



BOTANIC NEWS

WINTER 1987

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The first Annual General Meeting of the 'new' Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne Incorporated was held in the Auditorium of the National Herbarium on the evening of Monday May 4, 1987. Well attended by members and their guests, the meeting was actually the fourth A.G.M. but the first as an incorporated association. The Annual Report 86/87, as distributed, highlighted some 16 major activities, plus co-operation with and support from the Voluntary Guides, the Plant Craft Cottage Group and the Maud Gibson Trust. Membership was reported at 625, funds at \$36,813, and projects/assistance already provided, or committed to the Gardens as including

- information and directory boards
- benches and show cases
- shop expansion
- Herb Garden plants
- five large entrance signs
- plants for perennial border
- prototype for new secure rubbish bin design
- repairs to Nymphaea Lake and fountain
- landscaping new kiosk
- restoration of garden gate/s
- visitor survey
- graphics computer program for preparation of plant descriptions
- labels for Grey Garden near Temple of the Winds.

The last mentioned nine projects alone total some \$19,700. Additionally a further twelve projects exceeding \$1 million in total have been earmarked as targets for our Trust Fund, including an automatic sprinkler system, redevelopment of Long Island, Herbarium shelving, improvements to the Fern Gully and central Lake, and Alpine Plants Greenhouse to name a few.

In summary our active 86/87 year will be followed by another exciting year, with, hopefully, 'more runs on the board' by May '88. Many thanks to all councillors, volunteers and members for their support.

Special guest at the A.G.M. were Voluntary Guides from the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Adelaide. Their President, Mrs Christine Steele Scott, presented a most interesting illustrated talk at the conclusion of the meeting. Mrs Steele Scott outlined an impressive list of achievements of the Adelaide Friends over the past 10 years and her suggestion of joint activities for Melbourne and Adelaide Friends and other States was received by all present with enthusiasm. It is comforting that Australia's major gardens are being supported to the advantage of present and future generations. Your membership of the Melbourne Friends is making a significant contribution towards this worthwhile objective.

Frank Phillips

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

A red star against 'Subscription Reminder' indicates your subscription for 1987/88, due on March 1, is now overdue. Unfortunately we cannot continue forwarding literature unless members are financial.



MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

LANDSCAPES AND PLANTS OF EARLY HEIDELBERG

Tuesday June 23 at 5.30 p.m. in the Auditorium of the National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

Mrs Marilyn McBiar, Historian and Landscape Designer, will speak of the aborigines in Heidelberg and how they used their landscape and plants; of the early settlers, their estates and how they shaped the landscape and used the plants.

Wine & Cheese 5.30 p.m.

Lecture 6.00 p.m.

Plants for sale - contributions of plants from Friends would be appreciated.

RSVP	Monday A.M. June 22
Agnes Fulton	836 9183
Eve Brunner	818 5954
Members & Guides	\$3.00
Non-Members	\$4.00

COLONIAL SCIENTISTS

Tuesday July 14 at 5.30 p.m. in the Auditorium of the National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra.

Miss Helen Cohn, Librarian at the National Herbarium, will give an illustrated talk on the official scientific work done in Victoria up to 1860, with particular reference to Botanic Gardens and Ferdinand von Mueller, the National Museum of Victoria and the Philosophical Institute of Victoria.

Wine & Cheese 5.30 p.m.

Lecture 6.00 p.m.

Plants for sale - contributions greatly appreciated.

RSVP	Monday A.M. July 13
Agnes Fulton	836 9183
Eve Brunner	818 5954

MORNING COFFEE AT KAY'S

Thursday July 23 at 10.30 a.m. at the home of Mrs Kay Fairley, 76 St Georges Road, Toorak.

All are welcome!

It is not often the Friends meet purely to have coffee together and chat; so come along and catch up with your friends. Those who were on the recent Western District Gardens Tour may care to bring their photographs of the gardens visited and share them with the group. Tables will be available for display. It is hoped that one of the members of the tour can be persuaded to give us some impressions of the highlights. We hope to see you there.

Admission: \$2.00



PERSIAN GARDENS & GARDEN CARPETS

Tuesday August 11 at 8.00 p.m. at the Coleman Room, Melbourne Church of England Grammar School, Domain Road, South Yarra. (*Follow signs from the quadrangle which is entered through the main gates in Domain Road.*)

Mrs Bini Malcolm, an Oriental Rug Consultant, has been an Oriental rug collector for 20 years. She lived in Iran and Arabia for 8 years and has travelled extensively in Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan and India. Mrs Malcolm's talk on 'Persian Gardens and Garden Carpets' will be illustrated with excellent slides of the most famous Persian Gardens still extant and of gardens in India, Pakistan and Kashmir.

Supper will be served.

Members & Guides \$4.00
Non-Members \$5.00

RSVP Monday A.M. August 10
Lesley Clark 277 3984
Joan Nesbit 211 8979

ADELAIDE AND KANGAROO ISLAND IN SPRINGTIME

8 days. Sunday September 20 to Sunday 27, 1987.

This trip takes you by plane to Adelaide where we stay at the Grosvenor Hotel. There will be a guided tour of the Adelaide Botanic Garden, lunch at Yarrabee with the 'Friends', and visits to Grove Hill, Wittunga Botanic Garden, Beechwood and Panmure.

During the five days on Kangaroo Island accommodation will be at the Sorrento Resort Motel, Penneshaw. The manager, Jack Boyd, assisted by other local authorities, will act as guides around the island. We will see much native flora and fauna, and will visit most areas of interest.

