

The Magazine of the Friends of Pukekura Park

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Honeybee gathering pollen from
Puya alpestris flower.
Brooklands, December 2008.

Photo David Medway

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www.pukekura.org.nz

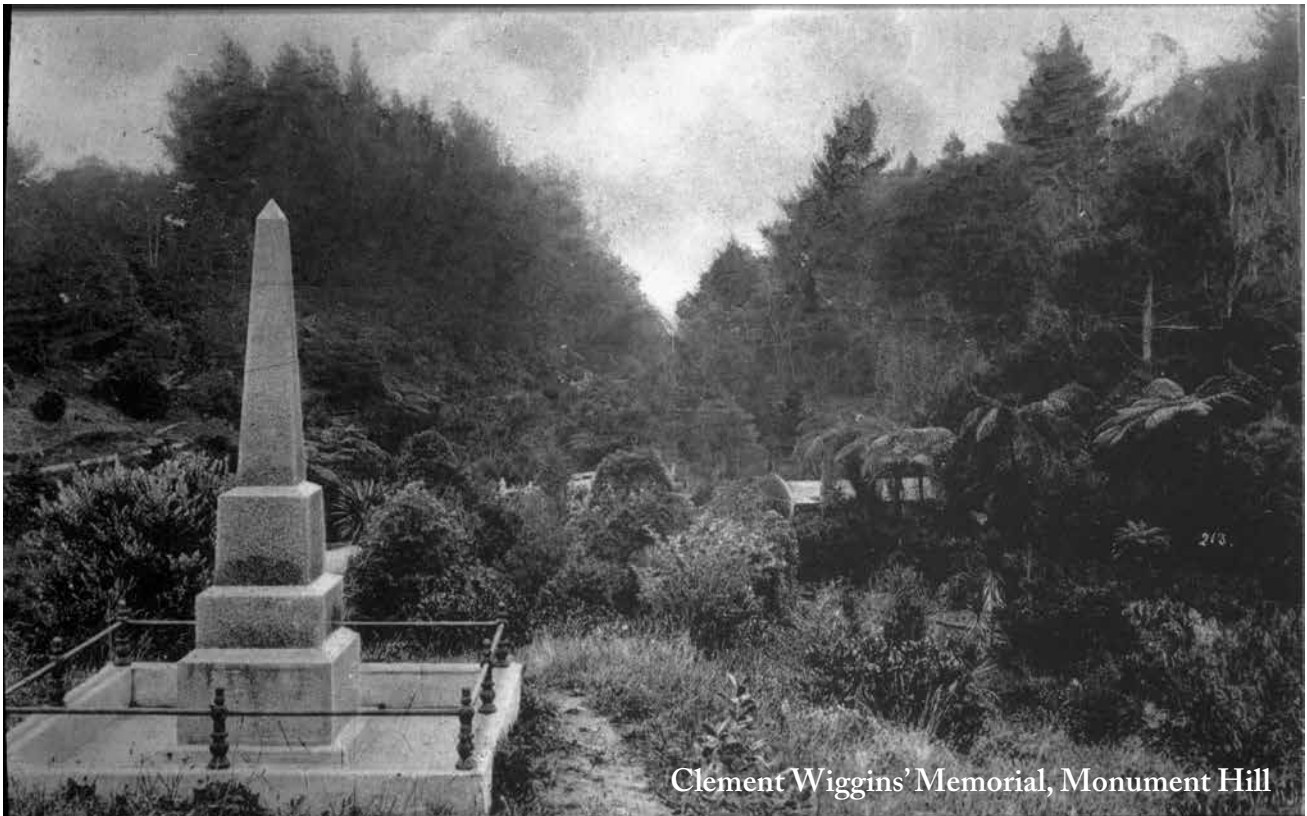
How Monument Hill acquired its name

Ron Lambert
Senior Researcher Puke Ariki

The name Monument Hill for the prominent spur immediately to the south of Boatshed Bridge in Pukekura Park is derived from a granite obelisk erected, probably in late 1903, to 777 Trooper Clement Edward Wiggins who, as a member of the 3rd New Zealand Mounted Rifles (the 3rd Contingent), served in South Africa during the Boer War.

