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Fagus

The Magazine of
Friends of the Royal
Tasmanian Botanical
Gardens



In this issue • Acting Director's Report • President's Report • AGM Minutes
• Visits to Chelsea Flower Show and Abbey Gardens
• Vale Don Dabner • Quarantine • and much more



Friends of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Inc.

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Contributors to this Issue

Fran Alexis; Joan Booth; Mark Fountain; Elizabeth Haworth;
Megan Marrison; Eileen Maskrey; Mike Maskrey; Lorraine
Perrins; Frank Povah; Les Winspear

Our cover

Rhododendrons near the Anniversary Arch (See page 5)

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RTGB FRIENDS



IT WAS WITH a mixture of trepidation and excitement that I approached the task of editing my first issue of *Fagus*, having been handed this task by the Friends at our recent AGM. I am relieved to report that things thus far seem to be going well and I have quite enjoyed the experience. This outcome is largely due to the high quality of the articles that have been submitted for inclu-

sion in this issue and the skills and diligence of Frank Povah who has designed the layout with a great deal of expertise.

So what does the November 2015 issue of *Fagus* have on offer? Mark Fountain has provided an Acting Director's Report with an overview of springtime activities in the Gardens and recent staff and Board changes. In this issue we have not one, but two President's Reports. Joan Booth, our new President elected at the AGM introduces herself and the Committee for 2015-2016, while past President Eileen Maskrey's Report to the AGM, outlining the Friends activities over the past year is reprinted in full. Our Member Profile for this issue is Lyn Byrne, a former leader of the Friends Propagation Group.

Eileen and I have been pleased to provide two articles that derive from our time spent in England earlier this year, featuring the Chelsea Flower Show and a favourite West Country garden. Megan Marrison and Lorraine Perrins have submitted an interesting article on the very important topic of biosecurity in the RTBG and how the garden staff deal with plant pests and diseases. Fran Alexis, who was the Friends' official delegate to the Conference for Volunteer Guides in Botanic Gardens has provided a report on the 2015 Conference held in September and hosted by the Sydney Botanic Gardens.

I think that you will agree that we have a fine mix of subject matter and should provide something for everyone who loves gardens and the RTBG in particular.

One new initiative that I have introduced is to ask you to share your photographs of the gardens with other Friends through *Fagus*. The categories and guidelines have been set out under the heading 'Sharing the Beauty'. Please respond by sending me your photos for coming issues. I hope you enjoy the following pages.

Michael Maskrey
Editor





Acting Director's Report

Mark Fountain

I thought I'd use this report for a quick catch up on the range of activity we have been managing over the last two months or so. Spring is traditionally a busy time across the Gardens and this Spring is no exception. So please forgive me if this report is all over the place just like Spring weather.

It's the time of year when we have a number of major events and this year without the services of a Marketing and Events Officer we've had an additional communications and events related workload. We've had Lisa Burnett working part-time on contract to help us with some marketing and events activities with a focus on the Spring Festival. Lisa has fitted in well with the team and produced a great festival with a very short lead in period.

On September the 22nd RTBG Staff and Friends celebrated Margot's 40 years of contribution towards the RTBG. By way of example two of Margot's major recent contributions are a role in the change in focus of the Conservatory displays from ornamentals to an Orchid focused display, giving the display value both botanically and horticulturally, creating a year round display and a much more sustainable display. Another very obvious major contribution is the phenomenon of the annual Tomato sale. Created and developed by Margot this event has developed 'legendary' status as a horticultural event and continues to be a community favourite. This year's

Tomato 'Spectacular' was another resounding success.

On other staff matters; we received official confirmation that our Marketing and Events Officer, Ben Davidson has now taken on a position with the Departmental Communications Branch, we wish Ben all the best in his new posting. I'd like to welcome Mark Johnstone to the Gardens, Mark has stepped into the Utility Officers role and Mark seems to be settling in quickly judging by the number of man sized irrigation holes that have appeared since he started. I'd also like to welcome James (Jimmy) Corrigan as our new trainee. Jimmy started on Monday and will be working to complete his Certificate III over the next two years. We are very sad to announce Anne's retirement, Anne hasn't established a firm date yet but she will be retiring within a month or so, we wish Anne all the very best in her new life on the 'outside', she has made a major contribution to the Gardens. The Gardens new Director will be announced within the next few weeks.

Apart from all the regular preparatory work for Spring the horticultural arm of the Gardens organised the Threatened Species Display to recognise Threatened Species day. I particularly like the permanent outcomes of this display in the new red labels recognising Tasmania's threatened species. Major change is also underfoot in the Northern section of the Gardens where the team has put an enormous amount

of preparation into the groundwork for new plantings in the Greater Hobart garden.

Succulent, the new restaurant at the RTBG and its smaller counterpart Sprout Café (the kiosk) are now in nearly full operation (the restaurant kitchen is awaiting the installation of a larger range hood fan). The Restaurant has a wonderful team in place, please come in and say hello to them and enjoy their service and their food.

The RTBG Board have recruited three excellent new Board members: Beth Mathison is a highly experienced company director and business manager with diverse experience, Paul Oxley has well developed skills in corporate governance, communications and government relations and Jo Bailey has high level skills and experience in strategic marketing and brand management across both the private and public sectors with a particular focus on tourism related activity. Beth Mathison and Paul Oxley were appointed for three years beginning on 6-7-2015, and Jo Bailey was appointed for three years, beginning 28-8-2015. The new Board members fill older vacancies left by Professor Margaret Britz and Nicky Mckibben and the recent resignation of Scott Gadd. Scott has been a major supporter of the RTBG both as the Secretary of the Department of Tourism, Parks, Heritage and the Arts and as a long term Board member, his input will be missed.

On Friday night September the 25th I officially opened an exhibition of the botanical art of Margaret Anderson Hope (1848 to 1934) and also officially launched a book of the work of this Tasmanian botanical artist. The exhibition is in the Allport Museum on the ground floor of the State Library and well worth checking out, it's beautiful work.

The RTBG Website 'went live' on Monday the 5th of October: <http://gardens.rtbg.tas.gov.au/> I think the new site looks fantastic and from my brief play with it, also seems to work very well. It's a brand new site so might require some minor work, so if you see mistakes please make sure you let Marcus or Admin know so that we can have them corrected ASAP. Thanks to Marcus for the concentrated creative effort that was required to make this important project happen.

Lorraine Perrins and Natalie Tapson both spoke to members of the Friends of TMAG when the group visited the Gardens in early October. Nat and Lorraine talked about the Gardens important behind the scenes plant conserva-

tion work, focusing on the work of the Seed Bank and the importance of the conservation seed orchards. Judging by the group's response and the number of questions this was a very well received session.

This years Spring Fest saw an almost unprecedented two good days of balmy Spring Weather and unfortunately slightly smaller crowds. The Festival itself was certainly a success, great food and an excellent line up of entertainment. The program of talks, demonstrations and tours developed by Marcus Ragus was very well attended with excellent feedback. Spring Fest (and it's previous incarnations) is 30 years old next year it will be important to review the event and it's future.

The RTBG Annual Report 2015 has been written, collated, edited and is now at the printers on time to meet it's statutory deadline of October 31st. Many thank to Natalie Tapson for the hard work of pulling it all together, David Hunt and team for the financials and David Reid and Natalie for some intense editorial sessions.

