



Campsis

NEWSLETTER

Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc.

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www.friendsbotanicgardens.org

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Photo: Dr Richard Kirsner

Guilfoyle's Volcano Reservoir C 1876-transformed-. see RBG Melbourne Page10

PRESIDENTS REPORT

The Future and Management of the AFBG network

The Friends of the Australian Inland Botanic Gardens are doing a great job in organising the AFBG Conference for 2010. Members and friends are encouraged to register and attend and share their experiences with others. I look forward to meeting you at Mildura/ Wentworth.

Since 1993 the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc (AFBG) has held memorable, worthwhile and enjoyable conferences that have brought together delegates from urban and regional botanic gardens. On many occasions we have benefited from the participation of botanic gardens staff and representatives from local authorities.

The twice yearly newsletter, *Campsis*, has provided our primary communication with members and the website has enabled members to list their contact details, promote their events and link to related organisations.

The Information Kit has proven to be a valuable resource for new (not so new) and emerging Friends' groups.

On a number of occasions the Committee has acted as an advocate for individual members or suggested a suitable person to contact. Individual Committee members have given information and advice by email or telephone, or in person, often visiting the Gardens of Members to speak at meetings etc.

AFBG has been represented at conferences of Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ) to foster and maintain our relationship with Botanic Gardens Management.

Beginning with a just a few Victorian members in 1993 the Association has spread and increased to the current 50 members throughout the seven and states and New Zealand, gaining 12 members in the last 3 years. Clearly the network is appreciated.

Why then am I questioning the future of the AFBG?

Issues

1. While the AFBG appears to be a successful national organisation the practical support of members needed to maintain it has for many years been left to just a few.
2. For 5 years we have depended on one person, Annie McGeachy, (Geelong) to be Secretary, Public Officer, Newsletter Editor and Treasurer.
3. Historically the President of the member group holding the next AFBG conference became the President of the Association. This meant that the position was rolled over every two years. For various reasons this has not happened in recent years with the result that at the next Annual General Meeting I will have been President for 5 years.
4. Janet Thomson (RBG Melbourne) has made a contribution as a committee member since 1999 and was Vice President for three years.
5. Mandy King (Warrnambool) has made a contribution as a committee member since 2004 and assisted with *Campsis* production since 2005.
6. Our 9 committee members are widely dispersed across two states- making the actual AFBG administration and regular meetings logistically very difficult and expensive.
7. Our concurrent funds, resources and therefore committee effectiveness are limited.
8. While I believe the AFBG objectives/ purposes to be really worthwhile, the logistics of achieving any of them, without solid member support, is rendered impossible.
9. The AFBG is your organisation dependant on your input and commitment.

Therefore I encourage you to check the Association's 'Purposes and Rules'.
See www.friendsbotanicgardens.org for -

- Association's 'Purposes and Rules'
- Names/locations of the 9 Committee representatives.
- Information Kit

Conclusion

The AFBG AGM and a members' general meeting is included in the Mildura Conference on May 22-23rd where-

The issues of administration, committee and executive succession and members' support and commitment to the AFBG will need to be resolved.

While it is acknowledged that we all have 'local B.G and Friends' issues' to deal with, I urge members to seriously consider the matters I have raised -

- Discuss them with your committee and members.
- Examine your role and ability/or how you might participate
- Consider nominating or nominate a representative for the Committee/Executive
- Consider how committee positions can be rotated.
- Try some lateral thinking? Is there another/better way to manage?
- What do you think the AFBG should do?
- Is being part of the AFBG network helpful to you?- how?

Please

- Attend the conference and nominate a member to speak at the general meeting.
- Reply to the above by mail/fax /email to the SECRETARY before APRIL 28th
- If it is not possible for you to meet that deadline, please reply to

Janet Thomson, 13 Bruce Street, East Malvern, Victoria, 3145

Or Email: jthomson@acemail.com.au by no later than May 20th

The matter needs your attention -the AFBG is your organisation.

FROM THE SECRETARY

Well I trust you have read –or will read the President's letter and appreciate we will have to find a more equitable way to manage the association-which I believe has been greatly beneficial to numerous Friends groups-providing a network of opportunity, assistance and information. I also trust this will continue and we will also continue to grow.

We have at last reached our 50th member and welcome the inclusion of Friends of Peacehaven Botanic Park Queensland(see article) and Friends of Burrendong Arboretum. Burrendong member were I think represented at the Orange Conference.

On reading your articles it was wonderful to hear the general joy expressed at the arrival of RAIN-the benefits to the various gardens and the rejuvenation of your energy and commitment. Unfortunately this was not the case –again-for Mackay Friends with the arrival of Cyclone Ului- although it will take considerable commitment to repair the damage.