Wiggins was a clerk for the Bank of New South Wales at both Eltham and New Plymouth. He had worked in Christchurch before being transferred to Taranaki in 1898. Wiggins joined No. 5 Company of the 3rd Contingent in New Plymouth in February 1900. The Contingent arrived in South Africa on 26 March 1900. Wiggins' war was short. He died, aged 27, from enteric (typhoid) fever at Germiston in South Africa on 13 July 1900. Enteric fever proved to be a more deadly foe than the Boer forces. Of the 3rd Contingent's total of 26 deaths, 20 were from the fever.

In September 1900, the Star and Tukapa Rugby Clubs of New Plymouth proposed a memorial to the three of their former players who had, at that stage, died in the war - Wiggins, Thomas Hempton of Okato, and Charles Enderby of Inglewood. Controversy soon erupted in the correspondence columns of the *Taranaki Herald* as to the siting of the proposed memorial. Ideas ranged from St Mary's Church to Te Henui Cemetery and the Recreation Grounds (as Pukekura Park was known then). One letter counselled that a monument to the three young men would be premature because Taranaki should wait until the end of the conflict, when a memorial to all local casualties could be made.



Clement Wiggins' Memorial, Monument Hill

Postcard, Muir and Moodie, about 1903
Puke Ariki Collection, PHO2007-021

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While it appears that the trio's rugby mates were suitably discouraged, Wiggins' banking colleagues in Taranaki and Canterbury were made of sterner stuff, and they persisted. In May 1903, the Bank of New South Wales Manager at New Plymouth, N. K. MacDiarmid, received consent from the Recreation Grounds Board to erect a memorial, to Wiggins alone, "on the tongue of land near the long island and the path leading to Mr King's."

In August 1903, the *Taranaki Herald* was finally able to report that "the many friends of the late C. E. Wiggins, who volunteered for service in South Africa with the Third Contingent, and died at Germiston, will be pleased to learn that the stone to be erected to his memory, by the officers of the Bank of New South Wales in New Zealand, has just been imported by Mr W. F. Brooking, to whom the work has been entrusted, and its erection will be proceeded with at once. The memorial is an obelisk of polished grey granite, and it is, by permission of the Board, to be placed in the Recreation Grounds" (*Taranaki Herald* 26/8/1903).

What became of the young bank clerk's memorial remains a bit of a mystery. The only real clue is a caption to the postcard photograph of the obelisk by Muir and Moodie (reproduced here) when it was published in the *Taranaki Herald* of 8 March 1962: "... Later the memorial became overgrown and in bad repair and was rolled down the hill and finally removed." It does, however, seem a little strange that such a substantial object was not transferred to somewhere like the Te Henui Cemetery. Maybe the fervour of Wiggins' banking and rugby colleagues had waned somewhat, and cash to complete such a transfer was not forthcoming.

Thus it is that only the name, Monument Hill, and the flattened spur near Boatshed Bridge where the obelisk once stood, now survive. However, Clement Wiggins' name is recorded on two South African War memorials in New Plymouth, at St. Mary's Pro-cathedral and the fountain on Marsland Hill.



View from the approximate location of the memorial.

View of Monument Hill from the end of Boatshed Bridge.



Some highlights in the Park

Ian Hutchinson
Technical Officer Pukekura Park

The benefits of last year's border renovations in Pukekura Park and Brooklands which I wrote about in the last *Magazine* are now being realised if current growth rates and flowering are anything to go by.

There is plenty of colour at present in the Brooklands herbaceous border. The Dahlias have now been flowering for well over a month and show no sign of stopping, the *Canna* Lilies have responded to division and feeding with amazing growth and much greater intensity in the flower colour, and the Cardoons, *Cynara cardunculus*, have produced the best flowering I think I have ever seen, with their flower spikes having grown up to around two metres high. These Cardoons are native to the Mediterranean and Morocco, belong to the daisy family, and have purple thistle-like flowers. The Salvias started flowering before Christmas and will continue on into the late summer-autumn, with different species coming into flower all the time. The *Crinum* bulbs in Brooklands have done very well this year with two species currently in flower, pink-flowered *Crinum moorei* and white-flowered *Cinum x powellii*.

