

NATURELINK

NEWSLETTER OF THE CRANBOURNE FRIENDS ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS VICTORIA INC.

VOLUME 26 :4| SUMMER 2019



Banksia robur, Photographer, Judith Cooke



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If print version, this magazine is printed on recycled paper

Discovery Tour: Mt Hotham and Victorian Alps Wildflower Adventure

Back by popular demand!

The Mt Hotham Wildflower Adventure Discovery Tour is on again in January 2020. The tour will run from Friday 10 to Thursday 16 January, 2020, and will be a wonderful opportunity to take in the stunning alpine wildflowers, snow gums and spectacular scenery of the Victorian Alps in summer. Accommodation will be at the central, nicely appointed Kalyna Ski Club at 10 Davenport Drive, Hotham Heights, where we have been well looked after on previous tours.

The variety of wildflowers and interesting flora in the High Country will seem endless as we explore alpine, sub-alpine and montane woodlands, herb fields and forest environments. Varied species of *Brachyscome*, *Craspedia*, *Bossiaea* and *Olearia*, many endemic to the High Country, will be in abundance, as will the Alpine Everlasting, *Xerochrysum subundulatum*, Royal Bluebell, *Wahlenbergia gloriosa*, various species and subspecies of Eyebrights, the distinctive Alpine Orites, *Orites lancifolia* and Yellow Kunzea, *Kunzea muelleri*. Native orchid enthusiasts will enjoy the later flowering period of the High Country that sees various *Caladenia*, *Pterostylis* and *Prasophyllum* species at their best in summer.

The Discovery Tour Program will involve walks and rambles led by Australian native plant specialist, Rodger Elliot. Generally the walks are low impact and accessible for all fitness levels. If anybody wishes to be bold and do some longer walks such as the Mt Feathertop-Razorback Walk that is possible too; however, this will require some bushwalking experience and a reasonable level of fitness. On some occasions we will drive to locations prior to exploring the area. An extra night has been added to this 2020 tour to enable a visit to the Falls Creek area, taking in plant communities. If road conditions are favourable we will also include an optional day trip to the Nunniong Plateau - a significant site for rare plants and vegetation communities.

In the evenings there will be opportunities to identify plants that we saw during the day or just socialise and enjoy the magnificent sunsets from the upstairs deck at Kalyna. We will also have digital projection capabilities for any participants who may wish to share a presentation with the group.

Cost is \$310 per person for 6 nights' accommodation in twin-share rooms with en-suites. The cost of a Family Deal is \$620 per room plus \$100 for each additional child. Doonas, pillows & blankets are provided, however you will need to BYO linen and towels.

Participants need to supply all food and drinks for breakfasts and lunches and will have dedicated cupboard and fridge space for storage. Participants can also cook evening meals at Kalyna, however there are also a number of cafes/restaurants that will be open for evening meals in Mt Hotham and Dinner Plain for those who wish to dine out.

If you are interested in being part of this wonderful Hotham Wildflowers Adventure please complete the Expression of Interest on the booking form and forward it as soon as possible to the Booking Officer, Ros Shepherd.



Photos: Alexandra Stalder

Hotham Wildflower Adventure

**10-16 January
2020**

Please express
interest via the
booking form

Enquiries

Alexandra
Stalder
0431 025 733

membership@
rbgfriends
cranbourne.
org.au

**We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians
of the land on which we work and learn,
the peoples of the Kulin (Koolin) Nation,
and pay our respects to their Elders past,
present and future.**

Place the dates in your diaries now

NB: This calendar may be subject to change.
Open House events are for Friends Members only.

JANUARY

10-16 January:

Mount Hotham Discovery Tour

FEBRUARY

Sunday 9 February:

Morning Talk: *Things my garden taught me*, Gabrielle Baldwin

Thursday 13 February:

Open House, Elliot Centre
The Raising Rarity Project with
Dr Meg Hirst

Saturday 29 February:

Walk and Gawk: Landscape
Painting - paint in the Gardens
with artist Erica Wagner

MARCH

Sunday 1 March:

Discovery Day: Bonsai with
Australian native plants

Thursday 12 March:

Open House, Elliot Centre

Sat/Sun 14 & 15 March:

Autumn Plant Sale

Tuesday 24 March:

Visit *Australian Plants Revealed*
exhibition, Ringwood

Saturday 28 March:

Bandicoot Activity Day

APRIL

Thursday 9 April:

Open House, Elliot Centre

Sunday 19 April:

Afternoon Talk: Rooftop
Gardens - Dr Nick Williams

Sunday 28 April:

Discovery Day: Bushland Flora
and Kuranga Nursery

MAY

Sunday 3 May:

Annual Lunch - Speaker Millie
Ross

Thursday 14 May:

Open House, Elliot Centre

Saturday 30 May - Tuesday 9 June:

North Queensland Tour

JUNE

Thursday 11 June:

Open House, Elliot Centre

Sunday 14 June:

2021 Friends Events Planning
Day

JULY

Thursday 9 July:

Open House, Elliot Centre

Sunday 19 July:

Afternoon Talk: Superb
Lyrebird: Alex Maisey

Sat/Sun 26 & 27 July:

Winter Plant Sale

AUGUST

Sunday 2 August:

Morning/Afternoon Talk:
Ikebana Talk & Demonstration

Tuesday 4 August:

Melbourne Herbarium/Library
and Fern Gully tours

Thursday 13 August:

Open House, Elliot Centre

Sunday 30 August

Workshop: How do I set up my
garden?

