

THE FRIENDS OF THE WAITE ARBORETUM INC.



NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1999

No 21

Secretary
Mrs Diana Mayfield
8379 6798

Editor
Dr Barbara Possingham
8363 0346

GENERAL MEETING

Monday, August 9, 1999 at 8 pm

Our speaker was Dr. Bill Barker and his subject was:

“Daggers, Pincushions and Cockatoo Fodder – the Diversity of Hakeas”

Dr Bill Barker gained his PhD at the University of Adelaide and works at the State Herbarium which is soon to become the Plant Biodiversity Centre a short distance from its current site at the Adelaide Botanic Garden. He works on the classification of plants, one of a small group engaged upon a huge task. The sanctity of biodiversity depends upon the knowledge of what is there.

Hakeas have been Dr Barker's research topic, along with his wife, Robyn and Dr Laurie Haegi, over a long period and it was for non-scientists among his listeners a revelation to hear so much of the story of hakeas. The talk covered the morphology of hakea, its diversity and adaptations and the negative aspect of hakea, its weediness as a multi-million dollar pest overseas. As a botanical ally of the grevillea it is similar in its woody fruits and sharp foliage and its tough bark and foliage.

Fire has been part of the bush for some 20 million years and is not a destroyer but part of the natural succession. Hakeas have evolved to survive through toughness of structure and the subterranean lignotubers in some species have the ability to sprout again after fire. *Hakea obliqua* has a corky outgrowth which protects seeds from fire, but fire is not necessary for opening the seeds as in some plants. They open regularly, by season, not by fire. Some woody, warty fruits stay closed for many years. Cockatoos threaten hakeas which are an important food source. They attack them, pruning them rigorously. The plants have adapted by camouflaging their fruit by colour and form to match branch shapes.

Dr Barker showed a rich selection of slides, illustrating the diverse forms that the species produces. Slides of Western Australian examples illustrated some of the most bizarre of fruits. A hakea plant on Kangaroo Island is known to have a sucker which is 30 km in length with a vast subterranean root system.

A strong message which Dr Barker left with us was that of the time bomb waiting to explode in other countries which have imported our hakeas to use as heath land plants, only to find them devastating their own vegetation. Planting local indigenous species is the answer to sustainable natural vegetation in our own land too. It was wonderful to listen to a speaker who is an undoubted expert in his field and to have such a well informed description of this well known but not fully understood species.

Barbara Crompton

FROM THE COMMITTEE

A meeting was held on Wednesday, 8 September 1999 at 9.15 am.

1. Netherby Kindergarten: Attempts are now being made to have the Kindergarten Act repealed in order to remove, once and for all, threats to the integrity of the Arboretum. Thank you letters have been sent to many of those who participated in the rally.
On October 6, (after the September meeting) the Friends received a letter from Mr Martin Hamilton-Smith, the Member for Waite. He is proceeding with a Private Member's Bill to repeal the Netherby Kindergarten (Variation of Waite Trust) Act 1997. Copies of the Draft Bill are available from Mr Hamilton-Smith's office on 8271 6448 or by email waite@parliamentsa.sa.gov.au. The Bill should be tabled in late October.
2. Our funds now permit the expenditure of a further \$5,000 on pruning and associated work and \$3,000 for weed control within the Arboretum:

ARBORETUM OPENINGS

Friday, August 27, 1999

Jennifer welcomed guests on the above Friday, to two openings of significance. She then introduced Geoff Speirs, Museums Officer, History Trust of SA.

The permanent Arboretum Exhibition room

This was made possible by major grants from Friends of the Waite Arboretum (\$9,300) and the History Trust of South Australia (\$8,000).

The room was declared open by **Geoff Speirs**. He remarked on the significance of the Waite Arboretum as a museum and resource for both the scientific and general community. He acknowledged the fruitful collaboration between the Arboretum and community groups such as the Woodgroup, volunteers, Friends and guides. He was personally delighted that the History Trust was able to contribute significantly.

Mr. Speirs said "The Waite Arboretum has 2,500 trees including 800 species and is of both scientific and cultural value. It is listed on both the National Estate and State Heritage Registers. It attracts many native birds as is a wonderful place, I particularly enjoy coming here because I draw spiritual sustenance from trees. The rapidity with which land was cleared in SA never ceases to amaze me and it seems to me a reflection on our values when, for example, most of the vegetation on places such as Yorke Peninsula is on the roadsides."

