

# Newsletter

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

*No 61, Summer, November 2004*

## President's Report

I have just finished reading a letter to the editor on the topic of "Whether or not the Museum should have a separate Antarctic Wing?". This letter got me thinking about what plans there are for the future expansion of the Botanic Gardens. The gardens have used up every available space. This action has resulted in Collections being compromised and many of the long vistas that were once a much-admired feature of the Gardens landscape have been planted out. One could argue that by the addition of Mona Vale the Gardens would have sufficient space. This is not so.

What are the options? - Extend the Gardens by taking over the sports fields in North Hagley? What!!!! Substitute Rugby for Rhododendrons? The likelihood of this happening would be much less than Buller leaving Canterbury of the Ranfurly Shield.

I believe that specific plant collections can be established at sites in and around the city. e.g. Victoria Park, Nicholson Park, Godley Head, Styx Basin, The Estuary and the new grassland area adjoining Orana Park. Looking further a field there is Hinewai Reserve. An example -The Wellington Botanic Gardens has the Otari Plant Museum attached to it.

Establishing alternative sites would relieve the pressure on the existing Gardens and could encourage visitors to spend another night in Christchurch. Christchurch would then become a true Garden City. Unless the city starts planning for the expansion of the Botanic Gardens it will be faced with the same problems our neighbours, the Museum, are experiencing now.

David Moyle



See page 4 for the article on Bus Trip to Ashburton.

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**FCBG**  
PO Box 2553  
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## Gardens' News

### Curator's Comment

The recent Heritage Week is a reminder that there is far more in the Botanic Gardens than just plants. The Botanic Gardens are in fact a very valuable historic precinct, set itself within one of the most historic parts of Christchurch. Few people may be aware, for instance, that as they drive into the Riccarton Avenue car park they pass a commemorative tablet at the spot where Robert Godley gave his farewell speech to the Canterbury settlers. As we pass the gravity station building and the weather station we are walking on ground that was trod by Robert Falcon Scott when he calibrated some of his instruments on his way to the Antarctic. Better known is that the Acclimatisation Society occupied part of the woodlands in the nineteenth century. This group was involved in the introduction of opossums and trout into this part of the world.

Wandering around the Gardens as the reincarnated John Armstrong - the first Curator - was an eye-opening experience and a fascinating point of contact with people. One Japanese tour group were fascinated to realise that they were talking to a Curator who "had been here so long and was at least 150 years old." A local couple came up with a copy of an item from a newspaper published in 1870. It dealt with the Curator catching a youth who had stolen a rose and was taken to court for theft. Someone else had some wonderful stories about the Gardens in the 1940s.

It makes us realise that we need to know our history and heritage in order to understand the present. We have had meetings with the City Council heritage group and with the Historic Places Trust especially to ensure that we exercise responsibility in dealing with heritage issues.

Another issue is wildlife. Several American visitors over the last year have been entranced by the sight of so many birds at close quarters. The New Zealand scaup is a special bird for us with Christchurch holding a quarter of the world's population of this bird. How many Gardens have shags nesting in one of their trees as we have? Paradise shelduck are again breeding within the Gardens. Hopefully we will have a much better idea of what is in the Gardens after we carry out a 24-hour inventory of all animals, plants and fungi in the Gardens next April. Sometimes we take

such things for granted, so it is good to have visitors pointing out such things to us.

Four staff attended the RNZIH (Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture) weekend in Hamilton at the end of October with two being at a meeting of Botanic Garden Curators. Members might have been fortunate enough to see the CBG display at the recent Rhododendron and Alpines exhibition at Ilam. It was good to see the Botanic Gardens involved and there was a lot of favourable comment. Staff members have just been involved in changing the bedding displays at Mona Vale, and it is about time of year for bedding changes in the main gardens, a reminder of how much work goes into both the design and execution of these display beds.

**David R. Given**

*BSc(Hons), PhD, FLS, AHRIH(NZ), CTheol, AFIAP  
Botanical Services Curator  
Christchurch City Council*

### About the Gardens

- Have your Say - Public Consultation. There was an encouraging city wide response to the Council's request for ideas on the future of Hagley Park and the Botanic Gardens. Thank you to all Friends who *Had their Say*.
- The Quarterly visitor Surveys have been completed and these interviews with visitors will add greatly to the information about the use of the Gardens.
- A new swing for the disabled has been donated by the Variety Club and installed in the Children's Playground area.
- Tree maintenance is ongoing and a new company has been contracted to do this work.
- The Information Centre has been altered to give additional office space and better storage facilities.
- It was all hands in the garden at Mona Vale recently when the new bedding plants for summer were planted, all 415 trays of them, around 10,000 plants. Gardeners from the BG were there to help the Mona Vale Staff. Rhododendrons from the McLeod collection along the western border of the main entrance drive continue to be a feature in November. The roses and fuchsias are a major summer attraction. New paths are planned before winter to help the visitor flow around this much-visited attraction.