SEPTEMBER

Thursday 10 September:

Open House, Elliot Centre

Date to be advised:

Walk and Gawk: Orchid
Conservation Centre tour

**Saturday 19 September -
Friday 24 September**

Great Ocean Road and Otways
Discovery tour (self-drive)

OCTOBER

Thursday 8 October:

Open House, Elliot Centre

Saturday 10 October:

Morning/Afternoon Talk:
Where have the wetlands
gone? Gary Presland

Monday 12 October:

Walk and Gawk: Cranbourne
Gardens with John Arnott

Sat/Sun 17 & 18 October:

Spring Plant Sale

Sat/Sun 24 & 25 October:

Australian Plants Society - FCJ
Rogers Seminar - Eltham

NOVEMBER

Sunday 8 November:

Discovery Day: Edible gardens,
system garden, Royal Park

Thursday 12 November:

Open House, Elliot Centre

Sunday 15 November:

Annual General Meeting

DECEMBER

Thursday 10 December:

Open House, Elliot Centre

Things my garden taught me: Gabrielle Baldwin

At this morning talk, Gabrielle Baldwin will speak about her recently published book, *Things my garden taught me*.

The book is an account of a twenty-five-year project to establish a native garden on land near Corner Inlet which had previously been part of a dairy farm. With humour, reflection and literary allusion, the author describes the challenges encountered and lessons learned, and explores questions about the relationships between humans and the natural environment. The lessons range from the down-to-earth to the metaphysical, from conquering the fear of snakes to the appreciation of decay as vital for life.

"I have always loved Wilsons Promontory and our family has spent many holidays there. When an opportunity arose to buy land close to the National Park, my husband and I bought it with the hope of replicating some of the wild beauty of the Prom landscape".



Gabrielle Baldwin



Wilsons Promontory.

Morning talk Sunday 9 February 2020

10:30 for 11:00am
Auditorium

Members \$20
Non-members \$25
Students \$10

Please book via
the booking form.

Contact:
Rodger Elliot
rgelliot@optusnet.
com.au
or
8774 2483

Friends open house: Raising Rarity project

We have a wonderful opening event for the first Open House for 2020. Do not miss it!

The vibrant, enthusiastic Dr Meg Hirst will be talking to us about the Raising Rarity project. This project uses a new approach to saving rare and threatened flora, by assessing the horticultural potential of rare species and establishing suitability for eventual introduction into cultivated systems, such as home gardens. Some Raising Rarity specimens will be on sale at the Cranbourne Friends Plant Sales.

The Raising Rarity Project, comprised of Meg Hirst and her Science Division colleagues at the Gardens, Sue Murphy and John Delpratt of The University of Melbourne and a team of passionate volunteers, were awarded the Protection of the Environment Award for the Raising Rarity project at the Keep Victoria Beautiful Awards in September 2019.

Meg Hirst is the Seedbank Officer based at the RBGV Melbourne Gardens. She is a plant ecologist, with specialist experience in *ex situ* seedbanking and plant conservation, through her employment with the Victorian Conservation Seedbank and the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. Meg holds a PhD in plant ecology from the University of Melbourne and is a teacher and researcher with experience in growing, tending and studying plants, in both scientific public gardens and experimental settings.



Dr Meg Hirst.
Photo: courtesy RBGV

Friends open house

Thursday 13
February 2020
2:00 pm – 3:30
pm, Elliot Centre

Contact:
Helen Morrow
helen@
themorrows.net.
au
or
9850 9125

Members are
invited to come
along to this free
event, no booking
required.

Drawing and painting are great ways to really see what's around you and to relax and to enjoy being in nature. Slow down and have fun capturing the shapes and colours of the beautiful Cranbourne Gardens.

Bring a pencil and an A4 or A5 sketchbook and/or inks, a small watercolour set, water jar and a couple of small brushes and join artist Erica Wagner on a walk in the Gardens, pausing to draw in four different locations.

Erica Wagner is a painter, publisher and creative consultant to storytellers. Recent highlights include two successful solo exhibitions at No Vacancy Project Space in 2016 and 2018 and winning the inaugural Victorian Artists Society George Hicks Foundation Contemporary Art Prize in 2017. Erica was awarded the Dromkeen Medal in 2017 for her contribution to Australian children's publishing and in 2019 she and Johanna Bell ran the inaugural Octopus Story Camp for Top End artists and writers in Darwin.

Please contact Roger Watts (0409 857 664) for more information.



Top: Artist Erica Wagner at work in Darwin.
Bottom: the artist's work.

Paint in the Gardens with an artist

Saturday
February 29
2020

9:30 to 12.30
Meet at the
Visitor's
Centre

Members \$20
Non-members
\$25
Students \$10

Please book
via the
booking form

Bonsai Discovery Day

This Bonsai workshop will be held at Chojo Nursery, Sassafras, but run by Craig Wilson of Gentiana Bonsai Nursery. We may visit the nearby Gentiana nursery as well. From Craig, we will hear about all aspects of growing and maintaining Bonsai plants with the focus of the day on Australian plants.

