BOTANIC NEWS

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

SUMMER 1992 – 93

FROM THE PRESIDENTS

Pleasurable Presidency is how I describe my past three years. To be supported by so many dedicated people makes such an honorary job a great pleasure. I have experienced tremendous changes during the past six years on the Council of the Friends and in particular the past three as President.

Membership has passed 1,000 and our total funds expended on projects has exceeded $200,000. The administration of Gardens and Herbarium has passed to the Royal Botanic Gardens Board from the Department of Conservation and Environment.

I will remain on the Council as Immediate Past President and attend meetings monthly as Shop Sub-committee Convener. I wish Sir Rupert Hamer, whose idea it was as Premier to name Victoria 'The Garden State', all the best for his term as President of the Friends. As Chairman of the Herald and Weekly Times Revitalisation Trust he has demonstrated to me, as one of his trustees, tremendous dedication to Victoria.

David Wilkinson

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I regard it as a great honour, and also a great responsibility, to have become President of the Council of the Friends at this point in the history of our superb Gardens. I have loved these Gardens since I can remember anything, and they are without question one of Melbourne's proudest showplaces.

This is a time of transition for our Gardens, with a new Board and a new Director now in office, and real prospects for a much-needed rejuvenation. We welcome the new Director of the Gardens, Dr Philip Moors, and look forward to many years of working together. In spite of their high repute and outstanding attractions the Gardens have of recent years been starved of resources, both in finance and personnel, which has brought them to the point where extensive renewal and redevelopment has become essential.

Since earlier this year I have had the responsibility of being Chairman of the Trust established by the Herald-Sun to hold and apply the proceeds of its Appeal for the revitalisation of the Gardens. The Trustees asked the then acting Director to prepare a 'wish-list' of urgent major projects for which no finance was available, and he produced a total of nine. I am glad to say that the Herald-Sun Appeal raised, in cash and in kind, more than $451,000. Two projects have already begun. The Friends, of course, contributed $15,000 towards the detailed planning of four of them.

In addition, the previous Government was stirred by the widespread public concern to commit itself to spend some $1.4 million on a proper watering system for the Gardens, which will release much skilled labour for more productive tasks.

The Gardens have indeed been fortunate, in these difficult times, to have had the dedicated and vigorous support of the Friends, the success of whose efforts has increased with each passing year. I look forward to playing my part in supporting those efforts and to sharing in the new era ahead for a precious part of our heritage.

Rupert Hamer

Money grows in pots and pictures! ***Growing Friends plant sale $25,000.....Botanical Art Exhibition $18,800***

Louise Coronel (left) Convener of the Botanical Illustrators, artist/tutor Anita Barley and Celia Rosser, noted for her Banksia studies, at the opening of The Art of Botanical Illustration exhibition (Photo: Irene Newton-John)

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

FRIENDS' CHRISTMAS DINNER

Friday 18 December at 7 pm for 7.30 pm at the Naval & Military Club, 27 Little Collins Street.
Cost $33.00.
RSVP by 2 December.
Please note address as above; in the invitation the word 'Little' was omitted.
See previously posted invitation for further details.

McCLELLAND GALLERY AND CRUDEN FARM, LANGWARRIN

BYO Dinner on the lawns of Cruden Farm
Friday 15 January 1993

Join us on this bus trip to the Mornington Peninsula.
First we will visit the McClelland Gallery, which is set in 10 hectares of beautifully landscaped grounds and bushland. Specialising in Australian watercolours, this Gallery has many interesting facets, including the Sculpture Park and a large tree-shaded lake. The workshops of the 'Spinners and Weavers' and the 'Woodworkers' will be open for inspection.
Coffee will be served on our arrival, after which we will have a guided tour of the collection on view.

Once again the lure of Cruden Farm beckons. Those who visited last year will remember the perfection of the borders in the walled garden, the profusion of blooms in the cutting garden, the diversity of well blended plants in other beds, and of course the serenity of the lake in the late afternoon. This year has brought new developments and Dame Elisabeth Murdoch has generously invited us to 'come and see'.

