



If you have an **email address**, please will you send it to Margot Wiseman [margw@paradise.net.nz](mailto:margw@paradise.net.nz)



**Newsletter:** Please send comments, suggestions and text or photographs for the next newsletter to Karl Rossiter, preferably by email to [karl.rossiter@xtra.co.nz](mailto:karl.rossiter@xtra.co.nz)



**Park Kiosk:** The refurbished Pukekura Park Tea House is due to open in the first week of December.

**EVENTS**  
for  
**Friends**

**LUNCH** Pukekura Friends of the Park will host a lunch for the staff who work in the Pukekura/Brooklands parks, the Zoo, and the Fernery/Display Houses on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December between noon and 1.00pm at the Bellringer Pavilion. This function is to thank all members of staff who work in the Park for their excellent contributions and for maintaining the Park to such high standards.

**PLANT SALE** Fernery "Little Treasures" are for sale. Surplus bulbs and tubers from Pukekura Park's Fernery and Display Houses have been made available to the Friends in a first ever sale of Fernery propagation stock. The mostly *Rhodohypoxis* and *Sandersonia* stock will be among other "Little Treasures" to be sold by Friends volunteers as a fund raising project for the Park.

Sale tables will be placed on the lawn outside the Fernery's main entrance on **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November from 10.00am till 2pm**, or as long as stock is available.

The sale is hoped to be the forerunner of similar opportunities in the future in a unique collaboration between Fernery staff and Friends.

The upcoming Rhododendron Festival is also seen as an exceptional opportunity for personal tours of the Fernery's unique collection.

Fernery staff are to conduct tours of the Display Houses every day during the Festival from October 27<sup>th</sup> to November 5<sup>th</sup>. Visitors are asked to meet at the Fernery's main entrance between 1.20 and 2.00 p.m. to take part in the tours.

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The Newsletter of the Friends of Pukekura Park



Volume 1, Number 1

November 2006

## The Newsletter of the Friends of Pukekura Park

### Beauty Spot...

When did you last walk around the King Fern Gully track?

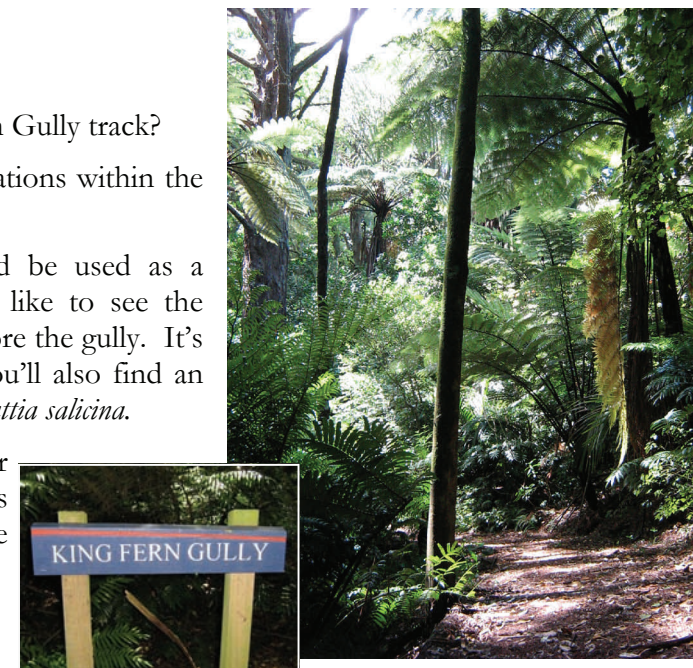
It has to be one of the prettiest 'bushed' locations within the Park.

Perhaps the King Fern Gully track should be used as a reference standard for how Friends would like to see the 'natural sections' of the Park... Go and explore the gully. It's full-bodied, soft and awe inspiring - and you'll also find an informative plaque about the King Fern *Marattia salicina*.

Entry to the King Fern Gully track is either from the south east corner of the Sports Ground, or down a steep path from the Claffey track. ... that's my current choice.

Where is your 'Beauty Spot'?

Karl Rossiter



Elise Smith

### New Manager Man of Many Parks

Mark Bruhn began as Manager Parks at New Plymouth District Council on 21 August, taking the overall responsibility for all aspects of parks management including the asset management and Parkscape operations.

