

THE FRIENDS OF THE WAITE ARBORETUM INC.



WAITE
ARBORETUM

NEWSLETTER NO. 57

Spring 2008

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Editor
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

As your Committee is due to meet again on October 1, this report covers the period to 1 October.

The Arbor Wind Quartet afternoon on July 20 was well attended and successful as a fund raiser so we hope to have them back again next year.

On July 30 a meeting was called by the University to investigate a water management plan for each campus. As this question is vital to the function of the Arboretum, our Director and two members of the Committee attended. We have asked Professor Geoff Fincher to keep us informed as the plans for Waite Campus are developed.

We were pleased to welcome the Director of Carrick Hill, Richard Heathcote, when he addressed a group of friends in Urrbrae House on Monday evening the 18th of August. There is more detail from our Editor in this Newsletter.

The Friends' visit to Ian Roberts' Blyth property on August 24 is also covered elsewhere.

After good rains in July and August the sun came out in time for the TREENET Symposium over 2 days in early September. The Director, Jennifer Gardner, put an extraordinary effort into this well attended annual function and the Friday visit to the Urrbrae TAFE and Waite campuses was greatly appreciated by all. My special thanks to our Committee members and volunteers who contributed to its success.

Colin Jenner has informed the Committee that the first draft of the book on Peter Waite's vision has been completed although publication may be more than a year away.

We look forward to welcoming you along with Friends of the Conservation Reserve and Urrbrae House on Monday December 1st. Mark the date in your diary and celebrate 2008 with us.

Bryan Milligan

IN THE ARBORETUM

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Death Caps

You may have read in the media that the lethal **Death Cap fungus** *Amanita phalloides* was discovered in the Waite Arboretum on 21 June by mycologist Pam Catcheside, Hon. Research Associate at the Botanic Gardens and Prof. David Catcheside. The mushroom, which is mycorrhizal primarily on oaks, was the first verified record in South Australia, although the northern hemisphere mushroom has been recorded in Victoria and NSW. All parts of the mushroom are deadly if eaten, with one cap enough to kill a healthy adult. As soon as the identity was confirmed by DNA analysis, the Arboretum was monitored daily and any specimens found were immediately removed. The last specimen for the year appeared on 27 August. In total 94 specimens were collected. Warning signs will be posted again next year at the beginning of the mushroom season.

Seats in the Urrbrae House gardens and Arboretum enable visitors to rest, sit and eat their lunch, read or chat and enjoy the landscape. Five seats have been donated this year, 3 in the Arboretum - gifts of the Jacobs Family, Graham Family, and Jennifer & Douglas Gardner and 2 in the rose garden – gifts of Mason Family, and nieces and nephews of Helen Brookes.

Vandalism, theft and graffiti have been increasing in the Waite Arboretum and elsewhere on campus. One of the very old cycads reported on in the last newsletter had the top metre knocked off and a 6 m tall, 20 year old Chinese windmill palm along the watercourse was destroyed. Please report to me (8303 7504) any vandalism you note, and immediately contact Waite Security on 8303 7200 (24 hours, 7 days a week) if you see any suspicious behaviour in the Arboretum. An additional security staff will be posted in the Arboretum overnight from now until the end of the school year.

In August, in collaboration with the University of Adelaide's Art & Heritage Collections, the Arboretum participated in **SALA (SA Living Artists) Week** with a special guided tour of artworks by Greg Johns, Silvio Apponyi, Meliesa Judge, Will Kuiper, John Dowie and others in the Arboretum and gardens. In September I presented a talk and tour in the University's 'Cultural Conversations' series.

Also in September, the Arboretum was the site of a number of outdoor presentations on Day 2 of the very successful **Treenet 9th National Street Tree Symposium**. It was pleasing that the Symposium has returned to its origins on the Waite Campus.

Sponsorship in kind and other support

United Water had delivered 500,000L of water (79 visits) to the end of July 2008 and continue to deliver tanker loads to the Elm Avenue.

