

# THE FRIENDS OF THE WAITE ARBORETUM INC.



## NEWSLETTER

No. 15

AUTUMN 1998

**Secretary**  
Mrs Anna Cox  
8332 1482

**Editor**  
Mrs Barbara Crompton  
8379 6405

---

### GENERAL MEETING

Monday 9 February, 1997 at 8 pm

**Richard Nolan** was our speaker and his subject was **Trees from Mediterranean Climates**. Richard is a staff member of the Botanical Gardens of Adelaide and last year he had the pleasure of visiting gardens abroad as a Churchill Fellow. It was a useful experience for us, dwellers in a Mediterranean climate, to hear all that he told us as it was very pertinent to gardening in our part of Australia. He visited U.S.A. as well as areas of the Mediterranean and the Middle East and spoke to the slides which he took on his travels. The elements of running water, stone, grey foliaged planting, as well as descriptions of water saving methods featured strongly throughout all the slides. We saw landscapes depicting trees which have survived in drought conditions just as trees from higher rainfall areas have adapted in our Arboretum to a dry regime.

It was good to see Richard returning from such a journey with so much experience to pass on. Fellowships, such as the Churchill, give benefit in many and various ways and Richard is a good envoy to spread the message in this country that water is a precious commodity.

### FROM THE COMMITTEE

Meetings on 4 February and 25 March

- Two new members have been welcomed to the Committee - Roger Bungey and Norma Lee. Roger with his experience in the Woods and Forests Department will be an asset to the Committee as will Norma who has generously agreed to take on the office of Treasurer.
- After the success of a previous exhibition, plans are under way for another joint exhibition of works by nine South Australian artists whose inspiration comes from nature. This will be an event in November to look forward to with much pleasure.
- Plans are also under way for a fund-raising Coffee and Chocolate tasting with botanical commentary by Dr David Symon on Sunday 14 June. Fliers will be posted in mid May.
- A verbal report was received from the Curator concerning insurance for volunteers. In addition to the normal public risk policy, the University provides substantial accident cover for volunteers in the house, gardens, Arboretum and on field trips.

- Friends funds have been allocated for paths and signage in the Mallee Block. Following a visit of some members of the Committee to the Enfield Cemetery to look at proposed paving surfaces, the choice of material was approved. The intention is not to change the informal character of the section but to provide a safer, all weather surface for visitors, and also to lead people into the Arboretum when they visit the Urrbrae House Historic Precinct.
- The Committee inspected plans for the Arboretum Exhibition Room. Jennifer has for a long time wanted to establish a permanent display on the Arboretum in Urrbrae House and she has secured a grant from the History Trust of SA for the design and production of the display panels. The Committee approved the expenditure of up to \$10,000 on display cases. Douglas Gardner was warmly thanked for producing and donating plans for the Exhibition Room and display cases, one of a number of tasks he had generously performed for the Friends of the Waite Arboretum.
- Several Friends added a tax deductible gift to their subscriptions this year and their generosity is appreciated. Many thanks to all who have renewed their membership. The difference in the Arboretum site since Jennifer Gardner began this group is noteworthy. Unfortunately the University will no longer be matching the funds which we raise.

### NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to: Ms Patricia Abbott, Highgate and Ms Thelma Grasby, Bedford.

**1998 SUBSCRIPTIONS are now overdue.** If your newsletter has a red dot this will be the last issue you will receive, unless your membership is renewed.

### ARBORETUM NEWS

#### Publicity and Promotion

The Arboretum was featured on Channel 2 'Snapshot' Program on 13 March, just before the 7 pm News. There was an illustrated article on the Arboretum in the Eastern Courier Messenger of 4 March. The Arboretum and its guided walks are listed in a new Arts SA publication 'Culture Attitude - A Guide to the Arts in and around Adelaide'. 'Today in Adelaide - A Guide to Tourism and Entertainment' features a full page advertisement every month on the Urrbrae House Historic Precinct and The Waite Arboretum and the guided tours which are offered. This publication with a circulation of 20,000 is distributed free to tourist venues all over the city.

The Mitcham Explorer bus is a collaborative venture between the City of Mitcham, the Arboretum, Urrbrae House Historic Precinct and other places of cultural interest in the area. During the Adelaide Festival of Arts the bus operated daily from 10 am to 4 pm, free of charge, with volunteer guides on the bus providing commentary as each point of interest was approached. Visitors could alight and explore at any venue and rejoin the next loop of the bus or remain on the bus for the complete circuit of one hour. The project was such a success (standing room only on some trips) that it is planned to continue the Mitcham Explorer with two circuits on the first Sunday of every month.

