

## Excerpt from “The Notable Trees of New Plymouth”, 2002

Author: Cory Smith, Editor: George Fuller

Based on a review of S.W. (Bob) Burstall's Mensuration Report # 19, 1973.

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Notable Tree N° ET 113

### “Rhododendron 'Sir Robert Peel'." p195

EXOTIC TREE: 113

SPECIES: ***Rhododendron 'Sir Robert Peel'***.

COMMON NAME(S):

B.B CATEGORY: Exotic Notable Tree - Local Interest.

#### ORIGINAL READINGS

LOCATION: Beside boat landing, Fountain Lake, Pukekura Park.

DATE MEASURED: 1973

HEIGHT: 54 ft (16.5 m)

CANOPY SPREAD: -

GIRTH AT 1 ft: 31 in (78.7 cm). ("Shouldn't *this be the diameter*"?)

BURSTALL'S NOTES: A double leader tree, one of several in the park, blazing with colour in late August.

#### CURRENT READINGS

UPDATED LOCATION: Same as above, over-hanging Fountain Lake and pathway at the Northern end (**Figs. 188 and 189**).

DATE MEASURED: 31st August 2001

HEIGHT: 15.35 m

CANOPY SPREAD: 12.3 m, only one measurement as the north to south reading is over-hanging the lake.

DIAMETER AT 30 cm: 92.9 cm; circumference = 2.92 m

REMARKS: The tree is on a 45 degree lean toward the lake, resulting in the canopy being asymmetrical to the base. It contains two large limbs that arise from 30 cm. This is one of the largest 'Sir Robert Peel' in New Zealand, by virtue of its trunk measurements and height. If the tree was conventional, (straight up and down) it would be 'taller'. (Does this account for height discrepancy relative to Burstall's and Medbury's measurements?). An example of early tree surgery can be viewed on the southerly leader 1.4 m from ground level, measuring 70 cm x 15 cm at the widest point. This cavity was filled by encasing the trunk in a thin metal sheath and pouring polyurethane foam, (surfboards) into the cavity then painted for camouflage, c.1970. A true survivor that is extremely healthy with prolific flowering of small trusses in late winter.

Difficult to obtain measurements because of location and inclined habit.

Diameter at ground level = 1.156 m. (Circumference = 3.63 m).

North leader dbh = 60.8 cm

South leader (nearest to lake) dbh = 50.6 cm.

The 'height' of this tree was placed on a grid pattern. If it was straight up and down (vertical) the length (height) of the tree would be approximately 20 m.

~ Fuller, 1982: The present measurement is; diameter at 30cm = 0.831m. The most northerly leader has a dbh of 0.521m and the southerly 0.459m.

(\*Medbury, 1984: Ht = 17.2 m; spread approx = 15 m. Planted c. 1930's(???)).  
W.W. Smith's planting was of one of the first hybrids available in NZ).

This is unlikely because W.W. Smith was in charge 1908-21. Planting may even have been before 1900, comparable with many large specimens from that era located throughout New Zealand.