The other success story in Brooklands has to be *Rosa* 'Sparkler', which is in the Four Seasons Border and has been flowering now for the best part of two months. It is still happily producing more flower buds, so it looks like it will be flowering for quite a long while yet. This miniature bush-rose has heads of double-white flowers which cover the whole bush almost to the point where the foliage can be hard to see.

Some history is being kept alive at the which are growing on the fence next to the for the first time this year. These vines were Stainton Dell which is a remnant plant from Breidecker, the second custodian of Pukekura the southern side of Stainton Dell to create first vineyard. The vines were planted at the have grown so quickly to fruiting maturity.



Gables garden in the form of grape-vines art studio building. They are fruiting propagated by Ken Davey from a vine in a vineyard set up in the late 1870s by Park. Breidecker leased what is now what was probably New Plymouth's Gables in 2006, and it is great that they

On the Fred Parker Lawn the highlight at present has to be the Peruvian Lilies planted as part of last year's revamp of the borders. There are three varieties, *Alstroemeria* 'Inca Ice' with lovely creamy peach-coloured flowers, *A.* 'Inca Adore' red with yellow-flecked throat, and *A.* 'Inca Tropic' with lovely warm mango-orange to yellow shadings that will become more spectacular as the clumps become bigger. In the south border, the *Ligularia reniformis* have grown very quickly and its shiny green leaves reflect the light well giving this area a real lift. Speaking of light, if you happen to be down on the lawn in the early part of the morning have a look at the effect created by the sunlight shining through the leaves of *Canna* 'Tropicanna' - very beautiful as it picks out the shadings in the foliage variegation.

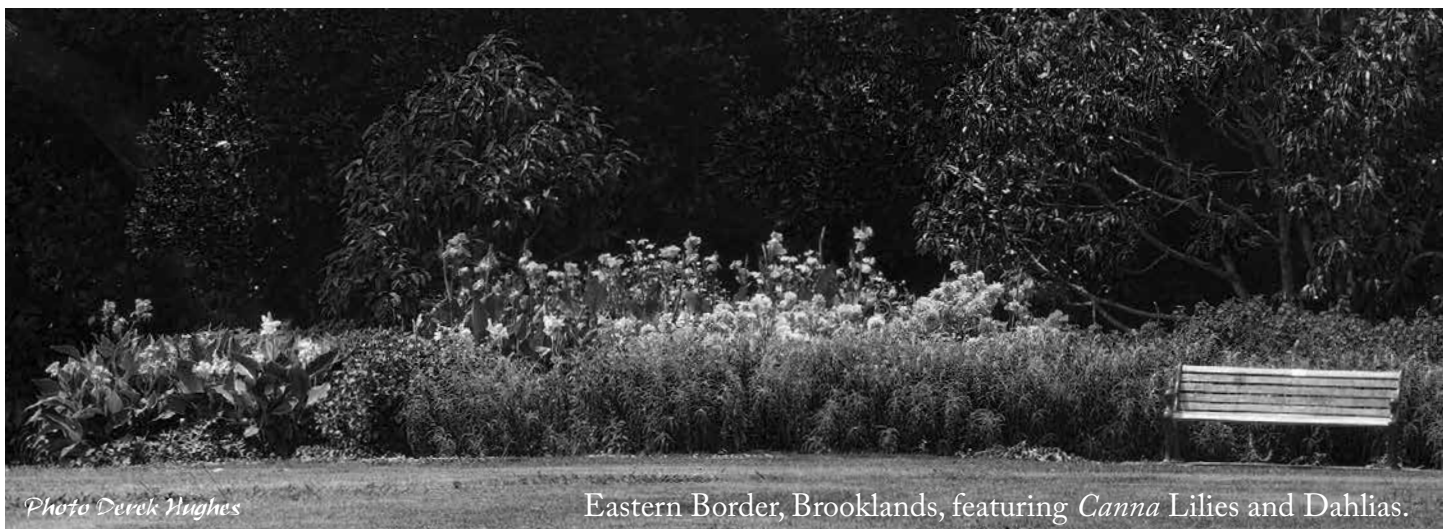


Photo Derek Hughes

Eastern Border, Brooklands, featuring *Canna* Lilies and Dahlias.

