

Newsletter

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

No 74, Spring 2008

President's Report

It is an interesting exercise to contemplate how the future role of our Botanic Gardens and Hagley Park will develop as the price of petrol continues to increase and as we approach the situation of 'peak oil'.

As families and individuals find they have less discretionary dollars to spend on petrol, they will look for ways to decrease their car usage. They could be attracted to alternative sites that have shorter traveling distances where they can still enjoy family outings. This where I see the Botanic Gardens becoming increasingly popular as one of our city's favoured centralised sites.

Looking further into the future, it is most likely there will increasing numbers of local visitors using the Botanic Gardens, especially family groups. This in turn may mean catering more effectively for these groups, such as providing more hands-on educational displays, special displays such as permanent nature trails, children's display gardens and other family-orientated attractions. These additional displays could be a good opportunity to make children more familiar with nature and assist them in becoming interested in plants.

Will the number tourists visiting the Gardens increase in future years? The effect of higher airfares as the cost of aviation fuel increases may have a big impact on tourism numbers. Currently the numbers of people that are recorded using the Botanic Gardens are approximately 1.6 million per annum. I understand that, apart from the Casino, the Botanic Gardens are the second most visited location in Christchurch.

There will of course be many other impacts if local visitor numbers increase over the years and there will a definite need to be balance this alongside with maintaining the integrity of the Botanic Gardens and preserving its main functions. Increasing visitor numbers in the future will provide challenges for both the City Council and the Botanic Gardens management team. The management plan for Hagley Park/Botanic Gardens approved by the City Council during the year should go along way to assist with future planning and development.

Don Bell

Don't forget the Christmas function – 4 pm, Saturday 6 December at the Canterbury Horticultural Centre

Editor's note

We continue to distribute the Newsletter by email to those members who have given us their email addresses and who have not requested otherwise. If you would prefer to receive the Newsletter by mail, rather than electronically, please contact Bill Whitmore – phone 339 8356 or billpauline@ihug.co.nz

Gardens' News

Jeremy Hawker reports –

The common reed, *Phragmites australis*, is a large perennial grass that, under favourable conditions, can form reed beds up to a square kilometre and spread as much as 5 metres per year. An inhabitant of wetlands throughout tropical and temperate regions of the world, the common reed can form extensive stands with its rhizomes extending down to 2m and even more horizontally.

MAF Biosecurity is currently involved with the eradication of this plant in New Zealand. The Christchurch Botanic Gardens has a small population around the native section pond. This group of plants has been within the gardens since the 1950s and it has the status of an unwanted organism. Chemical control has begun and over the coming months mechanical removal of the remaining plant rhizomes will be undertaken.

Botanic gardens, with a wide range of plants within their collections, were often responsible for importing many of the problem plant species into the country in the past. The issue of climate change has the potential over time of making some common plants seen growing within public and private gardens moving into the unwanted status.

BGCI (Botanic Gardens Conservation International) has recently focused on the changing climate and the possible effects on plant diversity, highlighting this by indicating that there is an increased risk of invasions by alien species, "as conditions become more suitable for exotic species whilst native species become less well suited to their environment (for example, *Bromus* is more invasive in wet years (Smith et al, 2000)). This is especially true given human interventions which have deliberately and accidentally facilitated the spread of species across the globe." BGCI. 2008

Gunnera tinctoria, *Lonicera japonica*, *Euonymus japonicus*, *Ochna serrulata*, *Rhododendron ponticum*; these are some of the more common plants currently on the MAF list. Protecting and conserving New Zealand native flora is one aspect of looking after our biodiversity; keeping an eye on plants that move from being friendly garden inhabitants to being invasive species, is another.

Over time as climatic conditions change the Christchurch Botanic Garden will be faced with the task of removing from its collections more of these garden escapers, and providing a refuge for our own very special flora.

Friends' display in information centre

In response to an invitation from the Gardens' management the Friends have accepted responsibility for putting on a display in the Information Centre during the months of September and October. The major focus of the display will be a continuous power point presentation. This presentation will feature *inter alia* historical photographs and seasonal pictures of the Gardens and of Friends' projects in the Gardens. The display will be supported by an array of plants and there will be colourful graphics both outside and inside the Centre drawing attention to it.

The Committee is most grateful to the Powerstore in Moorhouse Avenue for the loan of equipment for the power point presentation and for the work done by Charles Graham and David Moyle in making the necessary arrangements for this display.