## Recent Events

### Plant and Bulb Sales

Because of competition from other organisations the Committee decided last year not to hold an Annual Plant Sale Day but instead to conduct four seasonal sales offering plants grown by the Plant Propagation Group from stocks selected within the Gardens and most suitable for the particular season. The Plant Sale on 23 October was therefore a "Spring Sale" from stalls set up around the palm in the courtyard by the Information Centre. This sale produced a good profit of \$924. That sum, together with the profit of \$924 from earlier Small Conifers and Bulbs sales, was again a most welcome boost to the Society's overall funds which, as members are aware, will be applied for the benefit of the Gardens.

The next seasonal sale a "Summer Plant Sale" will be held on Sat 26 February 2005. In the meantime selections of plants including those left over from sales days and suitable for planting at any time will continue being placed on a trolley outside the Information Centre and available for purchase from there.

The Committee is most appreciative for the help of all the Members who again made the recent plant and bulb sales successful fund raising activities and enjoyable events. The helpers include the people who over many months, gathered, prepared, potted, nurtured and labelled both plants and bulbs for the respective sales. Additionally others whose work was most appreciated, are those who co-ordinated, advertised and administered all the essential arrangements for the sale including last but not least those who worked long hours selling plants and bulbs on sales days, and in cleaning up afterwards. Fortunately fine warm weather made for pleasant conditions on sales days.

The team includes - Helen Constable, Neil O'Brien, Don Bell, Barbara Jarnell, Jane McArthur, James Dunn, Toni Dunn, Jean Gluyas, Annette Lowry, Daphne McLachlan, Pamela Rabe, Trudy van der Weerden, Max Visch, Shirley Beale, Natalie Lofts, Astrid Neumann, Mami Kumada, Robin Gordon, Colleen Webster, Maureen Byatt, Maureen Valcour, Diane Percy. We also acknowledge the help of Staff members; David

Given, Jeremy Hawker, Bede Nottingham and all the Collection Curators, Greg Salton, Anne Dobbs, Brian Appleton, Jo Rooke, and Anna Coventry.

Other members who assisted on the Sale Days included Janet Begg, Ruby Coleman, Douglas Saunders, Faye Fleming, Jim Crook, John Cave and Lynne Nicholls.

### From the Propagating team

All going well the automatic irrigation system will be completely installed in the first week of November. Our present task is laying down weed mat over the top of the 'growing on' bed for trees and shrubs, setting out the plants in rows and a general tidy up of the area. Once this is completed seasonal 'potting up' of rooted cuttings and 'potting on' of other plants will be carried out.

### Guides' report

The new season of guiding has started on the first day of Spring. The weather was not very Spring-like but throughout the month 18 visitors were guided. Of these, 14 were overseas; two were local and two from other parts of New Zealand. As well, two church groups, a high school reunion group and two Elder-hostel groups were guided. All the walks this season start at the Museum entrance and this has simplified a number of things including advertising. The museum staff members are very friendly and supportive and we are a good partnership. During Heritage Week (15-22 October) we took daily guided walks through Mona Vale. This required some research by our guides but the results were very rewarding and 50 people, mainly locals, were shown the wonderful panorama and plants of Mona Vale. Over \$100 was raised from this new venture. We now have a bright yellow backpack for use by our guides so that they are easily recognized in the Gardens.

At our last training and development session Sue Molloy, a member of the Gardens' staff, gave a wonderful talk on historical incidents in the Gardens which will help our guides with their local history commentary.

PS In the last few days the visitor numbers have picked up and people are really impressed by the spring features in the Gardens.

## 4 FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS

### Bus trip to Ashburton

9th October, 2004.

Forty members and friends boarded the bus at 9am. and we set off on our journey. After a short stop at Rakaia we arrived at Alouette Nursery Garden where Sandi and Richard Leith welcomed us and led us off around the five acres of beautiful woodland garden. Rhododendrons abound, combined with many varieties of shrubs, all underplanted with drifts of trilliums, hellebores, woodland anemones and rare bulbs. A beautiful sight, indeed.

On then to Balvenie Farm Garden, the home of Judy and Don Grant whose hospitality we enjoyed as we lunched here in their garden. Don gave us an interesting talk on the history of the farm and garden before we wandered off to enjoy the interesting layout. Judy's passion is roses which the late spring had delayed, but there was so much else to see including trees which had been planted over a hundred years ago. Such a lovely view out to the mountains also.

At Suzette Gardens Suzanne Rollinson told us of developing her garden, very large, with themed areas of such variety and beauty. The New Zealand Native area was fascinating with a surprise around every bend in the path and a duck pond in the middle. In other parts of the garden Suzanne's imagination runs riot and there is entertainment aplenty with fairy dells and suchlike to amuse. We had afternoon tea before heading back home. A lovely day out in very pleasant weather.

Alison Fox

### Seed Collecting, the practical, the political and the philosophical

Dr Ena and Rev Hugh Paterson, at the Canterbury Horticultural Society, Sun 26 September.

The Patersons gave a wonderful interactive account together of their 21 years with "Southern Seeds", the fund raising venture they set up and ran for the Parish of Malvern. Mainly alpine seeds were collected, generally from the Waimakariri catchment, and offered by mail order. Many of their customers were from overseas and some visited NZ and became good friends of the Patersons.

