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ABOUT US

ENNZ provides a forum for debate on environmental topics through the acceptance of peer reviewed and non peer reviewed articles, as well as book and exhibition reviews and postings on upcoming events, including conferences and seminars.

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'EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION'

JAMES BEATTIE

Welcome to the last issue of 2009, one devoted to garden history as well as an obituary to our sadly missed Geoff Park.

Walter Cook, well-known through both his work on Wellington garden history and through his employment at The Alexander Turnbull Library, presents a delightful article on Wellington Botanic Garden's Lady Norwood Rose Garden and Begonia House. His account situates the gardens within their local as well as global history.

The second article, by Geoff Doube, continues with the garden history theme, this time presenting a multi-layered reading of the Renaissance Garden at the impressive Hamilton Gardens.

Charles Dawson reviews William Beinart and Lotte Hughes' exciting new book, *Environment and Empire*. Finally, David Young, contemporary and friend of Geoff Park, presents a beautifully written reflection on the life and contribution of Geoff.

In other news, Cath Knight, has begun a blog on environmental topics, one well worth visiting: http://envirohistorynz.wordpress.com

All that remains is for me to wish you all a very safe and happy New Year and Festive Season.

THE LADY NORWOOD ROSE GARDEN AND BEGONIA HOUSE

WALTER COOK

Large architectural statements in a formal classical tradition are rare in New Zealand. In Wellington, when these were planned, they were often left unfinished. There are the Carrillion and the Dominion Museum on Mount Cook. Both were designed in 1929, and built between 1930 and 1936, set in formal terraces planted with pohutukawas and other native trees. Two thirds of the museum building was completed, and the formal ceremonial way connecting the complex to the central city never became more than a pipe dream. Then there is our national Parliament Building. Designed in 1911, only half was built between then and 1928, giving the parliamentary complex its distinctive appearance – a cluster of half finished buildings dating from 1899 to the 1970s. Like fault lines in the Wellington landscape, this group of buildings seems to reflect disjunctions in our cultural and political history when the country took sudden new directions that rendered architectural projects redundant in the middle of construction. In this case the classical baroque style of the Parliament Building was not reflected in the layout of the grounds.

On the other hand there are two projects that were completed. One is the Wellington Railway Station that opened in 1936. Its great hall is an architectural experience like no other in the country, except, perhaps, for the interior of the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Christchurch. The entrance hall's vaulted ceilings refer to the baths of Carriculla in Rome and were designed as a fitting gateway to the city in the days when rail was the main form of public transport. Today its gigantic monumentality, like the opening section of Alfred Hill's *Ceremonial Ode*, is probably seen as a magnificent "one off" aberration – something totally un-New Zealand in character. The building fronts a formal forecourt of lawns planted with pohutukawas. The other example of a completed project in a formal classical tradition is the Lady Norwood Rose Garden and Begonia House. This article examines the construction of the Lady Norwood Rose Garden and Begonia House. (Fig 1)

Lady Norwood Rose Gardenand Begonia House

For many people, the Lady Norwood Rose Garden and Begonia House are their first contact with the Wellington Botanic Garden. With their horticultural displays, restaurant, and accessibility they have always been a hit with tourists and the local public. Even during the 1960s and 1970s when the Botanic Garden as a whole was not heavily used, people still flocked to the Rose Garden and Begonia House, especially on Sunday afternoons.

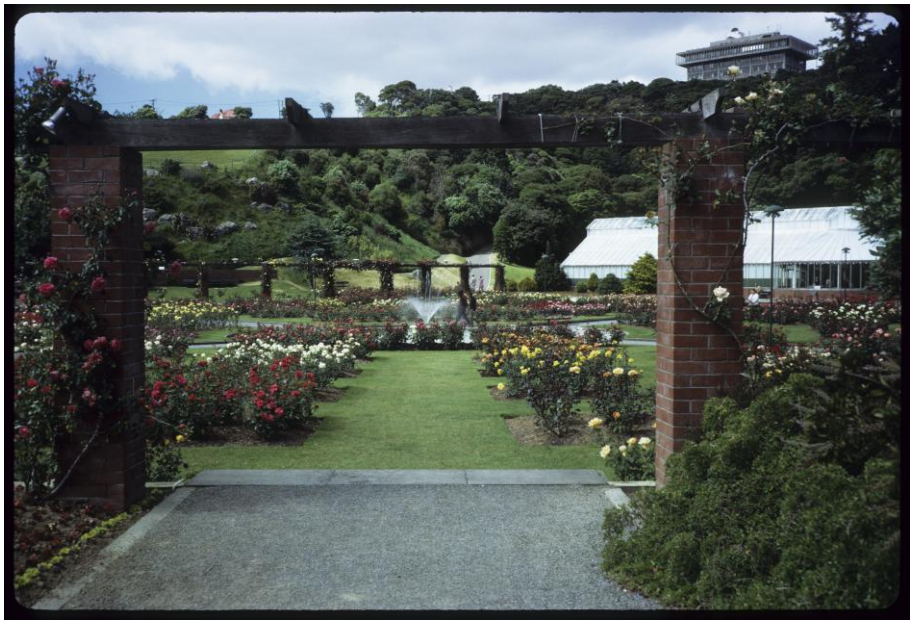

Fig 1: Lady Norwood Rose Garden, 1975. Photo – Donal Duthie. Alexander Turnbull Library reference PA12-1779-5.

The plan for this complex of gardens was most likely the work of the Director, Edward Hutt. It was certainly the largest addition to the Botanic Garden established during his directorship (1947-1965). (Fig 2)

The scheme was expressive of a forceful new director, and a community moving to reclaim its open spaces, many of which had been appropriated by the military during the Second World War. It was also expressive of an affluent post-war Parks Department, which, compared to the 1920s and 1930s, had money to burn. In 1965, at the end of Hutt's reign, Wellington had the best funded parks department in the country.

On becoming director in 1947, Hutt wasted no time in reorganising the department and getting new projects up and running. That year the new plant nursery at Berhampore was built. This operated as a factory ultimately pumping out millions of bedding plants for use in the Botanic Garden and throughout the city. It was also where trees and shrubs were grown on, until in 1956 this function was relocated to an open ground nursery at Makara.

Fig 2: Edward Hutt and his long-serving chairman of Parks and Reserves, Dame Elizabeth Gilmer photographed in the Botanic Garden in 1952. Alexander Turnbull Library reference ½-020495-F.

At the Botanic Garden, Hutt extended seasonal features such as spring tulip displays which at their most extensive consumed between 70 and 100 thousand bulbs, though some of these were also used in city plantings. Throughout the 1950s he tidied up the Main Garden by installing stone walls, and establishing the present Camellia and Peace gardens.

ROSES IN THE BOTANIC GARDEN

After Berhampore Nursery, a Rose Garden and conservatory were his next big horticultural project, and in July 1948 the plan for

these was published in *The Dominion* newspaper. Roses do not seem to have featured in the Botanic Garden of the Board (1869-1891) in the way that camellias and rhododendrons were. What James Hector, Wellington Botanic Garden's first Director, did establish in the 1870s was a teaching garden on the site of the present Sound Shell Lawn. (Fig 3) The layout of this garden, with its formal rectangular beds, was to become the basic structure of the first Rose Garden in the Botanic Garden. The Teaching Garden remained unchanged after the City Council took over the Botanic Garden in 1891, and remained unchanged until well into the 1900s. Photographs of the cleared, newly planted Main Garden dating from circa 1906, show that it was still intact at that date. Other photographs dating from circa 1906 to circa 1910 show that at its southern end, some of the rectangular beds had been modified, and were used for displays of seasonal annuals.

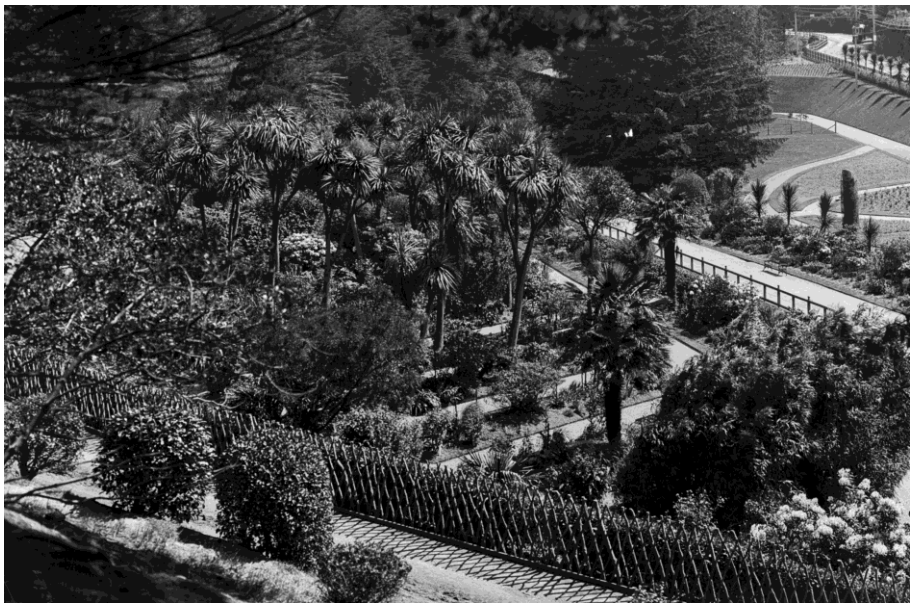

Fig 3: James Hector's Teaching Garden, Wellington Botanic Garden ca 1910. Photo – S C Smith. Detail of Alexander Turnbull Library reference 1/1-020191-G.

