

THE FRIENDS OF THE WAITE ARBORETUM INC.



**WAITE
ARBORETUM**

NEWSLETTER NO. 71

Autumn 2012

Secretary
Mrs Norma Lee
8379 4237

Editor
Mrs Jean Bird
8276 1439

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Vice-President, Beth Johnstone, opened the meeting by welcoming all Friends present. She then called upon the Secretary, Norma Lee, to read the minutes of the sixteenth Annual General Meeting which were duly confirmed.

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

Since the President's Annual Report was circulated with the notice of the AGM, it will not be repeated here.

The Treasurer, Peter Nicholls, then presented his report.

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT

16th April 2012

Mr. Chairman, I present the audited Statement of Receipts and Payments for 2011, a copy of which was sent out with the Notice of the Annual General Meeting, to all current members. I trust you have all taken the opportunity to read it.

In doing so, I express my real sense of gratitude, and a very big thank you to all members and volunteers who have contributed generously to the activities of The Friends of the Waite Arboretum Inc. during 2011.

Everyone's efforts have resulted in the generation of a surplus of \$10,969.14 for 2011.

I have organized the Annual Statement of Receipts and Payments into distinct groupings which reflect the activities of the members and volunteers and on the front page are summarized the receipts from these activities and the payments for the costs associated with them. On the second page the details of receipts and payments associated with each event are itemized.

In contrast to the previous year, the Friends did not have any major events other than the TreeNet Symposium. Consequently our Receipts were much lower and also our overall costs, which amounted to \$893.90, were lower. The TreeNet symposium was our most significant effort this year and Beth Johnstone and all her assistants are to be thanked for the well organized handling of this event.

We were delighted with the success that Les and Faye Loffler had during the TreeNet Symposium in selling their excellent wood carvings and their consequential support of the Friends.

Sales of Pat Hagen jewellery and Beryl Martin Prints continue to be a valuable contributor to our efforts as well as the booked groups who take tours of the Arboretum.

Finally I thank all members who have remained loyal to The Friends for their contributions, which enable Dr Jennifer Gardner to continue to enhance the ambience of the Arboretum. A number of our members are also garden volunteers and they are to be specially thanked for their continued work in the gardens and the rehabilitation of the North West corner area of the Arboretum.

Funds were committed during the year to enable purchase of a ride on mower unit and also to support the construction of a storage shed in that portion of the Arboretum.

It is with mixed feelings that I announce my retirement as Treasurer as of this night as a result of serving my 10 years on the committee. In doing so, I am happy that there is a healthy cash balance available for the continued support of the activities of The Friends of the Waite Arboretum Inc over the next years. I wish my successor all the best.

Mr. Chairman, I move the adoption of the Annual Statement of Receipts and Payments of the Friends of the Waite Arboretum for 2011.

Peter B. Nicholls

RED DOT NOTICE

Dear valued member please note that if you have a RED DOT on the front of your latest newsletter, this is to alert you to the inclusion of a Reminder Notice of your overdue membership subscription and a Membership Renewal Form for 2012.

Please send us your membership subscription as soon as possible, so that you will continue to receive your Newsletter, or advise us that you do not wish to renew your membership of the Friends of The Waite Arboretum.

You may renew your membership by using EFTPOS. If you decide to do so, please use your name as the reference. Otherwise I am NOT able to identify you for recording your payment.

Yours Peter Nicholls. Hon Treasurer FWA.

The Vice-President then announced the following nominations for the new Committee:

Beth Johnstone, Prof. Mark Tester, Norma Lee, Henry Krichauff, Eileen Harvey, Andrew Walters, Marilyn Gilbertson, Dr Jennifer Gardner (*ex officio*). As there were no further nominations those named were elected.

This concluded the AGM and Beth then introduced the Guest Speaker, Dr Suzanne Miller, Director of the SA Museum

Subsequent to the AGM, the new Committee met to elect the office Bearers – Henry Krichauff, (President), Beth Johnstone (Vice-President), Norma Lee (Secretary), Andrew Walters (Treasurer). Eileen Harvey was elected Editor with Mark Tester and Marilyn Gilbertson forming the rest of the Committee.

