

# Papyrus

Newsletter of the Friends of Burnley Gardens Inc.

No. 56, June 2013

## Have you visited the new Friends of Burnley Gardens website?

Our address hasn't changed – see <http://www.fobg.org.au/> - but our format certainly has! Over the past two months, Jill Kellow has done an amazing job to upgrade to a shiny, new WordPress website, and the Committee worked hard to provide useful, new and engaging content.

Check out the “What's On” page to see the range of activities we've lined up for Burnley's milestone year.



The University of Melbourne is marking the Gardens' 150th anniversary with a series of symposia on *Contemporary Issues in Urban Landscapes*. The first of these, on the topic of Edible Landscapes, was held on 6th June. If you're a Friend of Burnley Gardens, a student or alumnus, you can take advantage of the concession rates for the remaining symposia – see our website for more details. And if you're not a Friend already, this is a great time to become one!

Sue Murphy

## Save the Date!

### 150th Anniversary Open Day

**Sunday 14 July**

10 am – 3 pm

A day of activities  
in the Gardens

*Includes tours of  
Burnley's new  
green roof*

### Burnley Gardens Walk and Talk

**Saturday 20 July**

4 pm – 7 pm

Garden tour, supper  
and panel discussion

*A joint activity of FOBG  
and the Australian Garden  
History Society*

### Friends of Burnley Gardens AGM & Talk

**Wednesday 7 August**

AGM 6 pm

Lecture by  
Steven Wells

*Gardening Australia's  
Gardener of the Year*

Talk: 7 pm for 7.30 pm

### FOBG/Australian Garden History Society

**Tuesday 20 August**

7 pm

Lecture by  
Don Garden & Anne Vale

*The designers who influenced  
Burnley Gardens*

Talk: 7 pm for 7.30 pm

# From the Chair

*John Fordham*

Belated greetings to you all.

It's been some months since the last chair letter, so it's time we caught up. The recent rains (albeit a little too much too quickly) were nevertheless most welcome. That's it with gardeners: we're always talking about the weather. The lack of rain led to the trees hanging onto some pretty good autumn foliage this year. I was up at Beechworth recently and the autumn foliage looked spectacular.

So what's been happening at Burnley?

Jane Wilson and the team have been busily scanning a collection of fortuitously discovered lantern slides that were used for teaching at Burnley many years ago. We expect a digital slide show at some stage in the near future: I can't wait to see what they have. I believe our gates will be installed soon, with an official "opening" planned for September. Well, let's face it, what else can you do with gates but open them?

I had a great time doing a plant identification subject with John Rayner and his team in Semester 1. It was thoroughly engaging (*correct answer, Ed.*) - this from someone who has had a little more than a bit of experience with identifying plants in his time. It was of course much more than that, and very enjoyable.

Many of you may be aware that I am involved in something called the Gallipoli Oak Project. This is a National Trust initiative that will see a commemorative oak tree planted in schools for the 100-year anniversary of the Gallipoli landing, from 2015 onwards. We at FOBG are likely to be involved growing some of these trees for many of the primary schools.

Already the Victorian State Government has put up \$10,000 of funding the project. My role is in sourcing the acorns and we pretty much know where most of the trees in Victoria are now. Based on our experience over this past summer, trees don't seem to produce many acorns unless the trees receive irrigation over the summer period to enable the fruit to mature. In dry conditions, immature acorns are shed prematurely. You'll notice a slight change to the logo because as we are now on other web sites just the image of the bare trees didn't say enough about who we are so the words have been added beneath. Being on the Gallipoli Oak / National Trust web site can only be beneficial for membership which continues to grow, after all it is growing that we specialise in.

More can be found on the web site at <http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/vic/GallipoliOaksProject>.

Of course, our next big event coming up is the Burnley Gardens Open Day on Sunday July 14<sup>th</sup>. Once again Michele Adler has put together a great program with lots of engaging speakers lecture and workshops. Chris England (Merrywood Plants) and Chris Williams (University of Melbourne) will jointly run a workshop on fruit trees and vegetables. I always feel with these events we should be running something like a giant marrow competition or super pumpkin quest, something for the committee to digest perhaps!

Many of you who came on the tree tour last year sat beneath the largest Moreton Bay Fig in Victoria at Portarlington.

Another significant specimen of *Ficus macrophylla* is the Burke and Wills tree at Swan Hill.

More recently, it has suffered from a combination of dry conditions and inadvertently being poisoned. I was engaged by the Swan Hill council to oversee the removal of dead wood from this tree. The top image shows how it looked when the contractors started.

