

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

News and Views March, 2011

Web site: www.otariwiltonsbush.org.nz. For all walks meet at the Information Centre, Te Marae o Tane unless otherwise stated. Unless otherwise stated walks are free to Trust members, otherwise \$3. For information re walks and seminars contact the Treehouse on (04) 499 1400

The first Saturday of each month. 9am	Plant care is on the first Saturday of each month. It will not run in January, but will resume in February. Contact Wilbur Dovey, 4991044.
Tuesdays in March 7.30pm	March Seminars. Keep Tuesday evenings in March free. An interesting series of seminars has been organised. Details on page 4. Gold coin donation
Sunday 6 March 2.00pm	Love Affairs at Otari–Polygamy, Incest and Hermaphrodites <i>Leader: Rewi Elliot.</i> (Note change of date from February 27. This is because Rewi was going on a plant collecting trip to Otago, funded by the Trust.)
Sunday 27 March 2pm	Tour of Percy Reserve. 2pm at Percy Reserve. Anyone wanting a ride meet in the Otari car park at 1.30 (Advise Margaret 475 3263 in advance). <i>Leader: Jill Broome</i>
Sunday 10 April. 2pm	Treasure Trail. Easy walk, 1-1.5 hours <i>Leader: John Dawson</i>
Sunday 17 April. 2pm	Fungal Foray. <i>Leader: Geoff Ridley and Alison Stringer</i>
Sunday 8 May. 2pm	Treasure Trail <i>Leader; John Dawson</i>
Sunday 22 May. 2pm	Plant Skullduggery <i>Leader: Chris Moore</i>
Sunday 5 June. 2pm	Plant Identification Workshop <i>Leader: John Dawson</i>
Sunday 26 June. 2pm	Bernie Aston <i>Leader: Sandra Clarke</i>

Chairman's Message



We have been blessed with some great days this summer at Otari-Wilton's Bush.

Visitor numbers have been good and we have had a number of cruise ship visitors including two bus loads from the visiting Queen Elizabeth. Thanks to all the volunteer guides and hosts who assisted.



As you can see Rewi and his team have been busy with more path simplification in progress. As mentioned last time a further trip by staff to collect from South Island areas is about to take place we look forward to the results. New waharoa are now in place and the extra height gives a little more importance to an exceptional garden and bush reserve.

The Trust has purchased a new LCD projector so we look forward to bright pictures during the March seminars which start next week! Members should also note the special tour of Percy's reserve on March 27TH please let Margaret know if rides are required.

The planning is currently underway for the changes to the curator's house and we look forward to the continued progress on the landscape plan.

I hope you are all getting an opportunity to enjoy the gardens and bush reserve. The walking tracks are getting lots of use with positive comments on the changes to date.

May I wish you all a happy New Year for 2011 and see you soon at Otari-Wilton's Bush.

Regards

Phil Parnell

Chairman

Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust

Otari Report

Kia ora koutou,

It feels like we are well into the New Year here, I hope you all had a safe and happy festive season. The weather has been fantastic for the garden; unfortunately the weeds have also taken full advantage and are keeping us on our toes.



I had the pleasure of visiting Fiordland with members from the Wellington and Otago Botanical Societies during January. Having never been in the area before, everything was a delight. It was a real privilege to spend the time there with some excellent botanists gaining a smidgen of their knowledge. I also spent an afternoon in Queens Park in Invercargill, well worth a visit if you are ever in the deep south.

At Otari we have recently had the poupou (posts) of our two waharoa replaced. The old legs had decayed substantially where they were in contact with the ground. The new poupou are both taller and thicker, and should last considerably longer as they are treated timber. Portions of the former poupou have been taken back to Taranaki with the intention to carve them into pieces to adorn the rear of the waharoa.

Work to re-align the main path in the 38 degrees garden is nearly complete. The garden now has a central main path through it that lessens the former confusion of paths and provides safer access for our tractor. Planting will begin here in March.

A camera pole has been installed in the northern car park off Churchill Drive with cameras due to be installed during March. The new cameras will be solar powered and will provide much needed security for visitors using this car park.