The following support from businesses is gratefully acknowledged: **Adelaide Urban Tree Service** (Stephan & Lisa Gfrerer) – chipping service & mulch; **Trees are Us** (Nick Lutt) – mulch and **Taking Care of Trees** (Russell Botten) – mulch. **Neutrog** donated many pallet loads of Sudden Impact for Roses and the impact has indeed been remarkable with the roses looking the biggest and best I have ever seen them.

Community groups also supported the gardens and Arboretum with practical help. In July eight dedicated **Heritage Rose Society** members pruned all our heritage roses. The **Rose Society of SA** gave a grant of \$500 for the enhancement of the Rose Garden as part of their centenary celebrations. Members of the **Palm & Cycad Society (SA)** held two working bees this year, planting new specimens and tending the collection.

Finally, I wish to thank profoundly all the **volunteers** who have given so generously of their time and efforts in the Arboretum, Gardens and Reserve this year - undertaking hands-on work on Tuesday mornings and weekend working bees, assisting with research, Treenet Symposium, conducting guided walks and serving on committees.

Jennifer Gardner

POT – POURRI

The concert by the Arbor Wind Quintet (Lynette Whelan, oboe, Caryl Lamborn, bassoon, Philip Stephenson, clarinet, Paul Hampton-Smith, French horn and Jane Mackenzie, flute) in the ballroom of Urrbrae House on Sunday 20 July, in front of about 100 Friends and guests, was a delight. The artists performed works by Thomas Tomkins (1572 - 1656), John Bull (1684 - 1628) Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 -1750), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791), Anton Dvorák (1851 - 1904), Paul Taffanel (1844 - 1908) and Claude Debussy(1862 - 1918). One feature which I found particularly interesting and informative was that Lynette, Paul and Jane described the work of the lesser-known (at least to me) composers and gave some background information on the composers themselves. Although I have been familiar with the work of Bach for many years I did not know until this concert that he had published works into two books known as the 'Well-Tempered Klavier Books 1 & 2'.

The applause at the end of the performance suggested that an encore would be appropriate but Caryl put paid to that notion by announcing, à la Peter Cundall “And that’s your bloomin’ lot”. She unfortunately didn’t add, however, “But just for this week” and so those of us who would have wished for more of this delightful music were doomed to disappointment. However, there is a possibility that the Arbor Wind Quintet will delight us again next year.

As well as being so pleasing to the audience, the concert was a success financially.

Jean Bird

CARRICK HILL: WATER, CHILDREN AND THE RAMPANT OLIVE

At the General Meeting held on Monday 18 August our guest speaker, Richard Heathcote, Director of Carrick Hill, gave an interesting and entertaining talk on the above topic.

The President of FWA, Bryan Milligan, introduced Richard with a brief biography. Richard has had an interesting career, having worked in theatre, festivals museums and galleries in the UK and Australia. He has run the Victorian National Trust property, Rippon Lea Estate, restoring both the garden and buildings to their former glory, written on garden history and presented an ABC documentary, *The New Eden*, on the evolution of the garden in Australia. He came to Adelaide to accept a new challenge, the Director of Carrick Hill, a 20th Century garden estate.

Richard began his talk with a photograph of the Carrick Hill car park with a single car. He held up sprigs of pine, olive and bridal creeper, the enemies of Carrick Hill and much of the SA bush, for that matter. He saw his first challenges as attracting more visitors to Carrick Hill and getting rid of the feral plants. To achieve the first of these he thought of targeting children (without, of course, disenfranchising older visitors). To this end, he decided to abolish the entry fee to the grounds and to develop a trail to attract and engage children and allow them to explore. He pointed out that the Christmas Pageant was the brainchild of Sir Edward Hayward who, although he had no children, could relate to children and so a children’s trail at Carrick Hill is entirely appropriate.