Thank you to those who responded to the request for expressions of interest in hosting 2012 AFBG Conference. As usual the announcement of the successful Friends group will be made at the May conference in Mildura.

Unfortunately there are still too many members who are extremely tardy paying the annual membership-which frankly makes a lot of repetitive volunteer work- please consider.

NB With regard to ‘Presidents Letter’ – please read, discuss, consider and respond-either in person at the Mildura conference OR to the Secretary by May 18th-

(As I will be away my, email and mail will be redirected to Janet Thomson until June 16th).

Enjoy the Conference; I will be missing it this time.

Annie McGeachy
Secretary

AUSTRALIAN INLAND BOTANIC GARDENS MILDURA WENTWORTH

Wimmera & Mallee, Victoria

With the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Conference here on 22nd and 23rd May approaching quickly the staff and Friends are concentrating on arrangements and tidying the Gardens after refreshing autumn rain that, with a bit of luck, could herald a decent break in the long drought.



Friends are anticipating an interesting and enjoyable conference with around 60 delegates registered by the end of March.

Our ornamental lakes are almost refilled thanks to some Murray River environmental flow initiated by the Federal Government. The lakes had not been topped up during the years of severe water shortage for local irrigators, manufacturers and households.

For many months the volunteer Z-team members full of initiative, varied and valuable skills and plenty of enthusiasm and experience have put their spare time into the making of mud bricks. Finally the long awaited African garden rest shelter is nearing its construction phase. Already the AIBG has Australian, American and European styled rest shelters nestled in or near garden beds of plants originating in those geographical regions.

Jenny Eagle
Friends of AIBG Secretary

FRIENDS of BOTANIC GARDENS of ADELAIDE

Adelaide City, South Australia

Since my last contribution I am pleased to say that the FBGA have continued to prosper and be very active. The various Groups are 'beavering' away for the advancement of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide. Activities undertaken by these enthusiastic members have included supplying volunteers to give information in the recently restored and renovated Museum of Economic Botany in the Adelaide Botanic Garden, staffing an Information Desk and taking guided tours through all three Gardens. In the case of the Adelaide Garden, the work load has been heavier than usual as there have been many extra people in the city attending the Adelaide Festival of Arts and the Festival Fringe. It has to be said that we did not seem to get very many extra people overflowing from the Clipsal 500 car race! It is anticipated that the demand will continue high during History Week and a special tour has been devised to complement Tasting Australia' which will be held between 29th April and 6th May.

One matter which did have a somewhat disappointing effect upon the walks was the introduction by the State Government of a Heat Policy for Volunteers. Under this direction volunteers are not allowed to be offered if the temperature is above 36 degrees Celsius. This caused some disappointment to Guides and led to frustration for would-be participants. Comments such as "This is Australia, you expect it to be hot!" were heard on more than one occasion.

The Growing Group continues its good work, growing unusual plants for sale to the general public and also organising Propagation Workshops, which are well attended. The Botanical Art group continue to meet regularly, produce some stunning results and organise workshops and Master Classes for those who wish to learn even more even faster.

The Tours Group continues to fulfil its mission and organises both day tours and longer tours. One which will be eagerly awaited is a Garden Tour to Singapore later this year. In addition to 'real' tours, Members may also enjoy virtual tours, where a DVD of one of the great British gardens, such as Stourhead is shown followed by Morning Tea. This initiative has proven to be very popular, especially with older Friends who find it difficult to attend evening functions.

Members have been busy promoting both the Friends organisation and the Gardens at various venues, including Garden Festivals. In addition a group of people have been attending functions and giving lectures to the public. On the matter of talks/ lectures we have enjoyed some excellent speakers this year, both at our regular meetings and at the popular Twilight Talks. These Twilight talks commence at 5.30 pm, with a glass of wine and some light refreshments, we then enjoy a couple of talks and close at around 7.00 pm

One of the speakers at our most recent Twilight talk was Dr Nicky Fidler, Horticultural Curator at Mount Lofty Botanic Garden, who was the most recent recipient of a Gwen Thomas Scholarship which enabled her to visit Malaysia. Unlike other previous recipients, who undertook their trips simply to learn, Nicky was asked to teach as well and delivered a series of lectures in the Faculty of Applied Sciences in the University of Malaysia. I am sure that the goodwill emanating from this visit will be of great value to both the University and the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide.

Late last year we were privileged to have our Patrons, His Excellency Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR and Mrs Liz Scarce attend one of our meetings at which the Friends Oral History project was reported upon. This was a most enjoyable evening and was followed up in March

this year by a, well attended, reception in Government House for members of the friends. I believe this to be the first time in the Friends history that this has occurred and was most enjoyable.

