



ROYAL NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF HORTICULTURE

Newsletter

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Our new President

Congratulations to Dr Keith Hammett, our new President, who was this year awarded the Veitch Memorial Medal by the Royal Horticultural Society (UK). This medal is a memorial to James Veitch, Jr, a member of the great nursery firm, James Veitch & Sons of Chelsea, London. The medal is awarded to **“persons of any nationality who have made an outstanding contribution to the advancement and improvement of the science and practice of horticulture”**. It is the highest award that the RHS can make to a non-British resident. Keith was born in England but he has spent more than half his life in New Zealand, much to the benefit of New Zealand horticulture.

Keith is best known as a breeder – of carnations, dahlias, polyanthus, sweet peas, *Clivia*, *Cosmos*, *Dianthus*, *Helianthus*, *Mimulus*, *Nemesia*, *Petunia*, *Sandersonia* and *Zantedeschia* – and has produced more than 300 fully commercial cultivars. It may seem a remarkably diverse collection of plants but what is perhaps even more extraordinary is the rigour with which he approaches any breeding programme. Jack Hobbs, who has collaborated with Keith, has written a fine appreciation of his work in a recent *New Zealand Gardener* article (June 2013, Vol. 60, Issue 6, pp. 32–37). He has **one telling sentence**: **“Keith admits that he is incapable of doing anything superficially.”** Keith’s successes are not just the products of lucky crosses but the result of his thinking very carefully about his aims and painstakingly collecting the raw germplasm required. He is meticulous in his work. His philosophy of plant breeding is summarised in **an article he wrote, “The art of plant breeding”** which appeared in *The Plantsman*, (December 2008, pp. 256–259).

His achievements as a breeder include the development of bicoloured strains of sweet pea, the development of high quality border carnations and of sweetly scented, repeat-flowering *Dianthus*,

the development of *Nemesia* cultivars, and the development of strains of chrysanthemum, *Petunia* and *Helianthus*.

Perhaps his greatest success is with dahlias – he has bred dark-leaved dahlias, seed strains of dahlias, tree dahlias and exhibition dahlias which are appreciated around the world. It is fitting that he was given the **vanity number plate “Dahlia” for his car**.



Keith has received many awards for his work. He is the President of the RNZIH, became an Associate of Honour in 1994, and was awarded the Plant Raisers’ Medal in 1988. **A few of his numerous** other awards include the American Dahlia Society Gold Medal for Breeding and Literature in 1988, the Henry Eckford Gold Memorial Medal of the National Sweet Pea Society, UK in 1997, the John Brown Memorial Medal at Wisley Dahlia Trials in 2007, and the Reginal Cory Cup by the Royal Horticultural Society in 2008 for his work on **dahlias**. **In 2008, he was awarded the Queen’s Service Medal** for services to horticulture. Now he has been presented with the Veitch Memorial Medal, joining a very select and small group of New Zealand horticulturists.

Keith has also been active as a writer and a teacher and in many horticultural societies. He is a frequent guest speaker at international horticultural meetings throughout the world, but especially in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. He has even found time to be a member of the New Zealand Cat Fancy Breeds Standards Council and is a keen photographer. Well done, Keith!

Ross Ferguson

Penny Cliffin: New executive member

We welcome Penny Cliffin onto the RNZIH National Executive.

Penny is a Senior Lecturer of the Department of Landscape Architecture at Unitec, Auckland.

Penny worked as a landscape designer from 1985–1992, and then as a lecturer at Unitec until the present.



Her Masters degree focused on the biodiversity and management of tree collections in Auckland, **and her ongoing research into Auckland’s urban forest** has seen her convene an RNZIH conference titled **“Plants as Green Infrastructure” in 2006**. She has also established the Unitec Arboretum through documentation and labeling of campus trees, and the establishment of an online website at www.unitec.ac.nz/trees. The next phase of the research funded by Unitec is to expand the **concept of mapping Auckland’s urban forest on a GIS platform**.