Richard showed photographs of the children’s trail, including the Hobbit House which children can peer into but not enter, the Troll Bridge with hands over the edge ready to grab your legs as you walk across, the Secret Garden, the Jungle Book and Animalia with Mowgli’s camp, elephants, a wolf, a tiger and a zebra, Charlotte’s Web (a climbing web with Wilbur the pig) and other aspects of the trail. At various points along the trail, pop-up signposts have been put in place and these are evidently much favoured by small children who delight in popping them up! The school holiday programs have proved to be very successful and Richard showed photographs of several of these.

The problem of the feral plants has not been as easy to solve. The Carrick Hill grounds encompass 40 hectares, including three disused quarries and there are many olives and much bridal creeper. The pines can be cut down, but since they provide food for yellow tailed black cockatoos, this does not seem to be an option. The big challenges are maintaining the 81 identified indigenous species and developing the whole area into something useful. A gardener with an environmental background and some patrons would be extremely beneficial.

A plan for managing water at Carrick Hill has been developed over the last three years. The ornamental lake (originally a dam) was regularly topped up with mains water (when this was allowed) to compensate for the water lost to evaporation and through leakage. However, one of the gardeners, who had previously been a farmer, estimated that the run off from the property would just about equal the water being lost from the pond and so this water, which had previously run into nearby creeks and had fetched up in the Urrbrae wetlands, was channelled into the pond, a subterranean watering system for the gardens was put in place and the roof water from the buildings was all collected into a large underground tank. Thus, the Carrick Hill gardens no longer rely on mains water. The water management at Carrick Hill is something that we should all emulate.

At the end of his interesting and entertaining talk, Richard fielded many questions, a measure of how much the audience had enjoyed it.

Jean Bird

VISIT TO IAN ROBERTS' PROPERTY

On August 24, a group of a dozen enthusiastic Friends visited Ian and Narelle Roberts' property in the mid-north.

After spending some time in the Medika Gallery* in Blyth, Ian took us to a nearby nursery where he is raising a lot of local provenance plants for distribution to gardens and revegetation sites. Much of this material is grown from cuttings as well as seeds.

The group then drove east up to Brooks Lookout (a site donated in 2001 by a local farmer). The area has native vegetation, further enhanced by locals with plants raised in Ian's nursery. Ian claims the view to the west towards the Gulf to be "the best in Australia".

Further south along the same escarpment the group enjoyed their picnic lunch on Ian's property, where he later took us on a fascinating walk through his arboretum.

Late winter - early spring is usually a great time to see many plants flowering and we were not disappointed. The winter rains this year have been kinder and the crops in this area show great potential. However, the extraordinary hot weather in March did take a heavy toll on many of Ian's plantings, including trees more than ten years old.

Ian and Narelle have collected material from many parts of Australia including the west and successfully raised a wide range of species within each genus. These include *Grevillea*, *Hakea*, *Dryandra* and *Eucalyptus*. There are other groups such as *Melaleuca* that we did not explore. The wide range of flower types, colours, buds, seed pods and leaf forms had our group totally captivated. Large handfuls of materials were seen heading back to our vehicles at the end of the tour (with Ian's encouragement of course).

Ian's enthusiasm, generous hospitality and incredible knowledge were greatly appreciated and enjoyed by the Friends.

*The gallery is a real treat if you haven't had a chance to explore it. Among a wide range of artefacts are many of Ian Robert's exquisite paintings of birds and botanical material.



Bryan Milligan

At a recent meeting of the Committee, the problem of membership of the Friends of the Waite Arboretum was raised. Our membership currently stands at about 140 and we would like to increase this by as many people as we can, particularly as many of our members are not in the first flush of youth. Any ideas to attract new members, particularly young ones, will be most gratefully received. Our Vice-President, Beth Johnstone, has suggested compiling a speaker's kit for use by interested people willing to promote the Arboretum to various groups. If you are interested in this suggestion or have other ideas which might be adopted, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me or any other member of the Committee. Beth also provided the following poem which should give us pause for thought.

Jean Bird

STONE SOUP

A stranger comes to a starving town,
promising to make stone soup.

He finds some firewood,
uses his own pot,
puts water on to boil.
As the water heats he wanders around,
selecting, rejecting, cleaning,
stones.