GUEST SPEAKER

Our guest speaker, Professor Suzanne Miller, Director of the SA Museum, was born in Edinburgh and studied Geology Honours at the University of St Andrews before completing her PhD in Marine Geology at Imperial College, London. She spent 12 years with the National Museum of Scotland, latterly as Keeper of Natural Sciences. She was Honorary Research Fellow in Earth Sciences with the University of Aberdeen and Lecturer in Earth Sciences with the Open University.

She is a Fellow of the Geological Society of London, a Fellow of the Mineralogical Society, a Fellow of the Royal Society of South Australia, a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy and a Member of the Geological Society of Australia and was appointed Director of the South Australian Museum in 2007

Dr Miller, presented a most interesting illustrated talk on the subject of 'Ancient Continents – A Dynamic Earth'. She began by explaining that the earth's crust is a relatively thin layer on top of the very much thicker non-rigid mantle which surrounds the core. The crust is broken into a number of rigid plates which move against each other in different directions and at different speeds (from 2 to 10cm per year). Molten material penetrates the crust at the plate boundaries. The nature of the rock formed varies according to the type of movement (spreading, sliding or converging) and whether the plate boundaries are beneath the ocean or on land. Using this and other information, earth scientists have determined how the plates have separated and joined and how they have migrated over the surface of the earth from earliest times until the present.

In Australia you can see rocks from 4,400 million years ago to the present and fossils from the earliest time when life appeared on earth. Dr Miller said that this was one of the reasons she was keen to come to the SA Museum. The fossil record in Australia stretches from the single-celled fossil stromatolites of about 3,500 million years ago through the multi-celled animals of the Ediacaran period, the explosion of multi-celled marine animals in the Cambrian period, further diversification of marine creatures in the Ordovician period and then to the development of vascular plants on the fringes of continents in the Silurian period about 440 million years ago. The type specimens of *Baragwanathia longifolia*, one of the earliest vascular plants, were found in Victoria. The first trees appeared in the Devonian period. Then in the Carboniferous period trees began to develop strong root systems that allowed them to grow larger and occupy drier land. The giant club-mosses were giving way to seed ferns. The fossils of a true fern, *Zeilleria*, look just like ferns you can see today.

As the climate became drier in the Permian (299-251 million years ago), plants such as conifers, cycads and ginkgos evolved. Fossils of *Glossopteris*, a seed fern, have been found in India, South America, Australia, Africa, Madagascar and Antarctica, providing evidence that these continents were once amalgamated into a single supercontinent - Gondwana. The Triassic was a period of conifer forests with a fern understorey. In the Jurassic the climate was warmer and wetter and the land was covered with forests of tropical conifers, podocarps and cycads. Fossil evidence suggests that *Agathis jurassica* was widespread. Coincidentally the Wollemi pines, *Wollemia nobilis*, whose foliage is very similar, were found only 100km from an *Agathis jurassica* location.

The flowering plants evolved and spread in the Cretaceous period. Tropical and temperate forests covered large areas of Australia in the Tertiary period. In the Quaternary period (2.6 million years ago to the present), the climate was warmer and drier and hard-leaved plants such as eucalypts, spinifex, banksias and wattles were common and the landscape began to change to what we know today. Dr Miller finished her presentation with a series of slides which showed the amazing journey of our wandering continents as they moved together then split apart and Australia moved from one side of the globe to the other, from the equator almost to the south pole and back again.

At the conclusion there were numerous questions from the floor until eventually Beth called a halt, thanked Dr Miller for a very entertaining and enlightening talk and presented her with a wooden tree

sculpture made by Les Loffler using a hand scroll saw. The timber is azarole *Crataegus azarolus* from the Waite Arboretum. Les makes his exquisite silhouettes to match the species of timber he is carving.

Eileen Harvey

IN THE ARBORETUM

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Andrew Walters has settled in as Arboretum grounds person and has been kept busy with summer watering of new plantings, weed control, pruning, installing new donated seats and assisting the Tuesday morning volunteers in the Urrbrae House gardens.

The Elm Avenue is looking the best I have ever seen it after a couple of good seasons, mulching and supplementary drip irrigation over summer. The leaves are just starting to turn lemon yellow so it promises to be a splendid autumn display.

