

Main image: A record crowd gathers at Eastwoodhill for the Teddy Bears Picnic held on Sunday April 17, 2011. Insert: "Mrs Poppy" reads to the children as they take a break from the famous bear hunt.

Autumn 2011

The Friends of Eastwoodhill newsletter



Teddy bears picnic in sun-soaked splendour



On Sunday April 17, we held our annual Teddy Bears Picnic. Despite the forecast for rain it was sunny and warm and the arboretum came alive with the sound of music creating a wonderful ambience for over 150 excited children and their parents.

Clutching their bears, kids enjoyed the fabulous bear hunt, face painting, bear craft table, bouncy castle, sausage sizzle and stories read by Jan Shanahun of Poppies Bookshop. Bear enthusiast Helen Hunt talked to parents about "Operation Comfort Bears", a project dedicated to raising funds to send 5000 teddy bears to Christchurch children distressed by the earthquakes. She received a great response.

The winners of the Gisborne Herald colouring competition were announced, with Tessa Broad and Tui Cave taking home the prizes. Spot prizes were also given out to lucky picnic goers.

The day ended with the parachute game - where children group their teddies together and toss them in the air. This was accompanied by laughter and a cheer when the last teddy remained.

After three hours of fun the worn out but content children headed home. Eastwoodhill is grateful to Sam, Jan, Prue, Danny, and Louise from Classic Hits for the effort they put into organising activities, publicity and rewards.

Friends fundraising improves Visitor Centre

In December 2010 a new Point of Sale (POS) system, designed to record merchandise sold using barcodes, was introduced at the Visitor Centre shop.

Volunteers trained by staff to use the technology gave positive feedback, despite their initial concerns, with many stating the technology is "so much easier than the old cash register!"

The POS terminal is a touch computer screen with options to enter a sale manually or scan the bar code. The EFTPOS machine is linked to the POS system so there is no need for volunteers to swipe the card, as was done in the past.

If any Friend would like to volunteer in the Visitor Centre and experience how easy the new system is to use, please contact the office and ask to be included in the new season roster. Full training will be provided so you are comfortable before your roster day.

The Trust Board would like to thank the Friends for their fundraising efforts to purchase the POS system.

Curator's report

A warm welcome

I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone for their help with the transition into my new role as curator. Everyone has been extremely welcoming and supportive since my arrival in early March. The position of curator is a diverse role and I look forward to the challenges it will present. I am supported by a fantastic team of full-time staff and volunteers so I am well looked after.

Paul Wynen visited for a handover and we spent time walking through the park discussing ideas and projects for the future as well as looking at the mapping system that catalogues Eastwoodhill's 13,000+ trees. Paul is an extremely knowledgeable man and during his nine years as curator, took Eastwoodhill's collection into the modern age and gave us a platform to work off for the future. Much of the technical work he achieved was unseen but done to a meticulous standard. Thank you Paul, your legacy is plain to see.

The summer has been a wet and warm one with an extended growing season. This has been great for us with lush growth everywhere but it has also posed some problems. There have been branch failures in some large trees due to the extended growth, including one of the "stars in the park" - the St Landry's oak *Quercus X ludoviciana*. A large lower limb and part of the upper canopy failed but with the expert help of Paul Kenny, the damage was removed and once again it is a stunning large tree.

The autumn colours are well and truly kicking in now and the spectrum of colours throughout the park is a sight to behold. We have had a spell of cold and clear mornings, so hopefully this will continue to bring a long and glorious autumn full of colour. The lookout at the top of the Burma Road is a popular destination at this time of year for a panoramic view, and Cook's Corner for a more intimate setting full of colour from the *Quercus rubra* (red oak).

As we launch into winter, a focus will be on land stabilisation plantings to stop the progression of last October's flood slips. Many of you will have seen the impact this has had on some areas and we will try to stop the slips progressing further.

This is an exciting time to come on board at Eastwoodhill and I look forward to meeting you all.

Danny Frazer
CURATOR

Close to home

After leaving Gisborne 40 years ago, Rob Booth has returned home – well, part-time at least – to take up the role as general manager of Eastwoodhill Arboretum. He talks about his enthusiasm for the new job and ambitions to make the local treasure a destination in its own right...



Just down the road from Rob Booth's new office at Eastwoodhill is the family farm where he grew up. His parents Jim and Nan Booth farmed in the Ngatapa area and Rob followed in their footsteps for many years, until he had a nasty bulldozer accident and lost a leg.

