



Botanic News

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

The past three months have been busy ones for the Friends, particularly for the Activities sub-committee and the catering group. It is very rewarding for those who plan and run these functions to find such an appreciative response.

There were two events during these months which, because they occur periodically, may all too easily be overlooked, but which are the outcome of devoted work by Members. They are the Growing Friends' October Plant Sale and the new issue of *Botanic Magazine*, each a great voluntary effort. The Plant Sale's takings of over \$26,000 is a measure of its success; the quality contributions to *Botanic Magazine* speak for themselves.

I would like to express our warmest thanks to Sharon Beaman, Co-ordinator of the Growing Friends, who is stepping down after five years, although enthusiastically continuing with the group. Sharon's leadership coincided with an exceptionally demanding period involving the nursery's move to the RBG yard.

Our Members are obviously not superstitious; they filled Mueller Hall on 8 November despite the fact that it was the 13th Annual General Meeting, and were rewarded by an interesting talk, at meeting's end, by David Adam, the Chairman of the Board of the Gardens. He told us something of the future aims of the Gardens and gave us a valuable insight into the organisation's many and various activities, quite apart from the care and development of the Gardens themselves. At the meeting three new Honorary Life Members were elected, as detailed elsewhere. Their acceptance of this honour is a great pleasure to all of us and itself a mark of distinction for the Friends.



Australian Christmas bells, *Blandfordia nobilis*, among the first Australian plants to be grown in Britain. From *The Flower Chain* by Jill, Duchess of Hamilton, & Julia Bruce

SUMMER 1999/2000

Friends' Christmas Party at Gardens House

Tuesday 14 December from 6.00 – 7.30pm

This function has already inspired an enthusiastic response from Members, but there is still time to book. You are welcome to bring guests.

The elegance of the house and the secluded beauty of its setting will ensure a special evening. A flute and cello duo, together with sumptuous refreshments from Peter Rowland, will add to our pleasure. See Spring/Summer Extra *Botanic News* for further details.

Cost: \$25 per person
RSVP by Tuesday 7 December

FLOURISHING ACTIVITIES

The Friends have been privileged to present an exceptional program of speakers recently – as it happens, five of them related to new books. The talks have been of absorbing interest and have attracted large audiences. From four meetings alone (Peter Valder, Caroline Davies, Celia Rosser and Dan Pearson) more than \$5000 was raised towards our support for the Gardens.

Altogether, since June, Friends' activities have raised more than \$10,500. A big thank-you to all involved!

In April we were notified that an early Member of the Friends, Helen Johns, had left us a legacy in her will. We have now received \$230,000 for our Trust Fund from this generous bequest, and understand there is to be a further distribution among several beneficiaries. The Secretary is holding discussions with the Director about projects to which this money will be devoted.

The Gardens this spring have been looking better than ever. I hope all Friends have the opportunity to enjoy their beauty as the season changes and full summer arrives.

Ninian Stephen

Meet the Maribyrnong
**River Cruise and visit to Footscray
 Botanical Collection**
Thursday 20 January 2000 at 10.00am

All aboard the motor launch *Blackbird*, with local historian Peter Somerville at the helm, for a trip upriver, viewing the extensive beautification that has been achieved in this often-overlooked part of Melbourne. Peter will engage us with fascinating stories relating to its early industrial growth and, long before that, the area's Aboriginal heritage. The Maribyrnong has been his 'beat' for 20 years, so he has many tales to tell.

Peter says the river itself is now cleaner than the Yarra – no longer an industrial drain – and that birds and fish abound. Homes with absolute river frontage are highly sought after.

We'll go as far as the Canning Reserve (Avondale Heights), then return to our starting point to collect a basket lunch; we'll eat this on board while spending an hour cruising around Melbourne's docklands – very much in the news these days.

After we disembark, about 1.30pm, we'll have a guided tour of the Botanical Collection at Footscray Park, a six-hectare garden that was established in the depression years. It has sloping lawns, well-established trees and shrubs, lower plantings and water gardens by the river. Its Friends group is pleased to be in touch with us.

We will send a map after you book to indicate where ample parking is available near the landing in Footscray Park. We suggest you bring a bottle of drink, especially if it's a hot day.

The Melbourne Friends made a Maribyrnong trip nine years ago, so it's time for a repeat. As we're limited to 30 people, please book early.

Cost: \$30 includes river cruise and basket lunch
 RSVP by Thursday 13 January on booking form

**SEVEN SECRETS OF
 WATER-CONSERVING GARDENS**
Introduction to the new garden beds
Wednesday 9 February at 5.30pm

The Water Conservation Garden on the Eastern Lawn is being redesigned and extended, with sponsorship from South East Water. Alison Rice is the horticulturist responsible for these beds, working with the RBG's Landscape Planner, Andrew Laidlaw. They are combining both readily available and some unusual plants – including many suitable as ground cover and for rockeries. Andrew will show that there

are many choices beyond succulents and cacti, but he will also demonstrate how these species can be used effectively, given a dash of imagination. This area has always been a drawcard for photographers, and its characteristic bright colours will remain a feature.

Andrew, together with Alison and David Cliffe from South East Water, will talk to us about the need for water conservation in the home garden, and how to achieve it without compromising landscape appeal. David will reveal seven secrets to ensure a garden thrives, using less water.

We'll also have a chance to inspect the new green waste recycling area which has been established on the former Bell Shed site – mulch being an essential element in the water conservation routine.

