

Papyrus

Newsletter of the Friends of Burnley Gardens



From the Editor (in lieu of the President)

Welcome to the latest edition of Papyrus! Burnley's gardens are blooming on the ground and on the rooftop (*image above*) in the bright spring sunshine and we have lots of news for you.

We are thrilled to announce that Dr Greg Moore has agreed to be our Patron. As many of you know, Greg was Principal of Burnley College and was also a lecturer in Plant Science and Arboriculture. He has also been on the boards of many organisations including National Trust's Victorian Register of Significant Trees, Greening Australia (Victoria), Treenet and Sustainable Gardening Australia Foundation.

There have been a few changes in the Friends lineup since the AGM: warm congratulations go to both new and returning committee members. We welcome our new President – Bob Lazarus, who has settled into his job so well that he is enjoying himself in South America (as you read this newsletter).

(continued over page...)

Special notes

We held an entertaining finale for the end of the FOBG year on **Sunday 16 November**, with special guest Philip Johnson explaining "how to win a best-in-show at Chelsea". See the FOBG website for details of upcoming events!

<http://www.fobg.org.au/>

We are sorry to lose Glenys Rose from the FOBG Committee. During the past 6 years, Glenys made a significant contribution to the Friends. The Committee, and the volunteers, are delighted that she will continue her work with the Propagation Group even with her move to the country.

Save the Date!

Saturday 6 December

The Art of Espalier Workshop

Lecture, demonstration and hands-on workshop

with Chris England,
Merrywood Plants

10 am – 1 pm

Saturday 14 February

Valentine's Day Celebration

Don't die wondering - cemetery plants of Melbourne

Kevin Walsh, Manager Horticulture
Planning at Greater Melbourne
Cemeteries Trust

Talk 7 for 7.30 pm

Sunday 11 March

Garlic the Great

How to grow, harvest, cure and store it

Penny Woodward, author and
radio presenter

Talk 7 for 7.30 pm

(cont.) The current committee is:

President Bob Lazarus

Vice President Michèle Adler

Treasurer Jane Wilson

Secretary Ruth Lazarus

Ordinary Member Sandra McMahon

Ordinary Member Dianne Cranston

Ordinary Member Cheryl Andrews

Ordinary Member Jennene Arnel

Ordinary Member Anne Bishop

University Representative Andrew Smith

Ex officio Barbara Brookes

Ex officio Pamela Carder

If you wish to have more involvement with the Friends, other groups that might interest you are the History and Guides Group, the Cultural Collection (aka the Archives) and the Propagation Team.

We held a Monster Plant Sale on 31 August 2014 together with some free tours of the Gardens. The University of Melbourne also showcased some student research projects.

We entered the age of Social Media with our FOBG page on Facebook. Please go to it and “like” it. Don’t forget to keep having a look at our website. It is updated regularly with our activities and also what is happening at other groups.

In case you didn’t know, the Friends have officially moved into our new office, which is at the rear of the Archives room and has its own entrance to the outside.

FOBG have recently joined the Herb Society of Victoria. They meet on the first Thursday of the month at Burnley in Main Building MB10 at 7.30 pm. Their website is www.herbsocietyvic.org.au.

Spring in the Gardens

Andrew Smith

Blink and you’ll miss it.

October is when I consider the Gardens to be at their peak for beauty and diversity of flowering. Some of these plants, such as *Prunus glandulosa*, only flower for a short time and you have to be quick to see them at their best. Others last longer and can give a new lift and dimension to the garden bed they grow in. *Rhododendron austrinum* is one such plant. Several specimens are planted in the shady moist area of the lower section of the Azalea lawn and its dappled light and slightly acidic soil are well suited to its growing requirements. Former lecturer James Will introduced this American rhododendron to Burnley in the early 1990’s: it is not often seen in gardens. It is known as the Florida Flame Azalea, and is native to the north-



Rhododendron austrinum in flower; whole shrub (left) and cluster of flowers (right).

western “Panhandle” part of Florida, where it grows in acidic soil in moist ravines. The slightly fragrant flowers, with flower colours in shades of orange and yellow, have prominent stamens, thus its other common name Honeysuckle Azalea.