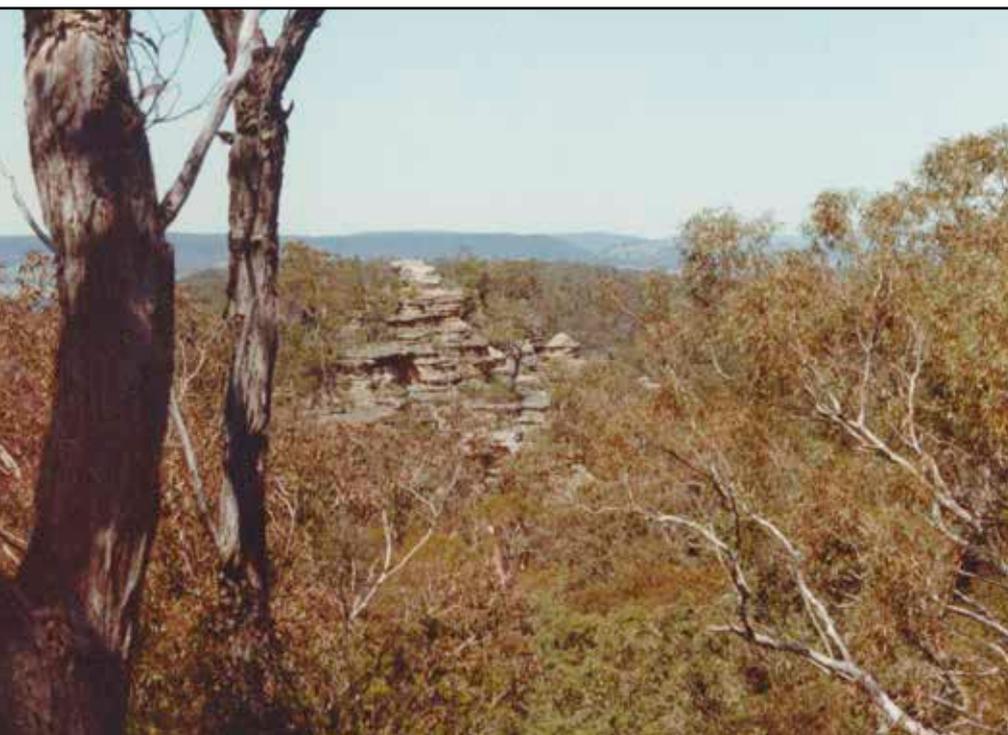
Finally a quick look at and com-

parison of visitor numbers over the lead-up weeks to Spring Fest in 2014 and 2015:

2014	
Week Beginning	Visitor Numbers
October 3	5,179
October 11	3968
2015	
Week Beginning	Visitor Numbers
October 1	5,999
October 9	11,793

The school holidays and pre Spring Fest. periods are usually busy times, as you can see this year however we have experienced a significant increase in visitor numbers, the weather is one factor, WK2 in 2014 was certainly weather affected. Without surveying our patrons it's difficult to determine the reason for what is clearly a very big jump in visitation in the 9-10-2015 week. We'll have a better idea of how things are progressing when we tally the total visitations for September and October for the October Board meeting.

The Gardens certainly are popular.



The King of China's Rock Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve Near Mudgee, NSW

So named for its pagoda like turrets, complete with 'windows', this hidden gem is in an area of high biodiversity, that is also a stopover for migrating birds.

Among its paradoxes are sandflats that in autumn are home to strange, glowing fungi the size of rockmelons, moss-filled gullies, and pockets of spinifex and mallee.

The ridge from where I took this photo is a watershed – behind me, all water flows to the west, before me to the east – and home to many carnivorous sundews.

Much of this region, along with its astounding array of flora and fauna is now disappearing under coalmines.



President's Report

A brief word for my first report as President of the Friends committee. Outgoing President, Eileen, presented her report on the activities and successes of the Friends of the RTBG at the recent AGM – a copy of which can be read in this edition of Fagus.

At the AGM I was elected to be the next President of the Friends of the RTBG committee and look forward to a productive year ahead. I know that we have a dedicated and hard-working group. In the absence of a nominee for the position of Secretary, Aina has agreed to continue in that position for another year in

addition to taking on the role of Membership Officer. Kaye continues as Treasurer and Eileen is VP. Jenny Parrott continues to beaver away at unearthing our history. We welcome new committee members: Mike Maskrey as Publications Officer; Fran Alexis and Catherine King as the representatives of the Begonia Group and Growing Friends respectively; Chris Watts who has taken on the task of co-ordinating the roster for the Studio volunteers and buggy drivers.

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank everyone – those on the committee and all those Friends

who work behind the scenes in various ways and look forward to continued support. We will have an interesting and exciting couple of years ahead. RTBG approaches its bicentenary celebration in 2018 and 'Friends' have committed funds for the rejuvenation of the interior of the Cottage.

Keep the date of Saturday 5th of December free. Our end of year social function will be a special morning tea, held in conjunction with our last General Meeting for the year.

Cheers

Joan Booth

SHARE THE BEAUTY

A lot of visitors to the RTBG carry around a camera, iPad, or smart phone with the express intention of taking photographs within the Gardens. I'm sure that Friends of the RTBG are no different. The gardens offer almost unlimited opportunities to take photographs of all kinds. So, why not share some of these by having them printed in Fagus?

If this is an idea that appeals to you, you are invited to submit your digital photographs to the editor as e-mail attachments. They may be sent to me at emaskrey@bigpond.net.au

Photographs can be in one of the three following categories:

- A. A close up image of a flower, leaf, insect etc.
- B. A scene taken within the Gardens
- C. A photograph of people enjoying themselves in the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens.

For category C it is important that you obtain the permission of the subject before submitting it, and a statement to this effect must be included with the photo. This is particularly important where images of children are involved. The permission of the parent or guardian must be obtained.

When you submit your photograph, please include your name and suburb within the message. Sorry, there are no prizes – just the satisfaction of sharing your favourite photographs with Fagus. Happy snapping!

Mike Maskrey, Editor

An example from categories A and C is included here and a suggestion for category B graces the front cover.



Annual General Meeting, September 19 2015

It is with great pleasure that I present the Annual Report for 2015. This has been my third year as President of Friends of the RTBG, a role I could not have filled without the support of the Committee, and many other members who volunteer within the RTBG.

The 2014–2015 cruise-ship season once again proved to be a great boost to our fund raising. The Princess ships brought large groups of visitors, often four coach-loads a day, which tested the stamina of our guides. The small, but dedicated group of tour guides are to be thanked for the many volunteer hours they gave, not only on cruise ship days, but also for the many other requests for booked tours we receive.

We have been fortunate to gain several new members, who are currently training as guides. A recent excellent “trip advisor” award for the RTBG, while marking the beauty of the Gardens, must in large part be due to the efforts of our guides. It also reflects the excellent job done by the volunteers in the Garden Studio. The Gardens Explorer (Buggy) continues to be popular. More drivers are needed to make this service available on a regular basis, especially during the main tourist season. As an example, not all cruise ships book tours, but they do bring coach loads to the RTBG. Tours are already booked by the Princess ships for 2015–16, and we have been invited to offer tours to even more cruise ships in the next two seasons. This year we will be conducting free tours during Seniors Week. Thanks must go to the staff in Administration for taking the initial bookings. We appreciate that it is an extra job for a very busy office. A huge thanks must also go to Rebecca Round who has coordinated the volunteers for both the Studio and Buggy. Rebecca

is retiring from this role, so we hope to find a replacement for this essential job of being the volunteer who coordinates the volunteers.

The special interest groups continue to flourish. Growing Friends contributes a great deal to the funds of Friends through its Plant Sale. Enthusiasm within the community for the heritage tomatoes does not seem to wane. The Prelude Day, which has a cover charge, is well patronised and a large proportion of the plants were sold. On the free day, Saturday, the very last plant was sold at noon. Profits are divided equally between Friends and RTBG. Without staff leadership (Margot White) and RTBG facilities, the group could not function. Smaller, more regular sales were considered, but did not eventuate. The Seed Bank volunteers continue in their invaluable scientific work, as do those in Orchid Conservation. It is pleasing to see the small display of Native Orchids in the Conservatory. The Begonia Group has grown both in membership and new plants.

The History Group has continued in its research of Friends’ history. Several interesting articles have appeared in *Fagus*. A remarkable link between History and tour guiding is the research done on the historical “Wardman Walk” by Fran Alexis and Jenny Parrott. They have led members and visiting tour groups on this walk to great acclaim. As a Friends’ RTBG Bicentennial Project, the Friends have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Board and Director of the Gardens, which will allow us to focus on the upgrading of the Friends Cottage. Jenny Parrott is currently in discussion with the Heritage Council to seek their advice on possible improvements to enhance the museum part of the Cottage.

