

Jubaea



Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Inc Newsletter

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FRIENDS OF
GEELONG
BOTANIC
GARDENS

The Friends TEA HOUSE



Farewell to the Friends' Teahouse

In early October 2011 the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens celebrated the nineteenth anniversary of the opening of the Friends' Teahouse. The opening in 1992 was the realisation of one of the first objectives of the FGBG when it formed in 1985.

The small group of Friends was enthused by GBG Director Ian Rogers to work towards the establishment of a kiosk to encourage visitors to come to the Geelong Botanic Gardens. Reserved in 1851, the GBG had remained a hidden secret in our City. The vision of a place in the Gardens where visitors and Friends could enjoy a cup of tea in beautiful surroundings was embraced.

A Teahouse would also provide the Friends with a venue for engaging with the public, providing information about the gardens and selling merchandise.

The first challenge was to raise the funds to build the Teahouse. Our capital was built through plant sales from the Growing Friends, bus tours, the Annual Winter Lunch, donations and subscriptions. It was also a time of high bank interest rates. At first, morning and afternoon teas were served by the Friends from a thermos at a bridge table and offered to visitors after they had enjoyed a guided walk. During the early days the Friends purchased a tent and set it up on the front lawn to facilitate our hosting activities.

Building commenced in 1992, after much debate between the Friends, Ian Rogers and Council on the size and location. A modest design by Cr. Peter Lockyer was agreed upon, at a cost shared between the Geelong Council and the FGBG, this was in the era prior to Local Government amalgamation. The Friends contributed \$17,000 and added a further \$3,000 to set up the facility. I cautiously agreed with the Director's request that the Teahouse would be staffed seven days a week by our members. This was a daunting task for a small group. A Teahouse Co-ordinator needed to be found and a new group of volunteering Friends organized to serve tea and cakes.

The Teahouse opened for business on October 5, 1992 under the co-ordination of Pam Jackman who was paid a small 'honorarium'. Weekends became our busiest days and more volunteers were always being sought. An extended menu was introduced in mid 1993 to include toasted sandwiches, raisin bread and soup.

With skilled management and friendly service the Teahouse gradually grew to become a very popular destination for locals and visitors to Geelong. The Visitors Book records the visits of garden enthusiasts from around the world.

Betty Lester-Parish, Sandra Camm and Helen Glare managed a very special place between January 1995 and January 2004 assisted by many remarkable volunteers. In October 2002 the Teahouse celebrated its Tenth Anniversary and many Friends including the late George Buller and wife Valerie, the late Madge Young, Olive Smith, Dawn Martini, Jill Holt, Diane O'Grady, Jenny McCallum, Wendy Appleton, Gillian Gubbins, Nancy Neagle, Peg Spittle and Julie Rogers were acknowledged for their long years of service.

As business increased there was a need for extra room. The City of Greater Geelong built an extra store room at the rear of the building in 1997 at a cost of approximately \$35,000.

The Friends have funded two further internal modifications and one external change. The latter in 2006 included improvements to drainage and the outdoor seating area.

Huge demands were placed upon the Teahouse when the 21st Century Garden opened in September 2002 as the number of people visiting the Botanic Gardens escalated. The GBG was a must see for locals and travelers. A larger café with undercover seating was required for the many busloads that arrived. The Teahouse and volunteers adapted and innovated but it was very evident the Teahouse did not have the capacity to meet peoples' expectations in the 21st century.

In 2005 The Friends funded and undertook a visitor survey to determine interest in a catering facility at the Gardens. Architects McGlashan & Everist developed a Concept Plan for the modification of the Walter Conservatory, and in response, the Friends developed a business case for the Conservatory Café. Shortly after, the City approved the 2007 Strategic Plan for future development of the GBG and Eastern Park, confirming the need for a visitor centre and café within the wider precinct.

Penny Fawcett held the fort at the Teahouse until April 2005 when we employed Jan Perry to oversee operations. Jan has been a tower of strength in the Botanic Gardens. Her people skills and catering know-how has enabled our front of house in the Gardens to continue to provide wonderful service under often challenging conditions. Nothing has ever been too much trouble; catering for large groups of people, bus tours and offering the now famous Botanic Gardens High Tea has enhanced the reputation of the Teahouse.