Wachendorfia thyrsiflora in the perennial border

Another of my favourites at this time of year is *Wachendorfia thyrsiflora*. It’s a fun name to say, and the multiple spires of golden flowers, on sturdy stalks, are a wonderful contrast against the green pleated foliage. The common name, Blood Root, comes from the extraordinary red colour of the root and corm tissues, and its sap (which is used as a dye). This evergreen perennial comes from the western and eastern Cape of South Africa, where it grows in permanent marshes and streams, from the coast to 1200 metres above sea level. Despite this water-loving natural habitat, *W. thyrsiflora* will grow in irrigated soils and the large amount of nectar it produces is much appreciated by birds.

A bed reborn

One of my early tasks as a gardener at Burnley in the late 1980s was to remove a shrub bed on the right hand side of the path lined with *Bergenia* that leads down to the large *Ficus macrophylla*. The idea was to open up the vista from the grey border, over to the perennial border on the Oak Lawn. The area was converted over to lawn, and a pathway was created along the far end that linked the path along the *Bergenia* border to the western entrance of the Sunken Garden. Over the last 20 years *Ficus* roots have risen out of the pathway and made it impassable. The decision was made to remove the path and return it to a garden bed. For aesthetic reasons, the irrigated mulched area under the Norfolk Island Pine was also incorporated, to form one bed.

As an additional alteration, a slight curve at the western Sunken Garden entrance will enable the *Sparmannia* to grow in a more natural, rounded shape, rather than the present straight, clipped look. In doing this path widening, it was interesting to discover an old glass stopper in the soil we removed from the path/lawn edge. Historically, we know that Luffmann in his redevelopment of the paths and lawns of the Gardens in the period 1897-1907, used street sweeping debris and other fill to raise the level of the lawns above the paths. This design ploy was so the paths would disappear from view when looking across the lawn vistas. Perhaps this glass stopper, similar to others I have found on the eastern slope of the lagoon paddock (used as the tip for Melbourne for many decades up to 1970) was from this previous time. The glass stopper fits perfectly in a “Hogan Bros & Co, Soluble Phenyle” bottle I had previously found in the Lagoon Paddock.



The restored, newly mulched garden bed

A day in the grasslands

Jan Chamberlain

On 25 October, a group of twenty people enjoyed a day out looking at grasslands. Before we left Burnley, John Delpratt spoke about grasslands, definitions and structure and then explained his involvement in Linda Tegg's *Grasslands* installation on the steps of the State Library of Victoria. Sadly, there is less than 1% of native grassland remaining in reasonable form in Victoria.



A view to the northern end of the city through the *Grasslands* installation

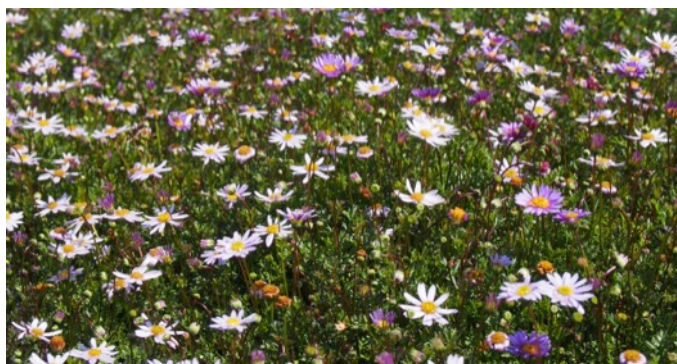
After a wander round the installation, which contrasted greatly with its city surroundings, we explored the Evans Street Wildflower Grassland in Sunbury, which covers an area of about 4 hectares. It is significant in terms of its diversity and abundance of plant species.

After lunch we adjourned to Ian Taylor's Western Plains Flora nursery for a tour of his indigenous nursery and seed bank (unfortunately, no opportunity to buy plants).