The bottom image shows how it looked towards the end. It sort of hurt taking off such large dead wood and we'll just see how it goes. I'm quietly optimistic.



*The Burke and Wills fig before (left) and after its remedial pruning*

On a different note, on behalf of the Friends of Burnley Gardens, I'd like to thank the Australian Garden History Society for what I believe was a wonderful joint evening on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June. Unfortunately work commitments unfolded whereby I was unable to attend however I have heard nothing but good reports on the evening. Furthermore I would like to thank the Australian Garden History Society for their generous donation to the writing of the history of the Burnley gardens based on their designers.

We believe that in our 150 year this is a most fitting way in which to capture Burnley's historical and horticultural story.

We look forward to the final manuscript and the publishing later this year.

Finally, do tell your friends about Open Day and keep checking our website as it is updated regularly and is very engaging. Thanks to Jill Kellow who has done such a great job with it!

Cheers for now,

John Fordham.

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## Calling all volunteers!

Burnley Gardens Open Day is Sunday 14th July. The Committee needs willing volunteers to help set-up and pack-down, and throughout during the day. Roles include:

- Helping on the plant stall
- Running the plant "creche"
- Acting as guides to deliver people to various workshops.

If you can help even for a couple of hours, we would love your help. Please contact Andrew Smith via email at [a.smith@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:a.smith@unimelb.edu.au), or on 9035 6861 during business hours.



## In the Gardens (in Autumn)

*Andrew Smith*

They say, good things come to those who wait and this is certainly true of the Fire-wheel Tree, making it a great feature to talk about during our big 150th anniversary year.

Our specimen of *Stenocarpus sinuatus*, in Burnley's Rainforest Garden on the southwest side of the Oak Lawn, was planted circa 1993 and has only begun to flower in any meaningful way this year. 20 years is certainly a long wait and requires a lot of patience from any gardener.

This stunning tree hails from the coastal rainforests of northern New South Wales and its habitat extends up to the Atherton Tablelands in far north Queensland. It has a tall and slender shape that befits its rainforest origin, and it can achieve 35 metres in height.

A member of the Family Proteaceae, this tree has distinctive foliage, and the floral form characteristic of its family. The amazingly intricate, bright red flower "wheels" are easily seen from a distance and create a fine display during late summer and early autumn: in Melbourne, generally February and March.

The tree harks back to the days when the Department of Agriculture occupied part of the site adjacent to Burnley (now the Botanic Corporate site). Staff from the Department planted the tree in memory of a colleague who loved and enjoyed the Gardens.

So take a walk for yourself along the sawdust path in the Rainforest Garden, and ponder the longevity of this fine Australian tree.



*Stenocarpus sinuatus* in flower

## From the Membership Secretary's desk *Carol Ferguson*

At the time of this Newsletter publication I am pleased to announce that FOBG membership is now 209. Thank you and welcome to our newest members:

Sue Barker, Lyndel Robinson, Belinda & John Bele, Denise Cooney & Chris Halek, Karen Alexander, Heather Ross, Janet Moritz, Jennifer Chamberlin, Rodney Keenan, Thomas Fairman, Thomas Baker, Geoff Olive, Don Garden; Michael Howard, Natasha Morgan & family; Jane Barrett; Peter Cornelius, Su Laird, Claire Ferguson, John Warburton; David, Tricia, Kate & Ben Saunders; John Lauricella, Lee de Sarro, Steven Wells, Jane Stormer, Yvonne Coleman, Ryan Young, Hendrik van Leeuwen, Mary Thackeray, Beth Gaze, Evelyne Richard, Teena Crawford, Maureen Ward & John Weickhardt, and returning member Julie Elliott.

The Urban Landscapes Branch of the City of Melbourne has also joined for 1 year: our first corporate membership!

### **Ten years of membership**

Congratulations to Susie Hall, Elizabeth Hill, Pamela Carder, James Whitelaw, Christine Foard and Alan Langley-Jones.

Our 10-year members will be invited to join us at the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 7th August, for presentation of a 10 year Certificate. The Certificates recognise your long-term commitment to the Friends of Burnley Gardens.

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## The Way It Was

*Michèle Adler*

Now that The Friends of Burnley Gardens are nearing their second century of members, and their 15<sup>th</sup> year of existence, it's time to reflect and tell the story of the Friends.

Way back in the dark ages, in 1997, Burnley Gardens belonged to the Victorian College of Agriculture and Horticulture. It was a time of great activity on campus with hundreds of students coming to study each week, to learn horticulture and enjoy the Gardens. The campus offered multi-level entry to horticulture: hobby courses, TAFE certificates, Associate Diploma and Bachelor of Applied Sciences, then later, Graduate Diploma, Masters and PhD qualifications. The Gardens acted as a living laboratory where students could participate and immerse in a unique environment just 6 km from the heart of Melbourne.