We'll serve drinks and savouries as we assemble, and suggest you might like to plan to have a twilight picnic in the Gardens after our 'walk and talk'.

Enter by B Gate in Anderson Street. We will send a location map with your entry ticket, so don't forget to send a stamped self-addressed envelope with your cheque.

Cost \$5 per person or \$15 for a group.
 No charge for children under 14 years.
 RSVP by 7 February on enclosed booking form

**A MORNINGTON PENINSULA VISIT
 TO OUR OWN FRIENDS, A GALLERY
 AND A NURSERY**
Bus trip, Friday 18 February

The bus will leave punctually from outside the National Gallery in St Kilda Road at 9.30am.

The first stop will be *Heronwater*, the Mt Eliza house and garden of past President of the Friends, David Wilkinson, and his family. Architect David has retained the best of the established trees as framework, and created internal vistas while providing some glimpses of the far distance. Attention to detail is the hallmark of *Heronwater*, starting with the handsome entrance gates with heron motifs. The formality of hedging and topiary contrasts with bountiful borders of roses and perennials.

We will have morning tea, and then proceed to the McClelland Gallery at Langwarrin, just re-opened after two years of renovations and extensions. A guide will take us through the Gallery's renowned collection of Australian paintings and sculpture. We will be able to see a display of Michael Leunig prints and an historic exhibition of Brunswick stoneware pottery. A light lunch will be served here.

Next stop: Romantic Cottage Gardens at Dromana. Graham Cooke established the nursery on this 10-acre site in 1986. They specialise in perennials, herbs and roses as well as an increasing number of Mediterranean plants that are suited to hot dry summers. Until last year, the huge informal cottage garden was surrounded by a forest of eucalypts. Many Narrow-leaved Peppermint gums died in the severe conditions of 1996-97 and this has prompted the new landscaping that will be interesting to see. Most of the plants in the garden are available in the new retail nursery.

Finally, we will visit St Neots Estate – a small vineyard of five acres established in 1980 by Philip and Elvala Ayton at Red Hill South overlooking Western Port. Philip was a member of the Friends' Council for 12 years, and is an Honorary Life Member. We will have afternoon tea before the journey back to the Gallery, arriving at approximately 5.00pm.

Cost: \$52 includes coach, morning tea, entrance to gallery, lunch and afternoon tea.

RSVP by Monday 14 February on booking form.

A CHINESE GARDEN VISIT AND A TWILIGHT BYO PICNIC Wednesday 1 March at 5.30pm

First, Terry Smyth will walk us around the Southern Chinese Collection, which she cares for; then we'll picnic on the lawns overlooking the lake, making the most of daylight saving.

The Friends have a special interest in the development of this garden, having supported Terry on two occasions when she visited and worked in Yunnan Province.

The Southern Chinese Collection along the Northern Border has recently doubled in size, and a new path has been built. New planting has taken place, much of this material having been propagated in the RBG Nursery from seeds and cuttings brought back from southern China by Terry, including from her secondment to Kunming Botanical Garden last year, which was made possible by a grant from the Friends. The extension of the collection is being funded by a grant from The Sidney Myer Foundation.

We suggest you enter from A Gate at the northern end of Anderson Street or H Gate in Alexandra Avenue. BYO picnic, family and friends. The Friends will serve strawberries and cream from the Clematis Pavilion to top up your meal.

Cost \$5 per person or \$15 for a group.
No charge for children under 14 years.
RSVP by Monday 28 February on booking form

GROWING FRIENDS

The weather this spring has been so mild that plants have put on exceptional growth and the Growing Friends have been kept very busy potting up plants.

It has also been a busy spring for selling plants:

* The October Spring Sale was very successful – the takings were \$26,600. There was the usual rush on Saturday morning, but even by Sunday people were still leaving with lovely selections of interesting and handsome plants.

* In November, the Growing Friends and the Friends of RBG Cranbourne were invited by Lesley and Ralph Clark to sell plants at their garden when it was open under the Australian Open Garden Scheme. More than 500 people came to see this unusual, peaceful garden and took away Friends' membership forms. We made \$940 and the Cranbourne Friends \$214 from our plant sales. In addition, one-third of the takings (\$720) has been directed to the Friends, together with a \$50 donation from Leline and Jack Burns. The Friends are grateful for the Clarks' continued generosity.

Several specimens of a shade-loving South African shrub with pale lilac flowers, *Macaya bella*, attracted much admiration and attention. Lesley bought these from the Growing Friends some years ago. We have small specimens in tubes at the Nursery at present; they should be potted up and ready for sale early in the New Year, and at our Autumn plant sale on 18 and 19 March.

Joan Hardy will take over as Co-ordinator for 2000.

There are lots of new plants coming on in the Nursery, and Christmas is almost here, so what lovely presents they would make for gardening friends and relatives. It's easier for you now that we have credit card facilities at the Nursery. **Visit us on a Friday from 10.00am to 1.00pm, or perhaps buy a gift voucher from the Nursery or the Friends' office.**

FAREWELL TO ANOTHER ELM

Another of Arthur's Elms on the Tennyson Lawn (in the promontory) has significant decay and presents a potential hazard for staff and visitors to the Gardens.

The next stage of the planned removal strategy for these old trees has had to be brought forward. Work commencing on 29 November is expected to take about five days.