Transport to Kangaroo Island will be by ferry, and by air return.

Number on tour restricted to 30. Cost \$800

(Incl. all fares, accom. twin share, & most meals).

FOR BOOKINGS CONTACT Lesley Clark..... 277 3984

SOME FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The Art and Meaning of Ikebana. At a Luncheon to be held on Thursday October 29. Beth Higgs who attended the 1986 Ikebana International World convention in Kyoto, Japan, will review the Convention and demonstrate Ikenana. Beth is a senior teacher of the Sogetsu School of Ikebana of Japan and has taught and demonstrated over many years.

Details in Spring Newsletter.

October or November - a tour of two or three Melbourne gardens.

A function to launch the May Gibbs Exhibition when it comes to the Royal Botanic Gardens in November.

Thursday December 10 - Christmas Function.



RECENT ACTIVITIES

Helen Aston - 10/2/87 - *'Travels with a Difference in Central Australia'*. A fascinating account of Central Australia and its early exploration.

Herb Luncheon - 4/3/87 - at Gardens House, the residence of the Director and Mrs Sylvia Churchill. Booked out and requests for a repeat!

Kay Fairley - 8/4/87 - *'Rain Forests'* - Well attended and a most interesting review of Australian Rain Forests.

Otway Ranges & Western Districts Gardens Tour - April 25 - 28. Universally acclaimed!

Annual General Meeting - 4/5/87.

GOLDA'S AUTUMN GARDEN TOUR

At 8.10 a.m. on April 25 an anticipatory coachload plus several cars left the Herbarium en route to the Otways and another Western District Gardens Tour. Our hopes were more than fulfilled, Golda and her team excelled even their previous excellence. One knew instinctively that all our arrangements would proceed like clockwork; we would be comfortably housed, fed, informed and generally cossetted, which we were. From the first day largely spent probing the beauties of the Otways to successive days of continuous enjoyment of both the countryside and wonderfully interesting gardens, it was a fascinating odyssey. Seeing such a diverse cross section of gardens, interesting and in many cases historic homes, made considerable impact; meeting the owners and managers who, without exception, were kindness itself giving freely of their time, knowledge and hospitality provided tantalizing glimpses of a way of life very different to our more urban existence. My advice to members of the Friends is, if at all possible, participate in one of 'Golda's Garden Tours'. It is an experience not to be missed and one you will cherish in memory long afterwards.

John Kenny



MEETING OUR PATRON

At a Cocktail Party at the Kiosk on March 5 members of the Friends' Committee and Herbarium and Gardens senior staff members met the Friends' Patron, His Excellency the Governor, Dr. Davis McCaughey and Mrs. McCaughey.

THE FRIENDS' SHOP

During the months of June, July and August, the Shop will open at 11.30 a.m. and close at 4.00 p.m. We will possibly be short of volunteers, despite the shorter hours as many of our members are migratory birds who fly north at this time of year. Jean Woelkerling is now the assistant manager of the Shop working 3 days each week. If you would like to 'fill a hole' please see us at the Shop or write or telephone 820 1125.

STOP PRESS. New stock includes 6 beautiful postcards of the Gardens.

'NEWCOMERS'

The Council of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens will meet newcomers to the Friends (since 1st October '86) for Morning Coffee at the Kiosk on Thursday June 18.

SPECIAL BENEFITS TO FRIENDS

Fryer's Nursery, 589 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, Idaho Nurseries, 410 Waverley Road, East Malvern, and The Arts Bookshop, 1067 High Street, Armadale offer special discounts to Friends on production of their current membership card.

WINTER NEWS FROM THE GARDENS

The main Camellia Bed at the northern end of the Oak lawn is always worth a visit at this time of the year. The Bed contains a nationally important collection of camellias including *Camellia japonica* cultivars developed from the first camellias imported into Australia in the 19th century. Unfortunately a very old *Aesculus hippocastanum*, Horsechestnut, which dominated much of the Bed, was blown over in April, damaging several camellias as it came down. Its loss will certainly change conditions in the Bed.

Hundreds of King Alfred daffodils soon will brighten up the Oak Lawn where, this year, the fallen leaves are being left on the ground. They will be cut up by the mowers to lie as mulch.

Some of you may have noticed that plants have already been removed from the beds along the facades of the Herbarium building as part of the site preparation for the Herbarium extension. The boiler house and gentlemen's toilet block at the rear of the Herbarium will be demolished in the next few weeks. Do pity the Herbarium staff as they shiver their way through this winter huddled around bar heaters. Some of you may also have noticed a 'patch of pink' on the southern exterior wall of the Herbarium. The white paint was removed to reveal the original warm tonings of the building. It is now planned to restore the Herbarium to its original colour and to match the extension to that colour. The building was first painted white for the Queen's visit in 1954.

The 'Touch Wood' Exhibition closed at the end of April after a very successful six months. The Wishing Well took nearly \$1,000 (which will be spent on buying plants) while we stopped counting visitors after we reached 40,000. The Exhibition is going to 'Coolart' next and then to the State Schools' Nursery. In the meantime the Gardens staff are enjoying a well earned rest before gearing up for the May Gibbs Exhibition in Spring.

The new gate signs should be installed in June. Each gate will have a large vitreous enamel map board and one or two smaller signs with a time-clock showing when the Gardens close each evening. The Friends have generously paid for those signs being installed at 'B', 'E', 'F', and 'G' Gates and the Lych Gate.

Eve Almond
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.'