Our last stop was the Ngarri-djarrang Grasslands on Central Creek in Reservoir. Here we heard from Sarah Bates from the Merri Creek Management Committee. This patch covers 9 hectares and is in a suburban heartland. A kangaroo community has recently set up camp there, which has softened the neighbour's hearts a little towards the area. After we arrived back a few people took up the offer of a small tour of the Burnley grassland area. It was an educational and very interesting day where we learnt much about this very precious eco-system.



Evans St Grassland, Sunbury



Brachyscome multifida in flower at Western Plains Flora

From the Membership Secretary

Cheryl Andrews

Since the previous Newsletter, FOBG membership has stabilised at 237. Many members were due to renew their membership at the end of June. The majority of people renewed and thus re-confirmed their commitment to the Friends of Burnley Gardens. Our new members have joined after attending our various activities, plant sales, via friends or word-of-mouth. I would like to welcome the following members who joined between June and October. They are:

- Don & Petrushka Owen
- Joanne Morris, Virginia McNally, Bryan Ward
- Patricia Veale, Karen Sutherland
- Francesca Coraddu & Jamie Foster, (Mr) Madan Dhungel, Joe Kaspar, David Bateman, Gilly Hogan, Christine Jones & Terence Donovan, Rebecca Korossy-Horwood, Helen Page, Gwenda Walsh, Christopher Norquay and Dawn King
- Helen Dunn, Elizabeth & Bruce Edwards, Scott Levy, and Jacquette Sloan.

Guides' visit to Ziebell's Farmhouse

Jane Wilson

Ziebell's Farmhouse is in the Westgarthtown pioneer precinct of Thomastown, and is open on the second Sunday of the month in the afternoon. Ziebell's farmhouse, now owned by the City of Whittlesea and managed by the Friends of Westgarthtown, is Victoria's oldest German immigrant building, having been built around 1850. There are five remaining German/Wendish farmhouses in the area but the others are still privately owned. The nearby Lutheran Church and cemetery are still in use. The only remaining buildings on the site beside the farmhouse are the cartshed, bathhouse and smokehouse. The well survives and a beautiful well maintained cottage garden.

Sandi Pullman suggested a visit so we turned it into a Guides' outing. The Caretaker gave us a lot of information about the family and how they had lived, and his cat showed us around the other buildings and the garden. There is a very detailed plan of the garden with a list of plants, many of which were typical 19th century cottage flowers, or favourites of the women who had lived in the house.

It is well worth a visit, particularly in spring or early summer to see the garden.

For more information, visit <http://www.westgarthtown.org.au/sites/> or the Victorian Heritage Database.



Christian Ziebell's bluestone farmhouse
at Thomastown, built in the 1850's

Image from
http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/vhd/heritagevic#detail_places:3687

Vale - Dr. David Aldous

Sandi Pullman

I was very sad to read about the sudden passing of David Aldous in the winter edition of the Melbourne School of Land and Environment's *Land and Environment* magazine. David supervised my Honours project in 2004-05 and was a Burnley lecturer for many years. He was well known among the 'turfies', as turf was his main passion; but he had a wide range of interests and was deeply engaged with horticultural therapy and parks and gardens. I remember being surprised that he had written an article on the history of women in horticulture, which of course, traced the careers of the first female students at Burnley.

Graduation time was always very colourful and steeped in the medieval tradition, as many of the lecturers paraded their academic achievements at the beginning of the graduation ceremony at Burnley. David had many degrees and wore the most wonderful academic gown. He began his career studying at James Ruse Agricultural High School in Sydney, and then went on to study at Wagga Agricultural College. Next stop was the University of Sydney where he obtained his B. Sc. (Hons.) and for a time he lectured Agronomy at Gatton College in Queensland (1972-1974). David then decided to study in America, where he achieved his Masters at Cornell University and his Ph.D. at Michigan State University. His next venture was to lecture in agriculture and horticulture at Massey University in New Zealand, and from there he came to Burnley. Never one to rest on his laurels, he recently obtained a Grad. Dip. (Education Management) from RMIT, and a TAFE Certificate IV in Training & Assessment.

