



# THE BOWL OF BROOKLANDS

**Friends of The Bowl of Brooklands Inc.**

**Newsletter No. 9**  
**AUGUST 2009**

Hi everyone.

This is for those of you who missed our AGM last week. The following Officers and Committee were elected:-

CHAIR: Lance Girling-Butcher; TREASURER/DEPUTY CHAIR: Paul Wadsworth; SECRETARY: Sheila Connell; COMMITTEE: Ali Girling-Butcher, Chris Rickards, Judith Jolly, Robin Sinclair, David Thorp & Warren Smith.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

### THE PUBLICATION

*It has been a period of relative quiet for most of our membership and intensive work for the small group working on the book text. My deepest gratitude to Chris Rickards and Sheila Connell who have completed the research phase on the early Bowl years and have now produced eight chapters on this fascinating period. They have also continued work on illustrations and have designed a cover that will be presented for your interest at the AGM*

*Meanwhile at the other end of the time spectrum, Sarah Foy has been through the Taranaki Daily News library researching old clippings and talking to some of the key players from the latter years. She has produced a chapter and is working on others.*

*While this work goes on we now need to start actively promoting the book and getting pre-orders. Now a cover design has been decided we can use this to put together a flyer for distribution to major corporations. who can use it for gifts and promotional activities.*

### BOWL ROAD UP-GRADE

*Representatives of the Friends were among those who pushed for the least destructive road access from the Racecourse to the Bowl to allow safety vehicles and large transporters to get in and out.*

### TEMPORARY SEATING

*We were also consulted about plans to provide a temporary cover for the lake for those promoters who felt it would make their shows safer and allow larger crowds. Sheila and myself, along with the Chairman and Secretary for the Friends of the Park were given a briefing at the Council by Cathy Thurston and Mark Bruhn.*

*There has been growing concern at people swimming in the lake during some popular musical shows. There is a real risk of someone being drowned or electrocuted. Some performers felt inhibited by problems communicating with their audience across the lake. We, like the Friends of the Park, expressed no opinion on this, just checked that it will be a temporary cover that can be removed when not required so the lake remains open for those shows where it enhances the performance.*

*I then sat in on a press conference where the proposal was released to the media. As a result I was quoted in the Daily News speaking as the Chairman of the Friends of the Bowl. This was not supposed to be a comment on behalf of this organisation and I apologize for not making that as clear as I might have done at the time. It was a personal belief as has since been correctly reported in a news article and a letter to the editor.*

*It is my belief, based on a number of year's experience in theatre, that we have no power to change this decision, which is a matter between council staff and promoters.*

*This does not mean that the Friends cannot express a public concern at this trend away from the traditional use of the Bowl. After all, it is some of our members who created the facility in the first place, working with shovels, carting it away in wheelbarrows etc. to create the Bowl's foundations.*

*I propose a discussion on the subject at the AGM and am happy to receive a notice of motion expressing any concerns which I will be happy to pass on to Council.*

*If anyone would like to make any nominations for Committee Officers please submit as soon as possible to the Secretary, c/- 20 Manu Crescent, Vogeltown, New Plymouth. Nomination forms attached email herewith*

*Lance Girling Butcher - Chairman.*

#### Temporary Seating at the Bowl

Lance enlarged on the meeting that was attended by Sheila Connell (Secretary) and himself with NPDC staff when it was explained that the Council employed Gary Sharp-Young to promote the Bowl and encourage major acts to come here. He's been reasonably successful but the biggest obstacle was some promoters saying they found the lake 'difficult' and a compromise was made, suggesting temporary seating be installed. The lake would be drained and cleaned, foundations laid and when the seating is required, a scaffold support structure to which seating platform can be attached would be installed. The seating structure would be removed after each event. Comments were invited from the floor and any recommendations would be passed to NPDC for consideration.

Lance reminded the meeting that this is a matter between the Council and Promoters who want to use the Bowl, who can do what they like as long as it is returned to its original state. He cited examples where the Opera House had major installations and transformations for a particular show – which of course were completely dismantled and returned to its original state the end of the show!

Terry Boon showed the group some drawings he has produced which could be an improvement on the original plan. He stressed that he was not against the idea and supports the concept but felt some matters needed clarifying.

Stephen Bone has concerns that the seating issue could lead to eventually filling in the lake. He is very concerned about the future of the Bowl.

Adrienne Tatham would like to see more consultation and discussion between Council and the Friends of the Park and Friends of the Bowl.

Paul Wadsworth summed up these thoughts, saying our organization should meet with the Council, with a positive attitude – saying we would like to be involved in a memorandum of understanding similar to that being suggested between the Council and the Friends of the Park on the future use of the Bowl. After considerable discussion it was moved by Lance Girling-Butcher seconded John Armstrong.

“That the Friends of the Bowl of Brooklands seek an urgent meeting with the NPDC advising that our Organisation strongly opposes any move to fill in the lake and seeks assurance of Council that this will not happen at any time in the future - further, that the temporary seating will be removed immediately after a show, and that consideration be given to the ‘sight line’ concerns expressed by one of our members, Terry Boon.”

CARRIED

GUEST SPEAKER

Mrs Adrienne Tatham

Adrienne gave us a most interesting talk on a ‘little bit of history’ of both Pukekura and Brooklands Park and some of her memories growing up in such beautiful surroundings. Lance duly thanked her followed by the group’s acclaim.