Construction of the Arboretum shed is complete and it is good to have the Arboretum vehicle, ride-on mower and mini front-end loader securely stored under cover. Over the next month we will fit out the shed with a workbench and shelving for storing smaller equipment.

In March Peter Marshall visited the Arboretum for a couple of days to collect oaks for his family run truffle farm Terra Preta Truffles just south of historic Braidwood, NSW. The farm operates on the Dehesa system and he and his wife Kate supply the highest grade of French Black Truffles (*Tuber melanosporum*) to chefs and individuals. Dehesa is a multifunctional agrosylvopastoral system developed in Spain. The tree component is oaks usually holm (*Quercus ilex*) or cork (*Q. suber*). Products include truffles, Spanish ham 'jambon' from pigs fed on acorns, and wild game as well as cork and timber. Peter and Kate will be experimenting with the following oak species collected from the Arboretum: Algerian *Q. canariensis*, kermes *Q. coccifera*, blue *Q. douglasii*, Tabor *Q. ithaburensis*, *Q. infectoria*, valley *Q. lobata*, downy *Q. pubescens* and cork *Q. suber*. Peter joined the Tuesday volunteers for morning tea and kept us enthralled telling us about truffles and his amazing truffle dog Sal. Peter was so impressed with the Arboretum and its oak collection in particular that he suggested a Gala Truffle Dinner as a fundraiser, very generously offering to donate the truffles for the occasion. This idea was enthusiastically endorsed by the Friends Committee and we are exploring options for a black tie event in Urrbrae House in mid August when the truffles are at their peak of flavour.

More than 200 seeds of our Californian buckeye *Aesculus californica* were harvested and supplied to Yamina Rare Plants Nursery in Victoria. The Arboretum will obtain some uncommon species in exchange.

The Arboretum Australian Citrus Research Collection established last year with a donation of 30 specimens from Paul Coates has recently been expanded with a further donation from Paul of another 33 specimens. Species represented include: *Citrus australasica*, *C. australis*, *C. garrawayi*, *C. inodora*, *C. glauca* and hybrid *C. x oliveri*. Some have been grown from seed, some from cuttings and others are grafted. It is hoped the collection will be valuable source of material for future research and breeding programs.

Thanks to the volunteers who staffed the successful and well organised 'Morphing Nature' Exhibition which the Friends held in Urrbrae House in collaboration with Basketry SA as part of the Fringe. The skill and imagination of the works delighted visitors. The concert by the Australian Guitar Duo was a very fine performance and fully booked. As well as fundraising, both the concert and the exhibition promoted the Arboretum, Historic Precinct Gardens and Urrbrae House to the broader community.

At a special morning tea on 3 April, the garden volunteers celebrated the 90th birthday of Torben Davidson. Torben has been a garden volunteer for 16 years and his gentle demeanour, positive attitude

and cheerful smile have endeared him to all. His sister, Elma Lippett, has been a great supporter and past President of the Friends of Urrbrae House. Their father, Prof. James Davidson, was the Foundation Professor of Entomology at the Waite so the whole family has a long-standing connection with and affection for the place.

The generous donation of 700 display stakes from Norwood Industries, Victoria, for labels in the rose garden is acknowledged. Thank you to David Hervey, Manager of Bunnings at Mile End and FWA Committee member Marilyn Gilbertson for arranging this donation.

Finally, I warmly thank Jean Bird, retiring Editor of the Friends' Newsletter and FWA Committee member for six years and Arboretum guide for 13 years for her dedicated service to the Arboretum and the Friends. I warmly welcome Arboretum guide and Committee member Eileen Harvey as the incoming Editor.

Jennifer Gardner

TARCHONANTHUS CAMPHORATUS L. – Arboretum specimen # 770 planted 1942

Tarchonanthus camphoratus, Family Asteraceae, is widespread in southern Africa as far north as Ethiopia and Somalia. It grows in a wide variety of habitats from sea level to 1600 m, in dense bushveld, in grassland, in forests and semi-desert. It is common in low-lying sand forest coastal areas and on dunes. It is drought and frost resistant, tolerates strong wind and salt spray and will resprout from the base after bushfires.