Rev Hugh told of the background to the project and Dr Ena described and demonstrated the

innovative ways they ran the business and amusing anecdotes of seed collecting adventures and contacts with many overseas customers. Their love of the mountains and plants had drawn them together in the first place and their infectious enthusiasm is still there. Some Friends' members went home with alpine plants to treasure.

### Heritage Week at the Gardens

15-22 October 2004

Once again the Gardens played a part in the city wide heritage celebrations, this year becoming one of the highlights!

In total, over half the staff in the Gardens played a part in this special week of garden related historical focus. The Gardens stepped back in time and every day had appearances from some key historical figures, many of who were singled out by local visitors and Friends' members to be congratulated on the team's efforts. Thank you!

Over all the response to all the activities was fantastic, with many new faces taking the historical guided walks and the (Friends donated) children's trail. Even more experienced the likes of past curator, John Francis Armstrong, Annie Quayle Townend, Kate Sheppard or explorer Capt. Robert Falcon Scott. Both staff and visitors alike enjoyed the week and most were lucky enough to be blessed with fine weather, (even luckier if you happened to be wearing a long dress at the time). It is hoped that this will be the start of many new experiences in the Gardens, so watch this space for news of more things to come!

Jo Rooke

See Photo next page.

### Keep safe over summer

Wear sunscreen and a hat when outdoors, in the garden or at the beach.

### Poisonous plants

Karaka (*Corynocarpus laevigatus*) mainly grows near the sea. Orange fruits are poisonous.

Ngaio (*Myoporum* sp.) very toxic.

Kowhai (*Sophora microphylla*) seeds are very poisonous if eaten.

Chilean jasmine (*Mandevilla suaveolens*) poisonous white latex in all parts.

Larkspur ornamental annuals toxic in all their parts.

Delphiniums are similar.

**Urgent poisons information from 0800 764 766.**



## Articles

### **Mona Vale and its Grand Lady** Diana Madgin

Mona Vale is Annie Townend's story: she named it, she developed it. My short history of Mona Vale offers a look at the life of this remarkable woman within the context of the garden story itself.

Mona Vale is that jewel in the Garden City crown that doesn't get quite the glory it deserves. With Cantabrians, that is. For Asians and North Americans, it's another story. On a finer day in October, they were all there, enjoying the sun dimpling the waters, feeding expectant ducks, the waft of azaleas every which way, the wondrous tulip tree, *Liriodendron tulipifera*, just about to pop its limey cups, the thick froth of flowering cherries in the palatial gardens over the river. And that was just the first hundred yards!

Mona Vale has always been botanically interesting. Its original owners, the Waymouths, bought the land from the Deans in 1897 and named it 'Karewa'. Alice Waymouth was a keen amateur botanist and planted some of the trees that are still there. The Waymouths had a four-acre garden and built the neo-Elizabethan house. In 1905, Annie Quayle Townend paid six thousand pounds for the property, added another nine acres and renamed it Mona Vale after her mother's birthplace, a sheep station on the Macquarie River in Tasmania.

I don't think Annie had a particularly happy life. Her father, George Moore, had come to Tasmania from the Isle of Man, invited by his friend Robert Ker-mode, whose sister he married in 1839. It was an unhappy marriage with four children; two died in infancy and one later, by his own hand. Annie was born in 1847.

## 6 FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS

At age three, little Annie was sent back to England to live with an aunt when her parents separated. At nineteen, she came to New Zealand to live with her father, who now owned Glenmark Station at Waipara. George Moore had 150,000 acres there and later, in partnership with Annie's uncle, Robert Kermode, bought Longbeach, then Wakanui next door, and Rokeby at Rakaia.

The wealthiest man in New Zealand maybe, but George Moore was not popular. Known as 'The King of Scab' because he wouldn't dip his sheep, Moore was mean and zealous of his money, terrified that his daughter would marry and fritter away his wealth. He made it clear that marriage would compromise her inheritance, and he kept a very close rein on visitors, especially men. He did, however, help Julius von Haast recover the large clutch of moa bones found on Glenmark and helped transport them to the Canterbury Museum, a foundation collection. He also built an extensive garden at Glenmark, which would have strongly influenced his daughter Annie's choice to buy Mona Vale.

Thelma Strongman writes that Glenmark was probably the most fashionable Victorian garden in Canterbury in the 1880s. She describes a sweeping carriage drive with clipped box hedges and parterres surrounding the house; Doultton vases graced the corners of low walls. There were several glass houses, a system of hot houses and an aviary, where Annie kept canaries. Twenty-five dozen loaves of bread were delivered each week to feed the ducks, swans, peacocks and emus.

The fabulous home at Waipara was burned to the ground in 1881, three years after its completion—and uninsured. Annie and her father moved to Christchurch. By then, 'Scabby Moore' was an old and broken man and had become blind. His obsessive control on Annie's social life forbade all male visitors to the house excepting his elderly lawyer and middle-aged doctor. By a stroke of luck, her father's blindness made it possible for Annie to enjoy two years of secret marriage to the doctor, Joseph Henry Townend, who was 53—her own age—but in poor health. Dr Townend lived a few doors away from his new wife. Two years later, in 1902, their short-lived happiness ended in his death, and three years after that, Annie's father died, too. He never learned of the marriage, and his daughter inherited all his wealth. One million pounds made Annie Townend the wealthiest woman in New Zealand.