The Friends Gazette continues to enjoy favourable comments. This is no small way due to excellent articles which are forwarded by members which makes the task of the editorial team that much easier than if we had to constantly “chase up” contributions or, worse still, write more material ourselves!

The very popular Photographic Competition will be run again this year and I am sure that there will be, as in previous years, a large number of excellent entries. Some of these entries will no doubt find their way into the Gazette so that many other people may enjoy them.

In addition to the many ways listed above in which the Friends help the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, I would be remiss if I did not mention that, once again, as has been the case almost since our inception, the Friends gave \$3,000 to the gardens Library. In addition we also paid for the relocation, upgrading and landscaping of the Cycad Collection in the Adelaide Botanic Garden. This development has been remarked upon very favourably by members of the public.

All in all it has been a busy period since my last contribution and I am sure that things will continue to speed along at the same rate in the future as we do our best to help the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide achieve its stated aims of conservation, education and research.

Ed McAlister.

FRIENDS OF BENDIGO BOTANIC GARDENS

Central Victoria

In February 2010 the City of Greater Bendigo formally accepted the Bendigo Botanic Gardens Master Plan.

It has been a long complicated process that took 10 years to complete. The Friends group was formed in 1999 and our core endeavors have been wrapped around this task. The full reality of what we have achieved is only just sinking in, and our wise words to any other botanic gardens organisation that is embarking on a similar undertaking are to be patient, polite and painstaking. These matters cannot be rushed.

All that remains to be done is turn the details in the Master Plan into reality, however this is easier to say than do, and we have quickly thudded back to earth once we grasped the size and scale of the project.

The plan of attack in 2010 is to continue with the restoration of the historic section of the gardens, while at the same time undertaking the extremely complicated task of designing the wetland section of the new gardens along the Bendigo Creek.

On March 5th. Bendigo received a third of its annual average rainfall and Bendigo Creek reminded us of how much water it is capable of carrying in peak flows. The Botanic Garden wetlands will have to incorporate some very clever hydrology design features to successfully cope with flood events like this.

The restoration of the heritage section, in comparison, is much more straightforward. These gardens now have a reliable water supply since the recycled watering system was installed.

The change in plant growth is wonderful. Green is once more a colour to be seen right across the gardens. However it is the installation of the old network of paths in Scott St area that will have a greater visual impact.

In the 1990's work was done to 'enhance' the Memorial Archway entrance to the gardens. The old entrance had parallel pathways into the gardens. This was changed to a single path that terminated in a mound or hill that completely obscured the long view into the main part of the gardens. This mound was supposed to be capped with a feature 'something' that was never installed. It was too difficult to grow anything on and our severe water restrictions meant that not even grass could be kept alive on it. So there it sat, a large brown lump, for all the ensuing years until just before Christmas last year when the heavy machinery arrived and in the space of a morning's work the lump was dumped somewhere else. (Its present location has not been revealed). The beneficial effect was instantaneous.

We can now see along the long axis of the gardens from the entrance to the western boundary. The Garden Staff, Council Landscape Planning Officers and Friends felt that Christmas had arrived early.

Incidentally it was the change that gave us the mound and the single pathway that started us on the long, winding obstacle course to the creation of a Master Plan. Its funny how things happen isn't it?

Jan Orr
Secretary

FRIENDS OF THE MACKAY REGIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS

North Coast, Queensland

Well, this is a different article from the one I would have written last week. Cyclone Ului roared through the region last weekend and unfortunately caused horrendous damage to our beautiful Botanic Gardens and much of Mackay. Over a third of the collection has been



destroyed. There are large and small trees which have fallen, right throughout the Gardens and the gardeners will be chain sawing for weeks to clear the debris away. Many of the very large trees which were there before the Gardens were opened in 2003 have simply fallen over with the strong winds and very wet soil after two months of solid rain. Many of the *Eucalypts* and *Corymbias* have snapped and many other trees and shrubs are leaning so far they will also need to be removed. The water logged soils and damage to root systems have seen another thirty trees succumb over a week after the initial storm. Several weeks of cleaning-up has commenced as well as studying those trees left standing for possible damage for potential later removal.

This event has been very upsetting for all the Friends, as well as the staff who have worked so hard to make the Gardens look so beautiful. To plant a small tube stock plant – perhaps even from a seed collected by one of the Friends - watch it grow and blossom – only to have it



snatched away in one night is quite traumatic. Thankfully, many of the Gardens' most special rare and threatened plants survived unscathed.

Many decisions will need to be made to choose the species to plant in future. Mackay had endured many years of relative drought before very wet summer seasons over the past three years.

