

The Magazine of the Friends of Pukekura Park

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*Friends of Pukekura Park
New Plymouth*



Photo Derek Hughes

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New Zealand ferns in the Fernery at Pukekura Park in September 1928

David Medway

In my article “Original ferns of the Pukekura Park Fernery”, which appeared in the *Supplement* to the *Newsletter of the Friends of Pukekura Park* 3(1) (February 2008), I said it is to be regretted that there seem to be no surviving lists from which we can ascertain the specific identity of any of the ferns which were growing in the Fernery when it opened in January 1928, or were growing there in the years immediately following its opening.

Iolanthe Small (1927-2008) was the manager of the Fernery and Display Houses for all but about the first five years of the very long time - 48 years from 1944 to 1992 - she was employed in Pukekura Park (*Daily News* 8/1/1992). Iolanthe was particularly interested in, and knowledgeable about, the fern component of the New Zealand flora. She was regarded, rightly, as a local expert on that subject. In late 2007, Iolanthe mentioned to me that she had a list of the ferns which were growing in the Fernery in the 1920s but was unable to locate it at that time. Since then, the list has come to light and, through the kind offices of Ailsa McCrone, I have been able to examine it. Ailsa, too, worked in the Fernery and Display Houses for a very long time - 45 years from 1957 to 2002 - much of it as Iolanthe’s “right-hand man”. I am grateful to Iolanthe for ensuring that this unique document survived, and to Ailsa for bringing its continuing existence to my attention.

In my above-mentioned article I noted that Francis Morshead was acting Superintendent of Pukekura Park from 4 February 1928 until 11 October 1928 while Thomas Horton was overseas, and that Morshead continued Horton’s work diary (Puke Arika ARC 2003-860, Box 1, Item 21) during that period. Morshead recorded on 7 May 1928 that “Mr Davies brought Messrs Northcroft (Govt Botanist) and Archibald of Wellington to see fernery. The former interested in *Gleichenia cunninghamii* var. *alpina*, wished to obtain specimens for examination and as D & D had none to offer I offered to accompany them to Mt Egmont and collect same”. The following day they went to Mount Egmont where they “collected five specimens of *Gleichenia* c. var. *alpina*. Mr Northcroft very pleased. Self obtained three varieties of ferns not previously in fernery”.

It may not be a coincidence that just a few days later, from 14-16 May 1928, Morshead and a staff member were occupied in the Fernery “re-labelling ferns according to new classification a long intricate undertaking large numbers having been re-classified”. Morshead reported to the Pukekura Park Board at its meeting in July 1928 that the ferns had been re-labelled where necessary to conform to the new classification of New Zealand ferns (*Taranaki Herald* 18/7/1928). The “new classification” of New Zealand ferns to which Morshead referred must be the one contained in the second edition of T. F. Cheeseman’s *Manual of the New Zealand Flora* which had been published in 1925. Northcroft may have drawn Morshead’s attention to this publication, as a result of which Morshead promptly undertook the task of re-labelling the ferns in the Fernery so that their names complied with Cheeseman’s “new classification”.

The typewritten list preserved by Iolanthe Small comprises three pages titled “New Zealand Ferns and Ferns Allies”. It contains a complete list of the generic, specific and varietal names of the ferns recognised by Cheeseman in 1925, enumerated in the order given by him. There is a tick alongside 122 of those names. Of the ticked names one is crossed out, two relate to genera, four also have a question mark alongside, and three relate to varietal names which were not recognised by Cheeseman. This leaves a total of 112 ticked names of species and varieties of ferns which were recognised by that author. Morshead, in his report to the Pukekura Park Board in September 1928, said that the fern collection then “comprised 112 recognised species and varieties, besides many local variations of the types which had been collected and sent in by interested collectors” (*Taranaki Herald* 19/9/1928). Therefore,

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there would seem to be no doubt that the 112 recognised species and varieties of ferns indicated in the list were those identified by Morshead as growing in the Fernery in September 1928, only eight months after it was officially opened on 28 January 1928. They are given here, in the order and under the names, many now out-dated, in which they appear in the list. By December 1928, Horton was able to tell the Pukekura Park Board that “They now had the most complete collection of New Zealand ferns in the Dominion” (*Taranaki Herald* 12/12/1928).

