



BOTANIC NEWS
SUMMER 1988

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Calendar year 1988 has been a very active and productive time for the 'Friends'. Numerous activities were well attended and enjoyed by all; in recent months members have participated in: two separate visits to Canberra and surrounding areas, enjoyed a morning coffee with the Plant Craft Cottage Group, joined with members of the National Gallery Society for a twilight picnic in the Gardens, enjoyed a visit to our Gardens from the newly formed 'Friends of the Benalla Botanic Gardens' and visited the Cranbourne Garden and the Dandenongs.

Links have been established with the National Trust, the Victorian Branch of the Australian Garden History Society and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, New York. It is pleasing that co-ordination with the Voluntary Guides and Plant Craft Cottage Group continues as do our close links with the Maud Gibson Trust. Working together is the only way if we are to provide proper support to our magnificent Botanic Gardens.

The year saw the appointment of our Executive Officer, Ms Margaret MacGregor, and our thanks go to her for her effective efforts in steering our expansion. A major initiative was the creation of the Growing Friends, additionally our shop at the Kiosk expanded over the two year program, managed by Mrs Iona Christianson. Iona, having seen through the first phase of the development of this important activity, can be well proud of her achievements. Our thanks to Iona for her efforts over the past two years as the shop re-organises for stage two.

The extension to the Herbarium is nearing completion. It was officially opened on Sunday November 20, together with the Gardens' Visitor Centre, by His Excellency the Governor-General of Australia, The Right Honorable Sir Ninian Stephen. This marks a most significant step in the development of the Herbarium and the Gardens.

Continuous co-operation with the Gardens staff and management was maintained and our congratulations go to them for the results being achieved. The 'Friends' Christmas dinner, Friday December 16, at the Kiosk in the Gardens, will no doubt be once again a great success.

I look forward to welcoming members to our Christmas party and take this opportunity, on behalf of the Council, to thank all volunteers for a successful year and to wish all members an especially happy Christmas with every best wish for the coming new year.

Frank V. Phillips
President

MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES FRIENDS' CHRISTMAS PARTY

Friday December 16 at 7.00 p.m.

The Friends' Christmas Dinner will be held at the Kiosk in the Gardens on Friday December 16 at 7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m.

Members and Guides — \$20.00

Others — \$22.00

For booking details ring Margaret MacGregor 650 6398.

"A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM" AND "WIND IN THE WILLOWS"

The "Fantastic Entertainment in Public Places" body is bringing "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and once again the "Wind in the Willows" to the Gardens. Scenes from these delightful pieces will be played out in different areas of the Gardens. There will be a Friends' evening for each of these productions as follows:—

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" — Friday January 20, commencing at 8.45 p.m. — price \$20 adults, \$14.90 children up to 16 yrs. (The producers recommend this for 12 year olds upwards).

Suggest you bring cushion and/or rug.

Join other Friends for a BYO picnic tea between 7.00 p.m. and 8.30 p.m. on the Oak Lawn near "F" Gate. For those not partaking of the picnic tea, meet at "H" Gate no later than 8.45 p.m.

RSVP January 12, 1989 on enclosed booking form.

"Wind in the Willows" — Friday February 3, commencing at 6.00 p.m. — price \$8.00 children and adults. This charming children's play is fun for all the family.

Please enter by "F" Gate and follow the signs to where the play begins.

RSVP January 26, 1989 on enclosed booking form.

MT. BUFFALO/FALLS CREEK TOUR

Sunday February 19 to Friday February 24, 1989.
Accompanied by Dr J. H. Willis

This exciting tour takes us to Mt. Buffalo by bus where we stay at the Mt. Buffalo Chalet for three nights. The legendary Dr Jim Willis will lead us on tours of the area to see a wide range of the local alpine plants.

We then move on to Falls Creek where we will be able to see the higher alpine plants of the Bogong Plains.

Cost — \$520 twin share accommodation, includes transport, accommodation and all main meals for the six days.

A few single supplements available — \$70 extra.

For further information contact — Lesley Clark 807 3984 or Margaret MacGregor, Friends' Office 650 6398.