Call for garden volunteers

Chris Connolly
Curator Pukekura Park

Our community has always been blessed with people who are willing to volunteer their time to work in Pukekura Park. Over the last 18 months or so, I have come to appreciate more and more the contribution volunteers from the Friends of Pukekura Park make to the Park. Their support comes in a number of ways, but all contribute to enhancing this wonderful asset we have. I look forward to this continuing, and would like to encourage more people to use their expertise to help us in the Park.

This year I am particularly keen to increase the number of volunteers who help with the gardening. We already have a small, dedicated team of volunteers who regularly turn up for a few hours on Thursday mornings. They make a significant contribution to the presentation of the Park while enjoying the company of other members of the team. In the past, this team has been involved in a range of gardening tasks throughout the Park. After discussions with members of the team it has been decided that, instead of the team working at different sites every week, I will allocate specific sites in the Park which the team will be responsible for the maintenance and presentation of. If you enjoy gardening and the company of others, and would like to learn more about the Park have a good time and get some exercise, please become a member of the garden volunteer team of the Friends of Pukekura Park and join us in the Park on Thursday mornings.



Photo Derek Hughes

Canna Lilies in the border of the Fred Parker Lawn.



Photo Derek Hughes

Dahlias in the Eastern Border at Brooklands, 'Colour Spectacle' (left) and 'Dianna's Memory' (below).



Photos Derek Hughes



Brooklands in 1916 - "beautiful gardens and bush"

David Medway

The following is the earliest description I have found of the grounds at Brooklands at a time when that property was still in the ownership of Newton King. It appeared in the *Taranaki Herald* of 21 February 1916 at page 6.

"The generosity of Mr. Newton King in throwing open his beautiful grounds at Brooklands on Sunday was taken advantage of by quite a large number of townsfolk and country visitors.

On entering the garden a wealth of colouring greets the eye, and innumerable varieties of plants are to be seen to the best advantage, while the green of close-cropped lawns throws up the many shades of the flowers in strong contrast. One bed that commanded attention was the tuberous begonias, with a border of lobelias, which made a fine colour scheme. In another bed Japanese maples and asters were in all their glory, and delighted lady visitors who seemed to take particular pleasure in parading round this plot. Dahlias were to be seen lifting their heads to the sunshine, and the varied and perfect blooms would have claimed attention at a horticultural show, though they would have lost the charm of their natural surroundings. Roses, climbing and otherwise, were to be seen in various colours, but it is rather late for these English favourites to be seen to advantage.

There are three glasshouses. The first holds many choice and valuable pot plants. Here one observed a basket begonia. This was suspended from the roof, the trailing blossoms crowding over and down, forming a pleasing picture. Gloxinia, a bell-shaped flower with a white centre and pale red top, also was shown to the best advantage. Different varieties of maidenhair ferns further enhanced the pleasure of inspection. A second house shelters a vinery, and a glance inside showed clusters of luscious grapes hanging from many branches. A small orchard contained many fruit-bearing trees, good crops of apples and clusters of pears nearing the ripening period giving proof of the fact that the soil round New Plymouth is favourable to fruit growing.

Whilst much attention has been centred on the production of flower beds, the grounds also contain a small area of native bush. Tree ferns of great height and large-spreading fronds, karakas, rimus in the beauteous stage of early growth, are all observed, while the supplejack shows itself quite at home. Well in the shade is a solid, gnarled puriri tree with spreading branches, but the pride of the garden is a glorious Spanish chestnut. The age of the tree is 68 years, and judging by its immense girth, the great height and the large branches, one could well imagine it has taken many years to accumulate the bulk it possesses. The branches droop over till the ends reach the ground, and the clear ground between the trunk of the tree and the extreme outside branches would allow ample room for a picnic party.

