

# OTARI-WILTON'S BUSH TRUST

## News and Views December, 2013

Web site: [www.otariwiltonsbush.org.nz](http://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

<b>The first Saturday of each month. 9am</b>	<b>Plant care</b> is usually on the first Saturday of each month. <b>No plant care in January.</b> It will resume on 1st February - the first Saturday in February. Contact Wilbur Dovey, 4991044.
<b>Sunday 15 December 2pm</b>	<b>Plants that Poison, Maim and Kill</b> One and a half hours, easy. <i>Leader: Margaret Crimp</i> <b>Please note the change of date - now the third Sunday of the month.</b>
<b>Sunday 26 January 2pm</b>	<b>How some of our native plants evolved to cope with hungry moa.</b> An easy walk looking at plant adaptations with a plant identification workshop focussing on divaricates. <i>Leader: John Dawson</i>
<b>Sunday 23 February 2pm</b>	<b>Future developments at Otari.</b> Come and see how our landscape and gardens will be changing over the coming years. An easy walk around the collections. <i>Leader: Rewi Elliot, Curator/Manager, Otari</i>
<b>Tuesdays in March</b>	<b>The ever popular March seminar series will be back.</b> Keep Tuesday evenings free for an interesting series of seminars. Details will be in the next newsletter and on the website.

## Chairman's Message

Hi everyone,

As the year draws to a close it has been a busy period for the Trust and Otari-Wilton's Bush staff. Cruise ships, conferences (BGCI and guides), overseas visitors from Kew, volunteer awards for our Saturday group, four wheel drive trips; no wonder we are needing a rest and barbeque on December 7<sup>th</sup>. Even the weather seems to be looking up for summer after some ugly winter storms still scarring Wellington's landscape.



Our curator returned from Kew Gardens Botanical Management Course where he made a number of contacts some of whom came to the BGCI conference recently held in Dunedin (see separate article). The Trust looks forward to helping him implement some of the new ideas he gained as part of this course.

The curator's house renovations are still on track and we await the appointment of a project manager for this project which is in the WCC annual plan for 2013-14. I attended the meeting at which it was finally agreed and it took less than a minute to pass which hopefully is a sign of confidence and overdue need to improve the many experiences that Otari-Wilton's Bush can provide. We expect a start around April 2014. Otari-Wilton's Bush will be a key attraction in the Eco-City plan for Wellington towards 2040.

The staff have been busy with tree removals, repairs and garden improvements. It is all looking great with a superb flowering season for everything, beech trees in particular! Remember the rata trees at Otari-Wilton's Bush generally flower the last weekend before Xmas so don't miss it this year!

The Board thanks all the volunteers who have helped Otari-Wilton's Bush this year. It makes us all proud when visiting or showing people the treasures of Otari-Wilton's Bush. I continue to be amazed at how willing people are to contribute time and energy in to the many projects we have and the education we provide. Take time to remember three of our volunteers who passed away this year when you next walk on the paths and tracks in Otari-Wilton's Bush.

Our best wishes for a happy festive season and we look forward to a bright and busy 2014.

Phil Parnell

Chair Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust

## Open Day raffle results.

**First prize**, \$100 voucher for compost donated by the Wellington City Council: Stan Pillar

**Second prize**, Hinau Bowl by Athol Swann: Dave Burton

**Third prize**, Rewarewa dish by Athol Swann: Vicky Ellis

**Fourth prize**, Three native plants donated by Otari Wilton's Bush: Sue Battley

**Fifth prize**, Walking stick by Geoff Moss: Marie Harris

Athol's dishes were crafted from trees which were casualties of storms in Otari. We made a total of \$555 book and card sales and the raffle.

# Otari Report



Greetings,

What a fine time to be in the garden. So far it's been an incredible flowering season in the forest and collections. Let's hope that the spring winds have passed. We did lose a large rewarewa in the last blast that took out a section of the canopy walkway. The walkway has had a temporary fix, with the full refit later this month. It's always sad to lose a forest giant, but what a view we have gained. Work has been completed in the fernery, and the new entrance and paths are a real feature. Mr Bidgood has done a fantastic job and is busy replanting as I write. The increase in light has been beneficial to the plants so far, the real test will be over the summer months. The barrel of the tawa that fell has been milled and is now drying. It will be used to make furniture for the garden.