The accident forced him to turn his vocational aspirations elsewhere, and in doing so, realised a talent for business he may have otherwise overlooked. "I moved away to try things other than farming and I have lived a very colourful commercial life since," he says.

"I headed the Gallagher Group for several years and have had a number of my own business interests. I've been involved in so many different things over the years. You could say I have a large capacity for work."

This "large capacity" may go some way to explain his willingness to commute to Gisborne from Auckland for two days a week at Eastwoodhill. One month into the role, he seems undaunted by the demands, or the commute, for that matter.

When the job first arose, Rob's fond memories of growing up in the area partly inspired him to go for it. Since starting at Eastwoodhill he has been talking to every visitor who comes through to learn more about what attracted them there in the first place.

"There are more than 3500 varieties of trees here and some of them are very rare," he says. "Gisborne people don't realise the asset that is sitting right here, and the great thing is it was built by Gisborne people. So much hard work has gone into it and I'm very privileged to be in this role."

One of the challenges Eastwoodhill has always faced is being a charitable organisation that relies largely on donations from the community. Mr Booth would like to move away from that reliance.

"We've got to the stage where Eastwoodhill is able to generate revenue. Now, hopefully, we can attract far more visitors from outside Gisborne. It is very well patronised by local people but I still think we could get a lot more. We have around 10,000 people come through every year – we would like to double that."

"The scope is huge. It's not an easy task to attract people to a remote location like this, but this facility is so good, I believe we can."

The work at Eastwoodhill provides a refreshing change from Rob's commercial projects in Auckland, which include "sorting out" businesses in trouble, and overseeing his electronic label and barcode business. He is also the chief executive of a company developing a new hybrid engine.

Despite this seemingly intense workload, Rob insists he has a healthy work life balance. "I have an interest in boats, aeroplanes, aerobatics, that sort of thing. I'm an avid car collector too...I guess petrolhead might be the more appropriate word," he laughs.

He also has a healthy appreciation for nature – particularly nature at its best at Eastwoodhill. "I'm not your tree hugger type, I'm far more commercially-minded, but I'm incredibly enthusiastic about Eastwoodhill and committed to be involved in a huge capacity. If you spend half a day here, you start to realise what a terrific place this is," he says.



Williams Memorial lights up for Elizabeth Marvelly's performance at the 2011 Radio Live Picnic in the Park.

New Zealand's latest international star performs at Eastwoodhill

On March 18 up-and-coming musical talent Elizabeth Marvelly performed at Eastwoodhill's second Radio Live Picnic in the Park concert. Classical singer Marvelly signed with EMI records at age 17, performed with opera star Paul Potts in 2009, and trained with the late Sir Howard Morrison in her home town Rotorua.

Concert goers enjoyed pleasant weather, scrumptious picnic hampers by Tasty Leaf Catering and were given a special treat when they had the privilege of being the first in the country to hear live renditions of well-loved songs including Gershwin's 'Summertime', 'Ave Maria', 'Over the Rainbow', and Dave Dobbyn's 'Welcome Home'.

The fabulous Sharon Cotter also performed, returning after an acclaimed performance at Eastwoodhill's centennial gala dinner in 2010.

Giveaway packages, including tickets to the concert, were offered in high profile magazines and newspapers, and were a great success. More than 700 people responded to the giveaway in the BOP Times and over 1600 responded to the NZ Gardener promotion. Thanks to Eastwoodhill, Knapdale Eco-Lodge, Bushmere Estate, Soho and the Portside Hotel for their contributions.

Friends AGM

The Friends of Eastwoodhill AGM will be held at 2.30pm on Sunday 29 May 2011 at the arboretum. Following the meeting, you are invited for afternoon tea.

Annual subscription rates will be discussed, as the Committee is recommending an increase in single annual membership to \$45 and joint annual membership to \$80.

Prior to the meeting at 1.30pm, join our new curator Danny Frazer for a short walk in the arboretum. We hope you will take this opportunity to meet Danny and hear about the exciting new plans for Eastwoodhill.

BNZ "Closed for Good" Day

The Friends of Eastwoodhill were the lucky beneficiaries of the BNZ Closed for Good day - a nationwide initiative where BNZ branches close nationwide for one day during the year so staff can go out into the community to assist non-profit groups with projects. In 2011, 768 submissions were received from various groups across the country.