A *water wise* plant in Mackay means something very different to someone in Melbourne or Adelaide – in Mackay this means a humble plant that can survive two to

three months of almost solid rain in summer, followed by almost five months of no rain at all in late winter and spring, high year-round humidity and strong UV. Many of our Friends involved with plant propagation routinely joke about suggested use of *plastic plants* to meet this demanding outcome! Fortunately the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Master plan review has been taking place over the past year and Cyclone Ului is a timely reminder that good design and appropriate choices are such important factors to running our botanic gardens.

Those of you who came to the very successful BGANZ conference last year will be very glad the conference was held at that time, though we were bemoaning the heat and the drought then. How quickly everything can change! The conference was a big effort for a small, regional botanic garden, but was very well received. All the visitors were very impressed with what was on show in Mackay and district.

Seven of the Friends attended the National Conference of Voluntary Guides of Botanic Gardens in Hobart in November and came home completely inspired by what we saw and learned. The opportunity to visit such an old, well established botanic garden, as well as all the other magnificent cool climate gardens was very rewarding. Mackay is sure to be well represented at the next conference in Brisbane in 2011 and we also encourage Friends from Queensland gardens to visit Gladstone in August this year for the Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand Queensland branch (BGANZQ) conference.

There was an attempt to hold a Friends planting bee early this month and a guided walk to the Eungella upland rainforests in April, but the rain meant postponement after postponement – a blessing in disguise as it turned out in both cases. No doubt, there will need to be many more gardening bees planned for later on to try to get the Gardens back into shape as quickly as possible and an active program to keep all our Friends interested and learning about the many special plants still to be found at the Gardens whilst the site recovers.



All gardeners know a garden is an ever-changing environment – sometimes for good, sometimes for bad – and that disaster brings with it a chance for renewal and exciting new opportunities.

Robin McWhinney
Secretary

FRIENDS OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS

Canberra, ACT

The long standing and popular summer concert series was held again this year in January. The weather was not kind and two concerts had to be cancelled but the remaining six concerts were well attended. Given concerns over recent years by the Gardens on the costs to them of the concerts the Friends agreed this year to provide additional funding to support this very important event.



Summer concert series

at the National Arboretum and bus links between the two were jointly organized. The Festival was supported by funding from the ACT festival Fund.

The third Botanic Art Exhibition at ANBG was opened on 30 April by Senator Kate Lundy. This exhibition is open until 18 April and is by the Friends Botanic Art Group, which commenced in 2005 and now has over 60 members. In keeping with the International Year of Biodiversity the exhibition will feature some of Australia's floral diversity held in the ANBG.

As part of the Canberra Week celebrations the Gardens and the Friends mounted the first Footprint Festival. The aim of the Festival was to educate and inspire people to appreciate the beauty and value of Australian flora, to understand the need for conservation and to recognize that everyone can make a difference. A wide variety of activities were organized and a number of outside groups participated in the Festival. There was a parallel event



Footprint Festival

The Friends have just launched a souvenir book of the Gardens to celebrate the Garden 40th birthday and the Friends 20th birthday. The book is a marvellous souvenir of the Gardens and is for sale in the Botanical Bookshop and on line (sales@botanicalbookshop.com.au)



Senator Lundy opening the Art Exhibition.

The very popular series of lunchtime talks continues in 2010. These take place each Thursday at 12.30. Amongst some excellent speakers including Stuart Johnston, Partnerships with Greening Australia on 3 June, Murray Fagg, Eucalypts of the ANBG June 17th and Matthew Higgins on 8 July with his new book Australian Mountain Stories, and his new short film on the Snowies in winter.

David Coutts
Secretary

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS

MELBOURNE

Melbourne City, Victoria

It's ironic that the Melbourne Gardens' landscape representation of a volcanic eruption was struck by a violent demonstration of nature's power on Saturday 6 March. The fierce hail and rain shredded the succulents (and many plants elsewhere in the Gardens!) that were settling in to their role as lava flows, prior to the official opening of Guilfoyle's Volcano Reservoir on 31 March.

The Reservoir was built in 1876 to ensure a water supply for the Gardens and was in active use until the 1960s. In time it became hidden from view by fences and vegetation. Now it has been transformed into a striking landscape feature with a strategic water management purpose.

The storm forced the Gardens closure for safety while plant debris and shattered glass from glasshouses were cleared. (The Growing Friends decided to have a bargain stall of damaged stock at their mid-April plant sale.) Some historic observatory buildings were affected, while the more recently built café, visitor centre and shop were closed for several weeks undergoing repairs for water damage.

