

Newsletter

June 2013

Featuring: *Who designed the Wellington Botanic Garden? (p4)*

Plaques and Memorials – Marking the Millennium (p6)

Rodney Read (p7)



Photo: Teara.govt.nz; photograph 18809

***The Botanic Garden in 1910
showing clearly the early layout***

President's Patch

We are now officially in the winter season, after having enjoyed one of the most benign autumns I can recall. The absence of wind has been a relief for both man and plants. The autumn colours have been much appreciated and the Garden looks to be in excellent order as we go into a period of relative dormancy.

I will use my column in this Newsletter to update members on some of the projects and activities your committee has under action or under consideration.

Downhill Path Markers

As mentioned in the previous Newsletter, we have been investigating the installation of permanent markers to highlight the Downhill path, one of the most frequented trails in the Garden, and to replace the painted crimson decals now in use. In consultation with Garden management and with the help of a designer, we are looking at the use of mosaic tiles, to be made in Italy. Sample tiles are currently under manufacture and we are looking at pricing. This project will require a considerable financial outlay should it go ahead. We will be sharing the costs with the Council.

Children's Teaching Garden

This is to be a major project and will be funded through a grant from the Plimmer Trust and through a public appeal. We have been asked by Garden management to assist with the fund raising effort and we are looking into how this might be effected.

Heritage Roses in the Bolton Street Memorial Park (BSMP)

We received a request from the Friends of the BSMP for funding to help identify and label heritage roses in the Park and for the costs of replacement roses. Your committee has agreed

to assist. It will be recalled that the Friends received funds from the Wellington Rose Society, on its liquidation, to be allocated towards the upkeep and improvement of roses in the Garden. Following consultation with former committee members of the Rose Society, it was agreed this heritage roses project in the BSMP should be supported.

Infants' play area adjacent to the Picnic Cafe

Following further consultation among the Friends, Garden management and the Picnic Cafe management it emerged that there was a significant divergence of views regarding the size, location and equipment for an infants' play area. Costs were another issue. In the circumstances, this project has been shelved.

Draft Ten Year Management Plan Workshop

As advised, a workshop was held on 18 April. Joanna Gillanders from the WCC gave a briefing on the main issues in the Ten Year Plan in relation to the Garden and facilitated the subsequent discussion. It was disappointing so few members of the Friends attended the workshop, given the chance it afforded to provide input into the overall framework for the Garden's development over the next decade. The draft plan will be put out for community consultation soon so individual members will have another opportunity to comment.

Upcoming events

We plan to hold a winter event around an exhibition to be mounted in the Treehouse relating to the involvement of John Buchanan in the early development of the Wellington Botanic Garden. Buchanan, a botanist and artist, worked with James Hector and helped design the Garden. Details will be advised soon.

Frank Wilson

Botanic Bulletin

As I set out to write this report, Council is in the final stages of reviewing the Draft Annual Plan. The final outcome of the Pay & Display car parking proposal remains unclear. Interestingly,

this time around the combination of submissions and survey results were almost evenly for and against.



On a more exciting note, the first of the *Rhododendron* Sir Robert Peel is breaking into flower, the *Luculia* are in full flower and scent and the earliest of the bulbs and camellias are out. While one can hardly see June as a portent of spring they are certainly a cheery sight at this time of the year.

This week, work has got under way to renew the paving in front of the Begonia House. The work is estimated to take around seven weeks and will include new pergolas over the gardens and additional lighting along the front of the Begonia House, especially between the foyer and the driveway. This will complete a suite of works which started with the seismic upgrade of the Begonia House, painting, glass replacement, hard surface renewals and tiling of the toilet floors. I would like to acknowledge and thank John and Wendy Norwood and the Walter Norwood Charitable Trust for their kind donations towards the construction of the pergolas. This has been a long discussed project and it's great to finally see it coming to fruition.

The Children's Garden fundraising programme is about to step up a notch as we look to employing a fundraiser. You will recall that Council has approved \$750,000 through the Plimmer Fund towards the project with the proviso that we raise a further \$750,000 to meet the estimated construction costs. I am keen to raise a substantial additional amount to ensure that the garden will be financially sustainable into the future and to assist with establishing an environmental education programme associated with the garden. Over the next two months we will be developing a sponsorship programme which will target corporate and philanthropic resources and also seek the financial support of the community. We look forward to working alongside the Friends as advocates for this fantastic project.