We have entered the New Year with a great team. Franz Tischler has joined us as our new gardener. Franz has come to Otari after finishing a three year horticultural apprenticeship with Wellington City Council.

2011 is the United Nations International Year of Forests. I encourage you all to do something this year to help with the conservation of forests and to raise awareness on sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. If you need some inspiration come and take a walk on the Nature Trail or visit the 800 year old rimu.

Kind regards,

Rewi Elliot
Curator/Manager
Otari Native Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush Reserve

OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

Presents

MARCH SEMINARS



March 1: John Sawyer (DoC):
"Rescue plans for native plants"

March 8: Phil Garnock-Jones (VUW):
"Is New Zealand's flora old and unchanging, or young and rapidly evolving?"
This talk will introduce phylogenetic analysis, using some examples of recent research at Victoria University of Wellington. . The origins of our *Plantago*, *Rhabdothamnus*, *Veronica* (*Hebes* and their relatives), and *Wahlenbergia* will be included, along with some other groups.

March 15: Carol West (DoC):
"Botany and ecology of the Simpson Desert (Australia)".

March 22: Carlos Lehnebach (Te Papa):
New Zealand native forget-me-nots; diversity and genetic affinities.

March 29: Gareth Cooper (GWRC):
Park Management and Ranger Roles

Where: Otari-Wilton's Bush Information Centre, Wilton Road.

Time: 7.30pm

Gold coin donation

Trust Board 2010 - 2011



The Board of Trustees

Chairman Phil Parnell	93 Amritsar St, Khandallah. Phone: 479 2239. landy@xtra.co.nz
Secretary: Margaret Crimp:	167 Wilton Rd., Wilton. Phone: 475 3263. m.crimp@xtra.co.nz
Treasurer. Jocelyn Hoskin	14 Warwick St, Wilton. Phone: 475 8696. jocelynhoskin@clear.net.nz
Peter Buxton	106 Weld St, Wadestown. Phone: 472 3456. jbuxton@paradise.net.nz
Wilbur Dovey	40 Warwick St. Wilton. Phone: 499 1044. cweag.dovey@xtra.co.nz
John Shrapnell	27 Hanover St., Wadestown. Phone: 473 7128. shrapnell@clear.net.nz
Mariska Wouters	13 Limerick Grove, Ascot Park, Porirua 021 401448. mmwouters@yahoo.com
Cathy Wylie	43 Huntleigh Park Way, Ngaio. Phone: 938 6498. cathy.wylie@nzcer.org.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.

Newsletter: Vera Burton. Phone 9388207. davee@paradise.net.nz

A Reminder from the Treasurer.

Subscriptions for the next financial year fall due in March. If you pay early you won't be plagued by reminders!

The Trust Annual General Meeting.

This important meeting will be held on Wednesday, 11 May at 7.15pm. At this meeting there will be the election of Trustees. We would be delighted to hear from any member who is interested in becoming a Trustee. For more information contact Phil Parnell or Margaret Crimp.

Walking Sticks

A selection of beautiful sturdy walking staves has been donated to Otari by Geoffrey Moss. Geoffrey has made them himself, all with different handles and of different woods. They are available to borrow from the hosts in the weekends for a gold coin donation. They must be returned by 4pm. Thank you, Geoffrey

OTARI AWARDS

The Board is calling for nominations for the Otari awards. These are granted for distinguished volunteer service.

The number of awards will be limited to no more than three each year.

Only financial members, or the staff, are eligible to nominate volunteer workers for these awards. Nominees must have made a considerable contribution to the work of the Trust and they must also be financial members of Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust.

The Chairman of the Board will appoint a panel of no more than three to make the final selection. It will contain one independent (non-Board) member. The selection panel will be chaired by the Chairman of the Board.

Nominations should be submitted in writing by 31 March to the Secretary of the Board.

The awards will take the form of a framed certificate personalised for each of the recipients.

The awards will be presented at the AGM in May, or at a special event.



Staff Profile:

My name is Finn Michalak, and I have recently become a Collection Curator at Otari.