The changes to the Wellington coastal garden area are having the desired effect of steering people left at the Cockayne lookout. This means more visitors are seeing much more of the collection.

With good growing conditions come the weeds, and much time at present is spent weeding throughout the collections. Many thanks to our volunteers who help us keep on top of the workload here. The garden looks exceptionally good right now, if I do say so myself. The cruise ship season is coming into full swing and the elite Otari guides are doing a brilliant job as ever.

As the photography competition draws to an end, we are seeing people making the most of the weather and trying to get that last perfect shot. It's especially exciting to see big school groups here armed with cameras. Looking forward to seeing the entries. The prize giving will be on Saturday 7 December, in celebration with the project Halo families. Hope to see you there.

Many thanks

Finn Michalak  
Otari Collection Curator

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## Trust Board 2012 - 2013



### The Board of Trustees for the current year is:

Chairman Phil Parnell	93 Amritsar St, Khandallah.	landy@xtra.co.nz	
	Phone: 479 2239		
Secretary: Margaret Crimp:	167 Wilton Rd., Wilton.	m.crimp@xtra.co.nz	
	Phone: 475 3263		
Treasurer. Jocelyn Hoskin	14 Warwick St, Wilton.	jocelynhoskin@clear.net.nz	
	Phone: 475 8696		
Peter Buxton	106 Weld St, Wadestown.	pebuxton@xtra.co.nz	Phone: 472 3456
Wilbur Dovey	40 Warwick St., Wilton.	<a href="mailto:cweag.dovey@xtra.co.nz">cweag.dovey@xtra.co.nz</a>	Phone: 499 1044
Jannine McCabe	40 Worcester Street, Wilton.	<a href="mailto:jannine_mccabe@yahoo.co.nz">jannine_mccabe@yahoo.co.nz</a>	Phone 475 5494
Ian Stockwell	2 Paisley Terrace, Karori .	<a href="mailto:stockwellian@hotmail.com">stockwellian@hotmail.com</a>	Phone: 476 – 3630
Cathy Wylie	43 Huntleigh Park Way, Ngaio.	Cathy.wylie@vuw.ac.nz	Phone: 938 6498

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*



Recent photos taken at Otari by Geoffrey Moss

"When doing the rounds as a host we often come across unusual parties and large groups enjoying Otari. One one occasion I came across a Samoan band playing for a wedding on the lawn by the rockery."



# NZ Plant Conservation Network Awards

These awards recognise outstanding plant conservation achievement across New Zealand

*Extract from New Zealand Plant Conservation Network's E-newsletter  
Number 120 (November 2013)*

From wetlands in the Waikato to the drylands of Canterbury, and from kakabeak on the cliffs of Hawke's Bay to the urban forests of Wellington and Auckland, this Conservation Network awards span the full breadth of activity required to protect New Zealand's native plants.



The 2013 award winners are:

- Individual involved in plant conservation: Jan Simmons (Hamilton)
- Community Plant Conservation Project: Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust (Wellington)
- School Plant Conservation Project: Vogeltown Primary School (New Plymouth)
- Young Plant Conservationist of the Year: Tim Logan (Darfield, Canterbury)
- Lifetime Achievement Award: Mike Wilcox (Auckland)
- Special Award: Forest Lifeorce Restoration Trust (Hawke's Bay)
- Special Award: John Sawyer (Auckland)

## Community Group

For nearly a decade, Wellington City Council, the Wellington Regional Council and the Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust worked together to clear and revegetate a 20 ha gully along the Kaiwharawhara stream in Wellington. The partnership, known as Project Kaiwharawhara, has been a great success, with over 20,000 native seedlings being planted, and the majority of weeds being removed. As we know, planting is the glamorous part of restoration work, but is by no means the end of the task. Since the downscaling of the partnership between Councils' and community in 2007, Wilbur and Liz Dovey, members of the Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust, have led the charge and co-ordinated a team of volunteers who have consistently visited the gully every month for the last six years. Wilbur and Liz organise the monthly weeding bees, arrange for any new plants required from Wellington City Council, and have purchased tools for other community volunteers to help them. The team of 12 they co-ordinate weed around young plants, fill gaps wherever new plantings fail, and control persistent problem weeds such as old man's beard, broom, and blackberry. Wilbur and Liz's efforts have been a huge contribution to the continued success of this project and they certainly deserve recognition for continuing to restore a once weed-choked gully into the lowland coastal forest it once was.

