

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

News and Views December, 2004

Check the web site to keep up-to-date with events: www.owb.co.nz

For all walks meet at the Information Centre, Te Marae o Tane

For information re walks and seminars contact the Treehouse on (04) 499 1400

Saturday, 11 December, 9am	Plant Care work party. <i>Leaders: Bronwen Wall, Jonathan Kennett, ph. 472 5891</i>
Sunday, 26 December 2 pm	Visit the kauri plantation, then go to the head of the adjacent valley to see tall original pukateas, gully tree ferns and ancient mahoes. 2-2.5 hours. Stout footwear recommended <i>Leader: Dr John Dawson</i>
Saturday, 9 January, 9am	Plant care work party <i>Leaders: Bronwen Wall, Jonathan Kennett, ph 472 5891</i>
Sunday, 23 January, 2pm	Rare and unusual native plants. All on one level from Wild Garden via deck and Treetop Walkway to the Lookout <i>Leader; Dr. John Dawson</i>
Saturday, 12 February, 9am.	Plant care work party <i>Leaders: Bronwen Wall, Jonathan Kennett, ph 472 5891</i>
Sunday, 27 February, 10am – note different time.	Something different: Through the Khandallah Reserve to the TV tower and an area of strange wind shrub vegetation. Note: meet at the carpark at the end of Clark Street at 10am. Bring lunch.. Stout footwear recommended <i>Leader: Dr John Dawson</i>
The first 4 Tuesdays, in March, 7.30 pm.	Seminar Series: For more detail see later in Newsletter
Sunday, 6 March, 2pm	Stepping Out Series: Rare and unusual native plants. All on one level from Wild Garden via Treetop Walkway to the Lookout <i>Leader; Dr. John Dawson</i>
Saturday, 12 March, 9am.	Plant care work party <i>Leaders: Bronwen Wall, Jonathan Kennett, ph 472 5891</i>
Sunday, March 13, 2pm	Stepping Out Programme: Pilgrimage to the giant, 800 year old rimu and other interesting trees on the Blue Trail. Stout footwear recommended <i>Leader: Dr John Dawson</i>
Sunday, March 20, 2pm	Note this is third Sunday of month : «Bludgers in the bush »». Hunting down native plants that climb up or perch on trees to get to ggod light.

To Contact the Trust Board

📍 *Postal Address:* 160 Wilton Rd, Wilton, Wellington 5.

📞 Chairman: Athol Swann, *Phone* 472 8417 *Email* athol.swann@paradise.net.nz

📞 Secretary: Margaret Crimp, *Phone* 475 3263 *Email* m.crimp@xtra.co.nz

📞 Treasurer: Johanne McComish. *Phone* 476 2925 *Email* mccomish@paradise.net.nz

The trustees welcome individual communications from members on any matters relating to Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve or the Trust, particularly from those who would like to assist and participate in our activities.

Gift Ideas

The Otari-Wilton's Bush greeting cards are ideal for Christmas messages and as small gifts or stocking fillers.

These cards, featuring plants growing in Otari-Wilton's Bush, are available singly (\$2.00) or in packs of 4 (\$7.50). Supplies can be obtained from the hosts at the information Centre 11-1pm Saturday or Sunday, or by contacting Athol Swann or Margaret Crimp.

A gift of Trust membership to your friends is another suggestion. Use the membership form on the back of the Newsletter. The Treasurer will be happy to welcome and inform your friend that the membership was gifted by you.

Coming soon:

1. A new home on the web for Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust. Visit us at www.OtariWiltonsBush.org.nz

2. Seminar Programme

New Zealand forests are rich in small plants in moist, shady places, but because of their small size they are often overlooked. Come along and learn from experts about these intriguing and attractive plants.

Tuesday March 1. Liverworts (Rodney Lewington)

Tuesday March 8: Mosses (Barbara Polly)

Tuesday March 15: Filmy ferns (Patrick Brownsey)

Tuesday March 22: Lichens (Barbara Polly)

Venue: Otari-Wilton's Bush Information Centre. Time 7.30pm.

3. Stepping Out Walks: For more information see diary.

4. What Native Plant is That?

John Dawson is repeating this course in the autumn. It will begin on Feb. 16 and finish on March 19.

At the beginning there will be a lecture at Onslow College about New Zealand forests and another near the end on New Zealand alpine plants. There will be three Saturday field trips - to Kaitoke Regional Park; Waikanae Forest Reserves; and Otari-Wilton's Bush. There will also be a plant identification workshop at Otari on a Saturday afternoon.