Penny is the current chair of the Auckland Branch Committee of the RNZIH, which organises branch newsletters and trips, administers the James McPherson award and has commissioned tree registrations of Auckland trees on the Notable Trees Trust register.

New Members

Welcome to our new members, including:

Dr Peter Catt NEW PLYMOUTH
Graham Cochrane INVERCARGILL
Vance Hooper TARANAKI
Vickie Worthington AUCKLAND

From the New Zealand Gardens Trust:
Ashfield Manor House & Garden; Auckland Domain Winter Garden; Carrington House Historical Garden; Dunedin Chinese Garden; Edenhouse; Greenhaugh; Kate Sheppard House & Garden; Mataia Homestead; Northview; Thackwood Gardens; The Paddocks; Tudor Park Country Garden; Tullamore; Whagarei Quarry Garden.

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RNZIH New Zealand Gardens Trust

Report of the annual NZGT conference held in April 2013

The conference was held in Dunedin this year and once again there was a good attendance with 76 delegates present. Various items of business were discussed during the course of the weekend.

Both Mick Reece, who resigned as our representative on the RNZIH, and Margaret Long, who announced her retirement as a trustee, were formally thanked for their participation in the trust.

Views were aired about the most effective way to publicise the Trust and several ideas were put forward. There was discussion on the use of social media, such as Facebook, for promotion. It was agreed that a marketing plan would be formulated by the Trustees.



Margaret Barker addressing the NZGT garden tour on the Larnach Castle grounds.

At the open forum, Trustee Mich Newton brought us up to date on progress on the new website which should be up and running in the near future. Ellerslie Garden Show was discussed and Penny Zino and Robyn Kilty were thanked for their efforts creating the display this year.

Those who participated in the pre-conference tour of Southland Gardens arrived in Dunedin on Friday evening raving about the gardens they had seen – everyone was stunned by the extent, the impeccable maintenance and the sheer beauty of Maple Glen.

On Thursday evening the delegates were fascinated listening to Brian Rance, who spoke about the flora and vegetation of the Sub-Antarctic Islands.

Friday night included the RNZIH Annual General Meeting and the Banks Memorial Lecture, delivered this year by Alan Matchett, curator of the Dunedin Botanic Garden, who spoke on the history of Botanic Gardens.

Saturday and Sunday saw everyone arrive early at the venue of St Margaret's College, minds alert, ready for two days packed with activities. And if there was any tendency to slack, exuberant MC Barbara Wheeler was willing to crack the whip!

Well-known nurseryman Denis Hughes told us about his roots – no pun intended – within a family of horticulturists whose nursery, Blue Mountains Nursery, in Tapanui is known throughout New Zealand. We heard about plants developed over the years by this family enterprise, now in its third generation.

With little time for reflection we were then led into the politics of, the need for and the changes in biodiversity in the home garden. Yolanda van Heezik of the Zoology Department at Otago University delivered a thoughtful address about the part played by wildlife in urban areas and how in fact cities can become a refuge for threatened species – just so long as there are not too many cats on the prowl!

Fiona Eadie, head gardener at Larnach Castle, followed with a rousing challenge to accepted (read tidy) gardening practices. Her basic message was about the importance of plants in the world and how crucial it is to maintain the soil they live in, so that it remains healthy and balanced, without recourse to herbi-

cides, pesticides, fungicides and other unnatural nasty's.

As always dinner on Saturday night was a convivial affair with delegates mixing in the dining hall of St Margaret's College, some no doubt reliving their days as a student. The tables, decorated with autumn leaves, the hips of old roses and tiny plastic frogs, added to the atmosphere and prepared us for what was to come later. Speaker for the evening was Dr Phil Bishop, also from the zoology department at the university and his topic was – yes, frogs! Not the usual after-dinner topic! But we were all fascinated by his photos of some very engaging, colourful critters and his details on their existence plus the risks to amphibians in this modern world. And if you've never been to a conference before, where a frog has proposed the vote of thanks, then this would have been a first!