Since 2008 Jenny and our wonderful young staff have assisted Jan at weekends. Volunteer Phyllis Unsworth has been magnificent organising rosters and has offered support whenever needed. Julie Rogers undertook this same task in earlier years. Many volunteers have given well over ten years of service to the Friends' Teahouse. All our volunteers will greatly miss their contact with the public and with each other, as the keys were handed back to the City in early January.

In its early days the Teahouse provided substantial income for the Friends. This was enhanced by the many enthusiastic donations of scones, sponge cakes and delicious biscuits. How times change - all food sold must now be prepared in a commercial kitchen. While profits have diminished recently, this is not the sole reason for handing back management to the City. The Friends Teahouse has needed to respond to changed legislation in the preparation and serving of food. Food handling standards require that all people handling and serving food undertake training – this was a significant change and challenge for our volunteer team. It has also become increasingly difficult to maintain the volunteer roster for seven days a week. Added to this was the constant request to serve espresso coffee. This requires an expensive machine and special training, a service our volunteers could not be expected to deliver. It was not one element, but the combination of many that has led to the change of management.

The Teahouse has provided a soul for the Botanic Gardens. It has been a meeting place for all, a place for laughter and place of memories and tears. The north-facing site nestled into the fern glade adds to its charm. All the wonderful Friends who have cheerfully given their time, contributed sweet dainties, volunteered and enhanced the visitor experience with their cheery smiles have made the Teahouse the remarkable success that it is. There are very few small businesses that have a life of 19 years. Congratulations to all those who have made a contribution to its success.

We trust the magic of the Teahouse will continue under David Pollitt of "Brioche". The Friends wish him well and hope that our loyal customers will continue to visit. We also hope they will be joined by many new faces who will take the opportunity to join a Discovery Walk or engage with one of our many other activities and join the Friends as members.

Jayne Salmon OAM

5 October 1992 to 4 January 2012

A Garden Party will be held on 28 February hosted by The City and The Friends to celebrate and recognize the considerable contribution of our organisation and the many people who have assisted the Teahouse throughout its 19 year history.

From the President

The Challenge of Change

Welcome to the 2012 “Growing Year”. At this time my usual focus is to draw attention to the themes, programs and events that the Friends of Geelong Botanic Garden will deliver over the coming year. However the past six months have seen the organisation travel through a period of significant change; explaining this change to the Friends’ membership is important. Handing the keys of the Friends Teahouse back to the City after 19 years has formed a major part of the process. While January 4, 2012 marks the end of an era, it also offers new opportunities for the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens and the GBG. It is hoped that the new operator at the Teahouse will also attract a new generation of visitors to our Gardens. The Friends will continue their presence at the Teahouse with the sale of quality merchandise and plants supplied by the Growing Friends. We wish ‘Brioche’ every success and hope their new clients engage with the Friends, become FGBG members and support our many activities and programs.

Parallel to changes at the Teahouse are recent changes to the Friends office, our staffing structure and volunteer responsibilities. The Committee commenced the 2011/12 year with a review of the structure and administration of the Friends organisation. The group was united in our understanding that the level of volunteering demanded from a number of people was not sustainable. Continued high levels of contribution could not be guaranteed into the future. The organisation’s long dependence on this model was placing the FGBG at serious risk. The increasing challenge of recruiting people to the Committee of Management was evidence of this. Without an experienced, committed and engaged committee, an incorporated organisation cannot legally continue to operate.

In response, the Committee sought professional advice through People @ Work. Tasks undertaken by Volunteers, Staff and Committee were analysed – this was matched to the services and programs that the Friends deliver to its membership, the GBG and the visiting public. Compliance requirements for volunteer registration and training were added to the list of tasks and most importantly, the FGBG commitment to supporting the Geelong Botanic Gardens was put to the forefront. It became immediately evident that the Friends needed to make some fundamental changes. The outcome was a model that required extending staff hours and absorbing many of the growing number of volunteer duties into staff responsibilities.

The most difficult and challenging part of this exercise has been the impact that change has had on the employees of FGBG. The restructure to the Friends organisation meant a change to our employees’ position descriptions. The Committee quickly recognised the significance of this restructure and sought advice from our lawyers, FairWork Australia, our payroll manager and a recruitment agency so that we could work through this process in the best possible way for our employees and our organisation. The process of restructure commenced early in October when we advised our staff of our position and our intention to restructure the administration of the whole FGBG organisation.