Coming up from late June (dates to be confirmed) will be a John Buchanan exhibition at the Treehouse. Buchanan was involved with the development of the garden and worked closely with James Hector. He also conducted the first botanical survey of the garden, a unique record which has served as a baseline for all forest

vegetation surveys since. We are grateful to the Gus Fischer Gallery in Auckland which held the exhibition, first shown at the Hocken Library, and have kindly lent us the resources for it. The reconfigured Treehouse lends itself well to exhibitions of this type.

Thanks to the Friends subcommittee who have been working through the development of the downhill marker tiles as permanent replacements for the painted flowers. These will be a durable high quality guide for visitors to the garden as they make their way from the Cable Car back down to the city.

Peter Tijssen has continued with cataloguing books into the library, most notably a large donation of over 100 titles from Titahi Bay horticulturist Beryl Brown. Remember that as Friends you have access to the library for research or for horticultural reading. Just ring the Treehouse for the key and to ensure the library is not being used.

We have recently removed two large pines from adjacent to Serpentine Way. Both are thought to have been seedlings as they are not part of the original and subsequent pine cohorts in the garden. As they were within the bush restoration areas we will not be replacing them. The bush around them will be left to revegetate naturally, although if it proves necessary, we will undertake supplementary plantings to encourage reestablishment.

Rewi Elliot, Curator/Manager at Otari Wiltons Bush, heads off to Kew shortly to attend its International Botanic Gardens Management Course. I will be working with Rewi to finalise his enterprise project over the next week or so. When he returns he will be working more closely with the Botanic Garden as we seek to align our collections management and educational resources for both gardens.

I look forward to catching up with you at the John Buchanan exhibition

*David Sole, on behalf of the
Botanic Garden Team*

Who designed the Wellington Botanic Garden?

The Wellington Botanic Garden has an extensive network of paths and roads, and recently I have been wondering 'who was responsible for setting these out'. The 1874 map shows most of the paths that exist now. True, there have been some additions with some minor realignment, but the basic layout remains recognisable.

In a recent article, Tyler (Linda Tyler *Art in the Service of Science; Dunedin's John Buchanan 1818-1898*) noted that John Buchanan '*designed the plantings in the Colonial Botanic Garden*'. Later in her article, however, she elaborated, stating '*it is difficult to ascertain the extent of Buchanan's role in designing the Garden, supervising the formation of paths, fences and plantings*'. Before making up our minds, let us look at what evidence is available.

Local Maori had areas under cultivation in pre-European times, especially around the Cable Car area. They would have had tracks through the bush areas, presumably along the ridges and spurs, but I can find no information on those, and whether they had any impact on the location of the developed paths we have now.

James Hector had administrative responsibility for the Garden from 1868, but additionally he had control over scientific institutions including the Colonial Museum, Colonial Observatory and Time Service, the Geological Survey, the Meteorological Department and the Standards and Weight Measures. He would have had little time for direct involvement in the Garden. Nevertheless, he would certainly have continued oversight of its development.

While in Dunedin, John Buchanan had been sending botanical material to Dr John Ross, a medical practitioner and amateur botanist in Britain. Ross recommended Buchanan to Joseph Dalton Hooker as a knowledgeable botanist, suggesting that Buchanan would be an ideal addition to serve on the Reconnaissance and Triangulation Survey of Otago, led by James Hector. In the spring of 1862, Hector engaged him, first privately and then officially, as botanist and draughtsman for both his expeditions of 1863, when they explored the West Coast of the South Island. He obviously developed a good relationship with Hector, and when the latter was chosen to found the Geological Survey in Wellington, he appointed Buchanan to his

permanent staff. It is therefore likely that Buchanan had Hector's confidence, and was delegated responsibility for much of the day to day development of the Garden.



John Buchanan

Hector's schedule of duties for Buchanan in Wellington included '*work at the Botanic Garden from time to time surveying roads etc.*' Right from the start, Buchanan was required to start each working day going to the Garden to inspect the work being completed, and to provide detailed reports to both Hector and the Board. With daily visits he would have been in a position to have a significant say on what was taking place.

In September 1870, the Board appointed a professional gardener originally from Britain, William Bromley, as the first curator. He would have worked closely with Buchanan in the development of the area, in particular organising the detailed planting, filling the areas created by Buchanan's road design. One can envisage there would have been good co-operation between them.