Mark graduated with a Bachelor of Horticulture, endorsed in Business and Technology, with honours from Massey University in 1994. Before starting at New Plymouth District Council he worked in parks at Kapiti Coast District Council, then as Team Manager: Regional Parks and Development at Tauranga City Council.

During his time in Tauranga he was heavily involved in establishing, developing and operating regional parks in collaboration with the Western Bay of Plenty District Council and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

He also managed Mauao (Mount Maunganui), The Mount main beach and, in more recent times, led the redevelopment of Kopurererua Valley, which is one of the largest wetland restoration projects in the Southern Hemisphere. A success of that Kopurererua Valley project was the high level of community involvement.

Mark is married to Tania – and they have three children – Amanda (4 ½), Nathan (2 ½) and Larissa (four months).

Mark can be contacted at the council on 06-759 6060 ext 8732.

This Newsletter is made possible through the generous support of the George Mason Charitable Trust

# Track Notes

Pukekura Park's ever changing face, the preservation of its history and plant knowledge, and identification of the many groups Friends need to recognise in their activities – just some of the challenges ahead of us.

It's now six months since the new Friends of the Park Executive 'took office'. You might not have seen too much of our establishment activities, but rest assured, behind the scenes a lot is simmering.

Our Friends' submission to the NPDC Long Term Council Community Plan was well received and partially effective. It also helped focus our attention on Park issues... and what we need to do about them.

Recently your new committee co-opted Craig Saxton to assist us with our communications, direction and strategy; and Ken Davey (on his retirement from the Park) to assist us with plant and horticultural matters. We've also tapped into George Fuller's extensive knowledge. The committee and its sub-groups have met a number of times and we've also participated in a workshop to determine our direction and priorities. The fruits of those deliberations will soon become apparent! In fact, this newsletter will become a seasonal feature, and evolve from this format. Expect something even brighter and more informative next year!

Now to the Park itself: As you will have noticed, spring has been exceedingly colourful this year with many commentators suggesting that our cooler winter, combined with the previous good summer, provided the right combination of factors to accentuate bloom quality and abundance. Certainly the Park continues to offer a stunning kaleidoscope of colour and scent to stimulate the senses.

But there are some areas of the Park that are changing in character, and perhaps some debate and comment is required from the Friends.

Have you noticed the emergence of a number of 'secluded gardens in a woodland setting'?

Much clearing, landscaping and replanting has gone on during the winter, which, when it all adjusts, establishes and fills-out, will be very attractive. But we must not neglect the bush as it's that backdrop that determines the unique environment and microclimate that is Pukekura Park.

Is Pukekura Park being opened up too much? Is it becoming too cultivated and in some areas, too formal? I really would like to receive your comments.

Bush density and re-growth is another concern along with the necessary tree planting to ensure an ever evolving and maturing Park. My wish is to ensure that in 100 years there are numerous mature and majestic native and exotic trees for future generations to marvel and enjoy.

Are we planting enough replacement trees, and in the right places?

What sort of trees should we be planting in Pukekura Park, and why?

Another concern of mine is the sharing and transferring of knowledge held within the Friends' membership to those working in the Park. Until I joined David Medway on his informative walk 'Plants for Birds, Part III', I had no idea of the importance of many often scruffy looking plants to birds at certain times of the year. If beautification goes much further we run the risk of replacing such useful plants with rhododendrons or azaleas which may not be attractive or useful to birds. According to David Medway, very few rhododendrons provide nectar for birds, but Pukekura Park does contain some exceptions. Do those who work in the Park know which particular specimens attract the birds, and are they propagating more of those plants?

Food for thought. Please contribute your comments for the next newsletter.

Send material to [karl.rossiter@xtra.co.nz](mailto:karl.rossiter@xtra.co.nz)

Enjoy the Park, it's a wonderful tonic!

Karl K Rossiter, FoP President



## Friends Receive Special Thanks For Support Efforts

Another usual busy summer is forecast by Manager, Premier Parks, Bryan Gould, as Park staff prepare for the school children and families visiting over the holidays, the Festival of Lights, another big Summer Scene programme – and, of course, WOMAD.

