



# FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS Inc.

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Issue No. 20

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1999

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well, the year is almost over and what a busy year it has been for the Friends.

We have enabled many improvements to be made to the Botanic Gardens such as restoration of the main entrance bed, preparation of the Growing Friends area, restoration of the fernery and memorial seats around the Gardens.

Work continues with the research and recording of the plants in the Gardens onto a database and their subsequent labelling with the hope of a Local History Grant which should be known within the next few weeks.

A colour brochure highlighting the Gardens is in the process of being printed by the Friends so that it may be available this summer and the history of the Friends (now entering their 10th year) is being compiled and will be available on our "Day in the Gardens" planned for Sunday 26 March 2000.

On a perfect Spring day in October 45 Edna Walling fans visited Bickleigh Vale at the invitation of the new owners of "Mistover" where we enjoyed a barbeque lunch and a visit to four beautiful gardens in the village. We were all very impressed with this "special place" and hope the Bickleigh Vale Residents Group are successful with their application for a Local History Grant to enable them to commission a Conservation Management Plan for the village.

I would like to thank the Committee and Members for their many contributions support and assistance over the past year and wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*Marie Ziebell*

## ARAUCARIA BIDWILLII

Bunya Bunya Pine

As you probably know we have an old Bunya pine in the gardens dating back to the time when Charles Scoborio first planned and planted out the Pinetum. There are some very valuable and rare in cultivation trees nearby -- including the Soledad Pine from North America which towers overhead. Because of the great height these trees reach and their proximity, the Bunya Pine is very stressed and is not in a healthy condition. Amongst the Flora for Victoria trees donated by the RBGM in 1996 is a young Bunya Pine which will be planted out this year in the Pinetum. The two species of



Araucarias native to Australia are the *A. Bidwillii* (Bunya Bunya Pine) and *A. Cunninghamii* (Hoop Pine). They grow naturally in the rainforests of Queensland. Bunya pines were first found growing in the Bunya Bunya mountains west of Brisbane. Discovered in the early 1830's by explorer Andrew Petrie, who collected some specimen trees and gave them to John Bidwill (1815-1852) he then forwarded them to England and hence the tree was named after him -- not after the true discoverer! Several Bunya pines were planted in the Brisbane City Botanical Gardens in 1855 and are still growing strongly.

Bunya pines were once common in South-East Queensland rainforests and were widely logged for their valuable white timber. Huge cones resembling pineapples form at the top of the canopy every few years. These contain many nutty, starchy seeds which were roasted by aboriginal tribes in times gone by. The trees can grow to 30 metres with a spread of 10 metres. The dome-shaped crown is familiar to us with its dense clusters of "leaves" extremely sharp and crowded along the end of the branches.

Despite its rainforest origins, the Bunya pine is surprisingly drought tolerant. It requires deep soils and is salt tolerant, and so has adapted well to being introduced into the Southern and Eastern parts of Australia. It was much used in Baron von Mueller's and William Guilfoyle's time in the great parks and gardens of the last century.

*Margold Curtis*

## EUCALYPTUS

Murray Bail won the 1999 Miles Franklin Award for his novel *Eucalyptus*, (1998), a whimsical fairy tale set in western New South Wales. A farmer offers his daughter in marriage to the first man to correctly identify all the many eucalypts he has planted on his property.

Another book with the same title would have been of great assistance to any hopeful suitor. *Eucalyptus* - an illustrated guide to identification (1996) compiled by Ian Brooker and David Kleinig is a compact and practical hand book for the tree watcher.

The four remnant gum trees in Warrnambool Botanic Gardens are *Eucalyptus viminalis* subsp. *cygnetensis*. Various known as Manna Gums, White Gums and Ribbon Gums this tree is wide spread through much of southern Victoria.

John Hawker advises that the trees in the Gardens are "now in declining condition...It is reasonably urgent that the Eucalypts are propagated and several replanted in the Gardens" (1999)

The tallest hardwood trees in the world are *Eucalyptus regnans* the Mountain Ash of the Otway Ranges and the mountains of eastern Victoria.

These can grow to 100 m in height. Although not as tall, the River Red Gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* is equally impressive in bulk. One tree in South Australia has a girth of more than 11 m and is estimated to be 500 years old. These trees are widespread along the waterways of south eastern Australia and a favourite subject for artists. The Heysen trail in South Australia runs from Kangaroo Island to the north Flinders Ranges amongst the old gums Hans Heysen painted so magically.

My favourite is the Messmate, *Eucalyptus obliqua*. I like its name, its stringy bark, so good for starting the fire, its tall straight trunk and the lopsided leaves that give meaning to the botanical name. The Messmate is wide spread in south western Australia and was the first named Eucalypt from a specimen collected on Bruny Island in 1777.

Since then about 800 species have been named and eucalypts planted on every continent other than Antarctica. They are valued for fast growth, for fuel, for fibre and for ornamental purposes, for their attractive timber, and as a source of honey. They also produce that versatile ageless cure all, that 100% natural oil; eucalyptus.

*Pat Varley Nov. 1999*

### **"DAY IN THE GARDENS"**

Sunday 26th March 2000

12 - 5 pm

The Friends are hosting a special day in the Gardens to celebrate the new century which will include a music program, an art and craft display, plant and produce stall, afternoon tea from the rotunda and free guided tours of the gardens. We would welcome assistance on this day and please keep this in mind if you are making jam or have surplus produce about this time.