Friends has been pleased to help the Gardens financially in a number of ways. Funding for the Native Orchid research continues to be supported by an NRM grant through the auspices of Friends. The staff scholarship was awarded to Megan Marrison and Anne Griffin. It will allow them to update their qualifications. A new incubator was bought for the Seed Bank, allowing for essential germination trials over a greater range of temperatures. Following a well researched request from Administration (David Reid in particular), a new Toro work vehicle was purchased for the Horticultural staff. By far our greatest financial outlay, this vehicle has proved to be of great benefit to the staff.

Volunteers once again helped at both the Main and Bottom Gates of the Garden during Spring Festival weekend. The weather was kind, and the event well attended.

Friends and RTBG staff enjoy a good working relationship, so we were pleased to be able to help them host the 10th Annual Australian plant Conservation Conference last November. Based at the Old Woolstore Hotel, members helped with registration and the information desk. Several tour guides led small groups to specific areas of particular relevance such as the Native Section and Seed Bank. Some help was given for setting up for the official dinner.

A technology session was held at the Bahá’í Centre. Friends had an information table where we displayed photographs of Friends help in plant conservation. It was a very rewarding experience for all who volunteered, and we were treated to an excellent “Thank you” barbecue on the final evening. The conference was a great success, and of particular credit to Lorraine Perrins (main

organiser) and the staff of RTBG. The cooperation of staff and Friends was also shown when some of our guides trained and helped during the Threatened Species weekend. Their knowledge helped during the Conference. I was delighted when Chris Lang was able to help me lead a tour of Japanese visitors whose particular interest was in the Tasmanian Natives Section. It was a delight to spend an hour and a half in such a special area of the Gardens, with a group of enthusiastic people.

The 2014 AGM in August was well attended, and we were treated to a fascinating talk by Liz Francis on her love of Tasmanian Gardens, and the resulting publication of two delightful books. General meetings offered a range of interesting topics. In November, Patricia, a member of Friends, gave a most thought provoking account of her time nursing and gardening in Uganda. The March meeting gave Anne Griffin and Kath Saunders (E Team Horts) the opportunity to present a beautifully illustrated talk about their scholarship visit to various gardens in Victoria. In June, Megan Marri-son spoke about the Begonia work, and brought examples of the success of the ongoing project.

Bill and Margaret Chestnut's delightful Inverawe Gardens in Margate, was the venue for a social

gathering in September. Keen members of Friends, Bill and Margaret made us very welcome with morning tea, and free range of the garden in its spring glory. Our end of year gathering in December was an afternoon tea. The weather being somewhat damp and breezy, we used the Banksia Room. Two of our committee members catered for the event, which was well attended by both Friends and RTBG staff. Chris and Frank provided the musical entertainment.

The relationship between the RTBG, Friends and Neutrog was strengthened by the visit of Vince Davey, National Business Manager for Neutrog Australia Pty. Ltd. in early December. Excellent deals for members were negotiated.

We are celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Friends this year. Our patron, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, AM, the Governor of Tasmania, has graciously agreed to host a reception at the end of October to mark this milestone. A large number of past and present members will attend.

Fagus, under the leadership of Carolynne and Chris Cruise at the time of writing, is an excellent publication. In glorious colour, with articles and photographs from members and RTBG staff, it is a publication to be proud of. Particu-

lar thanks must go to Frank Povah, whose expertise in publication has made it such a professional magazine. Our Facebook page (RTBG Friends) has a regular following, and we take any opportunity to talk about the work of Friends to community groups.

Robert Cockerell filled the role of Acting Director of RTBG for much of the year. At all times his dealings with Friends has shown great respect for our role within the RTBG. He kept us well informed and valued our input. Mark Fountain (Deputy Director) has long been a good friend of Friends, and will return to the Acting Director role until the new Director is appointed. Anne Suter has been the Liaison person between RTBG Administration and Friends for some time. We are sad that Anne's health no longer allows her to fill that role.

Friends were greatly saddened at the death of Life Member Don Dabner in July. Don's tireless work on the committee, especially as President, was an inspiration to all. He shared his great love and knowledge of the Gardens with countless tour groups, and helped train others to become guides. He loved driving the Explorer, and in the early days it became known as 'Don's Buggy'. The Dabner name will live on as Sally maintains her involvement with Friends.

It has been my privilege over the past three years to work with a dedicated group of people. I would like to thank Joan Booth for her support as Vice President, and her work on a Policy Manual for Friends. Without such an efficient Secretary as Aina Dambitis, and Treasurer Kay Hayes, my job would not have been possible. While we have lost some old members, many new people have joined, and I feel optimistic that a bright future is in store for Friends of RTBG.

Gileen A. Maskey

Another of Michael's suggestions for Category B (see page 5)





Friend of the Gardens and head of the Propagation Group 1997-2002

Interviewed by Elizabeth Haworth, 15 May 2015

Lyn was encouraged to join the Friends of the Gardens in 1997 by her brother Andrew Smith, who in 1990 started the Friends, becoming its first ever chairperson, a role which transformed into that of president in 1998. Soon Lyn succeeded Margaret MacDonald as co-ordinator of the Propagation Group, also known as Growing Friends. In addition, in 1998, she took on the role of secretary of the Friends for that year. From 1999-2002 she was able to concentrate on developing the Propagation Group, though during this time she also did a one year stint as editor of *Fagus*.

The Propagation Group worked well with the horticultural staff of the Gardens, becoming most proficient in mainly vegetative propagation. This is asexual plant propagation, producing new plants from vegetative parts of the original plant, such as the leaves, stems and roots. The Propagation Group used artificial induction methods taking cuttings, grafting, bud grafting and layering. New plants contain the genetic material of only one parent, so they are essentially clones of the parent plant. This means that a plant with desirable traits can be reproduced indefinitely in good growing conditions. Plants bypass the imma-

ture seedling phase and mature fast. Lyn also remembers sometimes assisting with pricking out and potting up plants grown from seed by RTBG staff.

The Group became really successful at creating new plants quite quickly and established regular plant sales at the Gardens. Lyn's strong and productive relationship with Jean Gray, who was the RTBG liaison

a volunteer at the Gardens had to end when she started a demanding working full time as law clerk in a Huon Valley firm as well as becoming a grandmother.

Lyn has childhood memories of the floral clock and aviary which used to exist in the Gardens. She also loved the conservatory and the cactus collections. She certainly approves of the extended use of the Gardens, for music, plays and other entertainment, as well as for weddings. She would like to see the Gardens extend one day to the foreshore and thinks that some all



officer from 2000 to 2009, helped the development and success of the plant sales. These are still a major source of funds for the Friends and enable it to support special projects and initiatives at the RTBG. During Lyn's time in Friends the plant sales were highlights of the year, which were set out on the front lawn and the Tulip Festival, which has since become the spring festival.

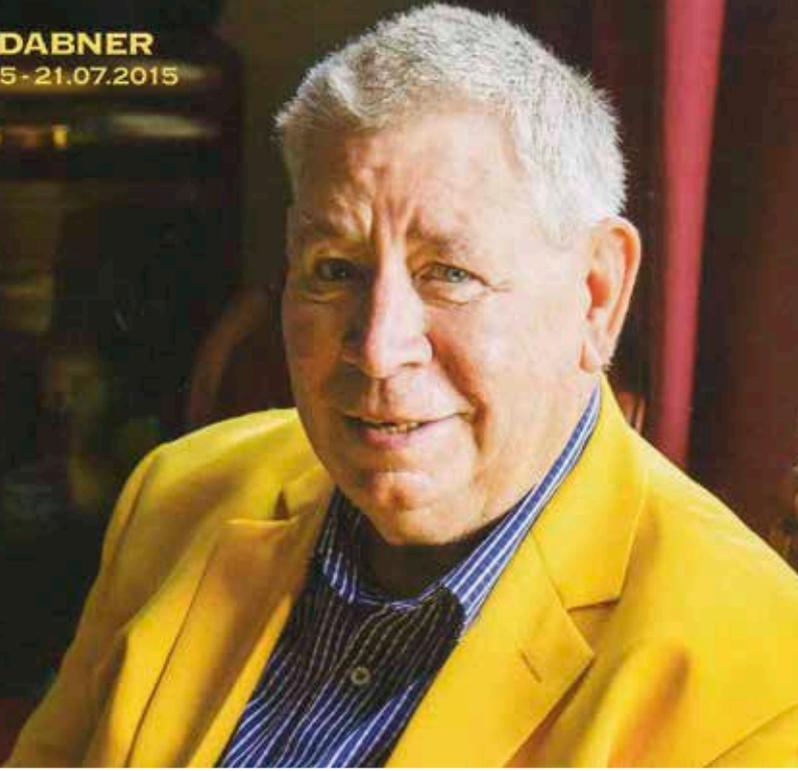
Lyn has always loved gardening and had undertaken courses in Botany and Horticulture, mostly by correspondence, at the Open University, then part of Curtin, WA. However, her background was legal and voluntary work and her time as

weather cover would improve the utility and pleasure of the Gardens, given Tasmania's unpredictable weather. However, parking and access may become real issues as the Gardens attracted more visitors.