The transformation to a Rose Garden was gradual. Rectangular beds were divided by new paths and much of the original planting including cabbage trees was retained. That roses featured in the garden by 1912 is recorded in a report to the Town Clerk from Superintendent Glen stating that the "Enclosed Garden "had been broken into and that roses and other flowers had been cut and strewn about." By 1917 the garden had become "The

Rosary," though many of Hector's original plants still remained. The last of Hector's cabbage trees and rhododendrons were finally removed in 1928, at which time the area was a fully fledged rose garden. The beds were edged with clipped box, and were underplanted with flowering annuals such as pansies and violas, a practice introduced in Britain in the late nineteenth century, by the horticultural writer and gardener, William Robinson, a doyen of the so-called "natural garden". The old Rose Garden remained until the Lady Norwood Rose Garden was completed in 1953. I don't know when it was finally grassed over, but it was still alive and well in 1951.

The site of the Lady Norwood Rose Garden and Begonia House

The site occupied by the Lady Norwood Rose Garden and Begonia House is the result of the most drastic landscape modification ever inflicted on the Botanic Garden. Originally, a valley extended from the bush at the back of the Dell, through the site of Anderson Park and Bowen Street, and included Sydney Street. On the western side, the Herb Garden ridge was higher, and ran above the site of Anderson Park, connecting with the ridge in Thorndon on the eastern side of Tinakori Road. (Fig 4)

Fig 4: Honeyman's Gully, Thorndon, Wellington looking north, ca 1880. Taken from above the site of the present Begonia House. Photo – Henry Whitmore Davis. Alexander Turnbull Library reference ½-230699-G.

Part of this land had belonged to the Weslayan Church, but had been transferred to the Botanic Garden in 1872. The rest was cemetery reserve, unused, and planted by the Botanic Garden board. In the late 1870s the valley was crossed by a high embankment that carried Glenbervie Road, the predecessor of Bowen Street. By the late 1890s and early 1900s, this area along with the Botanic Garden, was being surrounded by new suburban developments. Kelburn to the south, Northland to the West, and infill housing on the town acres along Tinakori Road increased the western residential population enormously. This boom in local population, combined with the development of organised sports, made the long projected Thorndon recreation ground politically achievable. The valley was chosen as the site for what became Anderson Park, one of a flush of sports grounds constructed in Wellington between 1905 and 1910. The others were the completion of Kelburn Park, Duppa Street (now Wakefield Park), and Kilbirnie Park.

The building of Anderson Park began in 1906 and was completed in 1910. Its construction involved the demolition of part of the western ridge, which was subsequently used to fill the valley. The money available for this project did not allow for filling that part of the valley on Botanic Garden land. This remained a gully, used as a rubbish dump by the Botanic Garden until the great depression of the early 1930s. (Fig 5)

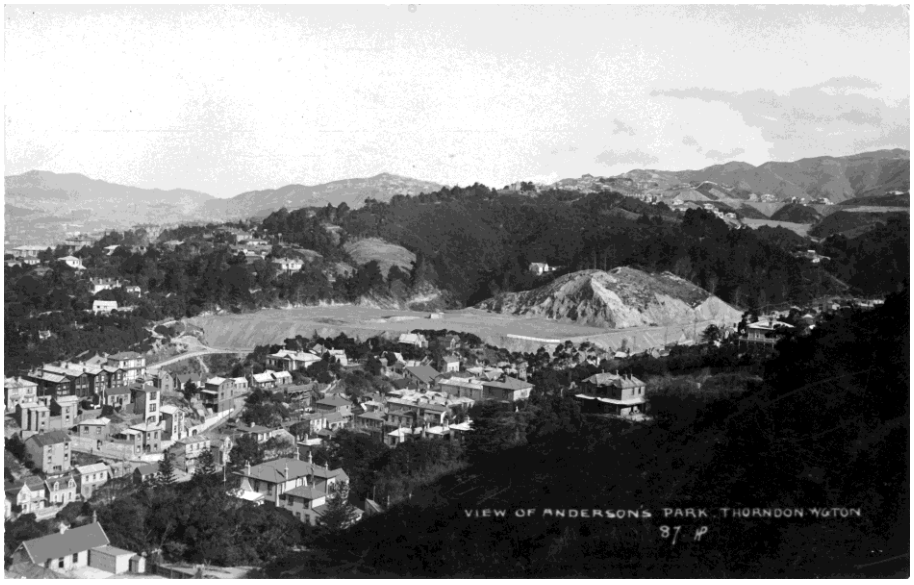

Fig 5: Anderson Park, newly completed, 1910. Alexander Turnbull Library reference PAColl-4601-01.

Unemployment resulting from the depression brought a "work for the dole" response from the Forbes/Coates government (1931-1935). This resulted in a number of work relief schemes, the most important of which was scheme five. Under this scheme the Government supplied the money, and local bodies the jobs and tools. Wellington benefited hugely from work done by cheap, subsidised labour. Sports fields multiplied, new roads were built and old ones widened, and much of the Town Belt was planted. One of these work relief schemes was the Anderson Park extension. Between 1931 and 1934 much of the remaining western ridge was demolished and thrown into the gully, providing a site, first for a sports field, then from 1942 a military transit camp, and finally the Lady Norwood Rose Garden and Begonia House. (Fig 6. Fig 7)

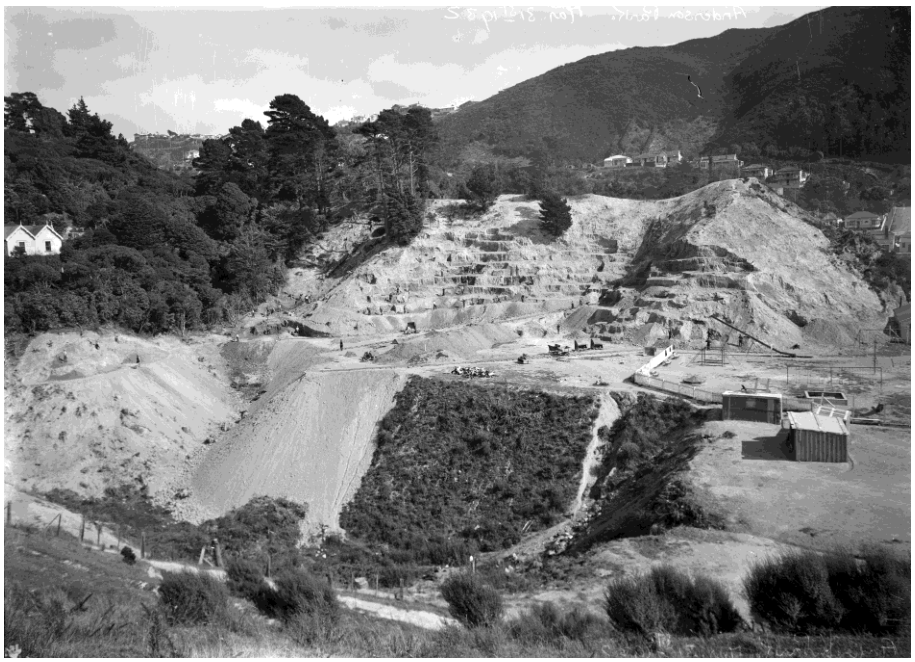

Fig 6: Construction of Anderson Park extension, Wellington Botanic Garden, 31 March 1932. Photo – *The Evening Post*. Alexander Turnbull Library reference EP-2485-1/2-G.

The civic Rose Garden project

The Parks Department's files on the rose garden, the Council minutes, and the Parks and Reserves Committee's minutes from late 1945 to 1948, contain no information, or hint, of discussions

about, or lobbying for, a Rose Garden and Begonia House. The Parks Department file on the Rose Garden begins after the proposal had been accepted, and the plan published in *The Dominion* on 15 July 1948. Nor is it clear who came up with the idea for a Rose Gardenand Begonia House, or who designed the layout.

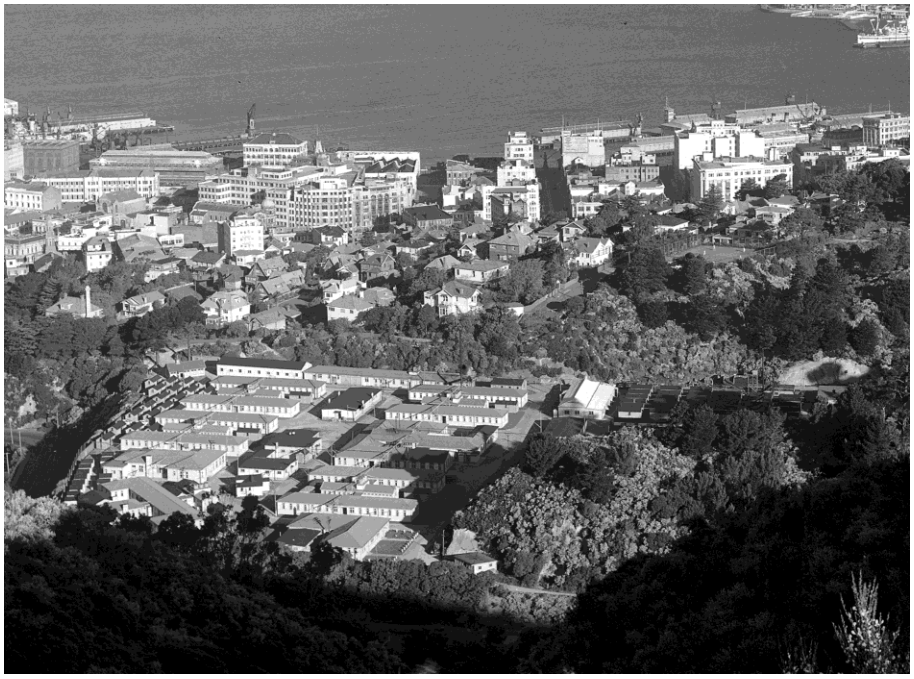

Fig 7: Anderson Park military transit camp, 1944. Photo – William Hall Raine. Detail of Alexander Turnbull Library reference ½-100724.

