

Newsletter

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

No 51, Early Winter May 2002

INSIDE

1 A Vision for the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Building

2 Recent Events

5 Bits & Pieces

6 Coming Events

11 Membership News

11 Staff News

FCBG

PO Box 237
Christchurch

A Vision for the Robert McDougall Art Gallery Building

The Robert McDougall Art Gallery will close its doors on 16 June 2002 and reopen in the new Christchurch City Gallery in April 2003. Because of this move, the Christchurch City Council has sought views on the future use of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery building.

The Friends' Committee set up a sub-committee to explore the future use for the building including the Canaday Wing, as part of the Botanic Gardens. A submission was written by Cam Moore and Dr David Given with substantial research from Janet Begg and incorporating material from other members. This submission was forwarded to the City Council and speaking rights requested for the hearing, which is expected to be mid-May.

The 1925 Act of Parliament, No. 46, made the site within the Botanic Gardens available for the Robert McDougall Art Gallery building. This Act clearly stated that if the building ceased to be used as an art gallery, the land and buildings would revert back to the Christchurch Domain board, which at that time was the board controlling the Botanic Gardens. In 1946 the Christchurch Domain Board was abolished and its powers and responsibilities transferred to the Christchurch City Council, stating the Botanic Gardens land could only be used as a botanic garden.

In the City's current management plan for the Botanic Gardens, one of the agreed objectives is the procurement of these buildings for Botanic Gardens' use. So both the original Act of Parliament and the management plan are clear in their

need to restore this beautiful heritage building to the Botanic Gardens, when it ceased to be used as an art gallery.

Naturally such a return must see this unique building well used.

Firstly it must be clearly understood our Botanic Gardens are on a very restricted site. No one would be comfortable about constructing additional buildings within this site, as this could only be done at the expense of botanical displays.

Secondly the Botanic Gardens are the most visited amenity and tourist destination in Christchurch. Over 1.2 million people visit our Botanic Gardens each year (compared with 550,000 for the Museum and about 250,000 for the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.) Visitors to the Gardens from outside Christchurch, account for about 450,000, with 260,000 of these being overseas visitors. From these visitor numbers our Botanic Gardens are clearly a very significant attraction.

In our submission we made the point that the existing Information Centre is too small for the multitude of needs which have developed. The Rolleston Avenue entrance handles about 37% of all visitors but has no suitable information and/or display centre.

The current buildings in our Gardens do not cater for the many roles now expected from Botanic Gardens in the 21st Century, e.g. education, conservation and research, leaving our Botanic Gardens unable to fully offer many of these functions. This lack of facilities becomes very obvious when compared to other Gardens both

here in NZ and overseas. Members of the Friends have visited over 200 Botanic Gardens worldwide.

With space becoming available once the McDougall Art Gallery moves, we see a unique opportunity to secure this building to provide for the functions of education, science, conservation and visitor services in line with those offered in other Botanic Gardens.

These can be summarised as follows:

1. **Education.** Displays, e.g. botany, conservation, history (Botanic Gardens, plant records, buildings,) plant exploration, local biodiversity and endangered plants, other Christchurch parks and gardens, botanical art, ethnobotany etc. Children's botanical discovery centre, audio/visual programmes.
2. **Information.** Plant identification, library and computer access, interactive computers, conservation and biodiversity, "what to do now in the garden," pest control.
3. **Rolleston Avenue visitors' Information Centre**
4. **Retail facility.** Comprehensive good quality garden book shop with associated products
5. **Lectures.** Public, schools and interest groups, etc.
6. **Guided tours and visitor facilities.** Daily tours, group tours both local and overseas, school groups, special interest groups, guides' resource room, bad weather alternative facility for tours using audio/visual equipment, etc.
7. **Library.** For the historical book collection.
8. **Herbarium collections** (commenced in 1862.) Much of this is currently housed outside the Botanic Gardens. No suitable facility exists

within the Gardens to adequately house and protect these valuable collections.

9. **Research.** Seed exchange (important for conservation), specimen mounting, plant collections, rare and endangered plants, ethnobotany, etc.
10. **Home for the Friends of the Botanic Gardens-** lectures and meetings.

Naturally the heritage aspects of this important building must be retained and protected. We see our proposed uses as not inconsistent with the existing uses of an art gallery, namely displays (including botanical art), lectures and information. The original layout and existing fabric would remain visible and to the expert eye the building would remain unchanged. It is common overseas to have heritage buildings used by botanic gardens without compromising their historical and cultural features.

Many of the functions listed above would be revenue generating and once established would reduce the pressure on local body funding. The use of this building by the Botanic Gardens would rejuvenate our Botanic gardens making them comparable with the best of overseas botanic gardens and clearly re-establishing their leadership in New Zealand.