Lyn remembers a very happy time as a Friend and Propagation Group lead. Despite some management ups and downs, which impacted on the Friends, there was a great sense of camaraderie and community spirit which she still holds dear. Lyn now visits the Gardens with her growing family, including brand new twin granddaughters, so that they too can enjoy the delights she remembers and helped develop.

Vale Don Dabner

DON DABNER
12.01.1945 - 21.07.2015



FRIENDS OF THE RTBG were saddened to learn of the passing of Don Dabner in July, too late to be covered in the August issue of Fagus. Like many of us, Don joined the Friends soon after his retirement as a school principal. He quickly made his mark.

He became a Tour Guide, and later took on the role of Tours Coordinator. He was one of the early Garden Explorer ('Buggy') drivers and was so attached to the vehicle that it was often referred to as 'Don's Buggy'. Don also spent time as an Education Officer and as Secretary to the Committee.

Don served a full three-year term as President of Friends and in 2013 was made a Life Member. For those of you who would like to learn more of Don and his many contributions to Friends, you can read his Member Profile in the May 2014 issue of Fagus.

PLANT UNDER THREAT

an ongoing feature

Common name: South Esk Pine

Botanical name: *Callitris oblonga* ssp. *oblonga*



Plant type/family: A small tree or shrub growing from 2 to 5m high. The branches are extremely erect and dense with angled blue-green foliage. It is restricted to riparian scrub usually with sandy soils and is endemic to Tasmania.

Why it is threatened: *C. oblonga* ssp. *oblonga* occurs only on the east coast of Tasmania with an estimated population of less than 4000 individuals. This makes it quite susceptible to fires and grazing from livestock.

Its story: We have collected seed which is now stored in the Tasmanian Seed Conservation Centre at the RTBG to be used for future research and conservation work.

How you can help: Get involved; join your local Landcare group, Threatened Plants Tasmania volunteers or join the RTBG Seed Bank, contact jameswood@rtbg.tas.gov.au

For more information: go to www.rtbg.tas.gov.au/conservation

The Maskreys discover
The Magic
of Chelsea

The Chelsea Flower Show held each May in London is on the 'bucket list' of many avid gardeners. This year we happened to be in Britain at just the right time and a kind relative had purchased tickets for us in advance. Alighting from the underground at Sloane Square, we joined a vast throng making their way to the grounds of the Royal Hospital (home of the Chelsea Pensioners) where the Show is held. The early part of the week had been marked by blustery winds and frequent showers, but on the Thursday, when we attended, the day was bright, sunny and warm.

There are many aspects of Chelsea. The most publicised section is certainly the Show Gardens section, where garden design, planting and landscaping materials are prized in particular. There were 15 Show Gardens, 12 entries from the UK and one each from Singapore, Australia and Dubai. Seven gold medals were awarded. The Best Show Garden title was awarded to "The Laurent-Perrier Chatsworth Garden" designed by Dan Pearson. This award was somewhat controversial and did not win overall approval from the critics. It was essentially a wild landscape consisting of massive rocks transported from Chatsworth Estate in Derbyshire with wild flowers, some trees and a 'trout' stream running through it (no trout were in evidence). It was certainly a major departure from past winners of the title. Other Show Gardens showed

a more tailored approach and (at least in our opinion) were generally more pleasing to the eye. For the record, Sydney designer Charlie Albone gained a silver for his show garden, "The Time in Between"

As well as the Show Gardens, awards were made to the 'Artisans Gardens' and to the 'Fresh Gardens'. The Artisan gardens are small plots constructed with an emphasis on workmanship and traditional skills. Eight of these were on show, seven from the UK and one from Japan. Four won gold medals. Best in Show was awarded to "The Sculptor's Picnic Garden" by Walker's Nurseries of Doncaster. In one of the Artisan gardens we were delighted to see Monty Don, the famous Brit-

ish garden 'guru' who hosts the BBC's 'Gardeners' World' and has been responsible for a number of television series and books on gardens around the world. The Fresh Gardens featured the latest in contemporary materials and design and are thus considered somewhat experimental in nature. There were nine entries in this category, seven from the UK and one each from Slovenia and Japan. The Fresh Garden voted as best was "The Dark Matter Garden" for National Schools' Observatory by Howard Miller Designs of Liverpool.

Although the various gardens draw the most crowds and comments, there is also much more to Chelsea. The Great Pavilion, a huge canvas-covered area, provides an opportunity for plant breeders, nurserymen, plant societies and even city councils to show off their wares. There were over a hundred exhibits in the Great Pavilion. Although the vast majority represented areas across the length and breadth of the British Isles, there were also exhibitors from France, the Netherlands, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, South Africa, Taiwan and Thailand. In addition, one corner of the Great Pavilion





was given over to a 'Discovery' area where information from plant pathologists, ecologists, the RHS, Horticultural Colleges, Forestry, and soil scientists were presented. The Great Pavilion was also the venue for Chelsea Flower Show Plant of the Year exhibits. From a shortlist of 23 entries, the first prize went to *Viburnum plicatum* 'Kilimanjaro Sunrise', second was *Streptocarpus* 'Polka-Dot Purple' and *Salvia* 'Love and Wishes' was placed third.

As well as the exhibits there were hundreds of stalls at which various garden paraphernalia could be bought, — plants of course, mature or as bulbs and seeds, also every conceivable tool from trowels to lawn mowers, plant containers, stakes and canes, all the way up to garden sheds and gazebos and customized garden sculptures ranging in size from garden gnomes to life size horses! We were self-disciplined enough to only buy a few badges in support of the RHS!

To sum up, our visit to the Chelsea Flower Show was a memorable experience. The photographs we have included provide just a tiny glimpse of what was on offer. We would advise any garden lover who knows that they will be within striking distance of London in May to make the effort to attend this event. You'll need to plan ahead and buy tickets in advance as they quickly sell out, and a warning – they are not cheap! What you will need as well as your enthusiasm is a lot of



stamina. If you want to see everything on offer you will need to do a lot of walking! But it is well worth while if you wish to experience the Magic of Chelsea.



Facing page: The Gold Medal Show Garden by Chris Beardshaw, THE MORGAN STANLEY HEALTHY CITIES GARDEN was a great favourite • This page, clockwise from top left: A section of the controversial winning Show Garden, THE LAURENT-PERRIER CHATSWORTH GARDEN designed by Dan Pearson » Portion of Sydney designer Charlie Albone's Show Garden, THE TIME IN BETWEEN » Colour and bustle within the Great Pavilion » Garden Guru and popular host of the BBC's weekly TV programme GARDENERS' WORLD is seen here visiting one of the Artisan Gardens » The winner of the Artisan Gardens section was THE SCULPTOR'S PICNIC GARDEN by Walker's Nurseries.



QUARANTINE MATTERS – OR DOES IT?

M Marrison and L Perrins

Hepatitis A risk in frozen berries, Blueberry Rust and now Myrtle Rust—diseases, and how Australian Quarantine deals with them were in the news a lot last summer, so we thought we would share how the RTBG manages this important issue.

The RTBG and in particular, the RTBG Nursery, houses some very special plants, many of which have not been grown anywhere else. As custodians of these collections we

plant them near natural areas or National Parks.

What about Diseases?