Things were about to change. When the College and its Gardens was taken over by the University of Melbourne, it set the scene for a new view.

A group of people with concerns for the future of Burnley Gardens met, with the aim of forming an association to love protect and promote the Gardens. Those people were students, staff and interested community members.

### **Who were the early movers?**

A mix of students: Sandi Pullman, Jenifer Lindupp, Cheung-Ling Wong, Libby Lambert, Jude Bowman, Carol Sorrell, Ricky Murdock, Meredith Clifford, Barb Brockley. Interested

community members, Dorothy James and staff members, Jill Kellow, Greg Moore, Phil Tulk, James Will and Michèle Adler. Soon others joined in and the group so formed called themselves The Friends of Burnley Gardens (FOBG).

Those early starters organized a committee; a constitution; a logo (designed by Andrew Close, a student); public liability insurance and then applied for set-up grants. They formed a propagation group, commissioned Burnley Gardens gift cards (to be sold at the campus book shop), organised working bees in The Gardens, for example, the planting of the back car park) and trained volunteers who formed a Gardens history group. They started collecting oral history, taping and transcribing various staff members' recollections and were soon able to showcase that history to visitors by leading Gardens tours in order to raise funds.



*Greg Moore shows the early Friends how to plant a tree in the back car park renovation*



*Construction of the ground cover beds in the field station*

## Building up funds

The committee decided to:

- Sell chocolate frogs. These were available from reception and also at each meeting of the group. The profit on each box sold was \$20!!
- Cater for the Burnley Summer School. This was an event that ran each year as a live-in gardening school.
- Participate in the Open Garden Scheme. Revenue was \$5 per head.
- Hold monthly meetings/social nights with guest speakers – one of the first of these was a 'wine and cheese night' with lecturer Peter May.

## Where are those early movers now?

- Some have moved away (or died), but many of that first group are still Friends – Sandi, who started the group still contributes as a garden historian, Jill manages our website, Greg and Michèle are life members and Michèle is Vice Chair.

Over the years the membership of The Friends has grown and has now reached nearly 200 people. FOBG still contribute to the Gardens in many ways, most recently commissioning the Sugar Gum outdoor furniture setting and the new Field Station gates. At the end of 2013 we will publish a book on the designers of Burnley gardens.



Thank you to the many many people who have helped FOBG over the years ... and please eat more chocolate frogs!



*Grinding out the Sugar Gum stump to make way for planting the Ellis Stones Rockery*



*The planted Ellis Stones Rockery*

## Propagation Group

*Glenys Rose*

The Propagation Group faced a few challenges through summer but we've come smiling through autumn and into the start of colder weather.

Roadworks outside the nursery from November onwards meant that the only access was off-road, through the Ellis Stones Rockery and nursery side gate. Quite a challenge to get fully laden trolleys out for our two successful pre-Christmas sales, believe me! This work was completed late January, so the novelty had well and truly worn off by then...

Aging nursery technology (*not us BTW, Ed.*) made life difficult: the fogging equipment broke down and some time went by before it was repaired. Cuttings dry out very quickly if the propagation environment isn't sufficiently humid, and as a result, the range of material that we were able to propagate over summer is smaller.

The good news is that the new fogging system is working well – these days, there's a definite touch of the Wuthering Heights to a visit to greenhouse 1! Nick Osborne, Sascha Andrusiak and Ben Kawa have done a great job in recent months to upgrade this propagation house, with replacement of shading fabric and the bench surfaces.



*Glenys, Mel and Fran propagating in the nursery*

We've been thinking laterally and growing plants from seed, bulbs, corms and tubers and will have a great range of materials available for Open Day – only a month away at the time of writing!

We held two very successful plant sales during autumn and look forward to another big day of sales on the 14th July.

Hope to see you all there!

## Remembering Burnley

*Sandra McMahon*

The Committee of the Friends recently hosted an informal afternoon tea and garden walk for members of the Kneen and Macauley families. These two families had a long and intimate association with Burnley College and the Gardens.

Tom Kneen was the Principal of Burnley College from 1946 until 1967.

During this time his family lived in the charming Victorian era Principal's residence, now sadly demolished. Mrs. Dorothy Kneen's delightful memoir of those days, 'A Dear Wee Cottage in the Gardens', is well worth a read. (Contact the Committee.)

