



Botanic News

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE INC.

A12827T

WINTER 2002

From the President

A great deal has been happening in the Royal Botanic Gardens in recent months. On one of Melbourne's splendid autumn days in mid-March the Friends celebrated their 20th birthday with a well-attended tree planting followed by a party in Mueller Hall.

At the tree planting on Hopetoun Lawn, where Beth Higgs flourished a gleaming spade to good effect, David Adam, Chairman of the RBG Board, spoke about the valuable work of the Friends over the years. They had, he said, done a great deal for the Gardens and the Board confidently looked to the Friends for growing support in the future. We not only welcome this recognition by the Board, but happily acknowledge the spirit of endeavour which we share in working for the good of our wonderful Gardens.

At the party which followed the tree planting, and after a succession of past and present Presidents of the Friends had taken part in the formal cutting of the birthday cake, Beth Higgs, as Founding Convener of the Friends, reminded us of the Friends' early days and of much of its subsequent history. Janet Thomson illustrated a great deal of this with excellent slides.

A major project: *Water Works, Water Wise*

The Friends are always alert for an opportunity to help with a specific project in the Gardens and our Council has accepted the Director's suggestion that the Friends support much-needed extensions of the Gardens' Automatic Irrigation System, initially to the Theatre Lawn adjoining Gate Lodge. This is a two-year project at an estimated cost of \$47,000. The existing automatic system has made a huge difference to the state of the Gardens, and has freed the staff from the time-consuming chore of moving hoses. However, two hectares remain to be connected to the automatic system and the Friends gladly take on this project.

Funding and fundraising

The Friends have also recently granted a further \$14,800 to the Gardens: \$9400 towards overseas study travel for Herbarium scientists and the balance for equipment for use by visitors to the Old Melbourne Observatory site in the Gardens.

Fundraising continues with considerable success: Caroline Davies' talk on Greek landscapes and Stephen Ryan's account of his travels in Ireland each raised about \$1500, while the Director's superb



Photo by Helen Fahey

Antarctic presentation resulted in more than \$1000. The occasion of 'A Morning with French Roses', which involved a percentage from each Delbard rose sold, raised just over \$2000. The Friends are grateful indeed to our speakers and all others who contributed to these events as well as those involved in the Growing Friends' autumn sale, where hard work produced a profit of more than \$25,000.

It is only by efforts such as these that the Friends continue to be able to fund significant grants for Gardens projects.

Ninian Stephen

This issue looks to the future as we launch our major new project, Water Works, Water Wise. It looks back, also, with Beth Higgs recounting the early days of the Friends. Another article describes how almost \$1,200,000 raised by the Friends has been spent on the Gardens. Plus our wonderful winter program.

FRIENDS STEP IN TO IMPROVE WATERING SYSTEM

For some time the Friends have wished to have a major longer term project in the Gardens as a target for our fund-raising. Our acceptance of this Automatic Irrigation System extension project will enable the Gardens to achieve a key priority of its 1997-2002 Corporate Plan.

It will also send a message to the community that the Friends and the Gardens are serious about responsible, efficient water use. We are pleased to learn that when the system is fully connected at Theatre Lawn, more planting will be undertaken in the area.

The Friends have a previous history of supporting irrigation projects. In 1988 we funded a feasibility study for the automatic watering system (\$8000); in 1991 we financed an irrigation system for the Herb Garden (\$8500) and in 1992 we allocated \$11,375 for the installation of a misting and watering system along the western end of the Australian Border.

Peter Symes, Senior Curator, Horticulture in the Melbourne Gardens, outlines the main issues relating to the proposed extensions to the Automatic Irrigation System.

Approximately two hectares of the Gardens (excluding Arid Collections and islands) remain to be incorporated into the Automatic Irrigation System, with the highest priority areas being Theatre Lawn, the Vireya Bed, the Canary Island Bed and the Cottage Rockery. Theatre Lawn, which adjoins Gate Lodge and is prominent on the Observatory Gate site, has been chosen as the focus for the Friends' fundraising.

Included in this irrigation design are some hydraulic adjustments which will almost double the system's flow capacity, benefitting the flow management over the entire Gardens. Its installation will improve the Gardens' ability to conserve water as it will enable irrigation programmers to wait for forecasted rainfall, rather than irrigating earlier, as they do at present, because they cannot afford to have lost irrigation time should the rain fail to eventuate. Also, less water will be lost by evaporation and wind, as watering will occur at night.

The installation of the extension will reduce the current difficulties experienced in having to fit watering regimes around the Gardens' schedule of outdoor entertainment; often they cannot start before midnight and then they run into the daytime. This is inconvenient for both gardeners and visitors, and is not effective for moisture retention in hot weather.

The plan is to complete the system at Theatre Lawn by installing another main tapping point supplying

irrigation to the lawn, and adding another control satellite to provide for future needs such as The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden.

The extension of the Automatic Irrigation System is very important for the health of our Living Collection and will put us in a far better position to deal with future water restrictions.

Bucket by Bucket, Drip by Drip...

The vital task of Gardens watering was a problem, right from the beginning. Until 1857, water was taken from the Yarra, with 'orphan boys' employed to man water carts. Mueller placed tanks and cisterns in all the principal buildings, and proposed the erection of windmills to pump water to higher areas — one was constructed to supply water to a fish tank! The first irrigation pipes were laid in the Gardens in 1864 after the Yan Yean Reservoir was built. However, the result was a great disappointment to Mueller. The supply was unreliable and failed to fulfill his dream of fountains. In his 1868 report, Mueller requested a steam-powered pump. This facilitated a water supply which the Director described as a great boon. He was shocked, however, to find the Gardens were completely cut off from the Yan Yean system once the pump was installed.

More disappointments followed, with the supply proving expensive and inadequate. Enter Guilfoyle, Director from 1873, and the construction of a reservoir near Anderson Street, landscaped to represent a volcano.

A new steam engine and boiler began service in 1877 but once again the water supply failed to live up to expectations. A major threat emerged during the 1880s when the Yarra water became very salty and damaged plants. Guilfoyle abandoned the pumping of water from the downstream reaches of the Yarra. Despite opposition from South Melbourne Council, the Gardens were once again connected to the Yan Yean supply. Towards the end of 1892, the Dight's Falls Scheme came into operation and provided a reasonably reliable and adequate source; it was deemed obsolete in the early 1960s.

Rohan Lamb, from whose history of the Gardens' water supply this summary has been gleaned, comments that for much of its existence the Gardens' Directors were constantly under pressure; they had to put their case to authorities against competing interests to ensure sufficient water and the survival of the Gardens.

These days, different pressures necessitate careful management of our water use. The Automatic Irrigation System provides the 21st century solution to an age-old problem. Its installation (it was fully operational by Winter 1994) represented a quantum leap in the history of watering the RBG. The system

supplies water to 24.7 hectares of the Melbourne Gardens via 17 satellites, over 430 valves and about 6000 sprinklers.

Rohan Lamb's article *Under Pressure. The Evolution of the Water Supply of the Royal Botanic Gardens* appeared in *Melbourne's Pride and Glory*, published in the Victorian Historical Journal to mark the 150th

Winter Activities

FILM LUNCHEON: I AM SAM Wednesday 19 June at 11.00am Dendy Cinema, Church St, Brighton

Sean Penn stars in the Oscar-nominated role of Sam Dawson, a disabled man who has single-handedly raised a daughter, Lucy, whom he adores. Outside forces move in when it appears that Sam's limitations will affect Lucy's schooling. Michelle Pfeiffer plays the lawyer who represents Sam in a moving tale of parenting and unconditional love.