Diseases are managed differently, and we have protocols in place to both manage existing diseases on-site and try to ensure new ones do not get a foothold. Any of our garden beds that are known to have problematic diseases in the soil are highlighted

elm trees are treated regularly to control the elm leaf beetle and prevent its build up in the Gardens. Elm leaf beetles can impact on the overall health of the RTBG's magnificent elm trees and are known to transmit Dutch elm disease. Although this disease is not currently found in Australia, there is a risk that an incursion will occur in the future and controlling the beetle is one way to mitigate its spread and keep our trees healthy.

Prevention is better than cure

The RTBG Nursery Area is deemed a “clean area” in the Gardens and many of our Friends of the Gardens Growing Group members would be keenly aware of the extra practices we put in place to ensure we minimise the risk of introducing pests and diseases into this facility. Some of our practices are –

- Ensuring all new potted plant material from external sources is placed in a special “Quarantine” area



Photo illustrating fruiting bodies of *Armillaria luteobubalina* at the RTBG
—Image: N. Tapson

must ensure that we manage and protect them from any potential diseases that could adversely affect their health. Likewise the RTBG has its own diseases within the Gardens, as well as potentially weedy species which we grow on-site (such as some species in our Subantarctic House), and we must manage them to ensure that they do not spread to other parts of Tasmania.

Managing Weeds

With the potentially weedy species that we display in our collections there are a number of management options, such as –

- removing and destroying seed heads before seed is shed
- not selling any of these species at our Plant Sales, and
- interpreting these plants to advise the visiting public not to

on the Gardens operational maps, and strict protocols for working in the beds adhered to. For example, the RTBG has put in place a protocol for working in gardens beds that harbour the root-rot disease *Phytophthora cinnamomii*, which requires staff to wash and disinfect tools and boots immediately after leaving these beds. Any plant material removed from them is not composted but instead removed for deep burial.

Our Horticultural Botanist, Natalie Tapson regularly monitors any new disease outbreaks, organising testing of suspect plants and on an annual basis maps the spread of fungal diseases such as *Armillaria luteobubalina* though the RTBG and advising on protocols for further management.

We also use some proactive preventative measures in certain circumstances. For example, all our



Elm leaf beetle showing adult
—Image: N. Tapson

and monitored for 3 weeks prior to integrating into the Gardens collections

- Ensuring all plant material (except seed), egg divisions, cutting

material, from external sources and the RTBG garden beds are treated with a bleach solution before being incorporated into the nursery collections.

- All unrestricted seed received from interstate under 1 gram in weight is to be inspected by our accredited inspector, Megan Marri-son, before sowing.

- All seed received from inter-state over 1 gram in weight has to be inspected by the Tasmanian Quar-antine Service prior to entering the RTBG.

- Ensuring plants aren't in direct contact with the ground, i.e. placed on gravel, or are elevated above the ground.

- Closely monitoring all of our collections and managing any outbreaks of pests and diseases promptly.

How you can help

Anyone visiting the RTBG has a role to play in ensuring we keep our Gardens collections as healthy as we possibly can. Some ways in which you can assist us is by –

- Ensuring that you clean any mud from shoes before entering the RTBG (this is also important after and before going bushwalking in Tasmania to prevent the spread of the Chytrid Fungus on frogs and root rot disease. For more information go to <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive-species/publications/arrive-clean-leave-clean>)

- Ensuring that you do not walk on to garden beds

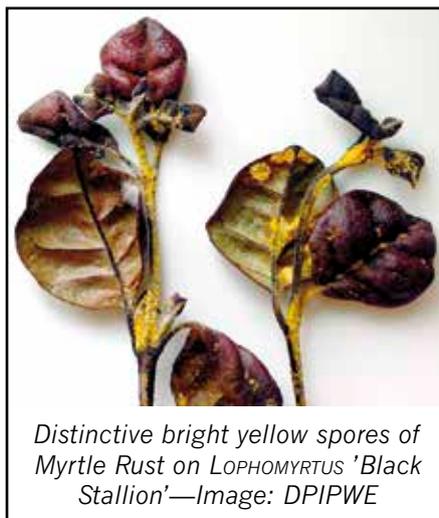
- If you bring a plant specimen into the Gardens for identification please ensure it is contained in a sealed plastic bag.

Education and Awareness are vital

This coming summer will be a turning point for one particular fungal disease recently discovered in Tasmania. Myrtle rust (*Puccinia psidii*) is a serious fungal disease affecting the plant family Myrtaceae, which

includes many Australian native species such as gum trees (*Eucalyptus*), bottlebrushes (*Callistemon*), tea tree and paperbarks (*Melaleuca*), lilly-pilly (*Syzygium, Acmena*), willow myrtle (*Agonis*) and brush box (*Lophostemon*).

Myrtle rust is a serious threat to the nursery and garden industry, forestry, tea tree oil production and natural ecosystems. Rusts are highly transportable because they can produce large numbers of dust-like spores and can be easily dispersed by:



Distinctive bright yellow spores of Myrtle Rust on LOPHOMYRTUS 'Black Stallion'—Image: DPIPWE

- Movement of infected plant material (nursery stock, cut flowers, plant cuttings)

- Movement of contaminated equipment (secateurs, chainsaws)

- Wind, water (wind-driven rain, irrigation)

- Animals (insects including bees, birds, other wildlife, pets)

- Humans (on clothing, mobile phone shoes and jewellery)

- Vehicles.

As the weather warms up and throughout the coming spring, summer and autumn, Biosecurity Tasmania is expecting that outbreaks of Myrtle Rust will again occur in the State. The RTBG takes its role in limiting the spread of this disease very seriously as not only would it have a big impact on our current collections and what we would be able to grow in the future, but there are also other risks. Our FRTBG studio volunteers would be aware that many of our out-of-state visi-

tors come to the Gardens on tours which when take them directly up to Mt Wellington, Mt Field or other Parks. We have to remain very vigilant that any outbreaks of Myrtle Rust in the RTBG are controlled effectively to ensure that the risk of our visitors inadvertently transporting spores into these natural areas is managed. Controlling this disease once it gets into natural areas is virtually impossible as there are no fungicides available which will kill Myrtle Rust.

The RTBG Staff will be working closely with Biosecurity Tasmania this year to facilitate education and awareness programs in the lead up to the active period for the rust. We will also be implementing even stricter requirements in regards to our in-house hygiene and quarantine protocols to minimise the risk of any incursion into the RTBG.

The Friends of the RTBG can help us in a number of ways such as –

- do not bring plants or plant specimens into the Gardens during the coming spring, summer and autumn active periods

- familiarise yourself with the symptoms of myrtle rust so you can monitor Myrtaceous plants in your own garden

- monitor the Biosecurity Tasmania information pages to find out where any incursions of Myrtle Rust are occurring - <http://dpiipwe.tas.gov.au/biosecurity/plant-biosecurity/pests-and-diseases/myrtle-rust>

- ensuring that if you have been travelling by car interstate or in the northern regions of Tasmania that you wash your vehicle before returning to Hobart or coming into the RTBG

- ensure you come to volunteer at the RTBG wearing laundered clothing (including hats) particularly if you have been visiting Northern Tasmania, Victoria, Queensland or New South Wales.

- Talk to RTBG staff if you have any queries about the myrtle rust protocols.

While in England, the Maskreys visit

The small rural town of Malmesbury lies at the confluence of two branches of the River Avon in the extreme north-west corner of Wiltshire, close to its border with Gloucestershire. Malmesbury is best known for its ancient Abbey, much of which is now in ruins, though the Abbey Church is still in regular use for services.

Between the Abbey and the nearer branch of the River Avon is located an old manor house known as Abbey House. The grounds of Abbey House, extending approximately 5 acres, have been turned into a most wonderful garden containing at least 10,000 separate plants. I acknowledge that England is full of wonderful gardens, but this one is a real gem!