Our *alfresco* BYO meal will be accompanied by a strolling player.
Members: $18 Others: $21
The air-conditioned bus will depart from in front of the National Gallery at 1.00pm sharp and will arrive back at the Gallery approximately 8.00pm.
RSVP: 7 January 1993 on enclosed booking form

GARDENS DRAMA

Once again two popular shows produced by the Fantastic Entertainment in Public Parks will be held in the Botanic Gardens. We have obtained group bookings for the Friends' as follows:
Friday 22 January – Wind in the Willows
Monday 15 February – Twelfth Night

Wind in the Willows

Friday 22 January at 6.00 pm
A new production with some new cast members.
Enter from Gate 'F' (adjacent to the National Herbarium in Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra) and collect tickets from the Wind in the Willows Box Office 10 minutes prior to commencement of show.
Admission: Adults: $11.00
Children (15 yrs & under) $9.00
RSVP: 2 January on enclosed booking form

Twelfth Night

Monday 15 February at 8.45 pm
With cast including Evelyn Krape, Nick Caraffa, Mike Bishop and Russell Fletcher.
Enter from Gate 'D' (The Nareeb Gates) in Domain Road and collect tickets from the Twelfth Night Box Office 10 minutes prior to commencement of show.
Admission: Adults $24.00
(No children's prices)
RSVP: 23 January on enclosed booking form.

WALK WITH THE BIRDS

The Voluntary Guides have offered Friends a special twilight bird-watching tour of the Gardens on Thursday 28 January. Approximately 60 species either pass through or inhabit the Gardens.

Guides with specialist knowledge will lead us on a leisurely 90 minute walk during which 25 different species could be sighted.

The walk will begin at 5.30pm from 'H' gate in Alexandra Avenue and we suggest you bring a picnic meal to round off the experience. This event is free, but we need your acceptance by 21 December, please, on enclosed booking form.

North East Tasmania Tour

8 to 15 February inclusive
This tour is booked out. If you wish your name to be on the waiting list please contact Lesley Clark (807 3984)

A DAY IN THE DANDENONGS

Thursday 18 February 1993

Join us on a very pleasant meander through the Dandenongs from Ferny Creek to Monbulk, in an air-conditioned coach. We'll have morning tea with members of the Ferny Creek Horticultural Society then visit 'Wychelm', a superb garden designed to complement a beautiful home. Claudette Fletcher has tastefully planned each section of her garden with a distinctive collection of plants used with a refreshing eye to colour schemes. The white garden is a delight. Strategically placed statues add interest. It's a garden to be enjoyed by plant enthusiasts and those who understand discipline and knowledge of good landscaping. This garden and the next are newly opened for viewing.

A Gallery of Plants

Looking for information about the Gardens' plant collections?
A Gallery of Plants is a new publication which describes 22 of the Gardens' major plant collections. Easy-to-read, it has a logical format and includes many beautiful illustrations by Anita Barley.
Pick up your copy next time you are in the Gardens.
It is availabled from the Visitor Centre and the Friends' Shop for $9.95.

Published by Victoria Press for the Royal Botanic Gardens

We continue on to Olinda, to Val de Araugo's pretty country garden containing a vast collection of perennials, shrubs and unusual roses planted informally. The newly completed pond with a selection of water-loving plants has its own family of wild ducks as permanent residents.

After lunch at the Lattice Tea Rooms and a browse through their nursery, where many of the plants in Val's garden are available, we will drive through Olinda via Coonara Road to Monbulk. There we can wander through a large garden full of interest, and observe Mr and Mrs Maxwell's very fine selection of plants including unusual bulbs, varied alpines and species propagated from imported seed. The woodland walk along the creek is particularly beautiful with an abundance of shade-loving plants, including some wonderful *Hosta, Erythronium* and *Tricyrtis* . The native garden and the various rockeries are just packed with plants to delight the eye.

Our bus will leave the National Gallery, St Kilda Road at 8.45am sharp and we will return at approximately 5.30pm. Cost includes morning tea, lunch and admittance fees to the gardens.

Members: $32 Others $35
RSVP: by 12 February on enclosed booking form

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS

This project of the Friends has been so popular and growing so fast that it has become a separate group, like the Growing Friends.

During our September exhibition, more than 150 people left their names with us, expressing great interest in attending workshops. We have begun to respond to this demand by organising an introductory day and a new series of workshops for 1993.

An Introduction to the Friends' Botanical Illustrators

To be held in the hall of the National Herbarium on Tuesday 23 February from 10.30am to 3.00pm.
Friends: $5.00 Others: $12.00

For all those interested in botanical art but particularly for practising artists and beginners in this genre, including current members of the Friends' Botanical Illustrators' Group. Speakers will cover the following topics:

– a brief history of botanical art
– techniques and materials currently used in the Botanical Illustrators' Group
– outline of our programme for 1993 which will include workshops and speakers

Artists of all levels are invited to bring examples of their work for a display of work in the afternoon. This will be on benches so work needs to be well protected and able to be handled, preferably in folios. Morning coffee and afternoon tea will be provided but we request you BYO lunch.
RSVP: by 16 February on enclosed booking form.