Following the film, lunch (sandwiches, cake and tea/coffee) will be served in the foyer. Parking is available in the Dendy Plaza carpark, entered from St Andrews Street, at a reduced cost upon production of your stamped cinema ticket. Alternatively, the Middle Brighton train station is a short walk from the newly-renovated cinema.

Cost per person: \$16.
RSVP by Thursday 13 June on booking form.
Payment with a stamped s.a.c. by this date will enable us to send your entrée card, to be exchanged for a cinema ticket in the foyer prior to the screening

WINTER LUNCH TO LAUNCH WATER WORKS, WATER WISE Thursday 20 June from 12.00 midday Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

All Friends are warmly invited to a mid-winter lunch in the Mueller Hall to launch our new major fundraising project, *WATER WORKS, WATER WISE*, which is announced in the President's column. Peter Symes, the RBG's Senior Curator, Horticulture will give us an explanation and overview of the proposed upgrades and additions to the Gardens' water irrigation system, and the Director of the RBG, Dr Philip Moors, will officially launch the project.

Members of the Activities Committee will be on hand to give a brief overview of coming events.

Attending our winter lunch will give you the opportunity to meet members of the Friends' Council and committees in a relaxed atmosphere.

New Members and your guests are most welcome.
Cost: \$10 incl. a glass of wine
RSVP by Monday 17 June on booking form

Banksia Seminuda 1997
(River Banksia)



Courtesy of Monash University Collection

Visit to the Exhibition of Celia Rosser's Banksias and Guided Tour of the State Library of Victoria Wednesday 26 June, 10.30am-12.15pm

Currently showing at the State Library of Victoria is the exhibition of Celia Rosser's 'Banksias' which features 76 finely-detailed original watercolours by this internationally-renowned botanical artist. We will gather just before 10.30am in the library foyer, being met by Cathy Miller, (a volunteer guide), and Celia Rosser. We are very fortunate that Celia, always generous to her fellow Friends, will conduct us through the exhibition of her beloved Banksias. It includes a 'work in progress', of a recently discovered Banksia, as yet unnamed, which was found in north Western Australia.

Our excursion will also include a comprehensive tour of Victoria's wonderful library, led by Cathy Miller.

To avoid disappointment, please book early.
Cost: \$10 Friends \$7
RSVP by Thursday 20 June on booking form

GARDENS IN CHINA

Illustrated talk by Peter Valder
Friday 5 July at 10.15am for 11.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Dr Peter Valder — botanist, author, TV presenter and doyen of Australian gardeners — published *The Garden Plants of China* to international acclaim in 1999. Now in 2002 comes a companion volume, *Gardens in China*, a magnificent 400-page book with 500 colour photographs and illustrations, published by Florilegium. We're delighted that Peter has offered to talk to us following the launch of his book in Melbourne the previous evening.

Once again he has drawn on his wide botanical and horticultural experience, coupled with extensive travel in China over 20 years. This book describes more than 200 gardens Peter has visited: everything from rarely-seen temple gardens, courtyards and ancient burial grounds to more recently established public parks, botanical gardens and aboretas. Many are depicted in a Western publication for the first time, revealing a sensitive understanding of Chinese culture and garden history while including useful information for 21st century travellers.

Peter is a generous supporter of the Friends, and his talks attract large audiences, so early booking is essential. Copies of *Gardens in China* will be on sale after the talk.

Morning tea will be served from 10.15am to 10.45am, with the talk commencing at 11.00am.

Cost: \$17 Friends \$12
 RSVP by Monday 1 July on booking form

INSIDERS QUARTERLY WALK

Foliage and form in the winter garden
Thursday 18 July at 10.00am

When many trees lose their leaves and flowers are spent, what provides continuity in a garden throughout the winter? What carries a landscape during those chilly days? Foliage and form!

Andrew Laidlaw, the RBG landscape planner, will lead this eye-opening walk around the Gardens, concentrating on what looks good when many of the Gardens' plants have 'closed down' for winter. He will emphasise the value of structure and form which, together with fantastic foliage, will take a garden through the whole year.

Join us at the Friends' home, Gate Lodge, in Birdwood Avenue opposite the Shrine. Our clever caterers will serve coffee and cake, and Andrew will give a brief talk before we set off on our walk.

This walk will be restricted in numbers so book early.

Cost: \$10 Friends \$8
 Payment must accompany booking.
 RSVP by Monday 15 July on booking form.

COURTYARDS AND TINY SPACES

Illustrated talk by John Patrick
Thursday 25 July at 5.15pm for 6.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

The trend to downsize into smaller houses, units or flats brings the question: 'Where do I put all those plants I want?' Small courtyards and gardens can be difficult to landscape and manage due to problems with light, shading and microclimate. Well-known landscape architect John Patrick will give us an illustrated talk full of ideas on what to do with courtyards and tiny gardens, from paving, planting and lighting to water features, plus a few tricks to make your space seem not quite so tiny.

John Patrick has been creating gardens and writing about them for over 20 years. Originally trained in Britain, he migrated to Australia in 1980, and in the 1980s was a Senior Lecturer at Burnley College. He was one of the Friends' earliest guest speakers, having given a talk in November 1982.

He has published a number of books. He also organised and wrote the guidebook to Victoria's Open Gardens for the State's sesquicentenary, which became first Victoria's Open Garden Scheme and then the national scheme. John's own garden has been open for the Scheme. He was a member of the RBG's first Board.

It is recommended that you book early, as this promises to be a popular talk. Refreshments will be served from 5.15pm to 5.45pm, with the talk commencing at 6.00pm.

Cost: \$17 Friends \$12
 RSVP by Monday 22 July on booking form

DISPLAY AND SALE OF BOTANICALLY-INSPIRED CHINA and SMALL UNFRAMED WORKS OF BOTANICAL ART

Wednesday 31 July from 10.00am to 3.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Back by popular demand are two of our most recent successful ventures rolled into one! Ceramicist Rebecca Trinca, whom many of you will remember from last July, has again agreed to display her botanically-inspired hand-glazed china. As well as the wonderful green and cream fruits, vegetables, leaf

dishes, urns and other decorative objects we saw last year, Rebecca has added many new items, and new glazes and finishes. Popular new items include cabbage jugs, lemonade pitchers, poppy bowls and additions to the fruit and vegetable range. New glazes include a beautiful smooth celadon, a crackled celadon, cobalt blue and a sunny yellow. Rebecca will be at the display all day to talk about her work and answer questions. All items will be for sale at a special price for the Friends on the day, with a percentage of all sales going to the Friends.

Last November, the Botanical Illustrators held a one-day sale of their small unframed works of botanical art and art cards. Due to its popularity and almost complete sell-out, we will repeat this event. During the day our artists will demonstrate the art of botanical illustration, so you can see how these works are produced. All items will be for sale with a percentage of all sales going to the Friends.

Entry is free. Everyone is welcome so please bring your friends. The Friends' catering group will operate Café Mueller from 11.00am to 2.00pm, serving tea/coffee and cake at a small cost.

FABULOUS FUNGI

Illustrated Talk by Bruce Fuhrer
Tuesday 6 August at 10.15am for 11.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

Bruce Fuhrer, who collaborated with Margaret Corrick to produce *Wildflowers of Victoria*, is returning to talk to us, this time on one of his favourite subjects, FUNGI. A noted biologist and photographer and recipient of the Natural History Medallion, Bruce was awarded an honorary degree when he retired from Monash University.

He is involved in ongoing studies of Australian fungi and has selected, from his extensive collection, a fantastic photographic 'feast' including brilliant coloured species, insectivorous fungi and several rare species not yet recorded.

For those of you who attended the talk given by Margaret and Bruce last year that was cut short by a fire alarm, there will be a 50 per cent discount for this occasion.

We will have on sale copies of *Wildflowers of Victoria* and Bruce's *Field Companion to Fungi*, with a percentage of sales being donated to the Friends.