More detailed information is available at the Otari-Wilton's Bush Information Centre. To enrol for the course phone Community Education, Onslow College - 477 1118 or email - commmed@onslow.school.nz

Report from the Chairman

A year has passed since Bill Winstanley due to his advancing terminal illness resigned from the Trust Board and it is appropriate that we pause and refresh our memories of him and his considerable contribution to our relatively young organization. For me, having taken over from him as chairman there have been many reminders - last Sunday provided one, when I joined John Dawson and a small group on his guided walk to the ancient Rimu trees. Like John's, Bill's guiding skills were marked by the enthusiasm with which he pointed out the wonders of nature, which we most certainly would have overlooked had we traversed the walk just for the exercise. I find that this enthusiasm rubs off on all participants and we realize the significance of our wonderful reserve when we can share the space with plants whose life cycle extends over so many more years than for us humans.

A brief update on the various projects and activities since the October newsletter follows :-

Kaiwharawhara Revegetation

Both the Greater Wellington Regional Council and the Wellington City Council are keen that we continue the 'project' in 2005. The Trust Board has decided to meet their request and continue planting adjacent areas, next year, and to do some planting with our neighbours – the Trelissick Park/Ngaio Gorge Working Group, in the area between Otari and their patch. That is the area across Churchill Drive, on its north side. Unfortunately **rabbits** have appeared from nowhere, and are chewing into our plantings, - and so there will be quite a bit of fill-in planting to do.

The growth of weeds is still a great problem, particularly wandering willy.

The Otari Trust has been asked if they would initiate a campaign to make the 40 neighbours living adjacent to our 'project' aware of the risk of spreading weeds into our recently planted areas.

Next year the Otari staff will be looking for additional nursery space to help them grow-on the plants we will need for the filling-in and new planting areas. So if you are interested in having a 'home nursery' would you get in touch with Dave who is on the Otari staff.

Thanks to all who have helped out this year. It's been a great year, apart from the rabbits.

Education Centre Feasibility Study

The last report indicated that the next phase of this study would involve discussions with Council Managers to determine possible options for location of an education centre with other visitor centre facility improvements. These discussions have been deferred pending the public release of a separate report commissioned by Council and covering several initiatives aimed at raising the profile of the Reserve. This is expected to be available shortly.

Rata Boardwalk and Viewing Platform

Members who have recently strolled through the ‘wild garden’ will have noted that all the additional associated path work has been completed with very pleasing results. All that now remains for this project is the completion of the interpretation panel for the platform and we will then arrange an official opening, likely to be scheduled for late January 05.

Wilton Bowling Club proposed New Building

The Wilton Bowling Club issued a general invitation by letter box drop to some neighbours to attend a meeting on 19 October to be acquainted with the proposal “to construct a new building to cover an existing green and provide an indoor bowling facility.” No specific invitation was addressed to our Trust. We understand from members who attended, that concerns were raised on various aspects of this development and there was an acknowledgement that the invitations were loosely handled. To qualify as consultation under the Resource Consent process we consider specific invitations to the wider neighbouring Community are necessary.

The Trust Board is also concerned that the report presented to the Council District Plan & Reserves Sub-Committee meeting on 20 August 2004 which granted land owner approval in principle for the proposed new building subject to all necessary consents being obtained, was misleading and favoured the applicant in several aspects. These concerns have been conveyed to the Council Chief Executive but the proposal is likely to proceed in due course to a fully notified resource consent hearing at which objections will be considered.

The Board considers that the proposal contravenes the provisions of the Reserves Act 1977 which places emphasis *on the retention of open spaces and on outdoor recreational activities* for sites classified as recreation reserves. Additionally, the proposal contravenes the discretionary limits stipulated in the Council District Plan Rules for buildings on a site designated as Open Space A, and consequently should not be granted approval to proceed.

On a less serious note, for those members who enjoy ‘jazz’ music, I can recommend an evening at Old St Pauls, where Andrew London and his ‘Hot Club Sandwich’ group perform monthly on a Friday evening 5.30 to approx 8.30 pm. Last Friday, Pauline and I, as well as a small group of other Trust members enjoyed fabulous entertainment for a modest \$10 p.p. Note in your diary the next performance scheduled for Friday 4th February ’05 at 5.30pm and join us there – you will not be disappointed.

Finally, with 2004 now drawing to a close, the Trustees wish you all a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Athol Swann

A Word from the Valley

Sometimes it's hard to be objective about the valley when you spend all your time there urging the plants to grow. You lose sight of the successes, and it becomes hard to see the forest for the weeds...

That's where site monitoring comes into its own; where the feedback from other valley users as they walk past really helps put things into perspective; and where taking photographs regularly starts to pay off.