Tarchonanthus camphoratus is one of the few arborescent Asteraceae. The generic name, *Tarchonanthus*, comes from a Greek word meaning funeral flower, perhaps referring to the camphor odour of the crushed leaves. Similarly, the specific name, *camphoratus*, and the common name, camphor bush, refer to the strong camphor smell given off by the leaves. In 2002, the *Tarchonanthus camphoratus* complex was subdivided into five species (*T. camphoratus*, *T. obovatus*, *T. parvicapitulatus*, *T. minor* and *T. littoralis*) based on differences in the inflorescences, flowering times, and leaf margins. The Arboretum specimen # 770 was planted in 1942 before this subdivision of species.



Tarchonanthus camphoratus is a small (2 to 9m) evergreen or semi-deciduous tree with a narrow crown. The older stems have rough, fissured, grey or brown bark, while younger branches have a dense covering of white felt-like material. The narrow leaves are grey-green above and grey and felted below.

The leaves may have entire or finely toothed margins.



The small creamy-white thistle-form flowers are borne in a branched inflorescence on the terminal end of the branch. The small strongly scented fruits are covered with fluffy cottonwool-like hairs, and are produced mostly in March to November. Male and female flowers are borne on separate trees.

In its native environment, animals such as kudu, giraffe and springbok browse the leaves of the camphor bush. In traditional medicine the smoke from burning the green leaves was inhaled to treat blocked sinuses and headaches. Boiled leaves are used to prepare treatments for coughs, bronchitis, stomach pains and toothache. The cottony seed heads were used as a filling for cushions. The dried leaves are smoked as a tobacco or inhaled as snuff. Zulu women use the leaves to perfume their hair and the Masai of Kenya and Tanzania carry leaves of the plant as a deodorant. The essential oil extracted from leaves is an effective natural product for protection from mosquitoes, midges and many kinds of biting insects.



Livestock browse the shoots and leaves. The wood is termite resistant and is used to build huts, fencing, for fuel and to make small household items. The camphor bush has a moderate (600 to 800mm per year) growth rate and needs no special care. It has a relatively aggressive root system and is used to bind sand dunes, for tall hedges and windbreaks and to reclaim dry lands where the fallen leaves improve soil fertility. It is very fire resistant and is used to create firebreaks.

Material for this article was sourced from:

Van Wyk, B., Van Wyk, P. & Van Wyk, B-E. 2008.

'Photographic guide to the trees of Southern Africa'. Briza Publications, Pretoria.

Coates Palgrave, M. 1990. 'Trees of southern Africa', second revised edition. Struik, Cape Town.

www.plantzafrica.com

<http://www.worldagroforestry.org>

Eileen Harvey

POT POURRI

The following poem is reproduced here with kind permission of the author. It was published in 2012 by Friendly Street Poets Inc. in Friendly Street–New Poets 17 / Wakefield Press, Norwood.

Labyrinth

I step into the design
formed on the ground
from sawn slices of trees
whose patterned rings reveal
the contours of life-spans
shaped by times and seasons
some showing signs
of damage and decay
a dignified guard of honour
as unhurriedly I tread
the sawdust-covered earth
held in the pattern's embrace
entrusting myself
to the mapped-out path
that gives shape and
symmetry
to my life's journey
centring me
taking me to the heart

John Pfitzner



Waite Arboretum Labyrinth



Photos: left: Amanda Bramwell, above: Jennifer Gardner

ELMS IN LATIUM, IBERIA AND BRITANNIA

Richard Barley, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, writing in the 'Botanic News' Summer 2009/10 issue, tells us about an article in *Nature* (431:1053). This states that five scientists in Madrid have concluded that all the trees commonly known as the English Elm (*Ulmus procera*) are derived from elm stock introduced to Great Britain by the Romans between 55 BC and the Fifth Century AD. This might at first seem to be an unimportant discovery. But it has implications for the choice of suitable species for Victorian streets.

It had previously been the theory that Britain's *Ulmus procera* were introduced by Bronze Age Celtic tribes. This new paper has it that the species arose from the Atinian Elm grown for vine training in Latium (near Rome), recommended for this purpose by Columella about 50 AD.