Morning tea will be served from 10.15am to 10.45am with the talk commencing at 11.00am.

Cost: \$17 Friends \$12

RSVP by Friday 2 August on booking form

BASIC PLANT PROPAGATION COURSE **Wednesdays 7, 14, 21 and 28 August,** **9.30am—12.30pm**

To be held in RBG Nursery

In conjunction with David Robbins, RBG Nursery Co-ordinator, and his staff, the Friends are delighted to offer a Basic Propagation Course. The group will be limited to 15, and will involve both classroom-style learning in the nursery and hands-on instruction in the new propagation facilities.

The course will cover an introduction to the Nursery: soil/potting media/hygiene; different types of plant reproduction: seed raising; vegetative propagation; micro-propagation and cacti/succulent grafting; seed sowing, taking cuttings and potting on. All instruction will be given by the RBG staff.

A simple morning tea will be provided. Four-hour meter parking is available in Birdwood Avenue.

The course is open to Members only, and payment must accompany bookings. Cost includes four mornings' instruction, course notes, all materials and a budding knife for participants to keep.

Cost: \$100

RSVP by Monday 15 July on booking form

PLANT PHOTOGRAPHY COURSE

We've received an encouraging response to our proposed course in plant photography (see Autumn *Botanic News*), and it is planned to go ahead in spring/summer. Any further expressions of interest in participating may be telephoned to the Friends' office, 9650 6398.



Rosemary Ball and Tommi Kimber at Attila Kapitany's talk on drought resistant gardens in April. Photo by Christine Harris

GROWING FRIENDS

Another successful sale!

Despite the rain, there was a queue at 10.00am on Saturday 13 April and the beautiful weather on Sunday enticed a steady flow of customers throughout the day. The result was that we made slightly more than at the Autumn Sale last year. The final total was \$25,029.

The Growing Friends are grateful to all those who helped to achieve this. The volunteers on the check-outs (organised by Janet Thomson and Cathy Trinca), those who count the cash, and the gardeners who assist with moving the stock to the site and back, and so generously give their time on the information desk, are vital to the operation.

Not all our stock was sold, and we are able to offer some at great bargain prices to Members in the next few weeks. In particular, we have good specimens of trees and shrubs which will be growing too big to keep in pots much longer and are anxious to be planted out.

Propagating plants is becoming a more complicated task. We are careful not to sell plants that have weed potential. We all know about tragic mistakes made in



Ann Jackson, Pamela Eames and Joan Hardy at the Autumn Sale.
Photo by Cathy Trinca

the past—blackberries, prickly pear, Paterson's Curse, Scotch thistle and so on. Even Australian plants may present dangers if they are grown in areas to which they are not indigenous. For this reason *Viminarias*, which we mentioned in the last *Botanic News* and which are not native to Victoria, had to be withdrawn from the sale because of their weed potential.

Another complication is the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity and Conservation. This is designed to return something to countries whose natural resources are being exploited. Plants that have been collected from the wild since 1992 come under this Convention. Until some way of compensation is worked out we will not be selling such plants.

We were pleased to see some groups visit the nursery recently—a group from the Botanical Illustrators and others on a Friends' Insiders tour.

Members of the Friends are welcome to come in to see the nursery and buy plants on any Friday morning except those immediately around the sales; we always notify the dates in *Botanic News*. The Spring sale is on 19 and 20 October.

Joan Hardy, Convener

AN UNEXPECTED GIFT

On 2 December last year the Melbourne Club opened its garden, famed for its four century-old plane trees, for the first time as part of the Australian Open Garden Scheme. The Club's Committee and Members have donated their share of the proceeds (\$1221) to the Friends of the RBG, in recognition of our 'valuable contribution to Australia's paramount garden'. A much-appreciated gesture.

Geoff Kneebone has been appointed volunteer gardener to assist RBG staff maintain the Gate Lodge garden.



Photo by Virginia Henderson

A PUBLIC BENEFIT FROM 'A VERY PRIVATE PERSON'

A small ceremony at the RBG nursery on 17 April marked the handover from the Friends to the Gardens of the new propagation glasshouse and propagating room. The facilities were funded by \$179,000 from the Helen Johns bequest to the Friends' Trust Fund, and \$21,000 from the Trust. Acknowledging this 'wonderful gift', Dr Philip Moors said it was not only present staff who would derive great benefit from it, but many future gardeners as well.

The RBG Nursery staff can now revel in the very latest computer-controlled technology: under-bench heating, fogging and venting systems and shading, as well as rolling benches which allow maximum use to be made of the space.

Along with the seed house donated by the Friends in 1995, the extra space and superior conditions are a great advance. The Growing Friends take cuttings in the propagation room on Fridays.

Dr Robin Sharwood, one of the Fund's Trustees, spoke about the donor whose magnificent and unexpected gift has enabled the Friends to fund the new nursery facilities and the de-silting of Central Lake.

Helen Wallace Johns was born in East Camberwell in 1916. She took an Arts degree at the University of Melbourne (1937), and, years later, a Diploma of Education (1949). She taught English for nine years (1940-1948) as St Catherine's School, and then worked as librarian for the architectural firm of Stevenson and Turner.

A member of the Lyceum Club, Helen Johns was active in the Toorak Uniting Church, of which she became an Elder. She was a Member of the Friends, working as a volunteer in the Friends' Shop.

Few appear to have been aware that Helen Johns, described as 'a very private person', had become a wealthy woman. She is believed to have inherited family money, and it is clear that she managed her assets with the greatest care. At her death in April 1999, her residuary estate — all left to an impressive roll-call of good causes — was valued at approximately \$4,200,000.

"Australians generally, and Melburnians in particular, should honour Helen Wallace Johns, this 'very private person', as one of their most notable late-20th century benefactors", Dr Sharwood said.

*Trustees of the Friends' Trust Fund
Lawrence Cohn, Dr Robin Sharwood and Frank Phillips at the handover ceremony.*

RBG Board Members

MS ELAINE CANTY and MR MICHAEL BOURKE have joined the RBG Board.

After working as a solicitor and as a tutor at Monash University, Ms Canty became the ABC's first female sports broadcaster in Victoria and in 1996 the first woman to be appointed to the AFL Tribunal. Best known for the 3LO program she presented for eight years, she still makes appearances on ABC radio and television, and runs a communications company.

Ms Canty is a Board Member of VicHealth, Women's and Children's Health (Royal Women's and Royal Children's Hospitals), Queen Victoria Market, Athletics Australia and is a foundation director of the Victorian Institute of Sport. She becomes Deputy Chairman of the RBG Board.

Mr Bourke has been Managing Director of City West Water Ltd since 1998, after spending five years as Chief Executive of Coliban Water in central Victoria. Apart from holding positions in many water industry organisations, he is a member of the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants, the Australian Institute of Company Directors, the Committee for Melbourne and the Committee for Economic Development of Australia. He was awarded the degree of Bachelor of Business Studies in 1980.

Professor Pauline Ladiges, the only remaining member of the original RBG Board appointed in 1992, has been reappointed, as have Chairman David Adam and Mr Rodger Elliot.

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Remember, Cranbourne Friends will be grateful for your donations of books, magazines etc (see Autumn Botanic News p13) for their Bookfest in Mueller Hall on the day of the October Plant Sale. Contact 9879 1427 for details.



Photo by Helen Fahey

Botanical Illustrators

DIANNE EMERY'S CLASSES

An Introduction to Botanical Art one-day workshops:
Saturday 6 July and Wednesday 10 July from
10.00am to 4.00pm. **All materials provided.**

Term 3 will commence in the week beginning 22 July.

For more information please contact Dianne Emery
on 9523 5397.