Recognised species and varieties of New Zealand ferns growing in the Fernery at Pukekura Park in September 1928

Hymenophyllum sanguinolentum, villosum, australe, pulcherrimum, dilatatum, demissum, flabellatum; Trichomanes reniforme, venosum, strictum, elongatum; Loxsoma cunninghamii; Dicksonia squarrosa, fibrosa, lanata; Cyathea dealbata, medullaris, cunninghamii; Hemitelia smithii; Polystichum sylvaticum, richardi, cystostegia, hispidum, adiantiforme; Dryopteris decomposita, glabella, velutina, punctata, pennigera, parasitica, gongylodes; Nephrolepis cordifolia, exaltata; Leptolepia novae-zealandiae; Davallia tasmani; Lindsaya linearis, viridis, cuneata, cuneata var. lessonii; Athyrium umbrosum; Diplazium japonicum; Asplenium flabellifolium, trichomanes, adiantoides, obtusatum, lucidum, lucidum var. obliquum, scleroprium, anomodum, hookerianum, hookerianum var. colensoi, bulbiferum, bulbiferum var. laxum, bulbiferum var. tripinnatum, richardi, flaccidum; Blechnum patersoni, discolor, vulcanicum, norfolkianum, lanceolatum, banksii, penna-marina, capense, filiforme, nigrum, fluviatile, fraseri; Doodia media, caudata; Pellaea falcata, rotundifolia; Nothochlaena distans; Cheilanthes tenuifolia, sieberi; Hypolepis tenuifolia, millefolium, distans; Adiantum aethiopicum, diaphanum, diaphanum var. polymorphum, hispidulum, formosum, affine, fulvum; Pteris tremula, comans, macilenta, macilenta var. pendula, macilenta var. saxatilis; Histiopteris incisa; Pteridium aquilinum; Paesia scaberula; Polypodium billardieri, grammitidis, dictyopteris, pustulatum, novae-zealandiae; Cyclophorus serpens; Gleichenia circinata, dicarpa, cunninghamii, flabellata; Schizaea fistulosa, dichotoma; Lygodium articulatum; Todea barbara; Leptopteris hymenophylloides, superba; Marattia fraxinea; Botrychium australe, australe var. millefolium.



Photo Derek Hughes

Autumn-winter update

Ian Hutchinson
Technical Officer Pukekura Park

We will continue this planting season with “tweaking” some of the renovation work done on borders in Pukekura and Brooklands Parks, as well as starting on a few new areas.

The herbaceous border in Brooklands Park is to have a few minor adjustments to fill some gaps from last year, and to improve some contrasts between plants. *Ligularia reniformis* will be added to the spaces between the rhododendrons opposite the *Fagus sylvatica* ‘Riversii’ Copper Beech. These plants were to have gone in last year but were not available at that time. *Sisyrinchium striatum* will be planted to break up and reduce the size of the block of Comfrey (*Symphytum*), and this should provide a better contrast to the *Strobilanthes gossypinus* and *Pulmonaria*. More *Dahlia* varieties will be planted to build on the success of this feature over last summer, and some more *Penstemon* varieties will be planted as well.

Stage one of the 4 Seasons border at Brooklands will undergo a few minor adjustments, and we will start on stage two which is the section from the large Macrocarpa (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) around to the entrance to the former Nature Trail. Stage one “tweaks” will mainly focus on extending the duration of the display by reducing the size of some of the groups of plants from last year’s revamp and adding some new shrubs and perennials which have different flowering times and colours. The revamp of stage two will entail removal of some older unwanted plant material, composting the soil, and then adding an overlay of fresh topsoil. The planned replanting in this section will include some new shrubs, perennials, and ornamental grasses plus the relocation of some plants from section one to section two so that the two sections of this border tie together by having plants in common. The new plants are on order and should be here some time in July.