GIFT MEMBERSHIP

A gift of Friends' membership would make an ideal Christmas present for someone on your list. Phone the Friends on 9650 6398 and we'll arrange to send a membership card with your greeting.

1999 ANNUAL MEETING

A friendly half hour of conversation, during which drinks and savouries were served by members of our valued catering group, set the scene for our Annual Meeting in Mueller Hall on Monday 8 November.

Nominations for vacant positions on the Council resulted in the election of the following Members: Vice-President – Heather Ironmonger; Secretary – Lawrence Cohn; Ordinary Members – The Hon. John Button, Cathy Hossack, Dr Richard Kirsner and David Plant.

Sir Ninian Stephen thanked retiring Council Members Caroline Cornish and Janet James for their valuable contributions to the Friends.

A resolution was passed increasing the maximum number of Ordinary Members of the Council from eight to ten members, the Secretary explaining that this may be advantageous in the future.

Margaret Howes, Ellen Mercer and Celia Rosser were elected Honorary Life Members of the Friends, in recognition of their outstanding service.

The Secretary noted that most of the 'Accumulated Surplus' of \$295,967 in Member Funds (compared with \$252,664 in the previous year) could more appropriately be described as 'Reserve for Grants to the Royal Botanic Gardens'. The Board has been requested to suggest projects to which these funds may be devoted.

After the formal proceedings, RBG Board chairman David Adam reflected on his association with the Gardens. 'I have lived around the corner from these South Yarra gardens for some eleven years now, and my wife and I have become totally dependent on them. To me they are the most beautiful part of a most liveable city. They give all of us who visit them a sense of peace and tranquillity.'

David Adam served initially on a RBG Funding Advisory Committee, joined the Board in 1996, started a still-active major learning experience, and was made Chairman a year or so later. 'Nothing that I have learned has altered my view that the Royal Botanic Gardens is quite an exceptional organisation, with quite exceptional people involved in it, and quite exceptional assets for which it is responsible', he said. The Chairman gave a comprehensive progress report on the Melbourne and Cranbourne Gardens, the Herbarium and ARCUE.

'The present Board is made up of seven directors, one of whom is a senior member of the staff of the government department responsible for the Gardens, three of whom have had fairly extensive professional and business experience, and three of whom are very

knowledgeable about botanical matters, plants and gardens.

'This might be thought to be a body designed to have the Gardens run as a business, and in some sense it is. As the directors of a company in the business world have the responsibility of producing an outcome the shareholders require, namely profitable growth, so the Board of the Gardens has the responsibility for producing the outcome its stakeholders are entitled to expect. Broadly speaking it should pass on to its successor Board, each year, an asset base which has been efficiently managed, and which has both provided the community with a high level of benefits during the year, and has ensured that it can continue to do so in the future. Whether this has been achieved will be a value judgement, far more difficult to determine than in the business world, as it will be only to a limited degree based on financial performance. (The Government provides something over \$5.5 million annually, with approximately \$1m extra required to be found to meet the RBG's operating expenses.)

Mr Adam cautioned that we may not always be so well provided for, as government funds became tighter and the User Pays principle became more entrenched. 'So we are seeking more ways to increase our non-government revenue, and increase our support base in all ways. In this context, of course, the Friends are a most important part of our future' he said. Referring to the current review of the Friends initiated by the Board, the Chairman commented that, with goodwill on everyone's part, 'the review will result in the Friends going forward for the benefit both of its Members, in strongly increased numbers, and the RBG, for the support of which it was established.'

THREE NEW MEMBERS OF FRIENDS' COUNCIL

A most relevant fact about the Hon. John Button, although it does not feature on his CV, is that he is a long-time and regular early-morning walker in the Gardens – therefore a keen observer of horticultural maintenance and a familiar figure to our gardeners.

Of course he will also bring to our Council years of accumulated wisdom, gained first as a Melbourne lawyer and then as a Senator for Victoria from 1974 until 1993. For the last 10 years of his political career, John Button played a leading role in shaping government policy on industry development and the re-structuring of Australian industry. Following his retirement, he served as the Commonwealth Government's Special Trade Representative until 1996, leading missions to all corners of the world.

Since then, the former senator has travelled, devoted time to private business interests and philanthropic

organisations, and enjoyed creative pursuits – including the publication of three books and chairmanship of the Melbourne Writers Festival.

Cathy Hossack has been prominent on the Activities sub-committee and with its catering group since joining the Friends in 1993. Born in Virginia, USA, she attended school in North Carolina and then studied Liberal Arts/Fine Arts in San Francisco.

Before coming to Melbourne in 1992, Cathy served as a consultant and volunteer in a wide range of community organisations in California; her experience there has sometimes provided inspirational ideas for Friends' functions. She has just taken over as Convener of the Activities sub-committee.

Cathy is married to Stephen Hossack and has a 12-year-old daughter Kate.

Dr Richard Kirsner came to the Friends' notice when his wife Angela saw our *Botanic News* appeal for computer assistance and, to use her words, 'dobb'd him in'. He has indeed provided valuable help as we have upgraded our office systems, and his extensive organisational experience will prove very useful as the Friends plan for the future.

A graduate of the University of Melbourne in electrical engineering and physiology, he currently holds appointments at St Vincent's Hospital, Latrobe University and Swinburne University of Technology where he is Adjunct Professor of Biomedical Engineering.

Dr Kirsner has been the Secretary of the Australian Federation for Medical and Biological Engineering since 1984 and is a former IFMBE Administrative Council member and IFMBE Treasurer. He is currently a member of the Australasian Regional Board of the Institution of Electrical Engineers.