We are taking expressions of interest for a Saturday
morning class in Botanical Art and Illustration.
Those interested should contact Dianne on 9523 5397.

SEASONAL PROGRAM

**The Bryophytes (Mosses, Liverworts and
Hornworts) - a talk with Karen Beckmann
Tuesday 11 June**

**Meet at the Whirling Room at 10.00am
Cost: \$5.50 (incl. GST). Pay on the day, but
RSVP to Friends' office, tel. 9650 6398**

Karen Beckmann will talk to us about Bryophytes and
the requirements for illustrating them.

In 2003 the Royal Botanic Gardens will be celebrating
the 150th anniversary of the National Herbarium of
Victoria. As part of these celebrations a conference
will be held, including the seventh Australasian
Bryophyte Workshop. The conveners of the
workshop will hold an exhibition of Bryophyte
illustrations during the conference and immediately
before the workshop. It is hoped that the exhibition
will stimulate the production of new works by
botanical illustrators and an interest in this important
and frequently overlooked group of plants.

Karen is inviting expressions of interest from artists
who would like to exhibit in 2003. You may contact
her on (03) 9752 1002, email at dixfarm@ozemail.com.au,
or at P.O. Box 56, Kallista, 3791.

ADVANCE NOTICE

In connection with the 2003 exhibition, Karen
Beckmann (Dix) will conduct a workshop dealing
with the botany of Bryophytes, most likely in
September. For more details, please contact Dianne
Emery on 9523 5397.

**Sale of Small Unframed Works of Botanical Art
and Botanically-inspired China**
in Mueller Hall, National Herbarium
Wednesday 31 July, 10.00am—3.00pm

THE ART OF BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION 2002

24 October to 10 November

ENTRY FORMS

Selection of works for this exhibition will be held
from 16 to 19 September in Mueller Hall, National
Herbarium.

**Entry forms for those wishing to submit works for
selection will be available from 1 July. Please
collect these from the Friends' office or send a
business-size stamped s.a.e. marked
"TABI Entry form".**

**Completed entry forms must be returned to the
FRBG by 6 September.**

Prospective exhibitors please note:

- We would like to encourage artists to submit
works for selection **unframed** rather than
framed, for ease of handling in the selection
process, to reduce the risk of damage to the
framing, and to allow selected artworks to be
photographed prior to framing.
- We are endeavouring to have all selected
works for this exhibition available for viewing
on the Friends' website. To facilitate this we
are asking exhibitors to provide us with a
professional quality transparency that can be
copied on to a disk for this specific purpose.
- A reminder: exhibitors must be financial
members of the Friends by 30 June 2002.
- Preview and opening reception will be held on
Wednesday 23 October.

THE ILLUSTRATED GARDEN

**A further invitation for our artist members to join
us in celebrating and recording plants from the
RBG's unique and varied Collections.**

We are looking forward to seeing the first selected
illustrations for this project on display in this year's
exhibition. If you are interested in submitting a
painting or drawing of a special RBG plant to our
forthcoming exhibition, there is still time before
selection in September.

Copies of our master list of significant plants and
trees are available for \$2 from the Friends' office. A
reference copy is held at the Whirling Room studio.

Golden Leaves

In the last Botanic News we noted the award in London of a gold medal to Botanical Illustrator Rita Parkinson. Here is part of her interesting response to Sir Ninian Stephen's congratulations.

'Thank you for your letter regarding my participation in the Royal Horticultural Society's London exhibition. I showed eight paintings from the Agavaceae family. Several of these paintings were of flora in RBG Melbourne. One such was an *Agave americana*, (photo at right) complete with inflorescence, from the succulent garden.

Botanical art is experiencing a renaissance. This resurgence of interest has an international scope. In the January exhibition in London, works from artists from Italy, South Korea, Greece, South Africa, USA and Ireland were shown, and the sole entry from Australia, myself.

When attending the exhibition, I overheard several people remark with astonishment that this artist had come all the way from Australia ... This reminded me that our artists do suffer from that historical disadvantage of distance. It's never easy for us. But it is important for us to participate internationally.

I have no doubts that work done here is equal to, and often better than, work done elsewhere. New technology can help us here. It is on the agenda for the Friends' botanic art group to develop a website in the near future. This will help us to communicate on wider bases, more often, in the future.

Meeting artists from a wide field, comparing notes on working methods, subject matter and the state of the local botanical art community was a wonderful experience for me, and certainly one that I would like to repeat.'

BOTANICAL ART STUDENTS EXHIBITION

Students of Botanical Illustration are holding an exhibition of work at the Australian Guild of Realist Artists, Camberwell Road, Camberwell, until 9 June. Details from Dianne Emery on 9523 5397.

WHIRLYBIRDS

The Tuesday Painters continue to hold their weekly meetings in the Whirling Room Studio, and invite Botanical Illustrator Friends to join them to work in an informal group, sharing ideas and technical information in a supportive atmosphere. Ring Rita Parkinson on 9821 5883 for information.



MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

If you're seeing this newsletter for the first time and would like to join the Friends, here is some basic information. Annual membership fees are:

Household	\$52
Individual	\$36
Country, Interstate, Overseas	\$26
Full-time Student or Pensioner validation required	\$26

OR phone the Friends' office, 03 9650 6398, for an application form, which also has details of Corporate, Group and Life membership.

OR visit our website: www.frbgmclb.org.au

Please make cheques or money orders payable to Friends of RBG Melbourne. If paying by credit card, state card number, expiry date and name on card.

Post to: Friends of RBG Melbourne
Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Avenue
Melbourne Vic 3004

Members will not be surprised to learn of a modest increase in subscriptions from 1 July — the first since 1999. We have tried to keep our rates as low as possible while needing to cover increased costs including a foreshadowed rise in postal charges.

THE FRIENDS' 20TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



1. Michael McNabb, RBG Acting Manager, Horticulture, presents the tree to the main players, Beth Higgs and Sir Ninian Stephen. Photo by Duncan Ironmonger



2. 'Your turn'. The spade is handed over. Photo by Duncan Ironmonger



3. Like a fairy godmother waving a wand, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch waters in the new tree very thoroughly. Photo by Jack Higgs

Here is a slightly abridged version of the talk given by BETH HIGGS at our 20th birthday party, recalling the earlier days of the Friends.

Twenty years ago corporate sponsorship for the Gardens was not in evidence—we were a small part of a very large government department. Individual enthusiasm was largely untapped, but we found evidence of deep emotional attachments from the public. People had walked their children around the Gardens, had fed the swans, held family picnics, had brought overseas visitors, did their courting.

Few were aware of the importance of the scientific work undertaken in the Herbarium or the depth of its collections. Little was known of the development of the Cranbourne Annexe after a protracted battle by the Maud Gibson Trust to secure the land.

Twenty years ago the Friends virtually had just one member—me. I was training to become a Guide for the Gardens when I was presented with a challenge by Dr David Churchill [the Gardens' Director] to investigate the formation of a Friends organisation. It was initially proposed as a branch of the Plant Craft Cottage but, because of the entirely different objectives of the two, it was essential that a Friends organisation operated as a separate entity with its own constitution.

I needed support, and it came in the form of a recommendation from Sylvia Churchill that I make contact with a certain lady. "You'll find her a very wise and thoughtful lady." I rang this lady, introduced myself and the subject of my call. (Imagine this—two people who had never met and probably had never heard of each other.) The reply to my call should go down in the history of the Friends — "I'm in the middle of preparing dinner, but I'm willing to listen". Golda Isaac has been involved in almost every phase of the development of the Friends and we have worked together in complete harmony from that moment.