My efforts to promote the Arboretum to the widest possible community are ongoing. Friends can help by spreading the word about our botanical treasure, the guided walks and our special events. If you would like some Arboretum brochures to circulate to your community centre, library, clubs etc. please contact me.

#### Projects

During the last few months a considerable amount of pruning has been done and 45 dead or

During the last few months a considerable amount of pruning has been done and 45 dead or declining trees have been removed. Much of this work has been done as practical exercises by students of Torrens Valley College of TAFE School of Horticulture, under the tutelage of Marcus Lodge. Other work beyond the scope of students has been done by Marcus and funded by the Friends.

Sculptures and statements of entrance for The Mallee project are under construction in the studio of artist Greg Johns. Innovative seating has also been designed so that visitors will have a shady place to sit while waiting for a guided walk. This project has been funded by a grant from the Australia Council. Tenders are being called for the construction of the paths which will be funded by the Friends.

Negotiations are under way for the casting of a bronze sculpture by Will Kuiper to be loaned to the Arboretum. This project has been funded by a grant from The University of Adelaide Foundation. A group of bronze birds by sculptor Meliesa Judge are also being cast at present. These sculptures, to be placed by the watercourse, have been commissioned for the Arboretum by a private donor. The new sculptures will add another dimension to the Arboretum and hopefully attract more visitors.

Graphic Designer John Nowland has been engaged to design the interpretive panels for the Arboretum display. The panels have been funded by a grant from the History Trust of SA. Display cases which will be funded by the Friends have been designed by Douglas Gardner.

### **Volunteers needed**

If you would like to share your knowledge and love of the Arboretum, why not become an Arboretum guide? Prospective guides are encouraged to attend the walks on the first Sunday of the month. A training session for new guides is planned for June.

Volunteers are also needed to help monitor and measure trees in the newly established TREENET sites. Measuring equipment and record sheets will be supplied. A volunteer is also needed to help set up and maintain the TREENET database. In addition to the Arboretum, there are TREENET sites in the Cities of Burnside, Charles Sturt, Onkaparinga and the District Council of Alexandrina. Another site is proposed at an Adelaide beach suburb.

### **Sponsors**

Over the last year or two the Arboretum has benefited from the generous donation of plants, goods and services by businesses, educational institutions and individuals. I would like to thank the following: for plants - Prof. Margaret Sedgley and the Dept of Horticulture at Waite Campus, Lawrys Landscapes and Nurseries, Dr David Symon, Dean Nicolle, Max Ewer; for goods: - DRiWATER® and GreenWell®; for mulch - Steve Slaughter Tree Services; and for pruning and tree removal - Marcus Lodge and students of Torrens Valley TAFE.

Jennifer Gardner Tel: 8303. 7405

## **IN THE ARBORETUM**

**Zelkova serrata** (Thunb.) Family Ulmaceae

*Zelkova serrata* is a graceful, deciduous small tree which is a native of Japan, Korea and China. It is in the same family as the elms but is better proportioned than the English elms and is disease resistant, yet very little known.

Many long branches grow from the short trunk and, given ideal conditions, the tree may grow to 20 metres. The bark is smooth, grey and, as the older bark flakes away, little patches of bright orange show through. Leaves are alternate, serrated, oval and dark green - slightly hairy above but paler beneath. They turn yellow-brown or orange in autumn before falling - very similar to the English elm.

Both flowers and fruit are insignificant. Small green-white flowers appear in late spring. Male flowers cluster in the leaf axils at the base of new growth whilst the females are smaller and green, growing nearer the tip of the shoot. Small green, woody pea-like berries follow.

*Zelkova serrata* is an excellent street or garden tree as it is practically trouble free. Deep root growth means it is virtually drought proof when established and shrubs which can tolerate shade grow easily underneath.

There are five species of *Zelkova* world-wide. Two species are medium-rare - *Zelkova serrata* and *Zelkova carpinifolia*, the Caucasian Zelkova. The others are really rare, indeed *Zelkova cretica* (*Ambelitsia*) has been described as one of the world's rarest trees. It is an alpine tree which grows only in one small area in the White Mountains of western Crete.

We have no common name for *Z. serrata* although in Japan it is called keaki. The timber which is stronger than oak is most valued in that country and many of the oldest temples are built of this light greyish-white, hard, dense, flexible wood. It is often used as a bonsai subject.

The Waite Arboretum has two beautifully proportioned *Zelkova serrata*, both at the western end near Fullarton Road. They are at grid A7 No. 969 and B5 No. 1252.

