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Beverley Graham 1994

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Campsis

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

SINCE THE LAST *CAMPSIS* the Committee held a meeting in Ballarat in August. Two new Members were welcomed:

- Friends of the Arid Lands Botanic Garden at Port Augusta, and
- Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden.

The Committee considered a proposal for reciprocity between Members, and the Secretary has sent a letter to all asking for their response. Where events are held for which charges are to be made and offering a concessional rate for that Friends' members, it was suggested that this rate be extended to visiting individuals from other Friends groups. It would be a welcoming gesture among Members of the Association.

Judith Bailey, who looks after our website, also attended the meeting and recommended that we buy software that will allow us independent operation of our own site.

An important item of the agenda was the appointment of a Sub-committee to look at our Statement of Purposes and Rules and to suggest any necessary changes. The Sub-committee is to report to the Committee, which will then consider its proposals before submitting them to a general meeting of the Association, possibly at the Annual General Meeting in 2005.

Pauline Wicksteed

Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide

THE FRIENDS HAVE BEEN very saddened by the passing of our former director of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, Mr Noel Lothian, OBE. A Memorial Service was held in the delightful setting of the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden on Friday 8 October 2004. He will always have a very special place in the history of the

Botanic Gardens of Adelaide and the Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide.

We have been very busy organising a special function entitled *Jazz in Mt Lofty Botanic Garden* for 28 November 2004. It is jointly sponsored by the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, the Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide Inc., Adelaide Hills Tourism and Adelaide Regional Development to celebrate successful partnerships in the Adelaide Hills and to offer to all our members of the 'Friends' a very special event to enjoy. Local hills wine and food will be a feature of this event, with entertainment from the Band of the South Australian Police.

All sub-committees have been busy and our guides are now offering walks every day in the Adelaide Botanic Garden (except Christmas Day and Good Friday) as well as the other two Botanic Gardens as required. Needless to say, these extra walks require extra guides, so we will hold a hairline program in 2005. They have also recently celebrated the Garden Guides' 21st Birthday.

Our Botanical Art Group will have a final workshop for the year with Louise Saunders, making it a highly successful year for this expanding group of the Friends.

The Growing Group and North Lodge Shop will hold their Spring Sale at Adelaide Botanic Garden on 6 and 7 November from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days.

We are also exhibiting at the Rose Spectacular at Burnside on 30 and 31 October, and selling Rose Books and 'rosy goods' from our North Lodge Shop.

Meanwhile the Tours Group is also conducting 'Pruning Australian Natives' at Wittunga Botanic Garden on 16 November.

The end of the year is upon us, so the Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide wish all our fellow members of the Association of Friends a peaceful and happy Festive Season.

Janie Smylie, President

Friends of the Grounds, The University of Melbourne

IN 1856, EDWARD LA TROBE BATEMAN was employed by the University of Melbourne as its first landscape planner. He had recently designed Melbourne's Fitzroy Gardens. Over the next 80 years his plan was implemented, and several aspects of the layout still exist today.

By 1886 the University grounds had become 'a pleasure resort for the residents of northern Melbourne. They strolled through the gardens viewing the plants and trees ... On warm Sunday afternoons hundreds of people lounged in the grounds until sunset when the porter rang his bell and locked all the gates' (Blainey 1957).

Today it is generally the thousands of students who use the grounds for relaxation, discussions or en route to classes. The public, however, has access to the grounds and is most welcome to walk or to picnic, especially during the weekends. There are no locked gates except around the System Garden overnight and at weekends.

Some highlights of the grounds are:

- The System Garden. A botanic garden created in 1856 and based on a number of early 16th century classical botanic gardens. The tower, all that is left of an original octagonal glass-house, is the focal point of the garden now considerably smaller than the original.
- The 1888 Building. A collection of exotic trees and shrubs in the garden at the front of the building reflect the planting of the period. Restoration of the western area is planned.
- The South Lawn. Constructed over an underground car park in 1972, the lawn contains plane trees growing in hyperbolic paraboloid shells.
- Professors' Walk. A landscaped pedestrian walk developed in 1975 and leading to the staff club, University House, the only remaining professor's house on the campus.
- The Ellis Stones Garden. A native garden north of the Altantes entrance to the South Car Park. Designed by Ellis Stones, it is now a lasting memorial to his style of landscaping.
- Masson Road. A major pedestrian entrance to the University off Swanston Street. It is lined with English elms and contains spectacular ginkgo trees.