New Series of Beginners' Workshops

with Mary Gregory

We are happy to offer a new series of workshops for 1993, the first being:
Five half day workshops for beginners every Thursday for five weeks from 4 March to 1 April. In two groups of 12 only. Mornings from 9.30am to 12 noon. Afternoons from 1pm to 3.30pm.

Mary will include discussion on materials and over the five weeks will concentrate on drawing from specimens and introduce the use of watercolours. Because numbers are limited, these classes are for members of the Friends only.

Cost: $75.00 for five workshops. BYO materials.
RSVP: 16 February on enclosed booking form.

PLANT PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

Following the great success of our recent 'Botanical Illustration' Exhibition, the Friends are organising a Plant Photography Workshop which will comprise six fortnightly two-hour evening sessions and one week-end afternoon session (date and time to be arranged between participants).

Professional and amateur photographers will give talks and demonstrations. Sally-Anne Pascoe will co-ordinate the workshops. She has a degree in photography and is studying for a graduate diploma in horticulture; she is at present photographing plants for the Ornamental Plant Collections Association. Bruce Fuhrer, an outstanding photographer from Monash University, and other experts will also contribute.

The workshops will commence onTuesday 23 February from 5.30pm to 7.30pm and will be held every second Tuesday at the Astronomer's Residence (adjacent to LaTrobe's Cottage), Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra, or elsewhere by arrangement.
Total Price: $105.00

Numbers will be limited to 25. For further information please contact the Friends' Office (650 6398).
RSVP: 9 February on enclosed booking form.

THE PLACE OF TREES AND ARBORICULTURE IN A BOTANIC GARDEN

Dr Greg Moore, Principal of Victorian College of Agriculture & Horticulture at Burnley Campus, will be our guest speaker in the Herbarium Hall, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra on Wednesday 17 March at 8.00 pm.

Dr Moore is well qualified to speak about trees. He wrote a PhD thesis on tree physiology and he has published a book entitled 'Tree Care for the Home Gardener'.

Supper will be served.
Admission: Friends: $4.00 Others: $7.00
RSVP by 15 March on enclosed booking form.

GROWING FRIENDS PLANT SALE

Saturday 20 March – One day sale. More details in the Autumn Newsletter.

FRIENDS' SHOP

Christmas Greetings from the staff and volunteers at the Friends' Shop.
If you're travelling, we have a good range of packable, affordable and small Australian gifts. Remember that during the Summer, we sell hats and film.

Jill Swann, Manager

WESTERN DISTRICT GARDEN TOUR

Thursday 25 March to Sunday 28 March 1993

After a successful reconnaissance trip, plans for our Western District Autumn Tour by bus are now in place with a range of private and regional botanic gardens, historic Port Fairy and the Art Galleries of Warrnambool and Hamilton.

We will have two nights in Warrnambool and one in Hamilton, linking up with the Friends' groups in these towns, also with the Friends at Port Fairy. 'Diversity in gardening as an art form' is the theme we have chosen to explore, the gardens ranging from Guilfoyle's **Dalvui** (Noorat) and **Turkeith** (Birregurra) to **The Gums** (Penshurst) where the formal garden has been replaced by vistas of distant parkland, Capability Brown style!

We will visit **Bortkoi** (Hexham) an Edna Walling garden, **Goodwood** and two other Whitehead family gardens at Spring Creek and nearby **Minjah,** where house and garden have been beautifully restored. Two special garden lunches are planned, one at **Minjah**, the other at **Woolongoon** (Mortlake), visited by Friends on an earlier trip.

We will look at the replanting now well under way at Tower Hill, comparing it with the terrain as it was when painted by Eugene von Guerard in 1855 (courtesy of the Warrnambool Gallery).

At Killarney we will stop at **Denbly**, an Australian native garden, small but crammed with unusual species, before arriving at the historic town of Port Fairy.

The Friends of Port Fairy Gardens have invited us to morning tea in a cottage garden and to see the restoration work in the Port Fairy Botanical Gardens; after a conducted tour of the town we'll enjoy a river-front lunch. There will be time for a leisurely walk in this historie precinct. There are 52 National Trust classifications in Port Fairy.

