



Campsis radicans (Trumpet Flower)
del. Beverley Graham 1994

Campsis

Newsletter of the
Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (Victoria) Inc.
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From the President

The committee of the Association has met twice since the last newsletter went to print. These meetings emphasise the value of representatives of various Gardens in the State being able to speak freely with each other.

The Annual Seminar "Growing Together Towards 2000" will focus on the role of the Botanic Gardens in the community and how Friends groups assist in various ways. The keynote speakers from the Botanic Garden of Adelaide, Director Dr Brian Morley, and publicity officer Chris Steele-Scott are highly regarded in botanic circles. Dr Morley is an eminent speaker and has addressed conferences throughout the world and has contributed to many botanic publications. The Botanic Garden of Adelaide is rated as one of the five best in the world by science broadcaster Robyn Williams.

Do not miss the opportunity to be part of this exciting seminar and so update your views and broaden your thinking. There will be ample opportunity to air your particular views and to meet Friends from other Botanic Gardens.

We look forward to meeting with you on the weekend of 14 and 15 May.

Jayne Salmon

THE HISTORY OF THE ASSOCIATION

It is not too soon to record the history of the Association in *Campsis*. Early in 1991 the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne had the idea of getting together representatives of botanic gardens throughout Victoria, so that they could discuss matters of common interest. The Melbourne Friends arranged a Seminar in Melbourne in May of that year. Some who attended were Friends, some represented local authorities.

The Seminar was so successful that another was held in Melbourne a year later. There was strong support for the establishment of an umbrella organisation, and this led to the incorporation of the Association on 20 January 1993. Philip Clingin of Ballarat was the first President and, with an enthusiastic group in that city, arranged a third Seminar there in April 1993. Nearly

sixty people attended, some from Canberra and New South Wales.

The Association aims to continue holding annual Conferences. Its first other venture is the publication of *Campsis* for the benefit of Members.

Lawrence Cohn

Friends of Port Fairy Botanic Gardens

1994 started with a real financial boost to our work program following a "GARDENS OPEN DAY". Five local, private gardens were opened and, along with a small plant stall and Devonshire teas, a total of \$2723 was raised.

The money has been earmarked to upgrade the watering system in one section of the recently-planted garden beds. We will also be able to employ a part-time maintenance gardener for three months, thus supplementing the monthly working bees.

Another recent activity has been the contacting of many local organizations in an effort to enlist some help with our monthly working bees. One half day per year is all that is being asked of each organization and we hope to engender not only interest in the project but also pride in this community restoration work.

Margaret McOrist

Friends of Hamilton Botanic Gardens Inc.

At the recent Annual General Meeting President Jim Spence reminded Members of the high points of the last twelve months.

One of the most important was the tremendous improvements made to the Duck Pond and in the appearance of the wrought-iron fence which surrounds two sides of the Gardens and was erected by public subscription in 1908. The pond has been drained and refilled, shrubs and trees pruned and concrete surrounds cleaned up. The fences now look smart

after sandblasting and painting. All this work was made possible by the extra labour provided through the 'LEAP' scheme.

Ongoing discussions with the Hamilton City Council are proving fruitful. They are centred on the production of a Conservation Study commissioned by the Council which will suggest more closely the role of the Friends. There is also the possibility of a timber footbridge over the Duck Pond in keeping with Guilfoyle plans. The Friends may also be allotted accommodation within the Gardens perimeter, invaluable as a meeting place and a display centre.

The discovery in the Hamilton History Centre of handwritten Guilfoyle planting instructions and plant lists, dated 1881, has already received publicity, following the finding of his Garden plan two years earlier.

Finally, mention must be made of a joint sponsorship by the Friends and North Hamilton Rotary of an open-air concert in the Gardens by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, which delighted 400 people for two hours on a sunny afternoon. It has been an interesting year.

Myddelton Lewis

Friends of Benalla Botanical Gardens

Despite the Hume Highway by-passing Benalla in 1986 the city still remains and has historically been a stopping place for travellers north and south – a welcome tea-stop with some readily available facilities.

The Hume Freeway 'tour' sign reads 'ROSE GARDENS' and it is the roses, now all clearly identified, that during their flowering season are a spectacular sight and a great attraction to the visitor and to townspeople alike. The adjacent children's playground is always in use.

The area of the Botanical Gardens has always been associated with recreation. It was 1864 when the area was gazetted as a reserve, conveniently situated in the centre of the developing town. Today the Gardens are still a recreation reserve – the green-turfed English-style cricket oval is a great space surrounded with a double row of English elms planted as part of the original design concept of Alfried Sangwell. A group of tennis courts is nearby, most picturesquely situated on the edge of the lake.

