



*Campsis radicans* Trumpet Flower  
Beverley Graham 1994

# Campsis

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

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## From the President

**C**ONGRATULATIONS to the Albury Friends on the organisation of a very successful 2000 Conference. Those fortunate to be there relished the beautiful autumn sunshine as they enjoyed guided walks and afternoon tea in the historic Albury Botanic Gardens on the Saturday afternoon. We were again reminded that we are indeed fortunate in Australia to have such a diversity of Botanic Gardens with the majority well supported by Friends groups.

You will be aware that Association membership increased greatly after the 1998 Conference held at Warrnambool, when it was agreed to alter our rules to allow Friends of Botanic Gardens outside the original geographic boundaries to become Associate (that is, non-voting) Members. At the Albury Conference it was suggested that we alter our rules again so that the Associate Members would acquire voting rights and so become ordinary Members (that is, Association Members). Letters were sent to all Members about this suggestion and several wrote to express their opinions. The Committee considered the replies at a meeting on 20 October and decided to recommend to the voting Members that, at the time of the next Annual General Meeting (to be held in March), this change should be made. You will receive a detailed letter about this matter in due course.

I am greatly encouraged by the growth in our membership and recently visited the Orange Botanic Gardens, Kings Park and Botanic Gardens and the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, all of which have strong Friends groups. It is clear that we can all benefit from closer communication and sharing of knowledge.

The botanic gardens in Victoria were mostly established in the latter half of the 19th century, encouraged by the Government Botanist, Ferdinand von Mueller, who distributed a wide variety of plants. Many of these gardens are now undergoing much-needed rejuvenation. Many regional gardens in other states have been established more recently and there is much we can learn from them.

With computer technology, information and plant records from all botanic gardens are relatively easy to record. Professional leaders of state and regional

botanic gardens throughout Australia now meet and communicate regularly with each other. This Association aims to provide the Friends of botanic gardens with opportunities to do likewise, and its Conferences over the last eight years have greatly helped in this way. The Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens look forward to welcoming many Friends to the 2001 Conference, titled *Bunce, Bunyas and Beyond*, which will be held from 15 to 17 June next. This winter Conference will mark our Gardens' 150th anniversary.

I know you will all be sorry to learn that Jeff Gates, our Immediate Past President, suffered a heart attack several weeks ago — but you will be glad to know that he is making an excellent recovery. He travelled from Albury to attend the recent Committee meeting and took a full part in it.

**New Members.** Since the March issue of *Campsis* we have been delighted to welcome the Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens, the Friends of Karwarra Australian Plant Garden Inc. (Kalorama, Victoria) and the Friends of Orange Botanic Gardens as new Members of the Association.

**Committee.** It is reported elsewhere that Dr Hugh Douglas, the President of the Friends of Hamilton Botanic Gardens, has retired to live in Adelaide. As he was representing those Friends as a member of the Association's Committee he has, to our regret, resigned from it. The Committee will now seek a replacement.

## Jayne Salmon

### Friends of Albury Botanic Gardens

**E**IGHTY-EIGHT FRIENDS from twenty-one Friends groups attended the Association Conference in Albury from 7 to 10 April, 2000 and *Beyond*. It was held on a glorious sunny weekend. Although the primary aim of the Conference was not to make a profit we were glad to be able to add a small sum to the Association's reserves. The many cards and notes of congratulation attested to the overall success of the weekend, and we thank all those who took part.

Development of our Master Plan is proceeding well. The official opening of the 'Fellowes Centre' on

30 May was our next function. It has been named in honour of the father and son who were the curators of Albury Botanic Gardens from July 1902 until July 1936. James Edward Richards Fellowes and his son Walter Bennett Fellowes were responsible for developing a designated area of 10 acres (4.05 ha) into the beautiful botanic gardens we enjoy today. The Fellowes Centre consists of administration offices, staff facilities and a function room, which is a great asset for the Friends' meetings. We celebrated a wind-down dinner for the Conference in the function room on 2 June. It was so successful that we held our next social evening there on the Olympics opening night, 15 September. Our regular monthly meetings have now been extended by having a suitable venue to enjoy guest speakers.

The rose bed design, which will follow the original design of James Fellowes, has been given Council approval and we hope the roses will be in full bloom by Summer 2001, with the latest varieties as well as traditional beauties.

On 15 October the growing group and other members staged the Spring Festival and Plant Sale. Although the sun shone brilliantly in a clear blue sky a chilling breeze kept the crowds away. Helped by our Sing Australia Choir we boosted our funds by \$1500.

During the weekend of 28 and 29 October a dozen members will travel to explore the Royal Cranbourne Botanic Gardens, with a barbecue lunch on the Saturday kindly provided by their Friends. Next day we will be in the Royal Melbourne Botanic Gardens enjoying a guided tour. Then home to Albury.

