

Featuring:

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***Henry Wright- Garden
Lover and Misogynist***



President's Patch

Recently I had the opportunity to travel to the Clare Valley in South Australia and to Adelaide, a distinct part of Australia, and one, I would guess, less frequently visited by Wellingtonians than Australia's Eastern states.

Among the points of reference and comparison that struck me were that South Australia, as a British colony, was founded half a century after the first arrivals at Botany Bay and therefore occurred at a similar time to the European settlement in Wellington and was a Wakefield-organised enterprise (not a convict settlement). And guess what?: an early decision (in 1855) by the founding fathers of Adelaide was to establish a Botanic Garden.

If you have the chance to get to Adelaide, a wander around their Botanic Garden, which is located just outside the city centre, is definitely a worthwhile activity. See, for example, the Museum of Economic Botany, a fascinating collection and interpretation of 'useful' plants. Classic Victoriana.

While there, I enquired about community support for the Adelaide Botanic Garden and, not unexpectedly, there turned out to be a group called the Friends of the Adelaide Botanic Garden, with objectives and activities very similar to our own. In essence what this group of enthusiasts was doing in Adelaide is a mirror image of our own aims and objectives which are to:

- support the development of the Wellington Botanic Garden and foster interest in it
- provide hosts and guides to enhance visitor enjoyment
- intervene or lobby the Council to ensure the values of the Garden are upheld
- enhance the educational, cultural and recreational assets of the Garden

Two projects to which we are giving particular attention at the present time relate very directly to these objectives. The first is supporting the Council to raise funds for the Children's Garden. As you will read elsewhere in this Newsletter, the Friends are taking a lead in the mobilising public support for this significant project. Ann McLean will be convening a special group to carry forward the fund raising effort. The second is the installation of permanent downhill markers to highlight the downhill route from the top of the Cable Car to the city. As many will recall, we have had this project under consideration for some years but I am pleased to report that you will soon be able to see the results of this work.

In terms of activities for members, I would highlight the recent exhibition of "microscopy" paintings in the Treehouse by Helen Mechen, and the forthcoming inauguration on 10 June by the Mayor and the Italian Ambassador of a collection of lithographic prints of Italian iris. The Friends funded the framing of these prints which were presented to the Garden by the Italian Embassy.

Finally, I should make what is I hope the obvious point that the Friends are a function of our membership: that is, without a thriving membership we cannot achieve the aims and objectives outlined above. I am pleased to note that we continue to receive a regular trickle of new membership applications; at the same time, there are resignations when for example people move away from Wellington. So while our membership numbers are satisfactory (around 150 in total), new members, new energy and new ideas are always welcome. The best way to achieve this is by direct, word-of-mouth proselytising. So, please sing the praises of the Friends and encourage your friends to join.

Frank Wilson



Botanic Bulletin

As I write, the last of the autumn leaves are falling and the last of the bulbs are being planted. There is plenty of *Facebook* chatter from people who are looking forward to seeing the tulips in the spring!

We have made progress with the Children's Garden fundraising and we are now \$900,000 towards our target. Thank you to those of you who have donated towards the Garden. We continue to make applications to Trusts and corporates as well as the public campaign. Katherine Monks has now completed her contract with us leaving behind a sound framework to continue the campaign. Katherine's professionalism and enthusiasm, including her morning teas, have rubbed off on us all! If you think you can see an opportunity for a funding conversation please let either me or Ann McLean know. A big thank you to those who have kindly volunteered to be part of the Children's Garden Working Group to support the campaign. I take this opportunity to thank the Friends' committee for their continuing and increasing support for the project.

Isthmus Group has begun the detailed design for the Children's Garden and we hope to have some concepts to show you before too long. We have had a children's workshop with four schools represented which was a great success and showed new insights into the proposed site for the garden. We have also met with a group of environmental educators whose insight will allow us to fine-tune the garden. Other workshops coming up include the Te Atiawa Taranaki Whanui and with members of the migrant communities.

The Botanic Gardens Management Plan consultation period has now closed. I appreciate that not everyone is enthralled at the prospect of digesting the plan! We are looking forward to reviewing the submissions and seeing how they can be integrated into the draft plan. The more submissions that are received, the greater the validity of the end document.