Profile: Bridie Gibbings

If you have recently pruned your roses, you will know first-hand what an unwelcome but necessary task it is. Have some sympathy, then, for those who tackle that task in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens.

“All the trainees get together, and we do all the pruning in the central rose garden and the heritage rose garden,” says Bridie Gibbings, one of the aforementioned Horticultural Trainees. “We just finished the work a couple of weeks ago.”

The trainee program was a natural fit for Bridie. She was in Year 13 and trying to decide what to do once she finished secondary school – look for

they shift to a different area. Bridie is currently working in the central rose garden, but her favourite areas are the rock garden and the natives section.

Bridie particularly enjoys the opportunity to do the small landscape jobs around the Gardens, where she gets to choose which plants will be used and where they will be placed. She is also particularly fond of working outside during the summer months. “You get lovely hot days and lots of people walking in the gardens.”

While she may not enjoy working in the cold – “winter takes its toll,” she admits – she still would



a job or go on to university. Then she saw an advertisement for the horticultural trainee program at the Gardens. “I’d worked at a tree nursery when I was in Year 13, and I liked working there. So the trainee program looked like a good opportunity for me to be able to work and still study,” Bridie says. She now divides her time between working in the Gardens and taking classes through the Open Polytechnic and the New Zealand Horticulture Industry Training Organisation.

In her nearly two and a half years in the programme, Bridie has had the chance to work all over the Gardens. The horticultural trainees are assigned to an area for two months at a time, then

not want to be working inside four walls all day. “My work is quite rewarding, because I can look around the Gardens and know I helped make that happen.”

With only about six months remaining for her in the programme, Bridie is starting to consider what she will do next. The skills she has learned will hopefully take her far. “I’ll probably see if anything’s available in Dunedin in its city gardens. I’d like to work for a couple of years, but then I’d like to go do my OE.”

Articles

The Gondwana Project

The Gondwana project was prominent in Dr David Given's ambitions for the Gardens. The project is part of the latest Botanic Gardens Management Plan and has been given prominence in the next funding round. The Gondwana garden will be located in the NW corner of the Gardens, west of the children's playground.

In order to facilitate the design process, the Friends of the Botanic Gardens offered to organise and sponsor a workshop bringing together top Gondwana experts in the country plus experts in design, learning processes and story telling. The theme of the workshop was: 'Gondwana: What story do we tell and how do we tell it'.

Participants included Dr George Gibbs, author of 'Ghosts of Gondwana', geologist Dr Hamish Matthews of GNS and Te Papa and co-author of 'In Search of Ancient New Zealand', botanists Drs Colin Meurk and Bill Lee from Landcare Research, geologist Dr Daphne Lee from Otago University, Anthony Wright, Director Canterbury Museum, Kim Jarrett from Auckland, designer of the Gold Medal Chelsea display, learning experts Neil Fleming, Judy Calder (primary) and Michael McMurtrie (secondary), landscape architect Dr Maria Ignatieva from Lincoln University, garden writer and FOBG Guide, Diana Madgin, Council project landscape architect Jenny Moore, Jeremy Hawker and Bede Nottingham from the Botanic Gardens, and Don Bell and Alan Morgan from the FOBG. To very ably control all these experts professional facilitator, Kris Cooper, was present.

What Story to Tell?

Gondwana (previously called Gondwanaland) is that 'hypothetical, southern supercontinent' which included what is now South America, Africa, Antarctica, Australia, peninsular India, and New Zealand. The bit that we are on, known as 'Zealandia', split off about 83 million years ago (mya) when the Tasman Sea started opening up. It was much larger than our current land mass and included what is now New Caledonia at its northern tip. So in that sense we ceased being part of Gondwana 83 mya.

As we moved away the landmass was stretched and thinned and as a consequence we sank below the ocean for a few million years until only a few spots were above water. Just how much was above water is still a matter of debate, as we found out from a spirited interaction between the geologists at the workshop - some theories have us totally submerged. The consequence of the submersion was that most, if not all, of the Gondwanan biota was wiped out. It subsequently was reintroduced by a process known as dispersal mostly from other Gondwanan fragments and in some cases from the Northern Hemisphere.

The first decision was then to decide whether the story would be limited to (a) the descendants of plants growing on the Zealandia fragment at the time of separation (aka 'Moas' Ark') or (b) cover the full story of the origin and evolution of our current flora.

