

THE FRIENDS OF THE WAITE ARBORETUM INC.**WAITE
ARBORETUM****NEWSLETTER**

Winter 2003

No. 36

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A CITY WITHOUT TREES ISN'T FIT FOR A DOG!

FRIENDS OF

WAITE
ARBORETUM8 PM Monday, 11th August 2003**David Lawry & Sean Donaghy**

will talk about

T R E E N E T

Urrbrae House University of Adelaide – Waite Campus
(enter from Fullarton Road, Urrbrae)

ADMISSION FREE
GOLD COIN DONATION TOWARDS REFRESHMENTS

All welcome
Enquiries: 8303 7405



THE LATEST ON MUNDULLA YELLOWS

Friends will (or may) remember the talk and subsequent Newsletter report on Mundulla Yellows, by Dr. Dagmar Hanold, produced a couple of years ago. The following update on the present situation is copied from "CCSA Briefs", produced by the Conservation Council of South Australia in June this year.

"Research at the Waite Institute into this disease of native vegetation is continuing, despite problems over future funding. (State government funding was allocated elsewhere.) The results from the past five years' work will be drawn upon as molecular research continues into finding the cause and control strategies for Mundulla Yellows."

I seem to remember from my perusal of the local press, that the funding in question had been re-allocated to the Institute for Horticultural Development based in Victoria. Shades of the "Grand Prix", or do I suffer from paranoia?

Finally, as your past Ed., I should like to thank Ginny for volunteering to continue with the task. You, my Friends, will make life easier for her by writing "stuff" and thereby getting your names in print.

To really fill up space I shall tell you about my early memories of the Waite Arboretum. When I attended school, aged five, at Highgate school, I lived in the then quite new, leafy green suburb of Springfield, together with my four brothers and sisters, three of whom were twelve years or more older than I, and there was a small brother, three and a bit years younger. The year was 1936. In those early years, the bitumen ended at Cross Road, although soon a tramline appeared; it went to Paradise! I have not yet reached there.

My father usually drove me to school, although occasionally I received a lift from the Hayward's R-R! Coming home was different; even at five, I walked home by myself, ie nominally. In fact, I often walked with a little boy in my class called Bobby! If I were very late, my mother sent the sixteen year old "little" maid to find me. Bobby and I used to hide in the Arboretum. We both climbed trees well and often peppered the poor sixteen year old with monkey nuts, or alternatively, hid from her in the deep earth drain alongside the dirt footpath. The poor child never thought of looking for us under a culvert, where we got wet and dirty and I was mildly reprimanded when reaching home.

Mother could always be bribed with a bunch of wildflowers, dandelions and buttercups, with perhaps a few soursobs decorated by shivery grass. I remember the Arboretum as being very large and rather wild. The grass was certainly long and good for hiding from adults. There were good mushrooms available each May.

There were sheep grazing in the Arboretum, so dogs were banned, as they still are. They were also threatened by being shot. The dog across the road from my house was a black Kelpie called "Bing". He was a nice dog and disappeared one day - my sisters said he had been shot. Maybe he had. I was very careful after this when walking near the Arboretum with my dog, Lily.

The area around Springfield and Netherby was then a delight for children. I was allowed to wander as I chose. Lily would presumably protect me. She used to pounce on courting couples and lick them both enthusiastically - not in the Arboretum, of course. Mind you, the best place to pounce was in the present Rectory walk; it was a narrow dirt track in my day - we called it Lovers Lane!

The war altered all of this. Springfield became too difficult - petrol was rationed, so we moved to Prospect and my days in the "country" were past.

Barbara P.



NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Since our last newsletter we have participated in the Open Day organized by the Friends of Urrbrae House with its distinctly Scottish theme. It was a very happy day with attendances estimated at over 1,000 people. Once again many first time visitors coming to the site appreciated the opportunity to see over Urrbrae House and enjoy the gardens. The weather was forecast to be of major concern but fortunately the weather predictions of very wet weather did not eventuate and all went according to plan with lots of entertainment from the various Scottish and school groups. Our stall made a profit of \$562.00 which resulted from the support of many Friends and visitors. Our thanks to all involved.