The Friends of the Grounds society was established over a decade ago to 'promote the Grounds as a significant horticultural amenity. The interest and enjoyment of the University staff and students, and the community at large, will be encouraged' (Constitution). Within the grounds are many hidden outdoor treasures of the

and paintings. The Friends of the Grounds society has adopted as its logo the symbol of the tower in the System Garden.

Each year four activities are offered for members and their friends. In 2004 these have been a visit to University College to hear Lorrie Lawrence talk about the development and planning of its gardens, with a tour to follow; a talk by Don Garden about the 1888 building and its gardens, and the display of a restored plaque to Mr Henry Bevan, College Gardener, from the grateful students of 1902_07; and a springtime guided walk around the grounds with the Grounds Manager, Wayne Williams, and his Deputy, Richard Phillips.

The final event for the year will be the Annual General Meeting, followed by an illustrated talk 'University Icons' by Bill Pye, at 5.30 p.m. on Wednesday 24 November in Lecture Theatre 1, Old Geology Building. The data show to accompany the talk will include several significant photographs of the University's grounds and buildings taken over the last hundred years or so. These photographs were collected and stored at the University and have been catalogued and entered on computer by members of the Friends of the Grounds Committee.

The Friends of the Grounds welcomes new members. The annual membership fee is \$12.50 and can be sent with the applicant's name and address to Friends of the Grounds, The University of Melbourne, Grattan Street, Parkville 3010.

Jill Anwyl, President

Friends of Parkside Gardens, Shepparton

THESE PAST TWELVE MONTHS have been extremely busy for our Friends' members. In February we were represented by a barrister at a Victorian Planning Panel Hearing, having listed 475 objections to the planning amendment to build 150 house lots on the beautiful Parkside Gardens site. From 1973 until the Commissioners' closure in 1996 the site functioned as an International Village Project. It was renamed Parkside Gardens and became free-entry public parkland at the time of closure.

Despite our presenting an excellent case based on social and environmental issues, and a meeting with Planning Minister Mary Delahunty and Chief Executive of Heritage Victoria in May, the planning amendment was approved by Minister in July. Greater Shepparton Council and VicUrban (the developers) had only to obtain an audit for environmental reasons before proceeding with

Our Vice-President Jenny Houlihan applied on Friends' behalf for heritage protection of the site in March this year, including the excellent Bangerang Cultural Centre and Philippine House and Museum, still lessees on the site. A great amount of archival information came in, dating back to the early 1970s, and we have a tourism documentary of the former Village in its prime, '1993', which has been shown far and wide.

In May the Executive Director Heritage Victoria gazetted his recommendation that Parkside Gardens be referred to the Greater Shepparton Council for inclusion in the local planning scheme. He also recommended that the Bangerang Cultural Centre be listed on the Victorian Heritage Register. One again, in August, Heritage Victoria Council came to hear submissions to these recommendations, and in September we were delighted to hear that the recommendations were approved and will be gazetted soon.

We now await local Council decision on the recommended inclusion of our beautiful 20-hectare site, including waterways, in the local planning scheme. The Heritage recommendation was not given lightly as the site is considered to be of historical and social significance to the community who have long-term valued connection.

On 29 August we were pleased also to read that Parkside Gardens had won the *My Favourite Place Year of the Built Environment Award* for North-East Victoria. Surely these are all pluses for our beautiful site's protection for future generations.

Our own representative on the Association's Committee, Denise Payne, has been a valued member of our Association for more than three years, and we are pleased to have her voice for us on the Committee. Thank you all for your continued support.

Pat Moran, Secretary, Greater Shepparton Botanic Gardens Association

The Tasmanian Arboretum

AT THE TASMANIAN ARBORETUM we have adopted and are in process of implementing our 2003_08 5-Year Operational Plan. The key new feature of this plan is to focus on certain collections, the North American, Eastern Asian, European and leatherwood (*Eucryphia*). By focussing resources we have an expanded planting program including faster-growing species, such as *Betula*, for their landscape

Another part of this plan has seen the end of using part of our 58 hectares for cropping. It is now sown down to pasture, allowing planting of foundation species in the coming years. We will re-use the tree guards made redundant by removing sheep from all of the areas currently being developed, except for part of North America.

The Devonport City Council and the Cradle Coast Authority have joined us to fund a strategic plan. This is being conducted by Farley and Associates in combination with Pitt and Sherry. We hope its completion will assist the development of the Arboretum in a business sense.

As part of our activities we held a Tree and Garden Festival. Although the inaugural event was a small one we will continue with this activity for its promotional and educational opportunities and, hopefully, greater fundraising.