In 1981 David became Vice Principal and Principal Lecturer at Burnley Horticultural College. He was one of the drivers of developing the old Certificate into the Advanced Certificate, Diploma and Degree of Horticulture. Many of our readers will have benefited from this terrific course structure as it allowed students to transition from the TAFE system into tertiary education.



David Aldous attending a graduation ceremony

After Burnley merged with The University of Melbourne, he became Associate Professor in Environmental Horticulture for the Melbourne School of Land and Environment. After a restructure, in 2007 he decided to take a redundancy package, and semi-retired to Queensland where he was an Adjunct Associate Professor, School of Land, Crop and Food Sciences, The University of Queensland and was on the Executive Committee for the most recent International Horticultural Congress (IHC).

It seems once a person retires, they are busier than when they worked and David was involved in many activities. He lectured part-time and belonged to the International Turf Society. He was also President of the Royal Australian Institute of Parks and the World President of the Royal Parks and Gardens Institute.

Recently a three volume set of books with David as a co-editor was displayed for the first time at the IHC and this year at the 2014 Parks and Leisure Conference in Cairns, a David Aldous Student of the Year award was presented for the first time.

His last article had a historical view. Written with Ravi Hegde of Horticulture Australia Ltd. and published in the journal *Chronica Horticulturae* it examined the plant species that came over with the First Fleet, through to the food and ornamental species we grow today and the importance of these activities to

our lifestyle and the Australian economy. This article can be downloaded at:

http://www.ihc2014.org/download/media/chronica_horticulturae/Profiling%20Australias%20Horticultural.pdf.

David was very highly regarded by his colleagues and students and he will be greatly missed.

Open Gardens Australia

Our members will have been sad to hear that the Open Gardens Australia scheme will cease operating in 2015, after more than 27 years. Many of us have thoroughly enjoyed visiting gardens of people we know, designers we love and those in different areas and styles. Like other organisations, OGA experienced increasing financial pressures. CEO Liz White said "We have been a big part of creating a sharing and inclusive community of garden lovers, and inspired many gardeners to try new and innovative things in their own patch. We have also raised millions of dollars for charities, and poured thousands more dollars back into local communities, to nurture people's passion for gardening at a local level."

On the weekend of 15-16 November FOBG member Pamela Carder will open her garden *Tea Trees* in Mount Martha under the scheme. Sandra McMahon's garden *Woodcote* at 73 Pascoe Avenue, Kilsyth, was also open for OGA - on 15 and 16 November it opened for Rotary's Garden DesignFest: see report on Sandra's AGM address on pages 12-13 of this edition).

OGA was kick-started by John Patrick in Australia, based on a model used in the UK. For more on the closure of OGA read the article on the Garden Drum website by Catherine Stewart:

<http://gardendrum.com/2014/09/01/open-gardens-australia-folds-after-27-years-why/>

Burnley's Green Roofs

In October, Dr Sue Murphy led a large group on a tour of Burnley's Demonstration Green Roof, to outline the design and construction of Burnley's newest outdoor teaching space. There are 14 distinct planting zones, featuring different plant types and over 200 species, with four distinct growing substrates being used at depths ranging from 100 mm to 300 mm. Even the walkway mesh has plants growing under it! The aim was to maximise the planted area to increase capture of rainfall: one of the key benefits of a green roof is the reduction of the volume of rainfall entering the stormwater system. One half of the roof is irrigated from spring to autumn, with the very toughest succulent species on the un-irrigated areas of the roof surviving on rainfall only. The installation of the green roof was captured by time-lapse webcam and Sue used this footage to point out the various stages of construction. Later Sue spoke of key elements for a successful green

Jan Chamberlain



A view of Sandra McMahon's garden,
Woodcote

Jan Chamberlain



The spectacular flowers of *Puya ferruginea* caught everyone's attention on the green roof

roof and the Burnley experience. The most important thing is to obtain expert advice from a structural engineer to determine the weight loading of the roof: every other decision depends on this. The Burnley roof was built up in a series of layers over the existing, unmodified concrete roof deck: waterproofing, protection layer, lightweight HDPE drainage layer, filter sheet, growing medium (substrate) and plants.

