



FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS Inc.

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AUTUMN 2000

From the President

As you may remember last year we hosted the annual conference of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens here in Warrnambool. This year it will be held in Albury hosted by the Friends of Albury Botanic Gardens. They have put together an interesting program of guest speakers and will co-ordinate workshops on fundraising, community participation, media and communications, special events, family activities. The conference dinner guest speaker will be Dr Philip Moors of Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne who will speak on "Botanic Gardens and how to preserve them for future generations".

These conferences are a great opportunity to share ideas, learn from others and make friendships.

Four of our committee will be attending this conference and we look forward to sharing all the knowledge that we will gain from taking part. Each Friends group has the opportunity to give a presentation and display on their gardens together with an annual report.

In the year 2001 the annual conference will be held closer to home at the Geelong Botanic Gardens.

Isobel Jones, our Guide Co-ordinator, will attend the National Conference of Volunteer Guides to be held in Canberra in October which is organised by the Education Officer of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney.

It is important that we keep up to date, extending our knowledge and guiding skills.

I encourage you to support your Friends group by attending our "Day in the Gardens" and the Friends Awareness Day to be held in May.

Marie Ziebell

DIARY DATES

Sunday 26th March 12 - 5 pm "Day in the Gardens"

Monday 15th May 10am Friends Awareness Morning

7th - 10th April Albury "2000 and Beyond" Conference of Assoc. of Friends

12th - 16th April Melb. International Flower & Garden Show, Exhibition Building & Carlton Gardens Ph. 61396392333

16 - 12 Nov. The Art of Botanical Illustration REG Melb.

31st March 12.00 to 3.00pm. Literary Luncheon John Hooker and Richard Crawley.

22 - 24 th April. Ex Libris Port Fairy Easter Book Fair Ph. Fiona Robinson.

Araucaria Cunninghamii

Hoop Pine

This ornamental conifer was first found growing in N.S.W., Queensland and even New Guinea. Like the Bunya Bunya Pine or *Araucaria bidwillii* (see last newsletter) it was introduced to the southern states for planting in parks and gardens.

It is a splendid tree, similar to the Norfolk Island Pine (*A. heterophylla*) including the small prickly leaves, but it is readily recognised by the bunched growth towards ends of the main branches and the hoop-like formation of the bark - hence its name. The largest trees occur by coastal water courses, in fact have been known to reach 45 metres, with a spread of 6 metres.

The hoop Pine is also successful in warm inland areas where it has proved highly drought resistant. Its white timber is a valuable softwood and the resin was used by early settlers for medicinal purposes, in particular to treat kidney complaints. The tree is also known as the Morton Bay Pine.

If you are planning a trip to the Australian Inland Botanic Gardens, Mildura, see the very fine avenue of Hoop Pines planted by AIGB Friends either side of the long entrance drive. Planted only ten years ago, they already reach close to 4 metres.

Marigold Curtis

"A DAY IN THE GARDENS"

Sunday 26th March 12.00 - 5.00pm

Includes

Art Display: Warrnambool Artists' Group.

Garden Pots: Pot, Stock and Barrel.

Floral hats: Blooms of Koonongal.

Lavender products: Ynulong Lavender and Aroma Therapy Pot

Fairy Plants, Preserves, Craft: Friends of WBG

Free Guided Walks at 1pm and 3pm

Afternoon tea available from the rotunda

Music by: Warrnambool Pipe Band and Warrnambool City Band

Any help by the members of the Friends will be gratefully appreciated.

If you are able to donate Pot plants [to be clean and well labelled] these could be dropped off at the Growing Friends potting area at the gardens, please contact Lorraine Richardson or Judi Phillips. Preserves and other products could be left at Judi Phillips or bought on the day.

We do hope that many of you will be able to attend. It is always an enjoyable day and we should make the most of the last of the summer weather. Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy the music in the tranquility of the gardens.

Native or not : our history

The remnant native vegetation in our Botanic gardens is meagre. Four manna gums and a Busaria. Botanic gardens were established to educate and please the public, and to acclimatise and display a diverse range of plants. As a nineteenth century garden it is appropriate that our collection consists predominantly of non native flora. However the loss of native vegetation extends well beyond the gardens. Isn't it ironical that a century and a half after "settlement" the exotic plants in many places are more common than the natives? Anyone travelling through the Western District could be forgiven for thinking that pine and cypress with an under storey of box-thorn and coprosma comprised the native flora. What would we see if we could go back 150 years?

James Bonwick, inspector of schools took a tour of Western Victoria in 1857 and reported that,

As early as 1839 Mr Bolden had a cattle station on the west side of the Merri. The locality around was densely timbered.

