

Jubaea



Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Inc. Newsletter

Volume 20 Issue 3

October 2020

FRIENDS OF
GEELONG
BOTANIC
GARDENS



Jayne Salmon, Friends' President 1989-2009 with Ian Rogers, former Director Geelong Botanic Gardens

THIRTY FIVE YEARS AND STILL GOING

In 1985 a small group of passionate and energetic people met to promote and foster the hidden gem lying in Eastern Park, Geelong. They were encouraged by the then Curator of the Geelong Botanic Gardens, Ian Rogers. A committee was formed and George Jones became the first President.

Initially guides were trained to show visitors the veritable treasure trove of trees and plants. Education was a priority and a program for school children was started by the Friends. Education continues today and is now managed by the City of Greater Geelong. Classes in Botanical Art were organized and are still extremely popular, with talented staff and students producing beautiful works.

As more volunteers joined, groups formed to develop the perennial border and tend the rose beds in the Gardens. A

Friends' Nursery was established to grow and sell plants from the Gardens. A Teahouse was built and volunteers provided refreshments for visitors for many years.

Thanks to these foundations, recent years have seen a notable increase in earnings, spending, educational and social activities. The professionalism, expertise, enthusiasm and time given by our members is cause for celebration.

In 2020, the COVID 19 epidemic has affected the Friends. Our volunteers have not met since March. No events are taking place. A solitary administrator manages the office using email, phone and Zoom. But, we will be back bigger and stronger when this is over, donating our time and welcoming new members and volunteers to support the gardens we love.

We hope you enjoy our photographic celebration in this issue.

WHAT IS A BOTANIC GARDEN...DURING A PANDEMIC?

More than one hundred years have passed since the Spanish Flu. And yet, as evident in this 1918 image from Sydney Botanic Gardens, Botanic Gardens have not only survived, they have flourished. Indeed, so too has our own Geelong Botanic Gardens. This is not our Gardens' first pandemic, and as scientists for decades have been predicting¹, it is not likely to be the last. What makes a Botanic Garden able to thrive during such adversities while other assets struggle to survive?



"At Work and Play" in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, during the 1918 Spanish Flu ¹

By understanding how humans and urban green spaces interact, we can understand what a Botanic Garden is during a pandemic and how this makes it such an essential asset. Green spaces, such as botanic gardens, are not new concepts but the emerging research now identify them as a direct source of health and wellbeing. This research gives validity to what those of us who are passionate about horticulture have known all along - gardens are good for us. What is most fascinating is that not just any garden will do. The broader a garden's botanic diversity the greater its perceived positive influence on health outcomes within a community². Anecdotally I certainly agree. Within the Geelong Botanic Gardens we have recently seen a larger number of doctors and nurses seeking refuge from increasing workloads due to the pandemic. Families with young children are also visiting in increased numbers, perhaps substituting trees, rocks and grass for locked-down plastic playgrounds.



2020 Development of the Pacific Rim Garden

Meanwhile the elderly meander with their morning coffees, feeling safe to exercise in the open space and clean air. During a pandemic a Botanic Garden is certainly a sanctuary.

As the Geelong Botanic Gardens has such a vital role to play in our community, we work tirelessly in a challenging season to support it. The staff have managed to increase the biodiversity, accessibility, quality and health of the entire gardens - and in only a few short months! The area where this is most noticeable is the Pacific Rim Garden, with construction nearing completion. The name of this garden is derived from the origins of the unique collection of plants featured in this display, particularly the Alistair and Julie Watt collection.



Progression of the Pacific Rim in March 2020

Progression of the Pacific Rim in September 2020



As horticulturally it could be classified under a myriad of categories the main unifying feature of this significant collection is that all of the plants have been sourced from countries bordering the Pacific Ocean. An extensive Living Plant Collection Management Plan has been put together to ensure that the curation of this collection remains true to its purpose.

The design of this landscape emulates the conditions and habitats preferred by the gymnosperms and other significant plant species showcased. The large rock borders represent some of the harsh rocky regions from which part of the collection has been sourced - namely Chile, North America and New Caledonia. Circular spaces have been designed with the Friends' tour groups in mind and the strategically placed viewpoints showcase the beautiful vistas within the gardens. The north-facing aspect of the landscape promotes optimal growing conditions, particularly for many of the rare trees that will one day redefine the garden's skyline - the urban forests of the future.

¹ ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2019, A Centenary Since the Flu, Viewed 30 August 2020, <<https://www.rahs.org.au/a-centenary-since-the-flu/>>

² Taubenberger, J. Morens, M. and Fauci A. (2007). The Next Influenza Pandemic: Can It Be Predicted?. JAMA, [online] 287(18), 2025-2027. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2504708> [2 Sept. 2020].