He adds them to the pot, carefully,
with strange muttered recipes.

Intrigued,
The villagers gather round.
This is the best entertainment
their village has had since the famine began.

As they listen,
they hear the stranger admit,
that, while stone soup is good,
it does taste better with a pinch of salt.

One of the crazier people, (or is she actually more caring?)
brings out some salt she has hoarded.

The stranger gets bolder,
suggests carrots, and potatoes,
and swedes, and dried tomatoes, and herbs.
As each one is added,
others remember their own stores,
and bring them to the common stew.

We have all made something out of nothing,
by remembering the old, old lesson,
that together we can create opportunities
which escape us when we hide
our resources and skills from others.

It is time to build community again,
to share what we have,
and to experience miracles,

It is time to live, expecting grace,
and finding it, daily, even hourly,
in the midst
of our harried lives.

Robert Theobald

9TH NATIONAL TREENET SYMPOSIUM

The 9th National TREENET Symposium was held on Thursday 4 September in the National Wine Centre and on Friday 5 September at the Urrbrae TAFE and in the Arboretum.

The symposium began with a welcome from Dr Greg Moore (University of Melbourne). The topic for the first session was “Climate change impacts on the Urban Forest” and the first speaker, Prof. Barry Brook (University of Adelaide), talked about what global change really means for biodiversity and Dr Frances Mowling (Rural Solutions SA) discussed “Trees, water and stormwater management in a changing climate”. She pointed out that urban trees can help to ameliorate climate change, reducing air temperature and absorbing storm water. Water is no longer considered as waste but as a vital product. Trends in water control need to be reversed – wetlands need to be reinstated, creek channels to be de-concreted and kerbs and gutters replaced with soft swales and sedges, designed to slow, clean and absorb water.

The topic for the second session was “Population Growth and Cities”. Dr Graeme Hugo (University of Adelaide) spoke on “Climate Change and South Australia’s Population Dilemma” and pointed out that the population needs to increase at present to cater for elderly baby boomers but then should be stabilised at 2 million, due to environmental constraints.

Dr Philip Roetman and Prof Chris Daniels (University of SA) considered “Including Biodiversity as a component of sustainability as Australian cities grow: Why and how”. Good biodiversity (native species) is sustainable, whereas bad biodiversity (exotics and plague species) reduce biodiversity over time as one or two species overwhelm the rest. Environmental attitudes are largely formed close to home, in the backyard or local reserve but many people in cities have become distanced from nature. Yet there is an increasing demand for change in urban development to include space for biodiversity and to maximize habitat corridors. Biodiversity can be rich in neglected areas but a variety of land use and maintenance regimes is best, involving residents as much as possible.

“Water” was the subject of the first afternoon session. Wayne Brown (Rural Solutions) described the landscape design of the new Oaklands Park Rail Station, built in 1926 and planted with sugar gums and pines in 1928. All healthy existing gums have been kept, new trees, sedges and grasses have been added and eco-swales are used for watering.

Geoff Connellan (University of Melbourne) discussed “Water Management Strategies for Urban Trees in an Uncertain Environment”. He explained how to calculate the daily water requirements for a specific tree and then outlined the options to provide trees with water – surface watering under mulch is good for mature trees. New technology allows actual soil moisture to be monitored for feedback and efficient water management.

Sheryn Pitman (Botanic Gardens of Adelaide) who discussed the work of the Sustainable Landscapes Project at our AGM in March, considered eight principles for sustainable landscapes viz., design for local environmental conditions, plant selections that need little supplementary water and are non-invasive, minimize chemical use, provide habitat for local native fauna, conserve water, minimize non-renewable energy consumption and use sustainable and locally sourced products and materials.

The theme of the final session was “Urban Design and Research”. Prof David Jones (University of Adelaide) spoke about “Street Tree Performance in Arid Landscapes: An Assessment of Street Tree Performance at Roxby Downs”. River red gums were the most successful trees planted. Maintenance and planting regimes were explained.