Samuel Hannaford enjoyed a series of sea and riverside rambles around Warrnambool in the 1850's and wrote about them in a book of that name published in 1860. He was one of Australia's pioneer naturalists and a friend of Ferdinand Mueller, to whom he dedicated his book. Describing a walk to the mouth of the Hopkins River he wrote,

The summit of the hill being gained, we have a pretty peep of the river through the cluster of Casuarinae (She-Oaks), Cherry trees, (Exocarpi,) and Boxwood (Busaria), which are left to ornament and protect the Botanical Gardens in course of formation on the bank higher up.

Sarah Midgley wrote in her diary 24th September 1860,

...we took a ride by the Botanical Gardens and the Cemetery to the mouth of the Hopkins where there is very romantic scenery.

The Hopkins site was stony and exposed to the wind. It was judged unsuitable for the Gardens and the present site was selected in 1866. It would seem, from a report some ten years later, that the Warrnambool Standard considered the new site to be not much better than the old, describing it as,

A howling wilderness, and as wild a piece of bush land as could be selected in the district. It was heavily timbered with a dense undergrowth of scrub, ferns and tussocky grass. (May 1877)

Richard Osburne published his History of Warrnambool in 1887, and recalled that forty years before,

The whole town, except to the west, with Lake Pertobe, was surrounded with thick forest, including many noble white gum, cherry, blackwood, and wattle trees, and it was not an uncommon thing in those days to get "bushed" in the actual boundaries of the town. That portion of east Warrnambool from Liebig street to Japan street, was at one time known as "grumbling Gulley", but is now called "Happy Valley".

Before this portion was surveyed and occupied it formed a beautiful and unbragous valley, and was a favourite hunting place of the aboriginals, who camped on the adjoining slopes. It should never have been surveyed or sold, as it would have made a grand site for the Botanical Gardens. The soil is rich and deep, and for many years the finest vegetables and fruit were grown there. (p.274)

Warrnambool covers a range of environments, from dunes to wet lands and forest, and the native vegetation was similarly varied. We have lost much of it, but we have at the same time accepted and preserved some fine imports.

There is a very old Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) growing down by the lake in the gardens, judging from its size and age we believe to predate the gardens. Naturally occurring from Queensland to Tasmania, they prefer moist, loamy soils and are found throughout the Western District.

Pat Varley March 2000

HISTORY OF THE FRIENDS

This is being compiled this year with the help of Marie Johnstone and Barrie Baker, however for members information we would like to mention the Friends contribution over the past ten years and their future plans:

1. Conservation and Development Plan
2. Restoration of Fountain and Sundial
3. Partial restoration of Rotunda
4. Restoration of Fernery
5. Memorial seats
6. Restoration of curator's garden in depot yard
7. Commenced a database and labelling of plants
8. Guided tours
9. Publication of brochures
10. Restoration of main entrance bed

The Friends have ongoing plans for:

Restoration of garden urns and gas lamps
Restoration of garden beds
Restoration of rotunda
Memorial seats
Growing WBG plants for resale
Database and labelling

FRIENDS AWARENESS DAY

MONDAY 15TH MAY 10 AM

This is a day for the Members of the Friends of the Warrnambool Botanic Gardens and friends who may be interested in joining.

The day will take the form of a general meeting of friends and committee.

There will be conducted walks of the gardens by our "Guiding Friends"

Morning tea provided by the committee

The idea is to familiarise the members with the committee and enjoy an informative but relaxing morning.

Meet at the Rotunda at 10 am.

R.S.V.P would be appreciated to assist with catering.

NEW GARDEN BROCHURE

With a lot of work from Billie Rowley the Friends have produced a new Gardens Brochure.

This takes the form of an informative but simple three fold coloured publication.

We have enclosed a copy with the newsletter and hope that you will show it to your friends or put it somewhere that it will catch the attention of a visitor to

Warrnambool. These brochures have been distributed to motels and other public places and have shown good results, in the numbers attending the guiding walks and positive feed back from friends.

If you are able to help with distribution please contact Billie Rowley

**FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL
BOTANIC GARDENS Inc.**

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Our news letter is published Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. If you would like to contribute to our publication please forward material to the above address.

*Marigold Curtis
22nd March 2000*

Mandy King

GAS LAMP

This historic lamp is in desperate need of restoration, much research has been carried out as to the best way to achieve this. Because of the neglect over the years the probable outcome will be to make a replica -

The location of the lamp is on the left hand side of the path, entering from the main gate, just before the turn to the rotunda -

A suggestion has been put forward at the last committee meeting that this could be taken up as a memorial. If this suggestion is of interest to any of our members or the public could you please contact Anne Kelly on 55624982

FIBRE BASKETRY - BOTANIC CRAFT

Are you interested in basket-weaving from natural fibres?