³ Barton, J. and Rogerson, M. (2017). The importance of greenspaces for mental health. BJPsych Int., [online] 14(4), 79-81. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5663018/> [1 Sept. 2020]

Other aspects of the landscape also include drawing the Geelong Botanic Gardens' past, present and future together taking inspiration from Daniel Bunce's winding pathways and other key heritage aspects, including the restored Furphy Tank, to blend the new with the old. The Furphy, thanks to the Friends' financial support, is now ready for installation. It will be connected to potable water and used as a hydration station for visitors and their pets - now the public can experience and study our history at the same time! We look forward to bringing this idea to fruition once Covid-19 restrictions subside.

We have also renewed a significant part of the "Peppercorn Promenade". These somewhat common trees have created a brilliant East-West corridor that connects the top of the 21st century carpark to the end of the Water Harvest Dam. Another tree avenue on display is the Ginkgo Avenue. It was a proud moment as each staff member planted one of these trees (planting for heritage is an exciting concept), all of which have been propagated from our own Ginkgo in the Asian Temperate Garden. All of these trees will also benefit from the new irrigation system. The irrigation system manages stormwater from East Geelong and has been developed using state of the art technology. With foresight, we have extended the irrigation out into the southern slope of the annexe. The longevity, design and installation of this system means we are benefiting today's Botanic Garden while also contributing to the sustainability and success of our future.



Alistair and Julie Watt helping to plant the collection

The Alistair and Julie Watt collection is an inspiring horticultural collection, and the crowning jewel of the Pacific Rim Garden. One of my fondest memories as an apprentice was fossicking through the Otway Ridge Arboretum with Alistair Watt and John Arnott, (previous Director of the Geelong Botanic Gardens) propagating many of the species we have today. For some years I watched this collection grow in the nursery and it is a profound privilege to be here as the very plants we propagated are presented in a

permanent display to the public. The partnership between the Otway Ridge Arboretum and the Geelong Botanic Gardens is a significant expression of true commitment to sustainable land management³ as well as excellence in horticultural practices. Between 2005 and 2007, the Friends contributed substantially to the acquisition of rare Araucaria and Chilean plants for revegetation of Eastern Park and the Geelong Botanic Gardens.



2020, fully restored Furphy Tank

As fellow avid supporters of Alistair Watt, I'm sure you are familiar with his life work and I know the Friends have done much to promote it, including taking tours to the Otway Ridge Arboretum and hosting information events with Alistair himself. I look forward to reading the article the Friends are presenting detailing the history of this collection further. An avid plant hunter, Alistair introduced over 240 species to Australia. It is no surprise that he found Robert Fortune a great inspiration and Alistair's work on Robert's life is a very comprehensive and a highly recommended read.

To Alistair Watt and his associated visionaries - Julie Watt, John Arnott and the Friends of the Geelong Botanic Gardens, we give our indebted gratitude for making this wonderful new addition a reality. This new landscape blends high level concepts of multifaceted sustainability, biogeography, horticulture, history and more. It will capture an extraordinary collection, indeed a legacy, for centuries to come.

Due to current COVID-19 restrictions we will initially have a soft opening for the Pacific Rim Garden and new Visitor Facility, and a more substantial event once restrictions subside.

We are looking forward to the humble opening of the new assets as the Geelong Botanic Gardens continues to be a place of hope and restoration during this season.

Ashley Filopovski (Acting Co-ordinator, GBG)

⁴ Cavender, N. Smith, P. and Marfleet, J. (2019). BGCI Technical Review: The role of botanic gardens in urban greening and conserving urban biodiversity. Surrey: Botanic Gardens Conservation International Descanso House, 1-25.

A LONG ASSOCIATION – THE ALISTAIR WATT COLLECTION

Friends of the Geelong Botanic Gardens are eagerly awaiting the opening of the newly landscaped southern annexe of the Geelong Botanic Gardens which will display many plants that originated in Alistair and Julie Watt's Otway Ridge Arboretum.

Our first association with Alistair was in July 1988 when he spoke to an enthusiastic group of Friends at the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens about plant collecting in Gondwana. Alistair had been collecting in Chile, New Caledonia and Fiji and was able to illustrate with beautiful slides, plants growing in these areas which are similar to flora we have in Australia. The basic southern hemisphere families and genera – Araucariaceae and Podocarpaceae, ancient broadleaves from the Cunoniaceae, Aquifoliaceae and Nothofagaceae families dominated the slides.



Pandanus on volcanic ash, Vanuatu 2017

Alistair had just returned from a collecting trip to New Caledonia with botanists from Sydney and Adelaide Botanic Gardens in 1987, securing seed and plants which cannot be imported today due to International protocols. Alistair has introduced approximately 300 plants to Australia and overseas, including a number of species of conifer, some of which have contributed to the New Caledonian collection at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and the Gondwanan collection in Geelong's 21st Century Garden.