The conifer collection planted on Monument Hill in 2007 - described in the Friends’ *Newsletter* 3(1) (February 2008), page 8 - will have some more plants added to it. One of the conifer varieties which was vandalised will be replaced, and between the conifers we will plant a combination of the ferns *Asplenium bulbiferum*, *Asplenium oblongifolium* and *Blechnum discolor*. This will help to reduce the amount of exposed bare ground, and hopefully the amount of weed control needed.

We have recently added two new varieties to the collection in Primula Dell. They are *Primula capitata* which has purple drumhead-shaped flower heads, and some hybrids between *Primula bulleyana* and *Primula beesiana* which should have flowers in orange, yellow and red shades. We also intend to plant some *Hakenochoa* grass on the bank between the joggers track and the Primula Dell stream. Again, this was to have been done last year but the required plants were not available then.

Two new areas to be revamped this year are the borders of Smith Walk and around the Waterfall. On Smith Walk we will remove a lot of Ladder Fern (*Nephrolepis cordifolia*), which has become an invasive nuisance, and cut back and remove some of the existing *Asystasia* in order to better reveal some very interesting tree trunks. We will add some new plants to the borders. We may use more *Mahonia* to build on the existing collection of *Clivia*, *Justicia pauciflora*, *Ajuga*, *Philodendron* ‘Xanadu’, and *Asplenium bulbiferum*, as ground cover. We will remove Ladder Fern and dead pongas from around the Waterfall, and cut back some of the existing vegetation to better reveal the falls and one or two very nice Nikau Palms (*Rhopalostylis sapida*). We intend planting some bromeliads on the ponga stumps, and the Ladder Fern will be replaced with Shining Spleenwort (*Asplenium oblongifolium*).



Autumn walk in the Park

Val Smith

In spite of threatening rain and a wintry 10°C maximum temperature on 11 May 2009, eight stalwarts met at the Rogan Street entrance for another informative guided walk in Pukekura Park. Plan B, a more sheltered modification of the original route, was put into operation. A circuit of the Band Room lawn was made within the bounds of the seedling *Camellia saluenensis* hedge, and some of the plantings from the earlier Frethey home at that site were identified. On Horton Walk, a sticky fruit of the bird-catching plant Parapara (*Pisonia brunoniana* 'Variegata') was tested as it passed from finger to finger. Parapara is a plant of northern New Zealand and the outlying islands, but the origin of the variegated form is unknown. Along the track behind the Fernery one of the Park's many Kauri (*Agathis australis*), thriving well south of its natural habitat, was commented upon. Further down, forming a backdrop to Stainton Dell, fruiting Himalayan Strawberry trees (*Cornus capitata*) were alive with feeding Tui fending off intruders. Although these trees are sometimes thought of as weeds, without them Pukekura Park would not be able to support the number and variety of birds that it does during the time of year when they are fruiting. The Wheki-ponga (*Dicksonia fibrosa*) which form a colonnade around the lily pond, their thick trunks almost hidden by skirts of dead fronds, came from Tarata when the ponds were constructed in 1928. It was pleasing to learn of the presence of the little Australian Whistling Frog (*Litoria ewingii*) in the vicinity and of the Southern Bell Frog (*Litoria raniformis*) in the Lily Pond at Brooklands Bowl, when frog numbers are declining worldwide. Near the Fernery entrance the Hinoki Cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*) gave rise to a discussion on the use of capital or lower case first letters when writing plant common names. The Fernery, as always, was a show of flamboyant exotics tempered by the softer greens of ferns but, except for a few, these were left for a rainy day. Back on Horton Walk a brief history of the pines that grew there, and their removal in 1924 and replacement with native trees, ended a walk in which the season was signified by the orange-red flowers of our Red Climbing Rata Akatawhiwhi (*Metrosideros fulgens*), rather than the coloured foliage of deciduous trees that may be seen elsewhere in the Park.