We are looking forward to the Geelong Conference and wish the Geelong Friends every success.

## Jeff Gates

### Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens

**W**E ARE DELIGHTED to report that updated plans for Stage 1 of the Geelong Botanic Gardens and Eastern Park Master Plan were launched on 31 August at a media conference at the Gardens. Work on the new entrance area is expected to begin in January to co-incide with the Gardens' 150th anniversary. Chris Dance Land Design Pty Ltd has further developed the original 1995 plan. The design enhances Botanic Drive, which rises from the Eastern Beach waterfront through a series of terraces and links to a new Gardens entrance. This entrance will be a raised podium featuring an arbour. From this elevated position visitors will be able to look upon a large sunken elliptical-shaped garden, to be planted with dryland and drought-tolerant plants. The new garden, designed for the 21st century, will be linked to the existing historic gardens by dramatic planting.

Our new General Manager of Environment and Recreation, Rob Small, came to Geelong from Auckland earlier this year. He has a great understanding of Friends groups and has emphasised the crucial need for a well-qualified curator. Friends and the Gardens' staff were 'over the moon' when the Council decided to appoint John Arnott as Curator, which position he took up early in October. John had

been in charge of horticulture at the Melbourne Zoo for 12 years. Together, he and Rob Small have brought a wealth of experience to Geelong. Our botanic gardens were being well maintained under 'the contract', but were on a downward spiral towards an amenity park. There will be a review of collections, policy and communication with other regional gardens very soon. We have received excellent support from both Rob Small and John Arnott.

Plans are proceeding for the Association's 2001 Conference, which will be held from 15 to 17 June at the Conference Centre, Eastern Park. Preliminary notices have already been sent to Friends groups. We expect to issue more detailed information before Christmas. The Conference will be later in the year than previous Conferences so as to hold it at the same time as an exhibition of botanic art at the Geelong Art Gallery. Paintings by Jenny Phillips and students, with an exhibition of historic photographs of the Geelong Botanic Gardens, will open at the Gallery on 15 June. We recently received a community arts grant of \$3500 to assist with the restoration, magnification and interpretation of these photographs, which provide a wonderful record of the Gardens.

Brian O'Neill, the Curator of the Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, will address the Conference and lead a workshop. Rob Small and John Arnott will also speak. Conservation, education and tourism will feature during the Conference. We urge you to reserve the dates and plan to join us in a stimulating and enjoyable Conference.

The Friends have been busy each month with activities for members. Our annual winter lunch, held in July, was most successful. 160 guests attended to hear the speaker, Michael McCoy, and enjoy the company. Other activities have been talks by Lucille Strachan about the Ornamental Plant Collections Association, Janet Thomson on Plant Hunters and Trevor Pescott about birds in the Geelong region. All these talks were held in the morning and were well attended.

We have been very pleased to welcome a visit from the Friends of St Arnaud Queen Mary Botanic Gardens, St Arnaud, which took place earlier this month.

## Jayne Salmon

### Friends of the Australian Inland Botanic Gardens

**THE FIRST LAWN PLANTING** of 2 acres (0.81 ha) around the Rose Garden in April is now covering well. Natural grass cover elsewhere between the various beds and a riot of spring flowering shrubs, trees, etc. are presenting a magnificent display through the Gardens. The new Information Gazebo near the Garnpang Homestead, sponsored by the Friends, was completed in May and now has an extensive display for visitors to view.

Six members attended the Friends' Conference in Albury and in May we celebrated our 10th anniversary by the production of a booklet on the history of the first ten years. A special weekend of festivities took place, with a combined Civic Reception from the two supporting Councils — Wentworth, N.S.W., and

Mildura, Victoria — on the paddle steamer *Avoca*. An historic occasion, it was the first time the two Councils had honoured anyone with a combined reception. A very exciting and fulfilling two days resulted and set us on our way for the next 10 years of development.

The stream and lakes project is in full swing with excavation help from the Wentworth Shire Council, some help from members of the 'Work for the Dole' scheme and much hard work from Gardens' staff and volunteers.

There have been visits from several school groups with very positive project reports from the children; it is hoped that more schools will follow. Many bus tours book tractor/train tours, which are always enjoyed with much enthusiasm, and our catering team provides a variety of meals for group bookings. The spectacular rose garden is about to erupt for its magnificent spring show after the winter pruning by the dedicated volunteers and Gardens' staff. The next Open Day is on 29 October with continuous train tours, barbecue lunches and Devonshire teas. Hundreds of visitors are expected.

A bus tour to Swan Hill for 37 Friends was enjoyed on 1 October, visiting six lovely private gardens and a nursery at Woorinen. We are indebted to the Swan Hill & District Garden Club, who hosted a great day.

The Gardens show extraordinary development in these first 10 years and, after the good rains throughout the winter, are well worth a visit. Do come to see us!