\$50 deposit required to ensure booking as only thirty people can be accepted.

Cheques made payable to Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc. Balance of payment to be made by January 19, 1989.

NEWCOMERS' WELCOME

Tuesday February 28

A Newcomers' Welcome will be held on Tuesday February 28 at 10.30 a.m. at "Garden House", home of the Director, Dr David Churchill and Mrs Sylvia Churchill.



Helleborus foetidus.

PERENNIAL BORDER — DONNA SOMERVILLE

Monday March 6 at 10.15 a.m.

After morning coffee or tea at the Botanic Gardens Kiosk, Donna Somerville, one of our knowledgeable gardeners, will once again speak to the Friends. She will speak on the progress and development of the perennial border — on trial beds and new perennials. Depending on the weather the talk will take place either at the Kiosk or at the perennial border.

Admission:

Members \$5.00

Non-members \$6.00

RSVP Thursday March 2 on enclosed booking form.

BALLARAT DAY TOUR BY BUS

Wednesday March 8 commencing at 9.00 a.m.

We shall visit the beautiful Ballarat Botanic Gardens where we will meet Friends of the Ballarat Gardens. After an early BYO picnic lunch we will be taken on a guided tour of the Ballarat Art Gallery (arranged by Robin Ferry past Convenor of the Plant Craft Cottage) which houses some rare, beautiful and historic paintings including those of T. S. Gill and members of the Heidelberg School.

On the way home we shall call at "Mount Boninyong", Scotsburn, the home of Graeme and Celia Burnham. Their garden is one of the oldest (if not the oldest) garden in Victoria and is very interesting.

Bring your own picnic lunch and beverages.

The bus will depart from the National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra at 9.00 a.m. (sharp) and return to the Herbarium at about 5.30 p.m.

Members & Guides \$13.00

Non-members \$15.00

RSVP Wednesday March 1 on enclosed booking form.

A HERB LUNCHEON

Wednesday April 5

A Herb Luncheon will be held at Garden House, the home of the Director, Dr David Churchill and Mrs Churchill on Wednesday April 5, 1989 from 11.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. on similar lines to that provided by Mrs Ann Sandie some two years ago.

Admission:

\$10.00 (members and guides)

\$12.00 (non-members)

Further details in the Autumn *Botanic news*.

AUTUMN SOCIAL GATHERING

Wednesday April 12

An Autumn social gathering will be held on Wednesday April 12 at 10.30 a.m. at the Kiosk.

Further details in the Autumn *Botanic news*.

A NEW FORMAT

In response to a number of suggestions, we will be holding a morning coffee seasonal gathering four times a year — on the second Wednesday in April (12/4/89), July (12/7/89), October (11/10/89) and January (11/1/90). We shall hold informal discussions, or walks, or have speakers. We would like to hear your views about what form future quarterly meetings should take.

The first Meeting will be held in the Kiosk at 10.30 a.m. on Wednesday April 12, 1989.

RECENT EVENTS

Opportunities & Constraints on 30/8/88. Talks by and discussion with John Taylor (Manager), Peter Lumley (Principal Horticultural Scientist) and Mike Looker (Superintendent) proved an exciting and stimulating evening.

Visit to Cranbourne Garden, the annex to the Royal Botanic Gardens on 25/9/88. This picnic and tour a happy and informative gathering.

The newly formed **Friends of the Benalla Gardens**, after a guided walk by the Voluntary Guides, met Melbourne Friends in our Gardens for a picnic lunch on 4/10/88.

The Dandenongs Day Tour on 5/9/88: A perfect day combining plantmanship, beauty and comradeship.

Spring in Canberra, Huskisson, Wollongong and Bowral, 11-18/10/88. A really beautiful time of the year to go wandering.

Dr Elizabeth Scholtz, Emeritus Director and Mrs Esther Tuttle, past Chairman of the Board of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, spoke and showed slides of their Garden — 31/10/88. Lady Hughes (Alison) entertained at lunch, our guests, together with representatives from the Voluntary Guides, Plant Craft Cottage and the Friends. A very happy and interesting occasion.