Mona Vale was Annie's town house. She also owned a large property on the Esplanade in Sumner with house cows and a model dairy. Her cowman was permitted to give surplus milk to less fortunate residents, infuriating the local borough councillor, who was the town supplier. He had Annie's dairy condemned, and her indignation took the town by storm when she arranged for a very young W H Williamson, just setting up his own construction business, to use two traction engines to draw the house from Sumner, along Ferry Road and up the dirt track that was Dyers Pass to rest in two parts on Macmillan Avenue. Annie lived with her housekeeper at Glenholme, number 8, and her coachman lived in the smaller wing of the old house at number 3 with the stables nearby. Annie employed 24 servants between her two homes.

At Mona Vale, her stables were at what is now 48 Matai Street West, complete with gold-lettered horse names and the red carpet laid down when she visited. I recently discovered her black coach, with monogram still visible, at the Yaldhurst Transport Museum. Annie Townend built the gatehouse in neo-gothic style, emulating the gatehouse at Glenmark. She also built the bathhouse and the Edwardian-style bridges over the Wairarapa and Waimairi Streams. But without doubt her most unusual and rare bequest to us is the fernery.

The fernery was one of the most remarkable buildings at the Great International Exhibition, 1906-7, staged in Hagley Park. It contained a collection of eighty species, mostly from the mainland or coastal islands. At that time a fernery was about the trendiest feature a serious English gardener could possess. Indeed, New Zealand was known in England as the Land of the Ferns. At the exhibition there was rapturous praise for these, "the sweetest of Tane's children, all plumed and feathery fronded." After the exhibition, Annie Townend bought the fernery for five thousand pounds and had it dismantled and moved by horse and cart to Mona Vale.

The fernery is an oval structure, 25 x 19m, supported within by ornate wrought-iron arches. Iron pillars and rafters were covered in cork bark to provide a base for ferns to sprout. Outside, concrete buttresses support the double-skin brick wall. The open lattice roof was covered by a green glass dome during the Great Exhibition, but that was removed and used for the new conservatory at Mona Vale.

Following Annie Townend's death in 1914, Mona

Vale had a succession of owners before Tracy Gough bought it in 1939. Gough was an outstanding gardener and added a fine collection of trees, particularly maples. He also planted rhododendrons and azaleas (Edgar Stead's Ilam Garden was just down the road!). The Buxton\* Bridge leading to the island in the Avon and the charming Edwardian lily pond were his additions to the garden landscape.

After Tracy Gough's death in 1954 followed by his wife in 1962, the property fell into disrepair. Mona Vale was saved from demolition and subdivision by the Civic Trust, which appealed to the public for funds in 1967. There was a generous response, and two years later the citizens of Christchurch were the owners of what was to become one of the city's star attractions. Since then, many organisations and groups have volunteered their time and expertise for renovations on the buildings and in the garden. The Rose Society and Heritage Roses designed the fabulous rose garden and still work to maintain it in partnership with the Botanic Gardens.

In Annie Townend's day, there was an iris water garden, fashionably Victorian. In the 1980s, C S Thomas gave Mona Vale his bearded iris collection as the foundation of a new iris garden. A decade later, the McLeods of Skyedale created a camellia and rhododendron garden to frame the elegant sundial they bequeathed to the memory of their plantsman son.

In the 1990s, two comprehensive collections of ferns were added to the restored fernery: Akaroa plantsman Eric Ericson donated his collection of more than 300 ferns just a month before he died in 1992, and Landcare Research gave its collection of mostly South Island ferns.

In 1997 an ornate, Edwardian-style gazebo was gifted to Mona Vale by arts patron Sheila Winn. The stained glass windows are copies of illustrations for the story 'Flora's Feast' created by Walter Crane, who was famous for his illustrations in pre-Raphaelite style. The gazebo itself, with its rimu ceiling and copper dome, is a work of art.

When Annie Townend died in May 1914, her will, most unusually, was printed in full in the newspapers. What is not well known is that this rather old-maidish, reclusive woman was benefactor to many good causes. Her obituary said, "There has been no deserving cause which she has not

helped, and few organisations for the relief of the suffering which she has not assisted." Restoring Mona Vale not only enhances our Garden City, it perpetuates the memory of the outstanding Canterbury woman who created it.

Note on sources: Over the years, I have collected information from various people and publications, including copies of material from the *Lyttelton Times* about the Great International Exhibition. Neil O'Brien gave me a fascinating essay about Annie Townend written, I think, by his daughter. I have also used Stevan Eldred Grigg's *Southern Gentry* and Thelma Strongman's *The Gardens of Canterbury*.