**Margaret Hall**

### **Friends of St Arnaud Queen Mary Botanic Gardens**

**T**HE ST ARNAUD FRIENDS have plenty of scope for work in the Queen Mary Gardens as the restoration proceeds. Since installing six former gas standards and lamps we have held our annual gala day to raise funds. This was well supported by our 140 members and the general public, clearing over \$2000. This money will go towards paying the cost of a hedge. The Friends will supply the labour for planting.

We have moved a memorial sundial from a too-shady spot to a better position, and have also cleaned and polished it. The sundial is in memory of a great curator, who served for 40 years and brought the Gardens to their time of greatest glory. He was Frederick Beyer, appointed in 1896. He retired in 1936. Sadly, the Gardens have suffered a slow and long decline since his days.

The Friends financed the cleaning and repainting of the ornate Angwin Gates at the entrance, and are about to tackle the restoration of the Long Bed that runs through the Gardens and was once its greatest feature.

We work closely with the Shire Queen Mary Gardens Committee of Management and with the Shire. The Council allocated \$7000 to the Gardens in the current budget. There is a long way to go in restoration and unfortunately there is some opposition to the Gardens being restored. Those who are opposed prefer a windswept park! We hope and believe that the Council will not deviate from the Walsh Plan in its

entirety in the face of the short-sightedness of a few people.

Recently we were glad to take a bus trip to the Geelong Botanic Gardens, where their Friends gave us a most interesting guided tour.

We also lend a hand in assisting the Queen Mary Management Committee in the restoration of the CWA Pioneer Park, which is the only park designed by Edna Walling now remaining in Australia. The Management Committee also manages the Park. Edna Walling expert Trisha Dixon has just completed the restoration plan, funded by a grant last year from the ABC Open Gardens Scheme.

Lastly, the St Arnaud Friends hope that, somewhere down the track, they can offer to host the annual conference of the Association.

**Ella Ebery**

### **Friends of Orange Botanic Gardens**

**O**RANGE IS A VIBRANT CITY of 36,000 people situated three hours west of Sydney in the Central Tablelands of New South Wales. At just over 800 metres the climate is cool and semi-alpine. Street plantings in Orange are primarily of European deciduous trees providing a wealth of colour in autumn and a distinctively bare look in winter. However, this enhances the beauty of spring with early spring bulbs such as daffodils, hyacinths and jonquils leading into the explosion of colour from rhododendrons, azaleas, dogwoods, magnolias and peonies that are planted around the parks and home gardens of the city. Older parks, such as our more-than-a-century-old Cook Park and Robertson Park have well-established plantings of older trees and flowering shrubs, and are popular picnic spots for visitors to Orange.

In contrast, the Orange Botanic Gardens is a young, developing garden of 17 hectares, first established in the early 1980s and officially opened in October 1988. The principal large trees in the Gardens are eucalypts such as yellow box and apple box that dotted Clover Hill Farm before it was developed into the Botanic Gardens. The Gardens take advantage of the cool tableland environment to showcase rhododendrons, ericas, dogwoods and spring bulbs. Special features of the Gardens include an extensive heritage rose garden established and maintained by the Central West branch of the Heritage Rose Society, an oak garden with more than 30 species of oaks, including evergreen species, a Peace garden enclosed with myrtles, olives and *Peace* roses, and an orchard. The orchard is an unusual feature to have in a Botanic Gardens but reflects the importance of Orange as a centre of deciduous fruit production. It features many older varieties of apples and pears, many of which were developed in Australia, but which are no longer grown commercially. These Gardens are picturesquely arranged around a series of billabongs with a central island providing protected habitats for a large variety of native birds. Early morning birdwalks are a popular activity at the Gardens, led by local ornithologists who have identified well over 100 species of birds in the Gardens.

Newer additions to the Gardens include an anomalous sundial (constructed primarily from local

bluestone blocks), which was opened by the Governor of New South Wales in 1998 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the opening of the Gardens, an extensive area planted out to Australian plants native to the Central Tablelands and a Tasmanian garden with plants from the Apple Isle that enjoy the type of climate also found in Orange. Under development are a biblical garden, featuring plants mentioned in the bible, and a native grass area being developed by the Friends.

The Friends have been associated with the development of the Gardens since their inception in the early 1980s and have contributed manpower or funds for several of the features of the Gardens, including the sundial area. In addition to fundraising activities such as lunchtime talks, plant stalls and catering for Open Gardens, the Friends run a guided walk around the Gardens on the first Sunday of each month (10.30 a.m. start, all welcome), have a monthly working bee and provide the Wednesday Weeders, whose role does not need explanation.

Next time you are travelling through the central west of New South Wales, take a trip out along Kearney's Drive to Orange Botanic gardens to relax in the picturesque and ever-changing peaceful environment that has been created there by the hard work and dedication of the people of Orange.