Water and mud leaked into the Herbarium from blocked gutters and drains, soaking carpets and setting off alarms. The Library was placed in intensive care; 200 water-logged books were freeze-dried, while others were patiently air-dried over the following days. Fortunately, the rare books room remained safe and dry.

There was one benefit from the storm; the water level in the Ornamental Lake rose to cover the mud flats exposed by the drought.

The long-planned Working Wetlands project is now able to proceed, as substantial generous funding has been committed by The Myer Foundation, the Victorian Government, South East Water, Melbourne Water and private donors. This will set up an extensive stormwater harvesting and bio-filtration system, incorporating the Volcano, to reduce the use of mains water in the Gardens.

An outstanding program of Friends' activities during the past six months included:

- an account of the scientific naming of Australian flora over two centuries
- an inspection of the National Trust's Como House and extensive gardens
- a visit to Bickleigh Vale Village, created by Edna Walling in the 1920s
- an illustrated talk on sustainable gardens
- a ramble around the notable gardens and architecture of the Old Colonists Village in North Fitzroy
- an insight into trees, drawn from history, literature, botany, myths and folklore
- a hands-on session with salvias – a stalwart among garden plants, and
- an information-packed presentation about the Yarra Riverkeeper Association.

At our annual general meeting, Prof. Robin Sharwood AM, who has served as Chairman of the Friends Trust Fund trustees since 1986, was elected as an Honorary Life Member of the Friends and was presented with a 20-year Volunteer Service Award. The contribution of

Frank Phillips, our first President, was recognised with a 25-year award and 10 other Friends received awards for 20, 15 and 10 years of service.

Friends Staff Scholarships for 2010 will support conference attendance by Melbourne's David Robbins and Cranbourne's Cali Salzmann. Val Stajsic has gained assistance for his research project on *Melicytus* (Violaceae).

Recent Friends grants have been devoted to the Volcano (\$70,225), the Herbarium Discovery Walk (\$30,100), a misting system in the Fern Gully (\$52,000) and a computer-controlled watering system in the RBG nursery's shade and glass houses (\$50,530).



Photo: Joe Ng.

Richard Barley with Janet Thomson, President, Friends of RBGM

In March, Richard Barley left his position as Director of the Melbourne Gardens, over which he had presided for 17 years, to become CEO of Australia's Open Gardens Scheme. His RBG career began in April 1980 with short-term tasks, leading to positions in the Herbarium, work 'on the outside with living plants' and liaison with Victoria's regional botanic gardens. Richard won respect and affection not only from his colleagues but also from the Friends.

Rodger Elliot AM, long-time member of the RBG Board, has been showered with congratulations following the publication in March of *Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants Suitable for Cultivation Sp-Z*, with co-author David Jones and illustrator Trevor Blake. This is the ninth and final volume in a momentous series they have worked on for 35 years.

The National Herbarium has a relatively low public profile and the building is off-limits to general visitors. The Friends are supporting the development of a Discovery Walk at its rear, where changing interpretive displays will reveal the extent of the Herbarium's treasured collections and highlight its important research programs. The project should be completed in late June.

The Herbarium holds 1000 plant specimens associated with the Burke and Wills trek and its relief expedition, sent to its Director Dr Ferdinand Muller for identification. This material is being accessed by The Royal Society of Victoria which is preparing for a 150th anniversary expedition in August to retrace the explorers' journey. The specimens will also feature in exhibitions and educational projects planned by other institutions.

In brief - You can now shop on-line at the RBG Shop www.rbg.com.au/shop and follow the links. New stock includes a revised and updated souvenir booklet for RBG Melbourne (\$9.95) and a waterproof eco-bag (\$12.95).

Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden now open Wed.-Sun. until sunset, also open on public holidays and during State School holidays. Avoid disappointment by checking details of hours and winter closure. (03) 9252 2300.

Heather Ironmonger

PEACEHAVEN BOTANIC PARK.

Toowoomba, South East Queensland.

The Peacehaven Botanic Park is located at Highfields. The 4.7 hectare parcel of land was generously donated by Stan Kuhl in 2004 who entrusted it to the then Crows Nest Shire Council, now the Toowoomba Regional Council, to be developed into a Botanic Parkland. Sadly Stan died in May 2005 before his dream was realized.

The garden's design was born from Stan's desire for peace and tranquility and is reminiscent of some of the great gardens he visited during his travels around the world. The land was part of Stan's dairy farm which was called Peacehaven.

Peacehaven is one of the region's newest parks and is now the green heart of the Highfields community. Set on naturally beautiful land, it offers breathtaking vistas of the Bunya Mountains and an overall rewarding experience that only nature can provide.