Although the closing date for submissions has passed, a letter supporting these views would be helpful. It should be addressed to Peter Mitchell, Legal Services Manager, Christchurch City Council, P. O. Box 237. Christchurch.

Our members' evening meeting on Wednesday 15 May, at 7.30pm in the Petanque Club Room (in Armagh St carpark, entry from the city side of the building,) will give you all an opportunity to ask questions and hear further about this submission.

Cam Moore

Recent Events

March Bus trip

On the 14th March 32 members and friends set off on a tour of three special areas, namely, the Addington Bush, the Trees for Canterbury Nursery and the Christchurch City Council Nursery.

The Addington Bush Society started with a group of eight families who were inspired by Mike Peters

and his efforts in planting the Eel Creek Reserve with Native plants. They removed the rear fences and joined backyards to form a large area, incorporating the then 1500 square metre Eel Creek Reserve. The Society now has 143 member organisations and 50 volunteer staff in the network.

Recent Events continued ...

Jessica Peters took us on a delightful walk along paths, bordered by many natives, to areas where people can gather to relax, or have afternoon tea, while the children play in an enchanting bushy area or in the playhouse, built in one of the many glades. As a result of the rather wet summer, the normal weeding programme had not been maintained, but the work that had gone into the plantings and the paths was very obvious. Jessica wanted us to also see their other project in the area, which was Addington Park, bordered by Barrington St. and Jerrold St North, where the Group had involved the local children in tidying and weeding the stream and banks, and replanting along the whole area. This is a very beautiful walk and a source of great pride to the local community.

Then we were off to 261 Opawa Rd to Trees for Canterbury. Steve Bush took us on a very informative tour of the work that goes on here, from seed collecting and cuttings to the growing on practices, and finally the stage where the plants can go out to be planted in public areas for beautification or reforestation purposes.

This organisation has been operating since 1990 and is now staffed largely by volunteers along with 5 permanent staff members. There is also an Educational Programme in which Steve talks to schools to encourage the pupils in the appreciation of Horticulture and to understand the problems of the Greenhouse Effect. There is a very extensive collection of native plants in this nursery available for sale to the public and it is well worth a visit.

From Opawa Rd the bus took us to the Edmonds Gardens where we had afternoon tea and a look around this lovely place before heading off for the last visit of the day to the City Council Nursery. This Nursery, under the management of Joe Cartman, is where so many of the plants we see in the City's Gardens are raised. Joe showed us some of their working areas, then the growing bays, while describing the processes of the work there. It is a little mind-boggling to realise just how many thousands of plants are needed for the City's projects. The whole area was perfectly maintained and a great credit to the staff.

Jessica, Steve and Joe gave us a most interesting insight into the workings of their particular sites and were happy to answer the many questions put to them. Our thanks go to them for their efforts, and to our bus driver, John Knox who always has so many points of interest for us on our way. *Alison Fox*

Barbecue & Social evening with Petanque Club Friday 22 March

Petanque is no longer a mysterious game to the 40 or so Friends and BG staff members who joined with Petanque club members for a most enjoyable evening. Almost everyone played this fun game and the Friends and the Petanque club provided the delicious barbecue. Our thanks to all the helpers.

Xerophytes, Plants for the New World

Jim Dunn and Max Visch shared their knowledge and love of Cactis and Succulents at our meeting on April 8th and an article on these plants will be published later.

Evening Meeting 17th April, with Bede Nottingham, BG Staff member

Report from Botanic Gardens Congress on Public Gardens in the 21st Century: "Conservation, Culture or Crass Commercialism" held in Canberra April 2001

Bede thanked the Friends for our grant towards his travel to this congress at which our former President, Dr David Given chaired some of the conference sessions.

The 240 delegates came from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Singapore, with keynote speakers from USA, Great Britain and China.

The four main topics were **Plant Sciences and Conservation, Public Programs (Education), Horticulture and Managing in the 21st Century.**

Bede spoke of the challenges facing all gardens of funding, staffing, and isolation. (Most gardens operated as individual entities but are now starting to co-operate and exchange ideas.) There is the need to use 21st Century strategies such as branding and sophisticated marketing to attract visitors in the very competitive leisure industry.

Recent Events continued ...

In his address to delegates John Hicks, Chairman of the Steering Committee said, "The Gardens 2001 Congress aims to optimise the role of Public Gardens in the new millenium... There is greater awareness of the fragility of the environment and the importance of biodiversity. Public Gardens can contribute considerably to conservation as well as showcasing plants..in a beautiful setting."