I have been working on and off at Otari for about two and a half years now. Originally born, bred and horticulturally trained in England, I came to New Zealand on a one year working visa in October 2008 with the sole purpose of travelling and learning as much as possible about New Zealand plants.

Although from the East of England, my education and experience in horticulture was undertaken in the South West of England where the relatively warm, wet coastal conditions favoured many southern hemisphere plant groups. Although my interest in plants is wide reaching, I was fascinated by the unique flora of New Zealand and its high level of endemic species. After a year working at Abbotsbury Sub-Tropical Gardens in Dorset I obtained a travel bursary from the Royal Horticultural Society which funded my trip to New Zealand.

When not working at Otari, I have spent time travelling to the North and South Islands, mostly looking at plants. This has benefitted my job at Otari and has contributed to my understanding of the importance of botanic gardens and their role internationally in the preservation of native species.

Obviously I had to extend my work visa on a couple of occasions to continue to work here at Otari. The nature of the work, alongside an enthusiastic and knowledgeable team makes this a very satisfying job role. There is a lot happening here at the moment and I will hopefully continue to work here for a good while to come. Therefore, I am currently in application for my residency.

I have a well rounded job role here. I have to curate, maintain and develop part of a significantly large historic and progressive native plant collection. I am also responsible for the Otari nursery that is constantly requiring the propagation of new plant material brought back from various collecting trips around the country. I'm excited about the future here because of the upcoming redevelopments that will increase and refresh our total collection, put emphasis on the threatened plants of New Zealand and provide a more informative and interesting garden visit. Interaction with academics, professionals, volunteers, schools and the public make this a thoroughly rewarding job role.

Bernard Cracroft Aston

B. 9 August 1871 at Beckenham, Kent - d. 31st May 1951 Wellington



Bernie was the eldest of 8 children. His parents were Murray and Mary Aston nee Griffen, his grandfather was Benjamin R. Aston MA. Bernie attended Horling Grammar School and after the family emigrated went to Christchurch Boys High School from 1884 – 1886. By 1887 the family were living at Dunedin. Bernie attended Dunedin Technical College probably at night school; later he attended some courses at Otago University and later Victoria University but did not graduate. He became an analyst at Milburn Lime and Co. for three years.

On the 1st May 1899 Aston was appointed “an Analyst to the Government” and shifted to Wellington. He developed the laboratory for the Department of Agriculture and was chief chemist until his retirement in 1936. At first he lived in the Aro Valley but about 1920 bought a property at 26 Espin Terrace, Karori where he lived until his death in May 1951. During his 30 years there he developed a collection of NZ trees and plants which spread across 3 sections; no. 22, 24 and 26 Espin Tce. Many are still growing on these sections in the year 2010.

He retired in 1936 just 18 months after Cockayne died. He was a keen amateur botanist and maintained this hobby all his life. He grew his first collection of plants in his parents garden at St Leonards, Dunedin. He brought them to flower and then made specimens for his herbarium. He collected material first with Donald Petrie. When Petrie left Dunedin in 1894 Bernie then contributed items to Thomas Kirks's (b 1828 - d 1898) private herbarium. The items were from the Southland and Otago area. Aston's own herbarium was gifted to the National Museum (WELT) in about 1920.

Aston was largely instrumental in seeing a list of Dunedin plants was published in 1896. Later he was involved in publishing lists of plants in the Tararua and Ruahine ranges and also in the Kaimanawa ranges. He also published a useful list of plants in the Wellington Province.

Aston was one of the first 20 fellows of the New Zealand Institute later called the Royal Society.

He received various awards and prizes and in 1948 he was awarded the CBE.

When Cockayne prepared the plan for Otari in 1932, he nominated two people significantly younger than he was to continue the voluntary interest in Otari. One was Bernie Aston who was still alive when the first fulltime Curator, Walter Brockie, was appointed in June 1947. The other person was Margaret Martin with a special interest in ferns who remained living in Wellington until 1943 when she went to live at Kamo near Whangarei. One of Bernie's sisters was the mother of Professor Geoff Baylis (1923 – 2003) who was the foundation Professor of Botany at Otago University. His early claim to fame was discovering 4 new plant species on a visit to the Three Kings Islands in the 1940s; they were *Tecomanthe speciosa*, *Pennantia baylisiana*, *Elingamita johnsonii* and *Cordyline kaspar*.