According to Hutt's successor, Ian Galloway, this was likely to have been Hutt himself, and all the evidence that I have found so far, seems to support this conclusion. Hutt had trained in England and Scotland in the commercial nursery firms of Henry Cannell and Son, Swanley, Kent, and Dobbie and Co. of Edinburgh. Personal documents, now in the Council archives, include information that while in Edinburgh, he took a course in landscape and garden design. With these documents there is also a plan for the layout of gardens around Lower Hutt's Civic Centre, drawn up by Hutt when he was Director of Parks and Reserves in that city, before taking the Wellington job. These demonstrate that he was quite capable of designing a layout like the proposed Rose Garden and Begonia House.

Other records in the Council archives also imply that Hutt was the probable author of the plan. He began his directorship in February 1947. That month he produced a report detailing a plan for the reorganisation of the department. It begins with comments on the organization of the Director's office. It has no adequate filing system. Nor is there evidence "of any landscape plans for the development of parks and reserves." Those plans that were on-file referred only to the engineering side of development. As a result of this, one of his recommendations was that any future development of parks and reserves should involve the preparation of detailed plans for their layout, and that these plans should be the responsibility of the Director. To date I have not had the time to look into the records to see whether there are collections of plans dating from 1947 onwards, the existence of which may reveal or add weight to the contention that Hutt himself designed the layouts, as he seemed to recommend in his report.

Another record that suggests he did, or at least oversaw their preparation, comes from a recommendation he made to Council in 1957. Hutt wanted to employ a landscape architect because the planning and design of parks and reserves were now the responsibility of the Director of Parks. Previously such work was done by the Engineers Department. Because the Parks and Reserves Department had grown over the previous ten years, the Director's role had become more of a political and administrative job than before. This request had no outcome, and the Department was not to get its first landscape architect until the late 1960s. From all this it seems to me probable that in 1948 Hutt was the person who conceived, and probably drew up the concept of the layout of the Rose Garden and Begonia House, which he then handed over to a surveyor and draughtsman.

It took two years from 1946 to remove the military buildings on Anderson Park and on the site of the future Rose Garden and Begonia House. This involved negotiations with the Government around whose responsibility it was to meet the costs and do the work of restoring reserves taken by the military during the war. In some cases a trade-off was reached by which the Council agreed to do the work, and in return was allowed to keep the buildings. This is what happened in the case of Anderson Park and its extension. After the war, timber was in short supply, and timber from the military buildings was used for housing,

particularly for foremen and custodians of parks and reserves. Acute labour shortages during the late 1940s and into the 1950s meant that free or low rental housing with a job encouraged staff retention.

The removal of concrete foundation slabs from Anderson Park and the Park's extension began in November 1947, which probably means that the area was not finally cleared until well into 1948 or 1949. Another factor of the post-war cleanup and refurbishment of reserves was the amount of money available for the task. At its meeting of 1 July 1946, Council proposed two loans that were subsequently approved in October. One of £96,000 was for the improvement of city reserves generally. The other of £16,400 was specifically to restore the playing fields at Anderson Park. This suggests that, other than to return the grounds to their pre-war uses, there was as yet no plan to develop a Rose Garden or a Begonia House.

Money for improvements to Wellington's reserves kept coming in the late 1940s. In 1949 a loan of £180,000 was authorised for 1950. Again there is no mention of money specifically for the Rose Garden project that had already been approved. Thus, the cost of the project may have been seen as part of the post-war refurbishment, and was embedded in these loans. One area that I have not had time to hunt out in relation to this are documents relating to establishing the scope of council estimates in the late 1940s.

The first reference to a Rose Gardenand Begonia House comes from the Reserves Committee's minutes for 5 July 1948. At this meeting "the Director submitted a plan for the development of Anderson Park and the northern portion of the Botanic Garden to provide for two hockey grounds, or one rugby ground at Anderson Park, and for a children's play area, a rose garden, a winter garden, Begonia House, and fernery." The plan as submitted was approved and later endorsed at the Council meeting on 14 July 1948, the day before it was published in *The Dominion*. It would appear that any discussion about the project, or directive to Hutt from his committee to come up with a plan, took place outside meetings, and off the record. (Another source that I have not searched in relation to this is the Wellington newspapers.)

Judging from the Rose Garden file, in July 1948 Hutt was already thinking about the planting of the new rose garden. He

intended to use species as well as horticultural rose varieties. To this end on 16 July 1948 he wrote to the directors of Kew and Edinburgh Botanic Garden asking for seeds of rose species. Edinburgh sent seed, and Kew promised to do so the following season. I have found no documentation indicating that plants resulted from this, or that species roses ever became part of the original Rose Garden plantings. On the other hand, the file contains sheaves of letters and lists to and from New Zealand nurserymen relating to the purchase of rose varieties. The building of the Rose Garden did not get underway until 1950, and was still at a rudimentary stage in March that year when a photograph of the area was published in *The Evening Post* on 10 March 1950. (Fig 8) The caption with the photograph reported that Anderson Park would finally be ready for rugby league games during the coming winter season.

Fig 8: Lady Norwood Rose Gardenunder construction, 10 March 1950. Photo – *Evening Post*. Alexander Turnbull Library reference 114/123/12-F.

Judging from the orders for roses in 1951, planting must have begun in 1952. This continued in 1953, with the added urgency that the garden be completed in time for the royal tour that year. To shelter the new Rose Garden from north-westerly winds, its northern half was surrounded by a manuka brush fence.

Later a border of large shrubs was planted along the Anderson Park boundary for the same purpose. In planning the rose garden, Hutt was supported by the Wellington Rose Society. In 1949 the Society held a rose festival that raised £147, 15 shillings and 2 pence for the garden, and gave the department 100 rose bushes. Given that the weekly wage of a gardener in 1949 would have been around £3, in present value, this was not an insubstantial sum of money. This donation does indicate community support for the Rose Garden project. Hutt and his predecessor, J.G. MacKenzie, worked at a time when horticulture in Wellington, and the development of city reserves attracted a fairly high level of community interest. This was expressed in organisations like the Wellington Horticultural Society, the Wellington Beautifying Society, and other specialist organisations such as the Rose Society. The Lady Norwood Rose Garden and Begonia House in the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s, realised this interest through the support of a project that embellished the garden and the city, and which represented the large-scale achievement of an horticultural ideal.

Lady Norwood and the Norwood Family and project completion

At this point I want to examine the connection of Lady Norwood and the Norwood family with the new Rose Garden and Begonia House. (Fig 9) Hutt's predecessor, J.G. Mackenzie, made two attempts before the war, and one during the war, to build a winter garden. When he failed in his bid for this in 1939, Lady Norwood donated £200 to improve the old Begonia House that doubled as the main propagating house located at the Botanic Garden nursery. In 1949 she donated a further £300 towards the Begonia House projected in Hutt's plan. This seems to be the beginning of the financial support underwritten by the family, support that ultimately enabled the completion of the project, and allowed for the landscaping of the surroundings. In 1950 the City Council decided that the new Rose Garden would be named after Lady Norwood, and in 1955 she offered to donate a fountain. This was installed and was operational by 12 November 1956. Lady Norwood's fountain was replaced by the present one in 1977, donated by her children.

Sometime during the first decade of the Lady Norwood Rose Garden's existence, there was a great disaster. A gardener accidentally sprayed the roses with 24D, a hormone herbicide, mistaking it for liquid DDT, and killed all but two beds of roses. All the bushes were removed, and that season the garden was planted with annuals until a new batch of roses could be installed. Needless to say I have found no documentation relating to this event in the City Council Archives, but it was still one of the horror stories related by staff when I began my apprenticeship at the Botanic Garden in the early 1960s. Here again newspapers may hold information. I was told that no staff member was sacked as a result of this mishap, instead Hutt put out a press release to the effect that the roses had fallen prey to a fungus disease and that the plants had been removed to the Berhampore nursery for treatment. In reality, they all went to the tip and Hutt ordered new ones planted.

Fig 9: Rosina Ann Norwood, 1930s. Photo – S.P. Andrew.
Alexander Turnbull Library reference ¼-019953-F.

Hutt's original project for a Rose Garden and Begonia House was completed in 1960 and 1961. The Begonia House was built in 1960, stimulated by a donation of £20,000 pounds from Sir Charles Norwood, and it opened on the 22 December that year. In 1961 the pergola, the zig-zag and brick walls up to the present Herb Garden were built. All in all, even in a climate of post-war affluence, it had taken Hutt 14 years to see his project through to the end.

The surroundings of the Lady Norwood Rose Garden and Begonia House were given their final form on the eastern side in the early 1970s. In May 1970 the children of Sir Charles and Lady Norwood gave $50,000 dollars towards this project. Between September 1970 and May 1971, the cut banks on the eastern side were hidden by tons of soil, and the waterfall, summerhouse, pond, and brick walls were built, supervised by assistant director Richard Nanson. As part of the project, access from the Weather Office was upgraded, and the pohutukawa along Salamanca Road were thinned and repositioned back from the road. The Begonia House was completed when the Lily House was built in 1989, a project supported financially by Sir Walter Norwood.