Inaugural Public Meeting. To gauge public support an inaugural meeting was held in February 1982. Professor Carrick Chambers—Professor of Botany at Melbourne University—addressed the meeting on the subject of the Cranbourne Garden, but used the occasion to encourage us in the new venture. I can still quote him: "**Friends should be guardians of the Gardens**" and "**Friends should be lobbyists to gain support for the Gardens**".

Interest was evident and support was essential. Our first step was to gather a steering committee with a wide spread of business and community interests. Those who accepted that original invitation included Golda Isaac, Frank Phillips (in 1984 our first President), Stuart Turnbull (our first Treasurer),

14 MARCH 2002



4. The tree, already 10 years old, was raised in the RBG nursery from seed collected in China. It should grow to about 15 metres tall. 5. Sir Ninian Stephen, Frank Phillips, Beth Higgs, Sir Rupert Hamer and David Wilkinson — a presidential lineup for the cake-cutting ceremony.

Photos by Cathy Trinca

Lawrence Cohn (who was for 15 years Secretary of the Friends) and Jill Jones. Michael Black, now in Canberra, undertook our early legal work. We needed immediate secretarial and membership recording services. Doreen Schofield and my daughter-in-law, Sue Higgs, came to my aid as interim secretary and membership recorder.

Broadly speaking the purposes of the Friends were:

- * To raise community awareness of the Gardens and Herbarium
- * To provide relevant activities for members
- * To raise funds for projects of value to the Gardens and Herbarium.

Save the Lake Campaign. It could be said that we were baptised in the Lake. A project that embraced all our purposes emerged when we were not yet out of the cradle. The Lake needed urgent attention. A weed had covered almost all of the Lake's reflective surfaces and decaying vegetation underneath posed a danger to wildlife. The solution was to drain the Lake and remove the silt and lily roots—cost \$250,000. We had no funds. The government said "It can't be done this year". A little lobbying was needed. Embarrassing articles were beginning to appear in the press. By fortunate chance *The Sun* newspaper was looking for a project to celebrate its 60th anniversary. What better than a public Save the Lake appeal; this was promptly launched with a \$20,000 donation from

THE BIRTHDAY CAKE

PATERSONS CAKES gave the Friends a wonderful 20th birthday present — a delicious cake, as they had done for our 10th anniversary. We acknowledge their support with much gratitude, and also the skill of Otto Fauser, who decorated the cake.

The Sun and received great support from the public and the government.

The most visible aspect of the appeal was provided by the Tramways Board. A jet-black tram with a fluorescent green skeleton of a swan stretching from end to end beneath a Save the Lake message trundled around the suburbs for several months.

Who, I wonder, remembers our first Family Picnic? Crowds, small painted faces, creating murals, collages, necklaces, a lovely lady transformed in seconds into a clown, a flautist making magical music, collecting children from all over the Gardens. That was year One.

Activities underway. By now (1983) the Friends were settling into a better-organised operation with a month-by-month program and a wider range of interests. I congratulate the Activities Committee for the constant program of interesting events —



On display at the birthday party—a centrespread from *The Sun* of 13 November 1982.

Growing Friends. Our Growing Friends have added another dimension to our retailing concept. There would be few discerning gardeners in Melbourne who have not visited their sales. The concept has taken root and there are now Growing Friends attached to many regional botanic gardens — a fitting tribute to their professionalism.

class lectures by local and overseas experts, always supported by the quality services of our Catering Committee. Local, interstate and overseas tours were important. Our first trip was to Canberra, where we were warmly welcomed to Yarralumla and its beautiful gardens by Lady Stephen. The direct contact with our members — our publications — have from the outset been of a quality that has earned unstinting praise.

Our first sales outlet was a humble table in the kiosk—weekends only—for which we produced the very first picture postcards of the Gardens. Later we added a letter card, printed from a painting donated by Jenny Phillips, of *Sophora torimiro*, a rare and endangered plant growing in the Gardens.

We were able to make our first donation to the Gardens towards redevelopment of the herb garden.

Our retail outlet moved to a store room with a blank wall facing the Lake. The carefully-drawn but misread plan to provide an opening in the wall resulted in a counter above the heads of children and our ladies needed to sit on high stools to communicate with the customers. Who can forget the 'Hole in the Wall'! Before long, permission was given to convert an unused room at the west end of the Kiosk into a proper retail outlet. Stocked with a wide range of appropriate merchandise, with professional management supported by well-trained volunteers, this operation provided, as well as friendly retail services, help and guidance for the lost and those in need—to the trams, to the nearest gate, to the city, to the toilets.

Outstanding exhibitions. Exhibitions have not escaped our attention. We had a finger in the pie in the Gardens' May Gibbs *Snugglypot and Cuddlepig* exhibition. Exhibitions conducted by Friends have been extremely well supported. In 1983 our first botanical art exhibition, *The Banksias*, featured a lecture by Alex George and an exhibition of historical prints, drawings and paintings from the Herbarium collection.

Further exhibitions in this genre featured artists Anita Barley, Stan Kelly, Jenny Phillips and Colin Woolcock. To celebrate the publication of Volume 2 of *The Banksias* painted by Celia Rosser, we staged an exhibition of the original paintings for Volumes 1 and 2, kindly loaned by Monash University. We were overwhelmed by the response; a timely acknowledgment for Celia Rosser and from the sale of volumes and prints, a profitable exercise for the Friends.

With these talented artists among us, instruction was in demand, and I compliment Louise Coronel for seizing the moment and introducing the first botanical art workshops. These were later to evolve into the very successful Botanical Illustrators group, which has few equals worldwide.

The 1991 exhibition, *Our Botanical Heritage*, may well rank as our most memorable. Working closely with the Herbarium staff, who chose and catalogued the display from the treasures of the Herbarium and its Library, we were responsible for the design, the publicity and the management of the exhibition. For three weeks, it quite overwhelmed the public.

Notes from the Gardens

Well, it seems that we may have at last packed the extended 'Indian' summer off to make way for its less sociable cousin, winter. Summer arrived unfashionably late and has hung around long after its welcome has worn out. Despite its generally sunny demeanour, it has been a little like the restaurant guest who remains long after the staff have closed the kitchen, put the chairs up and started sweeping around and under the patrons' feet. Poor old autumn has only been invited for a quick visit to the table, and even then was barely offered a drink. It is only now that summer has been escorted to the door and sent down the alley singing drunkenly, that the scene can really be commandeered by the winter brigade.

The plants in the Gardens have endured some degree of ambiguity about the change of seasons this year. Some have packed up their summer finery, and sat somewhat stoically waiting for the onset of the rain and colder temperatures. Others have taken a more brazen 'well darn it, if the days are going to continue warmish, then let's have another go at flowering' approach. It's hard to criticise either state of mind.

While temperature certainly is a factor which affects the change of season, day (and night) length do not tend to abandon their annual pattern. As we move towards shorter days, the reliable winter flowering plants step up to be counted. The Camellia collection is always a highlight for the flower-hunters, from the early flowerers in April (*Camellia granthamiana**, for example) through winter to the spring end of the season. It is interesting also to note the very camellia-like flowers of *Gordonia axillaris* (whitish, with yellow stamens) also in bloom during June-July, down near the Tea Rooms.

*See Anita Barley's illustration on masthead

BETH HIGGS continued

Contributing to our success. The success of the Friends is due to the outstanding contributions made by so many people. There are our Presidents: Frank Phillips, David Wilkinson, Sir Rupert Hamer, John Harper and Sir Ninian Stephen. There are our Council members, those who have served on the various committees, our volunteers in countless capacities, our secretarial staff and our Members at large, as well as the many sponsors for numerous events. This is an organisation where friendship, goodwill and the sharing of tasks and experience are a way of life. I stand in awe knowing that your combined efforts have enabled donations in excess of \$1,000,000 to be made to projects within the Gardens and Herbarium. Your work has been of immense significance in enhancing these Gardens, one of the world's greatest, together with the vital scientific institution at its heart.