The discussion quickly established that the latter story should be attempted as it had more relevance to the flora we know even though the direct Gondwanan connections are relatively tenuous. The story of dispersal and subsequent evolution is in fact more challenging and interesting than the direct descendant one. The Auckland Regional Botanic Gardens has a 'Gondwana arboretum' which follows the former approach with a predominance of Araucarias.

The information from the workshop is still being collated but I expect the chapter headings of the story would be roughly:

- The Gondwanan flora. (83+ mya)
- Separation. (83 mya)
- Submersion: development of species (speciation) on land remnants. (30 – 20 mya)
- Pre-tectonic movement flora (Lake Manuherikia, Central Otago) *Eucalyptus*, *Proteaceae*, etc. (20 – 10 mya)
- Tectonic uplift (as in the Southern Alps). Speciation, evolutionary adaptation (adaptive radiation), alpine flora, dispersal, volcanism (as in Banks Peninsula). (10 – 0 mya).
- Today. If there is space, a demonstration of the influences of mankind on the flora.

This suggests that a chronologically sequenced walk-through would be the logical format. Some stages of the story have us in considerably warmer climates so the flora of the time would require a heated environment while others may need cooling – just right for a heat pump.

Let's look at the 'chapters' in more detail:

Gondwana

With the supsize of the landmass there would obviously be huge differences in climate and rainfall and it would be impracticable to attempt to represent the total flora. The collection should restrict itself to the species likely to be growing in Zealandia which can be established by fossil records within our current land mass. Plants we would recognise from their modern descendants would be *Araucaria* represented by our kauris, *Nothofagus*, tree and ground ferns, club mosses, Cycads, plus a surprising number of flowering plants including proteas, hollies, mistletoe, and members of the *Ericaceae*, *Liliaceae* and *Caryophyllaceae*. Plus of course the remarkable *Ginkgo biloba* – the fossil in the Canterbury Museum found in the Clarence River bed is dated at 100 mya, about 20 million years before we separated from Gondwana.

Separation

This could be represented by a simulated chasm, with or without water, and bridged. Following separation we went through a sub-tropical era.

Submersion (or drowning)

This could be represented by islands, maybe in water or in a gravel area with plants that demonstrate the speciation and endemism that occurred through that time. (Speciation is the evolution of distinct species usually as a response to local conditions and an endemic species is one that occurs only in New Zealand, sometime with an extraordinarily limited habitat eg the Castle Hill *Ranunculus*).

Pre-tectonic movement era (20-10mya)

This is an era when we were considerably warmer than today, lower lying and with large lake and swamp areas. Lake Manuherikia, for example, occupied a large chunk of Central Otago/Maniototo and fossil beds near St Bathans have proof that Eucalyptus, Acacias, Casuarinas and Araucarias (and a species of crocodile) were prominent in the area.

Tectonic uplift (10-0mya)

In geological terms the formation of the Southern Alps is incredibly recent and is the result of the movement of two tectonic plates and the fact that we sit astride the interface (faultline). Of course if it wasn't for the interaction between them we probably wouldn't be here or it would be a vastly different place. Canterbury particularly owes its existence to the process; as the Southern Alps were pushed up they were eroded down by glaciers, water and wind to form the Canterbury Plains. More or less at the same time the Banks Peninsula volcanoes were active building an island, which eventually became joined to the mainland by the advancing debris from the Southern Alps.

The evolution of our alpine and sub-alpine flora ran parallel to the mountain building as new sites and habitats emerged. While some had linkages to the 'Moas' Ark' flora, others arrived by the 'long distance dispersal' process from other Gondwanan remnants, mostly Australia and some even from Northern Hemisphere sources. There is still much debate, conjecture and research going on and with improving science these linkages will become more certain.

Today

While it would be perfectly satisfactory to finish the story there, we could also tell the story of the dramatic changes man has made to our flora since his arrival. Apart from the native section, the rest of the Gardens tell the nicer parts of that story of man-introduced plants without necessarily getting into the depredation of the indigenous flora and habitat and the introduction and spread of undesirable plants since man's arrival.

How to Tell the Story

There was some discussion about the audience or at least the age parameters to be aimed at. Anthony Wright pointed out that the Museum aims at a reading age of 11, which apparently is also the average adult reading age. It was generally agreed that interpretive boards can be designed to cater for all reading ages – the audience is thus all ages.