## **Murray Fletcher**

### **Friends of Burnley Gardens**

**T**O MARK THE 150TH BIRTHDAY of Burnley Gardens, the Friends of Burnley Gardens in conjunction with Burnley College, University of Melbourne had a celebration commemorating this historic milestone. Early in 1859 *The Port Phillip Herald* announced that work on the Survey Paddock Gardens had commenced. These gardens became Burnley Gardens. To trees from the original planting are still growing.

On 21 and 22 October the Gardens and research station were open to the public. As part of the celebration there were exhibitions in the Main Hall by the Ikenobo Society, the Bonsai Society of Victoria, the Australasian Native Orchid Society, The Australian Native Plant Society and the Australian garden History Society. Invited speakers who discussed a wide range of horticultural subjects included John Patrick, Rodger Elliott, David Glenn, Anne Latreille, Dr Greg Moore and Mary Chapman.

Tours of the Gardens by the Burnley Friendly Guides were conducted throughout the weekend, which coincided with the Burnley Student plant sale. The Grasshopper Café and Plants in Print were also open for business. All funds raised over the weekend will be returned to the Gardens to support our ongoing redevelopment and restoration program.

## **Elsbeth Ferguson**

### **Friends of the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens**

**T**HE FRIENDS HAVE NOT BEEN SITTING idly on their hands during the last six months. During

this period many thousands of plants have been propagated and potted and repotted by the happy band of 'propagators'. We are committed to produce plants for a number of Landcare groups and for the Shire Council for its re-vegetation projects, as well as the thousands needed for the gardens surrounding the new building and, of course, for direct sale to the public.

The Visitors Centre/Herbarium is nearing completion but the official opening will not take place until 1 September 2001, which will give time to get all the gardens and lawns in top order to set the structure off to best effect.

We have been fortunate in obtaining the service of a Work for the Dole crew to lay the pavers that surround much of the building. They have proved to be an enthusiastic and energetic group, better than some in the past, which may be attributed to the range of ages and the provision of a good leader.

The Herbarium part of the building is operational and all our stored equipment and specimens have at last reached their final resting place. Now the specialist time is re-emerging, planning field trips, tuning up the new computer and breaking in fresh recruits. Spring is a good time to find new species and in bloom.

Our free barbecues are in demand, particularly by groups such as Probus, and we had a successful sausage sizzle as a fundraiser by the Friends.

## **Don Walton**

### **Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne**

**T**HERE'S STILL TIME TO SEE the Art of Botanical Illustration, the fifth biennial exhibition and sale presented by the Friends in Mueller Hall at the National Herbarium. It is open daily between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. until 12 November, with free entry. While the majority of the 169 works are by Victorian artists, there are also paintings from Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania. This year the artists have been required to provide precise botanical identification of their subjects, to underline the importance of botanical art in this role. Prizes for a raffle include a framed Banksia print donated by Celia Rosser. The Friends will purchase one or more paintings, to the total value of \$2,500, for presentation to the State Botanical Collection, which is kept at the Herbarium.

July, when Celia's 28 original watercolours from *The Banksias* Vol.3 were exhibited in Mueller Hall to great acclaim, could be seen as Banksia month. On Celia's behalf, the Friends arranged a reception for invited guests to mark the publication of this volume. It also celebrated the completion of the task commissioned by Monash University in 1974 for Celia to paint every known species of Banksia. Four special viewings for Friends, a raffle and the proceeds of the reception raised about \$10,500 for our funds.

Another very successful effort was the Growing Friends' Spring Sale on 7 and 8 October. Rain at last, and a burst of warm weather, meant that the plants looked irresistible. The proceeds of the sale amounted to a record \$29,000.

Sharon Beaman, who has retired after convening the Growing Friends for five years, has been proposed for Honorary Life Membership of the Friends. Sharon and Anita Barley, who has been active with the Botanical Illustrators since their inception, will both be honoured in this way at our annual meeting on 133 November. A group of RBG staff members will report to the meeting about a range of projects in the Gardens that we have funded.

A working group of the Friends' Council continues to explore options for the future directions of our organisation and its relationship with the RBG administration. It is clear that we must initiate a major drive to retain Members and increase our numbers. We welcomed 50 new Members at a very successful morning function, followed by a guided walk, on 6 October.

The pressure of the Grey-headed Flying-fox colony has forced the Fern Gully to be declared out-of-bounds to visitors, save for the powerful owl that appears there intermittently. Despite the fact that the heritage, botanical and cultural values of the Gardens are seriously threatened, no action can be taken against the bats while the Scientific Advisory Committee within the Department of Natural Resources and Environment considers public comments on their Preliminary Recommendation to list the Flying-fox as a threatened species.