Altogether Mr. Newton King's grounds are a fine example of what can be accomplished by the exercise of excellent taste in the expenditure of money and labour, and the people of New Plymouth are grateful for the pleasure gained from a visit to so attractive a garden."



Photo Derek Hughes

Pukekura Park Water Carnival

Chris Rickards

As early as 1950, Jack Goodwin, Curator of Pukekura Park at the time, had expressed interest in entertainment in the Park, as he wanted more of the public to use it. In 1954 an attempt was made to introduce entertainment, but with dismal results. Jack Goodwin, in response to a letter written to the Pukekura Park Board on behalf of nine local organisations, suggested a sound shell but this idea was shelved due to much opposition from the public. The *Taranaki Herald* of 12 February 1954 reported that, at an open forum, a member of the public commented that “soundshells are often used for roller skating, inviting undesirables”. Another person said that “if jazz bands played on it they can be heard two miles awaywe don't want the tranquillity of the park spoilt”. The proposed soundshell, which would have been placed in the Cannon Hill area, was based on the designs of those at Napier and Rotorua.

In 1955, the Jaycees were approached by the Chamber of Commerce to assist in the formation of a Public Relations Office for New Plymouth. The Jaycees agreed to this with one of their members being elected to the Public Relations Office Board of Control. The first Public Relations Officer employed was Mr. W. E. Barrett, with Mrs. Duffells as his Secretary. These two persons threw themselves into the detailed task of organising a water carnival to be held on the main lake at Pukekura Park during the summer of 1956-1957. However, shortly after they had been appointed, Mr Barrett and his secretary resigned and Eric Handbury stepped in to complete the task. Handbury was a man of enormous energy and imagination. He put together an exciting programme for the carnival which was approved by the Park Board and the Curator.

This very successful carnival was held over three days culminating on 13 January 1957. One of the features was a large float weighing 8 cwt and measuring 24 feet by 12 feet, supported by oil drums held together with angle iron which became the frame for a wooden floor. The float was built by members of the New Plymouth Branch of the New Zealand Institute of Engineers with material supplied by the Motor Vehicle Association and the Master Builders Association. The float was floodlit. It was made in several sections for ease of carriage and storage for future carnivals, there being an eye to further water activities.

The highlight of the carnival was a Carnival Queen with young ballet dancers performing a “mid-water ballet” on the floating platform. Earlier there had been a wrestling bout in which the man who was tipped over board was the loser. Miss J. Woodhead was the lucky Carnival Queen. Her throne was carried into the Park by four bearers preceded by the New Plymouth Highland Band, seven marching teams, and a troupe of scantily-clad ballet dancers, with the New Plymouth City Brass Band bringing up the rear. After enthronement of the Carnival Queen, four of the marching teams gave a display of precision marching watched by a crowd estimated at between 8000 and 10,000 persons. As the sun was setting, a fireworks display enthralled the audience who were left gasping with each thunder clap and star-shell. Eric Handbury had also organised Scottish dancing, and a jazz band at the Rotunda. All of this was vintage Handbury and undoubtedly the prelude to the “Festival of the Pines”. Jack Goodwin was ecstatic, particularly as there was little damage to the Park and many of the public picked up litter left behind.

This article was compiled from material in the Butler Collection and Festival of the Pines files at Puke Ariki in New Plymouth.