The 1980's and 1990's were a golden era for plant collecting; Alistair and Julie travelled to New Caledonia and New Zealand many times. In 2005 they visited China for the first time and returned frequently to pursue their interest in Chinese plants that have been distributed around the world.

In Director John Arnott's report, Jubaea October 2004, he writes of the emergence of the "Watt Collection" as a key collection for the Geelong Botanic Gardens and Eastern Park into the future. A Memorandum of Understanding was negotiated with Alistair and Julie Watt of the Otway Ridge Arboretum, Lavers Hill to access plants, cuttings and propagation material from their extensive collection of conifers and temperate garden plants.

The Friends were very supportive of this agreement to enhance the diversity of plants growing in our Gardens. Geelong Botanic Gardens' horticultural staff visited Lavers Hill many times to take cuttings and seeds to grow on in the nursery. Some of the podocarps nurtured at the nursery were planted in Eastern Park four years ago as part of the revitalization programme. There are many plants, including a selection from Chile, waiting in the nursery to be transferred to the new dedicated Southern Hemisphere landscape. A beautiful *Dacrydium nausoriense* collected in the mountains behind Nandi in Fiji will be on display.



Alistair Watt at Julies, Fiji

A visit to the Otway Ridge Arboretum was organised as part of the Association of Friends Conference held in Geelong in May 2016. Many of our Friends participated in this tour and were able to appreciate a unique collection of southern hemisphere plants. Alistair was an enthusiastic and generous host. I visited the Arboretum again in January 2019; it was an exciting and inspirational day.

Alistair has written two outstanding books on his visits to China which should be compulsory reading for those interested in plants and plant collecting. In 2017 *Robert Fortune, A Plant Hunter in the Orient* was published and in 2019 *William Purdom and Reginald Farrer, Plant Hunters on the Eaves of China*.

Alistair is an esteemed modern day plant collector and long-time Friend of Geelong Botanic Gardens.

Jayne Salmon

CHALLENGING TIMES IN 2020

The idea that out of adversity, innovation and change for the better may emerge is not a new observation, but a timely one for groups such as the Friends, who have had to manage the effects of the constraints of Coronavirus. The hope that everything will one day go back to “business as usual” once the pandemic is over, is worryingly introspective and likely to rob us of amazing possibilities.

When restrictions were imposed in mid-March 2020, every aspect of the Friends had to be considered: the employment of our staff, the Geelong School of Botanical Art (classes, fees etc) guided walks with our volunteer Guides and weekly and seasonal plant sales, management of approximately sixty volunteers and management of events planned for 2020.

The Friends’ quick and efficient response is an enormous credit to those involved. Covid-safe plans for staff were developed within days of the City of Greater Geelong’s requests. Sanitizer products were purchased and protocols put in place. Suddenly only three people were allowed in the office and within days all events, art classes and activities were cancelled or suspended. Refunds were made and deposits for planned events were negotiated. Possibly saddest for many was the suspension of all volunteering, cruelly made worse by the second wave restrictions—in early July. So many Covid-safe plans had been made for the return of art classes and volunteers. The Meeting Rooms and Nursery fell silent and our staff, magnificently, worked on alone.

With no end in sight, much is still in limbo.

But has all of this made the Friends stronger and, if so, what might be the lasting benefits?

“Zoom” has taken on a new dictionary definition for nearly everyone. Part of that definition could include “a means of saving organisations and families from despair”. The understanding and use of new technologies has been remarkable and prompted the Friends to consider some new opportunities. Committee and subcommittee meetings became possible and volunteers were able to remain connected as Coordinators checked in with their groups. We are grateful to our Office Manager, Tracey Tilbury, for facilitating our use of this new technology.

Perhaps most excitingly, Zoom on-line classes have been conducted by some of our botanic art tutors, commencing early in term three and four. Equipment such as a document camera and compatible laptop were eagerly purchased from successful grant applications. How adaptive the students and tutors have been! Such classes would not have been contemplated before Coronavirus. Many thanks are owed to tutors John Pastoriza-Pinol and Amanda Ahmed, and to Office Manager Tracey Tilbury and Treasurer Jane Laidlaw, for their amazing responses to the situation.

On-line classes have the potential to be offered post-Covid, as another form of reaching students who might not otherwise

engage with our art school. The Friends are working towards retaining this initiative, to complement face-to-face botanical art classes in the future.

A Zoom Annual General Meeting is not out of the question. The capacity to include a larger audience in future AGMs and other such meetings, by offering digital participation, is not at all fanciful. Who would have thought! The future possibilities are endless!