Speakers on Sunday morning pursued a range of topics – from Hamish Saxton, CEO of Tourism Dunedin, to Dylan Norfield from the Dunedin Botanic Garden, discussing the factors that make for a standout garden, and Fiona Hyland of Heritage Roses New Zealand talking about the Northern Cemetery in Dunedin. All three speakers had valuable ideas on how open gardens can extract the best from their features, and where applicable, their volunteers.

Afternoons were devoted to garden visiting. As usual, we could have drifted happily for longer in each place. The gardens struck a comfortable balance between public and private, formal and informal, feature garden or plant haven. It was interesting to see which plants still provided colour at the end of the usual gardening season. Our final visit was to Wylde Willow, the garden of Trustee Fran and Mike Rawling. A large, peaceful garden with autumn clearly evident, it was a fitting place to wander quietly before we all headed off to restart our busy lives in diverse parts of the country.

Barbara Wheeler, Glenda Bruce and Fran Rawling made a superb job of organising the conference so that it ran smoothly, competently and presented us all with a dramatic and diverse view of the South, both visually and intellectually.

Pamela McGeorge



Laburnum Arch, Larnach Castle.

RNZIH Education Trust

The 2013 Young Horticulturist of the Year competition: June update

Young Leaders Forum

The 2013 Young Leaders Forum was held in late May for the six 2012 competitors as well as two competitors from the 2011 competition. The aim of the forum is to provide a platform for recent competitors to gain a wider understanding of the horticulture industry, to network with each other and with leading suppliers in the industry.



The two day forum included presentations from ANZ, Bayer, Fruitfed Supplies, Turners & Growers, and NZ Horticulture ITO. In addition, the ANZ kindly hosted a six hour introductory session on leadership as well as a get together and dinner for the attendees and sponsors. The participants thoroughly enjoyed the two day forum and the networking opportunities it provided.

Sector Competitions Update

A number of sector associations will be running regional and national competitions over the next two months to identify who will represent their sector in the Grand Final including:

- NZ Winegrowers: Moore, Stephens, Markham Young Viticulturist of the Year
- Landscaping New Zealand: City Parks Services Young Landscaper of the Year
- Nursery and Garden Industry of New Zealand: HortFert Young Achiever competition
- Horticulture NZ: Young Grower of the Year
- NZ Recreation Association – Parks and Gardens: Young Amenity Horticulturist of the Year.

Jessica Mills will represent Floristry NZ Inc at the Grand Final. Jessica has her own floristry business in Hawera. We welcome Jessica back; she was a competitor in the 2010 Young Horticulturist of the Year.

Recent Media Highlights

Ben Smith, our 2011 winner, was interviewed on Radio LiveSPORT during Richard Loe's 'On the Field' show in early April 2012 to highlight the launch of the competition.

In addition, Country TV filmed part of the Young Leaders Forum, held in late May 2013. Their news item can be viewed via a link on the Young Horticulturist of the Year website at www.younghort.co.nz.

Sponsors

The Education Trust would like to take the opportunity to sincerely thank the following companies supporting the 2013 Young Horticulturist of the Year competition event. It is with their support and commitment that we are able to run the competition each year. Our sincere thanks go to the RNZIH who recently approved a grant for the competition.

Partnering Sponsors: AGMARDT, Fruitfed Supplies, Turners & Growers.

Supporting Sponsors: Bayer CropScience, Massey University, NZ Horticulture ITO, *NZ Gardener* magazine, NZ Winegrowers, OnGas.

Affiliated Sponsors: NZ Gourmet, Yara Fertilisers, Everris, City Parks Services, ANZ, Yates, Manukau Institute of Technology – School of Horticulture, Faber Greenhouses.

Friends to the competition: Auckland Botanic Gardens, The Cornwall Park Trust Board, Rainbow Park Nurseries, Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture.

Elenka Nikoloff

RNZIH Notable Trees Trust

Ron Flook Award

Congratulations to Gavin Donaldson of Auckland for receiving the 2012 Ron Flook Award. This is the New Zealand **Arboricultural Association's (NZAA) premier award**. It is named after the late Ron Flook, renowned Nelson landscape architect, past-President of the RNZIH, Registrar and a founder of the New Zealand Notable Trees Scheme. Ron's initiatives continue through the formation of the Notable Trees Trust in 2007/2008, and their online tree register (<http://www.notabletrees.org.nz>).