Two generations of the Macauley family also lived in the Gardens. Both Bill Macauley and his father were Curators of the 'Egg-Laying Competition'. It was Mrs. Macauley's mother who planted the celebrated Lemon Scented Gum, which grew in the courtyard near the canteen, until it regrettably needed to be removed several years ago.

Their combined association with Burnley endured for 50 years.

On the 25 April this year Cameron and Celia Kneen, and Barry and Averil Macauley visited us. All had endless tales to tell of a childhood and adolescence spent in the Gardens. By all accounts, these were times of great freedom, but also of some isolation, as there were naturally no other near neighbours.

In those days, the College had a small herd of Jersey cows, milked twice daily in the dairy, by George Manley, a retired dairy farmer. George lived in a cottage by the railway gates.



*Members of the Kneen and Macauley families rekindle old memories outside the former dairy - a building that has numerous lives since those days.*



Draught horses were housed on site as well, and employed to do all the ploughing in the vegetable garden and orchard. A highlight of the children's birthday parties appears to have been a ride in the horse-drawn dray, with old 'Freak' or 'Flora' between the shafts.

All our visitors expressed great appreciation for the work of The Friends of Burnley Gardens, in protecting this wonderful site and its heritage.



*Doug Kneen, youngest brother of former principal Tom Kneen, at the site of the old Principal's residence (now the Sunken Garden).*

*Doug was a frequent visitor to the Principal's residence in those days, and also designed the Burnley College badge. The motto "Desertum quasi hortum" translates "He shall make the desert bloom".*



*The fabulous Roof garden was met with fascination - and great approval.*



## Australian Garden Visit

*Carol Ferguson*

On Sunday 21 April, a group of 46 Burnley Friends visited the recently opened Australian Garden at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne. We began with morning-tea at the Boon-Wurrung Café - followed by a short introduction from tour guides, Trevor and Faye. We then split into 2 groups for our specialised Tours of the Australian Garden.

Most in the group had already visited Stage 1 of the Australian Garden since its opening in May 2006, but only a few had experienced it as a complete project. The second and final stage was opened to the public in October 2012. Summer rains, plus the dedicated monitoring by RBGC Horticultural Staff, have kept the Australian Garden looking immaculate. Although the Garden is now complete, the work never stops!

The “Plants for your Place” Tour gave us a good overview of what to plant in your garden at your place. The Northern Display Gardens, the Future Garden, the Cultivar Garden, the Home Garden and the Arbour Garden all present good ideas for plant choice and location. Some of these gardens are now seven years old and are quite well established.



*Cranbourne's Northern Display Gardens: a representation of inner city gardens*

As a special bonus (and not usually included in this Tour) our guide took us to the Research Gardens where we chatted with Burnley PhD student, Meg Hirst, and learnt more about the research she is doing with the genus *Brachyscome*.

This tour concluded at the Kiosk where we met up with the other half of our group who were just finishing the “Flora Australis” Tour with guide Trevor. Some FOBG members might remember Trevor Blake ran the tour that the Friends took of Stage 1 of the Australian Garden back in 2009.

The “Flora Australis” Tour completes the circuit of the Australian Garden. This is the story of the evolution of Australia’s unique flora and fauna. We are taken back in time to our ancient Gondwanan rainforest heritage. A large number of ancient plants have been carefully chosen for inclusion into the Gondwana Garden. The Wollemi Pine along with *Nothofagus*, *Macrozamia*, *Lepidozamia* and *Agathis* (to name just a few) are planted in this Garden. In around 15 to 20 years this garden will have a well-developed canopy, giving the Gondwana Garden a very different appearance, while protecting the lush understorey of ferns and cycads.

This Tour moves through time, taking us into the Eucalyptus Walk - where there are many members of the family Myrtaceae, followed by casuarinas, wattles, grasses and scented flowering plants.

And finally, Trevor spoke about how DNA sequencing has been used to distinguish *Angophora* and *Corymbia* as genera distinct from *Eucalyptus*.

At the end of the Tours some of us stayed on to experience more of the Australian Garden by joining the Garden Explorer - whilst others took a quick run up to the Trig Lookout to view more of the surrounding countryside.

It was a great day – from many of those “Friends” who came to experience the now completed Australian Garden at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne.

## Time to renew your FOBG membership!

Payment is due by July 1, 2013. Save time and save money by taking out a 5-year membership – a 20% discount applies on the standard annual rate!



*You're never too young to learn how to garden  
on Burnley's new green roof*



*Autumn colours in the rooftop  
perennial border*

## Photo Credits for this edition

John Fordham, Carol Ferguson, Sandra McMahon, Sue Murphy, Glenys Rose, Andrew Smith, Sandi Pullman.