As the skies turn dull grey, and the clouds lower their mantle in the middle of the year, the aloes stand as beacons of colour and light as they present their fiery spikes of flowers. With colours ranging from deep reds, through scarlets and oranges, and even into yellows, they offer a striking array of bold statements throughout the drier parts of the landscape.

June is a good month for catching a whiff of the heady perfume from the showy pink or whitish flowers of various *Luculia* species around the Gardens. At the other end of the scale, make an appointment for a viewing of the small yellow inflorescences on *Acacia aphylla*, at the Grey Garden below the Temple of the Winds. This curious Western Australian acacia has no real leaves, but gets by with photosynthetic stem tissue.

A quick trip past the *Eucalyptus caesia* 'Silver Princess' in the Water Conservation Garden is also worthwhile – the crimson-red stamens and hefty fruits are covered with a waxy bloom, and the white bark of the trunks stands out in the angular winter light. While out on the roam, keep an eye out for the almost continual flowering of the native hibiscus *Alyogyne huegelii* (we grow a selected variety called 'West Coast Gem'). These satiny deep-bluish-purple flowers are most spectacular, and seem to be present almost all year. This plant is surely one of the great underexposed beauties of the Australian flora, and worthy of planting in many more gardens.

Of course one of the real treats for this winter will be the Voluntary Guides' 'Chocolate and Spice' Walk – with tastings, naturally. I have a feeling that this may be very popular!

Richard Barley



Wendy Capper, Helena Kelso and Ruth Rundle enjoy a peaceful stroll beside the Ovens River at Bright which Friends visited in April. Photo by Durham Smith

GARDENS GROW WITH FUNDS FROM FRIENDS

Our tally of financial support for the Gardens, which includes grants from the Friends' Trust Fund, now stands at almost \$1,200,000. While many grants have been directed towards 'invisible' causes, others can be identified and are acknowledged with a plaque in the Gardens. Sometimes we've stepped in when the Gardens have been unable to attract corporate sponsorship for less glamorous, but always worthwhile, items on their wish list, such as \$49,000 to assist the cataloguing and databasing of the Herbarium's Leguminosae collection; \$10,000 for the cataloguing of the Jim Willis archive; \$4600 for the restoration of Baron von Mueller's dining room chairs, and recently \$19,500 towards the installation of rubbish recycling bins around the RBG.

This account illustrates the amazing diversity of projects we've supported, and raises the question: 'Where would the Gardens be without its Friends?'

The first donation

The first grant to the Gardens from the newly-formed Friends was a humble \$619 for plants for the Herb Garden in October 1985, followed up six months later with \$1500 for labels for the Herb Garden and then a further \$197 for plants. The Herb Garden received another boost from the Friends in January 1991, when we provided \$8500 for an irrigation system. Other early grants were for repairs to Nymphaea Lake and a fountain, and in 1988 \$11,400 for a new pathway. A similar amount provided a misting system for the Rainforest Border.

Beds and buildings

The renovation of Gate Lodge and landscaping of its garden (\$114,500) was a major contribution from which the Friends have received a direct benefit, acquiring a home while achieving essential restoration of a heritage building. A recent substantial bequest from Miss Helen Johns enabled us to pay \$120,000 for the desilting of Central Lake last year, and \$200,000 for a new glasshouse and preparation room in the nursery yard. This complemented the seedhouse (\$56,000) we had donated in 1995.

We've given more than \$36,000 for the establishment or refurbishment of garden beds over the years, more than \$14,000 for plant labels and more than \$10,000 for signs in the Gardens. We've donated \$2500 for frames for climbing roses, and were delighted to contribute \$16,000 towards the restoration of the Rose Pavilion for the Gardens' 150th anniversary. Sometimes we've financed preliminary studies (e.g. for the restoration of the former Director's Residence and Observatory buildings) and a soil survey (connected with the proposed irrigation system study), amounting to \$36,000.

In 1993 we provided \$15,000 for an officer to plan the use of funds raised by the *Herald Sun* RBG Revitalisation Appeal.

Computers and curtains

As new technology was introduced, the Friends were in demand to provide equipment such as computers, a laserjet printer, a global positioning system, an electronic gazetteer and two-way radios, amounting to \$60,000. We also provided wheels in the form of a golf buggy and a buggy with trailer for the Education Service (\$15,550).

Mueller Hall's versatility has been enhanced by the Friends' provision of speakers, chairs, curtains and lighting costing more than \$20,000. These improvements help attract revenue-raising bookings.

In 1994 the Friends instigated a scheme to facilitate the donation of garden seats; so far 82 seats have been placed in the Gardens.

Publications and paintings

We've supported the production of several publications ranging from Volumes 1 and 2 of *Flora of Victoria* to booklets on elms and nomenclature, another on Japanese flowering cherries, and illustrations for the *Cultivated Flora of South-eastern Australia* — altogether \$86,000. We've also donated more than \$66,000 towards the preparation of a history of the National Herbarium to be published for its 150th anniversary in 2003.

The high standard achieved by the Friends botanical artists has been recognised with our donation of paintings for the State Botanical Collection (\$6000) from their last three exhibitions. We also purchased an Ellis Rowan painting (\$4500) for this collection in 1998; a gift to the RBG of four framed Banksia prints is also recorded.

Grants to staff reap dividends

We supported a Mueller Fellowship with \$12,500 in 1998, and made a wise investment in scholarship at the Herbarium in 1990 by contributing \$13,500 for the initial short-term appointment of its first mycologist, Tom May, to curate the fungi specimens and integrate them into the Herbarium collection. Since then, he has expanded knowledge in this field with distinction. The Friends' most recent grant also goes to Dr Tom May and his colleague Dr Teresa Lebel, enabling them to present their research findings at the 7th International Mycological Congress in Oslo in August 2002.

Donations amounting to \$54,000 have resourced RBG staff to travel to conferences, make collecting

trips and undertake field studies. The Friends' sponsorship (\$11,000) of landscape planner Andrew Laidlaw to visit the USA in 2001 has already paid dividends in the form of his inspired plan for The Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden.

Terry Smyth is well recognised for her development of the Southern Chinese Collection in the Gardens. She often expresses gratitude to the Friends for funding her plant collecting trip to China in 1992 (\$5000) and providing \$14,000 for a replacement in the RBG in 1998 while she worked at the Kunming Botanic Garden in Yunnan Province.

Old Melbourne Observatory

The Old Melbourne Observatory will have in place by the end of June a new interpretive display for self-guided tours. It focuses on the people associated with the Observatory and on two significant projects that featured prominently in the Observatory's history. The Astrograph Project involved 18 observatories around the world, working to achieve the immense task of photographing and mapping the entire sky. The Old Melbourne Observatory played a significant role in documenting the transit of Venus between the Sun and Earth in 1874, for which the South Equatorial and Photoheliograph House was built.

Through the generosity of the Friends we are able to provide additional equipment, including three telescopes and 15 pairs of binoculars, for school and visitor programs associated with the display.

Philip Moors

SPONSOR A TREE

The Royal Botanic Gardens' *Sponsor a Tree or Collection* program is being very well-received, with interest from many people wanting to sponsor the highlighted trees and collections as well as their own favourites. It has been enjoyable to see families sponsoring their favourite trees, thus recognising the Royal Botanic Gardens' place in their lives.

Notes from Gate Lodge

We are delighted that we now have our three Celia Rosser Banksia prints displayed in Gate Lodge, having received permission from Heritage Victoria to install hanging tracks and notice boards on our walls. This has been made possible by our cheery handyman Bruce Peebles, a member who offered his services in the June 2001 survey. We thank Bruce for his help. He has also put up noticeboards and shelving and fixed our back door. All of these things contribute to our pleasant and efficient working environment.