During his first ten years at the Dept of Agriculture in Wellington Bernie worked with Professor Easterfield to examine the chemical constituents of various New Zealand plants. First it was tutu, then the karaka tree, followed by the rimu and pukatea. Later he transferred his interest from the poisonous aspect of plants to their contribution in making vegetable dyes. In 1918 an article on the *Coprosmas* published in the NZ Journal of Science and Technology was one of a series he wrote on the subject. H. E. Connor's *The Poisonous Plants of NZ.*, 1977 pays tribute to Bernie's work. Also Brooke, Cambie and Cooper *New Zealand Medicinal Plants*, 1981, includes citations. Later in life Bernie became more interested in promoting the garden cultivation of New Zealand plants and trees



and wrote articles for horticultural and other publications. Over 30 articles on New Zealand plants can be attributed to him.

During his life he collected over 20 plants that had previously been unknown. A list of those named after him follows.

Carex druceana var. *astonii*

Carmichaelia astonii

Epilobium astonii

Gentiana astonii

Muehlenbeckia astonii

Myosotis astonii (regarded as a variety of *M. petiolata*)

Poa astonii

Coprosma astonii has been renamed *Coprosma cuneata*

Veronica astonii has been renamed *Veronica tetragona* ssp. *subsimilis*

In this article, I have not tried to describe Bernie's contribution to the study of chemistry and geology as it is applied to the development of farming and forestry in NZ.

MEMBERSHIPS

Dunedin Field Club (Sec for 3 years)

Tararua Tramping Club (Original member)

NZ Institute (now the RSNZ) Pres 1926 – 1928 and 1930 – 1935 as well as holding other offices

National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum Board 1930

Tongariro National Park Board 1926 – 1931

President of the New Zealand Science Congress Auckland 1929

Canterbury Phil. Subantarctic Exhibition 1907

Member of the Ecological Society (UK) 1900 to 1951

NZ Forest and Bird Protection Society and its President 1946 – 1948

Aston was also a member of the Chemical Society (UK) and other similar societies

Bailey, R. Bernard Cracroft Aston. Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. 7 April 2006 URL <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz>

Sandra Clarke.

Glenn Denby

Glenn has passed away since the short note of his illness, and expression of gratitude for his initial work and advice during the early days of establishing our Trust. He died, aged 63 years, on the 21st December 2010, after courageously battling Motor Neurone Disease.

A capacity memorial service was held at St Andrews on the Terrace on Christmas Eve.

The service was a moving tribute to his family, musical and spiritual life, and his participation and courage during his illness.

It was a celebration accompanied by outstanding music performed by fellow musicians, of a life well and fully lived.

It was a privilege to have known him.

Jock Fleming



Myosotis explanata

This alpine forget-me-not is found in the wild around Arthur's Pass. It grows in damp rocky places such as wet screes and shady ravines. At Otari it lives in the pot collection in the Nursery. It has quite large showy white flowers, blue in some specimens. (Otari has a white one.)



OTARI
WILTON'S BUSH TRUST



OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

(Supporting Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve)

Membership Application Form

We are delighted to welcome new members - whatever your interest in Otari-Wilton's Bush - from a desire to participate in active friendly volunteer support and educational activities, or just the satisfaction of being associated with this wonderful native plant reserve. 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.

Yes, I would like to join the Trust.

Name (s) :

Postal Address :

.....

.....

Telephone contact number/s : ().....

E-mail address: < >

Billing Name and Address :

(if different from above)

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

*The Trust is registered as a Charitable organisation and donations over \$5.00 qualify for a tax rebate to individual taxpayers. (annual limits apply) We will provide a donation receipt to support your tax rebate claim

**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:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work parties | <input type="checkbox"/> Hosting at the Information centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administration | <input type="checkbox"/> Guiding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Research | |

Please send this completed form with your cheque to:

**The Treasurer,
Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust,
160 Wilton Road, Wilton,
Wellington 6012**