The first stage of the salt damp treatment was completed just before the Open Day and since then we have seen new roses planted in front of the House. While we have felt the loss of the old wisteria which was a feature of the House, we can now appreciate a different view of Peter Waite's old home. The second stage of the salt damp treatment is due to commence in November on the northern and eastern sides of the House.

A lovely new feature of the gardens had been the installation of a very special sundial made by John Ward and Margaret Folkard as a memorial to Lottie Sharard who loved and appreciated our rose garden very much. Some of our volunteers have propagated the lavender plants now growing in the garden leading past the sundial to the Mallee Block. It is a valued addition to our garden areas and will be of great interest to visitors.

The TREENET Symposium plans are progressing and once again we have been offered the opportunity to cater for the morning and afternoon teas. I shall be grateful for helpers in pouring tea and coffee on four occasions as well as baking the cakes for the afternoon sessions. The dates of the symposium are the 4th & 5th September.

Our major event for the year is the celebration of our 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Arboretum to be held on 16th November. We hope that you will have this date in your diary and support the day in as many ways as possible. Our aim is to entice hundreds of visitors to the Arboretum to appreciate this wonderful legacy that we have from Peter Waite and his family. We shall keep you informed.

Our loyal band of volunteers are working diligently to ensure that all parts of the Arboretum and the gardens are looking their best for the celebrations. Special thanks to you all.

Warmest regards

Cicely Bungey



THE BELAIR OSKARS

by Ralph Foster

A University of Arizona examination paper for 1999 contains this question. What is the Oskar Syndrome? What advantage does it give to long-lived, shade-tolerant trees?

Oskars are frequently encountered lurking beneath the canopy of shady trees such as oaks, olives and cypresses.

Weeders will be only too aware that many feral plants like broom and thistles have a huge reserve of buried, dormant seeds which spring to life in large numbers whenever the soil is disturbed, for example by pulling up a large weed.

On the whole, shade-producing trees do not have dormant seed stores in the soil. Instead, under the parent trees one can often find small offspring of various ages and sizes, which exist in a stunted, juvenile state. These slow growing, stunted trees are called oskars, and the phenomenon is known to botanists and foresters as the "Oskar Syndrome".

Oskars are named after a character in the novel of Gunther Grass called *The Tin Drum*. In the story, Oskar preferred the juvenile to the adult state and stopped growing at the age of three.

The development of tree oskars is halted at a juvenile, non-flowering stage by the competition of their female parent for light, water and nutrients. They linger on in a stunted form, often less than 2 feet tall, waiting for the day when a gap appears in the canopy of the parent tree. This gap may occur when the parent tree dies, is uprooted in a gale, or its canopy is damaged by the fall of a branch of either the parent or of a neighbouring tree. Then, relieved of parental competition, the oskars immediately start to grow at a rapid rate, forming adult leaves in the process. There may be (and often are) dozens of oskars in the shade of a mature holly oak. When their big break comes, the oskars all begin to grow, competing with each other until finally, the fittest survives to take over the space formerly occupied by the parent, dooming its siblings to death by shading. It then becomes sexually mature, producing flowers and fruits and eventually, its own crop of oskars!

The advantage of the oskar syndrome is that when the parent dies, its space is taken over by one of its own offspring and not by the offspring of a rival, competing species. Seeds of rival tree species are at a disadvantage because they first have to arrive in the vacant space, then germinate and take root, and then out-compete the oskars of the first species which are already well-established - an almost impossible task.

Most forest trees do not produce seeds every year. Only every second or third year is a mast year, so another advantage of the oskar syndrome is that oskars are ready to take over in the event of the parent dying in a non-seeding year.