The garden should set out 'to tell the story', not just present a display of 'Gondwanan' plants. The story has to include the 'geology' story, be enhanced with some of the fauna stories, but focus on the flora. It will not be possible to tell every twist and turn of 80+ million years of evolutionary history but to

6 FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS

focus on the main events that impact on today's flora.

The Canterbury story is big enough on its own and it has all the elements – proven Gondwanan fossils, evidence of submersion, tectonic uplift, glaciation and erosion, vulcanism and, if we embrace the West Coast, huge variations in rainfall and habitat.

In addition to the story being told in landform, plants and constructed features, the story needs to be told using every possible means – the minimum being static, interpretive panels, but also using the other senses. It should be experiential as well as informative. Ideas for other means of communicating the story were: holograms with or without sound, possibly projected on mist; simulated wildlife eg dinosaurs, moas, tuataras, insects with talking roles; tactile surfaces for touch; hiring for free MP3 players with commentary (as done in the Auckland Botanic).

If there were a secure and weatherproof structure the full range of electronic special effects would be possible. Kim Jarrett, with wide experience in film-set making (King Kong), suggested any Gondwanan plant or environment could be recreated artificially indoors. There might be simulated earthquakes and/or volcanoes.

Teachers in the group were keen to see that it fitted the current curriculum and hence become a fully explanatory learning experience for all levels. Printed handouts and teacher kits could easily be developed. Provision for some all-weather cover for class groups would be very useful for school groups – they plan trips a long way ahead and it is not easy to cancel. The Gardens tour also usually includes a museum trip so the stories should complement those at the museum.

Other ideas were: an entrance 'tunnel' from the playground with graphic panels and/or simulated earthquake/volcano experience; a 'fossil' hunt in a sand pit with buried simulated fossils; develop means to comprehend great time eg 80 m long walk for 80 million years; paved entrance with Gondwanan continents marked out and surrounded with plants associated with each country.

The possibility of including Maori mythology in the story was discussed and should be considered

further. While some thought the story is complex enough without the mythology, it could be fairly easily woven in with the scientific narrative.

Where to from here?

The ideas and conclusions were recorded on "post-it" sheets and are being processed by the Council. From this a design brief will be developed for the landscape architectural team at City Solutions to work on. A concept plan and a budget will be developed in order to apply for funding in the next three-year funding period, which will be decided in September.

All workshop participants were keen to stay involved as the project develops and a smaller advisory panel has promised to work with the designers. We hope the FOBG will be included in that process.

The workshop format was very successful could be useful for future developments, such as the children's garden or the native section revamp. Not only does it supply a wealth of ideas but it also ensures the ongoing interest of the participants and the organizations they represent.

Acknowledgements

While the FOBG paid the airfares of the out-of-town participants, the City Council paid for the facilitator and lunch and provided the venue and materials for the day. Colin Meurk helped with contacts to other experts as did Neil Fleming. Jeremy Hawker and Jenny Moore responded warmly to our offer and provided much practical assistance to achieve a very successful outcome. The venue, upstairs at the petanque rooms on a very cold, wet July day, demonstrated well the need for improved facilities for such events.

Alan Morgan, Friends' Guide

The Curator's House

It is one of the most photographed buildings in Christchurch. The Curator's House attracts the attention of numerous photographers not only because of its distinctive architecture. Its location at the southern end of the broad pathway, bordered by picturesque flower beds, running south across the Armstrong Lawn from the Canterbury Museum, makes it a focal point for visitors to the Gardens.

The Canterbury Pilgrims brought with them in 1850 the tradition of gardening that was such an integral component of English culture. It was therefore inevitable that gardens would be significant in the establishment and development of Christchurch. The idea of the garden as a fine art was a concept conveyed by the settlers to the new province. It was widely held that one of England's greatest contributions to art was the landscaped gardens of its stately homes. The vision of the founders of the Canterbury Association was that a colony should be established "which from its very beginning should contain and represent what is good and essential in the character and culture of plants and gardens."



In 1864, only 14 years after the arrival of the first four ships a public meeting formed the Canterbury Horticultural and Acclimatisation Society and agreed that central Hagley Park, a block of land encompassed by a big horseshoe-shaped bend of the Avon River, was the most suitable place in which to establish a botanic garden.

