

PATRONS

1918-1924	P.J. Luke, R.A. Wright*
1925-1926	C.J. Norwood*
1927-1930	G.A. Troup*
1931	T.C.A. Hislop*
1932-1935	J.T. Grose
1936-1938	A. Parlane
1939	P.J. Townley
1940	G. Cooper
1941-1942	R.G. MacMorran
1946-1948	G.P. Shepherd
1949-1963	O.C. Mazengarb
1964-1972	T.E.Y. Seddon
1972-1976	W.H. Wilson
1977-1979	T. Coveney
1979	Miss M. Seddon
1985-1994	S. Reid

** Mayor of Wellington*

PRESIDENTS

1918-20/21	E.W. Wiffen
1921-1922	J.J. Connor
1923	D. Milligan
1924	Dr E. Marchant
1925-1927	M. Simpson
1928-1933	H. Baillic
1934-1949	T.E.Y. Seddon
1951-1959	W.H. Wilson E.D.
1959-1960	McCabe
1960-1961	W.H. Wilson
1961-1963	P.M. Williams
1964	W.H. Wilson
1965-1969	T.G. Coveney
1970-1979	P.A. Fabian
1980-1984	P.R. Bothamley
1985-1990	Doreen Green
1991-1995	Bethney McLennan
1995-2005	Mary Stevens
2005-2009	Letizia Columbano-Green
2009-2013	Alan Whiting
2013 -	Graeme Schofield

OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

- To promote and share a knowledge of gardens and gardening
- To promote excellence in flowers, fruit and vegetables through judged competition
- To cooperate in community projects with other groups or organisations with similar interests and objectives
- To encourage in children an interest in gardening
- To enhance the environment of the Wadestown, Wilton and Highland Park districts

Email: secretary.wwhs@gmail.com

Postal Address: PO Box 12 227,
Wellington,

Website: www.wwhortsoc.nz



A History of the Wadestown Wilton Horticultural Society Incorporated

1918 - 2018

A History of the Society

Wadestown is a district with special problems for gardeners. At 368 metres above sea level, high on a rocky windswept ledge with acid soil, it needed a society to help residents develop flourishing gardens in beautiful surroundings.

On May 28, 1918, the inaugural annual general meeting of the Wadestown Cottage Garden and Beautifying Society was held in St Luke's schoolroom. The President was E.W. Wiffin, Secretary W.I.J. Blyth and treasurer E.A. Cook. Committee members were A.J. George, H. Beauchamp, S. Brice, C.R. Smith, H.S. Hislop, S.G. Nathan, G.B. Bullock, E.C. Alderson, A. Parlane, T.J. Halse, J.E. Evans, J.E. Bass, C.B. Trimmell and C. Dormer. Ladies Committee members were E.J. Wiffen, Grace Neill, A.A. Gregory, S.H. Watkins, P. McLeod and E. Best.

Three main shows were held for those early years. They were open to the public who saw what could be grown, and who joined the society to learn more. Monthly meetings were held except in winter, and a guest speaker would often attract audiences of 70-100 members. Prizes were given for the best kept flower and vegetable gardens.

To celebrate the first shipment of apples to the United Kingdom, Department of Agriculture staff provided apple trees to members they could demonstrate how to care for the trees and to prune them. The same year, the society helped families of local men serving overseas in World War 1 by maintaining their gardens.

The November monthly meeting and December summer show were not held in 1918 because the influenza epidemic forced the closure of all societies.

The 1920s

By 1920, the Society changed to become as the local Horticultural Society. The membership was increased with the development of sections from the former Rhodes family estate in Highland Park. Silver trophies were given by members and allocated for annual challenge.

In 1921 the Council agreed to build a rock garden at the tramway terminus if the Society would agree to keep it in order. This was done and some of the rocks remain at the parking area at the junction of Weld St and Wadestown Rd.

The members would order lime from the works in Hawkes Bay; eight tons were ordered in 1922. This practice continued for many years. The Society was active in planting trees and shrubs and requests to the City Council for 200 shrubs at a time are noted in the minutes. The area between Wadestown Rd and Moorhouse St was known as Lowes Gully and mention is often made in letters to the council of the rubbish, gorse and weeds of the rubbish, gorse and weeds.

In 1926 a letter was sent urging the City to buy the land for a reserve and this was eventually done. In 1926 two Society members were appointed honorary rangers in response to a request from the City Council for help in stopping the vandalism of shrubs and trees in the city and suburbs.

Since 2005, the Society has again turned its attention to this area, now known as Philip Myers Park. Many large trucks of rubbish have been removed and shrubs and trees have been planted and tended by the Society.