People walking past the revegetation sites will notice some new interpretation signs along the way. These signs are worth looking at, if we do say so ourselves! We had a great time collating the information for the signs. It confirmed what we've been suspecting all along – most of the sites are thriving as a result of the efforts volunteers have lavished on them. It also made us realise that people have been interested in tidying up this weed-invested valley since way back in the mid 90s, when blackberry and gorse were a mile high and people slept in cardboard boxes “in-t' middle o-t' road.”

So if you haven't managed to visit the valley for a while, treat yourself and wander down one sunny afternoon this summer; and if you're a regular trekker, take some time to step back, look nostalgically into the middle distance and just compare what's down there now with what was there a year or two ago.

We think you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Jonathan and Bronwen

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH NEWS _ December 2004

Spring is a time when nature likes to get the upper hand. It is easy to let the wind annoy you at this time of the year and it is equally easy to be caught out by the heat on the odd day when it is calm.

The wind, in combination with some severe spring storms has stripped more leaves off more trees. All of the forest is letting in more light and there also seems to be more leaf litter on the tracks. Of course at this time of the year the weeds and the lawns are growing fast and it is difficult to keep up with these growth spurts.

We are lucky to have a dedicated core of volunteers who come every Thursday morning to help us and we always appreciate their work. If you are interested in joining us, the work is light and can involve potting up revegetation plants in the nursery or weeding the collections and of course, the conversations are lively.

During October we had a group of over 100 people from an international garden centre conference. Unfortunately the day was drizzly, but the guides did a wonderful job of escorting them around the

forest and collections. On the same day we also had a visit from David Hardman from Kew Gardens in London and another small group from an international biodiversity conference. It never rains.....

Six selected cultivars from the Rene Orchiston flax collection have been planted at the Churchill Drive entrance, the northern picnic area and beside the Kaiwharawhara Stream along Wilton Bush Road. These have been specially selected by Saani Scott, a weaving tutor at Te Wananga O Aotearoa, and will be available for harvesting, by permit, for local weavers. Rene Orchiston travelled the country for 30 years selecting the best flax cultivars to preserve them at a time when interest in weaving was at a low and the art was dying out. Now with the huge resurgence in interest, these plants are proving to be a wonderful resource.

Michael Bayly and Alison Kellow from Te Papa have donated many species of hebe used for identification purposes while studying the hebe genus at Te Papa. Most of the plants will be re-propagated and added to the collections. The Department of Conservation has also donated two rare native gentians from Charleston on the West Coast.

A new boardwalk and viewing platform has been installed around the huge northern rata , *Metrosideros robusta*, which will hopefully protect its roots from trampling and deter people from walking on the garden.

Coming up in the new year is further remedial work on the circular track. We are hoping most of the rest of this track will be able to be completed.

Susan Moore, who replaced Eleanor Burton, has just left us to also have a baby. Susan has done a wonderful job of 'reconciling' the rockery while she was here. Susan and her husband, Martin, will be missed by the staff and volunteers. Given the time of the year, we will not be advertising for a replacement until the new year, but are lucky to have Rewi Elliot join us for the university holidays. Rewi was a gardener at the Botanic Garden until last year when he left to study at Victoria University,

Robyn Smith

Praise for Guiding.

On November 14 a group 20 Americans (including 2 Canadians) visited Otari for a guided tour. They were in New Zealand for visits to gardens and nature reserves as one of the events to mark the centenary of the oldest garden magazine in the US which is published in Boston. It was a beautiful day and the group was very impressed with Otari-Wilton's Bush.

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

Membership Application Form

Our membership year is from 1 April to 31 March. New members joining after 1 January will have the membership accredited to the following year. Membership entitles you to receive our newsletter and receive notification of all forthcoming activities at Otari - Wilton's Bush.

I wish to join the Trust
 (name of new member)

Postal Address

Telephone ().....(Home) E-mail.....

Billing Name and Address
 (if different from above)

Subscription:	Corporate	\$30	
	Double/Family	\$15	
	Individual	\$10	
	Student/Unwaged	\$5	
Donation:		\$	
Total Payment :	(please enclose your cheque)		\$

The Trust is registered as a Charitable organisation and donations over \$5.00 are tax deductible. We will automatically send you a receipt for tax purposes. We regret we cannot process payments by Credit Card.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please indicate the areas of interest to you from the following list:

- Work parties
- Weekend hosting at Otari Information Centre
- Fund raising

Please send your application to: The Treasurer,
 Otari-Wilton's Bush,
 160 Wilton Road,
 Wilton,
 Wellington.