Richard Barley believes that the remaining (two only) Arthur's Elms in the RBG, planted 1846 (claimed by RGB to be oldest elms in Australia) may be genetically identical to the elms taken to England by the Romans, and therefore likely to be linked to the Atinian Elm from the vineyard near Rome. Many of Victoria's elms would have the same origin, which could explain why they are not the tender moisture-loving trees that many think they are. Reference to a recent article in 'Elm Watch' about the Camperdown elms shows that some of our ancestors in earlier times viewed elms as tough drought-resistant trees. The idea of our elms NOT being a tree indigenous to England, but actually being indigenous to the Italian peninsula, will take a bit of getting used-to.

In the previous issue of 'Botanic News' (Winter 2009) Richard Barley told the history of the Arthur's Elms. They are named after John Arthur, the first Curator (Superintendent) of the Gardens, who was appointed in 1846. He came to Victoria in 1839 with very distinguished landscape-design qualifications, worked in local private gardens, and began a nursery at Heidelberg where he propagated elms as well as other trees. After his appointment he supplied a number of elms which were planted by him and his daughter Grace, and others, to a design by Henry Ginn, colonial architect.

Unfortunately John Arthur contracted cholera, believed to be caused by drinking water from the lagoon in the Gardens, and died in 1849 at the age of 45 years.

Of the four elms planted in Arthur's time, two had to be removed because of severe lopping in the early 1900s. Two 164-year-old elms still remain and they are now accompanied by two new elms propagated from them, planted by Dr Philip Moors (Director and Chief Executive) and David Adam (Chair of the RBG Board at the time).

The article above which was printed in 'Elmwatch' is reproduced here by kind permission of 'Elmwatch'.

ATTENTION: Death Caps have been found in the Arboretum

You are warned not to pick or touch **any** fungi in the Arboretum. Earlier year in Canberra, two people died from eating Death Caps, which were mistaken for the culinary straw mushroom.

Photos: David Catcheside



DISPLAY STAKES FOR OUR ROSE LABELS



We have been very fortunate in receiving 700 display stakes from Norwood Industries, Victoria, for labels in the rose garden. This generous donation, worth \$800, has been made possible by David Hervey, Complex Manager of Bunnings at Mile End and Julie Maggs, Sales Manager, SA, of Norwood Industries.

Seven years ago, Bunnings supplied the Friends with a similar quantity of display stakes which now have all been used. Bunnings no longer stock this item and so David very kindly pursued the matter directly with Norwood Industries on our behalf.

Many of the rose labels are in need of replacement. We also have additional roses which need labels. Visitors have commented on the clarity of the rose labels and this generous donation will help us maintain this standard.

Marilyn Gilbertson

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome the following new members:

Ms Claire Bockner, Athelstone, Mr Ron Allen, Highbury, Mr Dylan Lewis, Oaklands Park, Mr Rick Jones, St Peters, Ms Robina and Mr Stan Fuller, Blackwood, Mr Andrew Nicholson, Millswood, Ms Janet Gordon, Glenside

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Monday 14 May, 5 pm (for 5.30 pm start), Urrbrae House – Free Lecture by **Yvonne Routledge** ‘**James Arthur Prescott – A Man of Dignity, Diversity and Discovery**’. Refreshments prior to talk.

Wednesday 23 May at 2 p.m. – Friends of the Arboretum visit to view the **Plant Accelerator**, hosted by **Prof. Mark Tester** – meet just before 2 p.m. in front of the Plant Accelerator at the top of Hartley Grove. Free. No need to book.

Wednesday 23 May 7.30 p.m. Urrbrae House – Friends of the Waite Conservation Reserve AGM. Guest Speaker **Andrew Crompton** will present an illustrated talk ‘**30 years in bushcare ... and still lots to learn**’.

Wednesday 30 May at 5.30 p.m. – Friends of Urrbrae House AGM .Guest Speaker **Valmai Hankel** speaking on “**Sand and Paper**” exploration and travels in the outback. RSVP by 25 May to: peggy.rowe@bigpond.com or 8277 1426. Light refreshments will be served prior to the AGM at 6 p.m.

Sunday 22 July 2 p.m. – Friends of the Arboretum will host a **Concert by music students of Loreto College**. Urrbrae House Drawing Room.