Photo Elise Smith

Parapara
(*Pisonia brunoniana* 'Variegata')

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Photo Val Smith

Above. Red Climbing Rata Akatawhiwhi (*Metrosideros fulgens*)

Left. Wheki-ponga (*Dicksonia fibrosa*) at the lily pond



Photo Val Smith

Some early working bees in Pukekura Park

David Medway

In 1893, “large numbers of unsightly” *Pinus insignis* (*Pinus radiata*) trees, that had been planted in the Recreation Grounds (Pukekura Park) from the opening day in May 1876, were cut down and cleared away (*Taranaki Herald* 2/5/1894). The Recreation Grounds Board had been compelled “of late years to expend a lot of labour in thinning out the pinus insignis trees which, in the early years, had been planted very close together. Although much has been done to correct the overgrown forest-like appearance of the grounds, the trees are still in some places far too thick, and there is too much sameness in the character of the trees - the general effect being rather gloomy. In carrying out the thinning process, the Board has not been using the axe indiscriminately, but has been guided by due regard to the principles of landscape gardening. On Thursday last, some of the Board’s members met in the grounds by arrangement, and spent some hours in making a selection of trees to be removed, as they were in some cases injuring trees which it was desirable to preserve. The difficulty now is to carry out the removal, for the Board is not only without funds, but is largely in debt. Hence, it has been resolved to hold a working bee on Thursday afternoons, and, as several persons have signified their willingness to help, a start will be made next Thursday. Others willing to help are requested to give their names to the secretary of the Board” (*Taranaki Herald* 16/4/1894).



Puke Ariki collection PHO2009-212

The first of those working bees was on 19/4/1894. Persons intending to take part were advised that work would start at 2pm, and there would be a short spell for refreshments at 4pm. They were requested to bring their own axes, as the Board’s supply of tools was limited. There was likely to be a good muster of workers, including some “muscular” representatives of the Transport Service (*Taranaki Herald* 18/4/1894). It was later reported that

“There was a very fair muster of volunteers at the Recreation Grounds on Thursday afternoon to thin out some of the trees, and a large amount of “graft” was put in The well-directed labours of a dozen or so of men every Thursday afternoon would be of great assistance to the Board, and would improve the appearance of the grounds”. (*Taranaki Herald* 20/4/1894).

The Secretary of the Recreation Grounds Board received the following offer in a letter dated 21/4/1894: “At a meeting of the Egmont Sports and Athletic Club, held last evening, it was decided that a working bee go to the Recreation Ground next Thursday to assist in the work of thinning the trees there. If our services are acceptable to the Board we will be at Mr Robert Sole’s yard, Lairdet-street, at 1pm sharp to receive instructions and guidance what to do. The following have given in their names: - S. Hill, S. Barriball, J. R. Hill, J. W. Thomason, W. Stanley, G. Davey, W. Cheffings, E. Putt, C. Barriball, H. Putt, W. Bishop, D. Bishop, C. Colson, H. Bishop, Koru, Konaka,

and Makeora, and probably others” (*Taranaki Herald* 23/4/1894). Needless to say, this offer was readily accepted.

There was a good muster at the working bee on 26/4/1894 and “some serviceable work was done in the way of cutting down and clearing away trees that were considered not necessary. A party of settlers from Egmont Road ... put in a lot of good, solid work, and well deserve the thanks of the townspeople for the generous spirit they have shown. Refreshments were provided by a number of ladies” (*Taranaki Herald* 26/4/1894). One of the party, J. Bishop, had a narrow escape from a serious accident. A large *Pinus radiata* tree fell the opposite way Mr Bishop thought it would, and in attempting to get clear of some of the outer branches struck him about the head, but, except for a few scratches, did not inflict any injury. “It is understood that the same party intend to do a whole day’s work in the Grounds next Thursday week” (*Taranaki Herald* 27/4/1894).

The Recreation Grounds Board hoped there would be a good attendance at the working bee on 3/5/1894. “The work to be done will be chiefly the cutting up of trees already felled and the burning of the waste parts. Plenty of occupation for willing hands will be found in grubbing furze, wattle and rat-tail grass. Although a football match will be on, workers will be admitted free. Refreshments will be provided as usual” (*Taranaki Herald* 2/5/1894). This working bee may not have taken place because in New Plymouth on 3/5/1894 it was a “wet morning, with every sign of the rain continuing the whole day” (*Taranaki Herald* 3/5/1894).