MEMBERSHIP

It is very pleasing that, in the four months since the end of June, 80 new Members have joined our ranks and 54 Members whose subscriptions were unpaid at 30 June have renewed their membership. However, it is disappointing that 200 Members who were financial at that date are no longer so, having failed to renew their subscriptions which have fallen due since June. Reminders have been or will be sent, and we hope that many of the Members concerned will decide to continue to support the Gardens by again becoming financial Members.

Unfortunately, we have had to increase the annual subscriptions to allow for the GST, which is already payable in respect of the part of the subscription year that includes one or more months after 30 June 2000. The rates of subscriptions due before that date will be progressively increased, and after that date the subscriptions will include the full 10 per cent GST.

Our new Administrative Officer,



VIRGINIA HENDERSON, has now settled in to Gate Lodge on the retirement of Margaret Howes. Virginia has had a long-time interest in gardens, and once had her own rose nursery.

Virginia worked as Receptionist in the National Herbarium for 2 1/2 years, followed by a five-month stint as Administrative Assistant to Richard Barley in Melbourne Gardens Division, so we are extremely fortunate to have someone so very well informed about every aspect of the Gardens. Also, she has belonged to the Friends for several years.

Notes from Gate Lodge

As you will all be aware, Margaret Howes retired in mid-October and I am privileged to have been given the opportunity to work for the Friends. It is hard to believe that at the time of printing, I will have been working in the Friends' Office for nearly eight weeks. Time has flown by as there has been plenty to learn but I am thoroughly enjoying my new role.

I would like to take the opportunity of thanking everyone associated with the Friends for making me feel so welcome and for their helpfulness in every way. I would especially like to thank Margaret Howes for her time and patience during the "handing-over" process. The Office staff, Helen and Jean, the faithful volunteers and Members of Council have all made me feel at home, which I have appreciated.

In the past two months we have completed three mail-outs to our Members. This has put an unusual amount of pressure on our volunteers for this job. A special thank you goes to all those who have so willingly helped with this task.

Although I already knew many members of the Friends before I commenced my new role, I look forward to meeting many more of you in the future!

Virginia Henderson

AUDIO LOOP IN MUELLER HALL

Improvements have recently been made to the public address system in Mueller Hall. An audio induction loop has been installed to allow hearing-aid wearers with a "T switch" to tune in to the loop for improved audibility. High-quality speakers and amplifiers have also been fitted to the Hall, and the lectern microphone made more sensitive to speakers' voices. In combination, the experts assure us that these new pieces of equipment will greatly improve audio quality in Mueller Hall!

TRIBUTES TO HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Lawrence Cohn spoke as the sponsor of **Margaret Howes**: 'We break with an old tradition by proposing that a former employee be elected as an Honorary Life Member. Margaret came to us in August 1993; immediately before joining us, she was the Secretary to the Head of the School of Botany in the University of Melbourne, giving her a background that would undoubtedly be of value for the Friends.'

'Margaret has given her time unsparingly and has contributed to our affairs by her organising ability, her thoroughness, her thoughtfulness and her friendly approach. We know that at times life in the office was not always easy. She oversaw three office moves and worked happily for three Presidents and 18 other members of the Council, numerous volunteers and countless Members of the Friends; I hope she was glad she had only one Secretary to deal with in that time!

'I must add that Margaret is not leaving us altogether – she has now become a Growing Friend, and we wish her many active years in that rewarding activity.'

Heather Ironmonger, as the Friends' Editor, noted that **Ellen Mercer** had secured advertising for six issues of *Botanic Magazine*, to a value of \$20,000. Ellen had responded to a request for help that appeared in the Summer 1986 edition of *Botanic News*.

Heather described her relief, each time a magazine was in preparation, when Ellen agreed to accept responsibility for advertising once again.

'This keeping of lists and accounts used to be a very onerous task for Ellen, using a typewriter, carbon paper and correction fluid, and no retained information. Subsequently she mastered a computer, so the last two magazines have been much easier from that point of view.

'Ellen's calm and friendly manner has been a big factor in her success – she's not pushy but gently persuasive for the many necessary follow-up phone calls. She has been a quiet achiever, a treasure working behind the scenes.'



Louise Coronel, Convener of the Botanical Illustrators, outlined the long association of **Celia Rosser** with the Gardens, the Friends and banksias. This began in 1967 when the Maud Gibson Trust commissioned Celia to paint six Victorian banksia species for the National Herbarium collection. In 1970 Monash University appointed Celia as an artist in the Science Faculty and set her to work preparing

graphs. Her talents were recognised and she commenced *The Banksias* project in 1974.

After the second volume of *The Banksias* was published, Golda Isaac and Beth Higgs arranged for the Friends to exhibit the works from both volumes to celebrate the completion of the Herbarium extensions in July 1989.

The exhibition

made a completely unexpected profit of \$46,000, which funded a mycologist at the RBG for six months.

Louise said that Celia addressed the Friends on a number of occasions and was instrumental in the Friends' establishment of the Botanical Illustrators group. *Banksia aculeata* was displayed in their first exhibition and for the Illustrators' second exhibition in 1994, Celia filled two roles – those of selector and official 'opener'.

In September this year Celia completed her last paintings for *The Banksias* vol. 3 and displayed them as a preview to a capacity audience of Friends in the Mueller Hall.