#### Tree guide:

With the help of Mona Vale's gardener Brian Mitchelmore and tree-man Max Visch, I have compiled a walking guide to the significant trees at Mona Vale; send requests and s.a.e. to 373 River Road or e-mail bill.willmott@canterbury.ac.nz

\* See Story page 8 on AW Buxton.

### **The Townend House Story.**

The present Townend House in the Botanic Gardens, which was built in the mid 1950s to follow the curves in the adjacent Cuninghame House, is the second Townend House on the site.

The original conservatory, an ornate Victorian structure of kauri and glass, previously stood in the grounds of "Holly Lea" (or McLean's Mansion, now the Christchurch Academy in Manchester Street) when owned by Allan McLean. After his death, the conservatory and small orchid house became surplus to requirement as expressed by McLean in his will. His Trustees decided to sell the conservatories, which were purchased for the Botanic Gardens by the Trustees of Mrs Annie Townend's estate and re-erected in the Gardens in 1914. The conservatory, named for Mrs Townend, remained in use until 1955 when it was demolished because of deterioration of the timbers. The following year a new Townend House was opened on the same site.

Information supplied by Sue Molloy.

## 8 FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS

### The Beautiful and the Bizarre

The new Orchid House within the conservatory complex, was officially opened in September and has a changing display of orchids throughout the year. Over this summer, insectivorous plants are on display. The amazing plants featured are only part of these two extensive collections held at the Gardens. The following article about orchids has been supplied by the BG Information Centre.

Orchids are a fascinating group of plants well known for their beautiful, sometimes weird and wonderful flowers. They form the largest plant family, the Orchidaceae, including more than 25,000 species. In addition, plant breeders have created more than 100,000 hybrids, many with showy and fragrant flowers.

The word orchid is derived from the Greek word for testicle due to the appearance of the paired tubers of certain European species. Vanilla comes from the cured pods of *Vanilla planifolia* the only orchid to be grown commercially for food.

Orchids can be recognised by certain distinctive characteristics of their flowers and seed:

- In all orchids the reproductive organs in the flower, the stamens and the pistils, are fused into a single structure known as the column.
- Orchid flowers are mainly bilaterally symmetrical, which means they have only one plane of symmetry by which the flower can be divided to give two equal halves.
- Orchids have unusual pollen that is stuck together with solid masses known as pollinia. When orchid flowers are pollinated, these packages of pollen are transferred to another flower.
- Orchid seed is minute and dust like with no stored food source. For the seed to germinate and grow in the wild, it must be infected with microscopic fungi that provide sugars and minerals necessary for growth. These are known as mycorrhizal fungi.

While orchids have a diverse range of flower shapes, the typical flower consists of three sepals and three petals. The lower petals form the lip of labellum, which is often the distinctive part of the flower.

### Pollination

Orchids are one of the most evolutionarily advanced groups of flowering plants. Many have evolved elaborate flowers to attract only specific pollinators. In some flowers the lip has evolved to mimic a female bee or wasp so that the male attempts to mate and in doing so picks up the pollen, which is then transferred to the next flower it attempts to mate with. While some orchids are sweetly scented others can smell disgusting to humans such as *Bulbophyllum fletcherianum* that smells of rotting meat to attract pollinating flies.

### Distribution and Habitat

In the wild, orchids can be found in almost every habitat type from cold alpine regions to dry semi desert to tropical rain forest. The majority of species occur in the tropics and grow as epiphytes on other plants.

### Adaptions to life in trees;

- Many epiphytic orchids store water in swollen stems known as pseudobulbs.

Specialised roots have a pale spongy covering of dead cells known as velamen, which absorbs and holds water.

### Nurseryman and Landscape Designer Alfred Buxton

One of our Friends' Guides is the granddaughter of Alfred Buxton, who ran several nurseries in Christchurch and worked around New Zealand in the 1920s and 30s designing and constructing gardens, including work at Mona Vale. She writes...

"Alfred William Buxton. 1872-1950

My Grandfather immigrated to New Zealand with his parents and younger siblings in 1886 and became apprenticed to Thomas Abbott until 1891. By 1900 he had married, opened his first nursery in Springfield Road and had a daughter, my mother, Merle. Two sons, Trevor and Ray were born later.

From the turn of the century until the 1930s, his nurseries and landscaping businesses had expanded greatly - becoming A.W. Buxton and Sons Ltd., with much work being done in the North Island. The depression and imprudent business decisions forced him to cease and the family relocated to Otaki in 1936. Trevor lived in Palmerston North, and Ray went away to the war. A.W. returned to Christchurch to carry out work at Mona Vale in 1939 for Tracy Gough.



I was born in 1940. My grandparents, parents and I lived in one large house, with separate quarters and a communal kitchen. My Dad, Jim Kirkwood milked cows and grew tomatoes.

There were acres of spring flowers for the cut flower market; Iceland poppies, iris, violets, and maize, presumably for shelter. I can still visualise it. Whilst I was never allowed in the gardens or packing sheds, I was permitted to pick and bunch violets for "money and fair words", one of my grandfather's favourite expressions.