Early in this time of isolation an entrepreneurial idea to generate income, and promote the Friends and Geelong Botanic Gardens, was put to Committee. The outcome, advertised in this edition of Jubaea, is the production of a beautiful calendar, resulting from the collaboration of a large number of volunteers. Covid has prompted the completion of a project that the Friends have mooted for many years but not achieved. Congratulations to Kate Kirkhope and all who brought this production to fruition.

Another positive outcome of the Covid situation has been the strengthening of the Friends’ relationships with local businesses. From negotiating deposits and deferring bookings with our Winter Lunch caterer and bus-trip coach company, to the willingness of some local businesses to advertise in the 2020 calendar- all of these put the Friends in a stronger position to plan for their future.

As many Covid-related grants have been made available to the Friends, more Committee members have a broader understanding of applying for grants, which will be to our benefit. This will hold us in good stead for the future. Our Treasurer has gained further skills and insights into employment issues. Working in cooperation with our allied staff, financial and accounting advisers, Jane and the Friends Finance Committee have learned the intricacies of Job Keeper and working with Government agencies.

Along with the modern laptop, the Friends arranged for staff to be able to work remotely from home. With the use of modern technologies most aspects of Friends’ operations can now be covered if it is not possible for staff to work at the Gardens. This would have been handy during the six-week shutdown while the roof was being repaired two years ago!

The opportunity to create virtual walks with our Guides through Geelong Botanic Gardens became available through a Geelong Seniors Week initiative. With a grant for a suitable camera and microphone, the Friends will be able to offer these on a regular basis long after Covid has passed.

So, yes, the Friends are stronger, as their adaptability and resilience has been put to the test and not found wanting. The support and appreciation of our members has been important, and small acts of thoughtfulness with emails, photos and sincerely written notes have not gone unnoticed. Who knows what other challenges and accompanying possibilities lie ahead for the Friends? *Allison Martland, FGBG President*

CELEBRATING THIRTY FIVE YEARS OF THE FRIENDS



George Jones and Ian Rogers plant the Wollemi pine

Gail Thomas and John Arnott admire the growth on the Wollemi Pine



Jayne Salmon and Annie McGeachy sort through Guides' resources



Roz Hill addressing the Temperate Garden Opening

Jimmie Morrison worked on the Perennial Border for many years



Jenny Happell revisits the Camellia Walk



Conservatory reopens after an extensive restoration



Luanne Thornton and Meralyn Roberts hard at work in the Library



Botanical art tutors, Dolores Skowronski-Malloni and Rita Parkinson promoting the Botanical Art School with art works and merchandise



Botanical Art Tutors, Amanda Ahmed, John Pastoriza-Piñol, Dolores Skowronski-Malloni at the Opening of Inspired by Nature 5 Exhibition



Small group of Heritage Rose Garden volunteers



Some of the Perennial Border volunteers



Celebration of The Friends Tea House – 20 years



Growers in the Friends' Nursery



Jan Perry (Manager 2005 – 2012) closes the door of The Friends Tea House for last time



The Guides and Ashley Filopovski exchanging information about the new exotic plants in the Conservatory



Opening of the restored Ladies' Kiosk in Eastern Park



"Daniel Bunce", John Arnott and Annette Zealley



Aerial shot of the new 21st Century Garden



Geelong Botanic Gardens staff planting the Silver Border to celebrate 25 years of The Friends



Music in the Gardens – a typical crowd at one of our very popular concerts



Helena Buxton at the last 'Music in the Gardens' concert



Growers bring plants for sale to the teahouse



Seasonal Sale at the Friends Nursery several years ago



Jenny Possingham and Diana Sawyer
at Music in the Gardens



Newly planted avenues thrive in Eastern Park



George Jones and "Daniel Bunce" at the Bunce Celebration



Friends' Education Officer Ro Noone

Friends' volunteers working in the teahouse



FORMATION OF FRIENDS OF GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS

On 7 November 1985 a public meeting was held at City Hall with a view to establishing a Friends Group.

Jenny Happell and Jayne Salmon (both guides in Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne) had met George Jones when looking at trees and plants in the Geelong Botanic Gardens. Director Ian Rogers was enthusiastic about the formation of a Friends Group. The aim of the Group would be to promote the Gardens and to assist when able and required. One of the first projects would be the training of guides. The meeting resulted in a unanimous agreement to proceed.

In 1985, to celebrate Victoria's 150th anniversary, fifteen regional Botanic Gardens which had been allowed to run down over the years were rejuvenated. Fifteen German/Australian Companies provided the sponsorship to commemorate Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, the first Government Botanist and first Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

Criteria and conditions applied to select the gardens which would participate in the program. Sponsorship provided by the 150th Committee was to be matched by local management such as local councils. The criteria were: botanic merit, public ownership, the existence or traces of original design, the possibility of doing something worthwhile at a reasonable cost, and a guarantee of sympathetic maintenance.