We indicated that it was our hope to have the entire process of restructure completed by the end of December.

The two existing positions were being absorbed into two new positions, which also included many new tasks, added responsibilities and extended work hours. Volunteers had undertaken many of these new staff duties in the past. It was decided that People@Work would manage the recruitment process, with considerable input from members of the FGBG Committee.

The outcome of the Friends restructure is that Ro Noone and Helen have now left the employment of the Friends. It is important to recognise that both Ro and Helen have contributed significantly to our organisation. Ro and Helen are held in high esteem by FGBG members and by the many volunteers who have worked alongside them during their time with FGBG. The Friends wish them well in their future.

A fundamental part of volunteering is the gift of time. In this modern era of busy and demanding lives this gift is doubly valuable. It is vital that those coming to volunteer with FGBG can do so in a happy and safe environment. It is also vital that volunteers are offered meaningful work, their efforts are recognised and their contribution is valued. This can only occur within a supported and organised structure. The Committee believes that the new organisational model will meet compliance requirements and better support the efforts of volunteers involved in activities and services. It will assist the Friends to expand its base and offer new and exciting programs for the benefit of all people visiting the Gardens.

The path of change is not easy. The Committee is united in its view that the future of the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens is dependent on these recent changes. We are certain that the coming decade will see a bright future for our organisation.

The Friends Programs for 2012 begin mid January with a “Strawberries Master Class”. Internationally renowned John Pastoriza-Pinol is offering this class and our most experienced Botanical Art students will attend this four-day workshop. Basket Weaving with Helen Brotherton has been booked out. It is some time since Helen was last at the GBG, with its popularity we will investigate the possibility of a similar workshop in the near future.

Most importantly the Friends are holding the Twelfth Season of Music In The Gardens in February. This is our major fundraiser for the year and a very important event on the Friends calendar. Diana Sawyer, with the assistance of the Events and Marketing Committee, has organised a wonderful series of concerts. Come along, bring family and friends and enjoy our Gardens at their summer best.

Helena Buxton

President - Friends Geelong Botanic Gardens



BGANZ @ ALBURY

Our Education Officer, Ro Noone made her way to Albury in October to participate in the biennial conference of Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand – universally referred to as BGANZ.

This meeting brings together staff from Botanic Gardens, representatives from the network of Friends groups and volunteers to discuss a wide range of issues facing our Gardens today.

A most exciting initiative was the meeting of the newly formed subgroup the Botanic Gardens Educators Network. A key presentation was a workshop entitled “Using Mobile and Social Media to enrich the Visitor Experience” in which the group were challenged to consider ways of integrating mobile technology into programs to enrich the visitor experience. Shoni Ellis from The Australian Film, Television and Radio School presented a very interesting paper entitled “The potential of Mobile – a Guide to transforming the Visitor Experience” which is available at www.aftrs.edu.au or from the Friends Office. This is a very different approach to that which has traditionally been used in Botanic Gardens where the emphasis has been on enrichment by providing children with a range of sensory experiences with nature.

At the GBG we already have the Murmur project which connects visitors to presentations on the history of the Gardens and Eastern Park via their mobile phones. We are also able to link to the National Trust Significant Tree Register, available as an iPhone app, which links users to significant trees using GPS technology. Our challenge is to use

these and other technologies to forge connections between our visitors and the gardens that we love. Imagine being able to download a ‘pod cast’ of one of the best of our Discovery Walks and take a self guided tour through the GBG at leisure! Many of the world’s best museums and galleries are using this technology to engage with visitors.

Other presentations included Robyn Williams (of Science Show fame) who spoke of the challenges of increased extreme weather events or geological events such as the Christ Church earthquakes and their relation to climate change. His presentation entitled “Facing a turbulent future - the role of Science in botanic gardens” highlighted the damage done to the Townsville Gardens by Cyclone ‘Yasi’. The Christchurch Gardens however were almost unscathed by the recent series of earthquakes - not even the glass in the glasshouse broke. These gardens located on the edge of the City have provided an important place of peace and public gathering for the community of Christchurch.

Conferences such as these give delegates a chance to network with people in other Botanic Gardens. Everyone leaves with a wealth of new ideas to incorporate into their local programs and a better understanding of the challenges faced by other Gardens in the Australasian Region. The next conference will be held in Dunedin, NZ, in 2013.