He included the following quotation from a Judith Wright poem.

The Eucalypt and the National Character

*“With the toughest care,
The most economical tenderness, she provides for seed and egg
Nor is she ever vulgar; she commits no excesses,
Her various gestures surround our pine plantations,
those flat green regiments that gobble our noble hills
letting no light through, bearing no flowers.
She is all light,
breathes in the noonday as lovers their lovers’ breath.
We darken her sky with our cities.
She is artist enough to manage a graceful asymmetry;
but we are more apt to turn crooks.”*

The museum display enables things within the Arboretum to be put in context. We are given a brief history of the Arboretum, panels discuss contemporary aspects, there are folio volumes from the “Forest Flora of South Australia” and sculptures, carvings and wood samples made by members of Woodgroup SA from timbers grown in the Arboretum.

Roger Bungey, President of the friends of the Waite Arboretum, then thanked Geoff and introduced Dr Noris Ioannou in order that he officially open the Wood Art exhibition. Dr Ioannou is a cultural historian and author. He is crafts critic for the Adelaide Advertiser and is currently a Visiting Fellow in History at Flinders University as well as writer-in-residence at the Migration Museum.

The Wood Art Exhibition

This exhibition was declared open by **Dr Noris Ioannou**.

Dr Ioannou noted that, “Trees and humanity have a special relationship. So putting on my cultural historian’s hat, I would like to congratulate the Woodgroup SA for yet another interesting exhibition of wood art. The use of timber by early pioneer groups has been a major part of my research and writing. In the book *The Barossa Folk*, I documented the Prussian pioneers of the Barossa region and their cultural conversion of the valley’s natural resources, including its indigenous tree species.” He said that early cabinet makers converted the red gum and native cypress pine into wonderful items of furniture. Woodgroup SA work largely as a group of leisure-time dedicated crafts people, who have a love of and interest in timber and art. “Their work is important, and indeed, grassroots groups such as theirs are vital in keeping the ground swell of interest in the crafts. Woodgroup SA members’ diverse approaches to timber art has resulted in a diversity of forms: some sculptural, many turned vessels, some fretwork and some inlay and other techniques. The level of skilled work is excellent as is the appreciation of good design”.

The ***People’s choice*** was a magnificent wooden bowl by Ron Allen. This was selected by those visitors to the Wood Exhibition who chose to fill in a little form in order to record the name of the particular exhibit which had “won their hearts”. Ron has most kindly agreed to write briefly about this entry.

RING OF BRANCHES

The inspiration. In December 1997 the Woodgroup was cutting some timber from the developing Mt Barker Freeway site near the Mt Osmond turn off. One of the trees felled was a Norfolk Island Pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*), and I was impressed with the colour of the branches in the whorls. The heartwood was quite red in colour, but only for a short distance from the trunk, and then returned to its typical bland colour. Another characteristic of Norfolk Island Pine is that the whorls or rings of branches are very regular and always start at the pith, suggesting that an end-grain turning of a cross-section of a whorl of branches would be interesting.

The Timber. In late 1998, my wife Helen and I were taking walk in the Torrens Linear Park, and happened to park next to Athelstone House. On returning from our walk, I noticed the owner of this heritage residence moving sections of Norfolk Island Pine (for firewood!). Helen became reconciled to the fact that I was going to ask for a piece;- the result - 'The Ring of Branches'. Sadly I only took one piece. After sealing the ends and waiting for a couple of months, I rough-turned it and noticed the sap stain (also a characteristic of the timber). I then let it dry and re-turned it.

I was very pleased with the final result. The prominent growth ring figure was enhanced by the grey sap stain, and was highlighted by the regular knots which retained the reddish colour.

Ron Allen

IN THE ARBORETUM A Saharan relic *Cupressus*

In the centre of the Saharan Desert — well almost — is the Tamrit plateau of the Tassili N Ajjer Massif approximately 9° 30' E, 25° N in Algeria. A. M. Lavauden journeyed over the area early in 1925 and collected a *Cupressus* specimen that was named *C. dupreziana* by Camus in Bull. Soc. Dendr. Fr. (1926) p.40.

There was then reputed to be a forest remnant of massive, dense trees 5 - 10 m high and up to 3 m in diameter. These have since been devastated for timber and in modern times as few as 153 plants remain.