Those who visited the Arboretum in its early years and have again visited recently, such as the Friends of Cranbourne and the International Dendrology Society's Tasmanian Tour in 2003, commented on the progress this voluntarily-run organisation has made. Our growth has been such that we now contract the roles involved in developing the project, promotion and site management, moving to a part-time paid position.

If you wish to visit, please contact us. We are happy to provide a guide or a briefing if we can.

Phil Parsons, President

Friends of Warrnambool Botanic Gardens

AT OUR AGM IN JULY we were fortunate to have John Sherwood from the Warrnambool and District Society for Growing Australian Plants Committee speak to us on Australian native plants. He highlighted the importance of the remaining indigenous vegetation in our district and the need to use these plants in our botanical gardens. At this meeting I was honoured to be given life membership of the Friends.

In September we held a most successful film night in conjunction with Rotary. The film was 'Touching the Void', and with donations the Friends raised \$922.

Under the guidance of our new President Pat Varley many children, their teachers and pre-school carers have been introduced to the gardens. We have been fortunate in forming an association with TAFE and many child-care teachers with young children are coming to the gardens to learn about plants and trees, and to be entertained.

A recent group of young children visiting the gardens one day noticed a swarm of bees settling in a hollow in one of our old Manna Gums. This tree is now being called 'The Pooh Bear Tree'.

Marigold Curtis

Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Friends Association

THE EXCITING 3,000,000 DOLLAR Stage Two development of the Gardens is now underway after a few hiccups. The newly-elected Council had to be lobbied hard by the Friends group in April to persuade them not to hand the grant back to the government! Thank goodness those new councillors opposed to the scheme can mostly now see the benefits and appreciate how much the people of Mackay use and value the Gardens.

We were pleased to hear that Lawrie Smith, the landscape architect who has designed our Gardens was named an MBE in the Queen's Birthday honours list. Lawrie and our curator Helen Paulsen have made very productive visits to the nearby coalfields, the major industry presently driving Mackay's development. The coal industry is providing petrified wood and coal for a coal garden in Stage Two, and will assist with an interpretation and education programme for school-children visiting the Gardens.

Mackay has a sister-city relationship with Matsuura in Japan, which in July presented to Mackay a sculpture installation of five beautiful cranes and a stone lantern. They were designed to stand in a specially-created area in the Japanese garden. The setting is superb, but unfortunately the cranes come out only for special occasions when they can be guarded, as they are very light fibre-glass and so are very fragile. A special area will be created for them in a secure fernery to be erected shortly as part of Stage Two. In the meantime they are on display in the administration building. We hope to apply for funding to have bronze replicas made to stand in the Japanese garden.

Over 3000 people visited the Gardens in July for the spectacular *Global Grooves in the Gardens* event to close the annual Mackay Festival of Arts. There were many varied activities, including an afternoon and evening of music from multicultural groups, sponsored by the local ABC. The highlight of the evening was the band *Wala* from Ghana, who entertained us all with their fantastic rhythms and costumes. Friends were kept very busy during the afternoon running a sausage

The Visitors Gallery has been the venue for some lovely photographic exhibitions during the year, including one documenting the development of the Gardens. Southern visitors find it very difficult to believe how much everything has grown in difficult conditions in only eighteen months!

A local music group with the fascinating name *Squeeze the Fish* gave two concerts in the Visitors Gallery in September. Friends sold wine and coffee on the two evenings, a very pleasant experience for everyone, and an experiment we hope to repeat.

Some of the Friends have been involved monthly in gardening working-bees, which they are enjoying. MRBG Friends group hopes to fund the purchase of plants for one or more garden beds in Stage Two, and then help in planting the items next year.

Friends have continued to meet monthly to hear talks from many interesting speakers. Subjects have included sugar gliders, quolls, flat-backed turtles (Mackay is an important breeding site for these turtles) and an informative presentation by Lawrie Smith about Stage Two.

Robin McWhinney, Secretary

Friends of the Gisborne Botanic Gardens

LIKE MANY OTHER VICTORIAN Botanic Gardens groups, the Friends of the Gisborne Botanic Gardens have been battling water restrictions for some two years. This has meant we could not irrigate our gardens, although we did get an exemption for our nursery. As a result, we postponed moving plants from the nursery to the gardens, but rather kept potting plants up until some reached unwieldy sizes. However, after months of negotiations with Macedon Ranges Shire Council and Western Water, we have now been promised access to recycled water in the gardens. A meter and three access points will be installed soon and, in anticipation of this, we held a planting day on 15 October. Two strong young blokes from the Council came along to dig the holes, which saved our aging backs, and we extended our Pittosporum bed, as well as filling in gaps in the Hebe bed and around our information centre. The gardens now look much less 'patchy', and we hope there will be less foot traffic through the garden beds.