The 150th Committee set out to list and label existing trees and shrubs, to carry out tree surgery, to help with local projects and to provide guidelines for future care of the fifteen gardens. The Committee also tried to make sure that each garden had a company of "Friends", possibly a local horticultural society, to act as a watchdog on behalf of their gardens.

Geelong Botanic Gardens Friends modelled themselves on Friends of Adelaide Botanic Gardens.

Geelong Botanic Gardens was ready for help:

- Geelong Council was relatively small, and funds were lacking,
- Geelong was in the grip of a severe drought, and people were needed to help with watering,
- The Gardens had a wonderful history which needed celebration and promotion,
- George Jones had recently published his book, *Growing Together: a Gardening History of Geelong*.

With the full support of the Director, Ian Rogers, the enthusiastic Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens were off to a great start and ready to go!

Jayne Salmon

35 MEMORABLE YEARS!

What a difference friends make, especially when they're garden Friends! As with many botanic gardens across Australia, the Geelong Botanic Gardens have benefitted enormously from the energy, passion, vision and financial support of its hard-working Friends group. And now we're happily celebrating 35 years of that unstinting support.

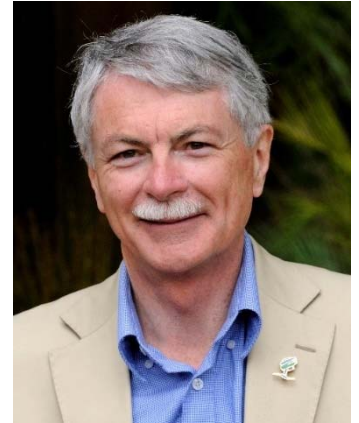
Gardens have taken on even greater importance during these Covid-affected times. During lockdowns we've had more time to work in our home gardens, as we read in the July issue of *Jubaea*, and when out for exercise walks we've paid closer attention to gardens in neighbouring streets. Gardens are uplifting, restorative places – just what is needed in our current times, and for the future.

I'm sure that walks through the Geelong Botanic Gardens have supported many residents during the recent Stage 3 restrictions. Projects undertaken during winter, especially the new parterre garden, will now be bringing great delight, along with the spring foliage and blossom, and the Gardens' staff will be looking forward to having the Friends Volunteers back soon to help with horticultural tasks.

The help of the Friends over the past 35 years has been an essential factor in the reinvigoration of the Gardens and Eastern

Park. Sustained advocacy for the cultural and community importance of the Gardens, fundraising and financial support for many capital projects, and extensive horticultural assistance show the diversity of the Friends' help during that time. Many members have been involved in those achievements, as well as enjoying the other activities and benefits of being a Friend – participating in botanical art classes, volunteering as a Guide, a Grower or in the Library, or enjoying talks, tours and other programmed events.

The achievements of the Friends' first 35 years are wonderful, and you can all have great pride in what has been done. I know the Friends Committee is looking now to the years ahead, and continuing your unswerving support for the Botanic Gardens and Eastern Park as community landmarks for Geelong and the region.



I offer my warm congratulations on this 35th Anniversary and best wishes for the years ahead!

Philip Moors, Patron

REFLECTIONS ON FRIENDS OF GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS

My association with the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens has spanned nearly 30 years. As a young horticulturist in the early 1990's I took a group from the Geelong Friends 'behind the scenes' at the Melbourne Zoo to see some of the interesting horticultural work being undertaken there. I can remember feeling at the time that this dedicated and progressive group of folks would achieve some remarkable things.

Skip ahead a couple of years to 1995 and I was fortunate to attend the BGCI Global Botanic Gardens Congress in Perth WA, where I properly met Ian Rogers and two formidable women from the Friends in Annie McGeachy and Jayne Salmon. Meeting these people and seeing firsthand their passion for Geelong Botanic Gardens was infectious!

Later that year I was asked by the Friends to open a travelling exhibition at the Geelong Art Gallery, *It's a Rare Thing*; Rare and Threatened Flora by Helen Leitch, which I felt was quite a milestone in my career.

With this background I was very much looking forward to working with the staff and Friends of the Geelong Botanic Gardens when

I commenced in the role of Curator Geelong Botanic Gardens in October 2000.

Gardens staff and Friends achieved some remarkable things in the six years that I was at the Gardens. These ranged from the opening of the 21st Century Garden, numerous national conferences, rejuvenating significant areas of the original garden, creating the meeting room as a community hub and of course the role that the Friends played in being the interface with the Geelong community (and beyond). This was all a testament to what can be achieved through a shared vision.