In the 1960s, the Lady Norwood Rose Garden and Begonia House were used as a place for perambulation and viewing, rather like visiting an art gallery. Certain proprieties were expected – no rowdiness or drinking, and certainly no dogs or children in the fountain pool. All of this began to change in the 1970s. By the late 1960s, the Beautifying Society and Horticultural Society had gone, and with them much of the community that had supported the project in the late 1940s. Social and cultural conditions were changing, and new and more "exciting" uses for the Rose Gardenand Begonia House were demanded. From 1969, and through the 1970s, the Rose Garden was floodlit during the summer, and this was combined with musical and dramatic events. This use in summer was extended especially during the Summer City festivals that were inaugurated in the summer of 1978/1979. These events, which drew thousands of people, benefited from the Government funded Project Employment Programme (PEP), inaugurated under the Muldoon Government (1975-1984) schemes that subsidised artists, actors, and designers. Spectacular events were staged in the Dell and Rose Garden, and elsewhere in the city. The Rose Garden and its

surroundings often looked like a fairground, and by the early 1980s children had certainly claimed the fountain pool.

Today the Lady Norwood Rose Garden and Begonia House remain the most visited part of the Botanic Garden. They and the surroundings stand as a fitting memorial to Sir Charles and Lady Norwood and their family who have for over fifty years supported the Botanic Garden, and this area in particular. I also think that in some way this part of the garden should be publicly associated with Edward Hutt.

The formal rose garden

Displaying roses in a formal setting did not originate in New Zealand, and I think that it is of some interest to know where it came from, and why Hutt may have chosen it. It could be argued that a more informal layout might have better suited the site and its surroundings. I have always felt that a formal garden of this size in the Wellington topography is something of a wonder – a triumph of mind over matter: of culture over nature.

To understand the origins of formal gardens as they existed in the first half of the twentieth century, and specifically formal rose gardens, I'm going to start with nineteenth century England. By the early nineteenth century there was a reaction against the classical landscape gardens of the previous century. In the gardens of the eighteenth century, great houses, framed by trees, sat in vast lawns that swept up to their walls. This reaction, often associated with Humphrey Repton, argued that the garden should be an extension of the house, a place to use, and like the house, a product of artifice and the quirks of the human imagination, rather than a proposed improvement on Nature. By the 1830s and 1840s this had developed into a full-blown revival of Renaissance-styled formal gardens, their elaborate parterres full of the new half-hardy seasonal annuals.

To translate such styles from the gardens of the very rich to the lesser estates of the new middle classes writers like John Claudius Loudon produced encyclopaedic publications which included plans to suit a wide range of pockets. (Fig 10) The practice in the formal garden was to have the house raised on a terrace overlooking the garden, which was also surrounded by raised walks. This enabled the design to be seen as a whole as well as entered for closer inspection. Though roses were displayed in

formal settings before the 1880s, the short flowering period of old roses meant that such formal gardens were established outside the main axis of the garden, where they could be ignored while they were out of season.

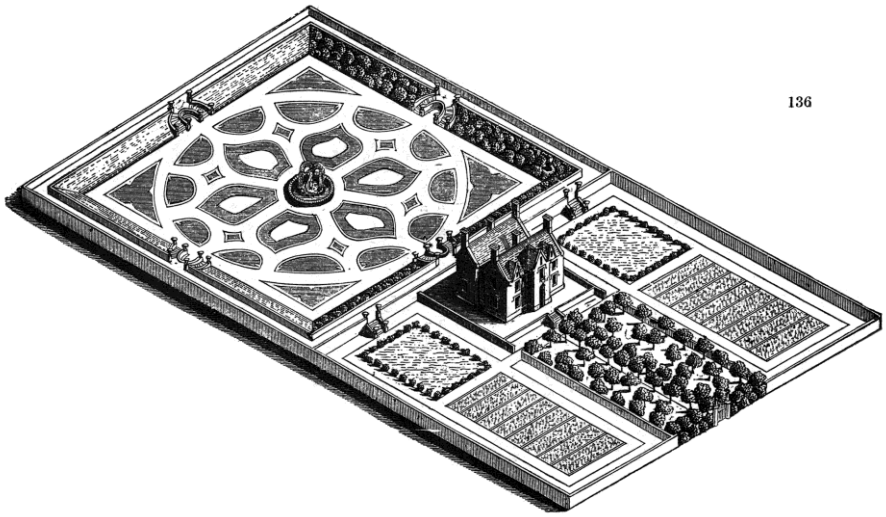

Fig 10: Plan for the layout of a villa residence of two acres, within a regular boundary, in the geometrical style. An illustration from Loudon's *The Villa Gardener*… (London: W. S. Orr and co., second edition, 1850).

This sort of formal gardening was the cause of another reaction in the late nineteenth century, associated with the names of William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll. Robinson proposed a move away from formally planted gaudy displays of annuals to a garden composed of native British plants and hardy exotics which included such informal features as meadows of wild flowers and grasses. Jekyll took Robinson's ideas and advocated a garden of formal and informal elements, including carefully colour-coordinated plantings of herbaceous borders, allegedly derived from the cottage gardens of England. There was much of the national ideal of "England's green and pleasant land" in this movement. It went with the revival of arts and crafts. This involved the construction of buildings based on seventeenth and eighteenth century originals, the colonisation by urban middle classes of decaying villages on commuter networks, the collection and recording of traditional folk songs and dances, and a sense of nostalgia for an old lost England.

This sense of nostalgia for things old and "native" informed the revival of formal gardens during the 1890s and 1900s. This revival was based on surviving seventeenth century gardens that

were originally inspired by French and Dutch formal gardens. But by the late nineteenth century such survivals were read as being native and British in contrast to the formal gardens of the 1830s and '40s. These had been imitations of exotic foreign styles. This development was not entirely separate from the Robinson/Jekyll type of garden, but is notable for the use of topiary, either in clipped hedges forming a series of rooms, or as in the seventeenth century gardens, quirky fanciful sculptural forms. (Fig 11) Ironically, one of the greatest of these new formal gardens was constructed not in England, but in New Delhi, India. Sir Edwin Lutyens, planner and one of the architects of the new imperial capital, designed for his Viceroy's House (now Rashtrapati Bhavan), a large formal garden which synthesised English and Moghul ideas. Lutyens' plan includes a large circular formal garden for flowers.[1]

The importance of this development for rose gardens was that it happened at the time rose breeders were producing perpetual flowering hybrid tea roses. By 1900 these varieties were widely used, and because of their long flowering period, the Rose Garden moved into the main axis of the garden, or, especially in public gardens, became a feature in its own right. The architects and designers of this new type of formal garden also used the pillared pergola, and often the formal Rose Garden was partially, or completely surrounded by such a structure.

One of the well-known practitioners of this sort of formal garden was Thomas Mawson, whose book *The Art and Craft of Garden Making* went through five editions between 1902 and 1926. Copies of Mawson's book are held in the Wellington Public Library and the National Library in Wellington. In it are illustrated spectacular layouts for formal rose gardens, both for public parks as well as private clients. (Fig 12) The pergolas surrounding the Lady Norwood Rose Garden are simplified versions of pergolas illustrated in Mawson's book, with their elaborate beam-work in an arts and crafts/Japanese style.

David Tannock in his *Manual of Gardening in New Zealand* published in the late 1920s, refers to the popularity of pergolas, rose gardens, and rockeries. Christchurch based landscape gardener Alfred Buxton spread them around the station homesteads of New Zealand between 1900 and 1930. (Fig 13; Fig 14)

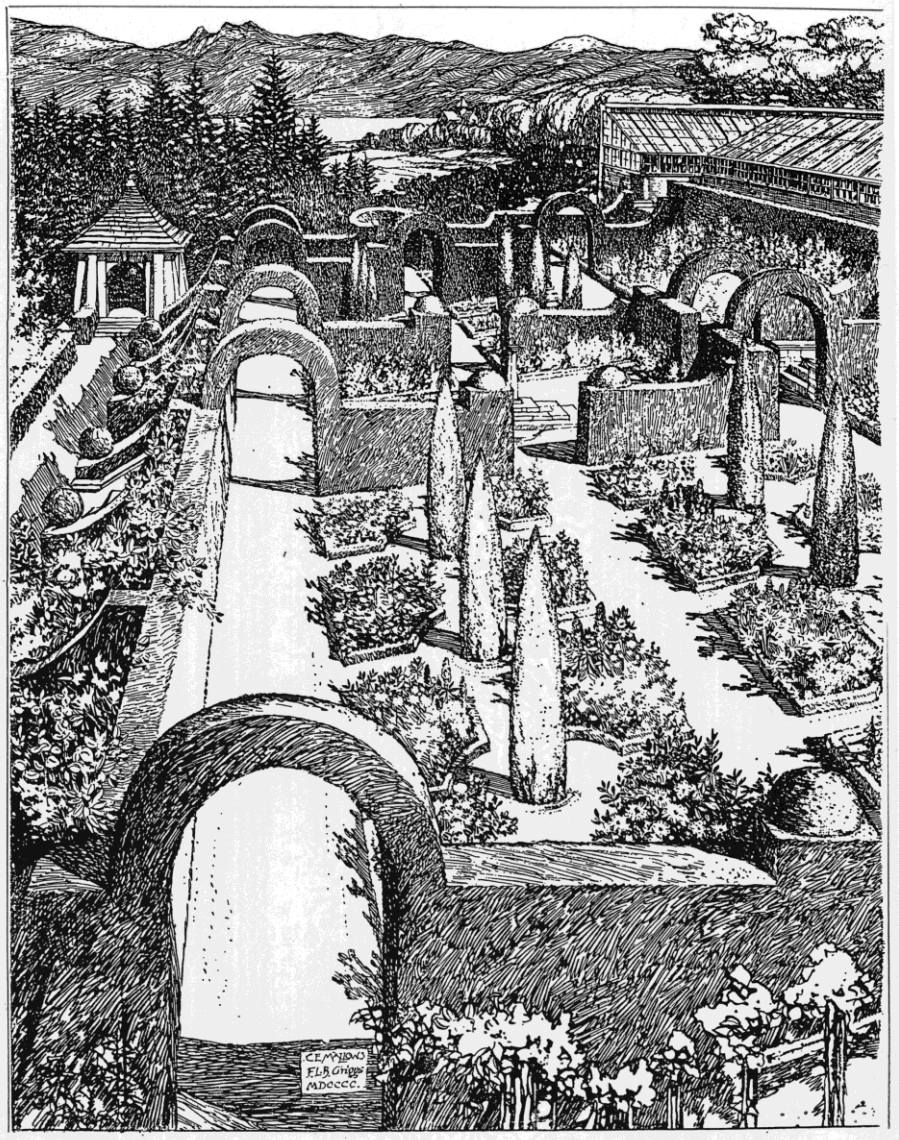

FIG. 114.—TERRACED EFFECT ON A STEEP HILLSIDE.