Our stay in Hamilton will allow us to link up with the Hamilton Friends, to see the Hamilton Botanic Garden and the Ornamental Plant Collections Association's *Abutilon* collection housed there. We will have pre-dinner drinks at the Hamilton Art Gallery (arranged by the Friends of the Hamilton Art Gallery) with time allowed for a tour of the Gallery, and then on to a special dinner with the Friends of the Hamilton Gardens.

We hope to be joined by members from several of the organisations belonging to the new Friends of Victorian Botanic Gardens group.
Cost including transport and all meals (except a BYO lunch on the first day) is $380.
Single supplement is an additional $22.50 per night. (Eight only single rooms available)
Departure: In front of the National Gallery 8.00am Thursday 25 March

Return: To the National Gallery 5.00 - 5.30pm Sunday 28 March Detailed garden notes will be provided.

As we are opening this tour to other Friends' groups we suggest you book early or let us know your intention. A detailed itinerary of the tour will be forwarded with your receipt. Please send $100 per person deposit with your booking.

Closing Date for applications (on enclosed booking form) is Thursday 4 March 1993

RECENT EVENTS

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION DRAWS CROWDS

More than half of the 142 original works were sold at the Friends' 'Art of Botanical Illustration' exhibition in September. This excellent result reflected the high standard attained by both beginners and the more experienced artists who attend our workshops. 3,300 people visited the exhibition, together with a number of school groups.

A financial success as well as an artistic achievement, it raised $18,800 for the Friends. Generous sponsorship and a great deal of voluntary help enabled the organising committee convened by Louise Coronel to minimise costs.

We were delighted that Celia Rosser's Banksia work attracted a final bid of $5,500, of which the Friends received 20 per cent. Among the positive outcomes of the exhibition, the Botanical Workshop group has been invited to exhibit in the Hamilton Art Gallery between 22 February and 15 March 1993.

GROWING FRIENDS

After a year of untiring effort at the potting bench, the Growing Friends held their Spring Plant Sale on 10 and 11 October. It was an outstanding success, netting just on $25,000. About 5000 plants were spread out on the lawn in front of the Old Melbourne Observatory in Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

Such is the fame of our sale that a queue was waiting for the gate to open. Several very satisfied nursery owners acquired large stocks, and we heard of some buyers who came from the country and interstate. Even a torrential downpour on the Saturday afternoon did not deter the crowds.

Our patrons also had a chance to take part in a raffle for a beautifully decorated Christmas cake donated by Mrs Pill. The lucky winner was Mrs Sutcliff.

The Growing Friends would particularly like to thank Royal Botanic Gardener Darren Edwards for his support in their work during the year and also Marcus and Annette from the RBG who, with Darren, contributed their expertise at the sale. However the sale would not have been possible without the help of Gardens staff in moving all those pot plants prior to the sale and the Friends' Activities Sub-Committee in managing the takings at the check-out tables.

If you missed out on the Geraniums mentioned by Sarah Guest in her recent article, the Growing Friends now have some available to Friends on Friday mornings at the Nursery in Birdwood Avenue behind the Old Melbourne Observatory.

Growing Friends Plant Sale. Is Malcolm Lee, then Acting RBG Director, getting some planting advice from Growing Friends Manager Lydia Bartlett?
(Photos: Julie Maddock)

JOHN TAYLOR

Warm tributes were paid to John Taylor at an informal Council farewell on 20 October.
John was very helpful to the Friends during his seven years as Manager of the Gardens – approachable, and very positive in suggesting goals and projects for our fund raising activities. As one member said "He helped us express our love for the Gardens in a practical way. He encouraged the Friends to feel that their efforts were worthwhile and appreciated".

Taking over the reins at the Gardens during a difficult period and, as it turned out, relinquishing them after another time of change, John was a positive force for progress and won our admiration. The Friends presented him with a stainless steel spade, and expressed good wishes for his future.

SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The sixth Annual General Meeting of the Friends was held on 26 October in the Herbarium Auditorium, and was attended by about 55 Members and several visitors.

The Council's report and the financial statements for the year to 30 June 1992 were received, and led to a number of questions. The report showed that the Friends had been particularly active during the year. The number of Members had increased to 1055 and numerous functions and other activities had taken place, including nine talks, six tours (to places as far away as Borneo and Japan), four day trips and other events too numerous to mention here.

The Members' Funds were slightly less at the end of the year ($87,858) than at the beginning ($90,364). Nearly $54,000 of income came from the Friends' Shop and the Growing Friends; $41,000 was given to the Gardens and Herbarium to fund various projects. The total amount contributed in this way up to the end of the year was $217,783. Members are encouraged to study closely the full report and financial statements, which were sent out with the notice of the annual meeting. Copies may still be obtained from the office.