The area is a plateau of 1000 to 1800 m altitude. The average summer temperature reaches 30 °C, down to 13 °C in winter with some frosts. Rainfall is erratic and low - 30 mm (ie. 1/20 of that of the Waite Arboretum).

The trees are in the wadi bottoms on alluvial gravels and sands. The smallest tree had a stem diameter of 13 cm and only five trees were less than 50 cm in diameter, suggesting no recent recruitment. Nomads shelter under the trees and their herds destroy any regeneration.

The trees are probably a relic of the once more widespread *C. sempervirens* — the well known Mediterranean cypress. Our tree is obviously closely related to this species and another relic population may be *C. sempervirens* var. *atlantica*, of which a tiny pocket remains in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco at Qued N'Fis. These populations have survived, but have been left stranded as the Sahara has dried out in relatively modern times.

In 1982, Mr B. Chatterton, then Minister for Forests, visited Algeria and received seeds of our *Cupressus*, as well as *Cedrus* and *Pinus*. These went to quarantine and were grown at Northfield. Germination was very low but about 130 plants were raised. According to Mr B. Boardman, now at Forestry SA, 32 plants were established at Whyte-Yarcowie in 1985 of which 23 were thriving in 1998. Another 32 were established at Mt

Ellen, Wirrabara, all of which have survived despite "rubbing damage from euros". The growth rate there has been twice that at Whyte-Yarcowie. Another 32 went to Bundaleer. However severe grass competition reduced survival and there has been slower growth rate, but no figure for survival is given.

Three plants came to the Waite on 9 July 1985. All three grew well and are now about 5 m tall, and all bear cones. They have a cylindrical form and are somewhat grey-green in colour. The species obviously grows well in South Australia and we look forward to these interesting young trees maturing.

An essay / monograph on the species was published by J. P. Barry, Bull. Soc. Hist. Nat. Afrique Nord. Alger. 61 (1970) 95-178, but I have been unable to trace this in Australia.

Thanks to Mr Bob Boardman for his help.

D. Symon

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND DIARY DATES

5.30 pm Friday 22 October

Opening by The Hon. Diana Laidlaw of "**Towards the Land**" – a sculptural narrative by Greg Johns with Silvio Apponyi and Doug Bell; in the mallee section of the Arboretum.

11 am Sunday 24 October

"**Flora and Fauna through the Lens**" - a group photographic exhibition to be opened by Dr Tim Flannery, Director of the South Australian Museum. The exhibition will be open 11 am - 4 pm Wednesday to Sunday and will close on 14 November.

Superb photographs for "hanging on walls" be available for purchase, at this exhibition, as well as small, often unique, hand-crafted cards suitable for Christmas or other special occasions.

11.30 am Sunday 31 October

Visit to Dean Nicolle's **Currency Creek Arboretum**.

A flier is included with details and a mud-map to help you out if you are held up and arrive at the tree a little late.

Sunday 7 November

"**Back to Waite**" Day & Urrbrae House Open Day.

This will be an entertaining day for all Friends, their families and their friends. All visitors may choose to be either educated, entertained or exercised or all of these things. Food and drinks will also be available plus guided pre- and post-prandial strolls. Opening hours 11 am to 5 pm. A flier outlining attractions is enclosed.

The Friends will have a plant and plant book stall. Donations to the stall are requested and can be delivered to Jennifer on the morning or during the previous week. Volunteers to staff the stall are also needed. Please contact Cicely on 8271 5720 if you can spare an hour or two.

6.30 - 7.30 pm Monday 6 December

Joint Christmas free drinks & nibbles with Friends of Urrbrae House and volunteers. A short stroll through the Mallee to the watercourse will proceed refreshments in Urrbrae House or the Arboretum, depending on the weather. Come along and meet both old friends and new acquaintances.

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to the following new members:

Ms Chris Birkett, Torrens Park
 Mr George Collett, Urrbrae
 Maxwell Cooper, Hazelwood Park
 Kate Hislop, Walkerville
 Mrs Elspeth Jacobs, Montrose, Victoria
 The Hon. Christopher Legoe, QC, Unley Park
 Mr Richard Page, Clarendon
 Mrs Heather & Mr Colin Tiddy, Netherby
 Andy Woodroffe, Kensington

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

MEET NEW PEOPLE AND HELP THE ARBORETUM

We still have a few gaps in the roster for minding the photographic exhibition (24 October to 14 November, excluding Mondays and Tuesdays). Please ring Cicely Bungey on 8271 5720 if you can volunteer for a shift (either 11 am to 1.30 pm or 1.30 pm to 4 pm). Bring a friend if you would like to.