Louise concluded: 'In recognition of Celia's completion of *The Banksias* project, together with the many years of providing support to the Friends, inspiration to our artist Members and for the sheer pleasure her work gives to all who admire it, I propose we give this award of Honorary Life Membership to a true friend of our organisation.'

From left: Celia Rosser, Ellen Mercer and Margaret Howes. At Margaret's farewell lunch in October, she was presented with a bouquet of roses, a gift voucher for the Friends' Shop, and a card on which an artist had depicted many aspects of her life with the Friends. Photo by Duncan Ironmonger

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS

INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOPS TO BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION

Two introductory workshops will be offered for those interested in finding out a little more about Botanical Illustration — Wednesday 12 January and Saturday 15 January, from 10.00am — 3.30pm.

Cost: Friends \$60, others \$70. All materials provided. For more information or to book, ring Dianne Emery 9523 5397.

ETCHING WORKSHOP

An intensive etching workshop will be conducted during the last two weeks of January. This workshop for Botanical Illustrators and others interested will be run in conjunction with the Victorian College of the Arts Printmaking Department, where we will have access to their expert tuition and equipment. The workshop will occupy about four days, run over two weeks, to allow time for drawing and planning.

The proposed schedule:

Thursday 20 January: An introductory morning, where the technique will be explained and questions answered. We will look at examples of etchings and consider their place in botanical art. Afternoon at the Victorian College of the Arts, preparing copper plates for drawing.

Friday 21 January: Working on the plate — transferring a drawing, working in line and tone, and correcting mistakes. Students will work on their plates at home until the following week.

Thursday 27 and Friday 28 January: At Victorian College of the Arts. Safety and equipment use will be explained; plates prepared for etching; plates etched and prepared for printing. Students will then have expert help for the printing process.

Cost: \$250 includes equipment and materials — copper plate (up to three plates), ground, etching needles, blockout, acid, printing papers and printing inks. The class will have a minimum of 10 places and a maximum of 12.

Dates may be subject to change, but will occur in the last two weeks of January 2000.

For more information or to book, contact Dianne Emery on 9523 5397.

DIANNE EMERY'S CLASSES

Term 1, 2000

Classes will commence on 8 February: Tuesday night, Wednesday morning, Wednesday afternoon and Friday morning.

For more information contact Dianne on 9523 5397.

BOTANY FOR ILLUSTRATORS

We are proposing to offer a course of six discussions and demonstrations on basic botany for the Botanical Illustrators. Ian Clarke, National Herbarium botanist and also an illustrator, has kindly agreed to offer his services to us. The meetings will be held weekly from Monday 14 February between 1.00 and 2.00pm.

These informal discussions will make use of the Herbarium's video microscope and will be an unsurpassed opportunity for illustrators to gain some important and very essential knowledge associated with their work and art.

Cost: \$75 for the six talks. Limited numbers. For more information or to book, contact Dianne Emery on 9523 5397.

THE ART OF BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION 2000

will be held from 26 October to 12 November
Selection will be on 19 September

Additional requirements to be introduced for exhibiting in this exhibition will include:

- * A hanging fee of \$5 per entry
- * A requirement that the subjects illustrated including studies of fruits, nuts, vegetables, Autumn leaves, etc. be accurately and completely named including the **variety** and/or the **cultivar**. In many cases this may be difficult information to source; it is therefore imperative that, **before** an illustration is begun, the **complete** identity of the specimen is known. It is recommended that a photographic record is kept, and on completion of the work the specimen be preserved by pressing for verification purposes. It is rarely possible to satisfactorily identify subjects from the finished illustration only.

We anticipate the introduction of a GST will affect the pricing of artworks and the sale of artists' cards as well as the payment of commissions. We expect to be able to include full details of all the necessary changes with the exhibition entry forms.

Entry forms will be available through the *Botanic News* Winter Edition. If you wish to receive a full copy of the conditions of entry for the exhibition prior to applying for a set of entry forms, send a stamped, self-addressed business size envelope marked T.A.B.I. to the Friends office.

Exhibitors must be financial members of the FRBG Melb. Inc. at 30 June 2000.

For any queries contact Louise Coronel, tel. 9827 5910

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATORS cont

TUESDAY PAINTERS GROUP (The Whirly Birds)

This informal painting group will continue to meet most Tuesdays in the year 2000, commencing 18 January. The cost is \$2.50 per session. If any Member wishes to join, telephone Mary Gregory on 9836 8587.

Christmas Exhibition

There will be a mini Christmas exhibition and sale of some Members' botanical painting at Catanachs Art and Antiques, 1210 High Street, Armadale from 10 December to the end of January.

HELENE WILD GALLERY

Helene Wild, one of our Botanical Illustrators, is to be Resident Artist at the CRT Resource Centre at Altona North, which accommodates the Habitat Trust. In a gallery bearing her name, she'll hang paintings of plants from the basalt plains and wetlands of the western region. Her aim is to show the public that all native flora, not just the biggest, brightest or most beautiful species, should be preserved for future generations.