*Wilbur and Liz Dovey receive the Community Group award on behalf of the Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust from Sarah Beadel. Photo: Astrid van Meeuwen-Dijkgraaf.*



**Sadly** we have recently lost three staunch members of the Trust



### **Vernon Mackenzie**

Vernon was a familiar sight in Otari for many years, always wearing shorts, no matter what the weather, and accompanied by his faithful golden Labrador, appropriately named Tussock.

Anyone involved in the planting down in the valley would have known Vernon. He was the man responsible for cutting thousands of squares of carpet to be put around the seedlings as weed mat. Recently he was not strong enough to climb the hills but would still come walking in the flat area, chatting to whoever was around.

When you walk through the forest that is now growing in the valley remember Vernon. We are so grateful for his dedication to the tree planting project. *Margaret Crimp*

### **Jack McCreanor.**

Jack loved Otari and was an Otari host for a number of years. Even as he grew frailer he still came to welcome and advise visitors when it was his turn on the host roster. Finally, once he reached ninety, he was not allowed to drive so reluctantly gave up hosting. However Jack could be seen most days whatever the weather, walking at Otari with his carer who would drive him from his home in Khandallah. They would sit on the canopy walkway, listening to the birds, enjoying the forest and passing the time of day with others walking past. We miss seeing him. *Margaret Crimp*

### **Grant Preston-Thomas**

Grant was a big man and a big personality in anything that he was involved in. He was a long-time supporter of the OWB Trust but his principal involvement with Otari was as part of his (in)famous track-building activity around the city. Together with his small but enthusiastic team, which included Jock Fleming, one of the Trust's founders, he was responsible for building 'Jock's Track' from the Flax Clearing towards the Summit Track. At Jock's funeral Grant made a memorable appearance by carrying a grubber when he stood up to give his tribute to Jock. Grant will be particularly remembered in Otari through the creation of the Kohekohe Track which runs from the upper Blue Trail to the Summit Track. In Grant's honour this has been renamed Grant's Kohekohe Track. *Wilbur Dovey*

### **Otari newsletters on line.**

If you would like to browse through all the newsletters since the Trust was set up in 2000 go to [www.wrhpc.org.nz](http://www.wrhpc.org.nz) The webmaster of the Wellington Region Heritage Promotion Council has very kindly put them in the WRHPC library. There are also newsletters from other organisations there. You do not need to be a member.

## Guides conference

‘Guiding for the Future’ was the theme for the 13<sup>th</sup> Australasian Conference of Volunteer Guides in Botanic Gardens. Participants from 15 botanic gardens spent four days in Christchurch in late October listening to presentations, participating in workshops, going on guided walks, and enjoying tours to more distant parks and gardens. Margaret Crimp and Bev Abbott share some memorable moments.



### **John Clemens, Curator of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens**

John's opening address looked at botanic gardens in a global context.

- 'Botanic Gardens' is a recognised brand with about 3,000 botanic gardens
- world-wide. Guides, being on the front-line, have a role in nurturing the brand values.
- The functions of botanic gardens have expanded since Rachel Carson wrote *Silent Spring* in the 1960s, but managing collections is still a core function.
- Internationally, many botanic gardens are now working collaboratively with scientists and the agriculture sector to meet challenges in plant and planet conservation. John encouraged guides to "go forth and save the world, one interaction at a time".

### **The trainers' workshop**

Some botanic gardens require very large teams of volunteer guides to operate their programmes of guided walks and staff information desks. Kings Park in Perth has 125 guides and a waiting list of people who want to become guides despite the \$140 fee for joining the 14-week training programme. Kings Park also uses formal systems, including a formal re-assessment programme, to ensure all guides are still performing well.

Many gardens find it difficult to recruit and retain guides. Some volunteers won't do school groups, and this can leave a gap in botanic gardens that don't have education staff.

Guides at some gardens meet monthly for various purposes such as arranging rosters, professional development, receiving updates from staff, and making arrangements to meet special requests, e.g. from disabled groups.

Christchurch has purchased speaker systems so guides can always be heard. (About \$80 per unit).