The Scerophyll Forest provides a living botanical history. Parts that have been developed are a dry scrub area, a bush food garden, a prehistoric corner where you will find a collection of *Araucaria*, one of the oldest trees in the world and other ancient plants, such as cycad palms. There is also a rain forest area featuring Australian native plant varieties, a wild life garden, a lake for bird life and the pivotal focus for many visitors is the Compass Garden, a living, breathing monument to the absolute need to spread the message of peace to the four corners of the world.

Peacehaven is home to a specimen of the threatened small tree species, *Clausena smyrelliana*, now reduced to a handful of trees in its native Frazer Coast region and other rare and threatened local species.

Some plants in the park are commemorative, including the Peace rose donated by the Crows Nest and Cooyar Masonic Lodge in honour of the members who served in World War II. The Peace rose was developed by French horticulturist Francis Meilland in the late 1930s and when Meilland foresaw the German invasion of France he sent cuttings to friends in Italy, Turkey, Germany and the United States to protect the fledgling variety. The park has picnic tables, toilets and an electric BBQ which is free to use

Peacehaven is affiliated with Davidson's Arboretum, donated to the community by Mr. and Mrs. Ken Davidson and holds a magnificent collection of mostly deciduous trees that display a great autumn colour. Both the park and arboretum host weddings, parties, functions and with the annual carols held at Peacehaven.

The Friends are an active group who are working hard to see the late Stan Kuhl's dream become a reality.

Ann Smith
Secretary

FRIENDS OF ST ARNAUD QUEEN MARYBOTANIC GARDENS

Mallee Region, North Western Victoria

A wet spring last year and good early rains in 2010 point to the possibility that the long drought might at last be over in the Wimmera.

Our annual Gala Day fundraiser on the March 20th was held in the gardens in glorious weather and raised almost \$3,500 to continue the restoration of our two landscapes, the Queen Mary Botanic Gardens and Edna Walling's Pioneer Park. We are fortunate to have conservation and restoration plans for each landscape. The Botanic Gardens plan was prepared by Kevin Walsh and financed by our Shire, and the Pioneer Park plan was prepared by Edna Walling authority Trisha Dixon with the help of funding from the National Open Gardens Scheme.

Last year we were greatly saddened by the sudden death of our long-time President, Gary Box, who was also the Chairman of the Council appointed Committee of Management. Gary was devoted to the gardens and the park and will be greatly missed. Gary was always ably supported by his wife Lyn and we are delighted that she has taken on the position of President.

To commemorate the work and commitment of Gary Box to the Botanic Gardens, we are launching a major rejuvenation and restoration of the long border that runs for almost 200 metres along the rear boundary of the gardens. This border has been cruelly affected by the drought and will be replanted with shrubs and perennials and include, a discreet memorial to Gary surrounded appropriately by a box hedge.

As the most Northwesterly town of the Victorian Goldfields, we are thrilled that Mandy Stroebel has included our gardens in her new book *Gardens of the Goldfields* published by Australian Scholarly Publishing. As a South African Mandy sees the goldfields gardens through fresh eyes and her writing is both informed and stylish.

For those driving to Mildura via the Sunraysia Highway for the Association Conference in May, you may like to break your journey at St Arnaud, which is about half way. Travel from Melbourne to the Ballarat bypass via the Western freeway, then, after Ballarat peel off at the Avoca St Arnaud exit. Our gardens are, unusually, right in the centre of town and are obvious when approaching on the Sunraysia and Wimmera Highways, or from the Western District via Ararat, so why not break your journey and take a stroll.

And the toilets in the gardens are brand new and clean!

Rosalind Small

FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS

Western District, Victoria

With all the extreme weather around Australia, Warrnambool has been blessed with periodic rain falls on warm earth so our gardens are flourishing.

Our cannon in the gardens is having a make over. The historic artillery was cast at the Carron Ironworks at Stirling Scotland in 1813. The date 1837 on the barrel probably indicates it was bored out to convert it from a 24 Pr to a 32 Pr in that year. It is very probably one of the 15 artillery pieces that are known to have constituted the defences of Victoria in 1860 and was installed in the gardens in 1910

The Friends have been able to obtain plans to create a replica gun carriage for the cannon and with the expertise of the Triton wood-workers this work will be carried out. The creation of a replica gun carriage will allow the existing carriage to be removed and stored for special restoration at a future date.

The Friends aim to have the cannon remain in the gardens accessible to the public as it has been for the past hundred years

The Friends are in the process of moving into a permanent home within the gardens. We have obtained a sandstone shed, which is being renovated by the WCC and Rotary. We are respectfully calling it 'Scoborio's Shed',

Wannon Water has assisted in funding our Water Wise garden and the second stage of the Water Wise bed is progressing well with plant material being ordered for planting in May/June.