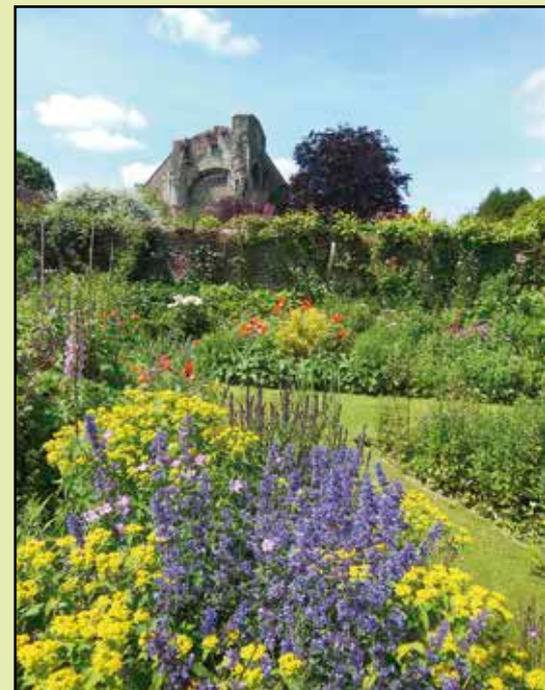
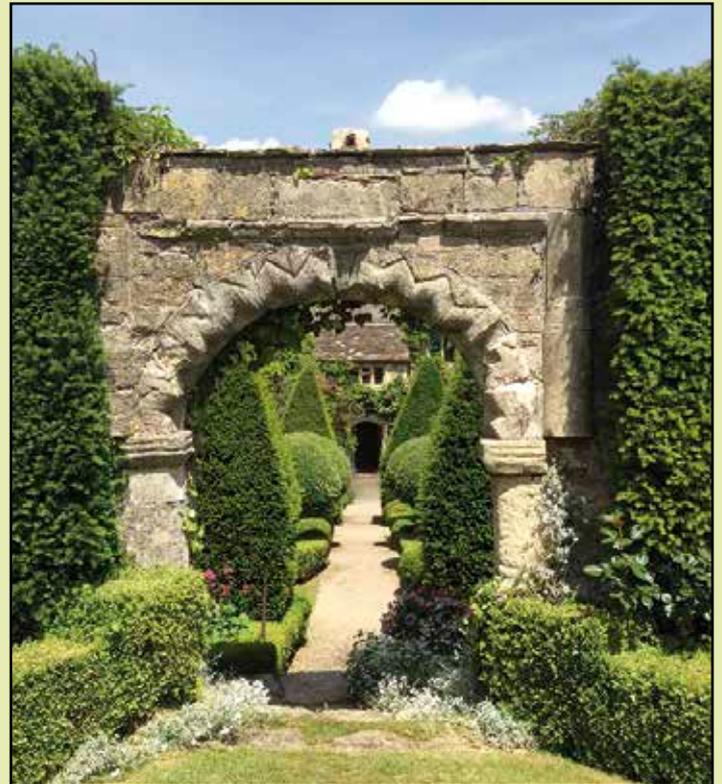
The Abbey House Gardens can be considered as consisting of three distinct parts. The lowest part, hard against the banks of the Avon, is wooded with ash, beech and maple



trees. The river bank itself has reeds and flag iris. On the surface of the water are lily pads. On the day we were there the area was alive with bird song and dragonflies. Rising from this river bank area towards the rear of Abbey House, several metres above, is a labyrinth of twisting walkways. Some of the paths are steep, others

more gentle, so suiting all levels of fitness. There are some tall trees on the slope, intermingled with low, dense shrubberies.

The third, and highest level, is perhaps the most impressive. It consists of both formal and less formal flower beds, interspersed with lawn areas and shady hideaways, many with statues and convenient seats. There are beautiful fountains too, both traditional and contemporary, and fine examples of stonework,



hedging and topiary. In the summer this area of the Gardens is a riot of colour. There are over 400 rose trees, as well as peonies, lupins, poppies, delphiniums, iris, salvias and many more types of garden flower. All the visitors to the gardens that we met were enraptured by their experience. So, if you find yourself in the West Country between late March and late October, then why not visit this gem of a garden. I promise that you will not be disappointed.

Views of a hidden gem

Previous page, clockwise from top right:

An archway leading into the formal section of the gardens.

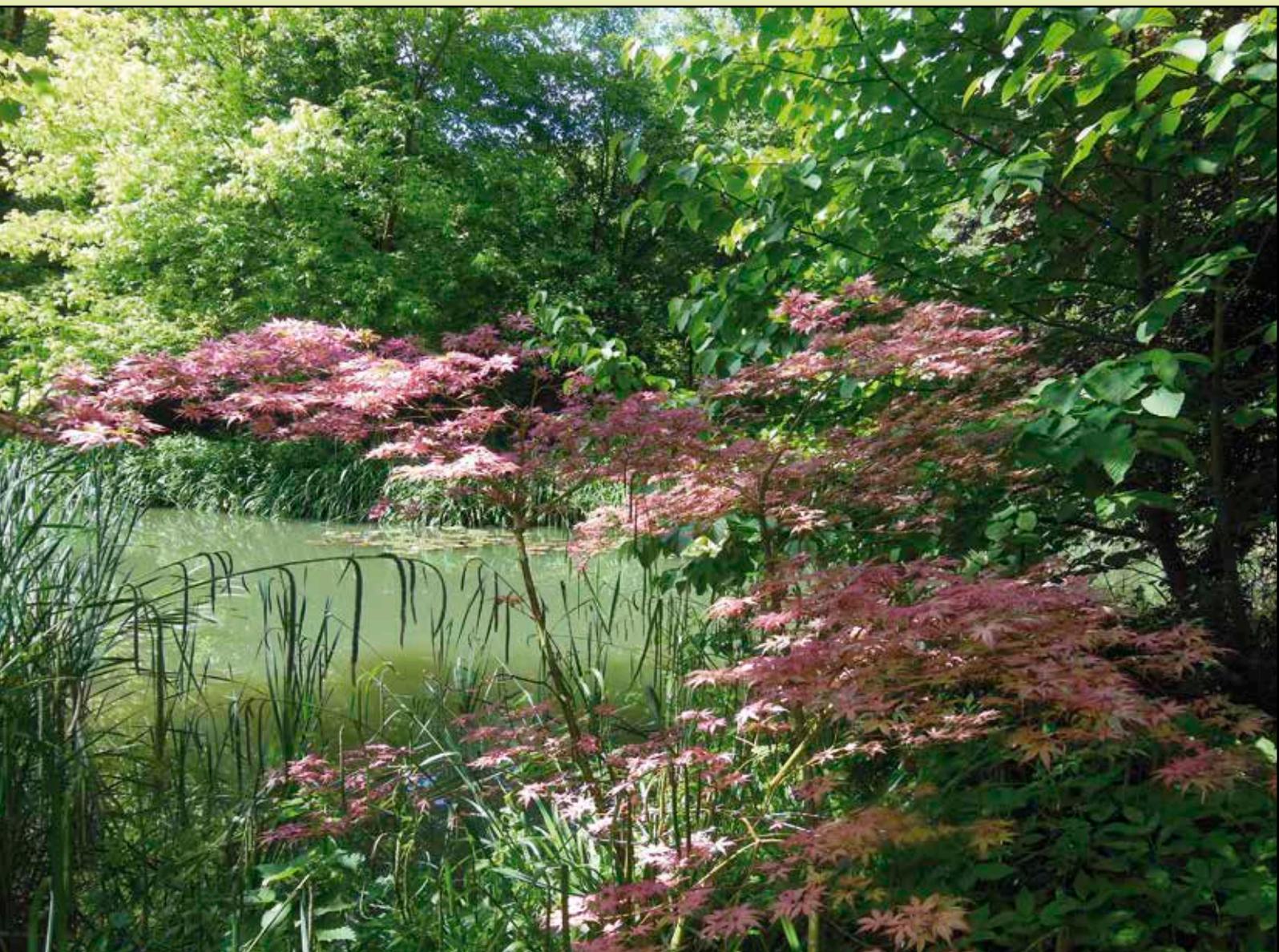
A riot of colour in the less formal section, with the ruins of Malmesbury Abbey in the background.

Gardens at the front of Abbey House

This page, from top right:

The rear of Abbey House seen from the river with the slope in between.

The leafy banks of the River Avon.