Craig has been growing bonsai for around 35 years and has a reputation in Victoria for being knowledgeable regarding Australian native plants. Many young people today have joined him in developing their knowledge and experimenting with a big range of species. Craig has been teaching and lecturing for many years throughout Melbourne. His principal interest is in teaching cultivation, as styling is such a small part of growing bonsai, whereas cultivation is daily. The trees at right are: (top), *Leptospermum petersonii*, 35 years old and 75cm high; (bottom) *Banksia integrifolia*, 50 years old and 1.2m high

If you are interested in finding out more about Bonsai using Australian native plants, please express your interest on the booking form and we will contact you with further details when they become available.



Top: Bonsai *Leptospermum petersonii*.
Bottom: Bonsai *Banksia integrifolia*.
Photos: Craig Wilson, Gentiana Bonsai Nursery

Sunday March 1 2020

Time and
costs TBA

Chojo
Nursery,
365 Mt
Dandenong
Road,
Sassafras

Enquiries
Christine
Kenyon
0438 345589
cekenyon@
bigpond.com

Visit to Banks-Solander collections exhibition at Ringwood - Cranbourne Friends Free Event

We are visiting *Australian Plants Revealed: 65,000 years of traditional plant use and 250 years of science*.

10.30 am to 12 noon - Tuesday 24 March 2020, at the Gallery of the Maroondah Federation Estate, 32 Greenwood Ave, Ringwood, Vic.

Australian Plants Society Victoria, in conjunction with the RBGV National Herbarium and the Maroondah City Council, has arranged an exhibition which will display six of the actual specimens collected by Banks and Solander in 1770 and 30 high resolution images of other plants from their collections. The precious specimens are rarely displayed in public so here is your opportunity to see them.

12.30 pm: BYO Picnic lunch at Karwarra Gardens, Mount Dandenong Tourist Road, Kalorama, followed by a stroll through these important Dandenong Ranges Gardens and inspect paintings and displays featuring unique Australian Plants. Check out visitdandenongranges.com.au/activity/karwarra-australian-plant-garden-and-nursery



Bossiaea heterophylla is one of the plants collected by Banks and Solander at Botany Bay. This species occurs on the East coast from Queensland to Wilsons Promontory. Its status is rare in Victoria.
Photo: Neville Walsh, Vic Flora

Proposed Cranbourne Friends tours - update

A lot of work goes on behind the scenes putting together itineraries, accommodation, speakers and so on to ensure the tours listed below are of a high standard for the Cranbourne and/or Melbourne Friends. These tours often take participants to places where the normal tourist would not venture.

The Event subcommittee is seeking a person who would like to coordinate the tour to New Zealand in 2023. It is proposed that an informal gathering will be held in the near future to discuss how tours (in general) are organised. We would like to hear from you if you are interested in attending such a session.

Members who have indicated their expressions of interest in one of the tours below will be sent an itinerary and the cost once they have been formulated. To book your place on the tour, you will need to pay a levy which will benefit special projects at the Cranbourne Gardens.

Use the accompanying booking form to express your interest in a tour and send it to the booking officer (bookings@rbgfriendscanbourne.org.au). Please check before submitting the EOI form whether you have already registered for a particular tour, so you are not listed twice. You only need to register your interest once.

Proposed tours -2020-2023

1. Alpine Victoria - January 2020 (see page 2)
2. Far Northeast Queensland - May 2020 (see page 7)
3. Tasmania - January 2021
4. Lord Howe Island- October 2021
5. New Caledonia - possible 2022
6. USA National Parks - May 2022
7. New Zealand - possibly 2023

For further information

Rodger Elliot
rgelliot@optusnet.com.au

or

Barbara Jeffrey
bajeffrey@westnet.com.au

Discovery Tour – Far North Queensland May 30 to June 9 2020

In the footsteps of Banks, Solander and Aboriginal Australians.

The tour will mark the 250th Anniversary of the visit of the *Endeavour* commanded by Lieutenant James Cook to the east coast of Australia, where naturalist Joseph Banks and Botanist Daniel Solander made collections enabling Australian plants to be introduced to European scientific study. While this will be primarily a botanical tour, on one day an Aboriginal guide, Johnny Murison, will take us through a vitally important Rock Art Gallery and displays near Cooktown. Some tourist hot-spots are also included.

Stuart Worboys, our botanical guide, has helped us develop an exciting itinerary. Coach Tours of Australia are organising the coach, all accommodation and meals. Destinations International Holidays in Kew will be handling all bookings.

Highlights will include

- Cairns region, Cairns Botanic Gardens and Kuranda by Skyrail
- Australian Tropical Herbarium at James Cook University
- Atherton Tablelands (home of the Ulysses butterfly), two private Gardens, nature reserves and the Stannary Hills area with distinctive geology and special plants in a rain shadow
- Daintree Region Tropical Rainforest (including a cruise to observe the crocodiles along the Daintree River)
- Cooktown Botanic Gardens
- Botanical hot-spots for plants in the wet tropics
- Private and public gardens
- Ancient Split Rock Aboriginal art site near Laura (rated by UNESCO as one of the top 10 rock art sites in the world).