Just as importantly, Pukekura is to again be re-assessed by the New Zealand Gardens Trust for its suitability for a Garden of National Significance award. "We are certain the assessors will experience the same magic and beauty of Pukekura that we all do – and we are confident they will award us this coveted title for a further three years," Bryan believes.

"On behalf of all the team within Pukekura – at the Fernery, the Zoo and the Park – I offer my thanks for your continued involvement and support. In particular the efforts of that band of hardy volunteers who assist in the park are much appreciated."

"What a beautiful place to work", " You're doing a great job, keep up the good work". These are some of the remarks that we as Friends of the Park volunteers hear from visitors in the park. We spend two hours on Thursday mornings doing set tasks or jobs we consider need doing, while we put the world to rights and talk to visitors from all parts of the world.

If you would like to join us please ring **George Moratti 751 4406**

## Pukekura Friends of the Park end-of-year 'Thank you' to the staff

As in other years, the Friends will host a special 'thank-you' lunch for the staff who work in the Park, the Zoo, and the Fernery / Display Houses. Such events that revolve around eating always seem to be appreciated! Friends help by bringing a plate of finger food. Our thank you lunch for, and with, the Park staff will be at noon on Tuesday 5 December at the Bellringer Pavilion. We look forward to seeing you there!

## Friends of the Park Incorporated

Working for the Park - The 2006 Committee

<b>President</b>	Karl Rossiter	Business Manager / Technologist
<b>Vice-President</b>	John Konijn	Lawyer
<b>Past President</b>	Heather Allen	Teacher
<b>Treasurer</b>	Chris Hinton	Accountant
<b>Secretary</b>	Margaret Rossiter	Voluntary worker
<b>Committee</b>		
Ian Barry	Teacher	
Ken Davey	Horticulturalist / Propagator	
David Medway	Lawyer / Ornithologist	
George Moratti	ex Farmer / Horticulturalist	
Bev Moratti	ex Farmer / Horticulturalist	
Mary Morris	Nurse	
Margot Wiseman	Teacher	
Craig Saxton	Communications consultant	
Elise Smith	Science Tertiary Tutor	
Heather Dodunski	Councillor, NPDC	
Alison Rumball	Councillor, NPDC	

## Membership Fees 2006-2007

Full: \$10 single; \$15 family

Student: \$2

Please make cheques payable to: "Friends of the Park Inc".

Post to: The Treasurer

Friends of the Park Inc.

44 Essex Street, New Plymouth

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New Plymouth 4310

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# Cuttings

## PUKEKURA PEAKS FOR BUSY SEASON

With flowers and birds in their usual abundance at this time of year, Pukekura's gardens are at their best.

In an update of staff activities in the Park, Manager, Premier Parks, Bryan Gould said Pukekura was well set for the annual Taranaki Rhododendron and Garden Festival season.

In a special report for Friends, Bryan Gould, the Manager of Premier Parks reports:-

**Planting:** The team has planted over 3,000 new plants around the park – in a range of sites. Look for new additions at the Rhodo Bank and Conifer Bank; Rhodo Dell path edges; Bowl crib wall; Kunming Garden; Wetland; Victoria Road car park; Bellringer Pavilion garden; Scanlan Walk; Japanese Hillside; Palm Lawn; Kaimata Street entrance; Kaimata Street frontage; Waterwheel; Brooklands; Zoo car park; Curiosity Walk; Horton Walk entrance; Fred Parker Lawn and Stainton Dell. Plus they have been in the Maranui Gully revegetation site and have laid down many new ferns throughout the park. The team is completing the tail-end of the plantings now and will be finished around mid November.



Out and about in Brooklands

Elise Smith

**Nursery site:** New boundary fences will be installed to define the public/non-public areas around the old nursery site (and comply with MAF containment regulations). The recently grassed open space to the east and south of The Gables will be opened to public access by December – ready for the summer crowds. The new open space amounts to an extension of the gardens surrounding The Gables. Initially it will remain a simple open area – and will be used by WOMAD in March 2007.

In the future, once designs are agreed, I anticipate creating some wonderful new landscaped gardens to enclose The Gables. This area is the next exciting location to be re-developed once preliminary plans have been reviewed, public consultation has occurred and Council approval has been received.