Members of the Council elected, and their responsibilities as conveners, were:
President: Sir Rupert Hamer
Vice-Presidents: Mrs Eve Brunner (Activities) and Mrs Lesley Clark
Secretary: Mr Lawrence Cohn (Publications)
Treasurer: Mr David Taplin
Ordinary members of the Council: Mr Philip Ayton (Projects), Ms Sharon Beaman (Growing Friends), Mrs Caroline Cornish (Publicity), Mrs Louise Coronel (Botanical Illustration), Mrs Golda Isaac and Dr E. Durham Smith (Membership).

After three years in office, Mr David Wilkinson stepped down as President and so became the Immediate Past President, in place of Mr Frank Phillips. He remains as convener of the Friends' Shop Committee.

Mr David Bristow and Mr Neil Robertson retired as Councillors. A resolution was passed to alter the rules so that only half the Council would retire each year. This alteration of the rules has to be approved by the Registrar of Incorporated Associations before it comes into effect.

Mr Frank Philips was appointed a Trustee of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Trust Fund.

After the formal business meeting , Professor Pauline Ladiges, Professor of Botany in the University of Melbourne, spoke about recent discoveries in regard to the genus *Eucalyptus*.

New Council Members

A breadth of talent and experience has been added to the Council with the election of a new President and two new members.

SIR RUPERT HAMER brings a high profile to the position of President of the Friends' Council, and we are delighted to welcome him. Since retiring as Victorian Premier, he has devoted his time to many boards, committees and charitable causes including the Victorian State Opera and the Council of the College of the Arts. His promotion of Victoria as the Garden State and life long affection for the Royal Botanic Gardens is echoed in the pleasure he gains from his own Canterbury garden, especially in growing vegetables.

After gaining an Arts degree at Melbourne University, **CAROLINE CORNISH** worked in the Premier's Department between 1978 and 1983 in the personnel area. She undertook a Burnley course while occupied with three children. Now the youngest is at kindergarten, Caroline sees her membership of the Council as an excellent way to build on her personal interest in horticulture and her familiarity with the Gardens as a recreational visitor.

DR DURHAM SMITH is a former president of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. In 1991 he was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for services to pediatric surgery – a field in which he has a high international reputation.

Durham and his wife Dorothy are enthusiastic participants in Friends tours and other activities. At their Ivanhoe garden there's a division of labour – he in the vegetable section and Dorothy attending to the flowers. She belongs to the Growing Friends and the gardening group at the Plant Craft Cottage.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dr Philip Moors, the new Director, sees the Friends as 'the Members of the Gardens' who can serve as a link to the wider community. "I would like to think we can develop the relationship, because it's crucial to widen our support as we enter this new era of opportunity for the Gardens. I think what the Friends have achieved is fantastic, and I'm most appreciative of their financial support. Perhaps we could combine with the Friends to add an extra educational dimension to the pleasure of tours, and encourage more people to join us."

The loss of three trees in the recent storms has underlined Dr Moors' conviction that some mature trees in the Gardens will have to be replaced progressively over the next few years. "Unfortunately there will be some visual consequences, but we must come to terms with the reality that Guilfoyle's trees won't live forever. We have to plan for sensitive rejuvenation, to revive the splendour of the landscapes created in the 1870s" he said.

"I can assure the Friends that the new Minister, Mark Birrell, has spoken very positively about the Gardens and of his interest in their future."

Dr Moors, 44, has a BSc from the ANU and a PhD from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. His career began in the interpretation section of the NSW Parks and Wildlife Service. During 15 years in New Zealand, and most recently as Director of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, his ecological training has been consolidated with scientific management – a combination of experience that impressed the RBG Board.

Dr Moors and his wife Debbie have two daughters.

The happy group of Friends who visited the Grampians and Little Desert in the spring. Irene Newton-John, who was also in the party, took the photo.