The Otari Curator's house reconfiguration is now well under way despite the weather. Taking down the fence was a revelation as to just how good this site is. The new deck and steps will complement the use of the lawn well. The interior of the house is being split into a staff flat and a public space to support education and research, to hold meetings and to support events on the Cockayne lawn. This is an exciting project which has been talked about for many years. Great to see it finally coming to fruition. There will be a formal opening at Otari Open Day on 20 September.

Work is starting to get underway on Remembrance Ridge to create a poppy field for the WWI commemorations. The team have stripped out and replaced the planting and is about to begin preparation of the poppy field. The lookout has recently been refurbished and you may recall that the Gallipoli pine *Pinus brutia* was planted by Winsome Shepherd's family about 18 months ago.

The historic *Tecomathe* in the Main Gardens has been laid alongside the log fence. The kowhai it was growing on had died so was removed to protect the vine and to prevent it falling into the stream – or on to the staff working below!

At the Treehouse we hosted a successful exhibition by Helen Mechan over April and we are about to display a further round of the exquisite Italian iris prints. There will be a small function hosted by the Italian Ambassador and the Mayor in early June. Watch out for your invitation!

Tim Harkness from the Rose Garden has been seconded to the Ranger team for up to three months to provide urgent cover. Franz Tischler has moved down from Otari to cover Tim's gardener role.

Coming up....Charmaine Scott has begun planning for Spring Festival and the team has started planning for the next children's holiday programmes. And the question on a lot of people's lips – 'will there be another Powerplant?'. After talking to the Festival team, probably not for a few years but there may be other opportunities. Given the success of Powerplant we will be watching out for them!

Kind regards

David Sole, on behalf of the
Botanic Garden Team



Wellington Botanic Garden's Native Forest Areas Part II

This is the second in our series of articles on these remarkable features of Wellington's ecological heritage.

After our 2003 botanical survey on contract to the Friends, Botanic Garden staff marked the boundaries of the native forest areas, with wooden pegs, for management purposes. Contiguous areas with mixed native as well as introduced species act as buffers, helping to protect these native forest areas from gales and weed invasion. Buffer areas should be managed so that they do not contain plants that are known to be invasive of forest areas. This is why the forest area between Ruru Path and Mānuka Path, (above the marker on Ruru Path), should be managed as part of the Stable Gully native forest area.

Recently, as we sat on Druid Hill summit finishing our thermos tea, we pondered whether the sparse vegetation on the site might be allowed, or better still, encouraged, to develop into kānuka forest.

What follows is the wording which we read later on an interpretation panel on Camellia Path / Waipiro Bush Walk:

Kānuka – the colonist

Kānuka is a colonising plant, one of the first species to start growing on burnt or cleared soil. Kānuka is often followed by broad-leaved species e.g., māhoe, pseudopanax, then late podocarps (native conifers). Kānuka acts as a nursery plant, providing shade and shelter for seedlings as well as conditioning and stabilising the soil. It also provides a habitat for birds that then bring in and spread seeds. This helps to colonise the area."

Kunzea ericoides / kānuka are very uncommon in Wellington city, except in the Botanic Garden, where some of them, well over 100 years old (Shepherd and Cook, 1988) survive as precious relics of our indigenous ecological heritage. Kānuka readily colonise relatively bare, dry, windy, sites such as Druid Hill summit and its north and south faces, at present under tall pines and being invaded by weeds. Far better surely, for it to be colonised by an indigenous species once common here in Kelburn – for example, at least one of C. D. Barraud's paintings in 1873, shows kānuka groves in the upper catchment of Pipitea Stream in Kelburn, which flows through the Botanic Garden, near Glenmore Street.

Druid Hill and Stable Gully combined

In our 2003 survey, we decided to treat the native forest areas on Druid Hill and Stable Gully forest area together because they are contiguous across the upper part of Camellia Path.

Druid Hill / Stable Gully - the margins

This native forest area is bounded by Druid Hill Path, Mānuka Path, Scrub Path, William Wakefield Way, and that part of Camellia Path which is below Ruru Path. The forest area is traversed by the upper part of Camellia Path, also by Cork Oak Path, Ruru Path, and two un-named paths linking Ruru Path and Mānuka Path.