"Public gardens with their unique blend of nature and culture, provide wonderful recreational opportunities and educational resources that promote understanding of plant biodiversity and sustainable use." P4, Conference Handbook, 2001.

Further comments on Bede's presentation and topics discussed at the congress will be covered in a future article. We also enjoyed the Bede's slides of gardens visited during his time in Australia.

Adrienne Moore

Saturday afternoon Monthly Walks

Encouraging numbers have been walking with our Guides. Neil O'Brien had an inquisitive group in March, when he spoke on Native Trees and Shrubs suitable for small gardens, and Max gave a wide coverage of English trees on our April walk. The use of our loudspeaker has greatly enhanced everyone's enjoyment of the walks.

Walks with the Staff - First Tuesday of the Month

We are most appreciative of all the staff members who share their particular areas of expertise and interest with us each month.

Richard Poole is the Plant Collection Curator in the Woodland area and surrounding gardens and was responsible for the redevelopment of the Heritage Rose garden and the Addington Brook plantings. His enthusiasm for the plants in his care is obvious and his walk on March 5th was over all too soon.

On a cold wet morning in April we warmed up very quickly in the Propagating Houses where Darren Tillet showed us how to make something out of nothing. We were amazed at how a tiny a cutting some becomes a strong healthy plant when given plenty of TLC. Darren inspired us to try for ourselves and shared many tricks of the trade.

Recent Meetings. 13 Feb 2002.

Bring a plant to discuss.

For our first meeting of the year held in the Petanque rooms, we had a lively session discussing plants contributed by Friends and David Barwick and Kevin Garnett Botanic Gardens' staff members.

These sessions are wonderful for learning about the notable plants each season and some of special interest this meeting were the following, from the Botanic Gardens.

Hymenosporum flavum, Australian frangipani, with small yellow fragrant flowers; *Lonicera sempervirens* 'Sulphurea' from the Fragrant garden; *Fuchsia thymifolia*, a tiny delicate fuchsia with pink flowers; *Enkianthus perulatus* a shrub for foliage colour; *Leonotis leonurus*, Lion's Ear, South Africa shrub with orange-scarlet 2 lipped flowers; *Hydrangea villosa* syn. *H. aspera*, with velvety leaves; *Elsholtzia stauntonii* a tall member of the Labiate/Lamiaceae family with showy racemes of purple pink flowers. *Osmanthus heterophyllus*, syn. *O. ilicifolius*, a tree with holly-like leaves sweetly scented white flowers growing near the Art Gallery; *Lobelia tupa*, a tall perennial with red-purple stems and orange red flowers (Herbaceous border); *Clethra arborea*, lily of the valley tree, with cup shaped fragrant white flowers. This tree growing near Cuninghame House, was badly affected by thrips some years ago and has made a spectacular recovery. *Eucryphia cordifolia* from Chile, but tucked into the Australian border. The spectacular single white flowers are the size of a 20c piece, with prominent orange stamens and wonderful dark green leaves.

Plants from members included; another *Eucryphia*, *Eucryphia* 'Nymansay' which was named for the garden where it originated, Nymans in Sussex, UK. It is one of the original seedling clones from hybrids between *E. glutinosa* and *E. cordifolia*, two Chilean species, which first arose at Nymans in 1914. Ref. Botanica's Pocket Trees and Shrubs, Godwit, Auckland, 1999, Chief Consultant- Geoff Bryant. (It is well worth including a visit to Nymans garden when visiting Britain.)

There is a spectacular specimen of *Eucryphia*. 'Nymansay' in the garden at Lanarch Castle in Dunedin, which prompted our member to buy this

Recent Events continued ...

Eucryphia. It has taken 10 years to flower but is worth the wait.

The very low growing *Sisyrinchium*, which we think is *S. bellum*, is sometimes called blue eyed grass. "Westfallen Park" is a lovely scented gold rose. *Acidanthera bicolor* var. *murieliae* is a member of the Iris family and closely linked to *Gladioli*. It is a taller form with white open star-like flowers with maroon blotches and has flattened corms like *gladiolus*. The name honours Muriel Wilson, the daughter of Ernest Wilson, (1876-1930) an English plant hunter, who later became known as Chinese Wilson. [In April 1899, James Veitch & Son Nurserymen, sent this "untravelling 23 year old . . . to China with instructions to find and collect a beautiful tree" (P155, *The Plant Hunters*. Musgrave, Gardner and Musgrave, Cassell & Co London 1998.) The tree was the Dove tree - *Davidia involucrata*.]

Bougainvillea 'Scarlet O'Hara' drew many gasps for the intense scarlet-cerise bracts. The true flowers are small white and tubular. *Bougainvilleas* are from South America and named in honour of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, 1729-1811- a sailor and explorer, mathematician, lawyer and author. He is also commemorated with Bougainville in the Solomon Islands.