Post Note:

Ro Noone left the Friends at the end of the 2011 School Year. We hope to see her back in the near future as a sessional teacher as part of a revitalised Education Program.

Spring Showers and ...

Over forty Friends and “friends of Friends” gathered for our November garden excursion to Daylesford. It was an early exit from Eastern Park in overcast weather, but the spirits were high as we headed towards Bacchus Marsh and the Wombat State Forest in central Victoria.

Our first garden stop was St Erth, now owned and managed by Diggers, but made famous by previous owner Tommy Garnett. Tommy was a great friend and mentor to the original group of GBG Friends, Jayne Salmon told a few “Tom stories” as we journeyed to St Erth. The area receives much more rain than Geelong and our visit will be remembered for the steady downpour. This did not deter our keen group and gathering umbrellas they wandered around the beautifully lush site admiring the variety of large trees and the wonderful entry display. The vegetable garden and the espaliered fruit trees were of particular interest as the variety of Diggers’ heritage plants were displayed to advantage. There were some beautiful large trees including a Tilia, a Fagus sylvatica purpurea or copper beech and a tulip tree, Liriodendron. The plantings have to be hardy as the summer temperatures can reach 40° whilst it can snow in winter.

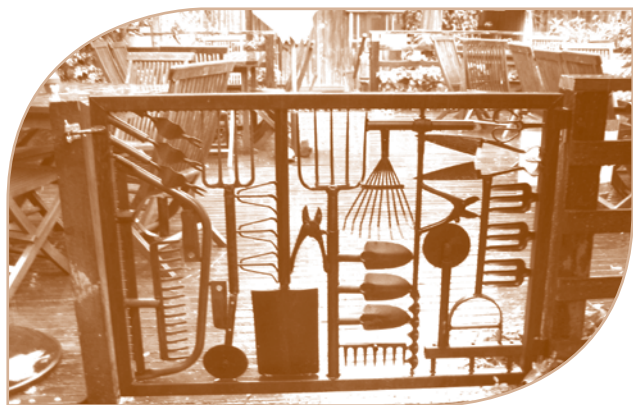
Spring Showers and ...



The original cottage, which now houses the Diggers shop was built in the 1860's by a Cornish stonemason. He settled here after the gold rush and named the property after his birthplace in Cornwall. Tom Garnett bought it and wrote a column in the Age for many years, reflecting on his gardening and horticultural experience here. The nursery was another attraction in spite of the weather. A fine café is also adjacent to the Nursery and it is worth a Sunday visit.

... *Lush Gardens*

Our next stop was Musk Farm Garden, the home of interior designer Stuart Rattle and reason for choosing this particular date for our trip. The garden was open as a fundraiser for the Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens at Daylesford. Luckily the rain had stopped by the time the bus arrived and we could really enjoy wandering around the magnificently presented property. The property was purchased in 1998 and the resulting garden has been developed over the past 13 years. Stuart and partner Michael nearly lost the property to fire in early 2009. The influence of friends Paul Bangay and Stephen Ryan is evident in some of the sculptured shapes and various planted rooms, but Stuart's decorating flare is also a feature. The house is quite unique in design and with the modified studio fits superbly into the setting. Musk is a plants-man's garden, inspired in its design and selection of plant material.



Friends of Wombat Hill provided simple delicious food for purchase and there was wine and coffee too. Lambley Nursery had a stall and the organisation was superb. Fete tents decorated with bunting greeted visitors and offered a county fair atmosphere. We all had plenty of time to wander with our detailed map and plant lists, dreaming of the changes we could make to our own patch.

Our final stop was at Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens and we could see quite a few changes from a previous visit, not long after a severe storm. There is a small but very active group working to restore plantings as well as rebuild the rotunda, fernery and paths. The gardens have a fine pinetum and like Eastern Park replacements are required for some senescent trees. Victorian designers Taylor and Sangster designed the gardens. Major fundraising is under way to assist Wombat Hill restoration. Various gardens were open in and around Daylesford late November and will open again in April 2012. The new café,



located in the renovated caretakers cottage is now open for business.

On the trip home a raffle was held and there were some great prizes including the first example of our new black Friends' apron with a stunning green embroidered logo. Aprons will soon be available for purchase. Everyone enjoyed the day and we look forward to our next outing visiting Geelong gardens. Thanks to the Events and Marketing Committee for a great day.

