is a challenge as, there are the 'Official Guides' and the 'colourful' locals, who have great information but ones safety cannot be guaranteed.

Many of the trees arrived with the different migrants and many have medicinal uses. The poinsettias were huge along with the Royal Palms. Unfortunately nothing was labelled, and we had major problems with language (they speak extremely quickly). We took a few guesses by

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rubbing leaves, as sometimes we doubted the guide. Anyway we did see the giant breadfruit trees with the fruit about the size of a football.

We had noticed a bright pink drink for sale on the roadside and discovered it was sorrel. The branches were sold by truckloads when in season. One tree was definitely the Cinnamon the bark of which is stripped and dried to yield the spice cinnamon. Another one of interest was *Myristica fragans*, nutmeg. It's a slender, evergreen tree maturing to a height of 15 metres. It has a smooth grey bark and the aromatic leaves are said to contain insect repelling agents. The nutmegs appear as fleshy pear-shaped scarlet berries when ripe. Their red jackets are harvested and processed separately to become mace, which is a milder spice than nutmeg.

Anyone interested in Middle Eastern cooking would be interested in *Tamarindus caesalpinioceae* the Tamarind. It has bean like pods, which contain large seeds, encased in an edible, sweet fibrous pulp. This pulp with high tartaric acid content is cooked and strained to produce tart-sweet syrup, which is an important ingredient in many curries. These were some of the more interesting species also lots of banana palms, frangipani, hibiscus and the giant bromeliads and orchids. Amongst the trees were some of the 430 species of birds, which make Trinidad a bird watchers paradise.

It wasn't carnival time but we saw the shops specializing in sparkles and glitter. We heard the calypso music and the museum had a fantastic display of costumes. Modern technology has helped in making lighter frames to support the weight of the costumes.

Certainly a colourful country and Neil's work at the University of the West Indies was very worth while. Having a driver allowed us to see a huge amount of the country in safety and to get a local viewpoint. Beautiful but unfortunately not always safe.

Faye Fleming

I walked in an English Garden
when the summer sun was high
strolled on the lawn stretching down
to the lake
under a brilliant sky

And I felt the unseen presence of our
lives
from centuries gone by

I stood in the rain-filled garden
when the skies were misty grey
breathed in the energy of trees
on a green and silver day

And I listened to voices I could
not hear
inviting me to stay

In my dreams I return to the garden
alone with my fantasy
by longing to know what cannot
be known
to see what I cannot see

And the ghosts of the garden drifting
past
are they aware of me?

Joanna Lynham, Cotswald Life, August 2000.

Contribution from Amelia Childs

Our sympathy goes to the families of the following members who have recently passed away.

Jeanette Webster, Theo Harper, Oscar Balint and Hendrik Van den Bosch.

Raffle results

The lucky winners of our end of year book raffles were Reit Visch and Natalie Crook.

Thank you to all who support our fundraising.

Snippets

Magnetic Observatory Workshop Museum

The winter lecture series (more detail in the winter newsletter) is inspired by the recent anniversary of the first expedition of Captain Robert Falcon Scott to the Antarctic, when he used the Magnetic Observatory in the Botanic Gardens to calibrate his instruments. A museum featuring permanent displays commemorating this connection will soon be set up in the former Observatory workshop now Ranger's Hut in the Botanic Gardens.

The Botanic Gardens Manager has requested Help from the Friends to prepare the Ranger's Hut for this museum and then for volunteers to be on duty when this permanent display is open to the Public. (E.g. Sunday afternoons during Heritage week)

Please contact Craig Oliver if you are interested Phone 364 7583

Bus Tours/Outings

Our thanks are due to Alison Fox for her work in arranging all of our Friends' tours. We had a full bus and a most interesting afternoon on the Avon River trip on November 10th 2001. Thanks also to Max and Dennis for their commentaries that day.

Friends' Guiding Group

Our Guides have been sharing the Gardens with visitors and Friends during the summer. More members of this group are always welcome and training is available.

Contact Sylvia Meek Phone 326 6167

OBITUARY – Hendrik van den Bosch

On the 13th December 2001 Hendrik van den Bosch, a long-time Member of the Society passed away following a severe stroke. He had been in poor health for quite some time but his sudden death, nevertheless, came as a shock to his family and friends.

Hendrik and his faithful Guide Dog Abbie were well known to many Friends. They often attended evening and afternoon meetings and joined us on our Guided Walks around the Gardens.

Hendrik always had a keen interest in plants and when his eyesight failed and he could no longer see the plants being discussed, he kept himself informed by perceptive questioning and the use of his hands and other senses. We shall sorely miss him.

And what about Abbie, you may ask. She is being lovingly cared for by the parents-in-law of Hendrik's youngest daughter.