Oskars can survive in the shade for up to 20 years in some species, suffering little mortality because their leaves are physiologically and sometimes physically modified to tolerate deep shade. The leaves of the oskars of Holly oak (*Quercus ilex*) for example, are much larger and more deeply toothed than those of their parent, and those of cypress are sharp and spiky, quite unlike the flat scale leaves of the adult trees. The leaves of oskars do not respire as rapidly as those of adult plants, so they

do not waste their limited food supplies at times of the day when light levels are low. On the other hand, they can respond rapidly to transient flecks of sunlight penetrating the canopy overhead. Oskars also put more effort into growing leaves rather than roots, i.e. oskars make the most of what little light is available. Oskars are survivors.

Some of my friends have children in their late 20s and 30s who refuse to leave home and mum's cooking. The Japanese call these "parasitic children"; perhaps a kinder name for them would be oskars.

[Editor's note: look for oskars in the Arboretum's oak collection]



A BRIEF NOTE FROM YOUR NEW EDITOR

Most of you will have met me by now. When I first arrived as a volunteer back in April, I made a brief guest appearance in the garden for a couple of Tuesday mornings, from which Jennifer then decided to extricate me, and duly posted me downstairs in the old TREENET office, arming me with a computer. I have a wonderful view of the huge pine tree outside the front of Urrbrae House and can see no fewer than four other varieties of conifers, along with several natives and the occasional tourists' legs passing by up on ground level.

Hopefully I can be of more use to her here, and am taking over the editorship of the Friends of the Arboretum Newsletter, giving Barbara Possingham a very well deserved break. I know everyone would want to join with me in thanking her for her tireless efforts over the years.

As I am a complete novice at this, I am very keen to have as much input from all the Friends as possible, and absolutely anything anyone would like to submit for the newsletter, I would be most grateful to receive! Even if it is only one or two paragraphs – it certainly doesn't have to be a short novel!

In the coming weeks, we will be compiling and distributing a list of tasks required for the 16th November – our 75th anniversary of the Arboretum and Open Day, along with a timegrid for volunteers to designate their preferred task and time to be "on duty" on the day.

We should get in early with God, and start praying now for a warm fine day.

2002 SHIRAZ

We have the opportunity to procure and sell several dozen bottles of 2002 Shiraz, which was made by a group of 20 students from grapes grown in Coombe Vineyard at the Waite campus. We hope to have this available to sell at the Open Day in November, and prior to that for any interested parties. Please give us any expressions of interest, and as soon as we have a price decided upon, and the wine labelled, we will notify everyone.





FRIENDS
OF BELAIR
NATIONAL PARK



You are invited to
Free Guided Walks

in

Belair National Park

Sunday 12th October 2003

Annual Professor Cleland Memorial Walk

10.00am from Main Oval

12.30pm at Volunteer Centre, Long Gully
talk on indigenous foods, and tastings

2.00pm from Volunteer Centre

4.00pm (approx) finish at Main Oval

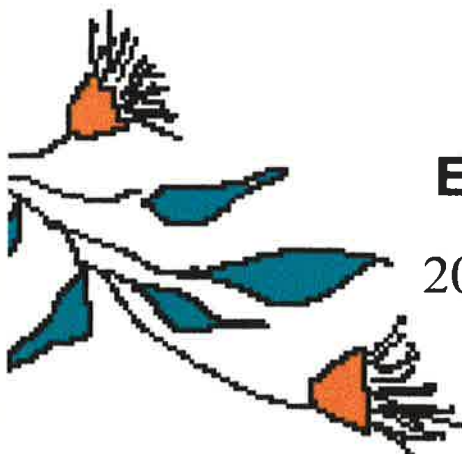


BYO lunch, snacks, water.

Wear walking shoes, a hat, sunscreen and jacket

Enquiries phone 8271 1534

2003 Year of Indigenous Culture



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