

THE FRIENDS OF THE WAITE ARBORETUM



NEWSLETTER

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Secretary
Mrs Anna Cox
332 1482

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379 6405

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING on Monday 29 April 1996 at 8 pm

Listening to **Andrew Beal** speaking to this meeting on his subject **The Emerging Native Food Industry**, I couldn't but think of afternoon tea at Grandma's house: a whole world away were the scones and cheese straws, the tiny cucumber sandwiches, caraway seed cake [that was awful], shortbread and good solid pound cake or sponge. Smart Grandmas will now be serving quandong tart, bush tomato sandwich, wattle seed scones, sponge filled with native currant jelly and yabby pâté.

Andrew is well known for his association with Andrew Fielke and the Red Ochre Grill but his work is in running Australian Native Produce Industries which is one of the two national firms which distribute wild food supplies. There is a growing demand as restaurants spring up and people begin to appreciate this truly Australian cuisine. Prices have been huge, e.g. \$60 for one kilo of quandongs. However more farmers are seeing opportunities for diversification and gradually availability will even out this inflation. Harvesting from the wild was the original source but clearly that must be controlled, else destruction of many plants will ensue. The S.A Government has passed legislation to enable trial farming of protected plant and animal species.

So far Australia's chief entries in the commercial food world have been kangaroo, various fish and macadamia but there is a growing list of plants which will emerge as common fare as time goes by. The list includes bush tomato *Solanum centralum*, riberry *Astroloma conostephioides*, Illawarra plum *Podocarpus elatus*, Warrigal spinach *Tetragonia tetragonioides*, muntries *Kunzia pomifera*, native plum or quandong *Santalum acuminatum* and many species of wattle, especially *Acacia victoriae*.

There are good prospects for the growing native food industry both in export, feeding tourists who like to find local special foods and for ourselves to grow to like. Research has to be done as seed raising and crop management in a new industry relies on experience and innovative ways. Andrew Beal's contribution lies in his experience and innovative outlook. He has used his training at the Waite Institute to help him develop an industry in propagating, cultivating, collecting, processing and distributing a range native foods. He is developing plant cultivars of known species which improve their eating quality...we all can remember, I'm sure, the tiny meals we used to derive from native plants found on childhood

walks. There is a new world of eating just over the horizon so we are now, it seems, saying goodbye to juicy, ripe strawberries and rejoicing instead in the prospect of native currant jelly and quandong...whatever we fancy.

Many thanks to Andrew Beal for a window into the future and an excellent presentation which included delicious samples for supper after the meeting.

Barbara Crompton

FROM THE COMMITTEE - Meetings on 11 June and 9 July 1996.

- A letter has been written to the Mitcham Council and to the University of Adelaide expressing concern about the proposal to rezone part of the Peter Waite bequest land on the Waite Campus to residential zone in order to sell it.
- Dr. Gardner has gained grants from the Art for Public Places and The University of Adelaide Foundation for the installation of leased sculptures in the Arboretum. The first such work, *Floating Figure 1* by local sculptor Greg Johns will be in place for an opening on Tuesday 1 October by the Minister for the Arts, Hon. Diana Laidlaw. Further works are to be sought in the future from emerging artists.

CORRESPONDENCE

It was interesting to receive a newsletter from the Friends of Brownhill Creek. Apart from information about current projects it was particularly interesting for the historical notes and bird list provided by the editor, who was nameless but much to be thanked.

TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR HAROLD WOOLHOUSE

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Professor Harold Woolhouse at his home in Wymondham, Norfolk on 19 June after a long battle with cancer. Harold was Director of the Waite Institute from 1990 until his early retirement due to ill health in August 1995. He was a man of towering intellect, vision and energy. He came to the Waite as a distinguished academic with a brilliant career in developmental biology and physiological ecology. He oversaw the amalgamation of Roseworthy College with the University of Adelaide and formation of a new Faculty which merged the two campuses. He was the driving force behind the co-location of SARDI (SA Research & Development Institute) and PISA (Primary Industries SA) on to the Waite Campus which together with the University, the CSIRO Divisions of Horticulture, Soils and Water Resources and the Australian Wine Research Institute form a world class complex for teaching and research in agricultural sciences. Over \$70m capital works were completed in the four years that Harold was Director including a Plant Research Centre which is the best facility of its kind in Australia and a library which has been named after him. Harold was a staunch supporter of the Arboretum and a foundation member of the Friends. With his support, 3 hectares of land were added enabling a much expanded eucalypt collection to be established and sheep were removed much improving the amenity of the Arboretum. He was very supportive of the wetlands project to beautify the existing watercourse and develop the area around the lake. Harold also encouraged the development of the Urrbrae House Historic Precinct and the Waite Conservation Reserve as assets for the enjoyment of the whole community. Before he returned to England Harold planted two South American walnuts *Juglans neotropica*. [#1007 & 1009, Grid B6] and he and his wife Leonie donated a seat under the bunya pine overlooking the mallee block. Our deepest sympathy is extended to Leonie, his sons Matthew and Arthur, daughter Hannah and grandson Zeb.

Jennifer Gardner

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to: Barker Family, Westbourne Park; Ms R. Blesing, Wayville; Mr R. Childs, Leabrook; Cornish Family, Adelaide; Mr G. de Jong, Windsor Gardens; Ms M. Dwyer, Fullarton; Ms L. Elzinga-Henry, Crafers; Ms C. James, Beaumont; Ms P. Rix, Coromandel Valley; Woollard Family, Para Hills West.

ARBORETUM NEWS

Three more seats have been donated to the Arboretum:- one in memory of Hugh Treloar (1930 - 1991) donated by his family; one in memory of Peter Ellis (1941 - 1995) a Senior Technical Officer at the Waite for 24 years, donated by his widow Dr Julie Ascher & son Todd; and one donated by the Coolabah Club, an Association of tree growers founded at the Waite Institute in 1959.

A very generous gift of books has been received from Mr Eric Chivers. They are four volumes of J.E. Brown's *The Forest Flora of South Australia*. (1882 -1890). These exquisitely illustrated books may be viewed by appointment with the Curator.

1996 planting is in progress. The 47 specimens include: *Acacia* (5 spp.), *Acronychia oblongifolia*, *Allocasuarina* (6 spp.), *Banksia* (7 spp.), *Eucalyptus* (17 spp.) *Hakea* (1 sp.), *Santalum acuminatum* and *Syzygium luehmannii*. In addition, the Palm and Cycad Society have held another working bee and planted more specimens along the watercourse.

Mapping of all 1994, 1995 and 1996 plantings is in progress in preparation for the new catalogue which will be published later this year.

The sculpture by Greg Johns *Floating Figure 1* has been installed [Grid 111] and the sculpture site will be officially opened 1 October. This work will be on loan for one year. After that it is planned to use the site to promote the works of new sculptors by offering it to a new graduating student from one of the arts schools in Adelaide. A second site for sculpture will also be established this year. Friends who would like to suggest suitable sculptors or sculptures for this site can contact me on 303.7405.

The Arboretum brochure has now been produced with grants from the Friends and the City of Mitcham. A copy is enclosed. If you would like more copies to place in your local library or community centre or to give to friends please contact me.

Plans are in hand for our forthcoming exhibitions of botanical art and wood sculpture which will be on display in the newly refurbished rooms in Urrbrae House (11 October-3 November)

Jennifer Gardner

TREE OF THE MONTH

Owenia acidula F. Muell. MELIACEAE

The best known trees of the tropical and sub-tropical Meliaceae family are the Mahoganies with their high quality timber. Australian Meliaceae include *Melia azedarach*, often planted as a street tree and *Toona australis*, commonly known as the Red cedar with its excellent timber.

Owenia acidula, one of six species in the genus, all Australian, is a small, shapely tree to about four metres with attractive long, pinnate leaves and small, inconspicuous off-white

flowers which appear after good rains. The plum-like fruit is globular, bright red when ripe and edible although sour hence the common name Sour Plum. *Owenia* was named for Sir Richard Owen [1804-1892], a British biologist who pioneered vertebrate palaeontology but marred his reputation by his vigorous opposition to the Darwinian theory.