### **Lynda Burns, Visitor Services Team Leader, Christchurch Botanic Gardens**

Lynda called her session *Growing plant lovers – educational tools for Botanic Gardens*. She spoke of getting the basics right. We saw evidence of this in the enhanced plant labels (which include a fact about the plant), updated heritage interpretation, and improved directional signs. New technologies are also being tested. QR codes have been incorporated into the new heritage interpretation signs so that people with smart phones can access more information.

During the school holidays, Lynda's team sets up one-off, self-guided family activities based on a booklet or illustrated map. Most are trails involving five activities. Designing and testing these is a lot of work for the team, but they have been a real success because families can come in to do them at any time. Children enjoy the sensory experiences as well as opportunities to navigate/explore, and solve puzzles.

### **Neil Fleming, Christchurch Botanic Gardens**

Neil argued that guides need to be passionate about people and plants if they are to deliver a visitor experience that is more than just an interesting walk. He encouraged guides to discover more about their own preferred learning styles because these will influence their deliveries. Learning styles include Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic (hands-on). The VARK website includes a questionnaire.

### **Delegates' meeting.**

Delegates from most gardens met for a session. Each delegate described their garden, the way the guides are organised, and the walks that they provide. Guides of some gardens are part of the 'Friends' as the Otari guides are part of the Trust. In other gardens, the guides are in a separate, independent organisation. There seem to be pros and cons for both approaches. Many people appreciated receiving a copy of our brochure as Otari is not well known. The Sydney guides unveiled their plans for the 2015 conference. Guides from Kings Park in Perth and the Canberra Botanic Garden, gave presentations as part of bidding to host the conference in 2017. After a secret ballot, the winner was Canberra.



### **Field trips.**

There were three field trips. Margaret was fortunate to get a place on the trip to Akaroa. The bus wound its way over the Port Hills, stopping for a tour of Ohinetahi, Sir Miles Warren's beautiful garden. The next part of the trip went up a narrow country road to view big old podocarps. There was great excitement when the bus could not turn around until a bank was dug out to allow the manoeuvre. We had lunch in the Garden of Tane followed by free time in Akaroa. On the way back, we called in at a DoC garden where they are growing plants ecosourced from the Canterbury region. All in all it was a most enjoyable day with perfect weather.

Bev's field trip included Lincoln University and two gardens. Highlights from Lincoln were the magnolia collection (100+ species/varieties), the research plots that show that fine nets may be effective in protecting potatoes from psyllids, and the stunning organic lunch.

## **Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand/Botanic Gardens Conservation International**

Report on BGCI/BGANZ conference Dunedin October 2013

There were 340 attendees from 45 countries who assembled in Dunedin for this conference which took a week including a day of hosted field trips.

New Zealand and Australia were well represented with most major botanic gardens represented although some surprising omissions eg Christchurch had only one rep and New York had none, although North America was well represented by other attendees.

A number of Asian countries sent people with a group from Korea going to a course at Auckland prior to the conference. There was a wide range of size and asset base.

A botanic garden in formation requiring funds in the Kingdom of Tonga was represented and seeking donations to start a garden from scratch with suitable land available.

The event was held at the Dunedin refurbished town hall complex which is vastly better than when I was last there with a separate auditorium for 400 people and conference presentation facilities to international standards- Wellington beware!

The theme was Celebrating success- the influence and appeal of Botanic Gardens.

Sessions each day consisted of a number of plenary sessions followed later by parallel sessions of up to 5 speakers across a number of venues so a lot of walking up and down stairs was included.

The quality of speakers and presentations was high the consistent themes of the global strategy for plant conservation (GSPC) woven into almost every talk. Highlights for me were the Hawaii



paper on breadfruit propagation to save poorer nations and the Chelsea Physic garden curator on contemporary relevance in an historic setting. There were many others which can be viewed on [www.BGCI.org](http://www.BGCI.org). Rewi Elliott is featured in one of these with Tom Meyer from Dunedin.

The main two points that were emphasised were:

- Build capability in your staff and volunteers to enable the best job to be done.
- Look to to partnerships particularly when conserving rare plants and increasing public education.

