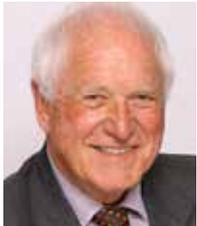


Bason botanic gardens trust

summer 2015 newsletter

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FROM THE CHAIR Ian Hamilton

This is an exciting month. The Homestead Entrance is in place, the new covered barbecues are finished and a major sculpture is being commissioned. Added to this is the placement of the city's Japanese Tea House on a peninsular at the edge of the Lake. This is the completion of approximately one million dollars of projects with the money raised from Wanganui Trusts. An outstanding public effort towards enhancing one of the city's beautiful parks. These parks are what makes Wanganui such an incredible city.

The trust is calling a brief halt to the asset part of its strategic plan, although we still want to see more of the metal roads sealed. We now want to concentrate on botanic and public activities. The trust is planning a summer programme in 2016 so that the area alongside the Lake can be used even more extensively by the citizens of Wanganui. It is worth noting that over 80,000 people went through the Bason in 2014 and I

know that the numbers will be a lot higher this year. The grounds have been recently full of families each weekend. We also have suggested some savings, such as less heating in the display houses, allowing a higher level of grass in the area just inside the gates and maintaining the Tea House Gardens ourselves. We will be asking Trust members to support the purchase of plants for various areas of focussed development.

Why should we have an outstanding Botanic Gardens with Council proactive support? Wanganui is and needs to be a beautiful city. It must be a place people want to live in. If it becomes anything less we are not going to get visitors, nor industry, nor tourism. While the Trustees understand the pressure Council is under to cut costs, we have received considerable feedback from visitors that the Bason Gardens are a place that they see as a 'must visit'. In my work I have visited most cities in New Zealand and can say with confidence

that a big drawing power of a city is its environment. Cities that have activities for families also are ahead in having more a settled community with less disruption from young people.

Throughout the world, cities see their Botanic Gardens as critical to their profile and for community wellbeing. The Bason Botanic Garden is



The two covered barbecues on the site of the old Outdoor Forum are nearing completion.

well established as an educator in a formal sense and is also, by its very nature, a place which displays plants in an informal relaxed way. Gardens are perfect places to demonstrate how important plants and people are to each other. However, our Gardens have a wider social responsibility as a place where families can be together in an environment which is relaxing and enjoyable for all age groups. The Trust's next development follows research which shows that we should be concerned with broadening audiences and finding enhanced relevance to the community. Our Gardens are for everyone and we need activities designed with wider audiences in mind.

I want to assure our City Councillors that a lot of time, effort, expertise and money has been given by the citizens of Wanganui. Vonnie Cave's article in the 'Leaflet' confirms that this has been happening over a long period of time. The Trust will continue to do its utmost to support the current status of the Gardens. However, it cannot do this without the full support of the Council. It is critical that the soul and fabric of the cities' environment is maintained. We may have to cut some services but cultural and environment icons must remain.



The arch at the entrance to the Homestead Garden is now complete, with the installation of the Lisa Walsh glass art in the steel pickets.



Another view of the two covered barbeques.



Eleven year old Juliette Taylor admires the Lisa Walsh glass art at the new Homestead Garden entrance.

BOOKINGS: Direct all Botanic Gardens venue/BBQ bookings to the Customer Service Desk
Wanganui District Council, phone 349 001.

MEMBERSHIP:

Become a **Friend of the Bason**, or **gift a subscription**,
and support Stanley Bason's dream.

Send your name, postal and email address to BBGT Treasurer.
Membership: Individual \$20; Family \$30; Corporate \$100; Life \$500

Internet banking is also available. The bank details are:

Account Name: Bason Botanic Gardens Trust Account
Account Number: 03-0791-0463019-00

Use your name as a reference and also please state whether this is a
donation or membership subscription.

Notification of payment can also be emailed to the Treasurer if you
wish, at terry@delphinium.co.nz

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50 YEARS AT BASON

Vonnie Cave

Vonnie Cave is a Life Member of the Gardens, who has been involved with the Bason for many years, most recently in the capacity of Patron. Chairman asked Vonnie to provide an article highlighting aspects of her contribution over the years.

When my late husband Harry was on the Friends of Bason committee with the late Owen Moore, Una Hawken and Parks Superintendent Milton Boothby, there were many things I was able to help with long before the Trust Board was formed (1997).

Membership: When elected to the Friends committee the first thing I arranged was a wine and cheese evening to promote Bason Reserve to more people. Many responded to our invitations and became members, paying an annual subscription. Over the years those gardener 'Friends of Bason' have been extremely generous through donations and bequests that have funded recent major developments. That initiative was very worthwhile. What do we do now to attract and meet new members?