Works have begun on the front gate bed with a permanent metal edge installed to clearly delineate between the annual plantings and the shrub/tree bed. This has allowed increased mulching of the front gate bed.

The dead *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* (Lawson False Cypress) has been recently removed with majority of the timber being donated to the Triton Wood Workers for their special projects. We now have for sale attractive pens turned from the cypress by a member of the Warrnambool Woodworkers.



The Garden's team has had numerous compliments over the annual displays and the colours of the Dahlias have again proven a winner.

750 King Alfred Daffodils have recently been planted underneath the old elm (Money Tree) and should provide a great display in Spring.

With the expansion of the indigenous bed additional plantings have been made with *Correas*, *Patersonias*, Grass trees and *Indigofera*, which have all been supplied by Society for Growing Australian Plants (SGAP)

The Gardens are going ahead at such a rate and are a treat to behold.

Mandy King
Secretary

WOMBAT HILL BOTANIC GARDENS

Central Highlands, Victoria

The Daylesford district had good falls of rain in winter, spring and summer. Yet on the profile of Wombat Hill there are some trees that are “thin on top” and lightning took out a large redwood.

Within the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens (Daylesford) Arborist Nick Wong continues his tree work lifting the canopy by cutting out understorey dead wood. The begonias are looking terrific and attracting visitors. The Friends’ Bed demonstrates perennials that grow well in the shade in a cool climate, the hellebores have clumped up and everything looks tended after our recent weeding bee.

The Gardens last year received Heritage listing and Council’s Advisory Committee is proposing to invest in some projects to ensure they look well for their 150th birthday in May 2013. Planning permits are sought by the Wolf Taskers of Lake House for work on the former residence to create a refreshment facility. John Hawker, Heritage Victoria, has been up for a very useful walk around the garden with Council staff & Friends, providing advice on the fern gully, tree stock and the axial path.

Our Friends are a small but loyal group. We are about to give our first guided tour for the Geelong Friends, we’ve visited Camperdown and Colac Botanic Gardens, Rob Hewat and Hepburn Shire’s apprentice gardener Matthew Young attended the BGANZ plant forum and have booked for an April tour of Guilfoyle’s Volcano in the RBG Melbourne. Three of us also look forward to seeing you at the May Friends Conference at Australian Inland Botanic Gardens.

Gael Shannon

FRIENDS OF ORANGE BOTANIC GARDENS

Central West, New South Wales

The first Sunday of each month is the busiest day at the OBG. We have guided walks, provide morning teas and the Bonsai group is busy in the Bonsai House. Over the last summer, we have also had the Discovery Centre open with the exhibition "Bite This" on the history of the apple industry in Orange and the Friends Shop is open.

We start the day with a bird walk at 8.30 led by Bernie and Colina Huxtable, long time members of both FOBG and the Orange Field Naturalists. The bird walks attract a dedicated group of regulars and often have visitors as well. With the range of habitats available around the gardens, the bird life is quite diverse and there is often a surprise find – occasionally a group of musk lorikeets, once a nankeen night heron and on a couple of walks, a southern boobook owl. We usually get around 28 to 30 species of birds although we lose a few species during the winter months when grey fantails, clamorous reed warblers and blue faced honeyeaters abandon the cool of Orange for warmer climes. It is wonderful in Spring when a number of species breed in the gardens, including black faced cuckoo shrikes, Australasian grebes, peewees, magpies, red wattlebirds, dusky moorhens and in most recent seasons, tawny frogmouths. We get a few species of cuckoos turning up in Spring too. After the walk, the bird walkers take advantage of a nice cuppa and biscuits provided by the Friends.



Bernie and the bird walk

For more than ten years we have also led a guided walk around the gardens commencing at 10am. Initially, these walks were started to show off the various parts of the gardens but have evolved into specialist walks looking in more detail at particular aspects of the gardens and utilising the special interests of the guides. Cathy Mills takes the Heritage Rose Garden walk, John Dunlop takes a stroll through the Rhododendron Garden, Molly Young might tour the Sensory Garden or Mick Harvey AM shows off the wattles (always quite popular). The attendance at these walks has been quite variable and is now largely dependent on visitors, except for one particular subject which brings the families out in droves! This is the 'Bug Walk'. We are fortunate in Orange to have the Agricultural Scientific Collections Unit (ASCU) of Orange Agricultural Institute and its associated scientific staff.

I don't know what it is about children and bugs but when our regular walks might have half a dozen people, the bug walks have more than 30! The last one we held was at the beginning of February.