Luanne Thornton
FGBG Librarian & FGBG Committee of Management

Borrowed China

A number of Members donated or lent fine china cups to the Teahouse.

These have been greatly appreciated by the Teahouse guests over the past two years and we thank you very much for your donation. If you would like to retrieve your cups, plates and saucers they can be collected from the FGBG office by 29th February.

The Friends will offer unclaimed china for sale at the Autumn Plant Sale as a fund raiser.



Director's Report

A Place for People

We have a glimpse of other people's lives as they pass through the Botanic Gardens. A mothers group chatting while children play, a woman reading her book on a garden seat with her dog at her feet, extended family on a day out and a couple walking hand in hand at the end of the day. Many people pass through the garden each day, often unnoticed, taking away an impression, a memory or a new fact about a plant. Some people enjoy our guided tours, others talk to the Horticultural team and others learn through observation or by noting a plant name to learn more later.

The new Central Bed display is inspiring our visitors about edible plants from around the world. Plantings represent Africa, India, Europe, Asia, the Mediterranean, North America, the Middle East and South America. Plants discovered by the early explorers like the tomato and humble potato in South America were taken across the globe and have influenced cuisines the world over. We forget how exciting it would have been to many cultures to first taste these plants and adapt them to local recipes.

The demand for new food plants developed new agricultural techniques and markets. Over time breeding for local growing conditions, tastes and simply experimentation changed plants significantly from their original parents. Big business and generic supermarkets have reduced the varieties available and it is one of our goals to expand home gardeners repertoires by growing different varieties. We can interest people to learn about the plants that produce spices we are familiar with like the capsicum that is used for Paprika.

One of the great stories is that of the 'Three Sisters' associated with our North American planting. It is a great reminder of a naturalists approach to farming simply and with a great understanding of the life cycle of plants. The "Three Sisters" is a style of Native American Indian companion planting where corn, beans and pumpkins are grown together to



provide support, nutrients and shade. The First Sister, corn, provides the Second Sister, beans, with structural support and the bean roots enrich the soil with nitrogen for the Third Sister, pumpkin, which will shade the roots of the corn. Our planting is growing well and changing as each sister comes to the fore and we harvest the produce.

Australia is very multicultural in population which creates a very broad understanding of international food plants and cuisines. Our habit of taking elements of different cuisines and cultures has resulted in an Australian culinary style called 'fusion'. Sometimes confusing to the traditionalists this fusion of foods reflects our ability to take the best and make it our own. Many of our visitors have different cultural backgrounds and their interest in the display is being demonstrated by the high number of people reading the interpretive signs and telling our Horticultural team their own stories and uses for food plants we are growing.

We share our produce the visitors we interact with and provide some as ingredients for meals at the Teahouse. Recently a couple of children were observed harvesting the tomatoes and sneaking out of the garden- I can only hope that they might be budding chefs and were going home to make sauce! It is this sharing which reflects the diversity of people in our community and the simple connections that people make to the Botanic Gardens.

Annette Zealley

Director, Geelong Botanic Gardens

Clean Up Australia Day

Our beautiful Eastern Park deserves our care!

FGBG is again registered as a Clean Up organiser in Eastern Park.

When: Sunday 4 March, we will work from 11am to 1 pm.

Where: Meet at the covered BBQ beside the Playspace.

FGBG members, neighbors and anyone interested are welcome.

We usually have volunteers from scouts and cubs, a couple of local churches and school students.

How To Be Involved:

You can register: online at www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/login or on the day at the site

People attending need to see me, or one of the organizers, before commencing for a briefing on where to go (and not go!) and to collect an approved rubbish bag.

The City of Greater Geelong places a skip in the car park adjacent to the picnic pavilion for safe disposal of all rubbish.

What to Wear:

Wear sturdy covered footwear and a hat. We will have some gloves supplied, but if you have strong gloves, please bring them. Do bring along water, sunscreen and insect repellent too!

If you have queries about this, please contact Rosemary Turner
5241 2654, or email preturner@ozemail.com.au
Site Supervisor for FGBG for Clean Up Day

Metamorphoses at GBG – Children's Week with bugs and butterflies



Once again, Ro Noone coordinated a fun-filled day in the Geelong Botanic Gardens for preschoolers to coincide with Children's Week in October this year.