Fig 11: Formal garden designed by Charles Edward Mallows. In Thomas Mawson's *The Art and Craft of Garden Making* (London: Batsford, fifth edition, 1926), figure 114.

Though not all formal rose gardens were circular, judging from Mawsen's plans, circular designs, or designs with strong circular elements were common. Tannock illustrates a circular design lifted from James Young's book on rose growing in New Zealand published in 1921. (Fig 15)

Edward Hutt grew up and trained as a gardener when this approach to garden design was contemporary, and widely admired as "the English Garden." To me it is no surprise that his Rose Gardenwas a late version of this received manner for displaying roses that, by 1947, was already established in other

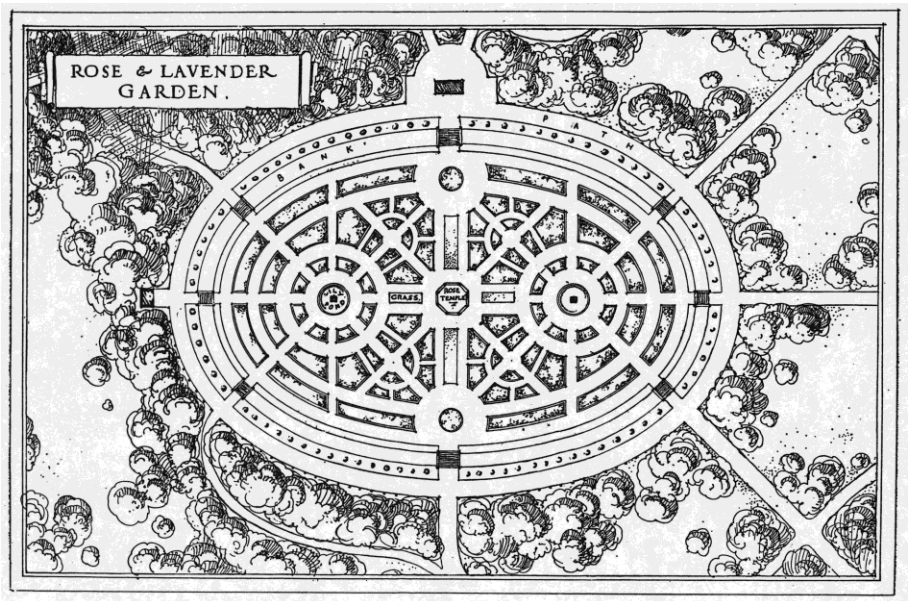

FIG. 160.—ROSE AND LAVENDER GARDEN, BLACKPOOL PARK, LENGTH 340 FT., WIDTH 240 FT.

Fig 12: Rose and lavender garden for Blackpool Park designed by Thomas Mawson. In Mawson's *The Art and Craft of Garden Making* (London: Batsford, fifth edition, 1926), figure 160.

Fig 13: Laurel standing at an entrance to the pergola, Greenhill homestead near Hastings, Hawke's Bay, October 1921. The pergola and roses were added to the Greenhill garden by Alfred Buxton in about 1919. Photo – Harold Hislop. Alexander Turnbull Library Reference PA1-o-228-20-1.

Fig 14: John A MacFarlane and Jean Williams in the pergola of the garden of "Ben Lomond," a house on The Hill, Napier, Hawke's Bay, October 1921. Macfarlane owned a sheep station with the same name as the house. It is likely that this is also a Buxton installation. Photo – Harold Hislop. Alexander Turnbull Library reference PA1-o-228-27-1.

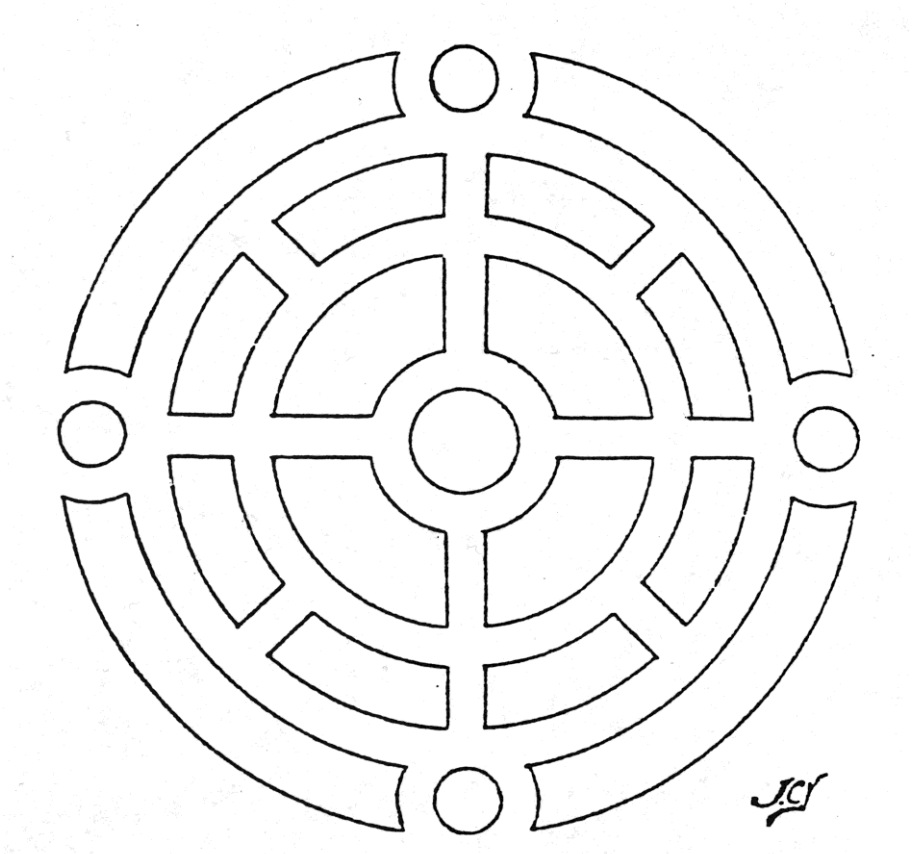

Fig 15: Rose Garden plan by James Young illustrated in David Tannock's *Manual of Gardening in New Zealand* (Auckland: Whitecombe and Tombs, no date), figure 255.

public gardens in New Zealand. His public would also have recognised his intention. The revival of formal gardens and the herbaceous border had had an impact on suburban gardens in the 1920s and 1930s, here as in Britain.

Conclusion

Though the scale of the Lady Norwood Rose Garden gives it an openness more in the spirit of the earlier Renaissance revival formal gardens, this is appropriate for a garden, the function of which is public. (Fig 16) On this scale the pergola defines the boundaries rather than encloses the space. Over the last 20 years the complex has aquired a herbaceous boarder running along the front of the Begonia House, and the Rose Garden is now flanked by beds edged with clipped box. In 1990 the then director, Richard Nanson, proposed extending the garden with a formal planting across the eastern half of Anderson Park. This would have given the Rose Garden a larger context and strengthened the link with the Bolton Street Cemetery that is run as part of the Botanic Garden and contains a collection of old roses. Protests from community sports groups prevented this from happening, but it is an idea that may be only shelved for now. As a consequence, the Rose Garden and Begonia House remain as a formal architectural entity complete in themselves, but linked to no larger pattern in the Botanic Garden, a characteristic shared by the Carrillion and museum building stranded on Mount Cook, as well as the Railway Station.

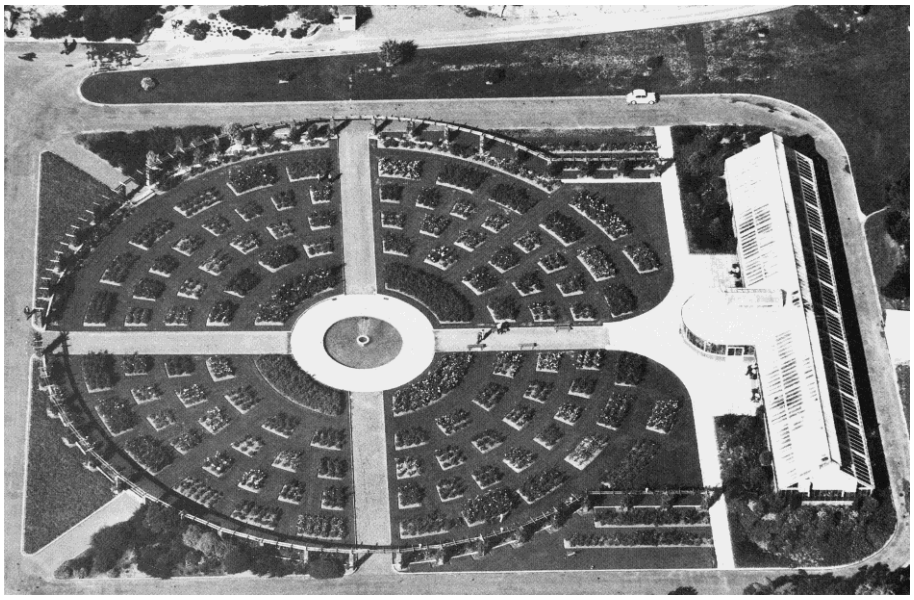

Fig 16: Lady Norwood Rose Gardenand Begonia House from the air, ca 1965. Photo – *The Evening Post*.