It was hoped that, weather permitting, the Egmont Sports and Athletic Club would work the whole day in the Recreation Grounds on 10/5/1894 under the supervision of “Mr Arden, who is entrusted with the tree planting operations, and of Mr Hughes, a member of the Board” (*Taranaki Herald* 9/5/1894). They probably did not do so because on 10/5/1894 it was “a thoroughly wet morning, with a dull heavy atmosphere” in New Plymouth (*Taranaki Herald* 10/5/1894). However, the Club’s working bee in the Recreation Grounds on 17/5/1894 was a “great success” (*Taranaki Herald* 18/5/1894). I believe that the accompanying untitled and undated photograph from the Puke Ariki collections depicts members of the Club who took part in the working bees on 26/4/1894 and 17/5/1894. Several of the Club members named in the newspaper apparently participated in both. The photograph may even feature those members of the Club who were present on 17/5/1894 when “sixteen workers, including eight natives, were engaged during the afternoon in felling and clearing away trees” (*Taranaki Herald* 18/5/1894).

I have not found any record of a working bee having taken place on 24/5/1894. It was announced that the Recreation Grounds Board would hold another working bee on 31/5/1894 “when tea will be provided as usual. A stranger on observing how few the workers are who turn up on these occasions would be tempted to remark that the number of able-bodied young men in this town must be very small” (*Taranaki Herald* 29/5/1894). This working bee does not appear to have taken place either. In New Plymouth on 31/5/1894 it was a “fine morning, but rather chilly atmosphere” (*Taranaki Herald* 31/5/1894), so weather does not appear to have been a factor. Perhaps the working bee was cancelled at the last moment because insufficient workers turned up.

At its meeting on 8/6/1894 the Recreation Grounds Board tendered its thanks to the settlers - European and Maori - from the Egmont Road, and to all others who had rendered valuable services at the working bees, including the several ladies named in the newspaper who had at various times provided refreshments for the workers (*Taranaki Herald* 9/6/1894). Three days later it was announced that, owing to the days being so short and the weather so uncertain, the working bees in the Recreation Grounds would be discontinued (*Taranaki Herald* 11/6/1894). The Board noted in its annual report for 1894 that “During the year a series of working bees were held, and a great deal of useful work was done under the direction of Mr Arden, whose plan for the permanent planting and ornamentation of the grounds will result most advantageously” (*Taranaki Herald* 21/3/1895). F. H. Arden was the “skilled gardener” who had been engaged by the Board in July 1893 to superintend the planting out of native trees in the grounds (*Taranaki Herald* 22/7/1893). Arden’s activities while so engaged will be the subject of a future article.



Photos by Elise Smith
from recent guided walks

The tale of a whale

Ron Lambert
Senior Researcher Puke Ariki

Quietly decaying under the ferns on the side of Cannon Hill, and now almost one with the soil, are some fragments of bone – big bones!

They are the last remnants of a baleen whale which washed ashore at the Katikara Stream, Tataraimaka in early December 1892. The *Taranaki Herald* of 7/12/1892 reported it as a “black or right species” but this identification is not supported by a photograph of the animal or by its reported length of 19 metres. These indicate it was either a Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*) or a Fin Whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*). It became something of an attraction, and “a number of persons drove out from town [New Plymouth] to view the whale. Mr Collis ... took a number of photographs” (*Taranaki Herald* 9/12/1892).

The farmhands who found the whale contracted local Māori to flense the carcass and transport the blubber to “...the ‘trying down’ apparatus, which has been fixed up in the locality” (*Taranaki Herald* 9/12/1892). It was expected to produce four tons of oil, and the finders were likely to also “make a good thing” from the whale “bone” [baleen].

In the following January, Thomas Skinner, a member of the Recreation Grounds Board, had discussions with the whale’s owners with a view to obtaining the skeleton for Pukekura Park. They generously agreed to give the skeleton free of charge to the Board (*Taranaki Herald* 21/1/1893). A wagonload of bones, being a portion of the skeleton of the whale, arrived at the Park on 29 March 1893 (*Taranaki Herald* 29/3/1893). The bones were stacked behind the bathing-house pending their reconstruction. Not long afterwards it was discovered that persons had been carrying off some of the small bones. The Board decided to enter a prosecution against anyone taking away bones from the stack (*Taranaki Herald* 8/4/1893). The Board reported in May 1894 that the bones would be mounted when funds were available (*Taranaki Herald* 2/5/1894).