One thing to stress is that a healthy garden is full of insects. Bees, butterflies, moths and flies pollinate various flowers. Christmas beetles, pear & cherry slugs, spitfires and grasshoppers eat plants. Spiders and other predators eat the plant feeders (and each other). Dragonflies and damselflies hunt around the water features and this gives the opportunity to talk about life cycles and aquatic insects. The most important group of bugs in the garden are probably the recyclers. While cockroaches, ants and termites are serious problems in houses, in the gardens they perform the critical function of turning leaves, wood and dead animals back into nutrients.

Our last stop for each bug walk is the young eucalypt area near the Clover Hill Centre. In late summer, these trees are shedding their bark and there are always interesting animals taking shelter under the loose bark. This year we found native cockroaches, click beetles, a few stink bugs and two large huntsman spiders, much to the excitement of the kids.

Later in the year, we will have a walk led by another of the ASCU scientists –(President of FOBG)Michael Priest a mycologist and he will lead a walk looking at mushrooms and toadstools, assuming we have rain at the right time to get them started.

Murray Fletcher
Secretary

FRIENDS OF ALBURY BOTANIC GARDENS

Murray Region, News South Wales

Everything in the Albury Botanic Gardens is radiant with colour after two good dousings of 50mm.plus and a couple of light showers over the last month or so. We lost a couple of big trees on our perimeter fence line as a result, but no greater damage was done.

The Childrens Garden is progressing slowly due to the prior more pressing need for a boundary fence, but our diligent gardeners are pressing ahead with clearing the site, path construction and replanting.

A very large Red Gum trunk, salvaged from the new freeway construction site has been skillfully carved into a Trolls Head which will form the entrance to a Troll Cave. Inside the cave will be hung, dinner plate sized troll heads cast by local children at a recent workshop.

The Friends are donating several tree trunk carved seats, carved by our local woodturning club members using a fairy tail theme,- trunks rather than single seats are being carved to avoid lifting!. The second stage of the development is construction of a wet land area due to begin shortly. Fund raising progressing slowly/well

Membership is still up and down, boosted recently with the local Bonsai club joining the Friends. We hope to involve this botanic art form into the gardens. The volunteer group of disabled Friends is still keen and helping out on a regular monthly basis with the growing group, bolstering our "For Sale" stock. The next sale is 2nd May.

Our fund raising activities over the past months have consisted mainly of catering for various Council functions. Albury City now boasts a Functions team of half a dozen fulltime employees, so functions like sports meetings, citizenship award days, musical events and open air movies, as well as our twice yearly plant sales, means there is always something to get involved in.

At our AGM in March the previous years committee was returned to service with shouts of glee all around. Unfortunately we are hard pressed to raise a contingent for the Conference in Mildura but wish you every success.

Jeff Gates
Secretary.

Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens APRIL 2010

A.C.T.

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Friends of Canberra Arboretum, PO Box 48, Campbell ACT 2612

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** Friends of Burrendong Arboretum,Po Box 465, Wellington, NSW 2820

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South Australia

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Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide Inc. Botanic Gardens, North Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000

Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Arboretum Inc., PO Box 370, Devonport, Tas, 7310
Friends of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Inc., C/o RTBG, Queens Domain, Hobart, Tas, 7000

Western Australia

Friends of Kings Park Inc, Volunteer Lodge, Fraser Ave., Kings Park & Botanic Gardens,
West Perth, W.A. 6005

New Zealand

Friends of Hamilton Botanic Gardens, PO Box 4268 Hamilton, New Zealand

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Campsis

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We welcome your articles, photographs and
important calendar events for inclusion

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Annual Membership is for a calendar year.
New memberships paid after August 1st are
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Forms available on the website.

Membership fees are \$25

Cheque or Money Order should be made
payable to:
Assoc. of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc
The Secretary,
16 Pavo St. Belmont VIC 3216

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Association web site www.friendsbotanicgardens.org/

To include your event on the website contact the Web editor: E-mail
clrdnobs@vic.chariot.net.au

OR for those without E-mail, post details to the Secretary.

2010

May 21st to 23rd

Assoc. of Friends of Botanic Gardens Conference
“Secrets of the Mallee”
Australian Inland Botanic Garden, Mildura, Victoria
Go to www.aibg.org.au/ for registration information

August

BGANZ Q Branch Conference.
Gladstone

October 5th-8th.

10th Annual National Heritage Rose Conference
Brisbane Botanic Gardens

2011

May 9-11th BGANZ Conference
Alice Springs.

Date TBA

Australasian Volunteer Guides Conference
Brisbane Botanic Gardens

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Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens

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www.anz.com.au/australia/charitabletrusts/guidelines.asp

The latest **Grants guide** is available

see <http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/page.asp?ID=417>

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