On 17 October we opened three Gisborne gardens to the public to raise funds to install an irrigation system linked to the recycled water, which requires special purple hosing. We had

pleasant stroll of one another. A plant stall featuring New Zealand plants helped increase our takings. Gisborne Botanic Gardens consists primarily of New Zealand plants, through our sister-city relationship with Gisborne, New Zealand.

At our Annual General Meeting in April, Melanie Kinsey stood down after many years as President, during which she worked above and beyond the call of duty. Stephen Ryan took over as President, and Pat de Moulpied as Secretary. After the meeting a presentation by Kevin Walsh on water-wise gardening attracted many interested members of the public.

We are looking forward to being able to water the Gisborne Botanic Gardens again. We have many more plants in our nursery, waiting to be liberated from their pots.

Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden

ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN some improvement in recent years, it is widely acknowledged that Melton lacks quality open-space areas. Melton Council itself commissioned a report, about 25 years ago, into the possibility of establishing a Botanic Garden in Melton. Council also purchased a significant tract of land in 1979, the Town Centre Park (Tullidge Street), which was set aside for badly-needed community open space. After enquiries, local state MP Mr Don Nardella MLA decided in early 2003 to commission a report into the feasibility of a Botanic Garden in Melton. As a result, research was undertaken by Victorian Parliamentary Intern Ms Megan Barnett in the latter half of 2003. A public forum was held at Victoria University (Melton Campus) on 21 August 2003 to discuss the findings of this report with the community and other interested parties. After the success of the forum and the public interest it created, a number of people met on 24 September 2003 and formed the Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden (FMBG). The group became incorporated on 2 December 2003.

The FMBG has since met monthly, regularly attracting about 30 members, and has begun to undertake an examination of the report's suggested potential sites, a tour of which was held in November 2003. The group is also establishing partnerships with key community organisations or agencies, and has invited keynote speakers to its meetings.

FMBG has grown considerably since its first meeting. It is now seeking to expand its membership and involve younger community members.

During May and June 2004 Isobel Keecher compiled a feasibility study entitled 'Where to from here', which examined possible types of botanic gardens; possible sites in Melton for the garden; how other botanic gardens have been established; the role of friends groups to support botanic gardens; the educational use of the garden by schools and groups; and the tourism value of a botanic garden. A complete copy of the feasibility report may be obtained upon request.

We held a public forum in May that attracted just over 70 people. John Arnott, the Director of the Geelong Botanic Gardens, gave a presentation and history of the botanic gardens. After a productive meeting with Melton Shire officers in September we have been invited to give a formal presentation to the Melton Shire Council on 8 November. At our October meeting we had a wonderful presentation by Rohan Braddy of Mambourin Services, who set up the Mambourin Sensory Gardens at Werribee.

In September we had a bus trip visiting Keilor Botanic Garden, Queens Park Moonee Ponds, Mambourin Sensory Gardens Werribee and Geelong Botanic Gardens to gain some idea of what different gardens are like and the themes used in each garden.

Our Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 8 September, at which the following positions were filled: President, Ian Dempsey; Vice-President, Leo Johnson; Treasurer, Lyn Holdsworth; Secretary, Janet Dyke; Returning Officer, Don Nardella; Public Officer, Leo Johnson; Committee members, John Bentley and Norma Akers. We had a primary school emblem competition. The winner was Brendon Zammit from Melton Primary School.

Some members have been extremely active this year, visiting Melton primary schools. All children were given a bag with goodies. The children asked lots of questions and all seemed very interested. The visiting team really enjoyed going along and presenting. It was wonderful to see the interest of the children.

Forthcoming events include a stall at the Melton Derrijuwarrah Festival, where we will be recruiting new members and fundraising.

Friends of the Portland Botanic Gardens

WE HAVE HAD A VERY POSITIVE FEW MONTHS! A **very** small committee of hard workers organised a Curry Lunch in August at a member's home and it was both financially and socially a great success. Together with our fund-raising efforts we now have some money to play with and we are to choose a bed

return it to its original condition according to our Masterplan. That is our other good news – the Masterplan has been accepted by Council and its implementation can now begin.

In November we are to have another afternoon of Devonshire teas and a tour of the gardens in conjunction with the 170th Celebrations that are being held during that weekend.

Friends of the Bendigo Botanic Gardens

THERE IS A NEW PROJECT FOR THE Bendigo Friends. Early this year the plant sales section of Bendigo Parks Nursery was handed over to the Growing Friends group of the Friends of the Bendigo Botanic Gardens. On the third Tuesday of each month and on special occasions we sell to the public an array of left-over Council plants and other plants that have been propagated by the group. So far we have raised over \$3000 that will be used to pay for enhancement projects within the public gardens of Bendigo.