Low phosphorus controlled-release fertilizer was used at half the normal rate to ensure plant growth is not too vigorous, and to reduce the loss of nutrients from the free-draining growing substrate into stormwater runoff.

Lots more information, including a free downloadable e-book outlining the design, construction and maintenance of green roofs, is available from the *Growing Green Guide* website: see

http://www.growinggreenguide.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/growing_green_guide_ebook_130214.pdf

From the Archives

Jane Wilson

ENTOMOLOGY – THE INSECT COLLECTION

One of the subjects taught in the Diploma of Horticultural Science was Entomology, and this meant the students had to make their own insect collections. When past student, Joanne Morris, came to Burnley earlier this year to organise the Class of 1973 Reunion, she mentioned that she still had her insect collection. She very generously donated it to the Archives with the instructions they were given on how to go about collecting the insects. Joanne described how the students first had to make their own wooden boxes with glass tops. She had made two boxes.

They were then required to:

1. Catch the insects
2. Kill them, in some cases in a killing bottle
3. Make a spreading board
4. Mount the insects

I found the casual instructions for the use of the killing bottle quite troublesome by today's standards – cyanide and ether were to be used.

Joanne did a pretty good job of her collection, as you can see!



Victorian Community History

Sandi Pullman

Each year the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) and the Public Records Office of Victoria present the Victorian Community History Awards for historical research by local community groups. October 20 was a great day for horticulture, with two Burnley alumni Dr Anne Vale and Sandi Pullman receiving awards in separate categories.

Anne was awarded the Victorian Community History Award for the most outstanding community history project in any category, with her 2013 book *Exceptional Australian Garden Makers*.

Sandi accepted the Historical Interpretation Award on behalf of the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage, for their work in recreating Charles and Sophie La Trobe's garden *The Garden at La Trobe's Cottage, Kings Domain*. This category recognises unique formats of historical interpretation, including visitor experiences delivered by physical exhibitions, artistic interpretation, history walks or tours.

Anne and I were very excited to hear RHSV President, Associate Professor Don Garden read out our names, and to have him present each of us with our awards.

More information about the awards is available at: <http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/victorian-community-history-awards-2014-winners>. You can learn more about the garden at La Trobe's Cottage here: <http://www.foltc.latrobesociety.org.au/garden.html>, and find out about Anne's book at her website: <http://www.heriscapes.com.au/>.

Two Burnley Reunions

Jane Wilson

This year there were two reunions held at Burnley. They were both very successful and brought back many happy memories for past students and staff.

The Class who graduated in 1973 held their reunion on the 6th and 7th June. It started with a tour of the College and Gardens conducted by Andrew Smith and a dinner was held at The Botanical the next day.

Joanne Morris, who was one of the organisers, put together a list of everyone in the 'year group' and a short description of what they have been doing for the last 40 years. It is wonderful to see that this group has been able to keep in touch with each other.



The class of 1973

The other class to reunite was the group who commenced in 1964 and graduated in 1967. They met at Burnley on 11th October. Andrew Smith and Greg Moore gave an update in the morning and then they all went to a nearby pub for lunch. Former Staff member and Nursery Manager, Ian McCure, came along and also the former Librarian, Mr Marriott, who had also attended the Class of 1973 dinner.



The class of 1964,
then...and now



Newsletter layout and photo credits

Photos in this edition came from Jan Chamberlain and Andrew Smith.

Newsletter content collated by Jan Chamberlain; edited by Jan and Sue Murphy; layout by Sue. Thanks to all our contributors! If you have any ideas for newsletter items, please email Sue (smmurphy@unimelb.edu.au).

Propagation Group Report

Glenys Rose

At the end of winter we had a very successful, widely advertised plant sale. Many thanks to the lovely FOBG members who volunteered to help with sales and to perform tea, coffee and cake duty at the last minute.

I have moved to the country and am now only attending propagation sessions fortnightly so Fran Mason is holding the fort each week, supported by Cheryl Andrews, Jennene Arnel, Ellie Bastow and Geoffrey Kneebone. We have wide ranging discussions including high art, politics, religion and open gardens. Anyone with horticultural experience is welcome to join us; we usually meet after lunch on Tuesday afternoons at the Burnley Campus Nursery. Please contact Andrew Smith so we can follow up on your interest.