The spirit of collaboration I experienced with the Friends was greatly valued...something that I will never forget.

John Arnott



ANNETTE ZEALLEY: DIRECTOR/COORDINATOR OF GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS, 2007 - 2020

Annette Zealley arrived as the new Director in 2007. She had very big shoes to fill: John Arnott had been something of a local hero, being so well known for his work with community groups, including the Friends. More widely, he was known as the person who developed the 21st Century Garden, which had resulted from the 1995 Conservation and Management Study and Landscape Master Plan for Geelong Botanic Gardens and Eastern Park. This Garden, whilst initially controversial, put Geelong well and truly on the international botanic gardens map.



Annette at a
Friends' Thank You
Event in 2008

Annette took some time to settle in and put her stamp on the management of the Gardens. Her style was very different and her priorities included a tighter organization of the workplace in line with current Work and Safety Regulations.

There was less time to work with the Friends, but Annette regularly attended Friends' Committee and Guides' meetings, and she was guest speaker for special groups like U3A, Guide Training and Annual General Meetings of the Friends.

The Friends continued to give financial support to the Geelong Botanic Gardens Education Program, which was now implemented by Gardens staff. Annette made sure that the Guides were informed about current topics and themes, so that they could explain and reinforce the public education program. The historic sunken glasshouse took on a new life as the Curiosity Cabinet, where displays also explained and developed Gardens educational themes.

Under Annette's leadership, the central bed in the 19th Century Garden became a focus for many seasonal educational themes: tea and coffee plants, soup plants, pulses, root vegetables, pollination and more. Work continued on implementing the 1995 Master Plan, moving on to Stage 2. In 2008, a Strategic Plan was confirmed to develop and manage the landscape and facilities of the Gardens and Eastern Park. Annette coordinated work on pedestrian and cycling paths which linked with the city. In 2011, funding was granted for Stormwater Harvesting and Storage in Eastern Park. This collected storm water from East Geelong and directed it to filtration and storage on the site of

Daniel Bunce's "lagoon". 6.8 million litres of water, which previously drained into the bay, can now be used to water the Gardens, Eastern Park and other plantings in the City of Greater Geelong. An attractive expanse of reclaimed water, surrounded with indigenous plants, attracts water birds and enhances the park. Plants surrounding the water include many grasses and strappy plants (*Austrostipa*, *Austrodanthonia*, *Carex*, *Ficinia*, *Lomandra*, *Poa* and *Themeda*) as well as shrubs which provide shelter and protection for small birds (*Acacia*, *Enchylaena*, *Eryngium*, *Goodenia* and *Pimelea*).

As a major project, Annette directed the evaluation of the many old trees in Eastern Park, following a plan by John Patrick. Senescent trees were replaced and original avenues of the park restored. Annette became enthusiastic about the history of the park, and led many interesting presentations on historic plantings and community activities. The location and recognition of the old carriageways became a consuming interest, for both Annette and the Guides.

The Guides organized a weekend walk through the park with John Hawker, a Heritage Horticultural Officer with Heritage Victoria. Over 1,000 trees have been planted in a few years to replace senescent trees and enhance the park. The new plantings have made an important contribution to the rejuvenation of this significant historic landscape. In 2010, Geelong Botanic Gardens and the surrounding parkland were listed on the Victorian Heritage Register as being of State significance. With help from the Friends, grants were obtained for the rejuvenation of the 1880s rotunda and the 'Ladies' Kiosk'.

In the Gardens, the AL Walter Conservatory needed complete renovation. The project involved years of frustration; the Conservatory was at last opened to the public in 2019, ironically when Annette was on leave. However, she directed much of the building renovation, as well as the surrounding landscaping, which featured unusual hedge plants.

Annette's last major project was the construction of a new Visitor Facility which will provide much needed toilets and shelter for garden visitors. Importantly the shelter becomes an 'Outdoor Classroom' for the education program. This pavilion has a wall for protection from the wind and afternoon sun. The other side is open to a view of some of the Gardens' amazing trees. Now that the building is complete, work is ongoing on access pathways and landscaping.

Over 12 years, much has been achieved. It is regrettable that Annette Zealley's sudden departure did not allow for congratulations and farewells. We wish her well in her retirement.

Elizabeth Bennetto

GEELONG SCHOOL OF BOTANICAL ART

Online classes were introduced in Term 3, as face to face teaching was not possible due to COVID 19 restrictions. These were conducted by John Pastoriza-Piñol and were very successful and valued by the students who attended.

In Term 4, both John and Amanda Ahmed will be taking online classes, each for two hours. John's classes will continue with watercolour and Amanda will be taking classes in colour pencil.

Online classes offer a very different approach to learning, and they pose particular challenges to tutors and students alike, but we are adapting and refining as we go. The digital cameras purchased for the School by the Friends are an invaluable tool that make this form of teaching possible.