Skinner investigated the cost and design of framing required to mount the skeleton. James Hector, the Director of the Colonial Museum (now Te Papa) was approached for his ideas on the process as his museum already had several similar cetacean skeletons. Perhaps because some major bones were missing – there are no forelimb bones or a skull visible in photographs – Hector’s advice on articulation was not used. The two massive jaw bones were leaned against the base of Cannon Hill and the vertebrae were merely scattered over its slopes. The curved ribs were used to form a decorative edging to the path up the hill. The bones appear in a number of photographs over the next few years, but over time the vertebrae were progressively removed and the jaw bones became overgrown and forgotten.

Pukekura Park’s baleen whale at the Katikara Stream with New Plymouth visitors and locals.

Photograph W. A. Collis
8 December 1892
ARC2002-615
Puke Ariki Collection



The Racecourse - Bowl road

Presentation by the President of Friends of Pukekura Park Inc. to the New Plymouth District Council on 9 June 2009 in support of submission relating to proposed new access road into the Bowl of Brooklands from Pukekura Raceway

1. In terms of Section 2 of the Taranaki Botanic Garden Act, 1876 the original area of Pukekura Park was vested in a Board of Trustees for Public Recreation to be held by it “in trust for a **botanic garden and public recreation grounds**”. In 1929, the Board of Trustees was dissolved and Pukekura Park was vested in the Borough of New Plymouth subject to the same trusts. The New Plymouth Borough Land Exchange and Empowering Act 1934 vested Brooklands Park in the Borough of New Plymouth, subject to the same trusts as the Borough held Pukekura Park under the Taranaki Botanic Garden Act 1876. **Those trusts have not changed.** In accordance with Section 6 of the Empowering Act mentioned, Pukekura and Brooklands together are officially known as Pukekura Park.

2. Pukekura Park has rightly been recognised by the New Zealand Gardens Trust as a “Garden of National Significance”, a classification which recognises its qualities and significance as an outstanding garden and of which the Council and the citizens of New Plymouth are justly proud and protective. Indeed, not only is Pukekura

Park a garden of national significance, it is also regarded as the “Jewel in the Crown” of New Plymouth. No lesser a person than the Mayor himself is recently quoted - on the Council’s website and elsewhere - as saying that the jewel in New Plymouth’s crown is Pukekura Park, “which has gained international acclaim as much for its botanical collection and gorgeous setting as for its cricket ground”.



The ‘Mahogany Archway’

3. Brooklands Park was formally handed over to the Borough of New Plymouth at a ceremony at Brooklands on 10 March 1934. This ceremony was attended by a large number of citizens and the then Governor-General, Lord Bledisloe, who officially declared the grounds open as a public reserve. Jas. McLeod, the Chairman of the Pukekura Park Board at the time, said in the course of his acceptance speech that the Board “recognised there would be criticism, much of it, perhaps, of a helpful nature, for as time went on there were bound to be changes. Nothing would be done, however, that would interfere with the natural beauties of the surroundings. **And nothing would be done to interfere with the native bush**



Photos by Derek Hughes

within the property. The speaker pointed out that around the whole of that bush there would be planted belts to protect the bush from what were termed “ground draughts” (*Taranaki Herald* 12/3/1934, p. 3).

4. Thomas Horton was Curator of Pukekura Park from 1924-1949. He was responsible, among other things, for planting the row of magnificent kauri, totara, rimu and other native trees along Horton Walk; for the plantings of native trees in Kindergarten Gully; for the planting of innumerable native trees in the native bush areas at Brooklands; and for planting the many kauri and other native trees in what is known as Kauri Grove at Brooklands. He was also responsible for planting the shelter belts around Brooklands to protect the native bush there from the “ground draughts” referred to by McLeod. Horton’s personal motto was consistent with the policy of the Pukekura Park Board at the time. He recorded it in his work diary for 1937, now in Puke Ariki, as **“To plant, plant, plant, & plant again, native trees preferred, and destroy only useless, or dangerous trees”**.