Trachelospermum jasminoides or Star jasmine comes from China, Korea and Japan and is a woody evergreen climber with deliciously scented small white starry flowers. It is also seen scrambling as a ground cover.

Kirengeshoma palmata is a clump forming rhizomatous perennial and member of the *Hydrangea* family from woodlands in Japan. The waxy yellow tubular flowers and pairs of sycamore-like leaves are most attractive. It grows to around 1.2m.

Rosa glutinosa. Rather a mystery. Can anyone throw any light please? The plant was bought at a Friends' sale. It is a vigorous grower, which suckers readily and has robust thorns and briar-like pale lilac pink flowers which turn into large hips. The foliage has a pine fragrance in damp weather.

Echinacea purpurea is a member of the *Compositae* family from Central and S.E. USA.

The name *Echinacea* comes from *echinus* a hedgehog and refers to the prickly cone-like centre of the flowers. It is also known as Purple cone flower. The root was used medicinally to activate the body's immune system and it had many uses for the Plains Indians. A white form was also discussed and this plant looks wonderful in semi-shade in the garden.

One of *Impatiens* was brought along for identification and the nearest we could get was a New Guinea hybrid.

Very often we all have something interesting, unusual or just particularly beautiful in our garden that we would like to share, or check the name. At our Bring-a-Plant meetings, not everyone brings something and those who do, may know very little about their contribution but we all learn a great deal and have fun in the process. Do join us next time. Of course members are all welcome to bring treasures to any meeting.

Adrienne Moore

Bits & Pieces

Information Centre Displays. Open 11.00am till 3.00pm in winter

Composting and Good Bugs for Gardens till 20 May, Arbor Day from 23 May till 11 June, Rose Pruning mid July till early August, then Sally Mason's Photography from mid August. Please phone the Information Centre for exact dates and times.

Gardens' Update from Craig Oliver, Botanical Gardens Team Manager

Spring bedding work has begun; more bulbs are being planted in Hagley Park and the recent southerly storm helped send autumn leaves on their way. The new Bridge into the Gardens from the Armagh St entrance, should be finished by June/July. In the woodland area, the new pathway along the banks of Addington Brook is ready for visitors.

Repairs to the Memorial Band Rotunda will be completed shortly. Cuninghame house and the Mona Vale Bath House have maintenance projects underway.

Coming Events - May-Sep 2002

May 10th	Fri 2:00pm Petanque Rooms	Talk	<i>"Alpines at Wisley Gardens UK"</i> – Richard Pender
May 15th	Wed 7:30pm Petanque Rooms	Talk	<i>"Vision for the Christchurch Botanic Gardens"</i> – Dr David Given & Cam Moore
May 18th	Sat 1:30pm Information Centre	Guided Walk	<i>"Autumn Treasures"</i> – Adrienne Moore
June 4th	Tue 9:00am Information Centre	Walk	Surprise – Kevin Garnett
June 9th	Sun 2:00pm Bird Hall, Canty Museum	Talk/ Slides	<i>"Bio-diversity of Antartica and the Sub-Antarctic Islands and the Legacy of human exploration and impacts"</i> – Dr David Given (Bring friends - entry \$2) - Part 1 of 2
June 13th	Thu 2:00pm BG Staff Tearoom	Meeting	Guides Group
June 15th	Sat 9:30am Information Centre	Meeting/ Walk	New members' morning tea and walk – Adrienne/Alison
June 15th	Sat 1:30pm Information Centre	Guided Walk	<i>"Botanical Curiosities"</i> – Max Visch
July 2nd	Tue 9:00am Information Centre	Guided Walk	<i>"Pruning Roses"</i> – Bede Nottingham
July 14th	Sun 2:00pm Bird Hall, Canty Museum	Talk/ Slides	<i>"Vegetative patterns across Southern New Zealand lattitudes"</i> – Colin Meurk (Bring friends - entry \$2) Part 2
July 20th	Sat 1:30pm Information Centre	Guided Walk	<i>"The importance of trees in the Urban Landscape"</i> – Max Visch
August 6th	Tue 9:00am Information Centre	Guided Walk	<i>"New Developments on the Gondwana Display"</i> – Angus Allan
August 11th	Sun 2:00pm Canty Horticultural Soc	AGM	General discussion on future plans for the Friends
August 17th	Sat 1:30pm Information Centre	Guided Walk	<i>"Yews, Boxes and Hollies"</i> – Friends' Guides
September 3rd	Tue 9:00am Information Centre	Guided Walk	<i>"Water Garden and Pinetum"</i> – Dean Pendrigh
September 7th	Sat 9:00am Venue & cost (to be advised)	Breakfast	Followed by opening of Children's arbor with invited guests, then a walk in the Gardens.
September 21st	Sat 10:00am Meet Petanque Rooms	Bus Tour	Daffodils at Elizabeth Wolff's, Thornbank at Rangiora and visit to Giller Trees.
October 1st	Tue 9:00am Information Centre	Guided Walk	<i>"South west storm"</i> – Mark/Malcolm