My recollections of grandfather are of a small, compact austere taciturn man – similar to a wire-haired terrier. He was kind to me when we infrequently spent time together and he talked enthusiastically about his flowers. Memories: Iris- King Alfred- deep blue-purple; climbing rose Etoile d' Holland - wonderful perfume and deep red velvety petals; and Pink Picture - a rose that had a fascinating "square" bud. To me my grandfather is associated with flowers, flowers and more flowers.

Alfred Buxton's Story is available in "Colonial Landscape Gardener- Alfred Buxton of Christchurch New Zealand 1872-1950" by Rupert Tipple, published by Lincoln College in 1989.

### Sundials.

Standing in the pouring rain the question puzzled. "How many sundials are there in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens?"

"Two, to my knowledge."

"Good. I checked yesterday and that was all I could find."

There followed a fascinating discussion. The gentleman belonged to the North American Sundial Society that was convened in 1994. It has a journal, annual conferences and web site, [www.sundials.org](http://www.sundials.org).

The shadow stick was probably the earliest form of sundial. The technical name for a shadow stick, gnomon (pronounced no-mon) comes from the Greek 'know' The shortening of the shadow was perhaps the first recognition that the angle of the sun marked the changing of the day as the shadow grew shorter towards midday and longer towards night.

Because the earth's axis is always at the same angle it was eventually discovered that angling the

gnomon to the north in the northern hemisphere made it more accurate as the hour marks were consistent. The numbers run clockwise. In the Southern Hemisphere it is angled South and the numbers run anticlockwise. This gnomon is called a style. It is always set at the angle of the latitude of the locality. Christchurch is 43 degrees 31 minutes 48 seconds South.

The ancient Egyptians built obelisks; tall towers sometimes called 'Cleopatra's needles.' They also used 'time sticks' which were T shaped with five hours inscribed in hieroglyphics, placed to the east in the morning and west in the afternoon so the shadow of the crossbar fell across the stick. Later, about 1500BC, they had portable small sundials.

The Romans perfected the horizontal sundial and used them in gardens as we do today. In the Middle Ages, in northern Europe, sundials were carved into clogs. These were placed facing the sun, the shadow of the heel falling across the dial to tell the time. There were also hand dials. A stick was held at an angle by the person's left thumb with the hand horizontal with the ground in the morning pointing west, right hand pointing east in the afternoon.

From these crude designs many refinements were developed. Compass points, zodiac signs, calendar dates, seasons and sunrise and sunset times were noted. Even after clocks were invented sundials were used for setting time, clocks being subject to irregular time or stopping. French railways regulated their clocks by sundial until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

There are many types of sundials other than horizontal; vertical, vertical declining, meridional reclining, declining reclining, equatorial, polar, analemmatic, reflected ceiling or altitude. Equiangular dials may be horizontal, vertical or reclining. Armillary sundials look like large open globes; the gnomon takes the form of a rod set perpendicular to the dial.

Most sundials now are mass-produced and used as decorative objects in the garden. Their accuracy is erratic. The sundial in the Rose Garden at the Christchurch Botanic Gardens is however, as I have on very good authority from our sundial expert, accurate as to time. The other, presented by William Rolleston in 1873, is on the centre path of the herbaceous border and missing the gnomon. Sandy Bain.

## Snippets

### Charities Bill

Members are probably aware that a Select Committee of Parliament is currently considering a Charities Bill. This Bill provides for the creation of a registration, reporting and monitoring system for charitable societies, institutions and trusts. It also provides for the establishment of a Charities Commission to administer the registration and monitoring system.

The Bill being considered by the Select Committee contains detailed provisions aimed at closely monitoring activities of the many charities which currently exist in New Zealand. There have been a large number of submissions to the Select Committee recording concern about those provisions, particularly in relation to registration charges, to ongoing fees for filing Annual Returns and to the need to display registration numbers on all correspondence and fund raising material.

Judging by Ministerial announcements it seems likely that there will be some easing of those conditions when the Bill is passed soon by Parliament.

The Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Inc. is a Society with charitable status granted previously by the Inland Revenue Department. To retain that status it will be necessary for the Society to register with the Charities Commission and to comply with whatever provisions are contained in the final wording of the Charities Act.

### Job Vacancies

Newsletter assistant

Adrienne still wishes to hear from anyone able to help put the newsletter together.

Please phone 3515 915

Friends' treasurer

This position is still vacant, please contact our secretary Jim Crook 358 5845 if you can offer your services for this vital committee position.

### What's On in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens Dec 2004, Jan, Feb & Mar 2005

#### December

- 'New Zealand Native' plants display in the Information Centre (Free)

#### January

- 'New Zealand Native' plants display in the Information Centre (Free)
- Children's Garden Trail, free from the Information Centre, themed around Native plants and their uses.
- Sunday Bandstands from Sunday Jan 16<sup>th</sup>, 2pm – 3pm. Free, sited opposite Children's Playground on Weather Station Lawn.
- Summer Theatre Starting from 28<sup>th</sup> Jan, every evening (except Monday's) 7pm, with 2pm matinees on each Saturday & Sunday (plus Waitangi Day), sited by the Band Rotunda.