5. It is an adherence to these and similar policies by administrators and custodians over the 133 years since Pukekura Park was officially opened in 1876 that has materially assisted in creating and maintaining the “Jewel in the Crown” that the Park is today. It is incumbent on those presently having custodianship and management of the Park to ensure that this continues.

6. It therefore follows that, to be consistent with these policies, **no long-established native vegetation in the Park should be sacrificed in favour of a perceived need for facilities such as improved access to a recreational use in the Park unless that need is clearly shown to be imperative.** Even then, the need should be met in a way that does the least damage to the native vegetation in question, even if it is more expensive to meet it in that manner.

7. It is the Friends’ opinion that the perceived need for the alternative access from the Racecourse to the Bowl as presently proposed has not been clearly shown to be imperative. Furthermore, it is patently clear that provision of that alternative access will involve the sacrifice of long-established native vegetation, something which should be avoided if at all possible. The Friends’ consider that insufficient consideration has been given to the importance of the several very large and smaller Kohekohe trees which will be destroyed, and to the effect that their removal, and the removal of other components of the native vegetation in the immediate environs – together with associated extensive earthworks - will have on the ecology of the affected area. The native vegetation which will be lost if the present proposal proceeds is very much more valuable than just common “scrub”. The loss of such long-established vegetation and the opening-up of the area will almost certainly have an adverse affect on the ecology of the affected area and its environs.

8. It is the Friends’ submission that there are two principal reasons why Council should defer reaching a decision on the present proposal.

Firstly, it is of considerable concern to the Friends that this proposal is being considered in isolation, and not in the context of a development plan for the Park as a whole. In these circumstances, it is surely in the interests of wise and sound management of the Park that this issue be considered in the context of such an over-all plan. The Friends welcome and support the steps being taken at present toward the formulation and completion of a long-overdue development plan for the Park.

Secondly, Pukekura Park is owned by the Mayor, Councillors, and citizens of New Plymouth. As I have already mentioned, it is the Friends’ view that implementation of the present proposal, which involves significant tree-felling and earthworks, will have adverse effects on long-standing native vegetation and the ecology of part of the Park. Given this potential, it is the opinion of the Friends that the present proposal should have been publicly notified, and still should be, so that all citizens of New Plymouth, as joint owners of our “Jewel in the Crown”, are aware of what is being proposed and have an opportunity to comment on it.

Work in the Park

**Chris Connolly
Curator Pukekura Park**

During the last few weeks it has been very evident in the Park that the seasons have been rapidly changing through autumn into winter with a significant deterioration in the weather. However, whatever the season and the weather, there is always plenty going on with much of our recent effort being focused on routine maintenance throughout the Park.

The annual summer bedding displays have been replaced at Brooklands, and the begonias at the Tea House have been replaced with poppies and tulips. Small drifts of poppies have been planted in the herbaceous border around the Fred Parker Lawn to add more winter colour to this area. Additional primulas and astilbes have been planted in Primula Dell. The Friends Volunteers have done a magnificent job planting a thousand daffodil bulbs along the banks of the western side of the Bowl of Brooklands.

The *Cryptomeria* trees on the Japanese Hillside have been selectively thinned out to facilitate the development of the remaining plantings. The Brooklands lawn and the large grassed area between the Zoo and The Gables have been renovated after Womad. These lawn areas have been cored and under-sown, and uneven parts levelled up with top-soil. The steps on the sides of some of the terraces around the Sports Ground have been re-built, and a section turfed to repair an area where the turf had been worn out and tree roots exposed.

In recent months we have been planning for the garden areas to be upgraded in the new financial year. Some of the areas to be targeted are the herbaceous border along the Zoo side of Brooklands Park, The Gables, Monument Hill, the Waterfall bank, and the entrance to Pukekura Park from Gilbert Street.



Photos by Derek Hughes