Benalla Friends tell visitors during their guided walks that the Gardens are unique in having three cultural aspects – horticultural, recreational and the art gallery – a valuable asset to the city, and the Gardens provide the artistic aspect.

The Friends adopted the Rotunda as their symbol. This delightful and unassuming building to the rear of the Gardens has been the venue for Benalla's musical and recreational activities and continues to play that

role in the community. The annual Carols by Candlelight and the Jazz Concert are two great events. The Rotunda is the next project for restoration. The Friends have an ongoing fund-raising plan for this project.

Benalla was originally sited on the Broken River as a convenient stopping place, providing water for settlers moving south with their belongings and their stock. In the early seventies the River became the great water space seen today in the city centre – man-made Lake Benalla.

There have always been floods. Photographs show the Gardens flooded in 1921. On 4 October 1993 more than 200mm of rain in the catchment area resulted in the greatest floods in living memory. Floods rose half a metre higher than any expected flood and put two metres of water over the whole Gardens area.

We recall that 'the area where the Botanical Gardens are today was not included in the survey for town allotments in 1848, being considered unsuitable – low-lying, flood-prone and thickly forested with redgum'.

The damage, as if by a miracle, appeared to be minimal. Some plants and trees may yet show a stress factor. Only time will tell.

Good management in the Gardens had the extensive rose beds heavily mulched and, in the opinion of the Superintendent, this protected the roots of the roses from the impact of water force and volume. As soon as practical when the water receded the mulch was replaced on top of a layer of fine silt and for the Annual Rose Festival five weeks later the roses put on their most spectacular display ever. The lesson – a good deep watering!

In 1993 a landscape master plan for the Gardens was developed by a select Committee which included representatives from the Benalla City Council, Royal Botanic Gardens, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Friends. The plan includes a re-designed area for the roses. Currently the Benalla Rose Gardens Advisory Committee, which includes two members of the Friends Committee, is considering this important feature of the future plan.

Ethel Stephenson

1995 Seminar to be held in Benalla

The Committee has accepted enthusiastically the invitation of the Friends of the Benalla Botanical Gardens Inc. to host the 1995 seminar. The dates are not yet certain, but are likely to be 29 and 30 April. Planning by the Benalla Friends is well under way.

Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Inc.

The summer season has been marked by an increase in visitors to our Gardens.



Publicity in October on the TV programme Gardening Australia as well as in our monthly magazine has helped spread the word that Geelong has beautiful Botanic Gardens.

March has been particularly busy with groups participating in

guided walks, followed by refreshments at the Friends Tea House. We now have over forty volunteers on the Tea House roster, which enables it to be open daily. A co-ordinator is paid a small sum to organise these volunteers as well as to purchase provisions for it.

The Friends' Autumn Plant sale was held on Sunday 20 March. The Growing Friends continue to expand; plants held in stock are now listed on computer, so easy reference is available.

The Friends will host the exhibition *Its a Rare Thing* at the Geelong Art Gallery from 13 January to 19 March 1995, after the exhibition has been to Melbourne. This is most exciting, especially as we have been able to secure sponsorship to cover costs.

The Conference we are hosting on behalf of the Association is receiving good support from our local members, which is very pleasing; however, we would be delighted to see more visitors from Friends around the State and elsewhere coming to Geelong on 14 and 15 May next.

We look forward to seeing you.

Jayne Salmon

Albury Botanic Gardens

The Albury Botanic Gardens has a new logo as a result of a competition held in November 1993. It is being used to promote the identity of the Gardens and will be featured on our new self-guiding walks and promotional brochures. The Heritage Walk brochure is due for release shortly and the information has been researched by the Albury and District Historical Society. There will also be a Rainforest Walk brochure and a glossy photographic brochure for promotional work.



ALBURY
BOTANIC
GARDENS

Construction of the Browns Lagoon Therapeutic Gardens Amenity building was completed in January 1994. The building style blends in well with the surrounding 1900-era houses and the garden site. The levee bank will be constructed shortly and from it all levels will be taken for the remainder of the park. A start can then be made on the footpaths, drainage, garden beds, seats and tables and foreshore clean-up. The committee has applied to the Environmental Trust Grants for funding for the project and to the Albury Wodonga Group Training Company to be included in the 1994 Land Environmental Action Program (LEAP). If successful, unemployed young people will be given six months paid work on the park project.

B. van der Weyde

Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Inc.

Our projected mid-year move from the Astronomer's Residence to Gardens House is a major pre-occupation for the Friends Council at present. Gardens House, home of Directors between 1857 and 1991, is undergoing restoration. Part of Pacific Dunlop's gift to the Gardens is being devoted to securing the fabric of the building. However, the Friends is to bear the considerable cost of heating, painting and furnishing the interior. The move will also involve setting up a new nursery for the Growing Friends behind Gardens House.

