



**BOTANIC NEWS**  
**WINTER 1986**

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

An overflowing Annual General Meeting and an over-subscribed tour of Western District Gardens is a very encouraging start to 1986/87 for the Friends.

April 7 saw Eve Brunner re-elected and David Wilkinson elected, as our Vice-Presidents. Retiring Vice-President, Hector Bourne will continue to assist the Friends in anaging our growing schedule of projects. Your Committee is looking at both minor and major suggested projects such as sundial, booklets, ornamental gates and eventually assistance towards a Conservatory. The Gardens' administraton and the Friends will be working together to decide on the appropriate priorities. A major Friends' shop expansion is an exciting probability. Lawrence Cohn has been appointed our Secretary to assist in the managing of our continuing expansion and the introduction of our Trust Fund. Treasurer, Stuart Turnbull continues in that role, while Barbara Hamer joins Committee members Golda Isaac and Lesley Clark. Beth Higgs continues in her ex-officio membership of the Committee.

The Friends are certainly very fortunate to have such a talented, energetic Committee, supplemented by many willing and eager volunteers. These include Editor, Dianna McClellan; Art Adviser, Jenny Phillips; Assistant Treasurer, Louise Coronel; Recording Secretary, Eva Best; Co-ordinator, Joan Nesbit; Herbarium and Gardens Staff Liaison Officer, Eve Almond; Voluntary Guides Convenor, Peg Gray; Friends' Shop, Brenda Owen; Catering, Elaine Clark. Philip Ayton has joined the team and will be looking at the marketing of the Friends and our activities.

Future activities are well publicised in the *Botanic News* and we look forward to your participation as well as your ideas as to how the Friends might proceed. Above all, our goal is to continue to further the well-being of our magnificent Gardens, the National Herbarium, and to assist the administration wherever possible.

Frank Phillips

## MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

### THE HISTORY OF EMBROIDERY

A talk by noted artist and speaker, Mrs Joan Hossack  
*Thursday May 29 at 10.30 a.m.*, Herbarium Auditorium,  
Birdwood Ave, Sth Yarra.

Morning Tea will be served.

RSVP	May 26
Sylvia Churchill	63 3564
Golda Isaac	817 5640

Tickets at door:

Members.....	\$3.00
Non-Members .....	\$4.00

### MID-WINTER LUNCHEON

*Wednesday June 25 at 11.00 a.m.*, Gardens House, the  
home of the Director, Dr and Mrs David Churchill,  
Birdwood Ave, Sth Yarra.

A Luncheon with Friends, including many of the members  
of the tour of Western District Gardens, who will  
endeavour to tell us about the places they visited and show  
us their photographs.

Of great interest will be the newly published *Ferns and  
Allied Plants of Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania*,  
written for naturalists, botanists and gardeners by Betty  
Duncan and Golda Isaac. Golda and Betty will be delighted  
to autograph copies which will be available for purchase on  
the day.

RSVP	June 21
Eve Brunner	818 5954
Robina Dickinson	20 8398
Members.....	\$ 8.00
Non-Members .....	\$10.00

The Trading Table will be held on July 29, not June 25.

## JOHN WEDGEWOOD'S FLORAL CHINA

A talk by Mrs Barbara Williams on John Wedgewood and  
his floral painting on china.

*Tuesday July 29 at 10.30 a.m.* at the Herbarium  
Auditorium, Birdwood Ave, Sth Yarra.

Would you please bring your surplus books, plants,  
'creations' etc. for our Trading Table.

RSVP	July 26
Iona Christianson	870 3940
Joan Nesbit	211 8979

Tickets at door:

Members.....	\$4.00
Non-Members .....	\$3.00

## ELLIS ROWAN MURAL DECORATIONS

A visit to The Australian Club, 110 Williams St. Melbourne  
to view the Mural Decorations by Ellis Rowan in the  
Committee Room of the Club.

*Wednesday, August 20 at 3.30 p.m.*

Marian Ellis Rowan (Lady Casey was her niece) was born in  
1848. She travelled extensively both overseas and in  
Australia, painting flowers in their natural habitat,  
including oils painted on cartridge paper which were then  
pasted onto walls. The Australia Club murals are of  
exceptional quality.