The 1930s

The Depression of the 30s prompted the Society to offer to provide seed and fertilizer for work schemes for the unemployed as proposed by the inter-church groups, and to advise the City Council on beautification projects for the suburb. In 1931 the Society made a donation of five pounds to the Napier earthquake fund. During this time the Society ran two major shows and eight meeting/shows. Most meetings reported attendances of more than 30 members. There was keen competition for points for annual prizes such as cake stands, a Moorcraft vase or an attaché case. The school children were encouraged to enter shows and once, in 1935, Wilton's Bush had to be declared out-of-bounds to over enthusiastic collectors of seedlings and cuttings. The May 1935 minutes record that card games of 500 were held regularly.

The 1940s

Society members supported the National Flower Show at the NZ Centennial Exhibition in January 1940. The Annual report of 1941 expressed pride in the members who were in the Armed Forces. The Wadestown Patriotic Society fund was augmented by money from the auction of a prize pumpkin and a display of prize gladioli blooms. Members were successful at the Wellington Dig for Victory Show. Arbour Day was supported enthusiastically with plantings of kowhai along Wilton Rd in 1941, and a further 200 in 1942. Meetings were well attended with 200 at one 1940 evening meeting. In 1941, one October meeting was cancelled because of torrential rain, floods and slips. At the AGM of 1942, evening meetings were cancelled so members could have time for other patriotic endeavours. In 1948-49, although the society had more than 200 members, too few were available to serve on the Committee, which led to the cessation of activities for two years.

A Fresh Start, The 1950s - 70s

On September 4, 1951 a Special General Meeting was held and the name of the Society was changed to the Wadestown, Highland Park and Wilton Horticultural Society.

In the mid-1950s the Society stopped display evenings and concentrated on three shows a year which were held on Wednesdays.

Annual Reports constantly commented on the keenness of the children thanks to encouragement from their schools.

The pattern of three shows a year, spring, summer and autumn continued for 35 years and heavy show trestle tables made by members were stored under the St Luke's Hall stage and put up with the help of Scouts for each show.

In 1979 the show date was changed from a weekday to a Saturday.

The 1980s-90s

New housing in Wilton brought more members.

A shortage of vases and trophies was solved when show vases and silver trophies were inherited from the defunct Wellington, Kelburn and Karori Horticultural Societies.

A gradual increase in the number of female gardeners was taking place unnoticed until the exclusively male vegetable grower's challenge trophy was won by Mrs Betty Porritt.

By the mid eighties the work load for three shows a year fell on too few shoulders. Members were surveyed and shows were reduced to the Camellia Show and a Summer Show plus monthly meetings. The best white camellia at the Camellia Show still receives a painting of white camellias painted by local artist Beatrice Seddon, wife of Tom Seddon, Patron in the 1960s.

At the AGM in December 1994, the Society was incorporated and the name changed to Wadestown Wilton Horticultural Society Incorporated. In the late 90s pea straw and Nitrophoska Blue fertilizer were ordered in bulk and sold to members. The society continued to flourish.

The 2000s

Evening meetings continued to be held monthly. At one very memorable meeting on birds in the garden, Del Wray demonstrated making bird puddings while John Stevens' very friendly shaver hens were walking around the hall pecking up food from the floor! While the replacement for the St Lukes Hall was being built, meetings were held in various venues, including the church. The annual Summer Show was held at the Malvina Major Retirement Village. A group of members, helped by community workers from the Dept. of Corrections, tidied the area around the old tram terminus. The Society donated three apple trees to the Wadestown Side School as part of the Society's 90th celebrations. For a while, the evening meetings began with a "Gardening for Beginners" section to encourage people starting up gardening, under the direction of Alan Whiting and Ian Young there was a strong emphasis on vegetables! Popular garden visits began to be organised in early November each year.

2010 - Today

While the majority of our members live within the Wadestown Wilton area, with the closing of many other similar societies throughout Wellington, we now have members who come from much further afield. The Society now holds three shows yearly. The Summer Show is held in February, The Spring Flower Show in September and the Rose Show in November. The monthly meetings continue to be well attended with speakers providing encouragement and education on how to meet the challenges of gardening in Wadestown. Evening meetings continue for most of the year and the June, July and August meetings are held in the afternoon. An annual garden trip is always well supported by members, their friends and families. In 2017 the trip visited members' gardens to see what others were achieving in similar conditions.

The Society participates in the annual Wadestown Community Fair and is a corporate member of the Village Green Trust, supporting their endeavours to further develop Philip Meyers Park.