Mapping Pukekura Park and finding the history of plants and places Elise Smith

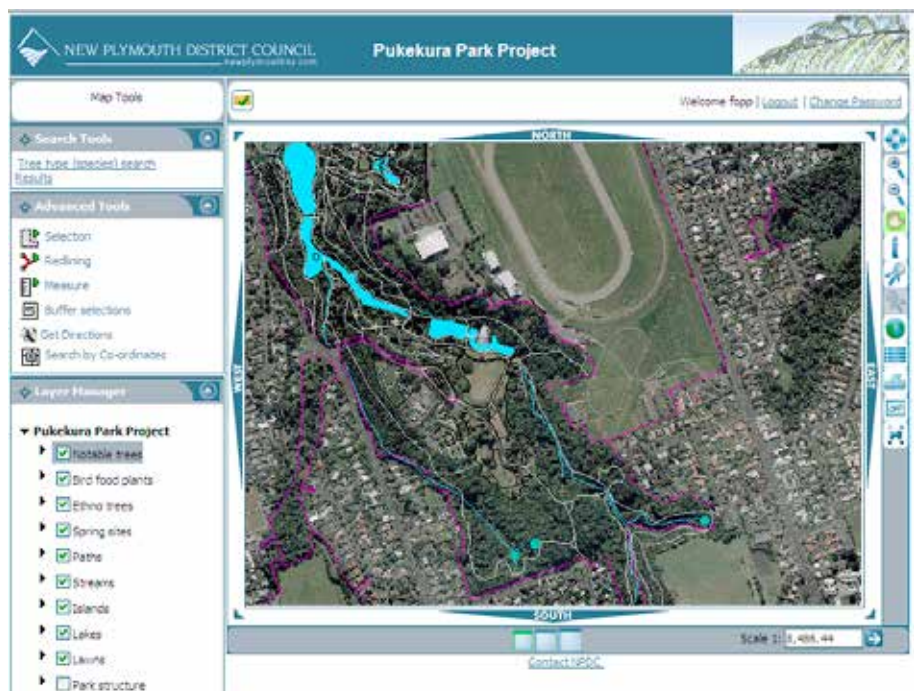
At last the Community Partnership Fund project can invite you to explore the history, plants, and wildlife of the Park using the Internet to see images, hear sound files, and browse through historic documents. Visit the Friends website www.pukekura.org.nz to start your fingers walking on a digital tour.

The project consists of two components. The 'Kete Pukekura' which stores sound files, images and documents and, hopefully, a Geographic Information Service hosted by the New Plymouth District Council which shows a map with layers of information about the Park overlying a base of aerial photos of the Park.

You can visit <http://kete.pukekura.org.nz> directly and see what we have in our digital library.

The map layers show lakes and waterways, plants, wildlife, and places. You can search for items of interest, such as finding the location of the Moreton Bay Fig (*Ficus macrophylla*), or visitor facilities. If the object you are viewing has any information stored in the kete, you will be able to link to these files and see them.

It is hoped that members of the Friends and the public will help us to add information about the Park to our digital library. Should you wish to help us scan in images and documents, or if you have information of your own about the Park that you would like to share then please either contact me personally or at info@pukekura.org.nz or register with the kete and load your material yourself.