Fran Alexis in Sydney

Volunteer Guides in Botanic Gardens Conference

Tirst I must thank the Friends of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens for enabling me to attend this Conference as a delegate by funding the Registration fee.

The Conference was a great success with over 140 people attending from major and minor Botanic Gardens around Australia and New Zealand, and it was a wonderful opportunity for me to mix with and learn from other volunteer guides from a diverse range of Botanic Gardens. Our Garden was well represented with six guides attending. I was joined by Eileen and Mike Maskrey, Vicki and Richard von Witt and Sally Dabner and we all enjoyed

meeting and talking to people we knew from previous conferences.

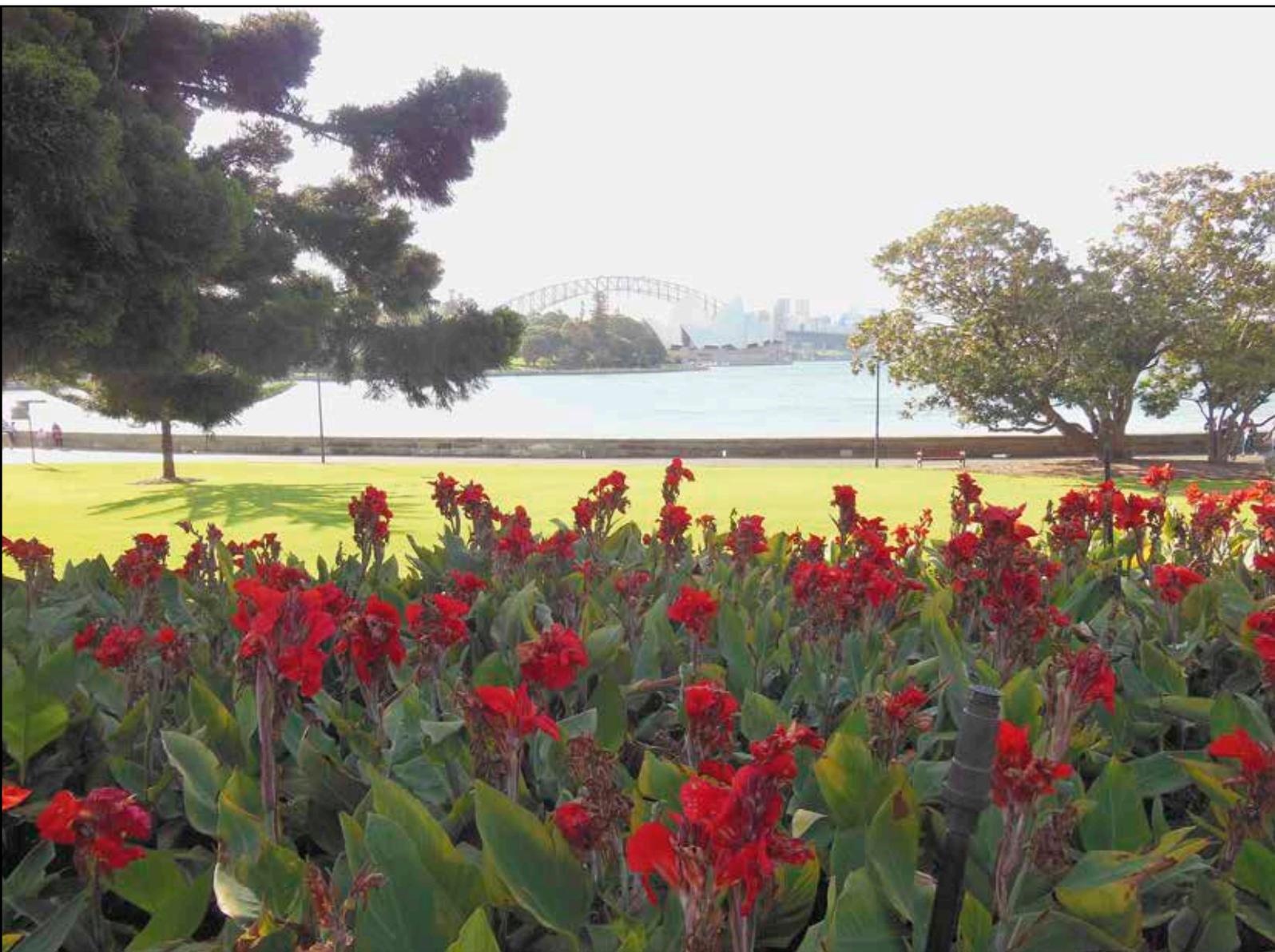
On the Monday we registered at the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens and I was impressed by the many positive comments made by a number of people who remembered with pleasure the good time they had in Hobart when the RTBG hosted the Conference.

We had tea and coffee in the afternoon and plenty of time to mingle between well conducted orientation walks round the garden, and were amused by the antics of a pair of magpies swooping a stuffed specimen of the Powerful Owl which was on display to show us what to look for as there is one of

these birds living in the Sydney RBG.

A welcome reception followed at 6pm. I was very lucky to strike up conversation with one of the Sydney guides who offered me a lift home when she found out I was house-sitting only two streets away from her own place in Lane Cove. I really appreciated the kindness of Caroline as we travelled to and from the conference together all week.

Tuesday's programme began at the Art Gallery, only a short walk from the Gardens, with an opening ceremony and welcome followed by morning tea. Then we had a choice from over 30 different walks and talks back at the Gardens before lunch and again before and after



afternoon tea. The weather turned cold and rain threatened that day but it did not dampen our spirits.

The guided walks I took were well conducted by well-informed guides. I chose the Hidden Corners Walk, the Palm Grove Walk and the ABC of the Garden; Begonias, Bromeliads and Cacti. The guide for this walk, John Page, showed us the two large gardens of Begonias established by Peter Sharp and was interested to hear about the Begonia Propagating Group Peter started here at the RTBG and our plans to use them as a year-round attraction in the Conservatory.

Sydney RBG is gearing up for its 200 year celebration next year and the gardeners have planted beds of Bromeliads in place of tangled beds of shrubbery under many of the large trees and these beds open out the view. The Cacti and Succulents garden is very sculptural and shows these plants well.

Wednesday was the day we went by bus to the Blue Mountain Botanic Garden at Mt Tomah or to the Australian Botanic Garden at Mt Annan. I chose Mt Tomah and was impressed by the wonderful display of waratahs and native trees and shrubs.

Thursday also began at the Art Gallery with talks before morning tea at the Pavilion Restaurant on the Domain where the Conference

Dinner was to be held that evening. I then attended the Delegates meeting and it was very informative as representatives from each Botanic Garden present introduced themselves and gave a brief description of aspects of their guiding programs such as number of guides, who managed the guides or volunteer programmes, the number of walks or tours offered per week and any successes that they considered worth sharing.

I considered some of the ideas very interesting and maybe worth a try here. For example, Phil Tomlinson from Wellington BG recommended wearing "ask me" vests to aid visibility and contact with visitors; Terry O'Brien of Ballarat BG mentioned that their new guides were often recruited from the U3A program and Marion Holland from Eurobodalla BG said that an advertisement in the local paper increases visitor activity.

The 2017 conference to be held in Canberra will begin on the last Sunday of Floriade (October 15) and will run to the following Thursday (October 19).

Kings Park Botanic Garden gave a presentation to Delegates to bid for the 2019 conference to be held in Perth in October. The theme is "The Wild West". The presentation highlighted the features of the Garden including managed bushland, themed gardens, the Conservation

Centre, nature trails, water gardens, associated Gardens. This bid was accepted unanimously. After lunch on Thursday, walks were damp as the showers increased to rain but we were not deterred. That night the Conference dinner was a success, though noise levels were high.

On Friday we participated in a panel discussion on Climate Change at the Art Gallery. Morning tea was again in the Pavilion restaurant before a very wet walk from the Domain to Government House via the foreshore and Mrs Macquarie's Seat. We were to have lunch in the rose garden but it was too wet so the final lunch and closing address took place in the lecture theatre back at the Gardens, concluding a very enjoyable and informative Conference.

Adjoining page: The Conference for Volunteer Guides in Botanical Gardens was held at the Sydney Botanic Gardens. This is an iconic view out over the harbour from the gardens.

