Dear Friends

With memberships now totaling more than 1300, representing more than 2000 individuals, and adding another 4000 plus people in associate or corporate memberships, we need to reconfigure our business. This has already commenced.

I would especially like to thank those who have stepped forward to make this voluntary organisation run so well for us all. Some new activities are:

Managing the membership: Obviously we needed more help with this and Susan Webb has come forward to help our Secretary, Colette Mackay, with the rapidly growing workload.

Managing the guiding service for the Arboretum: We thank all who have volunteered to be guides for without you this could not have been such a well-regarded service. Max Bourke, Roger Hnatiuk and Ben Robertson have been wonderful in helping me run the guide training—it simply couldn’t have happened without them. Also, Kathryn Cole, who stepped forward to run the guide rosters, is doing a marvellous job and thanks to Marelle Rawson for managing guide’s uniforms and clothing for other volunteers, with support from Helen Dawes and Jan Gough-Watson.

Supplying interim membership cards: We needed a working party to send these out—Anna Howe, Heidi Ramsay, Meredith Hinchcliffe, Yvonne Hackman, Hayley Cockman and Colette helped me complete the task. Linda Muldoon designed the cards and organised the printing.

And we have a host of other wonderful volunteers working on tree measuring, bonsai explaining, and on an increasing number of Arboretum working bees.

My reason in mentioning all these new activities and the people who have taken them on, is to encourage more members to volunteer and get involved. A key new activity will be fund-raising in new ways, now that we no longer collect donations on Open Days. Your ideas will be very welcome, particularly if you can help to implement them.

In the past, we were able to pay some of the costs for the Festival of the Forests and Open Days, but now there are many activities requiring our funding. This year we are co-ordinating the seat donation program, equipping all guides and volunteers with uniforms ($10,000), providing portable loud-speakers for guides with large groups ($1000), and donating a large seat to the Pod Playground ($3000). We are currently working on a new book about the Arboretum species, for sale in the bookshop, and we are canvassing the possibility of donating one or more six-seater electric (or fuel) club car/s for small group tours, as Centenary gifts.

We are developing new ideas with Arboretum management for fund-raising by the Friends, including the sale of plants and running exhibitions. As ever, our fund-raising can include finding suitable sponsors. We are very grateful that ActewAGL continues to supply printed copies of this newsletter for mailing and provides a venue for our General Meetings. We also thank Price Waterhouse Coopers for providing a venue for evening guides’ meetings. If you know of other possible sponsors who could help, please contact me with your suggestions: ph 0406 376 711 (business hours) or friends@arboretumcanberra.org.au.

Discounted parking passes at $25 per annum will be available as soon as they are provided by the Arboretum (still free for active volunteers). You will need to show your membership card to access discounts at the Arboretum shop.

See you at the Arboretum!

Jocelyn Plovits
Chair
Warming up for Warm Trees

BY JOCELYN PLOVITS AND JENNY CANTLON

What were more than 100 people secretly creating for the Arboretum? They were knitters preparing vibrant materials for the Warm Trees installation in July 2013. The concept for this event came from members of the Friends. The Friends put in a formal proposal to the Arboretum team, and the proposal was accepted, so the proposal was launched.

Our vision was to create colourful groves of trees throughout the Arboretum by applying knitted scarves and squares to tree trunks. We planned to brighten up the Arboretum during July, the coldest and most leafless month and we hoped that this would encourage visitors to explore more of the Arboretum, after visiting the Village Centre. Treasure hunts for families with children, run by the Friends’ volunteers, were planned for each weekend during July, with small prizes on offer.

But first we needed to get the knitted materials, so we advertised for participants. We were happy and quite amazed that so many keen knitters came forward from the Friends, and then from friends of Friends, from locally and interstate, from young and old, from teams of knitters in aged care, and to felt-makers and individuals. We formed the Arboretum knitters’ network and so it all began.

On 25 May we held a knitters’ morning tea in the Green Room at the Village Centre, so that people could bring the creations they had completed to date, compare notes, take inspiration from one another, and put faces to names they had been reading about through network communications.

WOW! The contributions were astounding, as you can see from these pictures: creative, colourful, imaginative, innovative and the quantity made us realise we would be able to make an impact in our first year of running this event. Thanks so much to all who contributed. It was great to see you all having so much fun!

Knitters’ morning tea in the Green Room  Photos by Linda Muldoon
Wednesday, 26 June arrived, and this was to be the first day for distributing the colour and ‘dressing’ the trees. A working bee of Friends set to work, first in the Himalayan cedars, then onto the ‘Wide Brown Land’ sculpture and the Chinese tulip trees.

Other non-forest areas were also transforming. Woolly worms and acorns adorned the Pod Playground and a fairy ring of woolly toadstools sprang up at the entry to the Canberra Discovery Garden.