When walking along Druid Hill Path, we noted that although large, emergent pines dominate some of the site, there are areas at either end of it, with closed-canopy, regenerating native forest. Between them, near the arid, wind-swept crest, some native plant species such as kānuka and big mingimingi, which can tolerate these conditions, have established and are thriving.

When walking the paths bordering and traversing this native forest area, we listed over fifty species of weeds. The more serious threats are, in our opinion:



- Trees and shrubs: sycamore, cork oak seedlings by the hundred, Darwin's barberry, cotoneaster sp., English broom, eleagnus, holly, strawberry laurel, holly-leaved senecio, hazel pomaderris and flowering cherry, plus the non-Wellington natives: karaka, *Hoheria populnea* / lacebark; pōhutukawa, *Pittosporum crassifolium* / karo, *P. ralphii*, and *Pseudopanax lessonii* hybrids.

- Vines: old man's beard.
- Fern allies: selaginella.
- Grasses: veld grass.
- Herbaceous plants: agapanthus, mist flower, montbretia, tradescantia, foxglove, ragwort and allseed.

We noted with interest, on Cork Oak Path, that the deeply runnelled bark on the ancient cork oak provides epiphytic habitat for three native species: *Microsorium pustulatum* / hound's tongue fern, *Pyrrosia leagnifolia* / leatherleaf fern, and *Phlegmariurus varius* / hanging clubmoss.

Druid Hill / Stable Gully native forest area – the interior

We traversed mainly gentle slopes on the Druid Hill section of the forest on a compass bearing of 202° true, from the northernmost point on Druid Hill Path, to the upper section of Camellia Path, between Ruru Path and the interpretation panel featuring kānuka.

The north end of Druid Hill summit ridge features a 2-4m canopy of regenerating indigenous tree species over a ground-cover of dense agapanthus. The summit itself has tall pines and pōhutukawa, English broom, introduced grasses, and some bare clay. To the south, towards Camellia Path, is more mature and diverse native forest, including:

- Trees and shrubs: rangiora, māhoe, tarata, hangehange, hīnau (25cm dbh), kawakawa, māpou, nīkau, kānuka, kohekohe.
- Vines: NZ passion flower, clinging rāta, bush lawyer.
- Ferns: ponga/silver fern.
- Weeds: Darwin's barberry, flowering cherry, tradescantia, and the non-Wellington native tree species, karaka.

On a compass bearing of 193° true, we traversed the Stable Gully section of the forest, from the upper section of Ruru Path, down to its lower section in Stable Gully, c. 6m down the gully from the concrete culvert. From there we climbed to William Wakefield Way, emerging at the twin-trunked, labelled kānuka. The traverse involved steep slopes on both sides of Stable Gully, through mostly indigenous vegetation, at times dense.

Travel down into the gully is under a canopy of tall kohekohe, including a triple-trunked, 15-m specimen, in fruit. The sparse understorey includes:

- Trees and shrubs: hangehange, kawakawa, rangiora, māpou, small rewarewa, māhoe and tītoki, and three young nīkau.
- Vines: white rātā, scarlet rātā, NZ jasmine and supplejack.
- Ferns: ponga / silver fern, and at least five species of smaller ferns, two of them climbers.
- Weeds: eleagnus, and the non-Wellington native trees, karaka, lacebark / *Hoheria populnea*, and *Pseudopanax lessonii* hybrids.

A notable feature on the gully floor is two gully tree ferns / *Cyathea cunninghamii*, uncommon in Wellington city.

Travel up from the floor of the gully on the same bearing, is under a canopy of tall kohekohe, and initially almost devoid of ground cover. Nearer William Wakefield Way, the forest understorey is dense, the highlight being four tawa seedlings up to 60cm tall. These could indicate the distribution of tawa seed by kererū, the only bird able to eat the fruit, and then excrete the seed in one piece. Species of note during the climb from the gully floor include:

- Trees and shrubs: tawa, heketara, shining karamu, kohuhu, tarata, kanono, an emergent hīnau, and a twin-trunked kānuka to c. 15m.
- Vines: bush lawyer.
- Ferns: drooping filmy fern.
- Herbs: hairy pennywort.

The weedy, Australian hazel pomaderris / *Pomaderris aspera*, and non-Wellington native trees, lacebark / *Hoheria populnea* and *Pittosporum ralphii* are present.