SPRING ACTIVITIES

Botanical Illustration Workshops –1 monthly and 1 weekly class
Historic Film - 3rd series – 2/9/92
Launching of Botanical Exhibition – 9/9/92
'The Art of Botanical Illustration' Exhibition –
10/9/92 to 27/9/92
Newcomers' Welcome –16/9/92
Historic Film – 4th and final series – 30/9/92
Grampians & Little Desert Tour – 1/10/92 to 7/10/92
Growing Friends' Plant Sales Days –10/10/92 & 11/10/92
Spring Gardens Inspection & Picnic Lunch – 13/10/92
Dr Alfred Lau – Mexican Plants – 15/10/92
Council Farewell to John Taylor, Acting Director RBG – 20/10/92
Annual General Meeting & Prof. Pauline Ladiges – 26/10/92
Morning Coffee with Kay Fairley – 9/11/92
Canary Islands Flora – Stephen Forbes – 23/11/92
Reunion Grampians-Little Desert Tour – at home of Yvonne Troedel – 28/11/92

SPECIAL BENEFITS TO FRIENDS

The following nurseries and bookshop very kindly offer special discounts to Friends. *Current membership cards must be shown in order for you to receive these discounts.*

Fryers' Nursery
589 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn
5% off plants only

Idaho Nurseries
410 Waverley Rd,
E. Malvern
10% off plants only

The Gardener's Bulleen Nursery
105 Bridge St, Bulleen
5% off seedlings
10% off potted plants

Town and Country Gardens
1280 Malvern Rd, Malvern
10% off everything

The Arts Bookshop
1067 High St, Armadale

Holmesglen College of TAFE
inc. the Victorian Schools Nursery
585 Waverley Rd,
Glen Waverley
10% off everything

FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

Botanic News is printed quarterly for the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc.

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

President of the Council of the Friends:
Sir Rupert Hamer

Vice Presidents:
Eve Brunner, Lesley Clark

Secretary:
Lawrence Cohn

Treasurer:
David Taplin

Editor:
Heather Ironmonger

FRIENDS OFFICE
Margaret MacGregor
Joan Baumgartner
Julie Maddock

C/- National Herbarium
Birdwood Avenue
South Yarra Vic 3141
Tel: (03) 650 6398
Fax: (03) 655 2350

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Gardens and Herbarium staff were pleased to welcome recently appointed Director, Dr Philip Moors, who took up his position on 9 November. Dr Moors brings with him a solid background in natural history, having worked with the New Zealand Wildlife Service, the New Zealand Department of Conservation, the New South Wales Parks and Wildlife Service, and most recently as Director of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union. One of Dr Moors' first projects will be the development of a Corporate Plan, which will help define the direction and priorities for the Gardens and the Herbarium and facilitate planning over the next five years.

The Gardens farewelled a number of long-time staff members over the winter months. John Taylor, Manager of the Gardens from 1986 to 1992, left on 11 September to take up a new position within the Department of Conservation and Environment. John made many contributions to the Gardens, including the development of Cranbourne for its opening in 1989, the management of the Herbarium extensions, development of the Gardens' Visitor Centre, and most recently, his involvement in the establishment of the Royal Botanic Gardens Board. John's good humour and open management style were greatly appreciated, and staff expressed good wishes to him for the future in his new position.

After 36 years with the Gardens, Ken Allan retires on 8 December. Ken initially worked as a gardener and was later put in charge of propagation in the Nursery where he developed the now extensive bromeliad collection. In 1972 he was appointed Assistant Superintendent. Ken's knowledge of and experience in the Gardens will be missed; however, we do hope he will remain available for 'consultation'. Staff wish him well in his retirement in his new home in Woodend.

Two staff members, Anita Barley and Mandy Hamilton, were also farewelled as they began 12 months' maternity leave.

In the Gardens, the Xeriscape and Californian Gardens are nearing completion with pathworks and planting begun over spring. Preparation of preliminary designs for the redevelopment of the William Tell rockery is also underway. Funded by the Gas and Fuel Corporation through the Herald-Sun Appeal, development of this area will restore the overmature plantings and facilitate better visitor access both through the Gardens and to the Lake edge.

At Cranbourne, the Jobskills team has built boardwalks and a bridge over Wylie's Creek which will greatly improve wet weather access to the Arboretum. Two boardwalks over lakes in the Australian Garden are also currently under construction. A number of In-Service courses designed to train teachers in the best use of the Cranbourne site have been held during 1992. This In-Service training assists teachers in their use of the very successful VCE Biology Teachers' Kit. Several courses are scheduled for December.

Finally, an exciting new Gardens' publication called *A Gallery of Plants* was launched by Dr Philip Moors on 18 November. This book is a guide to 22 of the Gardens' major plant collections. Presented in a logical easy-to-read format, it provides the most up to date information on the plant collections. *A Gallery of Plants* is available from the Visitor Centre and Friends' Shop.

Roslyn Semler
Acting Manager,
Public Programs