Bookings for this fundraising tour will open shortly; meanwhile we are asking members of Cranbourne and Melbourne Friends to pay the levy to secure a place (limited to 39 travellers) using the levy booking form in this NatureLink.

The Levy will be \$300 per person. This will cover booking expenses, payment for a Botanical Guide, gifts to Gardens visited and a small allowance for contingencies with the major part being a donation to Cranbourne Friends towards projects in Cranbourne Gardens.



Top: Magnificent tree fern just out of Cairns..Bottom: Daintree River.
Photos: Peter Miller

Far North Queensland Tour

Saturday May 30 to
Tuesday June 9, 2020

Secure a place through
the special levy booking
form enclosed

Contact:

Alex Smart
smartie38@bigpond.com
or 9707 5275

Vale, Diana Snape

Respected environmentalist and horticultural journalist Diana Snape has, with her husband Brian, been a long term member, and supporter of the Cranbourne Friends and financial supporter of the Cranbourne Gardens. We mourn her passing and offer condolences to her husband and many friends.

The conservation activities of Diana and Brian Snape, in the Little Desert, are described in the 50th birthday edition of *Environment Victoria News*, issue 32, Spring 2019, dated 4 October.





The Bandi has landed!

In the Spring edition of *Naturelink* you were introduced to the wonderful Charlotte Fletcher, our Southern Brown Bandicoot Outreach Officer. In case you missed that, Charlotte is leading the charge (with the help of funding through State Government, DELWP) to save this nationally endangered species in our region through collaborative projects with councils, schools, developers and residents to raise awareness, advocacy and practical conservation efforts. During the September school holidays we welcomed Bandi the giant Bandicoot, the star of our Big Bandicoot Backyard program, to the Ian Potter Lakeside Precinct. Created by artists Darryl Cordell, Vanessa Ellis, Trina Gaskell and Cliff Dolliver using weedy *Kunzea ericoides* removed from the bushland, Bandi made a big impression – not only on the many human visitors but also some real bandicoot relatives who paid a visit one evening, and were captured on infrared imaging. One does wonder what ‘conversation’ took place!

Who's counting?

It's an interesting question as to how to measure success in botanic gardens. Is it about the quality of the plant displays, the contribution to biodiversity conservation, or the impact on changing behaviours of our visitors for a more sustainable future? Of course these are all important botanic garden metrics, along with the more obvious annual visitor numbers. Cranbourne's visitation over the last five years has been a little up and down, but it is pleasing to see that they are very definitely trending upward. Indeed, last financial year we recorded our highest visitor numbers ever, and if the crowds are anything to go by, we will be looking to better that again this year. With the carpark regularly full over the recent September school holidays, I think the word is definitely out about what Cranbourne Gardens has to offer our community and international visitors.



Our friendly truck driver called it the most interesting load he had ever carried!



Please don't drop me!



Performers 'Born in a Taxi' encourage visitors to act for the Southern Brown Bandicoot.



Big Bandi captivates younger visitors



Roger Watts presents Chris Russell with the cheque for \$76,000 towards the shuttle bus.
Photo: Rufino Ramos

Year	Visitors to Gardens
2014-15	207,988
2015-16	182,347
2016-17	223,336
2017-18	173,891
2018-19	246,746

Shuttle bus

One of the key issues identified in the Cranbourne Gardens Masterplan is the current over-reliance on arrival by car. It is important that we provide a range of access options to visitors, so we continue to work with local government on incorporating pedestrian and bicycle linkages into the growing path network around us. However, despite our best efforts, we have been unable to secure a direct public transport service for the Gardens, which perhaps is not surprising given the challenges of providing even basic public transport services to the rapidly growing population of our immediate area. I am confident that in time public transport will be a commercially viable option, but it is certainly not something we can wait for any longer. Enter our wonderful supporters! We are very grateful to the Cranbourne Friends and the RBGV Foundation for their generous financial support that has allowed us to proceed with establishing a shuttle bus service between local public transport hubs and the Gardens. We are currently working with a specialist wheelchair conversion fitter on vehicle options and look forward to the service commencing as soon as possible over the next few months. The 12-seater bus will be adorned with RBGV images, including acknowledgement of our supporters, so it will also play an important role in raising the profile of the Gardens.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President's report | Roger Watts

I arrived in Edinburgh on the day of the students strike for action on climate change. Greta Thunberg and George Mombiot had just made a movie saying that the best way to remove carbon from atmosphere is to plant trees. Our patron Angus Stewart has just planted a grove of Tasmanian Blue Gums in solidarity.

This has been a busy period for the Friends, with preparations for the Spring Plant Sale coinciding with several key Friends events, including the full day Banksia workshop which was the subject of a full page write up in the Saturday Age, and at least two community radio interviews.