Afternoon Tea will be served. Numbers are limited to 25

RSVP Beth Higgs on 850 5908, *but not before July 25.*

Admission:

Members .....	\$ 8.00
Non-Members.....	\$10.00

## SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

PLEASE NOTE that the Membership Card sent with our  
last *Botanic News* was forwarded *in anticipation of your  
renewal* (saving both time and postage) as we indicated on  
the enclosed form, and was not intended to reflect financial  
membership or otherwise. If you have not done so would  
you please renew your subscription as soon as possible.



## SOME FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Tuesday September 9 at 5.30 p.m. at the Herbarium Auditorium. Dr Sophie Ducker will speak on 'The History of the Systems Gardens at the University of Melbourne'.

October 10-19 at the Herbarium Auditorium. An Exhibition of botanical art by Collin Woolcock and Jenny Phillips—to be officially launched by the Minister for Conservation, Forests & Lands, the Hon. Joan E. Kirner. *Assistance is needed in setting up the exhibits. If you can help would you please contact Eve Brunner on 818 5954.*

Saturday November 8. A one-day seminar at which a panel of speakers will discuss conservation, education, recreation and future planning in relation to our Botanic Gardens.

Saturday November 15. A bus trip to Macedon to visit 'Hascombe', the home of Sir Thomas and Lady Ramsay.

Friday December 12. Christmas Dinner at the Royal Botanic Gardens' Kiosk.

## FRIENDS' TOUR OF WESTERN DISTRICT GARDENS

During sunny autumnal days in April, Friends visited gardens surrounding homesteads (two in towns) as well as provincial botanical gardens. Our route took us past many miles of sun-scorched paddocks, and then, on turning into a side road, a belt of eucalypts or cypresses would herald a homestead with its startling green lawns and contrasting textures and colours of shrubs and trees, creating an oasis in this parched countryside.

Gardens ranged from those which are at present being restored to their former glory, many of which are of historical interest. Shortage of water, time and manpower were all named as difficulties encountered in the upkeep of gardens and, without exception, our hosts told of the damage inflicted by opossums and cockatoos.

On the tour we were comfortably accommodated and probably too well fed! The expert organisation of the whole trip is a tribute to Golda Isaac and her 'friendly' helpers.

## FRIENDS' HEADQUARTERS

Our headquarters are in the Old Astronomer's Building, a two-storey red brick residence adjacent to Latrobe's Cottage and the National Herbarium. Our office is staffed each Tuesday between 11.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. Membership enquiries should be directed to Joan Nesbit on 211 8979.

## WHAT'S OUT IN THE GARDENS

During the months of May, June and July, there are fine displays of camellias in the main Camellia Bed on the Oak Lawn and in the long bed bordering the Northern Lawns.

One of the earliest flowering is *Camellia granthamiana*, a species endemic to Hong Kong and introduced into Australia by A. W. Jessup in 1956, a year after it was discovered in the wild. It is likely that the specimen in the Camellia Bed originates from one of the three scions initially imported.

Other interesting shrubs from the Far East include *Chimonanthus praecox*, Winter sweet, one of four species endemic to China. The greenish yellow flowers are wonderfully fragrant. There is a bush in the triangular bed above the Bell Shed. *Euonymus alata*, from China and Japan has bright autumn foliage and is also noted for the unusual corky flanges on the branches. A specimen can be seen by the north-west corner of the nursery yard. From the Himalayas comes *Luculia gratissima*, Pink Swa, with long trusses of perfumed pink flowers. Examples can be found opposite the Camellia Bed and at the major path intersection near 'A' gate.

In one of the beds on the Eastern Lawn, near the grass trees, is an unusual South American tree, *Tipuana tipin*, Rosewood. Although a member of the Pea family, the tree has samara-like seed pods. Another interesting South American species, this time from Chile can be seen in the azalea walk bordering the Director's garden. It is *Peumus boldus*, Boldo. The bark is used for dyes, the fruit is edible and the timber is a useful hardwood.

John Beetham  
Botanic Gardens

## SPECIAL BENEFITS TO FRIENDS

Fryer's Nursery, 589 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, and 'Idaho' Nurseries, 420 Waverley Road, East Malvern, offer special discounts to Friends on production of their current membership card.

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