The Minister for Environment and Conservation, the Hon. Sherryl Garbutt, officiated at the opening of the RBG's state-of-the-art Green Waste Recycling Centre in September, and 'art' it truly is, with model mulch-making visible from a smart observation deck. It's on the site of the old Bell Shed. The Friends have contributed to the recycling effort by providing screened receptacles for separation of visitors' rubbish throughout the Gardens.

New gates leading into the Gardens from Observatory Gate were 'opened' on 17 October. They were commissioned as a memorial to the late Henry Simon by Anita Simon, a member of the Friends' Activities Committee. Sculptor Darryl Cowie designed the gates, which feature bronze and glass ornamentation. Nearby, on Education Lawn, the Magic Pudding sculpture by Louis Laumen will be unveiled on 16 November.

Despite winning prizes for its architects, the new building at Observatory Gate has not functioned as effectively as it should and changes are being made to improve its Visitor Information area. Work is also under way to remove the silt and accumulated debris from Central Lake, a project funded by a bequest to the Friends' Trust Fund.

The Gardens will commence publication of an eight-page full-colour newsletter, *Floreo*, in late November. Initially appearing three times a year, it will be distributed mainly to donors and sponsors, and to government, industry and tertiary institutions.

Friends' activities in November include a tour of the new Melbourne Museum, a visit to two private gardens and the Botanic gardens in Ballarat, and an illustrated talk by the award-winning garden designer Carolyn Blackman. We'll round off the year with a Christmas dinner at the Lyceum Club early in December.

Members of other Friends' groups would be most welcome to join us on a trip to Mt Buffalo, focusing

on the summer alpine wildflowers, between 26 and 28 January 2001.

You should be able to find details of all our activities on our new website, for which we are greatly indebted to the skills of Heath Rudduck from Squib and Dr Richard Kirsner, a Council member. Our website address is [www.frbgmelb.org.au](http://www.frbgmelb.org.au) and our email address is [friends@frbgmelb.org.au](mailto:friends@frbgmelb.org.au).

## Heather Ironmonger

### Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS, comprising 90 hectares, are situated on the side of Black Mountain, accessed from Clunies Ross Street. The winter months in Canberra are relatively quiet in the Gardens although our guided walks daily at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., continue to be popular, especially on warm sunny days, and the Gardens comprising all-Australian plants are interesting to visit at any time of the year. *What's in Flower* is published weekly, highlighting plants currently flowering. Now that spring is here, the Gardens are looking their best and there is greatly increased activity. The Gardens are open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily and in January and February from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Recent special events have included the opening of a walking track from the Gardens to Black Mountain Tower, and *Floral Impressions*, an exhibition based on Helen Hewson's book *Australia, 300Years of Botanical Illustration*. The Friends donated copies of this and of Celia Rosser's *Banksias* Vol. 3 to the ANBG Library, holding a special viewing for the Friends. There was a talk on Grevilleas by Bob Makinson and a trip to Burrendong Arboretum among other activities.

We have been looking forward to celebrating the 30th anniversary of the opening of the Gardens on 20 October 1970 by the Prime Minister John Gorton, and the 10th anniversary of the Friends (inaugurated on 14 October 1990). The anniversary celebrations were held mainly on the weekend of 20 to 22 October with the opening of the Gardens History Exhibition, *The Nation's Garden*. No. 1 Friend, Margaret Hendry, cut the birthday cake. In order to help document the history of the Gardens, the Friends have initiated the Oral History Project. This is now complete and the bound transcript will form part of the exhibition, which will be in the Visitor Information Centre until the end of February 2001.

The Guides have been busy learning about the plants in the new Display Glasshouse, opened officially on 21 October, after which the Guides began the public tours of this new display. A Wollemi Pine, to be planted by the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Robert Hill, was donated by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney. Concerts were arranged for 22 October, by the Hall Village Brass Band and on 29 October by the Royal Military College Concert Band, both on the Eucalypt Lawn.

The Annual Gardens Photographic Competition for High School and College Students, sponsored by the Friends, attracted 115 entries this year. The winners,

announced on 14 October, received prizes donated by the Friends.

On 25 November the Friends will hold another *Grazing in the Gardens*, a three-course meal at three different locations in the Gardens with live music entertainment for Friends and the public. Our first *Grazing* last year was very successful and attracted a large gathering.

In its Strategic Plan for 2000–2002 the Friends budgeted for an allocation of \$20,000 in 2000 to assist the Australian National Botanic Gardens with appropriate projects to enhance the Gardens. At the first round in April, the Friends Council approved the allocation of \$5000 for the first stage of an Interpretive Art and Craft Program, i.e., the Development of an Interpretive Strategy for the Gardens. It also allocated \$4500 for the installation of semi-circular seating adjacent to the Sydney Basin area. The next projects are to be considered in November.

The Friends also awards annually a bursary of \$2000 for Gardens staff to assist in a post-graduate or certificate course related to horticulture or botany, to fees for a conference relative to the Gardens or to assist participation in a Gardens-supported project.