At the same time, the Friends Committee has been meeting with Executive Director Chris Russell and other senior RBGV staff to adjust the way we work together and improve communications between the Friends and the Gardens. A new committee is to meet quarterly to discuss event programming and ensure cooperation and smooth running of Gardens and Friends events at Cranbourne. There was a great moment at the end of the meeting when we were able to present a cheque for \$76,000 to the Gardens from the Cranbourne Friends for the shuttle bus.

As reported to the Annual General Meeting, in addition to the recent bus donation, in late 2018 the Cranbourne Friends also donated \$40,000 towards fencing of 50 hectares of the Trig Point area bushland to prevent over-browsing by wallabies, and \$50,000 for an upgrade of the rear section of the Gardens Nursery, specifically for possum-proofing and new benches.

The finances allowing us to make such substantial donations mostly comes from the Growing Friends Plant Sales (over \$66,000 to 30 June 2019) and the Events subcommittee (over \$23,000 to 30 June 2019), so we thank the hardworking volunteers involved and all our members who support these activities.

The Big Bandicoot children's programs organised by Charlotte Fletcher and others have been a great hit during the school holidays and will hopefully encourage local families to look out for Southern Brown Bandicoots in the local area and create suitable backyard habitat. Cranbourne Friends were invited to assist in the presentation of these programs. If a formal Gardens for Wildlife program is established in the Cranbourne area by City of Casey, the Friends' role will depend on the arrangements made by the Council and the Gardens.

If you attended the Spring Plant sale in October you may have seen several new welcome developments:

- The Botanical Fabricators' marquee near the Garden Ambassadors' Shed offering a wide range of textile articles for sale, featuring Australian flora and fauna
- Some Raising Rarity specimens on sale under Dr Meg Hirst's collaborative research project, which attempts to save rare and threatened flora by assessing their horticultural potential and suitability for cultivated systems, such as home gardens
- Possibly also new signage about the Friends on the café building.

As in previous issues of Naturelink I would like to introduce you to a member of the Friends Committee who has been a great contributor over the last eight years. As Grants Officer Christine Kenyon has written up many grant applications using her University experience, and she has been archivist of the Friends' historical records. She established the Friends in the Gardens (FiGs) volunteer group which assists Horticulture staff with their extra jobs in the Australian Gardens. Christine will continue leading the Friends in the Gardens group but is now retiring from the Friends Committee, as is Vice-President and long-time Membership Officer Helen Morrow (see page 13).



Christine Kenyon, at right, with Friends in the Gardens volunteers.

The Friends Committee has identified a number of exciting opportunities to be developed next year and we are looking for volunteers to assist us with these. Obviously we need Committee members, but there are many opportunities for you to contribute, to learn new skills, to meet new friends, or to work from home in your own time. Learn how to develop the web site, monitor bookings or our membership lists, coordinate volunteers and take the mission of the Friends into the community etc.

Volunteers needed!

Would you like to contribute, learn new skills, make friends or take part in Gardens events like NAIDOC week?

If interested please email **Helen Kennedy** at hmken1@bigpond.net.au

Matthew Henderson, Horticulturist, Cranbourne Gardens



Matt Henderson,
Horticulturist

I grew up in a small town of around 250 people called Taradale close to Bendigo. Our property backed onto the Fryerstown State Park on one side and a small creek on the other so nature wasn't far away from me. I spent most of time outdoors, much to my mum's dismay. Because, in her words, she 'could never find me' as I'd quickly disappear 'exploring' with our border collie Sasha.

Much time was spent building new gardens with my dad and I always think back to the best part as heading to the nursery in Kyneton to pick the plants for the garden we'd just made.

I can still remember being allowed to pick a plant in a nursery near Ballarat and coming back with a *Banksia* (probably *spinulosa* from memory) and just being in love with the wacky flowers. So I guess if asked I couldn't pick a specific moment when I became interested in plants; they seemed to always be a part of my life.

I think this also extended to caring for the environment. A fond memory of mine now is a trip we took as a family down the Great Ocean Road. Dad and I had set off on a longer walk to explore the area. On the way back Dad was picking up the rubbish we found and had me help too. At the time I remember feeling embarrassed coming back from the walk with handfuls of rubbish we found along the way but now I can look back and smile and see the lesson in it all.

In 2000 we left our property in Taradale and moved to Kyneton to a somewhat smaller block but I still found time to go for long walks along the Campaspe River with my dog or bike riding with friends. I stayed in Kyneton until finishing high school.

When I finished school I headed off to uni but after a little while I decided it wasn't for me and felt I needed to look a little further away and applied for a bushland management traineeship with Maroondah City Council and moved to Heathmont shortly after. My new job and home, although a massive change for me, helped me decide that no matter what happened I would always work with plants. It also introduced me to many great people and in particular, while working at a reserve we looked after in Heathmont, I was introduced to the friends of this reserve and a lovely couple by the name of Rodger and Gwen Elliot. I quickly realised Rodger and Gwen would happily answer any questions I had for them, and I don't think they've managed to shake me off since.