**BOTANICA 2000
THE ART OF THE PLANT**

The Friends of RBG Sydney will stage an exhibition of botanical paintings by NSW artists between 4 and 19 March in their Lion Gate Lodge. Ceramics with a plant theme by Ivan Gluch will also be shown.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Thursday 9 March at 5.30pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

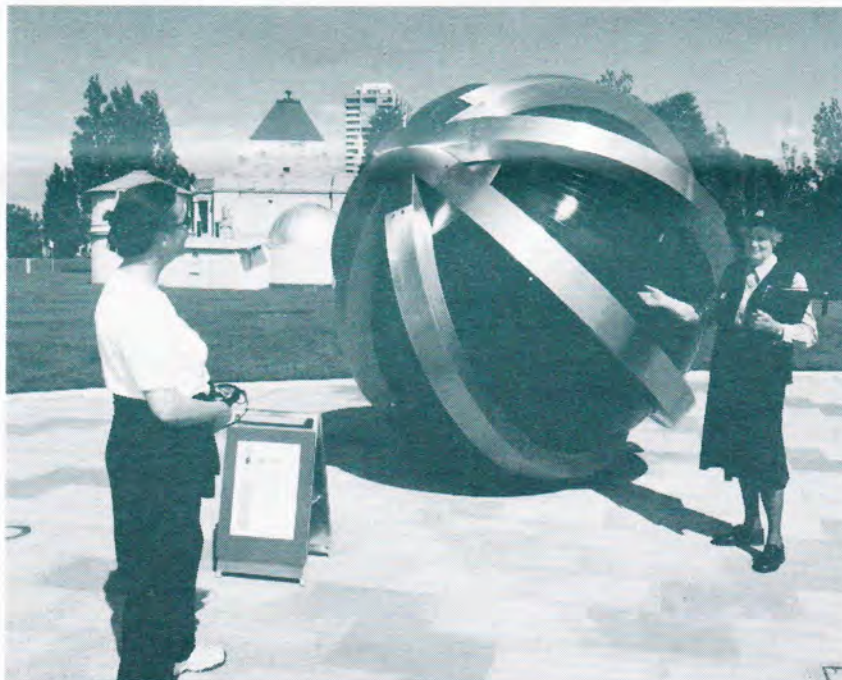
Invitations will be sent to recently-joined Friends to attend this 'orientation' function, at which a guided walk follows refreshments and an introduction to the organisation.

Those who have joined the Friends since our last Welcome in October, and those who have already requested an invitation to an early-evening Welcome, will automatically receive a notice. If you have not been able to attend a previous Welcome function and would like to come this time, please phone the office (9650 6398) and we'll make sure you are invited.

About 35 new Members gathered in Mueller Hall on 18 October to meet each other, be welcomed by Sir Ninian Stephen and introduced to the Gardens by the Director, Dr Philip Moors. Unfortunately the camera failed us, but we are sure those who attended were left with good memories of the occasion after the walk kindly led by the Voluntary Guides.

Stephen Ryan in Print

The Friends were delighted to invited to assist in staging the launch of Stephen Ryan's first book in Mueller Hall on 17 November. Called *Exceptional Plants – 100 trees and shrubs to give your garden the edge*, it is illustrated with Stephen's exceptional colour photographs and expounds his philosophy of gardening. His astonishing knowledge of plants and his irrepressible humour enliven the pages of this book, which is available in the Gardens' Shop.



The final element in the landscape of Observatory Gate – a sculpture symbolising the astronomical and botanical heritage of the site – was unveiled on the Pacific Dunlop Plaza on 6 October by Dame Elisabeth Murdoch and Mr Eric Windholz from Philip Morris Australia/New Zealand/South Pacific (who provided financial support for the commission).

'Neutrino' is a bold and beautiful work by Glen Dunn, who as a boy in Melbourne grew up fascinated by the buildings and telescopes of the Old Observatory. Here it is admired by Natalie McMaster, wearing the new uniform adopted by the RBG Voluntary Guides.

Photo by Lesley Skinner

SUMMER 1999/2000 BOTANIC NEWS
BOOKING FORM

**CHRISTMAS PARTY
AT GARDENS HOUSE**

Tuesday 14 December
6.00—7.30pm

No.....@ \$25

TOTAL: \$

RSVP by 7/12/99

**MEET THE MARIBYRNONG
River Cruise**

Thursday 20 January at 10.00am

No.....@ \$30

TOTAL: \$

RSVP by 13/1/2000

**SEVEN SECRETS OF WATER-
CONSERVING GARDENS
At the RBG Water Conservation Garden**

Wednesday 9 February at 5.30pm

No.....@ \$5

Group ...@ \$15

TOTAL: \$

RSVP by 7/2/2000

Please return the relevant section of this form with remittance and stamped self-addressed envelope to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens, Gate Lodge, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra 3141. Telephone: (03) 9650 6398

Cheques/postal orders payable to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens

NAME

ADDRESS

TEL.

SUMMER 1999/2000 BOTANIC NEWS
BOOKING FORM

MORNINGTON PENINSULA

Bus Trip at 9.30am
Friday 18 February

No.....@ \$52

TOTAL: \$

RSVP by 14/2/2000

BUS TOUR INFORMATION:

Please note that you must have an entrée card to join any bus tour. If you have sent your money with a stamped self-addressed envelope but have not received a card, please check with the Friends' office on 9650 6398 prior to the day of the tour to ensure you have been allocated a seat on the bus.

If you are unable to join a bus tour due to something unforeseen such as ill-health, please notify the Friends' office on 9650 6398 as soon as possible; we sometimes have a waiting list for trips. Your cheque will be refunded if your place can be filled.