This is our major fund-raiser for the year so please find some time if you possibly can. Also, included with this newsletter is a flier advertising the exhibition. Please help with publicity by passing it on to a friend.

Help is needed to fill the roster on the Friends' stall on 'Back to the Waite' & Urrbrae House Open Day, Sunday 7 November as well.

The Friends also need the assistance of a volunteer with word processing skills to help on an ad hoc basis with typing catalogues and mailing lists for exhibitions. Please contact Jennifer on 8303 7405 if you can help with this or other clerical work.

NOTICES

Friends with Internet access may be interested to check the following:

http://www.greenfingers.com.au/garden_clubs/f.htm

You will find the Friends of the Arboretum mentioned together with four other SA clubs.

http://www.austnatrust.com.au/angered_places/waite99.html

The Arboretum is listed by the Australian National Trust as an endangered place with a brief history of the situation. If you have trouble accessing this address. use <http://www.austnatrust.com> and use "Endangered Places" on the menu.

Arboretum Brooch An Ideal Christmas present.

These sterling silver "Dragon's blood tree" brooches were made by Pat Hagan based on a design of the Arboretum logo by Beth Chandler

The cost is \$75.

The brooches are made to order, hence if you do intend to purchase one for Christmas, an early order is suggested. To order, ring Jennifer Gardner Phone 8303 7405.

FRIENDS OF THE WAITE ARBORETUM



VISIT ANOTHER ARBORETUM

Sunday 31 October 1999 at 11 am

Dean Nicolle has invited us to visit his Currency Creek Arboretum which he established in 1992. Over 6,000 eucalypts, corymbia and angophora are planted there and hundreds are already mature enough to have flowered.

We are to meet Dean at the canoe tree (see map on reverse) at 11 am and he will lead the way. He will then give us a tour before lunch in his arboretum.

BRING A PICNIC, CHAIRS AND, IF YOU LIKE, A FRIEND.

Friends will remember Dean as the (youthful) expert who talked to us at our very first meeting. If you want to find out more about the arboretum before your visit, check out his website at: www.chariot.net.au/~vo/cca.html

If anyone would like a lift, please ring Anna Cox on 8332 1482. She will also keep a list of people who are driving but would like company on the trip. This is a good chance to meet other Friends.



BACK TO THE WAITE

Celebrating 75 years of the Waite Campus of The University of Adelaide

URRBRAE HOUSE - 11am - 5pm

- "Biodiversity Through the Lens" - An exhibition of photographs of flora and fauna.
- Guided Tours - every half hour

COACH HOUSE & THE MAWSON ANTARCTIC COLLECTION - 11am - 5pm

- Display on the First Waite Laboratory & the early scientific work at the Institute
- The Hurley Gallery featuring images from Mawson's 1911 Australasian Antarctic Expedition
- Displays of ceramics and woodwork by former Waite staff, David Symon and Tom White

URRBRAE HOUSE GARDENS - 11am-5pm

- Twentieth Century Rose Garden
- Sensory Garden
- Stalls and Attractions

WAITE ARBORETUM - 11am -5pm

- Guided Walks
- Wetlands Walk
- "Towards the Land" - Sculptures by Greg Johns

LIRRA LIRRA CAFÉ AND BAR - 11am -5pm

- Sausage sizzle & yiros
- International dishes
- Afternoon Teas
- Bar Service

DEPARTMENT OF SOIL & WATER (Formerly Soil Science)

Level 3 Seminar Room, Prescott Building - 2pm

- Presentation & Tour of the Department and its work
- Afternoon tea

DEPARTMENT OF PLANT SCIENCE

Marquee adjacent to Urrbrae House 2 -5

- Departmental Displays
- Beer & Bread Tasting

DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE, VITICULTURE & OENOLOGY

Plant Research Centre - 2pm

- Guided Tours 2.00pm & 3.00pm
- Display and information by Department

HICKINBOTHAM ROSEWORTH WINE SCIENCE LABORATORY

- Guided Tours 2.00pm & 3.00pm

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED & MOLECULAR ECOLOGY (formerly Crop Protection, formerly Entomology and Plant Pathology)

Charles Hawker Centre 2pm

- Departmental Presentation
- Afternoon Tea

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 7TH 11AM - 5PM