[1] I have never come across any evidence written, printed or photographic indicating that formal gardens of any note were established in New Zealand between 1900 and 1930. Even though Rupert Tipples states that Buxton's draughtsman, Edgar Taylor, was influenced by the British architect and garden designer C.E. Mallows, apart from pergolas, I have never seen a Buxton garden that looked remotely like the sophisticated formal gardens designed in Britain between 1890 and 1930. However, through the good offices of Google, I have discovered two gardens of quality in New Zealand, both relatively modern, that draw on the British and European formal garden. One is Miles Warren's garden at Governors Bay, Banks Peninsular that looks very like a late nineteenth/early twentieth century English formal garden complete with clipped hedges, topiary, a rose garden, and herbaceous boarders. The other is Richmond Garden at Carterton in the Wairarapa, designed by owner Melanie Greenwood. This is in a European tradition suggestive of France, and is notable (judging from the photographs) for its absence of flowers. It is also associated with a topiary nursery and this suggests to me that there may be more formal gardens in the New Zealand countryside lurking at the ends of long private drives.

SOME NOTES ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF HAMILTON GARDENS

GEOFFREY DOUBE[1]

There is an interesting and on-going philosophical debate that can be traced through the scholarly journals of human geography, landscape architecture, and garden history.[2] The central question with which this debate is concerned is, "are gardens meaningful?" This debate is pertinent in relation to Hamilton Gardens because one of the key messages that visitors to Hamilton Gardens come away with is (hopefully) that gardens *are* meaningful. Thus the very existence of Hamilton Gardens seems to weigh in on the affirmative side of the debate. In this article I illustrate some ways gardens can be considered meaningful through the example of the Italian Renaissance Garden at Hamilton Gardens.

Meaning and Gardens

Without straying too far into abstract philosophical issues, it might be helpful to firstly clarify the concept of 'meaning' we are using here. While sometimes we use the word 'meaningful' to refer to the concept of importance or significance, in this context the word 'meaning' refers to *semantic* meaning. Lots of things are meaningful in this sense – gestures or facial expressions, paintings or pieces of music, sculptures, films and so on. Therefore when we suggest that Hamilton Gardens is meaningful, we are suggesting, amongst other things, that Hamilton Gardens can be 'read' in much the same way as can a book or a film.

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[1] Geoff gave up a doctoral degree in the Philosophy Department at the University of Auckland in order to pursue a career in Public Gardens. He is currently Information Officer at Hamilton Gardens. This article was originally published in *The Gardener's Journal*, 5 February 2009.

[2] For two recent examples see Gillette, J., 'Can Gardens Mean?' in *Landscape Journal* (24:,1 2005) and Herrington, S., 'Gardens Can Mean', ' in *Landscape Journal* (26:2, 2007)

The theme of Hamilton Gardens is 'The History, Context and Meaning of Gardens'. There is a story to tell *about* gardens, their development over time and their variation across cultures. There is also a story to tell by *using* gardens. By looking at gardens in a particular way we can discern some very fascinating things about the culture and attitudes of their builders. However it must be noted, firstly, that reading gardens is a learnt skill, just like reading a book; and secondly that there are many different ways to read gardens. The question of whether there is one single 'right' way to read a garden is beyond the scope of this article. Our more modest aim is to outline some possible ways in which a garden might be read.

Hamilton Gardens: Concept

If you've never been to Hamilton Gardens then a quick overview of its concept is in order. The focus of Hamilton Gardens is very different from that of the traditional botanic garden. Instead of being primarily a collection of plants, Hamilton Gardens is a collection of gardens. Despite first appearances, this is a major distinction. In a traditional botanic garden the design of the gardens is subordinated to the display of plants; whereas at Hamilton Gardens the planting is subordinated to the demands of the garden design. If we were to explicate this distinction in terms of meaning we might say that a traditional botanic garden is a sort of living list of plant species, whereas Hamilton Gardens is a narrative account of social and cultural changes expressed through the medium of garden design.

Thus while traditional botanic gardens have what is called an ecological or ethnobotanical theme that focuses on the relationships between humans and plants and between different plants, Hamilton Gardens has an ethnogarden theme that focuses on the relationships between humans and gardens and between different gardens. It is not only the meaning of each garden that it explores, but also the combined meaning of groups of gardens that can be viewed as a narrative. Hamilton Gardens as an entirety and its overall theme is one such narrative configuration, but it is broken down into smaller parts which can be meaningful in their own right, and it's tempting to think of the smaller parts as being rather like the chapters of a book or the movements in a symphony: the parts contributing to the whole.

For example, the Paradise Garden Collection tells the story of gardens that have expressed their original designers' conceptions of paradise. This is only one part of the story of gardens but it is an important part and its historical importance is mirrored in the Paradise Collection's central position within Hamilton Gardens. Their importance is easily seen when we consider the role that the concept of 'Paradise' takes in a culture. We might argue that the concept of 'Paradise' never appears without its opposite, which is 'Earth'. Paradise is an unearthly place, far from the cares of this existence. A garden, on the other hand, is by its nature an earthy place. Thus a "Paradise Garden", as a combination of the two, lies somewhere between Paradise and Earth.

The features, therefore, of the various Paradise Gardens may be instructive because they might be read as revealing how different cultures have attempted to resolve the antagonism between the sacred and the profane. As one of the Paradise Garden Collection, the Italian Renaissance Garden can be used as a brief illustration of this point.

The Italian Renaissance Garden

According to much of European medieval metaphysical thought, Nature is set against humanity as a direct consequence of the Fall. By eating from the tree of knowledge, Adam and Eve's actions set all their descendents against Nature, both conceptually and as a physical condition of our existence. According to this Western view, while Humanity is sentient and moral and capable of ordered conduct, Nature is unthinking, cruel and chaotic. As God's creation, Nature is not morally bad as such but it is constantly opposed to Humanity, bringing privation, sickness and death. Its internal nature is unknowable and therefore we cannot predict or avoid the misfortunes that Nature visits upon us.

The Renaissance, however, represents a paradigm shift in the way that Nature was understood in the West. For Renaissance thinkers Nature is neither chaotic nor unknowable. In fact it is governed by discoverable natural laws which can be used to improve the lot of the people. In their thinking, Nature does not conspire with God to punish us for the original sin; humankind actually lies between God and Nature in the great cosmic hierarchy.

Renaissance gardens tended to express this relationship, firstly, by intending their gardens as a complete microcosm of the world and such relationships. The idea that Nature could be entirely knowable meant that it was possible to build a garden which contained every species of plant and animal in existence. Secondly, thinkers expressed this relationship through the creation of a 'Third Nature"; that is, a Nature improved upon and shaped by the artifice of humanity. Nature by itself is good, but it is so much better when it is bred, set out, tended, and pruned by people. Humanity thereby acts as a mediator between the heavens and the earth – between God and Nature – by bringing the divine order, which is usually hidden from view, into the open.

The Renaissance Garden, therefore, can be read as a reconciliation of the apparent Western contradiction between God (the Divine) and Nature (the Profane). It presents a narrative of the progressive subjugation of Nature from the woodland to the orchard to the scientific garden. The strong central axis of the design can be read as mirroring the Renaissance belief in the inexorable and direct path of humanity towards order and scientific omniscience. In short, each feature of the garden can be made to contribute to the overall meaning of it as a cosmic reconciliatory mechanism.

Different Approaches to Reading the Garden

However, you might like to take a less mythical and more historically-bound approach by looking at what the particular garden says about its owners and their standing in society. It's possible to see gardens in terms of their position in power relations. The Paradise Gardens at Hamilton Gardens, as reproductions of historical garden designs, also reproduce the messages that those garden styles were used to encode.

In milieux characterised by inequality between rich and poor, only the wealthy few are able to mobilise the labour required to build and maintain their own personal paradise gardens. It follows that if the owners intend their gardens to send a message about their social status, the message will be, "I am much richer and more powerful than you". One way in which the garden designers of the Italian Renaissance sent this message was through the sheer size of their gardens. Simply put, the bigger the garden and its features, the wealthier and more powerful the

owner. Another way that this message was sent was through the incorporation of garden features that displayed the owner's mastery over Nature. For example, the control and manipulation of water symbolised the control and manipulation of nature in general. (Fig 1; Fig 2; Fig 3; Fig 4) This control could be either overt (in the case of fountains); covert (in the case of the enormous and technologically advanced hydraulic systems used to raise water) or a mixture of both (in the case of 'water tricks', where hidden jets of water were suddenly turned on to surprise and soak garden visitors). Another method for displaying one's power was built into the garden layout itself: villas were often constructed on slopes overlooking the city in which their owners lived. The gardens would be designed to make use of this view, but for more than scenic reasons. By structurally incorporating the city into the garden (for example, by aligning the spires of city buildings with axes of symmetry of the garden) the garden seems to indicate that the city is merely part of the garden; or to put it more bluntly, only another part of its owner's domain.

Closely related to reading a garden in terms of societal power relations is reading the garden in terms of sexual and gender relations. Gardens, by their nature, are sexual places. After all, flowers are the sexual organs of plants and much of the activity in the garden revolves around either promoting or actively discouraging plants' sexual reproduction. It is perhaps for this reason that gardens have often been symbolically linked to the concepts of fertility and sex. In the case of the Italian Renaissance Garden at Hamilton Gardens the symbolic link is quite explicit.