#### February

- 'Flowers of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens' display in the Information Centre (free)
- Sunday Bandstands Every Sunday, 2pm – 3pm. Free, sited opposite Children's Playground on Weather Station Lawn.
- Summer Theatre, every evening (except Monday's) 7pm, with 2pm matinees on each Saturday & Sunday (plus Waitangi Day), sited by the Band Rotunda. Ending on February 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Begonia Display. Late night opening (till 6.30pm) of Townend House, dates available from the Information Centre.

#### March

- 'What is Bio-Diversity?' display in the Information Centre (Free)
- Sunday Bandstands. Every Sunday (until March 6<sup>th</sup>), 2pm – 3pm, Free, sited opposite Children's Playground on Weather Station Lawn.

### Membership

We warmly welcome new members Megan Fallick, Helen Clemmett, Maureen Valcour, Patricia Murray and Gerda Stannard.

Some of our foundation members are now finding it difficult to attend meetings and have resigned. We wish to acknowledge the very faithful service and support from Natalie Lofts, a former Committee member, and Pamela Phipps, a very regular supporter of our meetings and wish them both well. Several members attended the funeral of Joan Bower who died recently after a courageous battle with difficult health problems over the last few years. Joan was a former recent Committee member, whose support was given right up to the last.

### Friends' Programme 2005

Over many years the Friends have enjoyed monthly walks guided by Staff members on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday each month. In 2005, as a one year trial to cover the four seasons, these walks will now be offered at lunchtime, **from Main entrance to Cunningham House (by Rose Garden)**. This will allow city-working folk to take advantage of these themed walks to learn more about the Gardens from the Staff. Hopefully many of them will join the Friends.

The walks will be **for 45 minutes beginning at 12.10pm** and replace 10.15am the walks from the BG Info Centre. Hopefully this time will also be attractive to members who previously missed out because of other morning commitments. See details in the Coming Events insert.

### Thank You

The Friends' Committee acknowledge with gratitude the generosity of Jarvier Garcia and Jackie Garcia-Knight of Curator's House Restaurant, in providing a room for our Committee meetings each month.

### Children's free self-guided detective hunt.

**Do bring your family and young friends to the Gardens for the "Back in Time". Children's free self-guided detective hunt. Available from BG Information Centre till 22 November. Opening Hours 10.15am till 4.00pm. The summer hunt starts on the 15 December.**

### Subscriptions for 2004-5 due by 30 November 04

For those who have overlooked paying their subscription a final reminder and renewal form is enclosed. To continue receiving our newsletter and programme details please renew now and post with your renewal form - completed on both sides, to *Treasurer, Friends of Christchurch Botanic Gardens P.O. Box 2553 Christchurch*

No further newsletters will be sent to those who are not financial members by 30 November 04.

### The Canterbury Botanical Art Society

This group meets regularly at the Arts Centre. A visiting tutor from the Melbourne Botanical Art School, Fiona McKinnon is to take a four-day master class after Easter 2005.

For information, contact the Society's secretary, Irene McBryde Phone 343 0368

### Submissions

The Friends' sub-committee is still active in the submissions process for the Museum extensions and confining our concerns to matters that affect the Gardens.

### Stop Press.

### Heritage.

A University of Canterbury student has been selected as the recipient of a Summer Scholarship being funded by the Friends. He will start in about two weeks in the important area of heritage and history.

The Botanic Gardens will be required to develop a heritage conservation plan and this will be the first step in the process. Sue Molloy's work in this area deserves to be much more recognised than it is - her research into the Gardens' history has revealed many fascinating facets of past life that helps us interpret where the Gardens are at today.  
David Given

**Please note change of date for Christmas Party now Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December. See Coming events insert.**

## 12 FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS

### Contact Numbers

President	David Moyle	358-8914	Ex Officio	David Given	941-7583
Vice President				Jeremy Hawker	941-7580
Immediate Past President	Faye Fleming	351-7798	Helpers		
Treasurer			Newsletter	Caroline Collins	382-4212
Membership Secretary	Ruby Coleman	355-8811	Newsletter	Tony MacRae	359-8486
Minutes Secretary	Jim Crook	358-5845	Plant Sale	Helen Constable	980-9358
Committee Members	Dennis Preston	351-4131	Newsletter mail out	Jean Norton	379-2464
	Don Bell	343-6699	Botanist	Bill Sykes	366-3844
	Elizabeth Wolff (03)	313-5046	Walks	Max Visch	338-2273
Outings/trips	Alison Fox	942-4989	Guide Co-ordinator	Pat Whitman	384-3475
Newsletter	Adrienne Moore	351-5915	Enquiries	Info Centre	941-6840 x 7590
Programme	Adrienne Moore	351-5915	Computer	Sylvia Meek & Fay Jackson	
Education Subcommittee			Newsletter layout	Maria Adamski	
Co-ordinator	Lynne Rowe	358-8412			

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

**Friends of Christchurch Botanic Gardens Inc.**  
**Insert to Newsletter no. 61 November 2004**

**Friends' Phone Contacts:**

President: David Moyle 358 8914    Immediate Past President: Faye Fleming 351 7798  
Programme: Adrienne Moore 351 5915    Membership: Ruby Coleman 355 8811  
A small charge is made at some meetings/events to cover expenses – as indicated.

