



Papyrus

No. 70 Autumn 2020

**NEWSLETTER
OF THE
FRIENDS OF
BURNLEY
GARDENS**

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President's Report



Dear Members, welcome to this edition of *Papyrus*.

Well, what unprecedented times these are! I'm searching for ways not to state the obvious and to avoid clichés. Suffice it to say, that I hope we, and those whom we care about, can all survive these trying times and remain healthy, not just in body but also in mind.

So much has been written of late about the historical importance of fruit and vegetable gardens in times of war - the famous 'victory gardens'. These are also times of war, against a universal, unseen enemy, an enemy that my very superficial understanding of biology tells me is not even a living organism.

Whilst we are assured by our government that we are not, in fact, about to run out of food, the gardens we must turn to are our own gardens, and our beautiful public gardens, places that nourish the soul. What a treasure then are places like the Burnley Gardens! How vital that they remain protected and cared for.

In my recent email to the membership, I made the point that the Committee of FOBG is very mindful of its responsibility to provide members with a full, interesting and regular programme of events. For the time being at least, this has become impossible due to Covid19.

The Committee endeavours at all times to manage our finances responsibly. However our income will inevitably be less for the foreseeable future, and this will limit for the time-being some projects which we had hoped to finance.

At its March meeting the Committee established a new sub-committee to look into fund-raising, marketing initiatives and governance issues. This sub-committee, like the management Committee, will continue to meet electronically or via teleconferencing. Already a number of exciting initiatives are being investigated - but of course are currently on hold. Watch this space!



Presidents report, *continued*

Many organizations similar to ours, such as the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, communicate with members via **Mailchimp**. FOBG is currently transitioning to **Mailchimp**. We realize that many of you may not be familiar with **Mailchimp**, but you should not feel any concern about clicking on the links! All our emails will continue to show Friends of Burnley Gardens as the sender and will display our logo in the email, so that you can identify that they are from us! We recently trialled **Mailchimp**, sending to you a reminder message for the Valentine's Day Dinner, and with our 2020 program. If you don't recall receiving these emails, please check your filters (Junk/Trash/Spam) as they may have been captured there. We are proposing to send out all newsletters this way. Newsletters will continue to be available on the FOBG website.

Now for some news of what has been happening over the past few months:



Dr Sue Murphy

Our guest speaker following the AGM last August was the ever-engaging Dr. Sue Murphy. Sue was formerly on the staff at Burnley and is currently the Urban Tree Planner at the City of Boroondara. Her excellent presentation entitled 'Seeing the trees for the (Urban) Forest' dealt with the issues of planting, managing and renewing trees in the urban context. Certainly a hot topic, and greatly appreciated by a large gathering.



Royal Botanic Gardens, Kandy, Sri Lanka



The Colour Border at Swan Street

In September we were transported to the wonders of the Kandy Botanic Gardens by Lynsey Poore. Lynsey is a passionate botanist and gardener, and her beautifully illustrated presentation left many of us with a desire to visit Sri Lanka as soon as possible!

In October I spoke about Colour Theory and the process of creating the new Swan Street plantings, and the Colour Spectrum Garden on the rock tiers which descend from there into the Burnley Campus.

In November we revived an old and much loved tradition: a tour of noted gardens and trees in regional Victoria. This time we visited Camperdown. What a tremendous success this tour was! Timed to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Camperdown Botanic Gardens, Janet O'Hehir's marvellous itinerary included not only guided tours of these beautiful gardens, but visits to a number of very significant historic properties in the area, including Dalvui, Gnotuk and Titanga.

We also had the chance to view the revegetation being conducted on the slopes and crater of Mt. Elephant, the largest scoria cone in the western District. Visiting Janet's own garden was an unexpected bonus.

Please don't miss out next time! As soon as conditions permit we hope to announce another such tour to a different destination.



Our 2019 break-up was a combined event with the University, at which the 'Roots of Burnley' exhibition was officially opened. This exhibition, which explored the long and significant history of Burnley's role in the Victorian community was jointly curated by Meg Hibbert and our very own archivist Jane Wilson. (See Jane's entry on p. 9). So much fascinating material, both photographic and documentary! Just as well much of it can still be viewed in the Main Building at Burnley Campus. Although the Campus is currently closed, this material should still remain on view later this year. (Note: The Gardens are NOT closed!)

As always *Chris England* conducted his ever popular summer pruning workshop in December.



We had time for just one event this year before having to suspend our programme: in February FOBG founding member Sandi Pullman gave a most engaging talk about Charles Bogue Luffman, the tantalisingly colourful first Principal of Burnley College.

We look forward to being able to present all recently postponed events at some stage in the future.