MEMBERSHIP FEE

The question was then asked - whether the Friends of the Bowl should be continued and if so what Membership Fee should be charged. The original \$25 was agreed at the beginning to help with the running of the Reunion. Now the duties of the Committee are not particularly onerous – until we get the book ready for publication and plan sales etc. Administration costs will have to met ie today’s hall hire, afternoon tea, hire of projection equipment, office expenses etc.

John Armstrong felt strongly that the Friends should continue and wanted to suggest a fee of \$25, to which Lance ventured that a lot of us are retired and therefore \$25 might be a bit high. There was another suggestion of \$20 and after some discussion and several favoured \$15. It was then decided that the incoming Committee should deal with this question.

The meeting concluded with Afternoon Tea while Chris gave a commentary on the interesting pictures he projected of people and events at the Bowl over the last 50 years.



MEETING WITH NPDC

Lance, Paul and Sheila attended a convivial and positive meeting with Council officers, Cathy Thurston, Gary Sharpe-Young and Geoff Bondy on Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> July. At the meeting we received firm assurances that our fears of ‘the Bowl lake being filled in’ were completely unjustified and that such a move would remove the unique aspects of the Bowl as an amphitheatre and the reflections that are created by the presence of the lake.

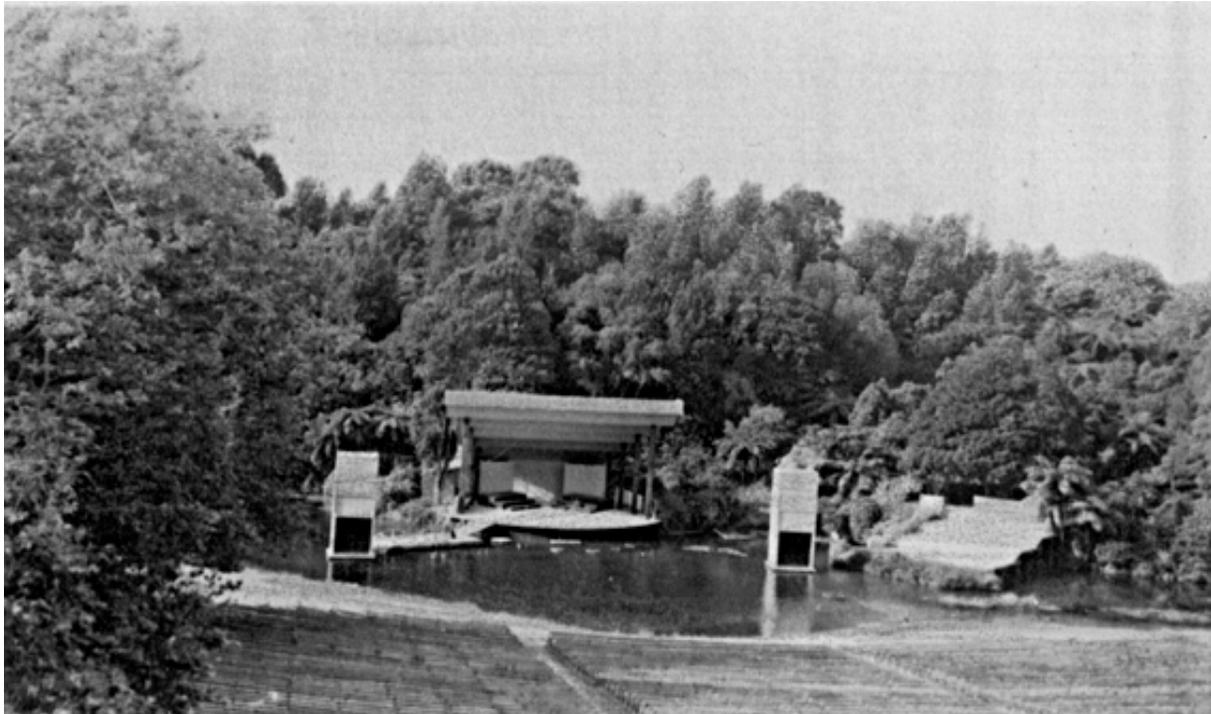
They added that ‘any attempt to fill in the lake would only happen after extensive consultation with the public’.

The temporary seating issue was explained and we were also reassured that the seating would only be used when requested by the promoter. It was also explained the seating would be in place for a maximum of 7 days from assembly to dismantling unless there was another show requiring it within the next 7 day period (i.e.) if shows were back-to-back, the seating would remain for the 14 days. Cathy Thurston informed the meeting that the Council has appointed Adrienne Kensington as the officer in charge of the Bowl and the TSB Stadium and that she will be available for consultation between the Council and the “Friends.”

Finally, as I didn’t get an opportunity at the AGM, I would like to express my thanks to Lance, our Chairman for his loyal and valuable leadership as well as to all other Committee members for their continuing support.

We trust that you will all continue supporting us with your Membership. We will advise you as soon as the fee has been decided at our next meeting.

Here's another interesting photo from our archives .....



### **The 1963 Bowl of Brooklands**

Note the three-level 'Woodland Stage' that a year later was wrecked, with the island being dug out. These were the front foundations. The 'Woodland Stage' then became a two-tier one joined by a boardwalk to the main stage, which by this time had been extended to the sound column line, and was wooden decked.

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Kind regards

Sheila Connell  
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