

4th May 2007

## **Largest Collection of New Zealand Native Plants opens in the UK**



Friday saw the unveiling of one of the largest collections of native New Zealand plants in the UK, just days after the annual ANZAC day commemorations of 25 April. The New Zealand Garden within The Savill Garden, part of The Crown Estate, was officially opened by HRH The Duke of York, with a ribbon cutting ceremony and unveiling of a commemorative plaque.

Ian Grant, Chairman of The Crown Estate, comments: “Today represents the culmination of work on a variety of elements of the Royal Landscape. Not only do we have the award winning Savill Building, but opening today we have a stunning new horticultural element in the form of the New Zealand Garden. This is an important demonstration of The Crown Estate’s commitment to enhancing the visitor experience of this popular amenity.”

Bronwen Chang, Deputy High Commissioner for New Zealand, spoke of her admiration of the hard work that has been undertaken to produce such an outstanding example of native New Zealand horticulture: “The links between our two

countries in plants and horticulture date back almost 250 years to Captain James Cook's first voyage to New Zealand, when Sir Joseph Banks and his team collected specimens and produced botanical illustrations of many of our native plants. New Zealand is very honoured to be the only country with a garden all to itself in Windsor Great Park. The many thousands of visitors to The Savill Garden each year will be able to enjoy this distinctive slice of New Zealand flora and landscape design in such a historic setting.”

The royal opening was accompanied by traditional Maori ceremonies provided by *Manaia*, a UK based Maori culture group who announced the arrival of His Royal Highness The Duke of York to other guests with conch blowing (puutaatara) and who supported the event with the ‘haka’, ‘karanga’ and ‘whakaararapaa’.

*Manaia* also hosted an outdoor workshop for 80 local school children to teach them about Maori traditions and give them a chance to perform some of the ceremonial dances.

The new garden has been developed and landscaped under the eye of the new Head of The Savill Garden, Harvey Stephens, working in conjunction with leading New Zealand landscape designer, Sam Martin, whose inspiration has been the unique and diverse habitats of his native country. Sam's winning design was selected because of the way it mimics the undulating roof of the new Savill Building, and takes inspiration from the hummocked shape of many New Zealand plants in their natural habitat. The garden showcases some spectacular country flora with the use of more than a thousand tussock grasses, striking individual specimens of cabbage palm and spiky groups of the silver-leaved astelias.

Harvey Stephens comments: “The New Zealand Garden is a wonderful addition to The Savill Garden in this its 75th anniversary. I am thrilled to have been involved in this unique and unusual project showcasing so many interesting New Zealand plants. Working with the plants’ great contrast in foliage colour, texture and form has been a real revelation and made the planting a most challenging and exciting task.”

The garden was opened to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The Savill Garden and houses nearly 3,000 native New Zealand plants representing what is probably the largest collection of such plants in the UK. The New Zealand Garden was started when The Savill Garden was chosen to house a collection of native plants given to Her Majesty The Queen following a state visit in 1986. The relocation of the visitor facilities to the new Savill Building, opened in 2006, has allowed for the development of a more ambitious New Zealand Garden with the addition of many new specimens.

The Savill Garden is one of the most significant woodland and ornamental gardens in England and contains a number of national collections. The garden hosts a wealth of exotic plants, providing huge public interest including many introduced in recent years by Keeper of the Gardens, Mark Flanagan, from collecting trips to the Far East.

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**Tours of the garden, are available on request**

### **Notes to Editors:**

**The Savill Garden**, a splendid garden, set in a royal landscape, is one of the greatest woodland gardens in England. The work of master landscape gardener Sir Eric Savill, it was created in the 1930s, and offers visitors interest year-round with its colourful displays of interesting and rare plants.

The opening of The Savill Building in June 2006 provided, for the first time, a visitor centre worthy of Windsor Great Park. Built to a unique and innovative gridshell design, made with timber harvested from Windsor Great Park, The Savill Building forms the gateway to The Savill Garden and The Royal Landscape. In addition to exhibition facilities, visitors to The Savill Building can enjoy a delicious selection of food and drink in the restaurant run by the esteemed caterers, Leith's, and choose from a range of plants, gifts and books in the new shop.

The Royal Landscape is an area of a thousand acres of gardens and parkland, accessible to the public, at the southern end of Windsor Great Park. It includes The Savill Garden, The Valley Gardens and Virginia Water Lake. It is a man-made landscape, which has been shaped and planted over a period of 400 years. Visitors can find further information by logging on to:

[www.theroyallandscape.co.uk](http://www.theroyallandscape.co.uk)

Entry costs for The Savill Garden are:

Adults: £6.50

Seniors: £6.00

Groups (10+): £5.25

Child 6 - 16: £3.25

Children under 6 are free

Family (2 adults and 2 children): £17.00 + £2.00 per additional child

Opening Hours:

10am to 6pm, Last admission 30 minutes before closing.

**The Crown Estate** is the owner and steward of Windsor Great Park.

The Crown Estate is an estate valued at nearly £6 billion, including substantial blocks of urban property, over 120,000 hectares (300,000 acres) of agricultural land in England, Scotland and Wales, and around half the foreshore, together with the seabed out to the 12 mile territorial limit.

As owners, managers and guardians of one of the world's most important and diverse urban, rural and marine property portfolios our aims are underpinned by the three core values of commercialism, integrity and stewardship.

The Crown Estate is part of the hereditary possessions of the Sovereign "in right of the Crown", managed under the provisions of the Crown Estate Act 1961 by The Crown Estate who have a duty to maintain and enhance the capital value of the Estate and the income obtained from it, which goes to the Treasury for the benefit of the tax payer. Further information can be found by logging on to: [www.thecrownestate.co.uk](http://www.thecrownestate.co.uk)

## **ANZAC Day**

On 25 April each year Australians and New Zealanders commemorate their war dead. This anniversary is called ANZAC Day in honour of the men of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps who died during the almost-suicidal landings at Gallipoli in the Dardanelles. The part that New Zealand and Australian servicemen and women have played in other conflicts on distant shores is also remembered on ANZAC Day.

## **Manaia Maori Performing Arts Company**

Manaia is a 100% Maori owned and operated London-based company, which specialises in providing professional Maori performing arts services. Their mission is to engage, entertain and educate the international community about New Zealand Maori culture through the provision of Maori cultural performances, corporate workshops and educational services. [www.manaia.co.uk](http://www.manaia.co.uk)

## **Haka**

The haka is a disciplined and emotional expression of the Maori people of New Zealand. It is a message of soul, passion, strength, unity and determination expressed by words and posture. There are many haka that have been composed, thousands in fact. The haka “Ka Mate” is the most well known haka. For more information about the haka refer to: <http://www.newzealand.com/travel/about-nz/culture/haka-feature/haka.cfm>

## **Karanga**

The karanga is an exchange of calls that takes place during the time a visiting group moves onto the marae or into a formal meeting area. The karanga usually indicates the start of the powhiri (formal welcome ceremony). Carried out almost exclusively by women and in Maori language, karanga are initiated by the hosts.

## **Whakararapaa**

Awakening call from the men taking part in a welcome ceremony and in response to the women's 'karanga' call.

## **Puutaatara**

The putatara is a conch (sea dwelling mollusc) shell which is blown to make a deep and distinctive sound.