Notes on Coming Events

Friday 10 May, 2.0pm Petanque Rooms. Alpine Collection, Wisley Gardens, UK

Richard Pender, a former apprentice in the Botanic Gardens, left our Gardens to work as a student gardener at Wisley, the Royal Horticultural Society's garden. Don't miss his talk and slide show, **Friday 10 May**. You are welcome to bring friends.

Wednesday 15 May, 7.30pm Petanque Rooms. A vision for the use of the McDougall Art Gallery Building by the Botanic Gardens.

Don't miss this important presentation by Dr David Given and Cam Moore on the Friends' submission to the City Council on the future use of this building.

Sat. 15 June, 9.30am Information Centre, New Members' Morning tea and walk.

We invite new members and any member who has not previously been able to attend our welcome functions, to morning tea and a 'behind the scenes walk'.

RSVP essential - Please phone Alison on 3854 933 by 8 June.

Sunday 9 June and Sunday 14 July at 2.0pm Bird Hall, Canterbury Museum.

Antarctic Lecture Series. See Coming Events list for details.

There is more to the Antarctic and Southern Ocean than heroic explorers and penguins. The Subantarctic and the Antarctic constitute one of the most fascinating places in the world for plants. These lectures by Dr David Given and Dr Colin Meurk, give the chance to see the plant world of the far south (and explorers and wildlife.)

Please bring your family, friends and neighbours. Entry \$2

Sunday 11 August 2002 Friends' AGM 2.00pm Canterbury Horticultural Society

Do come to the AGM to discuss future plans for the Friends. Lucky spot book prize, plus raffle for Botanica's Trees & Shrubs. Illustrated A-Z with over 8500 plants & CD-ROM.

Saturday 7 September 9.00am Breakfast followed by opening of Children's Arbor

More details later with venue and cost for breakfast.

Saturday 21 September, 10.00am Spring bus tour to Rangiora

Details from Alison Fox Ph. 3854 933. Bring own lunch.

Weekend of 21/22 September, plant sale - bulbs, alpines and early perennials

Exact date to be advised.

Saturday 19 October

The great plant sale 11.00am till 2.00pm Details later. NB later October date.

Saturday 30 November

Bus trip to Tichborne's at French Farm ...and more.

Do you Really Love our Botanic Gardens?

In November 1989 a group of community spirited gardens' lovers enthusiastically inaugurated the Society known as The Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens, this Society being patterned on similar overseas societies. At the initial Annual General Meeting of the Christchurch Society the first President, Dr. Warwick Harris, of Lincoln University, was happily able to report many achievements by the energetic Committee, including:

1. Building a strong membership base.
2. Organising a series of meetings covering a wide range of Gardens' related topics to cater for the varied interests of members in a friendly social environment.
3. Beginning fortnightly Gardens' walks and a quarterly Newsletter.
4. Raising funds to improve the Gardens' facilities.
5. Increasing the level of public contact with the facilities and activities of the Gardens.
6. Other varied ancillary activities related to the Gardens.

Over the intervening years subsequent Committees have continued to build on the great base established by those pioneer lovers of the Gardens. More Committee members with similar energy and enthusiasm are now sought to carry on those good works. If YOU can help in any way please tell one of the present Committee so that you can be nominated for appointment to the Committee at the next Annual General Meeting on 11 August.

**ACT NOW TO SHOW
THAT YOU DO REALLY
LOVE OUR BOTANIC
GARDENS!**

Jim Crook, Secretary

The Propagating Teams

All Propagating Teams have been making good and steady progress in creating a marketable stock. The Propagating Pit and the Quarantine House are producing a good variety of plants from cuttings and we hope to grow plants from seed in future. Surplus root stocks and thinnings from the Botanical Gardens should come on line in the spring when there will also be bulbs and alpines. Succulents and drought tolerant plants are available most of the year as they are grown indoors.

We have been very glad to have the use of the Sale Trolley; this was given us originally by Greg Salton, painted up by Neil O'Brien, given a metal superstructure by Dave Borrie and a canvas cover by Trish Oliver. A real communal effort! It looks good outside the Information Centre and the Staff are able to tow it indoors at night. We appreciate the efforts of Anne, Leigh-Ann, Antje and Anna in selling our plants.