Owenia acidula is not a tropical tree but grows in South Australia in the Coopers Creek basin, south to eastern Lake Eyre and into semi-arid Queensland, N.S.W. and the Northern Territory. During the Miocene period, about 13 million years ago, this area was rainforest. Today, almost the only survivor of the forest is the *O. acidula*. It is an attractive tree recommended for its foliage. The wood is quite beautiful and highly coloured. It likes dry, well drained sandy soils in an open sunny position and would be an excellent tree for inland plantings. Unfortunately, after more than fifty years of trying, no-one has been able to germinate the seeds and there has been but limited success from root suckers. This suggests that because of the difficult natural selection pressures which the tree has had to endure to survive as a species, the seeds must have to respond to a very rigorous set of conditions prior to germination. So far nobody has uncovered this secret.

There is one *Owenia acidula* in the Arboretum at H11, No. 230E. It was grown from root stock collected in the Northern Territory in 1976 by David Symon.

Mary Tester

Grinling Gibbons - [1648-1721]

Limewood (*Tilia* spp.) is a very soft, pale, almost white wood which darkens to pale brown on exposure. The grain is straight and it has a fine, very uniform texture. It is therefore one of the best woods for carving, especially for complex and delicate compositions.

Grinling Gibbons, born in Rotterdam of English parents, also sculpted in bronze and stone but it was for his exquisite wood carvings, mostly in limewood, that he is most famous. John Evelyn, the diarist, saw his carving soon after he returned to England in 1671. He was so impressed that he introduced him to Wren and later to Charles the Second and so his work adds immeasurably to the beauty of Windsor Castle, Whitehall and Kensington Palaces, St. Paul's Cathedral and many other Wren churches.

At the time when Gibbons began carving, the popular styles were formal classical and ornate Gothic. He rejected these and with his complex and delicate compositions brought a new vitality and naturalism to wood carving. He carved fruit, flowers and musical instruments, birds, foliage and lace so delicate truthful and elaborate of detail that many flowers move when shaken by a breeze. So realistic and three-dimensional is it that the work is cut almost free of its background, giving a pattern of strong light and shade, full of vitality.

The ceiling at Petworth House, Sussex is regarded as his finest work, but among his other treasures are cascades of fruit and flowers in Windsor Castle, carvings in the King's private dressing room in Hampton Court Palace and much ornamental work at Burleigh, Chatsworth and other great houses. In St. Paul's Cathedral he carved panels in the choir stalls in pear wood on an oak base.

In 1714, he was appointed Master Carver in Wood to George the First. He died on 2 August 1721 and is buried in St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden.

Mary Tester

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND DIARY DATES

8 pm Monday 12 August. General Meeting in Urrbrae House. The speaker will be **Dr Rob Morrison**, biologist and science writer and broadcaster, who will talk on the "**Nest Box Project**".

5 pm Tuesday 1 October in the Arboretum. The Hon. Diana Laidlaw, Minister for the Arts will officially open the **sculpture site**. **New designs for the gardens** of the Historic Precinct including the Paddocks Garden (the Mallee Block) will also be on display in Urrbrae House. Refreshments will be served. All Friends are invited to attend.

6 pm Friday 11 October in Urrbrae House. **Opening of the exhibitions** of botanical art, wood sculpture and wood turning and silver jewellery with a botanical theme. All Friends are invited. The exhibitions will close on Sunday 3 November.

10 am - 5 pm Sunday 13 October. "**An Arts Experience**" - a joint event with Carrick Hill in our Festival of Style. Visit exhibitions at both properties on a combined ticket. Enjoy music, refreshments and entertainment for children. Enjoy the splendid views on the Woolhouse Walk between the estates along the hills face. Guided walks of the Arboretum at 12 pm and 2 pm.

2 - 4 pm Sunday 27 October. As part of the **Australian Rose Festival**, authority on roses, Maureen Ross, will be in the Twentieth Century Rose Garden at Urrbrae House to give advice on roses and rose growing.

8 pm Monday 28 October. General Meeting in Urrbrae House. The speaker will be **Valmai Henkel**, Curator of Rare Books at the State Library who will talk on "**Rare Botanical Books**".

11 am Thursday 31 October & Sunday 3 November. As part of the Australian Rose Festival, there will be special guided walks in the Arboretum "**Trees of the Rose Family**".

First Sunday of every month - guided walks in the Waite Arboretum. Meet in front of Urrbrae House at 11 am. The walks last one and a half hours.