BNZ staff came to the arboretum on March 9 armed with spades, forks and secateurs and got stuck into weeding the fern banks and helleborus, clearing unwanted seedlings, and cutting back the agapanthus. They took to the *Melanoselinum decipiens* (giant angelica) on the Pavilion bank with great enthusiasm and despite their short visit, were hugely helpful. Special thanks to Eastwoodhill staff and Friends who put on a wonderful morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. It was a great day and enjoyed by everyone who attended.



BNZ volunteers get into the autumn clean up at Eastwoodhill on Closed for Good Day.



A new beginning

Danny Frazer would have walked over burning coals for the position of curator at Eastwoodhill.

Luckily the 38-year-old arborist only had to cross 394 kilometres when he moved from Hamilton to take up the position last month.

Now as both an arborist and a curator, his titles need a little explaining. "A curator is somebody who is responsible for a collection" he said. Eastwoodhill is the National Arboretum of New Zealand and its botanical collection is the biggest representation of Northern Hemisphere trees in the Southern Hemisphere.

Danny's new office takes up 135 hectares and has more than 3500 species that make up over 13,000 trees and shrubs. "Many of our trees are on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of threatened species, so it's important we preserve them," he said.

He is excited about the prospect of such preservation. "I am responsible for maintaining the collection to ensure it will be a beautiful and fascinating place to visit for generations to come. We have specimens of trees here that are the only ones in New Zealand," he said.

He is passionate about trees and spent a lot of time in the New Zealand bush. However, it wasn't until he went to Wintech in Hamilton to pursue a three year diploma in arboriculture (which he passed with distinction) that everything fell into place.

"It still blows me away how much arboriculture has cemented everything I've learnt until now."

"Eastwoodhill is such a beautiful place and I love living and working here."

Arborists, he says, are not just people who cut down trees. "That is part of what we do, but arboriculture encompasses all facets of tree management and care from the time a seed is planted until it dies of old age. People notice chainsaws and trees being removed, but many miss the other aspects of our job which are not so visible."

A typical day at the arboretum includes a wide range of activities. "With a small staff looking after such a large area it means everyone is quite versatile," he said.

He lives in the Eastwoodhill homestead with his wife Rethenwyn and their children Heron (6), Sol (3), and Rowan (9 months).

Encourage learning and be rewarded

Buy a kids activity pack from the Eastwoodhill Visitor Centre this autumn and be in to win Muirs Bookshop gift vouchers. Simply fill in a registration form with your name, address and phone number to enter the draw.

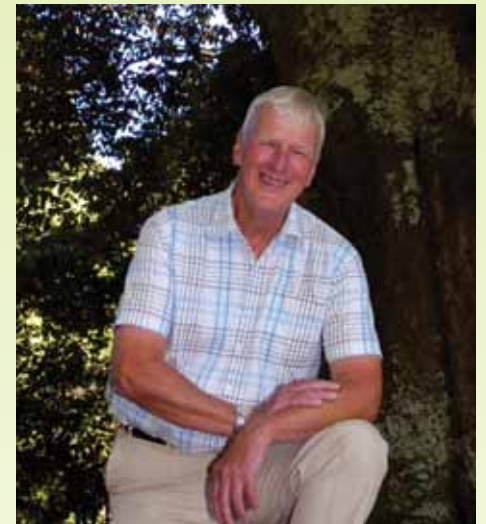
Hillier visit

Robert Hillier, managing director and fourth generation of the Hillier Nursery in England, and his wife Jean came to New Zealand in January to visit Eastwoodhill, Hackfalls Arboretum, and Lady Anne and Bob Berry.

At Eastwoodhill they were delighted to see many mature trees from Hilliers Nursery, especially the Jacklyne Hillier Elm, discovered by Roberts's late father Harold. Most elm trees have died off due to Dutch Elm disease.

Jean Hillier is currently researching the history of the family company for a book to be published later in 2011. The Friends of Eastwoodhill offered to look through arboretum archives for relevant material.

Hillier Nursery began providing trees for Eastwoodhill in the 1930s and 40s and continues to do so today.



Robert Hillier is fourth generation of a United Kingdom nursery company that has been supplying trees to Eastwoodhill since the 1930s. He was in Gisborne to visit Lady Anne and Bob Berry, Hackfalls Arboretum and Eastwoodhill.

Contacts

Phone: 06 863 9003

Email: enquiries@eastwoodhill.org.nz

Website: www.eastwoodhill.org.nz

Friends committee chair: Pru Roberts
Secretary: Alison Ross

Autumn opening hours:

Weekdays 9am - 5pm

Sat and Sun 9am - 4.30pm

Newsletter editing and design by Expresspr and printing by Te Rau Print.