W.D.B Mantell, MP and Executive Member of the Government, when writing as Acting Director to James Hector when the latter was overseas, often referred to the '**Buchanical Garden**' in correspondence. Others also used this name. Mantell was a foundation member of the Botanic





An example of Buchanan's drawing skills

Garden Board and its first secretary, and would have had considerable contact with Buchanan. Such naming can only represent the respect Buchanan acquired from those he worked with over the years. The 'amendment' to the garden name also suggests that amongst his associates he was seen to have played a substantial role in the establishment and development of 'his' Garden. Nevertheless he was never appointed to the Board.

The story, however, does not end there. There are two further people who are likely to have played a role in the design. Both had extensive, developed and established gardens in the Hutt Valley, even in the early stage of the colony. These are Alfred Ludlam and Thomas Mason.

Alfred Ludlam (1810 – 1877) was a leading New Zealand politician, horticulturist and farmer who owned land in Wellington and the Hutt Valley. He developed an extensive garden in Lower Hutt. A member of three of New Zealand's four earliest parliaments, he was also a philanthropist and a founding proponent of the Wellington's Botanic Garden.

In *Exotic Intruders* Joan Druett noted:

"some early settlers, appreciating a need

and more enterprising than most, set themselves up in the occupation of importing and cultivating seed and plants for sale.

One of those dealing in plants was Alfred Ludlam. He, with his friend and neighbour Francis Molesworth, set up an exchange system of sending plants back to England and receiving others by return ship. The garden they established on Francis Molesworth's Lower Hutt farm eventually became the Bellevue Gardens, nearly 20 hectares of native and exotic shrubs, including magnificent trees and massed beds of English flowers."

Ludlam supported the Wellington Colonial Museum and was one of the driving forces behind the creation of the Wellington Botanic Garden in 1868, having introduced into the New Zealand Parliament legislation to "establish and regulate" the garden, and serving on the Board from the first year. He introduced in 1869 an Act of Parliament which entrusted management of the Botanic Garden to the New Zealand Institute (forerunner of the Royal Society of New Zealand). He made substantial donations of plants and trees to the Garden, including over 500 species in 1870/71; 250 pine trees and a packet of pine seeds in 1874/75 plus significant other donations. He possessed some of the earliest pines found in Wellington, and many of these found their way into the Garden. With his knowledge and experience he would have been able to contribute many ideas during the formative stage.

The second individual was Thomas 'Quaker' Mason (1818 - 1903), the third settler to occupy a section in the Hutt Valley at Taita, who quickly established one of the outstanding gardens in New Zealand after his arrival in 1841. Significantly engaged in horticulture, he became closely involved in the Wellington Botanic Garden from its inception, completing 15 years on the Botanic Garden Board, and was the final Chairman of the Board prior to the transfer of the Garden to the Wellington City Council in 1891.

When Thomas Mason came to New Zealand at the age of 22, he brought with him skills in farming, horticulture and commerce that foreshadowed the prominent place he came to occupy in later years, creator of what was widely regarded at the time as the finest botanical garden in New Zealand, sometimes even called the 'best in the Southern Hemisphere'.

On his death there was pressure to preserve his garden in the Hutt Valley for future generations, but funds could not be found to do this. With his experience in establishing a 'botanic garden', his knowledge would have been invaluable. In addition he was also able to provide significant plant donations over a wide range of genera, also at the time when major new plantings were taking place.

These included:

1871/72 381 species

1872/73 1 *Pinus halepensis*; 3 *Pinus austraca* (a form of *Pinus nigra*); 3 *Pinus longifolia* (synonym of *Pinus palustris*); 60 *Laoristinus* (*Viburnum*); 6 *Widdringtonia* (cypress family); 2 *Cupressus junebns*; 100 Oaks; as well as rose cuttings and assorted cuttings

1874/75 24 shrubs

1875/76 12 *Phlox*, 6 *azaleas*, 24 shrubs

1877/78 Collection of plants and cuttings

In addition he made further unidentified donations in 1878/79, 1879/80, 1880/81, 1881/82, 1883/84, 1885/86, 1889/90 and 1890/91.



Another example of Buchanan's drawing skills

There was a considerable reserve of knowledge and experience from a number of people available when needed to assist in establishing this Garden, and the result tells its own success story. While Buchanan appears to have played a key role in the development, working with him was a team of knowledgeable and practical people who would have been able to make considerable contributions to the final successful result. To them all we owe an everlasting vote of thanks for a job well done.