There has been an encouraging response by the public to the stock presented, especially plants showing autumn colours, such as the Hydrangeas, Viburnums and Coprosmas, or those flowering now.

The following are the Sale Dates for 2002/3; please note them in your Diary and be prepared to respond to calls for workers!

Plant sales

One day during the weekend of 21-22 September – Bulbs, Alpines and Early Perennials. Details later.

October 19 – The Great Plant Sale. 10 stalls
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

December to May – Sales from Trolley outside the Information Centre.

February 25, 2003 – The Gardens' Open Day Sale

April – Curators' House Harvest Festival - if held

We also sell Fertilizers, Twistee Sticks, etc

Contact Helen Constable, 332-1212, if you would like to join a Propagating Team.

The Propagators are always grateful for pots or bags, of all sizes, preferably washed. Don't throw out your pots, recycle them!

Helen Constable

Conference for Volunteer Guides in Botanic Gardens held at the Australian National Botanic Garden in Canberra, 29 Oct to 2 November 2001

Thank you most sincerely for the grant, which enabled me to attend the conference of Volunteer Guides in Botanic Gardens, held in Canberra recently.

Not only did I learn a great deal about plants and Botanic Gardens, but also appreciated the chance to share and learn with the other delegates (103 in all) which was very stimulating. The programme and networking provided much food for thought for me personally and material to share with our Parks and Waterways people, Botanic Gardens staff, Friends and fellow guides.

Volunteers and guides are an integral part of the operation, education and visitor services in the Australian Botanic Gardens. They are highly trained and motivated and much respected by the staff. Many hours of time are given in guiding and on-going research and training and guides often travel major distances to do this volunteering. The Guides we used in Melbourne and Sydney have both been guiding for over twenty years.

The conference programme included discussions on volunteering in general, guiding in particular and many options for guided walks, workshops and tours to gardens in the Canberra area.

The Australian National Botanic Garden is an extremely impressive all native garden. Most of the Botanic Gardens in Australia's major cities are state funded and closely associated with scientific institutions. Their education departments offer extensive school and adult education programmes and some use the volunteer guides and "explainers" alongside paid staff. Most of the larger Gardens offer guided walks daily – generally a 'highlights' tour and some even offer twice-daily tours. To provide this a large number of guides are required and trained.

I see the need for us to work towards recruiting more guides and for a well-planned training programme and will be working alongside the Botanic Gardens' Staff and other Friends towards this.

Many thanks again for the wonderful opportunity. My full report is available on request.

Adrienne Moore

Araucaria bidwilli - Bunya Pine Araucariaceae (Relative of the Monkey Puzzle.)

This beautiful conifer is a native of South Eastern Queensland, but with some isolated remnants in the far north near Port Douglas and in the Blackall ranges in New South Wales.

The Bunya Pine was once abundant and formed forests of considerable extent. Now small relic stands and isolated specimens remain. It never forms pure forests but is found scattered as a predominant species in Coastal rainforest.