Dolores Skowronski Malloni will be taking classes in Term 4, but will be retiring at the end of the year. We will greatly miss her as she has made an important contribution to the School for many years.

Deb Chirnside has now regrettably retired from teaching in the School, due to her wishing to spend more time with her grandchildren. We also thank her for sharing her considerable skills and wish her well in the future.



Deb Chirnside

Judy Lavery
Co-ordinator GSBA

DANIEL BUNCE AND AUSTRALIA'S FIRST PEOPLE

Each year as Reconciliation Week is celebrated, we seek to strengthen our relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Geelong Botanic Garden's community can look back in time and acknowledge our first curator Daniel Bunce for his humanity and his strong association with Australia's first people.

Prior to his appointment as curator of the Geelong Botanic Gardens, Daniel Bunce led a life unlike many of the early settlers to our country. He arrived in Hobart (Van Diemen's Land) in 1833 with a background in gardening and botanising determined to make his life as a nurseryman and collector of plants.



Daniel Bunce
photo
Courtesy of the
State Library

In 1835 he became proprietor of the Denmark Hill Nursery where his plants were arranged according to the Linnaean Taxonomic system. Daniel Bunce had one of the earliest garden nurseries and possibly produced the first nursery catalogue in Australia. During 1837/8 he wrote the *Manual of Practical Gardening Adapted to the Climate of Van Diemen's Land*, published in monthly instalments. (The Friends republished the Manual in 2007 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the appointment of Daniel Bunce as Curator of the Botanic Gardens).

Bunce was interested in the native vegetation of Tasmania. He travelled widely to collect seeds and new plants which he carefully recorded in his diary. He was also interested in the indigenous people and observed the cruel treatment which they were subjected to and ultimate banishment. He tried to understand the violence that had occurred towards the aborigines prior to his arrival, and questioned the settlers' behaviour!

In 1839 he sailed across Bass Strait to the fledgling settlement of Melbourne. Soon after his arrival he met a well known aboriginal man named Benbow who lived with his wife in a corner of John Batman's garden. Bunce regarded Benbow as a very worthy gentleman. He met with other Aboriginal people and accompanied them on a plant collecting trip to Westernport Bay. He learned something of the local language from his companions and became relaxed with his new friends who brought him plants with their indigenous names to be recorded. He shared their food from the land, hearts of the tree fern, roots of the yam daisy and grilled white grubs. Bunce noted the soil and geology of the area and the tall banksias that grew in sandy soil.

Bunce acquired an interest in ethnography and met with a small group of like-minded settlers. William Hull, a merchant, became one of Bunce's patrons. However, Bunce led an impecunious life in the settlement of Port Phillip and had numerous brushes with the law. To save his reputation William Hull arranged for Bunce to sail to Sydney in 1846 and join Ludwig Leichhardt on his second expedition across Australia.

Bunce's passion for botany brought him into conflict with Leichhardt as they disagreed about who should keep his specimens. Leichhardt wanted to pass any unique specimens on to the proposed Sydney Herbarium and often tried to stop Bunce collecting. Bunce collected twelve Bunya seeds that were left behind in a campsite by a group of Aboriginal people.

Bunce was able to communicate with Aboriginal groups along the way by waving a wand of plant specimens. The local people named the specimens and indicated when a plant was poisonous. The language of plants bridged the gap between the Aboriginal people and the European explorers. However, the expedition was a failure due to illness and lack of provisions.

Leichhardt did not want Bunce on his third expedition in 1848 and suggested that he remain at Moreton Bay and collect specimens for the Sydney Botanic Gardens. Bunce enjoyed this time in Queensland and again collected many new plants.

On his return to Melbourne he set out again with Aboriginal friends to follow the Murray River to Adelaide. Bunce meticulously recorded the countryside and everywhere they went spoke with Aboriginal people as Bunce wished to learn more about the use of indigenous plants.

The Aborigines still saw the country as their own despite European occupation. Bunce received a warm welcome in Adelaide and many people came to see the explorer. Bunce and Jemmy, his Aboriginal travelling companion and long-time friend, returned to Victoria. At Buninyong they were joined by a group of Jemmy's relatives and friends who celebrated the travellers' return. By contrast Bunce's reception in Melbourne was cool: his critics refused to concede he had made any new discoveries as the land travelled had been settled by Europeans for a decade. Bunce returned his to former horticultural trade advertising seeds and specimens from his botanical journey to the interior and

offering to lay out gardens on landscape principles for gentlemen of means.

Although Bunce failed to win the respect of the worthy European settlers of Melbourne he was attuned to the Aboriginal people. He challenged the generally held settler belief that Aboriginal people had little of the intellectual capacity of the Europeans, stating that few people possessed closer reasoning power or had observing faculties of a higher order than those of the Aborigines of Victoria.

