

There's a story in every tree

Do you know of a tree, once believed to be extinct, which was rediscovered in 1948, which had cuttings sent around the world for recultivation, three of which came to New Zealand — one to Pukekura Park?

Do you know about the native tree that has two completely different types of foliage, even on the same branch?

Do you know which pine tree in Pukekura Park has grown so big that even horticulturists from its own native country don't recognise it?

And what about the very common looking camellia tree in the park that is the parent of every other specimen of its type in the country?

On Sunday a group of NZ Institute of Horticulture members and interested members of the public joined in a tour of Pukekura and Brooklands Parks under the guidance of former curator George Fuller.

The tour was the third in a series of tree surveys carried out over consecutive weekends, the first visiting Te Wera State Forest and arboretum, and the second exploring the Tarata-Purangi district in search of trees planted by the settlers of old.

Mr Fuller opened the tour with a brief description of Pukekura Park which he described as a "Disneyland" of the 1880s, a description based on the fact that everything in it — every tree, every flower, every lake, every flat area — is man made.

As the group walked around, Mr Fuller explained some of the milestones of park management, including the reasons for, and controversies surrounding, the removal of groups of pines over the years.

It was interesting to note that as a direct result of pines having been removed and new areas opened up to regrowth and replanting of native trees, tuis, which used to migrate at nesting time, have, for the last two years, been breeding in the park.

He also pointed out a reef heron's nest in a tree overlooking the fountain lake as another example of results of changes in the park's ecology.

RIGHT: George Fuller points out a noteworthy tree during the RNZIH tour of Pukekura Park recently.