Martin Ely (PhD student University of Adelaide) spoke about “Thinking like a Tree: Developing a Framework for Tree Sensitive Urban Design” and he considered the biological needs of the tree and how urban design could best provide these needs for street trees.

Finally, Sarah Cockerell (PhD student University of Adelaide and TREENET) updated the symposium on her Avenues of Honour project in “Avenues of Honour: Location, Assessment and Management of War Memorial Tree Avenues in Australia”.

For the last 15 or 20 minutes of the first, second and fourth sessions, Dr Greg Moore (University of Melbourne) chaired a panel discussion of the session’s topics.

The second day of the TREENET symposium began at the Urrbrae TAFE with an introduction to and overview of the day’s proposed activities. Each of the presenters took part in these introductory talks. The delegates were split into four groups and Guides were assigned to each group. The stations at the TAFE were the Production Nursery, where methods of planting for seed germination were shown, a demonstration of suitable paving for use round trees and the appropriate preparation for this, one of stormwater harvesting and recycling and one describing how trees cope with water stress under conditions of low water.

When each group had, in turn, inspected all of the demonstrations, we repaired to the Waite Institute for morning tea. Five demonstration sites had been set up in the Arboretum and there was one in Claremont Avenue. The Guides led the delegates to the various sites. David Lawry demonstrated a device he has developed to direct storm water from the kerb to the root zone of trees in Claremont Avenue, Phil Kenyon took a walk illustrating the various hazards that trees may pose, Ben Kenyon and Marcus Lodge gave a hazard report on a big sugar gum, contrasting the information gained by climbing the tree (shown in photographs) with an assessment from the ground from which the area of decay was not apparent. Dr Greg Moore and David Galway discussed roots at two sites, where an airspade had been used to expose the roots of an English elm, *Ulmus procera*, and a eucalypt, *Corymbia variegata*, Geoff Connellan and Wayne Brown described mulching and different types of irrigation systems for trees and Judith Fakes demonstrated pruning to the National Standard.

Each group began at a different site and then moved on to the next. There was a problem keeping each of the presenters to his/her allotted time because they were all so enthusiastic about their subjects and, as a consequence, we soon fell behind schedule. Each group went to three sites in the morning and three after lunch but, by lunchtime, it was obvious that we were all so far behind schedule, that the wrap up scheduled for the last part of the program had to be abandoned. The whole exercise encompassed much of the Arboretum and the delegates were given a great deal of expert information, which they appeared to accept with enthusiasm. Some people (especially this Guide!) were pretty weary by the end of the afternoon but it was an interesting and useful exercise, worthy of being repeated at the 2009 TREENET Symposium, albeit with different sites and perhaps some better organization.

Lynda Yates and Jean Bird

Christmas presents suggestions

A gift membership to the Friends of the Waite Arboretum makes an ideal Christmas present

or

choose from the list below and support the Waite Arboretum at the same time.

All items are available from the Arboretum Office and at the Friends Christmas party.

Jewellery

Exquisite sterling silver jewellery by Pat Hagan including the Arboretum brooch (Dragon's Blood Tree), earrings and many more. All are beautifully handcrafted and feature Australian plants and animals. They make an ideal gift for overseas friends and family. Prices \$30 - \$105.

Books

- "Eucalypts of South Australia" by Dean Nicolle \$25
- "Hakeas – A Field and Garden Guide" by Ivan Holliday \$30
- "Melaleucas – A Field and Garden Guide" by Ivan Holliday \$32
- "Gardener's Companion to Eucalypts" by Ivan Holliday & Geoffrey Watson \$30

Greeting cards

A range of cards and postcards by Beryl Martin, Keith Mallet and Pam Brinsley

Arboretum T-shirts \$16

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome the following new members:

Ms Jodie Russian, Somerton Park; Dr Diana Lawrence and family, Torrens Park

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Monday 1 December: 6 - 8 p.m. Urrbrae House. Joint Friends' Christmas Party.

Monday 6 April: 8 pm AGM. Prof. John Argue, University of SA will talk on Water Sensitive Urban Design.