Story: *Phil Tomlinson*
Pictures: *Te Papa Tongarewa*

WINTER EVENT FOR MEMBERS

Sunday, 28 July at 3pm, The Treehouse

Viewing of the Exhibition *Buchanan in the Garden*

Guest speaker: Associate Professor Linda Tyler, Director, Centre for Art Research,
University of Auckland

Light refreshments will be served

Entry Fee (optional for members): \$5

RSVP: The Treehouse 499 1400

Buchanan of the Garden

John Buchanan was a Victorian man of science: artist, botanist, explorer, draughtsman, calico pattern-maker, lithographer and photographer. Resident in Dunedin, he was appointed in 1865 by James Hector to work in the Colonial Museum in Wellington. The Museum managed the Colonial Botanical Garden, as it was then known, and for the next 20 years Buchanan took a supervisory role – and a dedicated interest – in the Garden. He produced the first map of the Garden – there is a copy in the exhibition – and undertook the first survey of all the Garden's plants, a survey which remains invaluable today.

The exhibition, originally titled *Art in the Service of Science – Dunedin's John Buchanan 1819-1898* was first shown in Dunedin's Hocken Gallery, then in Auckland University's Gus Fisher Gallery. Linda Tyler, Associate Professor and Director, Centre for Art Research, The University of Auckland, arranged the exhibition and has been very generous in helping us to carry it on here in Wellington. She is passionate about her work and your Committee is thrilled that she has agreed to be the Guest Speaker at this special event.

Plaques and Memorials in the Botanic Garden Marking the Millennium

In the Garden there are over 270 plaques and memorials. Most of these show physical records for all to see, but there are a number that are not marked in any way, only showing in the database. This has occurred for many reasons. There are 27 plant donations recorded, many of which have been donated over the years, especially roses, although there are others as well, which are not marked in the Garden.

Two events took place to record the Millennium 2000 event, neither of which is currently marked by a permanent record - a bed of roses in the Lady Norwood Rose Garden, and a group of golden totaras.

In October 1999, the Friends of the Wellington Botanic Garden sponsored a rose-naming competition to mark the

millennium. It appears this floribunda rose had been planted in 1998, produced by the Egmont Nursery which has since gone out of business. It is in the patio bed in the north-western corner of the Lady Norwood Rose Garden. The winning rose was given the name *Beehive Gold*. The prize offered was a \$4,000 garden makeover package provided by sponsors Living Earth, Wellington City Council and Wellington Rose Society. No further information is given in subsequent Friends' newsletters, so there is no detail such as the number of entries, or who was the winner etc. If anyone knows further information regarding this competition I would be interested to learn about it so the database can be updated.

Peter Tijssen, who provided the name information, also notes that it is struggling to survive.





Beehive Gold

The second event saw the planting of three golden totara along the southern end of Scrub Path, where it joins William Wakefield Way. As part of the 2000 millennium celebration, Friend member and native tree enthusiast Roger Smith,

and Garden staff members Neil Christensen and James Jones each planted a golden totara.

Roger and Neil planted their trees as the new century changed at midnight. James, for reasons we will not go into, planted his at 5 am that morning. Roger's and Neil's are thriving, but James's tree is struggling, but nevertheless they will form a nice group when they mature. This group should have a permanent marker installed in future to record this event, recognising that these trees are relatively long lived.

The production of the memorials' database has thrown up some interesting items, many of which are not widely known, and this provides a way of recording these for prosperity.

Story and Photo: Phil Tomlinson

Rodney Read Botanic Gardens Staff Member 1983-97

Members will be sad to learn that Rodney passed away late last month. Rodney will be remembered with affection by many associated with both public and private gardens in Wellington and the Wairarapa.



Rodney Read

He had relocated to the Wairarapa when he retired from the Botanic Garden in 1997 and became well known in garden circles there. Some of his associations were with: Friends of The Wellington Botanic Garden, Friends of Bolton Street Memorial Park, Wellington Rose Society, Heritage Roses NZ, Pauatahanui Burial Ground Rose Project, Heritage Roses Wairarapa, Rose Society Wairarapa, Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park, Masterton.

In the records of the Botanic Garden Friends there is mention of a talk given by Rodney in a 2006 Friend's lecture series. His talk was entitled "A history of plants in the Bolton Street cemetery". His knowledge of Bolton Street cemetery roses would be unequalled and his talk would have been memorable.

He came to the Bolton Street Cemetery in 1983 with the task of providing order to the remaining gravestones and resurrecting the plantings. He would have come across heritage roses when in England training for the wool industry many years before and this interest flourished in the setting of the old cemetery. People spoken to in researching Rodney's life of plants and gardens





Rodney with HE Dame Cath Tizard

spoke of his dedicated passion for roses and his obliging, pleasant and generous manner.