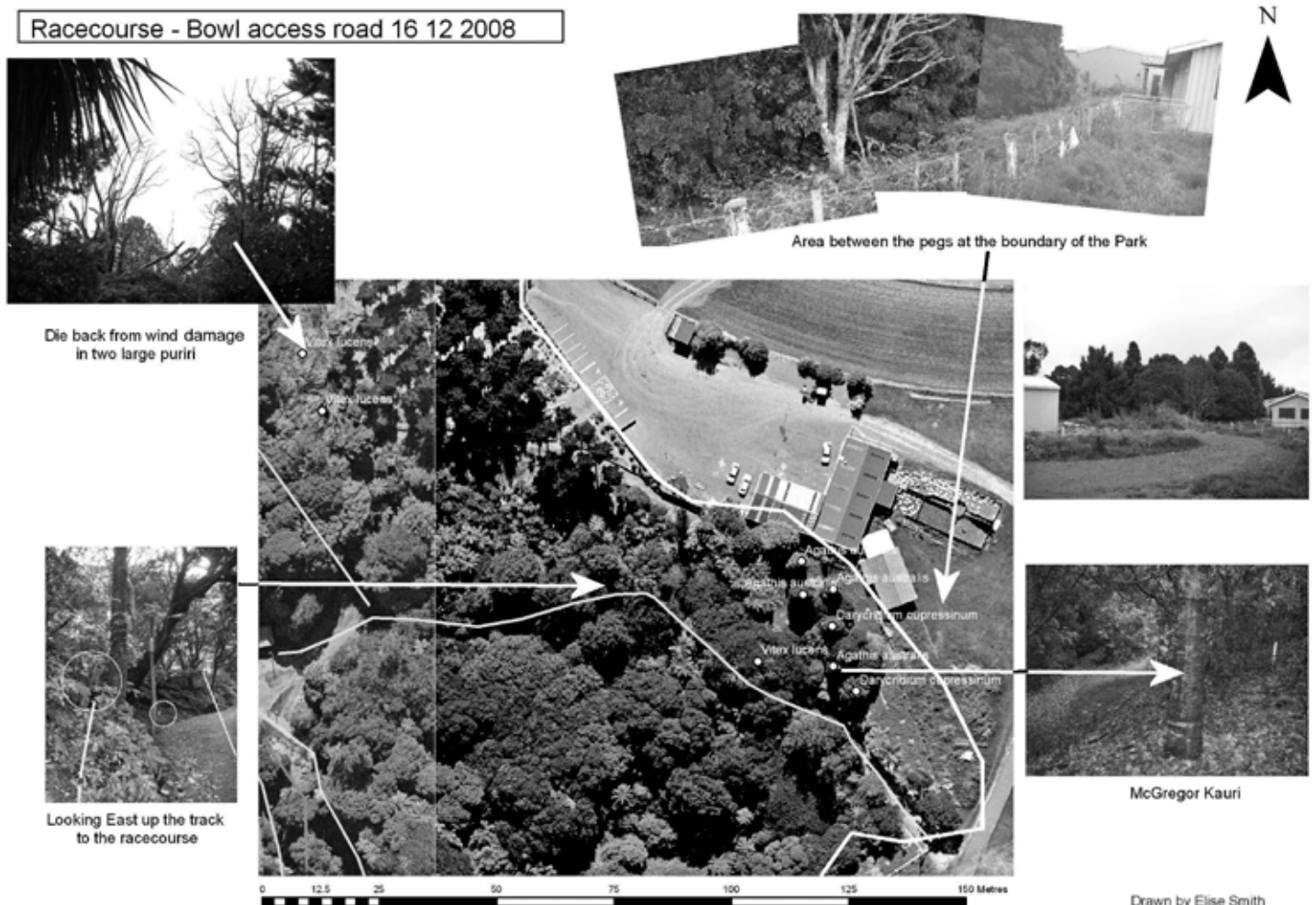


Pukekura Kete reveals information vital for planning process

Elise Smith

The Pukekura Park Geographic Information System (GIS) and the digital library “kete.pukekura” have already demonstrated their value in the New Plymouth District Council planning and consultation process. The current issue of a new access road from the Racecourse to the Bowl of Brooklands was raised in December 2008 by Pukekura Park managers. The presence of a large Puriri (*Vitex lucens*) had been noted by the planners, and the new road alignment designed to avoid it. However, when the Friends used GIS to identify the trees, and searched the digital library, it was found that the top of a slope through which the proposed access road would be constructed had been planted with trees in c.1970, including a Kauri (*Agathis australis*) to commemorate Professor William Roy McGregor of Auckland whose efforts were primarily responsible for saving the Waipoua Kauri forests from milling. An account of this commemorative Kauri is included by Cory Smith and George Fuller in their *The Notable Trees of New Plymouth* (2007: 30). Apparently, it was originally planted at Brooklands Zoo by local members of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society.

The positions of trees on the top of the slope were marked on the GIS map, and the system was used to combine site photos with an aerial photo. Planners can now link to the kete to read the historic background information. However, we do not know who planted these trees in c.1970. If you know, please tell me, or if you have any relevant material you would like to add to the archives please visit the kete and leave a comment, or load your material yourself.



Summer walks in the Park

Elise Smith

On every second Monday of the month a group of Friends discover some of the history and botanical secrets which help make Pukekura Park and Brooklands so remarkable. The distance travelled is sometimes only a few hundred metres, as there is much history to be discussed, and many plants have related personal anecdotes as well as being of botanical or ecological interest.



Photo Elise Smith

Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*) in Maranui Gully.