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Contact Numbers

President	Dennis Preston	351-4131		Janet Begg	385-5114
Immediate Past President			Ex Officio	Craig Oliver	366-1701
Treasurer	Colin Neal	359-8080		Kevin Garnett	366-1701
Membership Secretary	Ruby Coleman	355-8811	Helpers		
Minutes Secretary	Jim Crook	358-5845	Plant Sale	Helen Constable	332-1212
Committee Members	Tony & Janette Burnett	384-1381	Newsletter mail out	Gcon@xtra.co.nz	
	Amelia Childs	382-2451	Guide Coordinator	Sally Jebson	352-6363
	David Given	351-6069	Botanist	Sylvia Meek	326-6167
	Joan Bower	326-5312	Walks	Bill Sykes	366-3844
Newsletter	Peter Mahan	354-1550	Enquiries	Max Visch	338-2273
N. Assistant	Maria Adamski	325-2330	Afternoon Programme	Information Centre	364-7590
Outings/trips	Alison Fox	385-4933		Adrienne Moore	351-5915

Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Inc
PO Box 2553
Christchurch
New Zealand

Coming Events 2002

March 5th	Tuesday 9 am Information Centre	Walk	<i>Plants that associate with Roses</i> with Richard Poole
March 14th	Thursday 12.45pm	Bus Outing	Visit to Addington Bush, Trees for Canterbury and the CCC Linwood Nursery. See overleaf for details.
March 16th	Saturday 1.30 pm Information Centre	Walk	<i>Native Trees and Shrubs Suitable for Small Gardens</i> with Neil O'Brien
March 22nd	Friday 5 pm Petanque Club Rooms	Social	Barbecue and Petanque Games. See overleaf for details.
April 2nd	Tuesday 9 am Information Centre	Walk	<i>Propagation Techniques—making something out of nothing</i> with Darren Tillett
April 8th	Monday 2 pm Petanque Club Rooms	Talk	<i>Xerophyte Plants for the New World</i> with Jim Dunn
April 17th	Wednesday 7.30pm Petanque Club Rooms	Talk	<i>Report from Botanic Gardens Congress in Canberra on Botanic Gardens in the 21st Century</i> with Bede Nottingham
April 20th	Saturday 1.30 pm Information Centre	Walk	<i>English Trees</i> with Max Visch
May 7th	Tuesday 9 am Information Centre	Walk	<i>Christchurch Magnetic Observatory display at the Botanic Gardens</i> with Susan Molloy
May 10th	Friday 2 pm Petanque Club Rooms	Talk	<i>Wisley Gardens</i> with Richard Pender
May 15th	Wednesday 7.30pm Petanque Club Rooms	Talk	<i>Vision for the Botanic Gardens</i> with Craig Oliver
May 18th	Saturday 1.30 pm Information Centre	Walk	<i>Autumn Treasures</i> with Adrienne Moore
June 4th	Tuesday 9 am Information Centre	Walk	Surprise with Kevin Garnett

Wouldn't it be good if you rang a fellow member and offered to pick them up to bring them to a meeting?

FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS

Bus trip to Addington Bush, Trees for Canterbury and the City Council Nursery, Linwood.

Thursday 14th March, 2002

Meet at the Petanque Club at 12.45 pm for this very interesting trip.

Afternoon tea provided (bring your own mug)

\$10 per person, bring a friend.

To book Phone Alison Fox on 385 4933 by the 7th March.

Keep this date free

Sunday 9th June 2 pm

Bird Hall, Canterbury Museum, Rolleston Ave

A talk and slides presented by Dr David Given on the Bio-diversity of Antarctica and the Sub Antarctic Islands and the Legacy of human exploration and impacts.

This is Part 1 of a 2 part series.
Entry \$2. Bring a friend.

Change of meeting space for the Friends

As the Information Centre is now being used for more frequent and extensive educational displays, it is no longer convenient to hold Friends' meeting there.

Our 2002 programme has been planned to use the Petanque Club which is the two-story building, on the right hand side of the road, opposite the car park of the Armagh St entrance to the Botanic Gardens. We will be sharing costs of this facility with the Petanque Club and will need to find ways of increasing our income to cover this.

The weekday meetings, evening meetings and Committee meetings will be in these rooms. Following our experiment last year, in the winter months of June, July and August we will combine the weekday and evening meetings and hold these on Sunday afternoons.

Information Centre Displays

Botanical Artist K. Watson February/March
Embroidered Gardens from the 18th March for 4 weeks

Enquiries to Information Centre phone 364 7590

Social evening for Friends of Christchurch Botanic Gardens and the Petanque Club

Barbecue and Petanque at the Petanque Club, Hagley Park

5 pm Friday 22nd March

The Friends' will be sharing the facilities at the Petanque Club for most of our meetings in 2002, and we are starting off the year with a combined Social evening. Please come with your spouse, partner or friend to enjoy this evening. Please bring suitable footwear for playing Petanque and warm clothes. Both groups will supply the barbecue meal and drinks will be available at members' own cost.

RSVP by 14th March essential to enable catering.

Please phone Alison 385 4933 or Janet 385 5114.