The Friends of the Botanic Garden welcomed Rodney's guidance in ensuring guides were well versed in what the Bolton Street Cemetery had to offer visitors. He spoke to many garden enthusiasts over the years at meetings and on open days amongst the roses at the Botanic Garden gave tours and pruning demonstrations. He was also a guide for the Friends.

In the Friend's records is a delightful 1992 photo of Rodney with Governor General Dame Cath Tizard on the occasion of a tree planting at the Pinetum. A young great grandson of Sir James Hector was present and there was a connection in that Rodney's wife Ros is also a descendent of Hector.

For many years Rodney managed the annual Rose Society Show in the Begonia House. Sadly this event is no more but it was keenly looked forward to by the public each year. Rodney's passion for the rose ensured that it continues as a fascinating and beautiful part of our garden world.

Story and pictures: Richard Byrne

It makes you glow all over....

As expected following this summer's drought, there are not a great number of glow-worms around so far. But, according to Friends' guide Graeme Lyon the customers don't know how different it is and are all happy to be able just to see some and get close-ups.

Graeme was especially pleased by a boy about 8-9 years old and encouraged him to talk to him afterwards. He ran up with a huge smile and said, "Thank you very much. It's been the best day of my life".

Story: Charmaine Scott

Annual Subscriptions

Friends are reminded that 2013/14 subscriptions are about to fall due. A subscription form is enclosed with this newsletter. As ever, early renewal would be appreciated by your Committee

(and, don't forget that upon presentation of your membership card, a discount is available at the café in the Rose Garden!).

Coming Events

Glow in the dark glow worm tours **Fridays 5 July, 9 August, 6 September at 7.30pm, 4 October at 8.30pm**

Meet at the Founders' entrance on Glenmore Street for a fascinating tour into the world of the glow-worm. The tours take about one hour. Please bring a torch.

Adults \$5, children under-12 free.

July school holiday programme **10am–12 noon**

Botanic Garden: Tuesdays 16 and 23 July, Thursdays 18 and 25 July

Otari: Wednesdays 17 and 24 July

Meet our curators, tour the nursery and find out what goes on in the undergrowth in this free programme at the Botanic Garden and Otari-Wilton's Bush.

Suit ages 5–12 (no younger)

All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Bookings essential, phone 499 1400 or email treehouse@wcc.govt.nz

Sunday 21 July, 11am

Trees of history

Find out fascinating facts about some of our historic trees on this 90-minute guided walk through the Botanic Garden. It starts at the Cable Car entrance and ends at the Founders' entrance (main gates). The walk is mostly downhill. Cost: \$4

Monday 22 July, 11am

Our winter garden

There's more to the Begonia House than just begonias, especially in winter. Find out on this gentle 60-minute stroll in the warmth of the Begonia House. Cost: \$4

Sunday 18 August, 11am

Plaques

Discover some of the plaques that are tucked away in various corners of the Botanic Garden.

Meet at the Founders' Entrance, Glenmore Street for this moderate 90-minute walk.

Cost: \$4

Monday 26 August, 11am

The Observatory Reserve

There were once several observatories in the Carter Observatory area of the Botanic Garden. This easy 90-minute walk visits the history of the Reserve. Meet at the Cable Car entrance.

Cost: \$4.

Sunday 15 September, 11am

Crafty pollination ploys

Plant species need to reproduce to survive and for that they need to be pollinated. From ancient times plants have had to come up with clever ploys to attract pollinators. Meet at the Cable Car entrance to hear about some of their strategies on this moderate 90-minute walk.

Monday 23 September, 11am

Our botanical treasures

A 90-minute stroll in the Main Garden looking at its many treasures. Meet at the Founders' Entrance, Glenmore Street.

Cost: \$4

Sunday 29 September – Sunday 6 October.

Spring Festival

Tulip Sunday kicks off this year's Spring Festival, with music, dance, delicious food and thousands of tulips and other spring blooms. The programme will feature guided walks (of course!), talks and tours, workshops, and children's events. The complete Spring Festival programme will be available from www.Wellington.govt.nz during August.



Friends of Wellington's Botanic Gardens, P.O. Box 28-065, Kelburn, Wellington 6150

President: Frank Wilson, phone (04) 475 7337, email: fmwilson@clear.net.nz

Secretary:

Website: www.friendswbg.org.nz

Newsletter Editor: John Larkindale, phone (04) 385 2933; email: larkindale@gmail.com

Typeset and printed by NS Services phone (04) 970 5036, fax (04) 970 5037, email: gderb@ihug.co.nz