After finishing my traineeship I felt that I needed to continue learning and a job became available at Kuranga Native Nursery. There I spent the next four years growing the indigenous tube stock for the retail nursery. Wanting to learn more I moved down to the retail nursery in customer service for four years, trying to build up my knowledge of Australian plants. I then felt it was time to keep moving and, after I applied for a number of different jobs, a friend of mine told of one that was going at Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Cranbourne, which I'd spent many weekends visiting. After much encouragement I applied, not feeling I would have the qualifications for such a job. I went for an interview and to my surprise got a call from John Arnott offering me a position, and now it seems I've very much found my home at Cranbourne, with like-minded 'plant nuts' who are just as crazy about plants as I am.

Regular monthly activities

If interested in joining in one of the group activities, please contact the person listed. You don't need specific skills and you will be made most welcome!

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Friends in Focus

While our attendances remain fairly small, we have a committed group of enthusiasts who have been prepared to turn up in spite of some less than favourable weather forecasts. In July, we elected to stay indoors and took the opportunity to share some of our recent photographic activities. Despite another dreadful forecast in August, we set off to the Australian Garden and miraculously had a magical window of about an hour of clear skies and sunshine, which allowed us to pursue our photography, remarking on the amazing variety of plants in flower despite the conditions. We gathered in the cafe at the conclusion of our walk for a warming drink and most of us were satisfied with what we had achieved. In September we joined numerous visitors in the Australian Garden taking advantage of a beautiful sunny Spring afternoon. Highlights of the day included a Coot enjoying the excess algae in the lan Potter Lake quite close to us and a Spotted Pardalote in the car park collecting nesting material.

From top: Podoscypha petalodes in the Bushland; Epacris impressa 'Cranbourne Bells'; Diplolaena grandiflora. All photos: Judith Cooke



2nd Saturday of the month, Elliot Centre

Times:
9.30am
October to March (Daylight Saving time)

Botanical Fabricators

The Fabricators group have been out and about. We presented a display and sales table at the APS Wilson Park Berwick Plant Sale on Sat 7 September, at an Art & Craft Exhibition at the Karwarra Nursery from 5-20 October; and at the Growing Friends Cranbourne Plant Sale on 26-27 October.

The Plant Sale event gave us an opportunity to make articles for the Christmas market featuring Australian flora and fauna. Normally we don't have the opportunity of selling Christmas gifts. The group are looking for more ideas to use our range of materials.



2nd Tuesday of the month, 10am.

Contact:
Wendy Smart,
9707 5275

wvsmart08@bigpond.com

Herbarium Collectors

This season is exceptionally fine for Orchids, hence the Herbarium Collectors have been able to add to the collection. As explained previously, we can rarely collect more than one or two and often simply take a photo if the numbers are small.

With much gratitude we have added a new member to our group, a photographer. On the August collection day, both of our photographers were away. Alex Smart very kindly stepped in temporarily to help us. But now we have a steady three. Also, another new member is a whizz on computers, so the work that had slowed with the death of dear Dan Linsten is now progressing rapidly.



Acanthus caudatus. Additional collection 2nd September 2019. Photos: Tina Denham

1st Monday of the month, 9am -2pm
Elliot Centre

Contact:
Nola Foster
958385731

Botanical Illustrators

The Botanical Illustrators are a friendly group of artists at various stages of development who meet in the Elliot Centre on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month (except December and January). We support, encourage and inspire each other, enjoy fun and friendship and share the occasional culinary indulgence. Our membership is increasing steadily.



1st and 3rd
Wednesday,
10am to 3pm

Contact:
Margaret
Kitchen
0413 664 295

Drawing & painting a white Waratah, October, 2019

Marta Salamon, a well-known botanical artist and teacher who has a swag of awards to her name, conducted this workshop for us. The Waratah is a challenging subject, as is the illustration of a white flower on white paper. The participants enjoyed an engrossing 3 days of mental workout and skill development. The results have left each one with a deep sense of achievement. Our thanks again to Marta for an enjoyable and productive workshop.

illustrators@
rbgfriends
cranbourne.
org.au

Friends in the Gardens (FiGs)

If you would like to have the opportunity to assist the Horticulture Staff with their extra jobs in the Australian Garden then come and join our friendly group on the 4th Wednesday of each month. We meet in the Staff Administration tea room at 9.45am and help in the Gardens until 12.30pm.



July in the Stringybark Garden with Jess van der Werff, Karen Pogni, Sue Gilbert, Edie Patterson, Margaret di Nuzzo and Rosemary Breyley.

Fourth
Wednesday
of the month,
9.45am

Contact:
Christine
Kenyon
0438 345589

Contact Christine Kenyon, 0438 345589, or by email to cekenyon@bigpond.com.

THANKS

Thanks to a long term Friend



Helen Morrow is well-known to members, as she coordinates the monthly Open House events on Thursday afternoons. She will be continuing to do this in 2020 but is retiring from the Friends Committee.

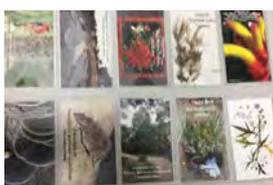
Helen and her husband Tim joined the Cranbourne Friends organisation in the late 80's when Rodger Elliot and others were trying to stop Ballarto Road being built through the proposed Gardens site.

In 2003 she joined the Friends Committee as the Membership Officer, and remained in this role until two years ago. More recently she was also Vice-President so that she could assist Treasurer Karen Russell.