**Brooklands Zoo:** The zoo team is working hard to improve various aspects of the zoo area. Recent tree works have improved the light levels and conditions for the animals in the farmyard area. Some minor changes to animal enclosures are ongoing and we will be upgrading boundary fences to meet the strict MAF containment requirements.

**Brooklands seating:** Eight new classic style bench seats, as attractive as they are functional, have been installed, completing the general upgrade and refit of the lawn area.

**Kunming Garden:** Additional plantings to the perimeter are virtually complete, making this garden a stand out attraction. It has become a popular quiet space for visitors and several weddings are booked for this summer. Later in the year Park staff propose to connect the garden to the adjacent Kauri Grove. Tracks are planned to be simple bush paths, suited to the kauri plantation environment.

## Member comment:

The 'naturalness' of Pukekura Park is always billed as its number one attribute, so where does all this formal planting come from?

How does formal under-planting fit in with the natural character of the Park?

Why one *Clivia* every metre? ... Why not informal clumps planted haphazardly in order to appear more natural?

Margaret Rossiter

Jottings

## Birds to look for in Pukekura Park

bellbird	grey duck	longtailed cuckoo	scaup
blackbird	grey warbler	magpie, white-backed	shining cuckoo
black shag	harrier	mallard duck	silver eye
bush falcon	hedge sparrow	morepork	song thrush
chaffinch	house sparrow	mynah	starling
fantail	kaka	pigeon	swan, black
goldfinch	kingfisher	red-billed gull	tui
greenfinch	little shag	rosela	welcome-swallow

## Friends Support Tui Treat

Sustaining Pukekura Park's special nectar producing rhododendrons for Tui is of particular interest to FoP member and ornithologist, David Medway.

David has identified several rhododendrons in Pukekura Park that are particularly attractive to Tui through their ability to provide a valuable source of nectar. This is comparatively rare, as most rhododendrons and virtually all azaleas fail to provide nectar for birds.



Tui on *Prunus campanulata*, Brooklands

David Medway

FoP member and Plant Propagator, Ken Davey, advises that it would be possible to propagate and multiply such special nectar producing rhododendrons so that in a few years time additional young plants could be added to the Pukekura collection to help sustain birdlife in the Park. Ken adds that propagating some of the older and large leaf varieties can be difficult and time consuming – another possible Friends' project perhaps, that contributes to the long term uniqueness of the Park?

FoP would ask Mark Bruhn and Bryan Gould for NPDC permission for Friends to propagate the selected rhododendrons. Then we would ask David Medway to identify the specimens that should be propagated and Ken Davey to help supervise the propagation process. Friends would need to enlist high-tech commercial assistance to grow-on and manage the cuttings and/or grafts – at a cost the Friends could consider raising. The project could be expected to take up to five years before we plant-out the new specimens.

One of the Friends' objectives is to preserve the unique features of the Park. Propagating nectar producing rhododendrons presents a worthwhile sustaining contribution towards such an ambition.

At the same time we should not overlook the propagation of those camellia species and cultivars that also provide nectar.

Your support please. We will need sponsors for each plant propagated!

Tui Treat

## Techniques for propagating the older Rhododendrons (and Camellias)

by Ken Davey, Horticulturalist and Plant Propagator,  
Pukekura Friends of the Park

In today's world many of the rhododendrons you can buy are available because they are easy to propagate from cuttings, grow to a saleable size quickly and flower well as young plants. You will also notice that many of them have small to medium sized leaves.

Many of the older cultivars have larger leaves and corresponding flower head sizes.

In the days before the advent of mist propagation, most rhododendrons were propagated by layering, grafting or using hardwood cuttings put in to overwinter in a closed cold frame.

Layering took up a lot of field space in a nursery and was not always successful. This method is still used today for a few cultivars that do not respond well to other methods of propagation.

Grafting was used for many cultivars that were too upright in growth for layering, or were naturally very slow growing. Many of the rootstocks used were seedlings and the result was a great variation in growth rate of the grafted cultivar due to the variability of the seedling rootstock's own growth rate.

There were also problems of matching the scion diameter to the diameter of the seedling's stem, as many of the cultivars had very large stem diameters, the worst being the giant leaved species and hybrids in the *Rhododendron* 'Grande' and 'Sinogrande' series. Another problem with grafting was and still is to be able to graft low enough on the stock to reduce the problem of rootstock suckering.