The public is informed of the sales by a sign at the Council nursery that brings a regular flow of customers. Occasionally articles are published in the local paper. Six to eight members of the Friends are on duty and those who are not selling re-pot, propagate, weed and tidy up the surrounding areas. At present we are re-potting Golden Wattle that have been grown from seed. This is an indigenous species of *Acacia* and will be used for sales and to plant an island within the White Hills Botanic Gardens.

The nursery sales project is strongly supported by the nursery staff and in particular by the nursery manager, Sandra Crump. It has provided the Growing Friends group with an enjoyable and ongoing program that has developed links with the Council staff and encouraged new members to join our group.

Glenys Anthony, Convener

Friends of Benalla Botanical Gardens & Riverine Parkland

THE BENALLA BOTANICAL GARDENS have undergone many significant and minor changes during the last three years. In 2001 a new committee group was formed to promote a comprehensive plan for the Gardens and the Benalla Lake area, to be called the Crossing Place

plans, the Benalla Botanical Gardens Conservation Plan and the Riverine Trail and Waterway Management Plan, developed as a cohesive project, with the addition in time of a Heritage Walk.

The Friends decided to incorporate the native bushland around Lake Benalla and upstream to the boundaries of the township into the area of its interest. To this effect, a name change was needed. Thus the name ‘The Benalla Botanical Gardens and Riverine Parkland’ has been adopted.

A project of replacement and renewal of garden beds has invigorated the Gardens landscape. The newly-created New Zealand Collection is a feature offset against the architecture of the Benalla Art Gallery. A wide range of perennial species have been planted in blocks to enhance the impact of colour and form.

The creation of a unique contemporary Rose Garden has transformed the area previously occupied by the Rocket Playground and the traditional rose bed display. The new Rose Garden was designed by Chris Dance, whose concept for the Garden of the 21st Century at Geelong is remarkable. It features an irregular ovoid-shaped raised section, approximately 65m by 20m, surrounded by a sunken sward representing a river and an island. A variety of roses in hues of red will create a spectacular effect. The original pathways laid down by Alfred Sangwell in 1886 have been re-instated and intersect at the Rose Garden.

The relocation of the Rocket with the recently-constructed Children’s Playground and a new Benalla Rotary Barbecue Shelter have provided a convenient and enjoyable ‘tourist friendly’ picnic area.

The Friends have worked in partnership with the Benalla Rural City Council to develop a new brochure for the Gardens with a clear map and information about its history and highlights, so that visitors will be able to enjoy all that the Benalla Botanical Gardens have to offer.

Dulcie Chandler

Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne

EVERYBODY’S TALKING ABOUT THE Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden, opened on 23 October by Deputy Premier John Thwaites. It has attracted extensive coverage in the press and on TV and radio. But the real seal of approval can be seen on the faces of excited

Made possible by a \$1 million grant from the Foundation and other donations, it is the culmination of almost five years' work by an inspired team of experts. They have created, on half a hectare, a space where children can explore and learn about the wonders of nature while having fun. Nothing is off limits: the young visitors are expected to get dirty as they dig, to get wet as they jump on the spiral water feature, and to feel the chill of mist as they dart between the snow gums and basalt shards. They can experience the smell and texture of different leaves as they crawl through plant tunnels and hide in a bamboo jungle.

Setting a sustainable example, all the water features use recirculated water. Plant material is left around for the building of cubbies or other free play. An adjacent organic vegetable garden offers an opportunity for hands-on cultivation and harvesting.

Many plants, such as flax, have been selected for their robust qualities, but it remains to be seen how the garden withstands the people pressure. It will be closed for an annual rest and refurbishment for two months at the end of the July school holidays. It will be open from Wednesday to Sunday between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., with Monday and Tuesday reserved for Education and Visitor Services programs. Children must be accompanied by adults and dogs will not be allowed. Fourteen guides dedicated to the children's garden have just completed their training, along with 23 who join the regular program of the Voluntary Guides.

Yet again we can express wonder and delight at the result of a Growing Friends Plant Sale, especially given that the proceeds of \$28,482 were achieved largely by the sale of plants in pots priced from \$5 to \$10. Spring rain brought the stock to peak condition for the sale on 9 and 10 October, crowning the great commitment and hard work of this group. It was a good start for Pam Eames' term as Convener.