In the Spring 1997 Newsletter it was reported that 40 *Zelkova serrata* had been planted along the south end of Devereux Road, Beaumont as a TREENET trial. These were slightly burned during the hottest days of summer but now all are growing well. I am sure the people in that area will be delighted with these beautiful, unusual trees.

Mary Tester

### FRED COUZENS

*In 1966 Fred Couzens retired from his post as Head Gardener of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute, ending a family connection of 62 years. In 1904 Peter Waite engaged his father, Fred Couzens Snr as his head gardener. Thanks to his grand-daughter, Marlene Lloyd, we have a copy of Fred Jnr's retirement speech which is summarised here. Marlene and her husband, Bert, are now Arboretum volunteers which brings the chain of Couzens family involvement back again. Such loyalties are precious.*

Fred recalled walking through the cottage they were to occupy and the happy and occasionally sad years which followed. Mr Waite added two rooms to the house as more babies arrived and he asked that the first child born on the estate should be named Urrbrae. Fred's second sister, first of the six children born there, won the privilege.

Fred, aged 7, worked as Mr Waite's paper boy for 2/6d per week. As Mr Waite liked to read the daily papers *The Register*, *The Daily Herald* and *The Advertiser* before he went to the city, they were left at the Couzens' cottage as the paper man could not deliver them before 8. A donkey was brought from one of the Waite stations for the small boy to ride up the drive. He had such trouble coaxing the animal to play his part that Mr Waite sent it back to the country and bought a bicycle for Fred. This continued until he was 15 and earning 7/6d a week!

Fred recalls the special events of his childhood such as the Hunt which took place over the 2.5 acre Urrbrae Estate, into Springfield and Galway Estates and back. The Kaffir Apple jumps could have been more than uncomfortable. His father would decorate the Ballroom for the Hunt Ball with asparagus fern and red geraniums matching the huntsmen's coats. The lodge entry was lit by two kerosene lamps, enclosed in glass, on iron stands and burning all night. Buggies and sulkies, driven by coachmen would bring the guests up the long drive.

Another great event was the arrival of the Smith brothers at the end of their historic flight from England to Australia in 1919. The boys were reared on one of Mr Waite's stations and the family was very interested in them. A large sheet was pegged on the lawn as a marker and the fliers circled the homestead twice, dipped their wings in salute and flew on to their destination, Sydney.

In 1928, after many years of intermittent work at Urrbrae, Fred was employed by the first Director of the Waite Institute, Dr. Richardson, to take responsibility for the Arboretum. I quote his remarks about his work.

*"My work especially with this Arboretum has been extremely interesting to me. I have raised most of the trees from seed, cuttings and grafts and have more or less grown up with them. I have not treated the Arboretum just as a collection of trees and when a new species was planted I would learn as much as possible of its natural habitat and its natural environment and I think in this way I have been able to help the trees quite a lot. As the years went by and more and more species were added to the Arboretum, my interest became greater so much so that I really thought that I owned them, but although I now realise that this was not so, at least I have had the pleasure of this 'ownership' over many years.*

Fred finishes his Farewell Speech with remembrances of the many wonderful people he has met and friends he made during his long life at Urrbrae. Between them, his father, his wife and son and daughter have given a service of over 100 years to Urrbrae estate. *"There may not be a Couzens on the payroll for at least a generation or two, but we will be back for sure."*

In March 1998 a garden seat was installed in memory of Fred Couzens, father and son, who devoted their lives to planting and nurturing the Arboretum between 1904 and 1966.

Barbara Crompton

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND DIARY DATES**

**Guided walks are taken at 11 am on the first Sunday of every month.** Meet at Urrbrae House.

**8 pm Monday 27 April** at Urrbrae House. Annual General Meeting. **David Lawry** will speak about **TREENET**.

**11 am - 12.30 pm Sunday 14 June** at Urrbrae House **Coffee and Chocolate Tasting** with botanical commentary by Dr David Symon.

**8 pm Monday 10 August** at Urrbrae House. General Meeting. **Andrew Crompton** will speak on greening the Freeway projects and native grass plots in the Arboretum.

**20 September - 4 October.** **Woodgroup SA annual exhibition and sale** of woodcraft in Urrbrae House.

**8 pm Monday 9 November.** General Meeting. **Bill Barker, Robyn Barker and Laurie Haegi** will speak on **hakeas** following a **walk** in the Arboretum to look at the Hakea Collection.

**15 November - 6 December.** **"In Pursuit of Nature's Truths"** An exhibition of scientific art by nine contemporary South Australian artists.