

# Bason botanic gardens trust

winter 2021 newsletter



## FROM THE CHAIR

### Vonnie Cave

It was with great sadness that I learned of the death of Vonnie Cave on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June. Vonnie had a long association with the Bason Botanic Gardens, both before it was a public garden and since.

Vonnie's support of the Gardens, as a Board member, a Patron, and as a volunteer, particularly in propagating and tending the succulents for the Homestead Garden, was outstanding. Her work in leading the volunteer group created one of the more recognisable areas within the property, becoming the subject of many photographs that have helped cement the gardens as a "must see" Whanganui destination for lovers of plants and landscapes.

Vonnie's efforts in helping train younger gardeners in the art of Camellia pruning were considerable and her determination to ensure that pruning met the required standard resulted in displays to be proud of.

The personal effort Vonnie dedicated into establishing the Millennium Hill, and eradicating raupo that was invading the Wetland, is an example of her long-standing dedication that remains for all to see.



Vonnie and Allan Skilton in Homestead Garden at National Camellia Convention when it was hosted by Wanganui, 2008

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Mid July Lakeside Walkway project start.

September 15 Small Talks  
(funds to Shakespeare).

Feb 24 to 27 "Merry Wives of Windsor"

### *Have your Say*

Please take time to fill out the council survey about parks, reserves etc as a preparation for the public consultation on Parks strategy.

Follow this link to the survey <https://www.whanganui.govt.nz/Your-Council/Have-Your-Say/Consultations/Parks-reserves-pathways-and-activities>

Completion of this will help  
frame future policy.

There is, of course, much more. How the gardens look today is in no small way testament to Vonnie's dedication to making the Bason Botanic Gardens a Significant Garden in our region.

Thank you Vonnie, your work is still seen, remembered and appreciated often.

Terry Dowdeswell  
Chair  
Bason Botanic Gardens Trust Board

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE BASON?

### ROUND THE LAKE WALKWAY

This July sees the beginning of construction of the final stage of the "Round The Lake Walkway", which joins the Japanese Tea House to the walkway across the weir at the discharge end of the lake. It will then be possible to circumnavigate the lake, off road, passing through various landscapes and taking in expansive views of the gardens from different angles.

As the walkway passes its highest point to the southeast of the lake, a space has been cleared to accommodate a sculpture, commissioned from local artist, Ivan Vostinar. This interactive, 6 metre tall work will have seating areas nearby which afford a magnificent view back over Picnic Flat towards the old homestead. Excavation



Pathway cleared



Over Lake from hill ...trees removed.

and shaping should be completed by the end of July (weather permitting) with final completion scheduled for mid September.

Please take care around this work and observe the safety signs.

### SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK - 24th-27th February 2022. Diary it NOW!

Director Karen Craig is working hard on preparation for the next Shakespeare play "The Merry Wives of Windsor". This is out and out comedy which will be adapted, just a little I'm told, for today's audiences.

An Information Evening for anyone interested in participating in any way whatsoever (from parking assistant to actor, admin to prompt)

## Become a Friend of the Bason

### To Receive:

Periodic newsletters highlighting plants and upcoming events  
Special offers on plants and/or seeds of special Bason plants.

**Register here:** <http://basonbotanicgardens.com/support-us/>

### To Volunteer

On the last Tuesday of each month our Bason volunteers meet in the vicinity of the Homestead Garden, where they may be involved in potting up, weeding and general maintenance.

**Contact: Janice 06 3442495 or John 06 3456417**

### Sponsors and benefactors

These wonderful people enable dreams to become realities. If you would like to make a project donation, an endowment or gift of a memorial feature please contact the BBG Trust

**Email here:** [basonbotanicgardens@gmail.com](mailto:basonbotanicgardens@gmail.com)

**BOOKINGS:** Direct all Botanic Gardens venue/BBQ bookings to the Customer Service Desk

Whanganui District Council, phone 349 0001.