The Growing Friends were disappointed in September by having to withdraw 400 plants from the sale because of their weed potential. This included 300 aquilegias – previously a big seller. In line with the policy adopted by the Council of Heads of Australian Botanic Gardens, many exotic plants are progressively under review against global, national and state guidelines, and of course the Friends have a responsibility to comply with withdrawal requests. The RBG regards this as an important example of environmental action.

The Friends' other major fund raiser, the Art of Botanical Illustration exhibition, was opened

November and will be on show daily until 21 November. The very high standard of entries (more than 300) made for a difficult selection process. 156 works by 76 artists are hung in the new venue of Domain House in Dallas Brooks Drive.

The catalogue is available on the website www.rbg.vic.gov.au/friends or on a CD.

Once again an image from the Friends' Illustrated Garden collection has been reproduced on a Christmas card. The work of Botanic Illustrator Marta Salamon, it depicts a red Waratah, *Telopea speciosissima*. Contact the Friends' office promptly on 9650 6398 if you'd like to order cards, either blank or bearing a Season's Greetings message, or specially printed with personal or business messages.

We'd be happy to welcome Friends from other botanic gardens at our Christmas Party on 1 December from 6 to 8 pm. It will be held in the beautiful setting of Gardens House, which is not open to the public. Again, contact the Friends' office if you'd like to join us for this festive occasion.

Still on the Christmas theme, florist and designer Shauna Lovisetto will lead a workshop to create traditional and contemporary decorations on 2 December.

After the formalities of our annual meeting on 8 November a new tradition was established with the presentation of Volunteer Service badges to about 30 members who have given 10, 15 or 20 years of service and remain currently involved with the Friends. Chris Russell, General Manager of RBG Cranbourne, gave an address entitled 'The Australian Garden at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne in an international context – comparisons from Barcelona and beyond'.

The annual report records that the Friends and the Friends' Trust Fund donated \$40,000 to the Gardens in 2003_04. We have also pledged \$50,000 for the irrigation system for the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden, payable in three instalments. In the past year the Trust Fund received donations of \$13,103. The Friends gained 365 new members but lost 284; this sort of equation is an ever-present challenge to our Membership Committee.

The new format of *Botanic News*, in full colour, has won the Museums Australia Publication Award in the category for magazines and newsletters employing up to 5 staff. This honour can be shared by editor Meg Miller and her team, with Helen Fahey who does all the trying production work on the computer and the contracted designer Dianna Wells. The FRBG Council has been considering options to offset the cost of this

meanwhile, it has agreed on a new policy to deal with the insertion of flyers in *Botanic News*.

Friends activities in the past six months have covered a wide range of interests: for instance, talks on topiary, new cliveas, The Trust for Nature, Beverley Sutherland Smith's edible garden and RBG's birds; a visit to the Gardenesque exhibition at the State Library and a tour of city buildings that have tapestries woven by the Victorian Tapestry Workshop. The newly-introduced Fit Friends Rambles have been adopted with enthusiasm, while the quarterly Insiders Walk adds to our knowledge of the Gardens. A wildflower walk and picnic strengthened our connection with the Friends of RBG Cranbourne. Two illustrated talks had outstanding financial results: Caroline Davies' 'Houses and Gardens of the English West Country' (\$1500) and Merryle Johnson's 'Treasure Trove of Plants in Eastern Europe' (\$1100). Our catering group were pleased to provide refreshments for the launch of the ABC's Open Garden Scheme and for Friends touring from Sydney.

The RBG will receive \$130,000 for five research projects as part of the Australian Biological Resources Survey. It will also share grants totalling almost \$600,000 for collaborative research with three universities and RBG Sydney. Such funding is highly sought after, and is important for the work of the National Herbarium.

The dahlia bed, one of two in the Gardens maintained by societies of specialist growers, is being redesigned in its new site formerly occupied by hybrid tea roses. Subtropical foliage will share the bed to maintain interest when the dahlias are not in flower. Meanwhile the Camellia Collection is expanding into the rhododendron bed, necessitated by a number of donations from a noted grower.

After years carrying a heavy workload, landscape planner Andrew Laidlaw has sought a three-day week at the Gardens; he wants to devote more time to his young family and to follow up some different interests. One of these is Markets in the Gardens _ a joint venture with another RBG staffer, Laurie Zarafa. They're planning a pilot program with stalls at Observatory Gate on 11 December and 12 February, and on 19 March near the Tea Rooms. If you're interested in having a stall selling, for instance, plant-oriented craft, contact Laurie on 0425 856 167 or Andrew on 0425 856 168. It must be emphasised that this is a private venture having no connection with the RBG.