The Curator's House is a symbol of the importance that Christchurch places on gardens, on the Botanic Gardens, and on the person responsible for maintaining and developing them - the Curator. The first Curator's House, however, was not nearly as imposing as the one familiar to

us now. It was a cottage built in 1872 on the same site as the present one - although the street was then known as Antigua Street not Rolleston Avenue. It was a modest single-storey building with a gable at the northern end of the street frontage and a verandah along the balance of the frontage. It was timber framed, sheathed externally with weatherboards.

This first house had problems. In his report on 4 July 1919 to the Domains Board (the body then responsible for administering the Gardens) Curator James Young stated: "With reference to the condition of the cottage (Curator's House) I have to report that the bedrooms are extremely damp. This has been especially so during the wet weather that

we have had to use the front sitting room as a bedroom. In fact Mrs Young has simply refused to use the other damp rooms for health reasons. I wish to state also that the bath has rusted through and consequently this has led to much inconvenience."

A special committee, set up to inspect the Curator's cottage and report on its condition, acted remarkably promptly. On the same day it was set up, the members of the committee inspected the house and made their report. The report said "After inspection of the Curator's house the special committee resolved to instruct Messrs. Collins and Harman, Architects, to furnish a plan with estimate

8 FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS

for a two storied house of five rooms, a kitchen and offices, with slate roof for consideration by the Board at their next meeting.”

The Board’s original intention was that it would be built in brick but this was changed to basalt rubble backed by brick on the ground floor. The upper-storey was to be timber framed and clad externally with roughcast and timber battens. The design reflects the Arts and Craft movement while the roughcast and timbering to the upper walls introduced a Tudor character. The exterior materials were to be in context with the character of the nearby Canterbury Museum and Canterbury University College (now Arts Centre) buildings.

A tender of £2,315 pounds from H. Hinkey to construct the house was accepted on 8 October 1919 with the contract allowing 26 weeks for the construction to be completed. The building was financed from the sale of gravel and sand excavated from areas in the S.W. of the Gardens, where the Water Garden now lies.

Building details

The outer walls of the ground floor of the Curator’s House are constructed of volcanic basalt rubble that came from Garlands Quarry, 351 Port Hills Road, Hillsborough. Angles and quoins are formed from rock-faced Halswell stone. The basalt blocks are lined on the inside with brick and plastered over. Sills and chimneys are of Sumner red stone. Ground floor partitions are of single brick.

The exterior of the first floor is of rough cast pebbles on cement plaster and heart rimu, rough sawn, for trim and facings. Interior walls are lath and plaster.

The floors are tongue and groove heart rimu on rimu floor joists on black pine sleepers. Window and door frames are totara, window sashes are redwood, while exterior doors are of yellow pine. The staircase is heart red pine. The roof is of Welsh slates fixed by copper nails to oregon and totara sarking.

In mid-1920 Curator James Young was able to move into the new house. He was followed by his various successors until 1982. When Warwick Scadden was appointed Curator in that year, he and his family chose to live in their own home rather than in the Curator’s House. This decision

coincided with a City Council decision to abandon its policy of providing residences for senior staff.

A new role for the Curator’s house

The house was rented out over the years during which the Council debated what should be its long-term use. Pending this decision, little was spent on the maintenance of the house and the outbuildings and the riverbank became overgrown with plants straggling under overhanging trees.

To expedite decision making Scadden and his team included two objectives in their ‘Botanic Gardens’ Management Policy Document’. One was to develop the land surrounding the House as a home display garden. The other was to invite registrations of interest for alternative uses, such as a restaurant, for the Curator’s House that would be appropriate for its location in the Botanic Gardens.

In August 1998 the Christchurch City Council invited applications for alternative uses for the building and its surrounds. As a result the Botanical Epicurean Company applied for and was given the lease of the building to be used as a restaurant. As well, the Friends of the Botanic Gardens put forward a proposal for the garden area on the river bank to the south-west of the building; to develop this as a home demonstration garden to give home owners ideas for their own gardens. This proposal also was adopted.

Proposed renovations of the iconic house, built in an English cottage style, were scrutinized carefully by the City Council Heritage officers and Historic Places Trust to ensure a harmonious and sympathetic outcome. The combined effort of the City Council and the Botanical Epicurean Company opened up this previously private corner of the Gardens to be an attractive asset for the people of Christchurch. The changes have enhanced the original building and garden area. The Curator’s House entered its new role as a restaurant in mid-2000.