## MEMORIAL GATES AT ENTRANCE TO WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS

After the death of King George V in 1936, the Mayor of Warrnambool Cr. R. V. Philpott opened an appeal for the public to subscribe to a memorial fund.

On the motion of Miss Lake it was decided that the best memorial to the late King George V would be ornamental memorial gates at the Botanic Gardens. The decision was made at a meeting of subscribers to the Warrnambool Memorial Fund.

The Mayor suggested that the present gates at that time be removed to the other entrance in Cockman Street. The Town Clerk, Mr H. J. Worland, mentioned that it was little known that the existing gates were the Queen Victoria Memorial gates and should also have an inscription.

The design of the gates was discussed and it was decided that the Mayor, Shire President, Town Clerk, City and Shire Engineers the Mayoress, Miss Lake and Mesdames Tait and Marfell should obtain suitable designs of wrought iron gates with inscriptions and submit the designs with prices to a future meeting.

At a later meeting of subscribers, three designs were submitted and it was eventually agreed to accept the design submitted by E. Wooles & Sons for gates costing £185. The gates were to be of mild steel finished with the new process, rendering them rust proof. The gate posts were to be in Harcourt grey granite, erected on a concrete foundation.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> May 1937 an impressive ceremony took place at the Botanic Gardens when His Excellency the Governor, Lord Huntingfield officially declared open the gates erected at the Cockman Street entrance to the gardens in memory of His Late Majesty, King George V.

On his arrival, His Excellency was welcomed by the Mayor & Mayoress Cr. & Mrs R. V. Philpott, the Shire President, Cr. W. Beveridge, the Chief Secretary, Hon. H. S. Bailey, M.L.A. and Mrs Bailey and the town Clerk, Mr H. J. Worland and Mrs Worland. His Excellency was accompanied by Col. and Mrs Helm-Pott. School children, Guides and Brownies formed a line in front of the gates. City and Shire Councillors and a large representation of members of the general public, were also present.

After the welcome by the Mayor His Excellency said he deemed it a great honor to be asked to declare the gates open and reminded those present that for 1500 years there have been Kings and Queens in Britain and for over three hundred years there had been uninterrupted and single kingship. He congratulated the citizens of Warrnambool and district on subscribing to have the gates erected and said it was characteristic of the British race to have a great love of gardens and natural beauty.

His Excellency pulled the cord of the Union Jack, which was draped over the simple inscription "King George V Memorial Gates, 1910 - 1936".

The Vice-Regal party entered the gates and under the guidance of the Curator, Mr D. Leitch, carried out an inspection of the gardens.

*Marie Johnstone. 22/11/99*

**FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL  
BOTANIC GARDENS Inc.**

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Our news letter is published Spring, Summer Autumn and Winter. If you would like to contribute to our publication please forward material to the above address or email address.

*Marigold Curtis Mandy King  
25th November 1999*

**DIARY DATES**

Christmas Drinks in The Gardens: 10th December 5.30pm

Day in The Gardens: 26th March 2000. 12pm - 5pm

Federation Celebration: March 2001

Guided walks in The Gardens: Every Wednesday 10.30am

Last Sunday of the month 2.30pm



**CHRISTMAS IN THE GARDENS**

Each year the committee and Friends meet in the gardens near the rotunda for a Christmas drink. This has proved to be a popular evening and is open to all members, we hope that you will all be able to join us.

**GROWING FRIENDS**

As you are aware the growing friends have been working very hard in the interest of the gardens. As an on-going fund raising venture the GF will be holding plant sales, to achieve this they will need a vast array and number of potted plants, their first major sale will be at our Millennium Celebration in the gardens on the 26th March 2000. The GF would appreciate it if you would keep them in mind while you are going about your gardening by potting up cuttings, unusual plants, saving excess bulbs etc. This is a very real way that you as members could be of assistance to help achieve the many projects that the FWBG have ahead of them. Thank you

**MEMORIAL SEATING**

If anyone is interested in purchasing a memorial seat for the gardens, please contact Dawn Smith for details.

**HOLIDAYS 2000**

Belize: A Caribbean wonderland.  
Gardens of Northern & Central  
Europe. Alaska.  
Free call 1300307317

**BIRD WATCH**

While walking around the gardens it is amazing to see the number of birds that use this area as a sanctuary.

Eastern Spinebill: This was seen feeding from a flowering Gynea Lily.

Description: 15-16.5 cm. Curved bill. Habitat: woodlands, heathland, flowering shrubs, gardens etc. Breeds: Aug.-Dec.

Nest: Cup of grass, moss, spiders' web in foliage 1-5 cm high.

White Faced Heron: Seen last week feeding two fledglings beside their nest on the top of one of the very high pine trees in the pinetum.

Description: 66-70 cm. Pale grey with white face and yellow legs.

Habitat: Shallow wetlands, coastal areas, fish ponds etc. Breeds: Sep-Nov.

Nest: Untidy, shallow; sticks and leafy branch 5-12 m high.

The Friends now have an email address, please feel free to use this to send information for use in the newsletter or to make enquiry's regarding the gardens