Summer also ushers in the popular program of outdoor entertainment in the Gardens. hopefully

Cinema, the evergreen Wind in the Willows, and Much Ado about Nothing.

Heather Ironmonger

Friends of the Orange Botanic Gardens

ORANGE BOTANIC GARDENS is a developing garden of 17 hectares, first established in the early 1980s and officially opened in October 1988. The Friends have been associated with the development of the Gardens since their inception and contribute manpower and funds in all aspects of maintaining the Gardens.

Regular guided walks, including early morning bird walks, are proving very popular with locals and visitors, with the added bonus of being able to purchase plants grown by the 'Wednesday Workers'. They also propagate, pot and re-pot plants to be used in the Gardens, as well as providing plants to be sold at the Autumn and Spring sales held in the nursery. This group of wonderful people is often referred to as the 'Wednesday Weeders', for obvious reasons.

In May 2004 the Orange Botanic Gardens hosted the NSW Botanic Gardens Regional Conference. The theme was 'Design, Education and Community' and the Conference was attended by over 50 delegates from all over Australia. The comprehensive program included a number of presentations from very interesting speakers covering a wide range of subjects relevant to the future of Botanic Gardens. The Friends provided most of the catering and the Gardens were brilliant in their vibrant autumn colours, looking very impressive to all visitors.

In early October the Friends, together with Australia's Open Garden Scheme, held a 'Special Event'. A full day with a program of gardening talks, including a rose-pruning demonstration, was very well attended and the funds raised were shared by the two organisations. The Friends also had a plant stall, which was most successful.

Created

Our Bonsai group is attracting a lot of interest with members of the general public as well as Friends and they now have a permanent display on show in the Bonsai House, which is opened to coincide with any Friends' activities.

The conifer garden is nearing reality with over 200 plants ready to be planted with the assistance of the Rotary Club of Orange (Daybreak). The money to establish the new conifer section was raised by FOBG with Rotary and extensive community involvement accumulated over several years of Garden and Outdoor EXPOs held in the

again because of a lack of volunteers to take on the key organisational roles.

Water restrictions, due to the drought, have made it difficult to keep some plants alive and a number of eucalypts and acacias have been lost. When conditions improve we hope to be able to start establishing the local understorey plants through the native areas and additional planting in the Native Grasses area.

The Adventure Playground recently completed adjacent to the Gardens attracts many family groups, who also take the opportunity to enjoy the Gardens, and the number of regular visitors wandering through the Gardens has steadily increased. At present the Gardens are a showpiece of spring blossoms with the orchard, the dogwoods and the rhododendrons attracting a lot of attention.

Margaret Weaver, Honorary Secretary

Friends of Australian Inland Botanic Gardens

KNOwn TO ITS FRIENDS AS AIBG, the Gardens have several features which we fondly call 'wow factors', one of which is a 2500-year-old Mallee (*Eucalyptus oleosa*), worthy of Heritage listing, we believe. Another, very recent, 'wow' is the winning of the 2004 Power/Prime Business Excellence Award in the category Tourism Attractions, which we were thrilled and proud to receive.

To this 'wow' list we can also add a project that has been carefully developed for some 10 years, which we call our Nature Trail. Created among and around a special patch of Chenopod/Mallee (*Eucalyptus oleosa*, *E. dumosa*, *E. gracilllis*), it offers visitors a half-hour walk (wheelchair-friendly) featuring over 400 plants of indigenous native varieties, representing about 100 separate species, most of which have been selected and planted by a small band of dedicated Friends. The surprisingly large genus list includes Acacia (17 species), Callistemon, Clematis, Dampiera, Eremophila (10 species), Grevillea, Hakea, Halgania, Melaleuca, Myoporum, Prostanthera and Senna, showing what a botanically interesting area the Mallee is.

Because of the climate and the 'hungry' nature of the mallee trees, all plants are on a dripper irrigation system, carefully maintained by the volunteers and supervised by staff members.

Informal seating areas have been provided for visitors to relax and contemplate their surroundings (school children are specially catered for), including the plentiful birdlife. Sixty-one species

Horsefield's Bronze Cuckoo, Tawny Frogmouth, Owllet Nightjar, Variegated Wren, White-fronted Honeyeater, Apostle Bird and Rufus Songlark, just to name a few.

The Trail is located conveniently adjacent to the information centre in 'Gampang', the pioneer cottage, and is popular with visitors both young and old, who all appreciate its unique ambience. We believe it is now reaching its potential as visualised by its founders and current 'caretakers', and so we proudly added it to the AIBG 'wow' list, a decision that was heartily endorsed by a recent visit by 120 members of the Australian Plant Society.

