

***The Fairer Side of Buxton: Alfred Buxton's Gardens and the women who loved them***

**Review in the *Otaki Mail* by Ann Chapman**

Alfred Buxton was New Zealand's first landscape garden designer. During his working life as a designer, nurseryman and florist, Buxton designed in excess of 350 public and private gardens. He had over 200 clients.

There has been much written about him, but what is special about this new book is that it focuses on 12 women who commissioned gardens from him.

The well-researched book is the history of these women and their gardens. They were a diverse lot, motivated with a desire for a Buxton Garden. Their gardens all featured Buxton's signatures. Clare Gleeson describes in some detail the features of a typical Buxton garden. They were large enough to encompass ponds, trees, flowers, pergolas, ferneries and grottos, lawns, and rose gardens. They contained gardener's cottages and all had an entranceway designed to impress. There was often a Japanese influence. The book is well written, easy to read and filled with photos, old and new, with a rich history of the women and their times. The book covers social and gardening history, a history of the times, the gardens and the people involved. There are stories about the families who built the gardens and those who later enjoyed living in them. It is also illustrated with Buxton's designs.

In his later life Alfred Buxton lived in Otaki and is buried here. He was president of the Otaki Horticulture and Daffodil Society. His own gardens, and nursery featured iris, gladioli, daffodil, violet, sweet pea and Iceland poppies. Available from Books & Co, \$60 (hardback).