Two aspects in particular can be shown to have this sort of symbolism. The first, and most obvious, is the statue of the Capitoline Wolf, which respresents Romulus and Remus being suckled by a she-wolf. This is a reproduction of a statue which is thought to have been cast in two stages. The wolf itself was cast in around 400 BCE by the Etruscans, and with her enlarged teats and protective stance she is already the image of protective motherhood. However, in the late fifteenth century this symbolism was made unequivocal by the addition of the suckling twins beneath her. A declaration is being made about the nature of the State, and if the garden represents power and authority then the declaration can be extended to the garden as a site for nurture and protection.

Fig 1: Nymphaeum, Renaissance Garden. The progression of water in the Italian Renaissance Garden: from the grotto to…

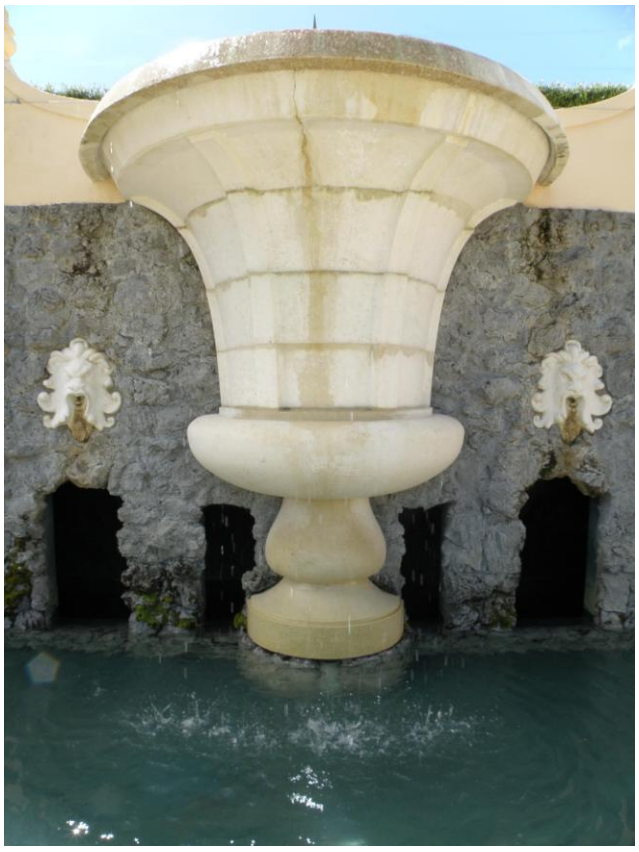

Fig 2: The Cascade…to

Fig 3: The Fountain...to

Fig 4: The Waikato River.

The second kind of sexual symbolism in the Italian Renaissance Garden is not quite as overt. The ancient Greeks and Romans considered natural landscape features such as streams, springs, trees, and meadows to be inhabited by female spirits called nymphs. They erected monuments consecrated to the nymphs called nymphaea. Later in the Renaissance, garden designers used nymphaea as features in their gardens. When this is combined with the Renaissance fashion for creating artificial grottoes (dark, deep, moist spaces) then it can be seen that the garden contained strongly feminine elements. The feminine was balanced by the masculine, both by the rigid geometry of the garden layout and by phallic elements such as fountains that spray rather than trickle.

Conclusion

There are more meanings to be found in the Italian Renaissance Garden at Hamilton Gardens than we have space for here, and many more ways to read it. It would be very illuminating to compare some of these Renaissance meanings with those that can be read in, for example, the Japanese Garden of Contemplation or the English Flower Garden, both represented in Hamilton Gardens. And concerning the debate around whether gardens really do have meaning or not, I hope that this article has given some reasons why they certainly do.

REVIEW: William Beinart and Lotte Hughes, *Environment and Empire*. The Oxford History of the British Empire: Companion Series. Oxford University Press, 2007. 395 pp., ISBN 978019956251.

CHARLES DAWSON

In 2006, New Zealand conservation department staff and volunteers needed to restore native plants on the inaccessible cliff faces of Mana Island. Their solution was termed a 'seed bomb': clusters of various species of packed native seeds were launched from the cliff tops, scattering seeds on the tiny ledges below. The impressive book under review acts as a kind of seeding agent for the discipline of environmental history, dispersing a generous range of scholarship to a wide audience. And it is likely the book will find that audience: it is accessible and of relevance to students of history, geography and environmental studies, and the general reader. Scores of topics are addressed, new avenues for research suggested, and leads for further reading detailed. Readers and teachers looking for a book that introduces — and develops — environmental history in a British imperial context will be well-served by *Environment and Empire*.

Beinart and Hughes acknowledge at the outset that dealing with 'the British Empire' as a topic is problematic for environmental historians who often glean the most insights from a trans-national or ecosystems-based approach. The authors are direct about the impossibility of forging a simplistic synthesis of the material at hand. This does not mean certain general lines of inquiry are not isolated and subsequently developed: the themes explored are environmental causation, and impacts, conservationism and Indigenous societies and local knowledges.

The book's short title compresses vast conceptual reach; Beinart and Hughes do justice to this scope (an achievement in its own right), in part because they acknowledge early on they have to 'work in generalities' and have made omissions for reasons of space (4). They have decided to narrow their focus to make the subject both manageable and 'grounded' in events, sites and particular scholarly developments. To this end, the book moves

from a series of topical case-studies in its first half to a wider conceptual and thematic coverage in later chapters, to, as they put it, 'provide hooks for comparison and discussion' (viii). The topics trace seams of extraction, commodification, subjugation and failure using a large number of secondary sources. The authors' decision to open the book with regionally-based case studies lends weight to the later thematic chapters. A reader working through the book will arrive at the thematic overviews with a strong sense of the myriad ways imperial power shaped, was knocked back by, or 'devoured' the environment: indeed, as the authors' themselves note, 'it is remarkable how much space and labour it took to fuel European consumption' (2).

Case-study chapters include investigations into disease (plague, tsetse and trypanosomiasis), the enduring influence of colonial and local forestry practices in India, oil in Kuwait, rubber in Malaysia (and concomitant indigenous survival and continuities), pastoralism in Australia and irrigation in Egypt and India. Thematic chapters include ones on the imperial traveller (which queries Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* [78]), empire and the visual representation of nature, imperial science, the colonial (and, importantly, the post-imperial) city, resistance to conservation, the rise of national parks and the resurgence of indigenous resistance — all backed up by a thirty page bibliography.

This "biblio-diversity" is one of the book's strengths. The ways the authors choose to handle such a range is effective. An encyclopedic mode would have sacrificed narrative strength and conceptual development for coverage: *Environment and Empire* is rewarding precisely because of the stories and trends it places side-by-side. So the reader moves from environmental aspects of the slave trade and Caribbean plantations (the first case-study, and a worthy reminder of the commodity-fuelled basis of British imperial power) to the fur trade in Canada (where the scale and impact of colonisation were mitigated for a time through climatic extremes, low settler populations and the Hudson Bay Company's own desire to retain trading power). These case-studies draw on data such as the scale of sugar production and average English consumption in the period 1660-1800 (a leap from 2 to 24 pounds annually per person over the period) and the concomitant effect on the slave trade (11-12 million Africans were shipped to the Americas in the period from 1450 to 1850, with millions more to

North Africa and the Middle East). An environmental focus on the slave trade allows Beinart and Hughes to consider the impact and spread of diseases such as malaria and the economic impact of African resistance to yellow fever. The case-study chapters manage to synthesise the scholarship in the topic area and still present powerful assessments of the situation: 'The Caribbean', notes the authors, 'was not vacant. It was made so by the cultural and biological hurricane of colonizers and their diseases' (34). For the New Zealand student of history (or indeed the student of New Zealand history) who has not studied the slave trade, let alone commodity histories, the case-studies are compelling.

Environment and Empire demonstrates environmental history's capacity to cross national and disciplinary boundaries, tracing the ways natural environments both form and alter commodity frontiers (57). Beinart and Hughes focus on British imperial spaces, to fit into the overarching Companion series. They begin by conceptualising the British Empire as a 'commodity frontier' (a term they have some qualms about, but that still carries the kind of spatial, environmental and socio-economic concerns they address). Such frontiers are 'the results of expanding European commercial activity productive enterprises, and sometimes settlement, which targeted raw materials and land in overseas territories' (2). *Environment and Empire* (rightly) complicates any singular notion of Empire by, for example, recounting the work of Sir William Willcocks, an influential irrigation engineer who worked in Egypt, India and the Middle East who refused to accept or propagate a purely imperial engagement with local knowledges and riverscapes.

As with the *Oxford Environmental Histories of New Zealand*, *Environment and Empire* relishes plurality and the subtleties and contradictions inherent in such an approach.[3] In its acceptance of diverse realities and theories, *Environment and Empire* also makes a strong case for complexity and in a sense calls for an end to discourses of polarisation and blame:

> …commodity frontiers and their diverse impacts are major themes, especially in the first half of the book.

[3] Despite Tom Brooking being acknowledged for his assistance, the Oxford *Environmental Histories of New Zealand* is absent from the Select Bibliography, which if nothing else denies the non-New Zealand reader a quick lead to that important (and currently out of print) work.

> But we want to explore a less unilinear analysis, and to introduce countervailing tendencies. All human survival necessitates disturbance of nature; population increase has required, and been intricately related to, intensification of production and trade. To judge all change as degradation is not, conceptually, very useful. We need a concept of degradation, but also a more neutral set of terms to examine the complexity of environmental transformations. (14)

This call for a more neutral set of terms is bold. Borne in part from the book's engagement with the 'political ecologies' of the present, Beinart and Hughes champion considered reflection and multiplicity (20). They suggest a mode that might take the discipline to a new level.[4] In doing so, perhaps they may wish to forestall the 'bipolar mode' which, Diana Wylie argues, marked scholarship on the history of disease, in which, for a time, Empire was either simply praised or condemned.[5] Beinart and Hughes issue a challenge to the environmental historians, perhaps aiming to bind Wylie's divergent paths of quantitative analysis and theory. In their own weave of case study and theory *Environment and Empire* offers some very promising leads.