Story: Barbara Mitcalfe and Chris Horne



The Children's Garden – an update

The Children's Garden will be a teaching facility where our largely urban children can explore, discover and connect with their natural world, and find out first-hand about the role of plants in providing our food, fibre, fuels, pharmaceuticals, construction materials, and cleaning our air. And also that plants are fascinating and fun! Parents, grandparents and children will be able to visit at any time, and an Educator will work with groups from schools, pre-schools and children on holiday programmes. The Friends also want to form a Children's Garden Club, and some enthusiasts have already expressed interest in making this happen.

The teaching garden site is strategically located on the grassy slope adjacent to the children's playground, just above the Treehouse and the greenhouses. The Threatened Species collection is also close by, so it's an ideal location for children to pick up a lot of the knowledge that city kids often miss, yet is still so important to health and wellbeing, recreation and resilience. The coloured poles on the slope in the photo below stake out some of the site. Behind them, the short track off Myrtle Way, the main downhill approach path, is flanked with some wonderful children's art – on your next visit do take a twenty metre detour to check it out.



Unlike smaller developments in the Botanic Garden, the Children's Garden will not be Council funded. As for similar developments in the Zoo and Zealandia, the installation will be funded through the Friends by donor benefactors, businesses and the general public.

Over one third of the aspirational budget has been pledged to date. The Friends are extremely grateful for the generous support of large donors who have contributed the bulk of this sum. It is also most gratifying to note the high level of popular support for the concept indicated by the many small donations made through the crowd funding site Givealittle - www.givealittle.co.nz .

This is an exciting and formative period in the development; **consultations** have been undertaken with core stakeholder groups, including children. **Concept drawings** for the Garden will be available in the middle of June, and will provide the basis for detailed design to commence. **Construction** will proceed stage-wise, as funds are available, with the aim of **completion** by June 2015.



Your Committee is convening a task force to disseminate information about the garden,

and to elicit comments and financial contributions. **This is where you come in.** We'd like the task force to comprise **advocates**, who could be people with connections to the main sectoral themes that the garden will embrace – health and nutrition, textiles, construction, energy, education and outdoor recreation. These advocates would undertake to spread the word through their networks, encourage interested individuals and organisations to join and support the Friends, and leverage donations for the Children's Garden to enable completion of construction by the June 2015 target date. Note: **donations over \$5 are tax-deductible!**

Are you, or can you recommend a potential Advocate? The intention is that this should not be an onerous task. It might be part of a company or industry group's Corporate Social Responsibility programme. Advocates could suggest their own strategy; they might volunteer, as well as promoting the Children's Garden through their networks, to attend two or three meetings of the group each year to report, coordinate and socialise with other advocates. The Garden Management has generously offered the Treehouse as a potential venue for such events of a suitable size and nature.

What's in it for you? Significant donors of elements of the Garden could be given naming rights for their component, and all donations, at the option of the donor, will be publicly acknowledged on our website, in publicity, and at the launch planned for February 2016, when the plants have settled in. And.... there's the simple satisfaction of being part of a laudable project.

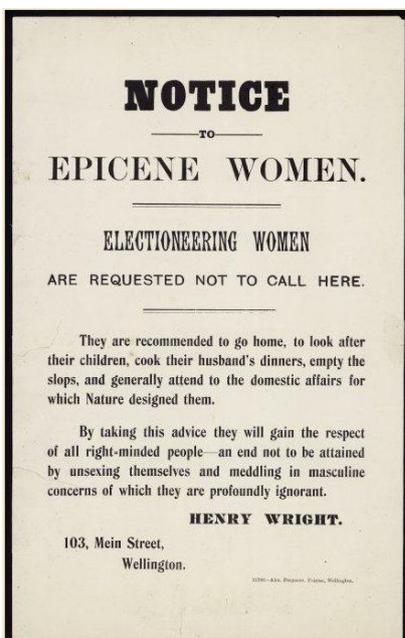
We shall also maintain a register and acknowledge **bequests** for the Children's Garden, and set up a '**pay it forward**' donation register for grandparents or parents who might like to make a donation in the name of a special child in their lives, who may have the thrill of visiting 'their' garden, knowing that they have a connection.