Virginia Henderson

Friends' initial support of \$15,500 for the development of the Aboriginal Heritage Walk is another example of our seed-funding contributing to a now widely-acclaimed activity in the Gardens.

Renewed enthusiasm

So, as we launch a new target for our fundraising, we reflect on what we've achieved so far, thank all those who have been part of our activities, and urge you to make donations, attend functions and enlist new Members; in this way we can continue to support our wonderful Royal Botanic Gardens in the 21st century.

Heather Ironmonger

Flying-foxes: record count

At the time of writing this report in late April, officers from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) were continuing the preparation of management plans, contingency plans, agreements, and amendments to local planning schemes, which will eventually allow for final approval of an alternative roost site for flying-foxes at Horseshoe Bend. Due to the complicated nature of the project and the involvement of so many agencies from local, State and Federal government, it is a slow process. However, good progress is being made and by the time the Winter issue of *Botanic News* goes to print we hope that final approvals will have been granted and that NRE officers will have gained access to the Horseshoe Bend site to commence preparations for the flying-foxes.

The most recent fly-out count in April gave a total of approximately 24,250 flying-foxes in RBG Melbourne. This is the highest count recorded to date and compares with 20,000 bats at the same time in 2001. The area of roosting has extended well beyond Fern Gully to now include a substantial section of Oak Lawn, Princes Lawn, Central Lawn and the north-western margins of the Ornamental Lake.

Philip Moors

THE BATS ARE BACK! So proclaimed the Friends' newsletter No.8 in May 1984.

"About a dozen grey-headed flying-foxes arrived in the Gardens during the first week in April and took up residence in the Fern Gully. Their numbers steadily increased to about 100 during April and May. This species had previously visited in March 1981 and 1982.

The article notes 'the flying-foxes will probably head north for warmer climes in June...It will be interesting to see whether their southern sojourn will become a regular autumn feature in the Gardens.'

Botanic Birds

Three interpretation panels about bird life in the Gardens have been installed beside the Ornamental Lake. Andrew Plant, a talented artist and bird watcher, has donated colour illustrations of a Fairy-wren, a black swan, a coot and a Nankeen Night Heron for the signs. The Friends granted \$900 for their production.



Photo by Virginia Henderson

Winter is coming

The birds are becoming quieter. The contact and alarm calls of the Blackbirds and the Scrub Wrens seem more muted. The Wattlebirds, Rainbow Lorikeets and the Sulphur-crested Cockatoos are less rowdy than usual and even the Magpie Larks and Willie Wagtails are not as chirpy. The Fairy-wrens, Spinebills, Reed Warblers and Song Thrushes are keeping to themselves. The Night Herons are tucking themselves away, and the numbers seem to be well below the peak in December (40-plus birds).

The noise of the 24,000 or more Grey-headed Flying-foxes, now spread out well beyond the Fern Gully across the Oak Lawn and beyond, makes it difficult to hear bird calls in a large section of the Gardens. One wonders how much the bats affect the birds in that much greater area.

For the time being, most of the Wood Ducks and Teal seem to have left the Gardens; the numbers of Cormorants and Night Herons are reduced also. The high-pitched, repeated 'seep seep' call of the Little Grassbird is missing and we do not know whether it has left the Gardens or is in quiet mode.

The number of fleeting visits from passing travellers has declined, although there have been recent sightings of a Pied Currawong (this happens two or three times a year) and the Kookaburra is still around. The Tawny

Frogmouths haven't been seen recently and we would welcome sightings of the Powerful Owl, the Hobby, and other birds of prey.

With the breeding season generally over, there has been a recent report of fledgling Reed Warblers, probably the second for the season. There are still some young Coot and Dusky Moorhens on the Ornamental Lake.

A Bell Miner takeover?

Since first sighted 12 years ago the Bell Miners (often mistakenly called Bellbirds) have steadily increased in numbers. They were largely confined to an area around D Gate in the South East of the Gardens. Over the years they have spread through the Eucalypt Lawn and along the fence line towards E Gate.

Separate colonies have now been established in the vicinity of the Separation Tree and near H Gate. There are even some birds in a Yellow Box between the Tea Rooms and the William Tell Rest House, although it may well be that they are an overflow from the Separation Tree area. There is also a small colony on the far side of Government House, near the main gate.

The Bell Miner is a particularly territorial and aggressive bird (first cousin to the equally aggressive Noisy Miner) and forces out other birds that threaten its space and feeding. One consequence is that there are fewer reports of White Plumed Honeyeaters than there were even three or four years ago. Is this the bird equivalent of a hostile takeover?

David Plant (9857 6006) & Tony Delves (9820 0694) would appreciate reports of sightings.



Framed by a wonderful eucalypt, College Principal Dr Greg Moore talking to Friends at Burnley in late summer.

Photo by Cathy Trinca

WINTER 2002 BOTANIC NEWS
BOOKING FORM

FILM LUNCHEON: I AM SAM

Wednesday 19 June at 11.00am
Dendy Cinema, Brighton

No.....@ \$16 TOTAL:\$
RSVP by 13/6/02

WINTER LUNCH

to launch *WATER WORKS, WATER WISE*
Thursday 20 June at noon
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

No.....@ \$10 TOTAL:\$
RSVP by 17/6/02

BANKSIA EXHIBITION & LIBRARY TOUR

Wednesday 26 June at 10.30am

No..... of Friends @ \$7
No..... of others @ \$10 TOTAL:\$

RSVP by 20/6/02

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, 100 Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne 3004. Telephone: (03) 9650 6398

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

NAME

ADDRESS

WINTER 2002 BOTANIC NEWS
BOOKING FORM

GARDENS IN CHINA

Friday 5 July at 10.15am for 11.00am
Mueller Hall National Herbarium

No.....of Friends @ \$12
No..... of others @ \$17 TOTAL:\$
RSVP by 1/7/02

QUARTERLY WALK

Foliage and Form in the Winter Garden
Thursday 18 July at 10.00am

No.....of Friends @ \$8
No.....of others @ \$10 TOTAL:\$
RSVP by 15/7/02

COURTYARDS AND TINY SPACES

Thursday 25 July at 5.15pm for 6.00pm
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

No.....of Friends @ \$12
No..... of others @ \$17 TOTAL:\$
RSVP by 22/7/02

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.

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WINTER 2002 BOTANIC NEWS
BOOKING FORM

FABULOUS FUNGI

Tuesday 6 August at 10.15am for 11.00am
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium

No.....of Friends @ \$12
No.....of others @ \$17
*No.....at discount = \$6
*No.....at discount = \$8.50

*Please list names if more than one

..... TOTAL:\$
RSVP by 2/8/02

PLANT PROPAGATION

7, 14, 21 and 28 August at 9.30am
RBG Nursery

No.....of Friends @ \$100 TOTAL:\$
RSVP by 15/7/02

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.

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SPECIAL EVENTS IN THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, MELBOURNE

JUNE 2002

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE WALK
Thursdays and Fridays at 11.00am
Sundays 2, 16 and 30 at 10.30am
Groups by arrangement.

GARDENS HIGHLIGHTS GUIDED WALK
Sunday to Friday, 11.00am and 2.00pm

OBSERVATORY TOUR
STARS, COWS AND SPIDER WEBS
Group bookings only, minimum number applies

THE NIGHT SKY EXPERIENCE GUIDED TOUR
Tuesdays 4 and 18 at 7.30pm

CHOCOLATE AND SPICE
Wednesday 5 at 10.30am; Sunday 16 at 2.30pm;
Friday 21 at 10.30am Hot chocolate at Observatory Café
then guided walk with botanic focus on spice plants.