### CONTACTS:

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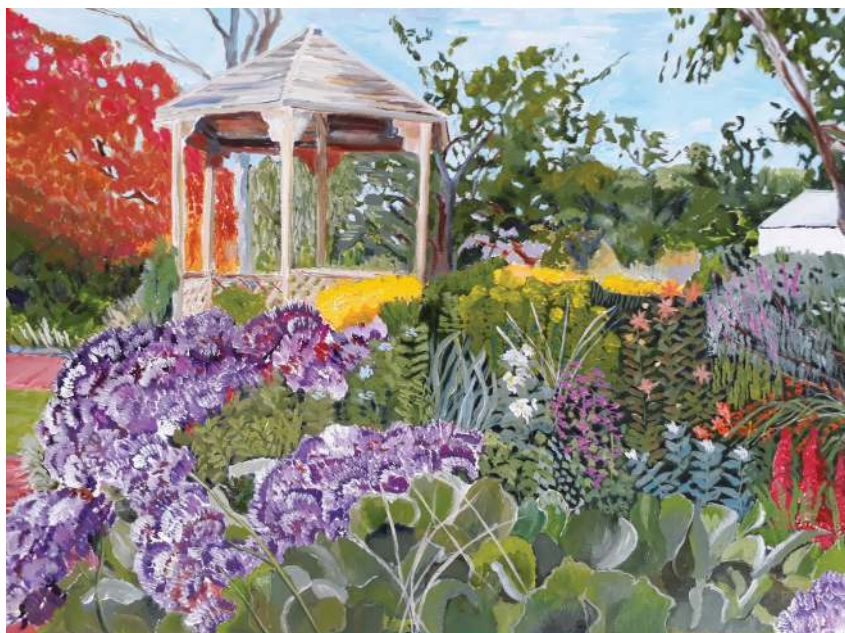
is being held on 29th July, 7pm Peat Street Studio, 82-92 Peat Street.

Auditions: 21 & 22 August, 11am to 2pm, Venue to be confirmed.

Check out the website for further information <http://www.shakespeareintheparkwhanganui.com/>

Also for your diary: A fundraiser for the play. SmallTalks, to be held at Bayleys Real Estate Auction Rooms on the corner of Guyton and Wickstead streets, will benefit the production.

These are lively, 5 minute presentations by 10 entertaining individuals. Tickets \$15 presale or \$20 at the door. If you would like to present on a subject of your choice, please contact me, Terry 0273516104



### **THE PAINTED GARDEN -** From Phil Thompson

I was interested to see these two beautiful paintings of the Homestead Garden at Fine Arts Gallery in Taupo Quay recently. The artist is Frances Sim-Higgins.

Many of us will have seen previous artworks of landscapes by Frances, including such themes as Rotokawau/Virginia Lake. When discussing the paintings with Frances, she commented that when she painted the gazebo in the Garden (see below), as she had done some years earlier, she was actually painting a different structure! The previous one became rickety and was replaced by the Council.

I suggest that you drop into the gallery (you can go through from Renata's Art and Framing in Moutoa Quay), and enjoy Frances' works, along with the other beautiful artworks!

From Francis:

My name is Frances Sim- Higgins. I am a painter and a



ceramist. I work from my studio at Ian Higgins Poultry farm in Rapanui Road. I painted these two pictures of two different areas of the Bason Botanic Garden for an exhibition entitled Whanganui Now, currently showing at the Fine Arts gallery, 17 Taupo Quay, Whanganui. I chose the Bason Botanic gardens as my subject as I particularly like painting gardens and flowers. I have been a gardener since the age of four and have worked as a professional gardener both here and in the United Kingdom.

The Bason Botanical gardens are I think, quite wonderful. Whanganui is very fortunate to have such an asset. This is not the first time I have chosen the gardens as my subject. I first painted them in my final year at art school and the gazebo was also the subject of one of the paintings.

For these paintings I took the liberty of adding more flowering plants because when I took the photographs to work from, the flowering season was almost over, and I needed more colour than what was available. I often paint my own garden and am always aware that while I am happily painting, the weeds are very happily growing! One of the advantages of a painted garden is that there is not a weed to be seen.