Future activities publicised in the Newsletter include a walk on Black Mountain and bird walks in the Gardens. On 9 November at 6 p.m. there will be a talk by Dr Pamille Berg, of MGT Architects, who has been engaged to advise the Gardens on the provision of high-quality art and craft work. The Growing Friends meet monthly and propagate plants for the very popular Plant Sales; the next is expected to be in December.

Our successful Summer Program will again be held throughout January and February, when the Gardens remain open until 8 p.m. The program is well supported by the Canberra public, who attend jazz concerts on each Saturday night on the Eucalypt Lawn and Sunday Serenade on the Café Lawn, all starting at 6 p.m. The gold coin donations go to the Friends, who also provide a wine and soft drinks table. The Gardens make a beautiful backdrop for excellent music and everyone enjoys picnicking or just soaking up the atmosphere in such a picturesque environment.

## Margaret Mansfield

### Friends of the Warrnambool Botanic Gardens

A SUCCESSFUL 'DAY IN THE GARDENS' was held on a beautiful sunny Sunday in late March.

The combination of band music, provided by the Warrnambool Pipe and Warrnambool City Bands, together with the various craft and produce stalls and afternoon tea from the rotunda was a good recipe for success, with \$1200 being raised.

Our Annual General Meeting was held in July with an interesting talk entitled 'Anecdotes of a Tree-loving Journalist' from Lynne Strahan, author and historian, renowned for her artistic garden *Eumeralla* at Yambuk. On display was a beautifully-bound copy of the Curator's Report Book 1898–1958. The original was rebound by the Friends for the City of Warrnambool and is held in the Library Archives. The copy will be made available for research purposes at the Library. The Curator's Report Book is a valuable resource to our garden research and comprises the reports to

Council of the first three curators of the Gardens. It is fascinating to read their accounts of the work they did over 60 years to establish our beautiful Gardens. Ellen Dwyer, who was the Friends' first President and a founding member has now retired from the Committee and has been awarded a Life Membership, the first for our group.

The Growing Friends have been busy pruning the new espaliered fruit trees and introducing three new apple and gig trees. They have continued to restore the main entrance bed, having purchased plants from the Melbourne Growing Friends, a wonderful resource for regional gardens.

We continue to research the Gardens' urns and gas lamps, seeking advice about their restoration. A labelling program continues, using existing labels and new ones purchased by the Friends. We have approached the Council for help to establish a database for all plants, essential for our botanical and historical records. Application for certain Government grants has so far been unsuccessful.

The Committee of the Friends attended several brainstorming sessions conducted by Neville Smith of Business Thinking Systems, who kindly donated his time. We have had a very positive outcome from these sessions, which showed us how to plan and use our time and resources productively. This has enabled us to draw up a realistic and effective plan for the group over the next few years.

## Marigold Curtis

### Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens

THE WINTER MONTHS seem to have passed so quickly, but it has been a time of progress in our Gardens. Our winter display in The Robert Clark Conservatory took on a more educational role. The Australian Reference Collection of Begonias was displayed, together with a plant diversity and plant evolution display. It was warm, friendly and very informative. Tuesday workshops, demonstrations and tours were arranged for July and August. The new display opened on 6 October — a colourful display of *Schizanthus* and *Cineraria* with a sculptural use of mirrors.

Our Statue Pavilion is being refurbished. Work by the Council building and maintenance staff is to be completed by the end of October. The Winter Garden section of the new Western Bed has been prepared, and planting has begun. The garden will feature a collection of conifers with striking foliage contrasts, coloured gravel mulches and winter-flowering accent plants. The Friends are very involved with all aspects of the Western Bed, and we are particularly pleased with this section. Several trees due for replacement have been removed and replanting has begun. The North Gardens Wetland Project, as I mentioned last year, has unfortunately been put on the backburner for a tie, but construction works are scheduled for January and February 2001.

The Friends continue to meet four times a year. In May our speaker was Greg Pyers, taking on creating a 'Suburban Wildlife Garden', In August Kevin Walsh spoke on his experiences as a tour guide in the south island of New Zealand. Both speakers were excellent.

The Growing Friends are busy propagating plants for our busy summer season. They continue to swell our funds with the sale of plants. The Guides have been quiet over the winter, but bookings are coming in for spring and summer. We have called a meeting for the end of October to form a Friends of the Statutes group. Our statues are in need of cleaning and several need repair. We hope a strong lobby group will help to find a way of looking after these wonderful works of art.

Jane Edmondson came to Ballarat last month to help launch our Spring Gardens calendar. Please contact me if you would like a brochure about what is on in Ballarat and district in the garden during next month. They are also available in the Conservatory.