Today grafting is still done on a limited scale and instead of using seedlings as rootstocks, cuttings of an easy to root cultivar are used. The grafts are often done using unrooted cuttings of the rootstock. The completed graft is then placed under mist or in a high humidity propagation tent with bottom heat to encourage callusing (uniting) of the graft and the formation of roots on the rootstock cutting.

As the physiology of rooting cuttings became more widely understood and mist propagation and other aids became more commonly used, cutting propagation became the norm, along with that came the trend towards using only those cultivars that rooted easily and produced a saleable plant in a short time.

These days with the average garden getting smaller, the larger growing and also larger leaved cultivars are losing out to the smaller growing ones. It won't be long before the only places that these larger and bolder plants will be seen will be large private gardens and public parks.

It may be that with the demise of local body nurseries and the training they provided that the only way to repropagate these older cultivars is to get one or two commercial nurseries to grow them.

For many rhododendron species and cultivars there are definite cutting collection times.

As far as I know all the soils in Taranaki are suitable for growing just about all rhododendrons.

Replacement camellias are much easier to propagate. The bulk of them will grow with relative ease from cuttings. By hunting around, many of the older cultivars can be found in nursery lists from around the country.

Any difficult species or cultivars can be easily grafted on seedling stock or on rooted cuttings of easy to propagate cultivars. In all cases, cuttings have an optimum time for collection and propagation, but with camellias, fair results can be obtained by taking cuttings at just about any time of year.

If the required plants are not in the trade, then any plant replacement from existing stock will take several years of nursery growing before flowering can or is likely to occur.



## Friends

### Friends Need Friends

Households neighbouring Pukekura Park, user groups, local government and many others as well as casual visitors to the Park are all potential friends of the organisation that is the Friends today.

As a communications strategy workshop held by the Friends committee agreed, these and many others have a continuing interest in Pukekura Park's well being and development.

Contact and regular communication to keep such interested parties involved and informed is seen as essential to the Friends' interests and future growth.

If sharing common goals and mutual appreciation of the Park's role and history in the community could assist Friends' ambitions, then the Friends' fellowship should foster such relationships.

Respecting and supporting each other's interest and use of the Park should be to everyone's mutual benefit, the meeting agreed.

Craig Saxton

### Executive Committee Adds Two New Members

Welcome to Craig Saxton and Ken Davey

The composition of the executive committee that manages the Pukekura Friends of the Park society has been expanded. Craig Saxton and Ken Davey have been co-opted onto the executive.

Craig is now leading the Friends through the development of its Communications and Public Relations strategy, and will then assist with the implementation of activities that complement Park focus. Craig is assisting the committee to analyse its role and vision and to help determine exactly what FoP should be doing. Craig's background is in international journalism; communications, public relations and management consultancy; and the application of on-line technologies for national and international business. Craig went to NPBHS and has worked all over the world. He is the son of D.F.C. Saxton, Chairman of the Pukekura Park Committee from 1948 until 1968. Welcome home Craig... and a big 'thank you' for joining the Friends!

Ken Davey is already a well established and respected professional of Pukekura Park and needs no introduction locally. Internationally known for his plant propagation work, nursery expertise and the management of the Pukekura Fernery display houses, Ken will be invaluable to the committee.

What a great combination of additional talent to the Friends' executive!

### Volunteers Please

Probably the most visible and appreciated of our Friends family, our core of hard working volunteers have a history of giving their time and industry to Park activities. Meeting visitors and making new friends in the process can be as personally rewarding as it is useful. But we can always do more. Enjoy new experiences and acquaintances, and the beauties of the Park at the same time by offering your services in these essential areas:-

**Wanted!** - Drivers for the Buggy (so that our less mobile visitors can experience the Park).

**Wanted!** - Hosts to lead simple guided walks through Pukekura Park.

These are usually small groups of out-of-town visitors who have heard of Pukekura Park and are keen to explore its beauty and diversity.

You'll meet interesting people from all around the world, and it's fun!  
If you can help, please phone **Mary Morris** on **758 1273**

**Wanted!** - Volunteer gardeners for two hours on Thursday mornings—please ring **George Moratti** **751 4406**