Norman Kemble

Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens

EVEN IN THE DEPTHS OF WINTER, the Geelong Botanic Gardens has continued to develop in many exciting ways. Two years on from the opening of the Garden of the 21st Century, plantings are well established. The indigenous beds offer a spectacular display, Gondwanan groups are flourishing and drought-tolerant plants from Africa and South America fascinate our many visitors. In the heritage gardens a new Asian temperate garden is now being created. Landscaping will focus on the magnificent *Gingko biloba* and the collection of Japanese crane sculptures, and plantings will continue the Asian theme. The Friends have made a major contribution to the cost of this exciting project.

As the word has spread about developments at the Gardens, the demand for guided walks has increased dramatically. When the seven new recruits have finished their training we will have twenty-one active volunteer guides. Guides meet regularly for planning and learning, and in addition to the normal rostered and booked walks, several guides assist the FGBG Education Officer with school groups. Demand for the education program has also increased; our Education Officer is now fully occupied for at least two days per week.

At the recent Melbourne ABC Gardening Australia show the colourful FGBG stand attracted a great deal of interest, and we expect that this marketing venture will bring even more visitors to our Gardens.

In response to demand for 'plants of the 21st Century' the Friends' Nursery is working on increasing stocks of Australian native plants, especially those indigenous to the Geelong region.

in more specialisation, so that the growers responsible for a specific group of plants liaise with the appropriate Geelong Botanic Gardens staff, who have been most enthusiastic and helpful. The weekend Winter Plant Sale resulted in a profit of over \$8000 for the Friends.

There are now over 500 Friends, many of whom participated in recent activities.

- A successful Winter Lunch, addressed by Stephen Ryan
- An evening lecture by Nina Crone, of the Garden History Society
- A bus tour to RBG Cranbourne
- A luncheon talk by Helen Moody on the Gardens of China
- A car tour of outstanding local gardens.

Planning is already underway for our Christmas function and for two large celebrations of Music in the Gardens in January and February 2005.

The Friends has had to grow and develop as an organisation to keep up with the unprecedented demand for visitor services at the Gardens. A new strategic plan prompted changes to the constitution, approved in June at the AGM. The new Committee of Management is working hard, with a sub-committee structure now considered essential to handle diverse areas of activity. The Friends are certainly never bored!

Liz Bennetto, Secretary

Friends of the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens

THE DESIGNERS OF THE GARDENS gave a lot of thought to providing access to features of the Gardens for everyone, not only for able-bodied visitors, but also for those with limited mobility, whether wheelchair-bound, dependent on a walking-stick or sticks, pushing a baby stroller or simply not good on hills.

To achieve this ease of access, the main entrance from the carpark to the Visitors Centre and its display gardens is almost level, while that from the building to the open picnic area is also graded for easy walking. A significant addition to the range of easy walking paths is the recently-completed, purpose-designed and built Limited Mobility loop walking track. The Track is one kilometre long, and the slope is no more than 3% throughout. When the accompanying display gardens are completed, it will expose the visitor to a variety of plant habitats and vegetation types.

A Sensory Garden will be constructed beside the Limited Mobility Track, where beds of tactile and perfumed plants will be built up to wheelchair

mosses will be established beside the path. It then winds across a small wetland and lake, where it is proposed to erect a bird hide and seating to allow observation of the many birds that frequent the area.

The back section of the Track passes adjacent to a vegetated sand dune, where local sand-binding plant species are displayed. Visitors can deviate here from the Limited Mobility path and walk around and over the dune via a timber walkway. The walkway is not part of the main track and is not graded for limited mobility access. In keeping with the dryland vegetation theme, a Xeriscape Garden is being constructed and will be accessible from the Track. Here will be demonstrated low water use practices for home gardens, together with water-saving ideas and suitable plants. The last section of the Track passes through forest and a garden planted with forest-loving flowering species, and finally returns the visitor to the carpark.

The Rotary Club of Batemans Bay assisted substantially with funding the project. In recognition of the development of the Track the Club has received the Community Services Award for Rotary District 9710, which covers the south-east region of NSW, including the ACT. The presentation of the Award was made in Canberra at a conference attended by delegates from all over Australia.

The Limited Mobility walk is not the only area where access for the less able has been considered at these Botanic Gardens. As well as the entrance paths, the lawn area where the amphitheatre, rock and sculpture are situated has been made available to these people by the construction of a high-level bridge over a rainforest gully. The bridge is connected to graded paths at both ends. This complex will make more of the Gardens experience accessible to a wide range of visitors.

Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Inc.

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