Out theme this year was The very Hungry Caterpillar . Despite having to reschedule due to wet weather, over 100 visitors (children and their parents or grandparents) joined in take part in interactive story telling, making butterflies and searching for bugs and butterflies in the gardens.

Thanks are due to the City of Greater Geelong for financial support and Jenny Possingham who assisted with the children and whose "bug hat" was a great hit with the children.



What's on Events, dates for the diary

January

What: **Indigenous Basket Weaving with local expert Helen Brotherton using plant material from the GBG – BOOKED OUT**

When: Australia Day, Thursday 26 & Friday 27 – 10 am to 4 pm (BYO lunch)

Where: GBG Meeting Room & Weather Allowings on the lawns at GBG

What: **Discovery Walk – ‘AUSTRALIA Day @ GBG’**, Australian plants were first used by the aboriginal people for food, medicine & timber; now they are popular in our gardens. We will look at plants from the local Geelong region and other parts of Australia, discussing techniques for planting and maintenance. With each wave of immigration, we have been introduced to plants from other continents. A special new planting in the GBG celebrates this theme

When: Sunday 26 January, 2 pm – no booking required

Where: Meet your Guide at front steps of GBG – gold coin donation

February

2012 MUSIC IN THE GARDENS

A Fabulous line up of bands for the 2012 season, some old, some new. Relax with ‘The Friends’ and enjoy the last of Summer at the Geelong Botanic Gardens. Arrange to meet your family and friends for a picnic and book these dates into your 2012 diary. The Teahouse will be open for coffee, ice-creams and light dinners.

Rickety Bridge	Feb 5
Hip Cats	Feb 12
Soul Sisters	Feb 19
African Agogo	Feb 26

What: **Twilight Welcome & Guided Walk for New & Old Friends**

When: Wednesday, 15 February 5.30 pm

Where: Meet your Guide at front steps of GBG, light refreshments to follow
RSVP Friends Office, 52 226053

What: **Discovery Walk – ‘OUT OF AFRICA -** from papyrus to pelargoniums, plants from the Nile to the Cape of Good Hope

When: Sunday 19 February, 2 pm – no booking required

Where: Meet your Guide at front steps of GBG – gold coin donation

What: **Teahouse Garden Party -** Celebrating the Friends contribution to the GBG & thanking volunteers and staff who helped make the Teahouse a special place to visit.

When: Tuesday, 28 February, 10am

Where: Teahouse Lawn – RSVP essential -
botanic@geelongcity.vic.gov.au

March

What: **Sustainable Home & Garden Expo**

When: Saturday 10 & Sunday 11 March

Where: Geelong Waterfront, hosted by Barwon Water

What: **Discovery Walk – ‘HARVEST CORNUCOPIA’-** discover food plants from around the world growing at the GBG – there is more to put in your basket than you might imagine.

When: Sunday 11 March, 2 pm – no booking required

Where: Meet your Guide at front steps of GBG – gold coin donation

What: **GROWERS AUTUMN PLANT SALE**

When: Saturday 24 & Sunday 25 March, 10 am to 4 pm

Where: Growing Friends Nursery, GBG rear access open

What: **Discovery Walk – ‘BIRDS & BINO’S’ -** bring your binoculars and join your guide for a morning stroll through the Gardens to discover some of our feathered residents and visitors

When: **9am Sunday, 25 March - NOTE – “early start for the early birds”**

Where: Meet your Guide at front steps of GBG – gold coin donation

April

What: **Garden Secrets of Geelong -** a self drive tour – join the Friends on a tour of select Gardens around Geelong

When: Monday, 23 April, full details available on booking.

Where: Strathbrae - Highton 10am, Hill House - Highton 11.15, Claremont – Newtown 12.30 pm, ending at Arundel, East Geelong
Enjoy a late BYO picnic lunch – cake, tea / coffee provided

Cost: **\$30 members, \$40 non-members – Bookings preferred, contact FGBG office for details**

A BOOKING MESSAGE

For many years the Friends have included a Booking Sheet in each edition of Jubaea.

We have decided that printing 500 sheets is not a smart use of our resources.

The vast majority of bookings are made through direct contact with the FGBG Office by phone or email.

We hope you support this sensible change.