**NB. RBG IS NOT RUNNING SCHOOL HOLIDAY
ACTIVITIES AT SOUTH YARRA THIS JULY**

Gardens Highlights Guided Walks do not require prior
bookings except for large groups.
Meet at the Visitor Centre, Observatory Gate.

PLEASE NOTE that most events incur a charge and
require prior booking. It is important that you contact the
appropriate phone number. Unless otherwise noted, the
number to ring for all listings is 9252 2429.
Please appreciate that, after Botanic News goes to press, it is
likely that additional events may be arranged for late in the
quarter.

JULY 2002

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE WALK
Thursdays and Fridays at 11.00am
Sundays 14 and 28 at 10.30am
Groups by arrangement.

GARDENS HIGHLIGHTS GUIDED WALK
Sunday to Friday, 11.00am and 2.00pm

OBSERVATORY TOUR
STARS, COWS AND SPIDER WEBS
Group bookings only, minimum number applies

THE NIGHT SKY EXPERIENCE GUIDED TOUR
Tuesdays 2, 16 and 30 at 7.30pm

PLANT CRAFT COTTAGE
SCHOOL HOLIDAY WORKSHOP. CARDS FOR KIDS
Spend half an hour or so making cards. 10.30am—2.00pm,
Tuesday 9, Wednesday 10 and Thursday 11.

SPECIAL EVENTS AT RBG CRANBOURNE Bookings essential on 5990 2200

WINTER LECTURES
9.45am—4.00pm, lunch included.

Sunday 16 June at Cranbourne Public Hall
Trevor Blake. *Up in the Blooming Mountains*
Dr Teresa Lebel. *Frolicking with Fungi*

Sunday 14 July in City of Moreland Auditorium, Coburg
Alistair Phillips and Jane Shepherd. *An Urban Role for Local
Plants*
Tony Faithfull. *The Merri Creek Project*

Sunday 11 August in the Wonga Park Community Hall
Dr Robyn Adams. *The Role of Fire in the Australian
Landscape.*
Scott Seymour. *River Catchments and Rivers in our Backyard*

AUGUST 2002

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE WALK
Thursdays and Fridays at 11.00am
Sundays 11 and 25 at 10.30am
Groups by arrangement.

GARDENS HIGHLIGHTS GUIDED WALK
Sunday to Friday, 11.00am and 2.00pm

OBSERVATORY TOUR
STARS, COWS AND SPIDER WEBS
Group bookings only, minimum number applies

THE NIGHT SKY EXPERIENCE GUIDED TOUR
Tuesdays 13 and 27 at 7.30pm

SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAMS
MARVELLOUS MINIBEASTS
Tuesday 2 and Wednesday 10 July at 10.00am.
For 6-12 year olds

BOOMERANGS AND BOONDIES
Wednesday 3 and Thursday 11 July at 10.00am.
For 6-12 year olds

NIGHT PROWL
Thursday 4 July at 7.00pm For adults and children over 6.

ROSE EXTRAVAGANZA

Is it possible to have an excess of roses? On our morning with French roses in April, Mueller Hall was filled with Friends and flowers. There were single long-stemmed blooms, potted bush and standard plants in flower, stunning arrangements, framed watercolour prints, and our surprise extra speaker, extrovert milliner Peter Jago, who fashions his own silk Delbard roses. A rose, La Jago, has been named after him.

Chloe Fournier created a cone of roses, berries and foliage; a cluster of roses in a pumpkin; an informal massed arrangement, and a fascinating outsize rose made from individual petals. Our Catering Group set the scene with dainty French treats.

Rod Kerley, whose business at Moorooduc had concentrated on marketing unusual fruit and vegetables, went to France in search of the famous apples which had been cultivated by five generations of the Delbard family. When he realised he'd have a nine-year wait to achieve a marketable crop, he readily accepted the offer of a licence to grow Delbard roses in Australia instead...a much quicker result. The rest, as they say, is history!

"Loving friends"

Friends' President David Wilkinson wrote in *Botanic News*, Winter 1990: *Our role as 'watchdog', as well as fundraiser and promoter of the Gardens, is a very important one. If there are any areas within the Gardens that you feel deserve improvement, please write down your criticism, constructive or otherwise, and send it to us. It is only one's friends — loving friends — who are prepared to point out one's shortcomings in life!*

His words could still apply today, in our 21st year.



French florist, French roses — a serendipitous connection. Chloe Fournier with some of her imaginative creations.

Photo by Susan Brookes

FRIENDS' BENEFITS

The Gardens Shops 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, Port Melb.
589 Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn
5% off plants only

Berna Park Nursery

cnr Park Rd/Paul St, Cheltenham.
5% discount on plants

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 plants over \$20 only.

Holmesglen Nursery

585 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley
10% 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% off everything

The Cottage Garden Nursery

Cnr Macedon Ave/ Doncaster Rd
North Balwyn. 10% discount,
also 8 punnets for \$22 (GST incl)

The Arts Bookshop

1067 High St, Armadale

Banksia Hill B & B

RMB 5349, Horsham, 3401
10% discount on accommodation

Feldspar at Trentham B&B, via

Daylesford. Ph: 5424 1821

10% discount on accommodation

Killarney Cottage B&B Sorrento

Ph: 5984 1970

10% discount on accommodation

Blackwood Lane Gallery

24 Blackwood Lane, Gembrook
10% off paintings, prints and
commissions

*Botanical Creations

122 Grange Rd, Glenhuntly
Disc. on mthly Garden Club items

*denotes newcomer 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

Heritage Victoria

The Heritage Council recently resolved to include the whole of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne on the Victorian Heritage Register. The notice of registration and extent was gazetted on 11 April 2002. Heritage Victoria endorsed the RBG Melbourne's Master Plan as the guide for day-to-day management and care of the gardens and a framework for the future development of the landscape and the living plant collections within it.

That RBG Melbourne has remained an integral part of the cultural and scientific heritage of Melbourne since its establishment over 150 years ago is testimony to the vision upon which the Gardens was founded and developed, and continues to be managed. Registration places high-level protection on RBG Melbourne, ensuring that generations to come will be able to experience one of the world's finest botanic gardens, and provide a living reminder of our horticultural and scientific achievements. The Royal Botanic Gardens welcomes the Heritage Council's decision and will continue to acknowledge and preserve the RBG Melbourne's significant heritage, whilst continuing to evolve in its scientific, conservation, education and horticultural endeavours.

Long Island

The rehabilitation of Long Island, which aims to recreate the indigenous plant communities that existed more widely in the local region prior to European settlement, is close to completion. The final stage of the project is

under way, including the resurfacing of the main access path across the island, complete with animal footprints, for it to be more compatible with the surrounding indigenous habitat. Site interpretation is also under way and will include a 'Bora' site (meeting place) and re-created middens, as well as guided walks. Completion of this project is anticipated for mid-2002.

Corporate Plan

The Royal Botanic Gardens' existing Corporate Plan draws to a conclusion at the end of this financial year. Through a series of strategic planning workshops undertaken in collaboration with the Corporate Management Group and staff, a new plan was prepared by a working group and recently approved by the Royal Botanic Gardens Board. The new Corporate Plan provides a three-year framework (2002 – 2005), the details of which will be implemented via annual business and work plans, and is intended to reinforce the sense of the Royal Botanic Gardens as one organisation with a common vision and a clear forward direction.

Development of Royal Botanic Gardens brand merchandise

Building on the success of The GARDENS *Produce* range, which includes sauces, preserves and chutneys, the Royal Botanic Gardens has extended distribution of this range Australia-wide, including through David Jones. Further export opportunities are being assessed. The RBG is also discussing the development of a range of Gardens linen with a local company.

Philip Moors
Director