**Daily** guided walks depart from the Museum entrance to the Gardens at 1.30pm. Cost \$5  
For group bookings all the year for Introduction to the Gardens and Seasonal highlights walk -  
phone 384 3475

All **Friends'** guided walks leave from the BG Information Centre unless otherwise noted.  
From 2005 all Botanic Gardens' Staff led walks depart from outside Cunningham House near  
the Rose Garden. (On the fourth Tuesday of the month at 12.10pm, for 45 minutes.)

**Coming Events**

Wed 17 Nov    7.30pm **Bill Whitmore**, former Commissioner on Plant Variety Rights in New Zealand, will speak on - **Plant Variety Rights** - Inspired by the 'Peace' rose and now protecting plant breeders' rights.  
Canterbury Horticultural Society. 57 Riccarton Ave, \$3 includes supper.

Sat 20 Nov    2.00 pm Guided Walk with Friends' Guide. Roses. \$2

Sat 20 Nov    Bus trip to Akaroa departing at 9.00am. Enquiries Alison - 9424989

Tue 23 Nov    10.15am Guided Walk – Woodland Trees with Staff member Richard Poole

In December    New Zealand Native Plants Display in the Information Centre

Sat 11Dec    Members' Christmas Party – 4.30-6.30pm - at the United Croquet Club Rooms, Riccarton Avenue entrance to Hagley Park beside United Tennis Club.  
Please bring a plate of finger food to share and plenty of \$ for multiple raffles.  
Parking in BG Carpark. **Surprise entertainment not to be missed!**  
**Wear a Party Hat and soft soled shoes.**

Wed 15 Dec    Start of Children's Summer Garden Trail free from the Information Centre, themed around Native Plants and their uses.

Sat 18 Dec    2.00pm Guided Walk - Plants associated with Christmas with Friends Guides. \$2

N.B. No Staff walk on the fourth Tuesday in December

2005

In January    New Zealand Native Plants Display in the Information Centre

In January    2.00pm-3.00pm Sunday Bandstands. From Sun 16 Jan Free. Opposite Children's Playground on Weather Station Lawn.

- Sat 15 Jan 2.00pm Guided Walk - New Zealand Plants of Distinction with Max Visch. \$2
- Tue 25 Jan 12.10pm Guided Walk (45 minutes) – The New Zealand Section with BG Staff member. Starts from Main Entrance to Cunningham House (by Rose Garden)
- Fri 28 Jan-13 Feb 7.00pm Summer Theatre, every evening (except Mondays) and 2.00pm. Matinees on each Saturday and Sunday (plus Waitangi Day). By the Band Rotunda in the Woodland.
- In February Flowers of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. Display in the Information Centre
- In February 2.00-3.00pm Sunday Bandstands every Sunday Free
- Mon 7 Feb 2.00pm Meeting\* “Herbaceous Highlights” with BG Staff Member David Barwick, in the Petanque Club Rooms (in BG Carpark Armagh St entrance) \$2  
Bring and Buy table, followed by afternoon Tea.
- Fri 11-Sun 20 Feb Festival of Flowers and Romance.
- Mon 14 Feb 5.30pm Guided Walk - Seasonal Highlights with Friends’ Guides from BG Information Centre Cost \$2
- Wed 16 Feb 5.30pm Guided Walk - Seasonal Highlights with Friends’ Guides from BG Information Centre Cost \$2
- Sat 19 Feb 2.00pm Guided Walk - Seasonal Highlights including plants associated with Romance with Friends’ Guides from BG Information Centre Cost \$2
- Tue 22 Feb 12.10pm Guided Walk (45 minutes) – Festival time-Roses, with BG Staff member Angus Allan. Starts from Main Entrance to Cunningham House (by Rose Garden)
- Sat 26 Feb Summer Plant Sale 10.00am till 2.30pm. Stalls around the Palm near BG Information Centre.
- Sat 5 Mar Riccarton Bush. BYO Picnic. Meet by Deans’ Cottage at 12.00 noon.  
Guided Walk to Bush and grounds at 1.00pm with Ranger John Moore Cost \$3
- Sat 19 Mar 2.00pm Guided Walk – Biodiversity-Looking at Plant groups, with Max Visch \$2
- Tue 22 Mar 12.10pm Guided Walk (45 minutes) Habitats-Ducks and Birds, with Angus Allan  
Starts from Main Entrance to Cunningham House (by Rose Garden)
- Sat 2 Apr Bus trip to Styx River. Enquiries Alison Phone 9424989

**\*Herbaceous Border.**

Almost all of the proposed rearrangement of plant groupings in the herbaceous border has been Completed, to minimise the effects of possible drought. Some new material has been added e.g. geranium cultivars and plants rearranged according to soil, moisture and shade requirements. Look out for the Salvias, Euphorbias and Kniphofias. Come and bring a friend to hear David Barwick on Monday 7 February

**Everyone is welcome to our events. Bring your family and friends.**