Sandi Pullman

One last announcement for now:

I'd like to make a special mention of the great work done by our team of Guides at Burnley. Being a guide in the Burnley Gardens provides an opportunity to learn more about the history and development of our beautiful, heritage-listed Gardens. The Guides are currently seeking more volunteers to join their ranks. Training is provided, you'll get to work with a small bunch of friendly people, who, most importantly take tours of groups - large and small - and thereby raise significant funds for the gardens. The guides also visit other notable gardens from time to time. If you are interested, please contact Judith Scurfield on 0416237464 or email judithscurfield@yahoo.com.au

*With all good wishes,
Sandra McMahan,
President, FOBG.*

Autumn in the Gardens by Andrew Smith



Quoting the apocryphal 'Chinese curse' "May you live in interesting times", it certainly seems that way.

In regard to the devastating bushfires, the plants at Burnley of course escaped the inferno fate of other parts of Australia. The cooler and wetter February and near tropical conditions since has provided near perfect conditions for plant growth, with many plants flowering for a second time. For *Wisteria sinensis*, this is not uncommon but for *Philadelphus* species this is far more unusual. The greener lawns have certainly prompted much comment, from memory this last occurred a decade ago, so again an unusual occurrence. Interesting times indeed.

We are sorry to report that the largest and oldest of the ginkgos (*Ginkgo biloba*) on campus has unfortunately died from Cinnamon Fungus (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*), with the neighbouring *Lagerstroemia indica* in the north island bed also testing positive to the disease. The ginkgo on the Ginkgo Lawn was a replacement tree for another that declined and died in the late 1970s - early eighties. Perhaps upon reflection, the blame for the first tree's death, attributed to Emily Gibson mounding up the soil around the tree trunk for a Japanese oriental effect, could now be attributed to phytophthora instead? This lawn and the neighbouring North Island bed has heavier soil, more prone to water logging. Not a soil type to wish for when *Phytophthora cinnamomi* is present. As background, the Ginkgo suffered dryness in the late summer of 2019 (due to irrigation failure while I was sunning myself on holidays), had premature, insipid autumn colour, then failed to come back into leaf in the following spring. There were green buds but they never burst into leaf, exactly like the buds of the *Erythrina caffra* in the shady walk several years ago, that also died from phytophthora.



Goodby to the ginkgo!

When mid- December arrived without leaves emerging on the Ginkgo, a soil test was done, and 'pear bait' soil tests were also done on the nearby *Lagerstroemia indica* (Crepe Myrtle) as well as the *Brachychiton rupestris* (Bottle Tree) near the Rose Arbor at the end of the Native garden, as they both had unusual branch dieback. All tested positive for *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. While this may sound alarming, the disease had been previously identified in the *Rosa rugosa* end of the Rose Garden in the early 1990s, and was also detected and treated in the Bergenia Walk. The long slow decline and sudden death within a month of the nearby *Pinus canariensis* several years ago attested to the treatment only saving the rhododendrons that grew beneath it. Perhaps trees, with their deeper root systems, are more difficult to treat than shallower-rooted shrubs?

An example of this was the soil testing we did on the *Erythrina caffra* in the shady walk. Soil samples that were taken just below the soil surface, at 300mm and at 900mm only identified phytophthora in the deepest sample at 900mm. It is difficult to apply treatments at that depth; we even soil injected to a depth of 700mm without success. We have begun treatment for the Crepe Myrtle and Bottle Tree; the pessimists are doubting success but I won't let it be said I didn't try all known avenues to save the trees.

On a brighter note and to try to stay ahead of inevitable tree decline and removal, I've planted two new *Quercus* species in the Gardens. I was fortunate to be given two *Quercus lobata* by the RBG, propagated from acorns brought back from California where an Oak conference was held. These tall (30 m) trees are considered very suitable for our emerging hotter and drier climate, and will



Quercus lobata

add to the *Quercus* collection I started planting in the 2000s. The other species planted was *Quercus phellos*, the Willow-leaved Oak, a curious anomaly to the usual lobed oak leaf shape seen in *Q. lobata*.



A new oak for the Gardens

Also of note is the Corkscrew Vine, *Cochlianthus caracalla*, that grows outside reception. The fragrant blooms and interesting flower shape certainly draws attention. If you are tempted to buy one for yourself, beware the very similar and often confused snail creeper, *Vigna speciosa*, an invasive, (suckering) non-fragrant, more aggressive vine commonly sold in nurseries. The multi-coloured, fragrant nautilus-shell shaped flowers of the *Cochlianthus* differ from the purple-only snail-shell shaped flowers of the invasive *Vigna*. The two are said to be often confused. Interestingly, both are dependant on ants to pollinate their flowers, resulting in long seedpods, like green beans, hanging down amongst the foliage.