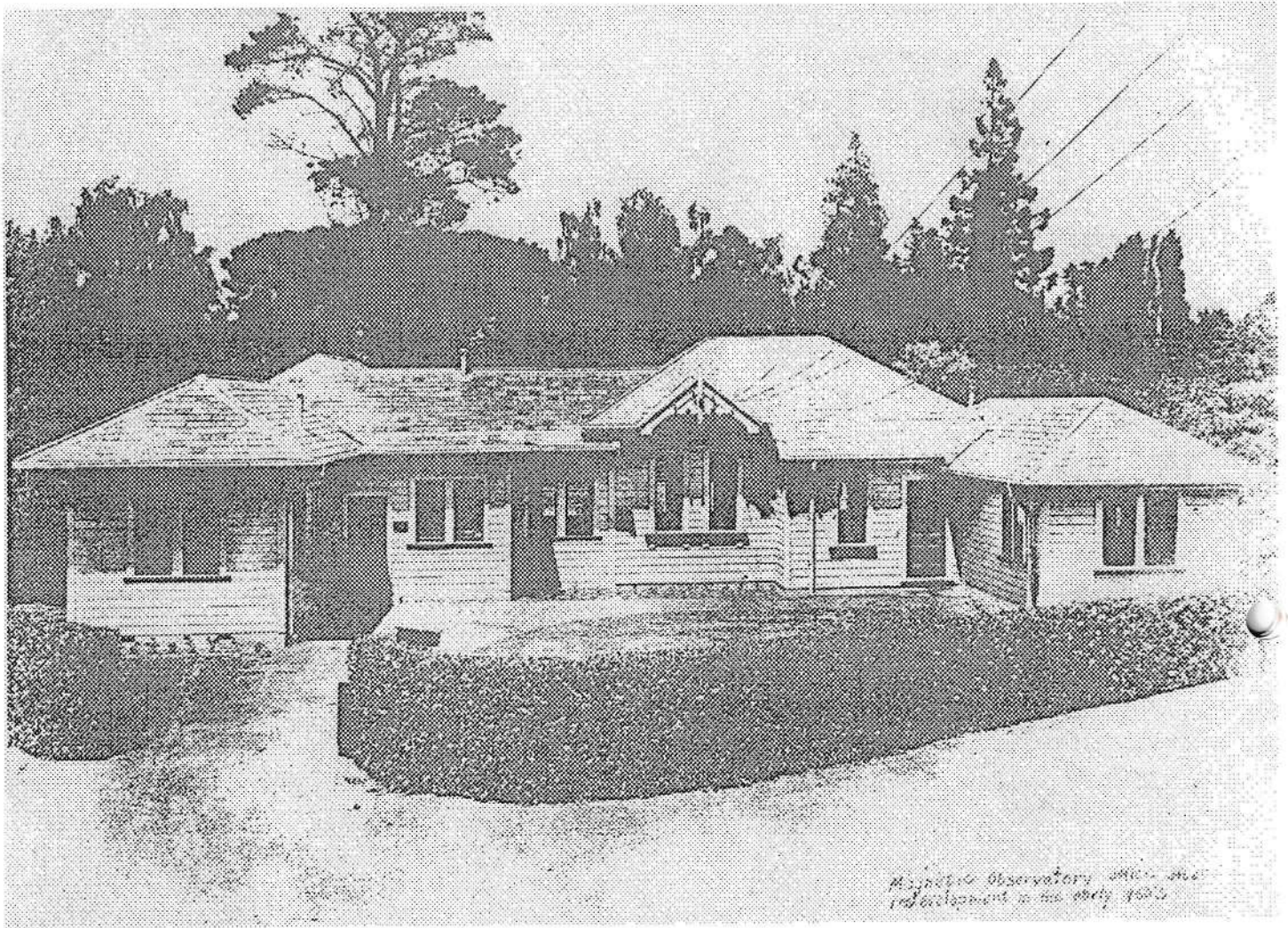
It is a large symmetrical tree, (100-150 feet in height) with an evenly dome shaped crown and whorled branches. The very rough bark occasionally measures up to six inches in thickness and is dark brown-black.

The large female cones are rather like pineapples in shape and the large egg shaped seeds are much valued for food by the aborigines, each tree being held to be the property of one family. Their walkabouts were planned to coincide with the ripening of the cones. The Australian Government has placed restrictions on the felling of this tree and an area of hill country in the Bunya Mountains (SE Queensland) where the bunya is plentiful, has been set aside as a seed reserve. Seeds are produced each year but a full crop is obtained every third year. The seeds can be roasted and are rich in protein.

The Aboriginal people climbed the trees using "steps" or footholds cut into the trunks to harvest the cones. If left to fall naturally the cones were a real danger to anyone standing underneath. In some Australian Parks and public gardens where the bnyas are planted, the area is fenced off when the cones are likely to fall.

There are several fine specimens of this tree in the Botanic Gardens. At present is a small bunya cone and seed are on display in the window of the Botanic Gardens' Information Centre.

Max Visch



The Magnetic Observatory - Christchurch Botanic Gardens

The illustration shows the observatory in the early 1950's. It replaced a much smaller building on the site just west of the Kiosk Lake formerly called the Paulownia Lawn. Observations have been collected more or less continuously, since 1881.

A recent large exhibition at the Information Centre has marked a hundred years from Robert Falcon Scott's 1901 – 1904 expedition, when he calibrated his instruments at the Botanic Gardens Observatory before sailing south to the Antarctic.

1970 was the year where the Magnetic Observatory grounds - as per the 1901 agreement – were handed over to the Christchurch City Council by the D.S.I.R. The workshop and two portions of the office wings were kept; the remaining buildings and surrounding hedge and shrubbery's were removed.

Four sites and marks were preserved. They were the International Gravity point in the work shop floor; a subsidiary bench mark out in the lawn, a benchmark in the cellar and by the old rear gateway the mark

used by Capt. R.F. Scott for his magnetic observation. These still remain today.

2001 was the year it was decided to convert the old workshop into a museum in honour of the observatory.

2002 work will begin from February, on the workshop/museum conversion. It is expected that the Museum will be open for tours and special occasions. The re-developed lawn where it is sited has been renamed the Observatory Lawn.