The Friends organised two functions for October. First, a trip to see the wildflowers in Halls Gap, also a visit to the lovely native plant nursery and garden at Pomonal. A bird-watching walk was held on 15 October. Michael McCoy is doing a workshop for us in November. Ballarat, Buninyong, Daylesford and Castlemaine Friends are organising the Association Conference in 2002, to be held in spring rather than autumn. It will be in November. There have been two meetings of the organisers, who are looking forward keenly to the challenge ahead.

**Joan Garner**

### **Friends of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, Hobart**

**T**HE FRIENDS HAVE BEEN BUSY over the autumn, winter and spring. With two enjoyable bus tours, first to Mt Field to view the 'fagus' in its autumn colours and various other alpine plants endemic to the region; another in September to view the daffodils and various gardens in the Huon valley, plus an interesting view of a mushroom farm and how they are grown.

Our Historical Photo exhibition of early records of the Gardens has been put together and hung in the Cottage and we trust that it will be open for public display shortly. Our propagation group has been busy organising the area at the back of the Cottage as our project for the year 2000. This will be of great benefit when finished, and the group will be concentrating on endangered species endemic to Tasmania, with a small section for other plants required for their popularity from our 'Plants for sale' barrow. These endeavours all raise much-needed funds for the use of the Gardens in projects such as funding for the Conservatory and the purchase of seeds, pots, fertiliser, etc.

The Gardens had a very successful Tulip Festival in spite of a rainy Saturday afternoon. The tulips have been beautiful and a mass of vibrant colour in the beds. We helped as gatekeepers, volunteers in the Discovery Centre and with a stall selling various previously-loved items.

Next month we have a Christmas meeting at which Mark Geeves will give a talk on cottage plants, as the area in front of the Cottage is being made into a cottage garden showing plants grown in Hobart at the end of the 19th century. Interstate visitors are very welcome. The date is 25 November at 10 a.m., in the Easy Access Garden Centre. Morning tea will be served in the Friends' Cottage afterwards.

**Anne Clarke**

### **Friends of Castlemaine Botanical Gardens**

**W**E ARE ABSOLUTELY DELIGHTED that the reconstruction of the 1872 summerhouse in the Gardens was completed on 15 September. It is a beautifully constructed building, and we can only hope it will not suffer from vandalism, particularly before the official opening on 5 November by Senator Tsebin Tchen.

The only remaining task for this project is the erection of an interpretative sign, which is at present with the manufacturer. The project has been funded by the Commonwealth Government through the Federation Fund, with extras such as the sign and plaque being paid for by the Friends and the Shire of Mount Alexander.

We recently completed the ten-year review of the Conservation Policy and Management Plan of the Gardens, which was presented to Council late in September.

The interpretative sign at the entrance to the Gardens was erected in August. This was jointly funded by the Shire and ourselves, and is most informative and very attractive to the eye.

Our Annual General Meeting is to be held on 11 November, after which the Executive Committee will be taking a well-earned rest!

**Trish Addis**

### **Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne**

**T**HE CRANBOURNE FRIENDS have had a very successful year. They helped the Gardens staff in running Bushfest in March, which was a great way of introducing the public to the Gardens. Guided walks for adults and families, and fun and educational programs for the children were organised by the staff. The Friends helped by having a plant stall and a botanical art exhibition, and sold Robins Bush Foods and tea and coffee. Free tastings of Bush Food Products were offered.

The Friends' annual dinner was another highlight of the year. Dr Mary E. White gave a fascinating talk — a history of Australia beyond 40,000 to 60,000 years of habitation by humans, back to the time when Australia was situated in the northern hemisphere and part of Gondwana. Again, lots of raffle prizes were won — plants, wheelbarrows, etc. The ever-popular auction at the end of the function drew lively bidding, with the main prize, donated by our Patron, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, being lunch for seven people with her at Cruden Farm. The personally-inscribed copy of Mary White's book *After the greening — the browning of Australia* was also highly sought after.

A very pleasant get-together was held at the Stringybark picnic area in March to pay tribute to the Hon. Peter Howson, CMG, on his retirement from the Maud Gibson Trust, on which he served as a member for 30 years, with the last 14 years as Chairman. To honour the outstanding contribution made by him to

the Cranbourne Gardens a plaque was presented, to be placed on a new seat in the Gardens.

Another extremely successful event this year was the winter lecture series organised by Rodger Elliot. Held on the last Sunday of June, July and August, in three different places, people were offered an optional Gardens visit at 10.30 a.m., then a light lunch followed by two speakers. The speakers were Helen Richards — 'Victorian Orchids'; Jane Edmondson — 'The relevance and importance of growing Australian plants'; John Arnott from the Melbourne Zoological Gardens — 'Aus-Bush at the Zoo'; Rodger Elliot — 'Wonderful common and uncommon Australian plants'; Trevor Blake — 'Exploits in Central and Western Australia'; Neil Marriott — 'On fascinating Grevilleas'.