Below left: A group of guides discusses palm species in the Palm Grove, Sydney Botanic Garden.

And at right: Some guides being shown around the Blue Mountains Botanic Gardens at Mt Tomah. The waratahs were particularly impressive



It's Springtime!

And Friends play an enhanced role at the Festival



Friends Gill Paxton and Jenny Parrott fill their traditional role of taking entry fees at the Lower Gate, while Friends President Joan Booth mans the Friends Stall at the Spring Festival



Volunteers from Friends have always helped out at the Spring Festival by being present at the Gates to collect entry fees from the patrons and dispense programme guides. This was the case at the most recent Spring Festival held at the Gardens on 11th and 12th of October.

This year, however, Friends played a greater role. They were granted a stall from which they were able to sell tomato and herb seedlings, and Friends carry bags. It provided a great opportunity for the role of Friends to be acknowledged and a chance to tote for new members. It also proved a good fundraising exercise, with over \$900 being taken over the course of the weekend.

BIG MONKEY RETURNS TO THE GARDENS

Adapted and Directed by Les Winspear
at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens



Big Monkey Theatre has produced its dynamic brand of theatre in the Botanical Gardens for over twenty years and this year they are delighting us with an adaptation of Pinocchio.

The original story was written by Italian author Carlo Lorenzini who wrote under the name of Carlo Collodi. Lorenzini died in 1890 and was well respected during his lifetime as a talented writer and social commentator.

Pinocchio began its life as a serial, published weekly in *Il Giornale dei Bambini* (the first Italian newspaper for

children). In the original serialisation Pinocchio dies a gruesome death, but at the request of his editor, Collodi added chapters 16–36, in which the Blue Fairy rescues Pinocchio and eventually transforms him into a real boy. This turned the story from a dark moral tale into a rich, enduring adventure that has delighted readers and audiences for more than a hundred years.

As usual Big Monkey will give us a fast moving piece of physical theatre with original songs and lots of laughs. Writer/Director **Les Winspear** has

assembled a highly talented cast to bring the story to life.

Will Pridmore, who has spent the last year in New York, has returned play the title role and with him we have: **Claire Dawson** who starred in *A Woman on the Edge, Blitz* and *Sinbad*; **Craig Irons** who appeared this year as dozens of characters in *Wheeler's Luck*; **Emesha Rudolf** who played Robin Hood for Big Monkey and whose comic talent can be seen around many Hobart venues; and last, but not least, **Quinn Griggs** who also appeared in *Robin Hood* and has toured extensively with Terrapin Theatre.

Pinocchio starts with a school season during November/December and opens to the public on December 30th playing Wednesday to Sunday until 24th January. Tickets will be available from the Botanical Shop, Centertainment, Theatre Royal or at the gate 30 minutes prior to each performance.

OUR WONDERFUL CONTINENT AND ITS ANCIENT HERITAGE

Frank Povah

Australia is an ancient land, old beyond time. For hundreds of millions of years, it was only the forces of wind and water that moulded our landscape; the great tectonic upheavals and gougings of the ice-sheets that in geologically recent times gave facelifts to other continents, largely passed us by.

We now know that the Aboriginal people have been here for at least 60,000 years and it is widely accepted that their ancestors were the first humans to leave Africa, some 70,000 years ago.

In the time that they have been here, they have witnessed great climatic changes, among them a prolonged drought that scientists tell us lasted for a thousand years or more. There are stories about this time from all over the continent (*see Fagus*, August 2015) and there are also stories about the creatures that once lived here. Once dismissed as the childish myths of a primitive people with “no real culture to speak of”, they have since been given credence by the huge expansion in fossil discoveries of recent times.

When, about 180 million years ago (mya), the Supercontinent Gondwana, was in the process of breaking up, the fragments began to travel over the planet's surface. With no land bridges our plants and animals – because of our geological history already displaying marked differences to those elsewhere – were left to evolve in isolation from the other land masses of the time.

Fifty million years ago Australia severed the last physical ties with Gondwana when it separated from Antarctica and began its own solo journey.

But the links were not entirely broken. They can still be seen in the fossil record and in the rocks. Most magical of all, they can be seen in ancient plant families that still persist in widely separated pockets where conditions are suitable.

Nothofagus, the Antarctic Beech, for example, can today be found in New Guinea, New Caledonia, south-eastern Australia, New Zealand and in south-western South America.



The proteaceae are probably the most Gondwanan of all our ancient plants.

Poorly dispersible, it required intact land bridges to spread and did so very early in its history. Because Africa had separated from Gondwana by about 90 mya, species

evolved in isolation and are different from their Australian relatives, though similarities are obvious.

Today, members of the family can be found in Africa, India, Asia – including South-East Asia – New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand, southern South America and from the centre and north of that continent into Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean.

And so, in my usual way, I arrive widdershins at the subject of this story.

Many years ago now, *Australian Geographic* asked me to interview a woman named Mary E White, who had written a widely acclaimed book on the evolution of Australia's flora.

Ms White was not trained as a botanist, and she did not begin writing until after her retirement, yet the book received great praise among the scientific community. The title of this book is *The Greening of Gondwana: THE 400 MILLION YEAR STORY OF AUSTRALIA'S PLANTS* and was the first in a trilogy, the others being *After The Greening*, and *Listen... Our Land is Crying*.

Greening was translated into several languages and sold well, but that was not enough for the publishers to continue to keep it in print, but in my opinion it should be required reading for anyone interested in the flora of this, the world's driest vegetated continent.

I don't know if this wonderful book has found its way back on to any publisher's list, but it should be available from your

library and you may even be fortunate enough to find a second-hand copy.

A great advocate for our country and it's inhabitants and ecology, Ms White wrote this book in a style that makes it eminently readable by almost anyone and the text is complemented by scores of colour photographs and explained by many maps and diagrams.

Anyone reading this wonderful book and its companion volumes cannot fail to stand in awe of our home's long and venerable history and gain even more respect for the wonderful plants we all so admire today.

Above from top: The distribution of Nothofagus in modern times and in Gondwana. Below, from top: Proteaceae from Queensland, Chile and South Africa.



The Greening of Gondwana, 3rd edition, by Mary E White. Kangaroo Press, Sydney, 1998

General Information for Members and Prospective Members

December General Meeting and Christmas Get-Together

The final General Meeting of Friends will be held on Saturday December 5th in the Banksia Room. It will be followed by our Christmas Get-Together. Do come along and finish the year in style!

New telephone number

The RTBG new phone connection is now fully operational. The new numbers are: **6166 0451** or **6166 0453**

If you would like to be involved in any of our projects please contact the President or any committee member.

Sprout and Succulent Up and Running

At long last, we can announce that the Garden Kiosk and the Garden Restaurant are fully operational and once again catering for visitors to the gardens. The kiosk goes under the name of 'Sprout' while the restaurant is known as 'Succulent'. Niall Mitchell is in charge of the operations and he and his staff would love to welcome you. So, we would urge Friends to pop along and check it out!



Do you have any items of interest in your scrapbook (or, like me, in that pile of papers you've been meaning to sort since the year dot)? Why not share them with Friends by way of Fagus?



FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL TASMANIAN BOTANICAL GARDENS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Name _____

Dr Prof. Mr Mrs Ms Other _____ (Please circle preferred option)

Address _____

_____ State _____ Postcode _____

Contact Details: Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

Mobile _____ Email _____

Name preferred on badge _____

I wish to pay the following subscription* (tick one)

Single, \$30 Joint, \$40 Affiliate, \$55 Make a donation of \$ _____

I am paying by Cheque/Money Order Cash Direct Deposit (details below. **PLEASE reference your name**) †

I am interested in Cultural Heritage/Library Visitor Services Tour Guides

Growing Friends Friends Cottage Seed Conservation Begonia Volunteers

*I understand that my annual subscription will be deposited in Friends of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens account and will be allocated to specific projects of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens as nominated by the Friends Committee.

Please send this form with your payment c/o Membership Officer, or pay at the Botanical Shop

†Bendigo Bank. BSB: 633-700 A/c # 1171 21863 A/c name: Friends of RTGB

Membership # 2015/16 _____