In a later Newsletter it is hoped to tell the story of the successive Curators and the contributions that they have made to the Botanic Gardens.

This information comes largely from an article “Curators and the Curator’s House” by Sylvia Meek.

Look at that tree – *Michelia doltsopa*

In August every year without fail a *Michelia doltsopa* tree standing alone on the lawn south of the rock garden starts producing its large scented white flowers. The flowers burst out from long (8cm) golden furry buds. They continue to be produced, in good numbers, into October.

The gardening books tell me that michelias are frost-tender to half-hardy. I don't whether anyone has told this tree; it continues to produce a show of the creamy white flowers despite the frosts, sou-westerly storms and occasional snowfall thrown at it by the Christchurch climate.

For some reason, perhaps because of its open position, this particular specimen is unusually compact in habit. Typically trees of this species are more open in habit inclining towards lankiness.

Michelias are closely related to the Magnolias; indeed *Michelia doltsopa* is sometimes mistaken for *Magnolia denudata*. They come from tropical and sub-tropical Asia, with a few species, such as *M. doltsopa* from the cooler foothills of the Himalayas. Some species are widely cultivated in India for their fragrant oil, which is extracted from the blooms for use in perfume and cosmetics.



In Christchurch's hill gardens these trees will come into flower as early as June and continue in great profusion for the next 4-5 months.

Even without its display of flowers *M. doltsopa* makes a handsome tree with its large glossy green leaves having paler undersides. And as a bonus, towards the end of summer small bright-red fruit appear.

The genus gets its name from Florentine botanist Pietro Antonio Micheli (1679-1737). Micheli was celebrated for his pioneer researches into cryptogams. (Cryptogams are not a type of crossword puzzle; the term refers to the group of plants without stamens or pistils ie non-flowering plants such as ferns, mosses, algae, lichens and fungi.)

Bill Whitmore

Friends' Groups

Some highlights from the annual general meeting 24 August 2008.

President's Report

Supplementing his written report Don Bell:

- Gave thanks to Jeremy Hawker and staff for their assistance to the Friends and to all Committee members and helpers for their work during the year.
- Commented that members had thoroughly enjoyed the bus trip arranged by Liz Wolff to visit fascinating Oxford gardens last November.
- Informed the meeting that the Native Plant Gardens project, approved by members at the previous AGM, had been successfully completed at a cost of \$35,000.
- Reported that a \$1,250 grant had been approved for purchase of books by the Gardens library

The meeting approved that subscriptions for the financial year commencing 1 July 2009 should remain at current rates: Student \$10; Ordinary \$16; Affiliate \$16; and Family \$22.

Committee

Don Bell was unanimously re-elected as President for the coming year and Alan Morgan as Vice President. New member Alan Hart joins the Committee. The new Committee is listed on the last page of this Newsletter.

Don Bell paid tribute to the work of Liz Wolff who was retiring from the Committee and made her a presentation on behalf of the Friends. He also said how much the Committee had valued the services of Lesley Godkin who would be retiring from the position of Treasurer by the end of December.

General Business

Alan Morgan gave an account of the Gondwanaland Project workshop and reported that the Friends were examining the possibility of setting up a Trust Deed to help raise finance for such major projects.

Charles Graham outlined the work he and David Moyle were doing for a Friends' display at the Information Centre during September and October and for an exhibit in the Ellerslie Festival next year.

Talk by Operations Manager.

Jeremy Hawker gave an illustrated talk about implementation of various projects approved in the Botanic Gardens Management Plan. Major points of interest were:

- Architectural firms had been invited to compete in developing designs for the Botanic Gardens Centre for which Council had approved \$10 million.
- The delay over filling the Curator position had occurred because there had been an attempt to make it a dual employment post with Canterbury University. This had not proved possible. It was now to be advertised as a solo position.
- Council had sought proposals from private firms for operation of a tour vehicle in the Gardens.
- The potato exposition had attracted much public interest and similar events would be considered.
- Approval for importation of the Wollemi pine appeared to be getting closer.
- Along with other Australasian botanic gardens Christchurch was to be in a survey to gauge customer satisfaction. A survey of local residents had shown a 92 % level of satisfaction
- Signs within the Gardens were being enhanced.
- The Peacock Fountain paintwork was being repaired because it had been affected by chemical reaction between metals and chlorine used to keep the water clean.