### **GREEN PAVLOVA – Some musings**

I recently attended the Green Pavlova conference in Rotorua. The conference is aimed at people working in the Parks and Recreation industry and gives an opportunity to find out about what's happening throughout New Zealand and Australia. It is always good to be able to get a better understanding of the drivers of the industry from this forum.

There were some regular themes that ran across the programme including 'What Parks should be doing in the face of Climate Change' and some of the ideas that came out of this were around Park design including species diversity to allow for warmer climates,

more planting to create heat sinks. It strikes me that the Bason is well positioned to go forward, in the face of climate change, but that future plantings should be considered in terms of how they can help build resilience.

I would also note that botanic gardens come into their own by providing a diversity in species which also helps to build sustainability. The key words to take out of this topic were: resilience, adaptability, and sustainability.

Another topic that featured throughout the conference was how to get people interacting with nature and the environment. If there has been one positive from COVID, it's that it showed that while most of us are very urbanised - it is estimated that 70% of the world's population will live in urban areas by 2050 - there is still a part of us that craves the outdoors. Parks make cities more liveable and are part of a solution to positive wellbeing. There are now studies that can quantify benefits - so it is no longer just a feeling.

The traditional narrative of how people interact with the outdoors which has been dominated by organised sport, is now being challenged and is likely to impact on design of open space. One very interesting programme that Auckland has started, was a night in the bush. This was a family based camping event that took place over one night in one of Auckland's Reserves.

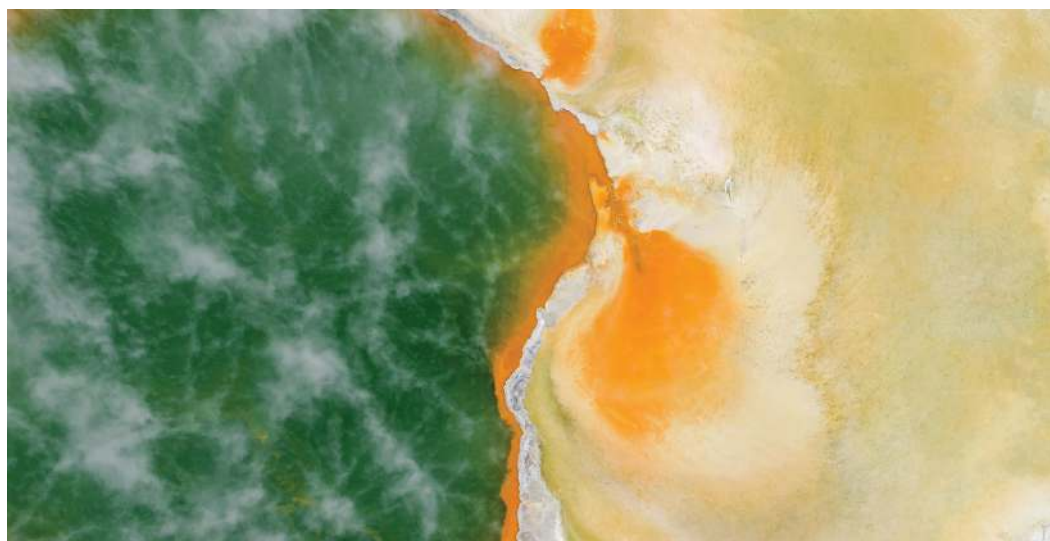
There were night walks, exploration into stream life etc. It has been a huge success and has hopefully encouraged more people of all ages to undertake volunteer work.

Auckland Council is fortunate to have two Rangers who are able to organise such events.

The current Parks and Open Spaces Strategy is being written. This is an overarching document that gives broad direction for all open space areas. Topics such as Climate Change and Accessibility to Open Space are particularly relevant in respect to the strategy. There is currently a [survey](#) (click on the link) on the Whanganui District Council web-site to allow you to make comment. A draft strategy will also be available for comment by the public at some point.

We sometimes take our access opportunities for granted as we do have a number of parks available to us within relatively close proximity. This is not the case for all people. During lockdown in Melbourne for instance it became apparent the many people did not have a park or greenspace within 5 km of where they live.

All food for positive thought.



Bason  
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c/- PO Box 778, Wanganui