Beinart and Hughes are at the 'centre' of a mode of inquiry and site of power. Yet to an extent they share Paul Star's concerns about the marginalisation of environmental history, those moments where seed clusters of new research might land on inhospitable terrain.[6] Beinart and Hughes regard the discipline as in need of support. Although the main Oxford British Empire series has, belatedly, opened up space to admit fuller 'companion'

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[4] In this they echo the recent scholarship on historiography which, according to the editor-in-chief of the Oxford series, has benefited from the balm of time: 'Though the subject remains ideologically charged, the passions aroused by British imperialism have so lessened that we are now better placed than ever before to see the course of Empire steady and to see it whole' Wm. Roger Louis. 'Foreword.' *Historiography. The Oxford History of the British Empire*. Vol. V. (Oxford, 1999), p. vii.

5 Diana Wylie, 'Disease, Diet, and Gender: Late Twentieth-Century Perspectives on Empire' in *Historiography. The Oxford History of the British Empire*. Vol. V. (Oxford, 1999), p 279.

6 Paul Star, 'Environmental History and New Zealand History', *ENNZ: Environment and Nature in New Zealand* (April 2009). (http://tinyurl.com/yamryfk).

environmental and colonial histories, *Environment and Empire* argues the issues like environmental causation 'have hardly penetrated into mainstream historiography of empire, if the volumes of the Oxford History of the British Empire are an indication' (9)

Beinart and Hughes both specialize in African history, and to an extent the volume attends to Africa and India, rather than Hong Kong, the Pacific, or (thematically) opiates, horticulture, or marine life and spaces. It is nevertheless fascinating (and gratifying) to read their account of the Māori resurgence and renaissance within the context of the foreshore debate. A mis-spelling of Lake Rotorua in a photo caption, and an account of the renaming of New Zealand to Aotearoa-New Zealand (which may imply this is a legislated renaming) shows how a compendium volume has to skim over certain details to simply keep things moving (295, 342). But the authors' excitement regarding the Māori renaissance also helps one see afresh how much relative gain Māori have made; the book's wide range highlights that pace, while noting gains are often contingent upon climate, disease and control over physical resources and terrain.

Environment and Empire showcases a confident discipline on the rise. In this considered and wide-ranging work, Beinart and Hughes help take environmental history to a new audience, while consolidating and re-gifting over two decades of diverse inquiry.

GEOFF PARK: A TRIBUTE

DAVID YOUNG

It should come as no surprise to historians that Geoff Park, whose first love was ecology, could find a soul-mate in history. The wonder of it is that this kind of 'dualism' does not occur more often. After all, both are sprawling disciplines preoccupied with understanding the context of relationships and communities (for history, sometimes read 'nations'), including their establishment, the nature of power, dominance, hegemony, survival and succession - albeit usually on different time scales.

In his 1995 treatise, *Nga Ururoa: The Groves of Life* Geoff busted out of the rigours of his soil science and ecology (his Ph.D. from The Australian National University was on forest nutrient cycling) into what James Belich once described as "an act of the imagination". Geoff imagined himself into an elegiac ecological and historical account about Aotearoa/New Zealand's surviving lowland forest communities in a wasteland of depauperate nativism. It is a measure of the work that before its emergence, awareness of the extent of lowland forests up until the devastation of the nineteenth century took place was at best poorly understood by most of us. Geoff also imagined the Maori communities who lived in and near these forests who had largely been displaced and overwhelmed by 150 years of relentless modernism. What did remain were those groves of life, persisting with sometimes astonishing tenacity against human-induced adversity.

His was a thesis – as he freely stated – owing much to his former Department of Scientific and Industrial Research colleague and mentor, Geoff Kelly, that was radical in its capacity to jolt receptive New Zealanders. Looking back it helped create a new awareness that has had more than a little to do with one of the most significant phenomenon in the trauma of post-Rogernomics widespread-community-endeavour to make right the yawning

ecological deficits bequeathed by our forebears and in so doing giving rise to new and purposeful community.

In simultaneously upholding Māori and ecological truths, which he came to see as profoundly convergent and as forming the basis of a covenant, he put himself offside with the leadership, if not the membership, of the still preservationist Pākehā conservation movement. The "Yellowstone park model", as he described it elsewhere, imagined, then took native people out of the places where millennia of mutual nourishment had occurred. It replaced it with the empty landscapes of "wildness" of Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Muir and Henry Thoreau. Even the late great exponent of modern ecological thinking, Aldo Leopold, pays little attention to the indigenes. What differs in New Zealand thinking, where philosophers such as Geoff are as rare as mature kahikatea, is that nineteenth century colonisation pushed forest back with axe and fire on a scale and at a speed that, at the time was probably unprecedented worldwide.

If there was one limitation to the book that eventuated, it was Park's presentism – his judgment delivered upon those who had been so unmindful of what it was that they were destroying. It *was* terrible but it was no worse – at least in extent – to the unthinking Māori fires that had originally laid waste the first quarter of Aotearoa's lost forested landscape. And both settler groups – separated by some 550 years but thousands of years of divergent evolution – showed what human settlers the world over have demonstrated: that awareness of the symbiosis of wild and human nature and a spiritual relationship based on respect is uncommonly rare in those first few hundred years of adjustment following arrival.

Geoff Park grew up in Pinehaven, Upper Hutt with the emerging ornithologist, Sandy Bartle, as a close mate. This friendship helped spawn Victoria University's Ecology Action group who had a great victory in the late 1960s when they were able to force the mighty Ministry of Works to shift part of the Hutt Motorway in order to protect regenerating bush on the valley's western flanks. It was also Bartle's knowledge of our endemic and single-destination black petrels and Park's concern for the landscape that helped turn Forest Service plans to mill it into the exquisite forest, limestone, pancake rocks and wetland-coastal ensemble that is today's Punakaiki National Park. Both these

political triumphs become part of chapters in the meditation that is *Nga Ururora*.

If you were lucky enough to paddle and tramp with Geoff, he shared his knowledge with great generosity. A day in the wild with him was as good as a semester in the lecture room. Symbolic of the lowland ecology is the kahikatea, of Gondwanan lineage and New Zealand's tallest tree. I still recall his pointing out the subtle splendour of its lilac fluorescence in spring on the Upper Whanganui. That was the beginning of trips in which we always stayed, at his instigation, in Tamatea's Cave, a unique heritage experience, but also a potential death trap in the event of unexpected flooding.

On a trip almost 18 years back we roamed by kayak the wetlands, lagoons and coastal edges ("edge" and "connectedness" were favourite words of his) of South Westland. "Bring your umbrellas," he had said. Sure enough, when we paddled Okarito's length to view the kotuku colony we had wind assistance, Mary Poppins-style, both ways. The islands offshore of Open Bay provoked a rendition from him of the "Ballad of Davy Louston", New Zealand's oldest Pākehā ballad. Seized by a Muir-like turn of transcendentalism, Geoff had hoped we might camp the night out in the vast wetlands of Haast, with their giant flaxes and teeming wildlife. I think most of us were relieved when he finally pronounced that we needed to find dry land for the night.

He could be surprisingly blasé though, about weather forecasts, but maybe that was the John Muir coming out in him too. (Muir's favourite memory of his visit to New Zealand in 1904 was being lashed by a storm while coming through the Buller Gorge riding shotgun on a coach.) At Geoff's suggestion, he and I once paddled out to Mana Island with his *Nga Ururoa* editor, Andrew Mason (Andrew liked to say Geoff had "a corkscrew mind" – but it must be said immediately that writing on holisitic matters does require an orchestral concentration.). Our return journey, however, was against the tide and into the fangs of a big northerly. Andrew disappeared off into the mist and I did wonder if we would make it to shore. When finally we did we lay tuckered out on the beach. For a guy of average build, Geoff had enormous physical confidence and it is unsurprising that at least one of his three sons has been a cliff-jumper, Hawaiian-style.

His artist wife, Lindsay, who is a graduate in geology and ecology and is a great outdoors-person herself and a vibrant

partner, had three sons and a daughter, all of whom were imbued with a strong sense of their Pacific-wide cultural and natural heritage.

In spite of the macho streak, what made him appealing was a tender, romantic side. After all, as a lad he raised orchids. He engaged in a 20 year conversation with Ian Wedde on Wordsworth and his Lake District poetry, contributing to his *Theatre Country* in 2006. There were always the spiritual underpinnings. Raised in a church-going home he once remarked to me that he thought he was "put on the planet to write Nga Uruora".

He was also a close reader of the American sage of sustainability, Wendell Berry and Black Mountain poet, Gary Snyder whose spare, elegant reflections evoke his Buddhist commitment to nature with a lifestyle to match. While Geoff's work was all-consuming, even in conversation which had little room for what was outside his thinking, there were times when he grew deeply silent. Once, on a trip coming down the botanically compromised Whanganui he began to reflect on the nature of what was pristine, falling into what I came to think of as "botanic reverie". He seemed not to emerge from these spells until he had resolved his thinking, which was often, for a small drifting archipelago, truly visionary: a unique way of seeing the land.

His friendship with Sara McIntyre late in life took him back to the Kakahi bach of that 1960s environmental campaigner, her father, painter Peter McIntyre. Here, again mindful of both human heritage and natural, it served as a topic in several of his series in *Forest and Bird.* Kakahi enabled him *to* muse on his beloved, lamented kahikatea, still surviving on those river flats just round a bend from where that other great campaigner for the environment, Keith Chapple, had lived and died. Geoff revelled in the serrendipity of all that.

Geoff Park was a wonderful, impossible man and we are all the poorer for his passing so early in his rich life.