If you have to make a last-minute cancellation, it is important for you to leave a message on the answering machine at the Friends' office before 9.00am. This will avoid a repeat of previous situations when a bus has delayed its departure, waiting for people who have booked but who fail to arrive.

Please return the relevant section of this form with remittance and stamped self-addressed envelope to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens, Gate Lodge, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra 3141. Telephone: (03) 9650 6398

Cheques/postal orders payable to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens

NAME

ADDRESS

TEL.

SUMMER 1999/2000 BOTANIC NEWS
BOOKING FORM

**CHINESE GARDEN VISIT
AND BYO TWILIGHT PICNIC**
Wednesday 1 March at 5.30pm

No.....@ \$5

Group....@ \$15

TOTAL: \$

RSVP by 28/2/2000

Members are reminded that we request a stamped self-addressed envelope to be sent with your booking if you wish your entrée card to be posted by return mail.

Otherwise your name will be recorded on a list available at each function to verify your payment.

Please return the relevant section of this form with remittance and stamped self-addressed envelope to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens, Gate Lodge, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra 3141. Telephone: (03) 9650 6398

Cheques/postal orders payable to: Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens

NAME

ADDRESS

TEL.

SPECIAL EVENTS IN THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE

DECEMBER 1999

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE WALKS

Thursdays and Fridays at 11.00am,
Sunday 12 at 10.30am
Groups by special arrangement.

OUTDOOR THEATRE

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Commencing 14 December
Monday to Saturday 8.30pm
WIND IN THE WILLOWS
Commencing 21 December
Monday to Saturday 11.00am and 6.00pm

MOONLIGHT CINEMA

Commencing 17 December
Tuesday to Sunday

OBSERVATORY TOUR

Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays,
1.30pm and 2.30pm
Sundays 11.30am and 12.30pm

GARDENS HIGHLIGHTS GUIDED WALK

Sunday to Friday, 11.00am and 2.00pm

JANUARY 2000

SCHOOL HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

Information and bookings 9252 2358

RAINFORREST MAGIC

For ages 4 — 8

Monday to Friday 10-14, 17-21

THE YOUNG ASTRONOMERS PROGRAM

For ages 8 — 12

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 12-14, 19-21

FAMILY VIEWING AT THE OLD

MELBOURNE OBSERVATORY

Thursdays 6, 13, 20, 27 at 9.00pm

JANUARY 2000 continued

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE WALKS

Thursdays and Fridays at 11.00am,
Sundays 9 and 23 at 10.30am.
Groups by arrangement.

OUTDOOR THEATRE

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Monday to Saturday 8.30pm
WIND IN THE WILLOWS
Monday to Saturday 11.00am and 6.00pm

MOONLIGHT CINEMA

Tuesday to Sunday

LIVE JAZZ

23 and 30 January
Time to be confirmed

OBSERVATORY TOUR

Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays
1.30pm and 2.30pm
Sundays at 11.30am and 12.30pm

GARDENS HIGHLIGHTS GUIDED WALK

Sunday to Friday, 11.00am and 2.00pm

FEBRUARY 2000

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE WALKS

Thursdays and Fridays at 11.00am,
Sundays 6 and 20 at 10.30am
Groups by special arrangement

OUTDOOR THEATRE

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Monday to Saturday 8.30pm

MOONLIGHT CINEMA

Tuesday to Sunday

FEBRUARY 2000 continued

GARDENS HIGHLIGHTS GUIDED WALK

Sunday to Friday, 11.00am and 2.00pm

TWILIGHT WALKS

Thursdays 17 and 24, Tuesday 22 at 6.00pm

THE NIGHT SKY EXPERIENCE

Guided tour, Tuesday nights. Bookings now being accepted for April and May. Telephone 9252 2300

Please note that most events incur a charge and require prior booking, so it's important that you contact the appropriate phone number. Unless otherwise noted, the number to ring for all listed events is 9252 2300. Also, please appreciate that, after *Botanic News* goes to press, it is likely that additional events may be arranged for late in the quarter.

TICKETS FOR ALL OUTDOOR THEATRE AND CINEMA ONLY FROM TICKETMASTER 136 100

RBG Summer Highlights

Look out for the Heritage and Species Rose Collection in its new site near the B Gate entrance. The new display contains many roses transplanted from the previous site near C Gate, supplemented by additional material obtained from rosarians and specialist growers in Victoria. Two of the new beds exhibit 'Victoria Gold', a hybrid rose specially developed for this year's centenary of the Australian Rose Society.

In December, see the wonderful crinkle paper flowers of the Romneys in the Elisabeth Murdoch Californian Garden on the eastern border, and admire the voluptuous foliage of Hostas as they emerge in the Magnolia Bed. Waterlilies illuminate the Nymphaea Lake in January and February. During summer, check progress as the new Perennial Border becomes more established.

Other highlights include the Grey Garden, the stately Magnolia Grandifloras and fruiting Cycads in January, hydrangeas, and the annual blaze of colour in the Canna and Dahlia beds.

GREENWASTE RECYCLING

The final stage of the greenwaste recycling facility is nearing completion at the old Bell Shed site. Staff have been using the facilities for several months for storing, mulching and composting all greenwaste from RBG Melbourne. The last element is the construction of a public viewing platform and installation of interpretive signs to enable visitors to learn how greenwaste can be recycled and used in home gardens. The work is being carried out using a grant from EcoRecycle Victoria.