Camellia Planting: As members of the Camellia Society Harry and I planned the 1985 Memorial planting at the rear of the property and with the help of other members did the planting and subsequent pruning for 20 years until the age factor limited efforts. I made plans for the Council of the species beds, the named plants and sourced replacements.

Succulent Garden: In 1988 I discussed with Bruce Crichton, Parks Superintendent, the possibility of getting the rockery in the Homestead garden tidied of scattered bulbs, Japanese anemone and an old lemon tree so that we could plant succulents in that sunny area. He was very helpful, asked that we preserve the concept of the Homestead garden and leave the *Doryanthes palmerii*. Thus a team of six 'Friends of Bason' led by Keith Burt came to plant in 1989 the 120 dozen rooted cuttings I had grown from my lifetime collection. Since then our team of six volunteers weed every month, three of the original team still regulars.

Millennium Hill: The removal of deer from the hill saw the beginnings of the Millennium Hill tracks and plantings in the year 2000 and after that I kept the eastern end of the hill face (to the Eucalyptus trees) free of weeds with my knapsack and spray. It was during those years of work that I was able to grow a huge number of *Echium wildpretii* on the hill. A knowledgeable plantsman remarked that it was the best display ever in NZ of that species which is not easy to grow.

Weeds: I helped with the eradication of Japanese anemone in two areas of the Homestead garden and bullrushes from the swamp area above the lake where they were increasing rapidly and overcoming native grasses.

Photographic Records: During the 1980's I made photographic copies of all the old photos relating to Bason that could be found back to 1965 when the property was accepted by Wanganui District Council, and made prints for the Scouler Room historical display. I gave the Museum an album of the prints, all home developed and printed, and attached the negatives for safe keeping. Since then regular colour prints for the Scouler Room display have been taken, those including orchids, begonias, homestead garden, Millennium Hill flowering shrubs, conifers and people working or relaxing in the grounds. The last few displays I've donated and Bev Sinclair has assisted me with photos I lacked and the setup.

Donated Plants include several shrubs on the Millennium hill, six different dahlias suited to the Homestead garden, *Cyclamen hederifolium*, *Verbascum creticum*,

and *Monarda Cambridge Red*, their success depending on staff knowledge.

Requests for talks to groups have been fulfilled along with guided walks in the gardens, camellia pruning demonstrations and assistance with the Teddy Bears Picnic Days.

The Homestead Garden Concept
In the future I hope that the ideals of Stan and Blanche Bason and other benefactors are not forgotten. Their feelings toward a natural theme in the then new property should not be ignored. The original idea of working to a style, mainly with brick in the buildings, has been allowed to diminish recently with a hotchpotch of manmade structures cluttering the property.



JAPANESE TEA HOUSE

Phil Thomsen

The tea house that has been part of the Nagazumi-Wanganui Friendship Centre in Wanganui East has been a feature of the city since 1991. The tea house was built according to tradition and custom by Japanese craftsmen. It has been used to inform Whanganui residents about Japanese culture and traditions. However, in September Mayor Annette Main travelled to Nagaizumi and was informed by the mayor Hideo Endo that the town council would be selling the centre, for reasons of affordability, and also because it was now easy through technology to access information on aspects of Japanese culture. However, there was a wish among both city councils to retain the use of the tea house, since it enabled people to directly experience Japanese culture.

The Bason Botanic Gardens Trust Board has agreed to fund the transfer of the tea house to the Gardens. The Rotary Club of Whanganui and Nagaizumi Friendship Group are also supporting the move, and assisting where appropriate. An iconic position has been identified on a peninsula on the Lake edge, close to the wetland area where the ring road passes the Lake on its return. Some trees on the site will be retained and shaped to appropriately reflect Japanese gardening practice. It is planned to add further plantings of



Brittons House Movers remove the Tea House from Wanganui East. It is being stored in Tayforth until the new site is ready.jpg

Japanese plants, such as bamboo, flowering cherry, Japanese pines and Japanese maples, as well as ground covers. The original stepping stone will be installed, and complemented by gravel and stones. A landscape plan is being drawn up by Board member Kelly-Jean Kerr, and will be sent to Nagaizumi for approval.

In the meantime, the tea house has been uplifted from the Duncan Street site and is being kept in storage until the site is ready. It is hoped

to have the tea house on its new foundations by April; although the landscaping may take longer to reach fruition.



At the presentation of models of the three chosen finalists in the sculpture competition. From left to right Wi Taepa (artist), Terry Dowdeswell (Trust Board), Paul Johnson.