In November 2008, we traversed the former Nature Walk which passes through the native bush at Brooklands. Along the way, Ambush Gully prompted some debate about the true site of the ambush after which it was named. The December 2008 walk started at the Kaimata Street entrance to Brooklands. After visiting the ancient giant Puriri (*Vitex lucens*) we descended into List's Garden in Maranui Gully where we discussed the history of that part of Brooklands. In the dell of the old female Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*), we were dwarfed by the primeval King Fern (*Ptisana (Marattia) salicina*). We discussed the nearby Eucalypt collection before travelling down Maranui Gully beneath towering native trees, among which Kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*) and Pukatea (*Laurelia novae-zelandiae*) are prominent, and emerging at the Pinetum near the Bowl of Brooklands. On the Brooklands lawn we marvelled at the unusually-coloured flowers of *Puya alpestris*, a native of Chile.



Photo Elise Smith

Metrosideros fulgens vines on large Pukatea (*Laurelia novae-zelandiae*).

The January 2009 walk took us to Rhododendron Dell where there are some of the most interesting floral gardens in the Park. We appreciated the history of the original Rhododendron plantings of 1934, with some of those Rhododendrons still providing food for Tui which also frequent the nearby large old Kowhai (*Sophora microphylla*) trees when they are flowering. We spent some time watching a young Tui obtaining nectar from the flaming-red flowers of the South American *Erythrina crista-galli*.



Photo Elise Smith

The Traffic Islands garden at Brooklands.

SCANZ and Pukekura Park

Fiona Cayzer

Solar Circuit Aotearoa New Zealand (SCANZ) is a premier art and technology event held biennially in New Plymouth. SCANZ consists of a residency, exhibition, and symposium for 22 participants from New Zealand and around the world. This year, it ran from 26th January to 8th February and was held at the Western Institute of Technology (WITT). For more detailed information on SCANZ and Pukekura Park projects see www.intercreate.com.

Four artists worked alongside six local high school students and two WITT graduates as part of a collaboration between SCANZ, Puke Ariki and Shell New Zealand under the 60 Springs Education for Sustainability project. Two of the artists, Brett Stalbaum (University of California, San Diego) and Andrew Gryf Paterson (Helsinki, Finland), worked on projects relating to Pukekura Park.

Stalbaum's project, "Pukekura Park Demonstration/Environment and Sustainability GPS Tours", worked with students to develop a concept demonstration of experimental, mobile, GPS guided tours on issues related to Pukekura Park. He utilised specific software to enable these tours to run on mobile phones. Students learned about GPS, Walking Tools platform (software), and how to create narratives/sounds/scenarios in relation to the Park.

Paterson's project, "Taranaki Platform Ecologies", investigated the online platforms, Taranaki wiki and the soon to be released kete. Using the proposition that these platforms can be interpreted as "ecosystems" - imagined by initiators to be sustainable, outgoing and ongoing developments - he made conceptual connections with the natural and social ecologies in Pukekura Park. In discussion with the students, he developed an iterative series of diagrams which acknowledge the complex interactions between all involved in these ecosystems.

From the Friends

Photos by Elise Smith taken on recent walks.



Visitors impressions

Donna Christiansen

Technical Officer Fernery & Display Houses

2008 was another successful year in the Fernery & Display Houses with a total of 61,073 visitors, an increase of c.6,000 on the previous year.

We are fortunate to have a visitor's book which is well-used. Visitors come from many parts of the world including England, Europe, South Africa, North America, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and locals. Every age group is represented from young children who love the tunnels and fish, to the elderly who willingly struggle up the steps to see the displays. The interests of visitors range from those of the avid horticulturalist to the novice gardener and the non-gardening types who all enjoy the uniqueness, history, and beauty of this magical facility.

Visitors' comments are well-worth reading while you are in the Fernery. A few are shared here: "Good use of our rates, keep it going"; "Amazing & free"; "Unbelievable"; "Inspiring"; "Unique"; "Incomparable"; "Mind boggling"; "God's creation Praise the Lord", and a few lines down the page, "Nothing to do with God, it's down to the gardeners".

The Fernery team are always experimenting with new plants to enhance the displays. This year the displays of good, old-fashioned Delphiniums and Gladioli were stunning. "Back to Basics" is the theme of a display to be created in autumn. It will incorporate re-cycling and eco-friendly ideas. All will be revealed in March-April.