Helen says that she has been on the committee so long because it has always been a pleasant and cooperative group; the focus on Australian plants attracts interesting and enthusiastic people to the Friends.

Having a keen Membership Officer is very important to any Friends organisation, so it is great that Alexandra Stalder took over in 2018.

The biggest change Helen has seen during her time with the Friends is that when she started there was no garden – it was the bush. It was very exciting to be there to observe the building of the Garden from scratch and be practically involved in the Opening of the Australian Garden in 2006.



*Top: Helen Morrow at the Elliot Centre.
Bottom, Some of Helen's collection of Friends membership cards from past years.*

Membership update

Welcome to New Members

This quarter we are pleased to welcome 35 new members: Patricia Bingham, Caroline Kettle, Claire Robinson, Lydia Kinda, Margaret Di Nuzzo, Rebecca Rees, Suzanne Clark, Ann Taylor, Rob Francis, Vanessa Calder, Rosemary Paterson, Bernadette Evans, Lee Murphy, Patricia Phillips, Zane Diamond, Jeane Diamond, Jacqui Winstanley, Chris Russell, Belinda Barnes, Pamela Kirby, Ellen Regos, Tamara McCarthy, Pam Hook, Bill Jones, Leanne Green, Malcolm Allchin, Angela Hill, Peter Durkin, Peter Williamson, Bev Williamson, Matthew Henderson, Jill-Louise Dawson, Patricia Kusel, Keith Williams and Donghwa Jang. We look forward to saying 'Hi' at one of our forthcoming events!

Communications from the Friends

From time to time members raise concerns that they may not be receiving emails including Naturelink and event information from the Friends. We would hate you to miss out on hearing about all our wonderful events, activities and news! If you think you may not be receiving emails, firstly, please check your 'spam' folder. Sometimes our emails end up in spam (this is quite common with gmail accounts for example). To avoid this happening, please add our email address < membership@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au > to your contacts. Otherwise, please don't hesitate to get in touch by emailing membership@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au or texting /calling 0431 025 733 for help with email problems.

Book review - *Where Song began*, by Tim Low

by Robin Allison

In *Where Song Began*, Tim Low shows the enormous strides made towards the understanding of bird evolution since Darwin first published *On The Origin of Species* in 1859. The introduction of carbon dating in the twentieth century and DNA sequencing in recent decades, have greatly facilitated subsequent research.

Low's easy style soon had me hooked. The book is packed with fascinating stories within the story. Early chapters describe the unique features of Australian birds and show how these have evolved in balance with development of flora and fauna particularly trees, which in turn adapts to geological and climatic changes.

Among his stories, Low tells of a Tasmanian blue gum in Davey St. Hobart, (p. 13) which appears as a large tree in an 1889 painting and is still there now; swift parrots feed in this bountiful tree. As the city grew, parrots colliding with windows became such an issue that Government issued a brochure titled 'Prevent Window Collisions' and advised letting windows get dirty or drawing drapes. I was reminded of the sad saga of the Taylor Memorial installation in the Box Garden.

Another story illustrating the intelligence of some birds describes how 'a pet cockatoo of Konrad Lorenz...played such tricks as biting the buttons off Lorenz's father's trousers, while he slept, and flying round and round a tree unravelling balls of wool'. (p. 111). Read on for more and more lovely stories.

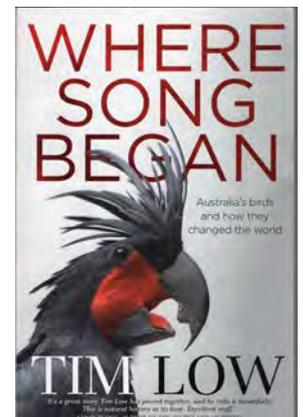
Written by a biologist, *Where Song Began* is based on extensive research, has End Notes and a detailed Index as well as colour illustrations.

By Alexandra
Stalder

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REVIEW



This book is published by Penguin Random House Australia, and can be found in bookshops and libraries.

The Earth Moves in Mysterious Ways, with Peter Betts - 3 August 2019

Peter Betts, Professor of Tectonics from the School of Earth Atmosphere and Environment at Monash University, packed the Australian Garden Auditorium for this lively presentation. We learnt of his journey from plumber's son in East Gippsland to becoming an academic geologist and how Peter applies his expertise to many different research problems in the field of tectonic plates.

The importance of Earth Sciences for society was demonstrated as Peter showed us how Earth is imaged and explained how movements of the world's tectonic plates affect us. Frequent volcano and earthquake activity may occur along the edge of the plate, for example, if magma pushes up from the Earth's mantle through a weakness in the crust.

Earth Sciences are significant and important for society today. Climate change is a critical issue. We need to understand how the plates of the Earth moved in the past to better understand the planet and to better predict the future. The great new challenge is being able to explore inside buried rocks (we have exhausted rocks at the very near surface). In some ways our future and our children's future very much lies beneath our feet.

Research into tectonic plates and zones can indicate sites for future mining of energy metals. The discovery of metals that support a greener energy future, such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, copper and manganese, will be very important (especially if they are 100% recycled) but known lithium reserves are insufficient for predicted future needs. Renewable metals and battery metals can provide an opportunity for Australia to support a greener energy future, but such developing this opportunity requires significant investment from government.