On 9/11/88 the Friends enjoyed a very pleasant morning coffee as guests of the **Plant Craft Cottage**; convenors of craft groups demonstrated and spoke of their various activities after which members were taken on walks by the Voluntary Guides.



Aquilegia hybrids.

FRIENDS' SHOP

How about visiting the Friends' Shop when making out your Christmas list! Remember, there is a 10% discount on purchases of \$20 and upwards.

A good choice would be a Gift Voucher — these are enclosed in the large card of the painting by J. H. Carse of an early view of the Botanic Gardens. Anyone who visits the shop regularly knows how wide the variety of gifts is, but here are some suggestions: botanical prints by Jenny Phillips, water colour scenes of the Gardens by Lola Duffell, original water colours of Australian wildflowers, reproductions of Margaret Preston's paintings and woodcuts, handpainted pure silk scarves, gardening books.

Volunteers Wanted. Christmas and the summer months are a busy time in the Shop and more volunteers are required. If you are interested please contact Mrs Margot Buckeridge, Shop Manager, 820 1125.



Hosta sp.

FRIENDS' SHOP — 2ND BIRTHDAY PARTY AND THANKS TO IONA

Our 2nd Birthday Party was celebrated at the Kiosk by shop staff and volunteers, Gardens staff, Council members and others — some seventy people partaking of tea, biscuits and birthday cake and also taking the opportunity of saying "thank you" to Iona Christianson, who was the inaugural Manager and largely responsible for the strong and healthy business that the Shop has become.

We extend congratulations and greetings to David (Vice President of the Friends and Convenor of the Shop Sub-Committee) and Bibi Wilkinson on the birth of their daughter, Artemis, to coincide with the Friends' Shop 2nd birthday celebrations.

SPECIAL BENEFITS TO FRIENDS

Fryers' Nursery, 589 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, Idaho Nurseries, 420 Waverley Road, East Malvern and The Arts Bookshop, 1067 High Street, Armadale offer special discounts to Friends on production of their current membership card.

HERBARIUM & GARDENS NEWS

At long last the Melbourne Botanic Gardens' new Visitor Centre is open to the public. Ideas and concepts developed many months ago have now been transformed into a series of displays entitled 'The Fascinating World of Plants'. So come along and experience the diversity of plant life, journey through the history of the Gardens and Herbarium and discover how they have evolved over the past century. The Visitor Centre is the perfect starting point for any visit to the Gardens. It is open daily, 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

As you may have noticed, building works on the Herbarium Extension continue . . . but they **are** nearing completion! It is hoped that by March 1989 both the Herbarium collection and botanical library will have relocated to the new building. By this time office staff should also be settled in the refurbished Herbarium building.

Works at Cranbourne are continuing and in early 1989 part of the Garden will be open to the public. The most exciting news, however, is that a financial commitment to the development of the site has been made by the Victorian Government. Development plans and funding for the next two to three years were announced by the Premier's wife, Mrs Nancy Cain, on Monday October 3. Fencing will be the first major project to be embarked upon.

Out in the Gardens several new projects are underway. Along the Hopetoun Lawn border plans for an Ornamental Grass display area are being developed by gardener Anne Fitzpatrick and second year horticulture student, Josie Dujmoric. According to these designs a series of gardens will be planted over the next three years displaying grasses from around the world. They will be arranged according to their ornamental, ecological and economic significance. Initial plantings will include those considered of ecological importance.

A new design for the Cacti and Succulent Garden near "C" Gate is also being implemented. Originally the site of a conservatory known as the 'Palm House', this garden dates back to 1947. The new design will include thematic plantings, for example, 'African and American arid-zone plants' and 'drought-evading bulbs'. By introducing such groupings it is hoped to put an emphasis on the educational and interpretive value of the plants, as well as displaying their interesting and unusual features.

The Gardens has so much to offer: beauty, entertainment and a wealth of information. So come and spend some time in the Gardens this summer — there's something here for everyone to enjoy.

Roslyn Semler
Interpretations Officer

'The Friends' of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Incorporated has been formed to stimulate further interest in the Gardens and National Herbarium and to support and assist them whenever possible.'