If you'd like to make suggestions or participate, please call Ann McLean, 475 8955, or email amclean@mpwr.co.nz.

Story: Ann McLean

A Misogynist and his Tropical Garden

In 1905 a famous poster aimed at giving the brush off to "electioneering women" was penned by an affronted Wellington citizen and nailed to his front door. Printed copies soon appeared on front doors all over Wellington: "Electioneering women are requested not to call here," the poster said, "They are recommended to go home, look after their children, cook their husband's dinner, empty the slops, and generally attend to the domestic affairs for which Nature designed them". Good old Henry Wright's *Notice to Epicene Women* might have had short sharp-shock value at the time but it didn't work terribly well in the long run. He'd be turning in his grave to see how far those pushy women have got in New Zealand politics today.



Henry Wright



A copy of Henry's poster still hangs in his Newtown home - taking pride of place in the lavatory. And the present owner, Janey Grocott, has a fondness for the curmudgeonly old chauvinist who died here in 1936, aged 92. He built the grand villa with its formal gardens to house his family in the late 1880s. Henry Wright was secretary of the Wellington Meat Export Company and had interests in Coromandel gold mining (which is why the inner-city suburb of Newtown has a Coromandel Street as well as a Wright Street). He was also a money lender and debt-collector, a photographer who documented early Wellington, a book lover and a gardener. Collections of his photographs and books are among the historical treasures stored at the Alexander Turnbull Library and his orchid collection was left to the Botanic Gardens.

Walter Cook, in his section on the Garden History, notes that "in 1923, Henry Wright offered his "collection of rare plants and orchids, many quite unprocurable in Australasia to the city". But this was also unsuccessful in the cause of building a winter garden. Nothing more was heard about this gift until 1928 when in March that year Council minutes note that Mr Henry Wright's collection of hothouse plants would be accepted and installed "when accommodation can be provided for them". The position on this matter is made clearer by an article from the *"Evening Post"* published in December 1928. The main propagating house had been provided with a new boiler contained in a roofed, brick-lined pit, and pipes carrying hot water for heating were installed. It had also been extended, "more than doubling its length and making possible a much more effective arrangement of begonias and companion plants". This freed the old "Lower Glasshouse", previously used for begonias, to be used for the collection of Mr Henry Wright "one of Wellington's keenest specialist gardeners". The collection is described as being of tropical plants, "a gift too good to be refused". At the time of the report the collection was awaited but had not yet arrived.

Jack Robertson who worked at the nursery in 1928 remembered that this collection was installed, but there appears to be no written records of it. Its fate is mysterious for when Bill Lannie began work at the Garden Nursery in 1935 he can remember no outstanding collection of tropical plants housed there, and no stories of there ever having been one. This is one of the great mysteries of the Garden, and we would be interested in hearing from anyone who can provide additional information.

As a footnote that might be of some interest, the present owner of the house, Janey Grocott, took it over a number of years ago and it is reported that – perhaps a little like Henry - she loves gardening, has an appreciation of the past and a passion for good times in the present. Janey's skill at creating ambience, as well as her gourmet cooking, have resulted in dinners that are said to be famous, if not infamous, in some Wellington circles - "I have been known to go to bed and leave them to it," is all she will say in response to tales of the discussions and deeds that have emanated from her table

And of her interior decorating skills? "I have too much of everything and it's all a hotchpotch of stuff I have been given or inherited or bought second hand. If I won Lotto I would throw everything out and start again, but if you put a whole lot of junk together it's amazing what you can do".

The dinner table is set in the dining room in winter and in the orangery in summer. An orangery - a kind of greenhouse with citrus trees in tubs - was a feature of aristocratic residences in the 1800s. Today we might call it a conservatory, but Janey has kept her orangery true to its purpose, complete with citrus trees in the original planter boxes. "I have every meal out here in summer," she says. "It's divine; to be enjoyed in full for a short time, like the asparagus season". Seemingly, some of Henry's approach to living continues in his house.