Cathy Trinca and
David Adam

Richard Kirsner
and Joan Hardy

Sharon Beaman,
Retiring Convener of
the Growing Friends, at
the October Plant Sale

Photo by Geoff Hardy



PRIZE FOR PERTH

The Friends of Albury Botanic Gardens have organised a raffle to help fund the 10th conference of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens, which they will host on 8 and 9 April 2000.

The prize, valued at \$4000, is a complete travel package:

- A 7-day stay in Perth for two people, tour of Kings Park and local attractions, return airfares, luxury accommodation and meals.
- 2500 tickets only are for sale at \$10 per ticket (\$2 for Friends of RBG Melbourne for each ticket we sell). We have tickets now in the Friends' office, and will also make them available at Friends' functions.

*Photographed at the
Annual Meeting by
Duncan Ironmonger*

FRIENDS' BENEFITS

The Friends' Shop and Gardens' Shop offer 10 per cent discount on Members' purchases over \$20. The following businesses kindly offer discounts to Friends on PRIOR presentation of their signed current membership cards, which are not transferable.

Gills Nurseries (all branches)

*1 Centre Rd, East Brighton
*390 Balcombe Rd, Beaumaris
*cnr Bay/Graham Sts, Pt Melbourne
589 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn
5% off plants only

Idaho Nurseries

410 Waverley Rd, East Malvern
10% off plants only

Bulleen Art and Garden

6 Manningham Rd West, Bulleen
10% off plants, 5% off other goods

Town and Country Gardens

1280 Malvern Rd, Malvern
*24 Whitehorse Rd, Balwyn
10% off everything

The Arts Bookshop

1067 High St, Armadale

Holmesglen College of TAFE

585 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley
20% off everything

The Gardeners Corner Store

190-192 New St, Brighton
10% off all plants

Collectors Corner

Springvale Rd, Keysborough
10% off all plants

Kew Nursery

Cnr High & Gladstone Sts, Kew
10% off all plants

Burwood Garden Patch

1418 Toorak Rd, Burwood
10% discount

Garden of Eden Nursery

33 Ferrars St, Albert Park
10% discount off everything

The Cottage Garden Nursery

Cnr Macedon Ave & Doncaster Rd,
North Balwyn.

10% disc, also 8 punnets for \$20

The Garden Walk

199 New Street, Brighton
10% discount off plants only

*Piccolo Gardens

356-360 Punt Rd, South Yarra
10% off all items (park in Lang St)

Banksia Hill B & B

RMB 5349, Horsham, 3401
10% discount on accommodation

*Denotes newcomers to list



BOTANIC NEWS is produced quarterly for 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.

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FROM THE GARDENS AND HERBARIUM

Spring, with all its vigorous plant growth, bright colours, warmth and longer days, has heralded great activity in the Gardens. If we needed any confirmation of the change in the seasons, the annual Spring Sale of the Growing Friends provided it – and once more the group's hard work produced a wonderful array of healthy plants and a most successful sales tally. Visitors to the Spring Sale also would have seen much of interest in the Gardens themselves. The new plantings at Observatory Gate are growing on very well, especially in the indigenous collection along the Birdwood Avenue frontage. The Perennial Border, rejuvenated in winter 1998 with a grant from the Friends, is a profusion of colour, striking foliage and unusual plants.

A ceremonial planting took place in the new section of the Southern Chinese Collection on 20 October. 1999 marks the 20th anniversary of the sister-state relationship between Victoria and the Southern Chinese province of Jiangsu. While visiting Melbourne, the provincial Governor, Mr Ji Yunshi, joined the Victorian Governor, Sir James Gobbo, to plant two Chinese Windmill Palms in the garden to commemorate the anniversary.

The Trustees of the John T Reid Victorian Charitable Trust have awarded a grant of \$500,000 over the next 18 months to assist work on the curation and databasing of the Australian Collections in the National Herbarium. These collections comprise some 60 per cent of the 1.2 million specimens in the Herbarium and are one of the world's most important collections of Australian flora. This generous grant will enable the Herbarium to take on additional staff to speed up greatly the mounting of 19th century specimens and the entry of specimen information onto the Herbarium database. Computer

accessibility of this information will be of great benefit to botanists world-wide, ultimately via the Internet. The Herbarium Volunteers will continue to play a vital role mounting and curating the collection as part of the overall project.

The fourth and final volume of the *Flora of Victoria* has now been published by Inkata Press. This volume has been edited by Neville Walsh and Dr Tim Entwisle. It brings to completion a decade-long project to document the plant biodiversity of Victoria and to provide an authoritative reference for the identification and distribution of native and introduced plants. The volumes provide an essential information resource for managing and conserving the State's plant life. The Friends' support of the project and publishing grants for earlier volumes are much appreciated.

The Aboriginal Heritage Walk at RBG Melbourne received the prestigious 1999 National Award of Excellence from the Interpretation Australia Association (IAA) in the category for personal or 'face-to-face' interpretation (ie for tours, guided walks, talks, performances etc). (In 1996 the RBG won an IAA award for the Australian Rainforest Walk.) The Friends provided funding in 1998 for development of the Aboriginal Heritage Walk.

Jane Liefman has been appointed as Manager, Education Services and Michelle Joy as Manager, Visitor Programs. They both commenced in their new positions on 29 November. Their responsibilities cover all educational and visitor programs, respectively, across the whole organisation, although Jane will be based in Melbourne and Michelle at Cranbourne.

Philip Moors
Director