Guiding group

During the winter months we have met monthly to continue our development and training sessions. We have had a computer session, Alan Hart provided an interesting session on Gardens in Europe and Diana Madgin took us on a beautiful visual tour in China.

We have three new guides-in-training: Alan Hart, John Thacker and Charles Graham. Each has a very full folder of training principles, policies and ideas and their training will involve working with our established guides. We welcome them to our group.

This month we will be running a refresher course on First Aid so that our guides are well-prepared for any eventuality.

Our new season will start on September 16th with a walk around the Gardens with Jeremy Hawker to view any changes. The season will end on April 30th April 2009. We look forward again to providing the Friends of the Botanic Gardens with a boost to their fund-raising of some \$5000 as in 2006 and 2007.

Faye Fleming

Jane McArthur

In the autumn 2007 issue (No 68) of this Newsletter there was an account of the many contributions of Jane McArthur, the "bulb lady". Not long after this Jane was nominated for a Community Service Award. Sadly Jane died earlier this year before the Award could be presented to her. The Hagley-Ferrymead Community Board, however, was eager to acknowledge her contribution over the years and decided to make a posthumous award to her niece, Ally.

In the citation prepared for the Award it was pointed out:

"Jane was an inaugural member of... the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens which was formed in 1989. She brought with her a fascination for alpine plants, the bulbs which for many years were an absorbing interest. In her early

years as a member of the Society she also helped to propagate rock plants from seeds and cuttings.

About ten years ago, Jane turned her attention solely to alpine bulbs. For many years Jane ran the Alpine Bulb Propagation Team for the Friends. She worked with the Gardens staff and accumulated legendary knowledge of her subject. Jane would clean, sort, collate, package and store the bulbs, for subsequent sale. In addition, she would research and prepare pictures of bulb flowers to help viewers visualise possible purchases. Her sales tables at the NZ Alpine Gardens Society meetings and the Friends' sale days were eagerly attended and Gardens are much indebted to her efforts at fund raising and promoting awareness of the Bulb collection. She has given unconditionally of her time and effort in this voluntary service, the proceeds from which have gone to support special projects in the Gardens.

Jane became a prominent member of the NZ Alpine Garden Society, serving as both Secretary and Treasurer and working to host the very successful International Conference of Alpine Societies in 1996.

Even after her retirement from 'bulb lady' as she was affectionately known, Jane retained a keen interest in things botanical and was an invaluable resource of information for the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens."

Coming Events

Saturday - 25th October 2008 - Big Plant Sale

9am to 1pm

Under the Phoenix Palm in front of the Information Centre in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens.

There will be 6 sale tables offering shrubs, natives, perennials, succulents and bulbs - and advice on growing them.

All plants grown by the volunteer Propagating Teams of Friends of the Gardens.

All proceeds go to the Christchurch Botanic Gardens for special projects.

October bus trip

On Wednesday 22 October you are invited to join other Friends to visit the Department of Conservation Nursery and the Bearded Iris Garden, both at Motukarara. Travel will be by car pool. See the Coming Events Programme for full details.

12 FRIENDS OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS

Contact Numbers

President	Don Bell	343-6699	Ex Officio	Jeremy Hawker	941-7580
Vice President	Alan Morgan	384-9976	Helpers		
Immediate Past President	David Moyle	358-8914	Plant Sale	Helen Constable	980-9358
Treasurer	Lesley Godkin	388 0043	Newsletter mail out	Jean Norton	383-9711
Membership Secretary	Ruby Coleman	355-8811	Botanist	Bill Sykes	366-3844
Minutes Secretary	Jim Crook	358-5845	Guided Walks	Max Visch	338-2273
Outings/trips			Guide Co-ordinator	Pat Whitman	384-3475
Newsletter Editor	Bill Whitmore	339-8356	Enquiries	Info Centre	941-6840 x 7590
Programme	David Moyle	358-8914	Administrative Assistant	Sylvia Meek	
Other Committee Members	Charles Graham	348-5896	Newsletter layout	Maria Adamski	
	Nancy Boundy	388-6345			
	Alan Hart	332-6120			

Christchurch Botanic Gardens Inc
PO Box 2553
Christchurch

OR friendsofthegardens@gmail.com