In 1851 he published "*Language of the Aborigines of the Colony of Victoria and other Australian districts*" and "*Hortus Victoriensis*"; a catalogue of the most generally known flora of Victoria. In 1857 Bunce published "*Australasiatic Reminiscences of twenty three years wanderings in Tasmania and the Australias: including Travels with Dr. Leichhardt in north or tropical Australia*". He also authored "*Hortus Tasmaniensis*", "*Guide to the Linnaean System of Botany*", "*Australian Manual of Horticulture*", and "*Aborigines of Australia*".

Bunce continued to wander; an early enthusiasm for gold waned and he continued to collect plants. In 1855 he settled in Melbourne to write and edit the "*Rural Magazine*" and a column "*Journal of a Naturalist*".

In 1857 Daniel Bunce was appointed the first curator of the Geelong Botanic Gardens, the windswept reserve of nearly 300 acres overlooking Corio Bay. The transformation of this difficult landscape and his significant plantings are well documented, but what is not so well known is his great friendship with King Billy, regarded by Europeans as the sole representative of the Aboriginal race which had formerly owned the district. When Bunce died in 1872 King Billy was among the mourners who farewelled him at the gate of the Geelong Botanic Gardens.

As we wander through the beautiful Geelong Botanic Gardens today we should reflect on the past and acknowledge the affinity and respect of our first Curator for the Aboriginal people of Australia.

Jayne Salmon

References: "Clearings", Paul Fox; "Growing Together", George Jones; Bunce publications held by FGBG
Copies of "Manual of Practical Gardening" may be purchased from the Friends Office.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 9 November, 5.00 pm

All Members are invited to attend our Annual General Meeting. An official notice will be sent out shortly with the Covid Safe allowances for in-person attendance in the meeting room and details for online attendance.

It may be an interesting mix of face-to-face and Zoom attendance. For members of the Friends who have an interest in working with a dedicated team to manage the affairs of the Friends, nominations for Committee are now open. One meeting a month and attendance at some Friends functions is required. Committee would particularly appreciate a nominee who has some financial knowledge/experience to assist the Treasurer and / or experience in organisational management.

Please call the Friends Office for more information and / or nomination forms. Collaboratively minded members are invited to nominate and will be most welcome.

FGBG activities @GBG and beyond



JUBAEA SUBMISSIONS for the next Edition are due by 4 January 2021.

All articles including high resolution photos (jpeg files) can be sent to the FGBG Office via email, WeTransfer or USB.

THE FRIENDS' INAUGURAL GARDENERS' CALENDAR

THE PERFECT GIFT FOR 2021

With monthly hints on what to plant, gardening tips and what to see in our wonderful Botanic Gardens - all offered by our talented local gardeners. Fundraising helps the Friends in their support of Geelong Botanic Gardens.

For online orders, click on the link www.friendsgbg.org.au or phone the office (03) 5222 6053

\$15 per calendar (\$12 Members)

NOW AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE



Events That Were Deferred This Year Due To The Covid Pandemic And We Hope To Offer In 2021:

Bus trip to Daylesford and Frogmore in Autumn

A Silent Plant Auction

Geelong Design Week guided walks in March

Self-drive tour of local historic gardens and homes

BGANZ Botanic Gardens Day in May

Cooking demonstration with Gwen Anderson

Winter Lunch at Truffleduck

Through the Garden Gate

The Gift Fund currently has \$427,009.00 and we look forward to continuing support for projects in the Geelong Botanic Gardens with these funds. Details of our past support are on the Friends' website. Our continuing thanks for all donations.

FGBG Patron: Dr Philip Moors

FGBG Committee: Allison Martland - President, Libby Hogg – Vice President, Judy Lavery – Vice President, Jane Laidlaw - Treasurer, Kate Kirkhope – Secretary, Tilly Brunton, Jan Cheyne, Denise Feldman, Peggy Muntz, Barrie Satchell.

Editorial Team: Luanne Thornton, Liz Bennetto, Judy Fyfe, Tracey Tilbury, Allison Martland, Peggy Muntz, Margaret Gork.

The Jubaea Newsletter is printed at GORDON PRINT, Little Malop Street, GEELONG 3220.

Jubaea is published by the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Inc. PO Box 235, GEELONG 3220.

Friends' Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 10.00 am – 1.00 pm.

Friends' phone: (03) 5222 6053

Website: www.friendsgbg.org.au

Email: info@friendsgbg.org.au

©Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Inc. 2020. The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens or those of the Geelong Botanic Gardens. Neither the FGBG nor the GBG accepts responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed, although every effort is made to publish reliable information.