The Growing Friends' autumn plant sale drew large crowds and resulted in sales of \$17,600.

Rhododendrons, raised from seed collected in China by Royal Botanic Gardens gardener Terry Smyth in 1992, attracted strong publicity and interest.

We have instigated a project to facilitate the donation of seats for the Gardens, the cost of \$1000 including maintenance for at least ten years. The Friends handed over two seats at our twilight Christmas picnic, and since then three more seats have been given by individual Friends as memorials to family members.

Dr Durham Smith has joined Mrs Eve Brunner as a Vice-president, while Mr David Baumgartner has succeeded Mr David Taplin as Treasurer. Mr John Harper and Mrs Heather Ironmonger have been appointed to the Council, the former filling a vacancy created by the retirement of Mrs Golda Isaac. Eve Brunner, convener of the Activities Sub-committee since the formation of the Friends, has stepped down from that position but fortunately remains a member of that hard-working group, now led by Mrs Lesley Clark.

As often happens in organisations, our membership dropped at the end of the financial year, but is rising again and stands at 1030 in April 1994.

Volume 5 of the *Botanic Magazine* was published early in 1994. Copies of this 52 page magazine may be obtained from the Friends' Office for \$6.00, including postage.

The Friends' Shop suffered a frustrating forced 21-day closure in November and December while building work was completed at the adjoining kiosk and paving/landscaping undertaken. Fortunately, record sales in January, February and March were some compensation for our loss of revenue before Christmas.

The active Botanical Illustrators group continues to attract new members to the Friends. An exhibition is planned for October.

Our 1994 program began with a visit to Southdown at Merricks and a picnic tea in the gardens of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch's home on the Mornington Peninsula. Another popular event was a shared excursion with the Friends of the Meat Market Craft Centre to three places in the Geelong area.

We've held a film luncheon and organised party bookings for the two theatrical presentations in the Gardens during summer. In March, Dr James Hitchmough, former Burnley lecturer now working in Scotland, gave a stimulating talk about British horticulture.

Three groups have visited the Victorian Tapestry Workshop, in particular to see progress in the creation of a tapestry from a Celia Rosser Banksia painting. With help from the Embroiderers Guild, classes in botanical embroidery have been initiated.

The Voluntary Guides presented a slide show and walk for Friends, focusing on William Guilfoyle's period as Director of the Gardens, and the first of four seasonal strolls around the grounds of Government House took place in April. Friends are participating in organised tours to China and Europe.

Heather Ironmonger

Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Inc.

The Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens have recently been incorporated and revitalised. From some fifteen members membership now stands at fifty-six.

There are a number of sub-groups within the 'new' Friends:

History Friends, who are researching the history of the Gardens

Seminars and Workshop Friends, who organise our internal and public programs of seminars

Guiding Friends, who launched themselves publicly during the recent Begonia Festival after their series of training sessions

Growing Friends, who have spent many Saturdays and Tuesdays producing plants sold at the Friends' stand during the recent Begonia Festival.

The Gardens played host to Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* performed over a season of ten evenings during the New Year Period. The production was staged by Performing Arts students of the University of Ballarat, beneath the canopy of the *Sequoiadendron giganteum* trees. *Twelfth Night* was a feature of the Arts in the Parks Program, which provides entertainment in the Gardens from January until April.

The 1994 Begonia Festival became a major focus for the Friends, with the following activities being arranged:

A Friends' stand within Gardenfest featuring an historical display of the Gardens, plant sales by the Growing Friends and a promotion of Friends' activities

Tours of the Gardens by the Guiding Friends

Participation in the Begonia Festival Parade.

The plant sales were very successful, generating over \$3500 in funds.

Bernadette Cheesman

The Association's Logo

The illustration of *Campsis radicans* used at the head of the first issue of *Campsis* was copied from a drawing made many years ago. Now Beverley Graham, a member of the Melbourne Friends' Botanical Illustrators group, has very kindly given the Association a beautiful monochrome drawing to use instead. The Committee greatly values Beverley's skill and generosity.

Beverley's work as a botanical artist and designer is represented in many Australian and overseas collections. Her *Thinking of You* stamp of February 1990 was one of Australia Post's most popular issues, and her floral designs feature in the Pettis Studios range. Beverley exhibited in London in 1991 with the 'Australia Five Naturally' group and there released six limited edition botanical prints.

Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (Victoria) Inc.

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C/- National Herbarium of Victoria

Birdwood Avenue

South Yarra 3141

President: Jayne Salmon

13 Remony Avenue, Highton, 3216

Secretary: Mr Lawrence Cohn

36 Somerville Street, Doncaster, 3108

Telephone: (03) 848 7029