Peter Mahan

Reminder Antarctic talks

Sunday 9 June 2:00pm - Dr David Given
Sunday 14 July 2:00pm – Colin Meurk

Bird Hall, Canterbury Museum

All welcome!

Membership News

The Friends are Growing

A warm welcome is extended to these folk who have joined recently. Astrid Neumann, Joyke Hansen, Mitsue Matsmura, Cheryl Gordon, Barry Margetson, Harold Oakley, Andy Reed, Kay Deer, John and Shirley Holden, Jean Norton.

This brings our membership to 435. How amazed and delighted we would be to have you all turn up to our meetings especially the AGM. (See AGM notice.) We urge you to diary our coming events. The programme is planned to offer a variety of times and only daytime events during June, July and August.

For your membership renewal (due after AGM) please include your email or fax to help us keep contact details up to date.

Dorothy Croucher, who passed away on 19 March 2002, had only 10 days earlier been with us on the nursery visits. Dorothy attended many of our meetings, walks and events during her years as a Friend and was always one of the willing helpers who support our Society. Several members attended her funeral. We will all miss her cheerful company.

Guiding Group

The Friends' and staff guides gathered recently to hear Adrienne Moore report on the Conference for Volunteer Guides in Botanic Gardens in Canberra.

All the conference notes and material received from other delegates and their Botanic Gardens is available for staff and Friends. Progress has been made on assembling our guiding manuals. This is an on-going project and guides are expected to research topics to share. We would warmly welcome any members interested to research for us or to join the Guides group. Training is given and we aim to build up the numbers of guides to be able to offer more walks in the Botanic Gardens in the future. The main qualification is a passion for the Botanic Gardens and good communication skills.

The next meeting of the Guides is **Thursday 13 June at 2.pm** in the BG Staff cafeteria. Enquiries phone Sylvia Meek 3266 167 or email sylvia.meek@clear.net.nz

Staff News

The 'A' Team in the Information Centre

Recent changes have seen Wendy move from the Information Centre to a new Administration office, and new members of staff in the Information Centre, bring the numbers up to four. With each working part-time this team of Anne, Leigh Ann, Anna and Antje surely is our front line 'A' team offering service to our visitors.

Maria's Moved

We will all miss being able to greet Maria as she worked away in the Herbaceous Border, which gives such pleasure to the Friends and visitors alike. Thank you Maria for the care you gave to that wonderful garden and to us all. The border was only a part of Maria's many roles in the Gardens. Now she is moving on, for a year.

Maria first trained with a landscape firm in New Plymouth for a year, before two years studying at Lincoln College, where she completed a Diploma in Horticulture and a Diploma in Parks and Gardens Technology. In her second year she started a National Certificate in Horticulture through the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture. In 1989 she worked for the Waimairi District Council as a Charge Hand Gardener and successfully applied for a position at the Botanic Gardens in 1990, around amalgamation time. In 1993/1994 Maria went to the United States and completed an internship at the Bellevue Botanic Garden in Washington State and then at the Missouri Botanic Garden in St. Louis. After her return she continued working at the Christchurch Botanic Gardens until the end of April 2002.

Maria has now been seconded for a year, as an Area Contract Supervisor for the Fendalton/Waimairi/Yaldhurst areas. Part of Maria's responsibilities, in her new role, will be to ensure quality standards and customer service expectations are maintained to a high level as well as responding promptly to complaints and concerns. Having seen Maria at work in the Gardens and her close involvement with the Friends, I know she will give those good citizens in the northwest great value. Maria is a loyal supporter of the Friends and their activities. She is always on hand to help, especially with some of those less obvious but critical tasks such as the cleanup after the annual plant sale and standing in for Jim to do secretarial duties when he is away.

We wish you well in your year's secondment Maria.

Dennis Preston

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			Richard Doyle	371-1782
Minutes Secretary	Jim Crook	358-5845	Helpers			
Committee Members	Adrianne Moore	351-5915	Plant Sale		Helen Constable	332-1212
	Tony & Janette				Gcon@xtra.co.nz	
	Burnett	384-1381	Newsletter mail out		Sally Jebson	352-6363
	Amelia Childs	382-2451	Guide Coordinator		Sylvia Meek	326-6167
	David Given	351-6069	Botanist		Bill Sykes	366-3844
	Joan Bower	326-5312	Walks		Max Visch	338-2273
Newsletter	Peter Mahan	354-1550	Enquiries			
N. Assistant	Maria Adamski	325-2330	Afternoon Programme		Information Centre	364-7590
Outings/Trips	Alison Fox	385-4933			Adrianne Moore	351-5915
					hazelbrook@xtra.co.nz	

Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Inc
PO Box 237
Christchurch
New Zealand