

Report on the Ikebana Group From Kurashiki, August 2004.

THE GROUP

This Ikebana Group visited Christchurch as part of the Christchurch's Festival of Japan, a biennial festival hosted by a Trust to promote Japanese culture, and artists. It is widely supported by both Japanese residents and visitors as well as the general residents of Christchurch.

Ikebana, the ancient art of Japanese Flower arranging and display. The display of the Ikebana was placed in the foyer and restaurant area of the Crowne Plaza Hotel in central Christchurch. In addition to the display area, several demonstration seminars were held by the visiting Ikebana members and the local Ikebana Chapter.

Our Christchurch - Kurashiki Sister City Committee became involved in some of the local arrangements and hosting along with the local Chapter members.

ARRIVAL

Newton Dodge, Cheryl Thorne and Barbara August, along with several members of the local chapter, met the visiting group officially at the airport. There were 10 members from Kurashiki and Okayama in Japan.



The popular duck feeding at Mona Vale

They were taken on a city tour including the grounds of Mona Vale and the areas of Hagley Park and central city. Several of the group were booked into the Copthorne Central Hotel and others were found Homestay Hosts from amongst the local chapter members.

RECEPTION

The first evening, the group were hosted to a welcome reception at the Crowne Plaza, by the Christchurch Consul of Japan, Mr Eiichiro Yamada. The Deputy Mayor of Christchurch, Lesley Keast gave a greeting and welcome to the city. Gifts and greetings were exchanged between the visitors and the local chapter members.



Formal Presentations & Speeches

IKEBANA DISPLAY

For the Saturday and Sunday, the group set up their displays and held seminars in the foyer and restaurant area of the Crowne Plaza in central Christchurch. Many visitor and local people saw the display and attended the demonstrations over the two days. It was truly exciting to see so many file past the displays clicking their cameras with excitement. It truly was a well supported part of the Festival of Japan.

A selection of the Japanese Ikebana Group displays at Crowne Plaza follow . .



The group attended an informal Chapter Dinner at the Yamagen Restaurant in the Crowne Plaza on Saturday evening and were hosted to Homestay meals for Sunday evening with the Local Chapter members.



DAY PICNIC

The weather forecast was for cold southerly, rain, hail and sleet with snow down to low levels.

The visitors were treated to a visit to 'Untouched World' factory shop and followed this with a morning tea.

However it was fine and sunny, BUT COLD.



Visiting the Kurashiki Garden at Halswell Quarry



The Gazebo donated by the Local Chapter



I love this tree. It will blossom soon

A visit to our Kurashiki Gardens in Halswell Quarry proved a very worthwhile venture. The Ikebana ladies stroll through the newly planted Cherry Blossom trees pretending what they will be like in about one months time. Thirty of these trees were recently donated and planted to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the link between our two cities.

The visitors also sat on the seats in the Gazebo partly funded by the local Ikebana Chapter and clicked photos constantly.

On the way to the **Kapuranga Farm**, near Springston the group drove around the grounds of the Lincoln University. The farm visit was true delight for the 10 ladies from Kurashiki.

The resident farmer and his wife **John & Jill Hughes**, were true farm hosts who laid it on for the visitors. A delicious meal was provided, followed by a demonstration of wool spinning and a quick look around the well decorated homestead.



This is a huge mid-day meal



Is this how they used to spin the wool?

Before leaving, the visitors were treated to a real life shearing demonstration with many of the ladies trying their hand at the shearing task.

Due to the time of the year, the visitors were also treated to the pleasure of holding real live 3-4 day old lambs and had the opportunity of feeding many of them by bottle. Most had never seen lambs so small, let alone touch or cuddle them.



It's lovely, but it is shivering



This is how it's done on the Farm

The farmer, John Hughes, treated the ladies to a very informative display of the various types of wool grown in NZ. We were very fortunate to have the kind services of Mitzuko Mason doing the interpreting for the day.



It's not as easy at it looks



Is it really only 3 days old?



Look it's nearly finished

FAREWELL DINNER

The visitors were invited along with all the Homestay Hosts, several members from the Local Ikebana Chapter and representatives from the Sister City Committee, to a wonderful dinner at the Garden Restaurant in Marshland Rd, Shirley. This was an excellent opportunity to thank the local chapter members for the work and to farewell the visitors before the very early flight out of Christchurch the next morning. A few necessary speeches and some gifts were exchanged following the meal.



Thank you.

Thankyou for the opportunity of again hosting the local arrangements for this visiting group. I started with absolutely no knowledge of the art of Ikebana and ended up at least understanding the beauty of the art. Cheryl and I have again met

and made some great friends with yet another group of people from Kurashiki.



The farewell photo at Christchurch Airport on the Tuesday morning.

COSTS

As most of the local hosting fell on the Local Ikebana Chapter, our committee expenses were kept well within the target figure of \$1,500.00.

For the Christchurch - Kurashiki Sister City Committee

Barbara August
Project Organiser

Newton Dodge & Cheryl Thorne
Local hosts