At the Conference Dinner Awards the NZAA was honoured to have Ron's wife, Cindy Flook, there to present the award.

Gavin has a long career in arboriculture dating from 1980. He is currently employed as Head Arborist for Auckland Council. Over the decades, he has contributed significantly to the promotion of the arboricultural industry, being a founding member of the NZAA and recently serving on the Executive up until this year, including being the co-ordinator of the Approved Contractors Scheme for several years.

Gavin's citation was prepared by Kevin Squire and published in *Tree Matters* (Edition 56, Vol. 14, Issue 4), the magazine of the New Zealand Arboricultural Association Inc. (<http://nzarb.org.nz>).



Notable Tree Notes

In each edition of the Newsletter we feature a tree or trees from the New Zealand Notable Trees Trust database. The idea is to highlight a specimen or group with outstanding attributes and/or an especially interesting history.

MWR/G1052 – Westoe Garden, 129 Kakariki Road, Greatford, Marton.

Westoe is situated on a small terrace above the Rangitikei River, just off State Highway 1, eight kilometres north of Bulls.

Sir William Fox (1812–1893) and his wife Sarah arrived to settle in New Zealand in 1842. Westoe was named after the village in north east England where Fox was born. Fox was a significant figure in early New Zealand contributing as a politician, social reformer, painter and explorer.

The micro-climate afforded by this site offers shelter from the strong westerly winds and provides some comparatively frost free areas on the edge of the terrace. A variety of soil types allows a wide range of plants to be grown within this wooded haven.

The four hectare garden was started by Sir William Fox when he built the homestead. It is now listed as a category 1 Historic Place and was built in 1874 because the site of the first house which was closer to the Rangitikei River was prone to flooding. Some of **Sir William Fox's original plantings still remain today.** Amongst others, the Atlantic cedar MWR/1041, stone pine MWR/1042 and Norfolk Island pine MWR/1043 are now magnificent specimen trees.

Since 1885 three generations of the Howard family, each with a special interest in unusual plants, have further developed the garden. The emphasis is on trees, shrubs and woodland bulbs and perennials with a particular emphasis on plants endemic to New Zealand.

Several of the trees at Westoe were noted in the Burstall and Sale book, *Great Trees of NZ*:

“A fine Atlas cedar at Westoe, Greatford, about 8 km south-east of Marton in the Rangitikei River valley, is one of the original plantings in the garden of Sir William Fox, an early public figure, staunch prohibitionist and intermittent premier of New Zealand” (Burstall S.W. & Sale, E.V. 1984. Feature tree 66, p. 160).

MWR/1041 – *Cedrus atlantica* (Atlas cedar)

As an arborist and a man with a passion for trees, I have found it a privilege to have the pleasure in managing this fine specimen over the years.

Some time ago we reduced some of the lateral spread due to the onset of stress fractures occurring along the branches. We also gave the tree a long overdue tidy up, which entailed the removal of storm damage and dead wood. Other than that the tree has prospered without human intervention and I am sure that, with some occasional care and attention, this tree will remain for the pleasure of several generations to come.

Recording the history of these trees on the New Zealand Tree Register has allowed me the opportunity to share the magnificence of some of our local trees to like-minded passionate tree people throughout NZ.

Darryl Judd, Guardian Tree Services (Palmerston North and Hawkes Bay)

The New Zealand Notable Trees Trust manages a free public database containing details of some of the most notable and significant trees in this country. The database is constantly being updated. New trees may be registered at any time – together with any contributions of information or support. View online at www.notabletrees.org.nz



Top: *Cedrus atlantica* (Atlas cedar) located at Westoe, Estate, NZTR record MWR/1041. Photo: Darryl Judd.

Bottom: NZNTT database 'Map View' for MWR/1041.



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