Cochlianthus caracalla

FOBG Plant Propagation Group Report, March 2020

A long time has passed since our last communiqué. We have been steadily planting seeds and taking cuttings - turning them into plants of varying commonness and rarity, both beautiful and modest. We care for them and make them tough so they can cope with real garden situations. Thankfully many people like what we produce so we raise money that is used for large projects in the gem that is the Burnley Gardens.

The success of the group depends upon our volunteers turning up every week, regardless of the weather and all the other activities in their lives, and working in varying conditions depending upon the availability of University facilities. We are ever grateful for the support provided by the Nursery staff. Three people who were volunteers and great contributors to the group's activities have left. John Hill who specialised in propagation of Australian native plants left so he can focus on other commitments. We thank him for his enthusiasm and support, especially regarding the plant tag system he initiated, and wish him all the best with his other endeavours.



Three stalwarts of the Propagation group – from left: Melanie Conomikes, Sue Murphy, and Glenys Rose. Only Glenys is still with the group.

After a long association with Burnley through study, as a foundation member of the Friends plant propagation group, committee member, newsletter editor and lecturer, our dear friend Sue Murphy has taken a job with the local government. The trees will be in good hands. We thank Sue for her contribution of plants, plant material, assistance with propagation, help at sales and endless enthusiasm and wise advice. We miss the discussions about our favourite things - plants and the occasional song.

Au revoir Fran

When Fran Mason retired from her role on the committee, Michele Adler suggested she start propagating plants to raise money for garden projects. She, Sue Murphy and Melanie Conomikes, a former Burnley lecturer, worked away growing plants initially using material from the gardens. Fran then started supplying plant material she sourced from private gardens and plants she bought. Thanks to the passion she developed for Salvias we now have a collection of around 55 species. Fran is a plantswoman and has a very good knowledge, enhanced through constant attendance at lectures, classes,

membership of the Plant Trust, personal study and work. She has been the anchor of the Plant Propagation Group for more than ten years, turning up week after week to lead our steadily growing group to expand the range and depth of species we grow for sale. She has moved to Tasmania and will be greatly missed.

We recently welcomed Margi Petzke to the group. She was a teacher with a great love of gardens and gardening long before she gained her Certificate of Horticulture at Burnley in the mid 80's. She lectured in Horticultural Therapy at Latrobe University and She is keen to teach and inspire Melbourne gardeners with plants grown by the propagation group.

We are looking for new volunteers. If you have a passion for plants and gardens and formal or informal experience in propagation and are available on Wednesdays please contact me via the Friends email address or phone number. Any able-bodied FOBG members who have time to assist on sales days would also be most welcome.

Our current active members are: Cheryl Andrews, Ellie Bastow, Barbara Burrows, Robin Calabrese, Brett Hough, Janice Peeler, Margi Petzke, Thea Roche and Catherine Scott.

Glenys Rose - Coordinator

Membership Report by Cheryl Andrews - Membership Coordinator

Since the No. 69 Newsletter, our membership has stabilised at 213 members. We have 22 new members, and I would like to extend a warm welcome to them all. I also thank all our members for their continuing support and commitment to the Friends activities.



Ginkgo biloba on the Ginkgo Lawn, in healthier days

The Burnley Guides by Judith Scurfield



The Guides are a small group who take tours of the Gardens for interested groups such as Probus, U3A and other garden clubs.

Would you like to learn more about the history and development of our beautiful heritage-listed Burnley Gardens, and then pass on your insights to visitors? If so, you might like to join our small bunch of friendly Guides, who take tours of the Gardens for small or large groups.

Informal training is given with more experienced Guides, and we meet regularly in the Archives office to discuss future programmes and new things we have been learning about Burnley Gardens. We also make occasional visits ourselves to notable gardens.

If you are interested, please contact Judith Scurfield on 0416237464 or email judithscurfield@yahoo.com.au

Judith Scurfield

The Guides are seeking additional volunteers who would like to learn more about the history and importance of Burnley Gardens



The Bird Bath in the Herb Garden, donated to the Gardens by the Herb Society, in memory of President Enid Carberry

The Roots of Burnley by Jane Wilson



The Roots of Burnley: Exploring a long history of significance to the Victorian community
Ground Floor, Main Administration Building (Building 901),
University of Melbourne Burnley Campus, from Monday
30 September 2019

The exhibition *The Roots of Burnley: Exploring a long history of significance to the Victorian community* offers an insight into the history of Burnley Gardens and the Burnley campus in the Victorian landscape.

Eight panels with historical photographs and documents illustrate the strong connection people had – and still have – with Burnley. The exhibition is a walk through time from the beginnings of the campus as experimental gardens to today's modern University campus. Opening in 1863, the Burnley site has continually adapted to cater to the needs of the community. With content primarily sourced from the archives collection, the exhibition not only reflects on this rich history, but provides an outlook on the future of the Burnley campus.