*Phil Parnell*



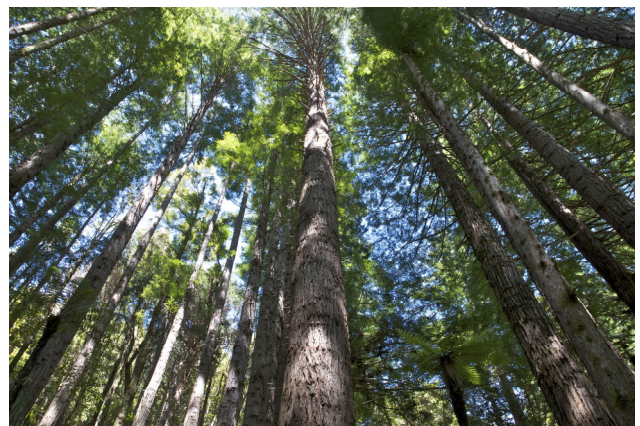
## **Akatawara four wheel drive trip**

Once a year we have a combined trip with the Wellington Cross Country Vehicle Club. This year we took a different route into the large valleys of the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) managed Akatawara Forest to see large redwoods in a forest setting.

Twenty people from Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust went into terrain otherwise inaccessible other than by trail bike or mountain bike, both decidedly more dusty options on a hot day. Lots of kamahi and hinau in flower contrasted with large tracts of cleared forest awaiting replanting. Ferns everywhere which were not enjoying the lack of water with recent dry weather. A picnic lunch and a short walk to see the magnificent redwoods and other forest trees planted in the 1930's by GWRC, some up to 30metres high, completed a great day out.

Our thanks to all the drivers of the ten vehicles and to David Sole who made this trip possible.

*Phil Parnell*



## Ranunculus Paucifolia-The Castle Hill buttercup

Conservation Status Nationally Critical



I was lucky enough on the way south to go to the Lance McCaskill reserve on the way to Arthur's Pass and take some guests to see this rare plant with Daniel Kimber from Doc Waimakariri office. It is only found in this area and happened to be in flower when we visited the day after the violent storm in Canterbury in October. This meant we were a day later than intended as Daniel was attending to his own trees at Sheffield which had blown down.

It is part of the Kura Tawhiti Reserve, a group of limestone tors

which dominate the upper Waimakariri basin. Most tourists see the car park some stop and take a photo from the car park get back in their car and drive off. But the hidden secrets are but a short walk away behind the Tors and Dan the man (he was an Aussie but married to a Kiwi) knew the area well. (He also took out the Wellington Botsoc last year).



We had a magical hour or so exploring this reserve and hearing about the issues surrounding the difficulty of propagating this rare species. The gentle slope (see photos) is thought to be critical to successful growth together with limestone seepage which flows onto these tiny plants. Weeds are a constant threat and hares are also known to jump the reserve fences particularly when snow covered. It is amazing that it still survives but is a stubborn beautiful plant there hopefully for many years to come. Dr Lance McCaskill led a conservation effort in the 1950's to preserve this plant and numbers have increased from 32 plants in 1948 to over 300 today. *Phil Parnell.*