There was a record attendance at the Annual General Meeting in September, which was followed by an excellent talk given by our Director, Dr Philip Moors, who spoke on 'The birds of the Cranbourne Gardens'. He pointed out the great importance of growing native plants to sustain our native animals and birds, and showed charts illustrating the minute areas of native vegetation remaining in the Gippsland area.

A new attractive brochure for the Friends was produced this year and has received many favourable comments.

Recent donations from the Friends made to the Gardens have been \$3450 for fire equipment and the 13 volumes of the *Flora of Australia* (\$990).

## **Lesley Clark**

### **Friends of the Gisborne Botanic Gardens**

**W**ELL, WE ARE BACK ON TRACK and moving along quite well! We have had a display board up in the local shopping centre in recent months and this seems to have raised our profile in the community. The display is changed each month and has referred to Kevin Walsh, our speaker at the Annual General Meeting; drought-tolerant gardens (very topical here as we are still suffering from water restrictions, after two years); our sister-city relationship with Gisborne, New Zealand; and the content of the new garden beds in the gardens. A pamphlet box has to be regularly refilled, so someone is looking at our board!

Recently we received a grant of \$4300 from the Shire, which has enabled us to develop 1100 square metres of garden beds. A planting morning saw 25 volunteers from the Friends and the community put in more than 250 trees, shrubs and grasses in less than three hours — we were absolutely thrilled. Most of this has been planted with a collection of Pittosporums with a view to us one day holding the OPCA collection of Pittosporums. Already we have more than 25 cultivars — you wouldn't believe there were so many Pittosporums out there!

## **Melanie Kinsey**

### **Friends of the Palmetum, Townsville**

**G**REETINGS FROM sunny North Queensland and welcome to our first contribution to *Campsis*. I'll start with a bit of history about Townsville's Palmetum, and will add more information in future numbers.

The Palmetum, covering almost 17 hectares, is situated on a parcel of land adjacent to the Ross River in the suburb of Douglas. The site was originally developed around the turn of the century as a mango orchard, market garden, dairy farm and an abattoir. The land was acquired by the Townsville City Council in 1960, but it was not until 1982 that the site was put forward for 'The Meridian — Townsville's Palmetum' as a bicentennial project. Minor plantings began in 1983, and The Palmetum was officially opened on 18 September 1988. The number of palm species in The Palmetum is about 350, with 60 being native to Australia, and many considered rare and threatened in their natural habitats. In total 900 species of plants make up The Palmetum.

The most significant event this year was Cyclone Tessi in April. Heading in a south-westerly direction, Cyclone Tessi, a category 2 cyclone, crossed the coast about 40 km north of Townsville. She was accompanied by wind gusts to 130 km/h with heavy to flood rains. Areas of The Palmetum closest to the Ross River sustained considerable damage to both large trees and palms, and in other sections some large branches were brought down, causing damage to palms and other plants below. Wood-chipped cyclone debris from throughout Townsville and Thuringowa has provided much-needed mulch to The Palmetum.

On a more regenerative note, six new varieties of dwarf coconuts have been established in open areas of the park. The seeds were from commercial dwarf coconut varieties from a plantation in the Solomon Islands, and are new to Australia. Several of the varieties are highly ornamental and it is hoped that they can be used as a seed source for further plantings in parks and gardens around the city.

## **Danielle Heller**

### **Friends of Hamilton Botanic Gardens**

**S**INCE THE LAST REPORT there has been some very encouraging news on the water situation. The drought conditions of last summer should not be repeated this year after wonderful spring rain, and the cleaning and maintenance of the reservoir that serves the Gardens.

During the year the Friends submitted a recommendation to the Shire for the implementation of a Committee of Management to oversee the long-term preservation and promotion of the Gardens. This proposal has been accepted and is in the process of being formulated.

It was with regret that we had to farewell our President Dr Hugh Douglas and his wife Sina (who was also an active member of Committee). They are retiring to live in Adelaide. The Co-ordinator of Parks and gardens will also be missed as he has accepted a new career challenge and has moved away. His replacement is still to be appointed.

There has been a considerable increase in tourist numbers in the Hamilton district, which has seen many



more visitors to the Gardens. With the spring and summer season upon us the Friends intend to organise live music in the Gardens and a pre-Christmas day of entertainment, including stalls and afternoon tea.

Christmas and Season's Greetings to all Friends, and success to all 2001 ventures.

## Beris Smith

### **Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (Victoria) Inc. A0026805Z**

*President:* Jayne Salmon  
*Vice-President:* Joan Garner  
*Secretary:* Lawrence Cohn  
*Treasurer:* David Baumgartner  
*Immediate Past President:* Jeff Gates  
*Committee:* Joyce Gates, Janet Thomson, Marie Ziebell

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Friends of the Gisborne Botanic Gardens Inc.  
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