Curated by Meg Hibbert, a student enrolled in the Museums and Collections Projects Programme, and Jane Wilson, Volunteer Manager, Burnley Campus Archives, University of Melbourne.



Perle des Jardins glass slide, Burnley Campus Archives, University of Melbourne

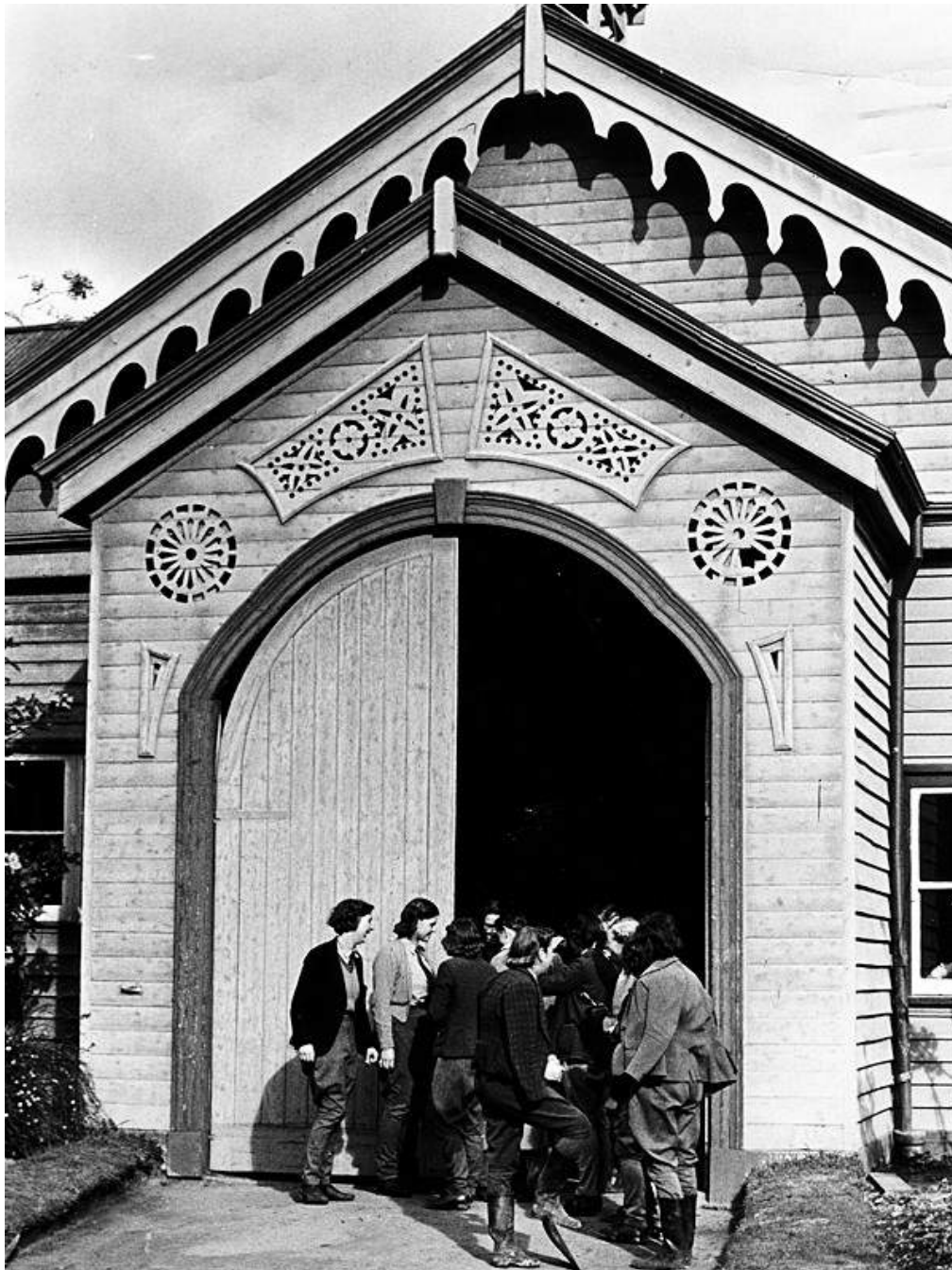


Stained glass window positioned above the doorway at the Principal's Residence at the Burnley Horticultural College, until it was demolished in 1980.
Burnley Campus Archives, University of Melbourne

On the lighter side...



Thanks for the giggle, Cheryl Andrews!



The Pavilion (nick-named "The Elephant House") - Burnley before the Main Building was built. Thanks to Jane Wilson for this image from the archives.

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