Sources:

Winsome Shepherd and Walter Cook; **The Botanic Garden, Wellington A New Zealand History 1840 – 1987**

Pillman, Eve **The Last Laugh, Life and Leisure Magazine** Vol 13 May/June 2007

Story: Phil Tomlinson

Pictures: National Library of New Zealand



Jane Goodall in Wellington

Friends may be interested to know that Jane Goodall, well-known for her work with chimpanzees in Africa will be speaking in Wellington later this month. Certainly chimpanzees are not *flora*, but nevertheless the work that she has undertaken over many years is quite inspirational. Jane Goodall will be speaking at the Michael Fowler Centre at 2pm on Sunday, 22 June. Tickets are available at www.allanwilsoncentre.ac.nz. All profits from her talks in New Zealand will go to the Jane Goodall Institute for the care and protection of chimpanzees in Africa and for her other global conservation initiatives, such as her youth programme. She has just turned 80, so there may be few further opportunities to hear her speak, despite the fact that she still travels around the world for 300 days a year to promote her work.

An apology and an explanation

Observant readers will have noticed that the caption under the photograph on the cover page of the March 2014 issue of the *Newsletter* read "The Painted Garder". I regret that this was your Editor's fault; his mind was clearly on other things as the caption should have read "The Quilted Garder". Sorry!

You will also have noted that this issue of the *Newsletter* has been prepared with full page text, rather than the double column format that has been the norm in recent years. The Friends' committee decided that with the vast majority of Friends now receiving their *Newsletter* electronically, a full page format was much easier to read. Accordingly, this will be the approach followed in future.

Editor

Coming Events

Sunday 15 June. 11am A bit about bark

The focus is on bark, its beauty and its hidden treasures.
Meet at the Cable Car entrance for this moderate 90-minute walk. Cost: \$4

Sunday 22 June, 1pm Meet the curator – choose the right tree

Explore the huge range of trees that grow well in Wellington gardens – and find out about a few that might not work so well in yours – with the Botanic Garden's curator-arborist.
Venue: Starts at the Founders' Entrance, Glenmore Street. If wet, the talk will be in the Treehouse Visitor Centre. Free.



Monday 23 June, 11am
Plants and New Zealand poems

We look at some of the plants in the Botanic Garden and read poems written about them. Meet on the uphill side of the playground for this easy 75-minute walk. Cost: \$4

Meet the curator – prune roses back into shape
Sunday 29 June, 1pm and 2pm

If your roses are running wild, this is your once-a-year chance to learn how to prune them.
1pm: modern roses – meet at the fountain in the Lady Norwood Rose Garden.
2pm: heritage roses – meet at the Seddon Memorial in Bolton Street Memorial Park.
The pruning demonstrations will be held in the Begonia House if it rains. Free.

Meet the curator – camellias and a cuppa
Sunday 6 July, 1pm

Join a Botanic Garden curator for a look at the *Camellia* collection, which includes the species used to make all the tea we drink. Find out how to grow great camellias, and then join us for a cuppa and a look at how tea is produced, with Wellington's T2.
Venue: Wellington Botanic Garden, starts at the Treehouse Visitor Centre. Free

Sunday 20 July, 11am
Early days in the Main Garden – stories of men and plants

Hear interesting stories from the early days of Wellington and the Botanic Garden on this easy 75-minute walk.
Meet at the Founders' Entrance, Glenmore Street. Cost: \$4

Monday 28 July, 11am
The Begonia House in winter

Avoid the winter weather and join us in the warmth of the Begonia House.
Meet in the foyer for this 60-minute stroll. Cost: \$4

Sunday 17 August, 11am
Trees we love

Join a group of our guides for a stroll around their favourite trees and find out why they think these trees are special. Meet on the Treehouse deck for this easy 90-minute walk. Cost: \$4

Monday 25 August, 11am
Observatory Reserve

There were once several observatories near the Carter Observatory in the Botanic Garden. This easy 90-minute walk explores their history. Meet at the Cable Car entrance. Cost: \$4

Glow in the dark glow-worm tours

Fridays 27 June, 25 July, 29 August and 26 September at 7.30pm

Meet at the Founders' entrance on Glenmore Street for these fascinating tours into the world of the glow-worm. The tours take about one hour. Please bring a torch. Cost: \$5; children under 12 free.



Spring Festival 20-28 September
Otari-Wilton's Bush open day: Saturday 20 September
Tulip Sunday: September 21

The Spring Festival programme will be available at www.Wellington.govt.nz or the Treehouse from early August.

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