Baskets can be made from plant materials such as gladioli, iris, cordyline, watsonia, willow bark and jasmine - to name a few.

Are there members out there who would like to form a gardens craft group with a botanic theme?

Please contact Marie Ziebell or Mandy King

GROWING FRIENDS

Lorraine and Judy and their band have been working hard in the growing friends area and have made vast improvements, in the way of creating a working environment in which they are now able to pot up and care for seedlings and cuttings. The long term plans are, to propagate particular varieties of plants, in preparation for plant sales as a fundraiser. The other important job will be to propagate plants from within the gardens, for future re planting. Lorraine and Judy are always looking for assistance, if you are able to help in any way or have a particular expertise in this area, please do not hesitate to contact them at any time.

The Growing Friends area is at the "depot yard" in Coulstock Street.

GUIDING FRIENDS

Isobel Jones and her willing helpers have been reporting a slow but steady increase to their numbers, people are becoming aware of the fact that a guide is at the Gardens every Wednesday at 10.30 am and the Last Sunday of the month at 2.30 pm. This constant vigilance has paid off, and now with the help of our new brochure the attendance is slowly building. Some recent attendance has been 20 P.F.A. members, 20 Masons, a group of 7 locals and a group of overseas visitors.

If you would like to organise a group booking outside the times above please contact the Tourist Information Centre (03) 55647837.

Remember "The Gardens" as an addition to Flagstaff Hill etc. for your visitors to Warrnambool.

EX LIBRIS PORT FAIRY EASTER BOOK FAIR PRESS RELEASE

The first Ex Libris Port Fairy Easter Book Fair, is to be held over the Easter break with an exciting line up of reader-focused events on Saturday, Sunday and Monday April 22, 23 and 24. Ex Libris was inspired by the much frequented book village, Hay-on-Wye on the border of Wales and England.

Our Port Fairy reader-focused weekend is to be opened by ABC Arts Today presenter Michael Cathcart, on the Village Green at noon. The Port Fairy Band and a line up of other music providers will be there also. On the Saturday afternoon, participants will have a choice between 'Dusty corners and lively minds' at St Johns Anglican Church hall, hosted by a star studded discussion panel - Brian Hubber of the Rare Books Department at the State Library of Victoria, Laurel Clark, author of works relating to early Melbourne booksellers, Murray Simper, bookbinder and bibliophile and authors Wendy and Allan Scarfe -- to which you will be invited to bring along your favorite book for appraisal, OR; 'How far can you throw a romance?' beside the Community House, a Barbara Cartland hurl, OR; 'Shipping arrivals and departures' at the History Centre delivered by expert in Victorian shipping, author, historian and researcher, Marten Syme.

To top the day off, in the evening there will be an Oliver Twist book auction (More Please) conducted by the maestro of the gavel, Garry Lockett at the Boldrewood Room, Seacombe House in Sackville Street. A feature of the auction will be a recent painting by one of Australia's leading figurative and still-life painters, Brian Dunlop. A large assortment of old and interesting books will be put under the hammer.

Sunday is a day for gardeners. You can meet publisher and rare and current bookseller, Gil Teague of Florilegium Press; botanic artist of Monash University, Celia Rosser and; global plant collector of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne Terry Smyth at, Dr Lynne Strahan's charming garden Eumeralla and Rugosa Gallery, Fingerboard Rd, Yambuk. Husband, Brian Dunlop's paintings will be taken down from the gallery and Celia Rosser's wildflower prints put up for a special exhibition of her work over the fair.

Further events will include a Griffiths family reunion picnic on Griffiths island. A 'Food for thought' luncheon at the Victoria Hotel in Bank Street hosted by food writer Diana Marsland. There will be an afternoon tea with author of Malinche's Conquest, Arne Lanyon at Harley House, Sackville Street. Other events will include head-to-head-meet-the-author sessions at various locations, internet book search consultations, childrens storytelling, tour of Port Fairy churches and, haunted houses bus-tour for the foot weary.

Finally, on the Monday a forum titled 'God and local government - are they mutually exclusive?' will be chaired by Cr James Nicol and Cr Brenda Hampson of the Warrnambool City and Moyne Shire Council respectively, including speakers Rev Tim Costello former councillor, author, Baptist pastor, Cr Dick Gross, Mayor of Port Phillip and; Dr Peter Yule author of histories of, for example, Koroit, Warrnambool.

Fiona Robertson