Academic geologist Peter Betts in New Zealand. Prof. Peter Bett's research can be seen on the Monash University website at: research.monash.edu/en/persons/peter-betts/.

Mistletoes in the Environment, with Peter Rogers - 23 September 2019



Peter Rogers showing flower arrangement of Drooping Mistletoe *Amyema Pendula* to Barbara Jeffrey.

After a concise and informative presentation on the often poorly understood Mistletoe, Peter Rogers led us on a tour to the Trig Point Track and the Gardens Office area to see mistletoes at close quarters.

"Mistletoe" refers to perennial flowering plants, usually woody and shrubby or vine-like, which grow as parasites attached to tree branches and shrubs.

These plants have a penetrating haustorium that attaches to a host and enables nutrient absorption and development of the mistletoe. It penetrates the bark of the host and grows into the host's xylem (the plant tissue carrying water and nutrients).

There are about 94 species represented in Australia of which 67 species are endemic to here. Some mistletoes have very specific host plants while others are less discriminating. Some mistletoes are exceptional at mimicking their host plants, including species of *Acacia*, *Allocasuarina*, *Casuarina* and *Eucalyptus*.

Mistletoes are of major ecological importance as they provide shelter, including bird nesting sites, and food for wildlife. Generally they do not kill or severely harm the host tree except if the host is unhealthy or weak. Research has shown that where there is mistletoe leaf litter there is greater biodiversity.

Historic Boroondara Cemetery and Yarra Bend Park - 12 August

A sunny but chilly morning greeted the Friends at Boroondara (Kew) General Cemetery when they toured the site with Helen Page, a Cranbourne Friend. The cemetery was originally designed as a Victorian garden cemetery. Recently the general horticultural direction of the cemetery has been revived and improved, and some sections have been planted up with Australian plants, many purchased from Cranbourne Friends' plant sales. It is hoped that the use of Roundup can be discouraged.



*Australian plants in the replanted Pauper section of the Boroondara cemetery, looking spectacular.
Photo Rodger Elliot*

A volunteer group works in the cemetery on Saturdays and Wednesdays once a month (check out the website for details - <http://www.fobkc.org>).

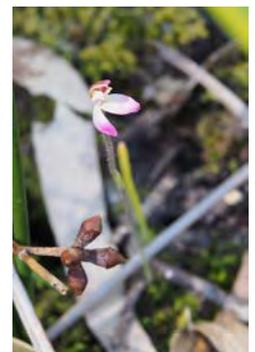
Later the Friends went to Yarra Bend Park, where Leon Costermans led us on a tour exploring the park's plants and exceptional geology. Part of the walk took us past Dights Falls, which is one of the barriers to salt water going further up the Yarra River. There is a monument to Charles Grimes who, as the Surveyor General of New South Wales, was one of the first Europeans to reach the River Yarra on 8 February 1803.



Bush BBQ and wildflower ramble - 6 October

A ramble from Stringybark BBQ area was the order of the day on Sunday 6th October, led by horticulturalist Matt Henderson. Bush volunteer Dawn Neylan had scoured the area to mark a number of tiny orchids and other plants in flower that we might like to see.

*Top: Caladenia mentiens, with seed capsules from Eucalyptus ovata for size comparison.
Bottom, Diuris orientis.
Photos: Alex Smart, Peter Miller*



Years ago Donkey Orchids of the *Diuris* genus were more common. Unfortunately rabbits and wallabies browse on the flowers. This does not necessarily destroy the plant, as the tubers are likely to survive. With the Friends funding the Wallaby exclusion fencing (in Trig Point area) it will be exciting to see these orchids flowering again. On the ramble we also saw Wedding bush, *Ricinocarpos pinifolius*, and all the flowers were 1.6 metres or higher off the ground, where the wallabies cannot reach them.



Cranbourne Friends Committee

President: Roger Watts	0409 857 664	Booking Officer	Ros Shepherd	5932 5611
Secretary: Helen Kennedy	0419 125 800		bookings@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au	
Vice President: Helen Morrow	9850 9125	Events Sub Committee	Barbara Jeffrey	Rodger Elliot
Vice President: Rosemary Miller	0422 893 745		Ros Shepherd	Alex Smart
Past President: Indra Kurzeme	0408 002 028		Lyn Blackburne	Richard Clarke
Treasurer: Karen Russell	9878 4857		Marjanne Rook	Mick Robertson
Assistant Treasurer: Richard Clarke	5974 1750	Naturelink Editor:	Rosemary Miller	0422 893 745
Membership Secretary: Alexandra Stalder	0458 550 509		naturelink@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au	
RBGV Representative: Chris Russell	5990 2200	Quicklink Editor:	Janette Wilson	0477 711 569
General Committee:		Social Media Convenor:	Amy Akers	0423 513 281
Christine Kenyon	9589 2154			
Barbara Jeffrey	5998 5410			
Alexandra Stalder	0458 550 509			
Janette Wilson	0477 711 569			

The General Committee meets at the Gardens on the second Thursday of the month (except January) at 5.30pm.