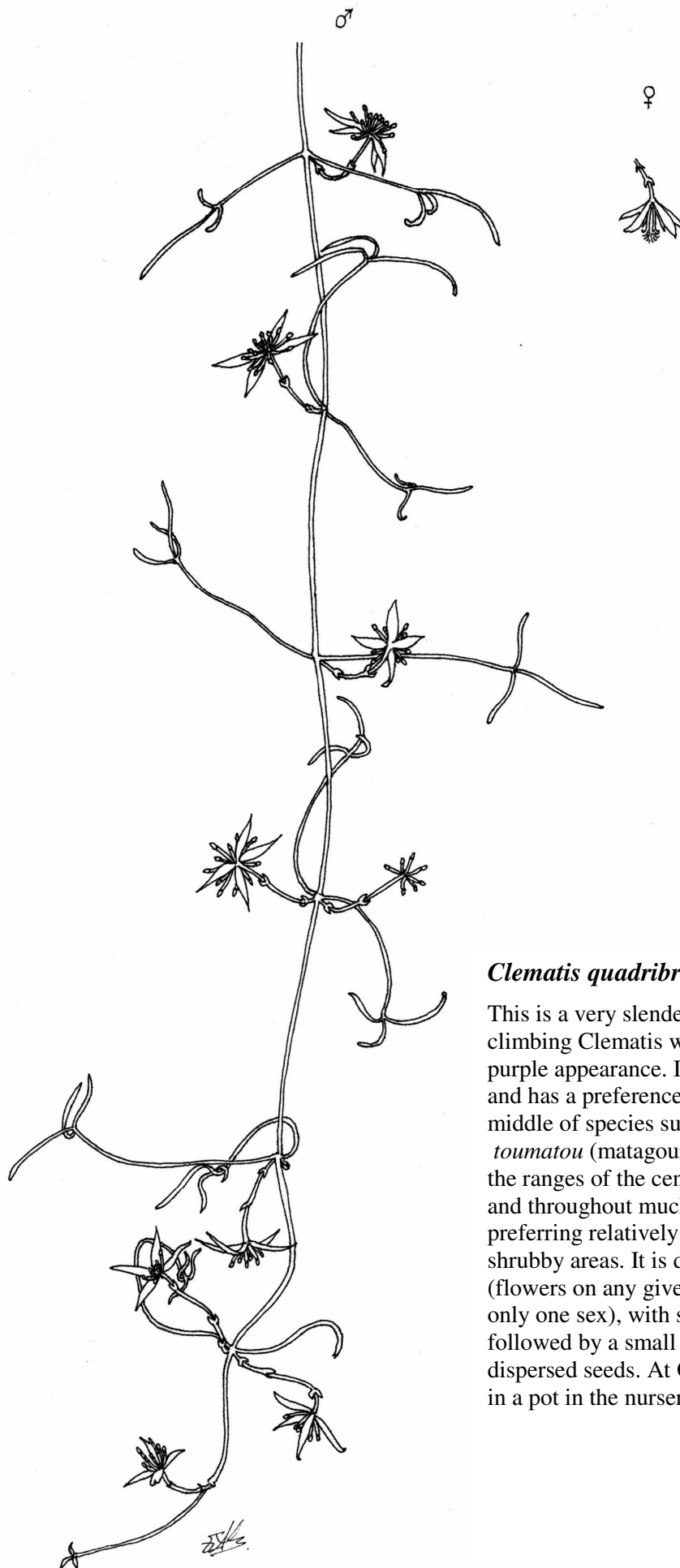
## Commemoration and Unveiling (CQCQCQ) September 29th 2013

On a cool calm Wellington spring day at the Te Ahumairangi lookout Wellington harbour was like glass, unlike the day this unique radio facility was first opened in 1912. A key part of early Wellington communications, shipping and emergency heritage. The commemoration organised by former employees led by Barry Allison was to remember the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the facility closed along with similar facilities elsewhere in NZ on September 30<sup>th</sup> 1993.

A plaque commemorated 81 years of 24/7 operation by NZPO/Telecom employees to ensure the safety of life at sea in New Zealand and transoceanic waters using morse code and radio telephone. They also paid homage to 9 civilian radio operators/coast watchers who died in the Gilbert (Kiribati) and Ellice (Tuvalu) islands in 1942 following capture by Japanese forces.

Two plaques organised by Wellington City Council were placed in a new picnic table now on the lookout picnic site. The friends and relatives enjoyed the occasion and celebrated appropriately after the moving ceremony. Mayor Celia Wade-Brown joined the group for the occasion. *Photos by Phil Parnell*





***Clematis quadribracteolata***

This is a very slender scrambling to low climbing Clematis with a brownish purple appearance. It is very cryptic and has a preference for growing in the middle of species such as *Discaria toumatou* (matagouri). It is found in the ranges of the central North Island, and throughout much of the South Island, preferring relatively open rocky or shrubby areas. It is dioecious (flowers on any given plant will be only one sex), with small purplish flowers followed by a small head of wind dispersed seeds. At Otari it is growing in a pot in the nursery.



# 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) .....

<b>Subscription</b>	Corporate	\$30	\$
	Double/Family	\$15	\$
	Individual	\$10	\$
	Student/Unwaged	\$5	\$
<b>Donation*</b>			\$
<b>Total payment</b>	(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**

**Or pay by internet banking: .**

**Westpac Bank 030518: 0205713:00 :50. Otari-Wilton's Bush Trust. Please add your name for a reference.**