Our area in the nursery has not changed much yet but Fran and I will be developing a plan soon – like all things it is a matter of finding time.

Most of the last batch of Gallipoli Oak acorns, from the younger Geelong Grammar tree, did not germinate, however we do have a small number of trees ready to be moved on to our supporting nurseries, for eventual distribution to Victorian primary schools. For more information visit <http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/vic/GallipoliOaksProject>.

Our thanks as ever to Nick and Sascha, the nursery management group for ongoing support of our efforts, and to Andrew Smith and the gardens team for maintaining our “stock plants” in such good order.

In conclusion:

“In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.”

– Margaret Atwood, *Bluebeard's Egg*

Enough Horticultural Rope

Jan Chamberlain

In September, Dr Greg Moore and Dr Peter May exposed some old gardening myths and re-educated us by answering questions and de-bunking lots of horticultural hearsay. Both Greg and Peter are Honorary Research Fellows at Burnley.

Here's a sample of some of the questions and answers:

Q. When planting out from a pot to the garden what is recommended: teasing out, reducing or untangling existing root structures?

A. If roots just come to the edge of the pot there is no need to tease. If roots are bending then tease / trim / shear the outside of the root-ball off / cut vertically. Best idea is don't buy plants that are root-bound. This is particularly important for trees – ask the nursery person to take the plant out of the pot so you can check it.

If you trim the roots don't trim the top of the plant!

Q. Do eggshells add calcium to the soil?

A. Would need to grind the eggshells into the finest powder and even then it would take geological periods of time to dissolve. Most soils have adequate calcium anyway.

Q. Planting by the moon – myth and magic? Or does it really work?

A. There is no scientific evidence to back up planting by the moon.

Q. Pruning roses - outward bud versus chainsawing – does it give the same result?

A. Both pruning systems can be used but they do not give the same result.

For more exposés on horticultural myths, have a look at 'The Garden Professors' blog from Wisconsin University: <http://blogs.extension.org/gardenprofessors/> and also from Dr Linda Chalker-Scott and others: http://puyallup.wsu.edu/~linda%20chalker-scott/Horticultural%20Myths_files/



FOBG President Bob Lazarus, Greg Moore and Peter May

Sandra McMahon's AGM address

Sue Murphy

The Friends were very fortunate to have experienced landscape designer Sandra McMahon give the 2014 post-AGM address. Sandra gave an engaging talk on the challenges presented by some of the landscapes she has worked on, and some of her strategies for dealing with them. It was a beautifully illustrated talk, demonstrating Sandra's love of plants and her understanding of how to put them together to achieve both aesthetic and functional design outcomes.

Gardens are places to escape and ensuring that plants work together is vital. Paying attention to foliage texture and the structure of the planting engages the visitor's interest. Key approaches are the manipulation of space, and the creation of a sense of mystery and surprise. Disguising hard edges e.g. fence lines can enormously increase the sense of available space, by borrowing the landscape beyond your boundary. Creating spaces or rooms within the garden is another smart technique, as the whole garden is not revealed all at once, and by making the visitor move through the garden, different views and new points of interest, are revealed.



No visible fence lines here!

A further message from Sandra is that flowering times are brief; so realistically, it's smarter to expect interest to be provided by the permanent structure (stems, branches) and foliage of plants. Flowers are a bonus but not necessarily the main aim of the game. Being on top of the seasonal changes that plants undergo, and of the duration of different phases of a plant's life cycle is one way to ensure that your garden offers long-lasting interest.

Sandra concluded by explaining that the need to plan for a sustainable garden should be first and foremost in our minds, not only in terms of hardscape materials, but also in relation to plant materials and their ongoing water needs. Be realistic about your site and your location, research the plants you want to use and don't be afraid to ask questions such as "how big?" and "how many?" if someone is suggesting plants to you.



Another important message: don't over plant small spaces