On subsequent days, more colour appeared in the Camden white gums, on the pines on Dairy Farmers Hill and elsewhere. Then clues for the Treasure Hunt were distributed and secured in various locations, in time for the first hunters to start work on 1 July.
The radiata pines on Dairy Farmers Hill

Acorns and a worm (above left), adorning the playground

A very cosy Camden white gum!

A fairy ring of toadstools around a warm southern magnolia

Photos by Linda Muldoon
Pod Playground opens!

BY LINDA MULDOON

Saturday, 22 June arrived and the countdown to the grand opening began just a few seconds before 10:00 am. Five! Four! Three! Two! One! Then a surge of small people, accompanied by bigger people, rushed through the gate.

The small people then ran in all directions in a frenzied tour of discovery. And there were so many new things to explore: acorn cubby houses connected by rope tunnels, sound-based attractions, rope nets to climb to a jumping platform, chalk boards, a musical bridge, and giant banksia cubbies.

Pod Playground is designed to keep children enthralled and physically active. It caters for tiny tots, bigger kids, the brave and the not so brave.

The not so brave wanted to turn round and come back, once they were up in an acorn cubby, and I watched a few parents on rescue missions, but generally the playground is a huge success. Any problems have been how to cope with such a large volume of playground visitors, particularly during the school holidays, rather than how to attract more people.

The formal opening began at noon with Katy Gallagher MLA, ACT Chief Minister, and the Hon. Andrew Leigh MP, Member for Fraser, both addressing the crowd.

Sound-based activities proved very popular with tiny tots
Left and above: ACT Chief Minister, Katy Gallagher MLA, and Member for Fraser, The Hon. Andrew Leigh MP, declare the Pod Playground OPEN!

Photos by Linda Muldoon

Trained guides and general volunteers required for concert on Saturday, 23 November 2013

Contact Jocelyn@arboretumcanberra.org.au
This exhibition at the National Library of Australia was the result of Jyll’s several visits to Canberra, interviews with its tree people, probing into its tree history and visiting its tree places.

This was a Centenary of Canberra project, supported by the ACT Government, the Australian Government and the National Library of Australia. The Arboretum became part of its fabric, as did some members of the Friends who featured in the sound recordings. Many of us had met Jyll before, over quite a long period, at the Arboretum and at one the Friends’ General Meetings (on her 2012 visit). Indeed looking at some of her early photos of the Arboretum, we were reminded just how far it has progressed since those early days.

Jyll, who lives in the UK, has a background forged at Goldsmiths’ College (of art and social sciences) and the Slade School of Fine Art. She had previously worked on other projects that dealt with the connections of people with plants. She brought a copy of her book, *Mr Roscoe’s Garden*, to her first meeting with the Friends’ Council at the Arboretum, some years back. This had been published in 2008 and, along with an exhibition of photographs, told the story of a 19th century plant collector and the fate of his collection in Liverpool. Since then, Jyll has worked on another two projects with people and plants as their theme.

On 5 July 2013, some 30+ members of the Friends were fortunate enough to attend this very gentle *CITY of Trees* exhibition, with Jyll as a guide.
I am privileged to have visited many arboreta around the world, as well as a specialist palmetum, a pomarium, a bambusetum and a ceriseum*, but this was my first Mangrove Arboretum!

Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve is a remarkable piece of ‘reverse engineering’, quite like what is underway at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands in the ACT. A group of dedicated naturalists, led by a serious bird-watcher in Singapore, spent many years persuading the Singapore Government that an area of derelict fish farms in the north-west of the island on the Strait of Johor should be converted to a nature reserve. Tenacity and lobbying paid off and the site covering some 130 ha gradually moved from vision to a reality. It was opened by the Singapore Prime Minister in 1993.

This is an area of vital importance to migratory birds as it is in the centre of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway and of the 280 species recorded on the site, some 118 species are regular migrants. Many of these also connect with Australia.

Of course to have good birds, you need good trees, and one of the dedicated areas within the reserve is the Mangrove Arboretum. There are around 12 species of mangrove trees in three genera (two of these genera also occur in northern Australia). Around the wetlands there are also relatives of species we have in our Arboretum, the most spectacular being the tropical

Sculptural map of the complex waterways at Sungei Buloh

Resting/observing pavilion above one of the waterways

form of Albizia (we have Albizia julibrissin in Forest 6). This one has a similar flower but can grow to 45 m quite quickly! It was formerly known as Albizia falcatoria but has now been renamed Paraserianthes falcatoria. The mangrove forest margins contain another 20 species of trees and large shrubs, turning what was a fish farm 25 years ago into a ‘natural setting’. There is a good visitor centre with excellent didactic material, plus good information on flora and fauna throughout the site, including excellent bird hides. The site has very good board walks as well as paths, though on the sunnier rocky sites, large monitors happily occupy the space. Prolific warnings instruct visitors to keep to the paths as crocodiles inhabit the waters but jumping fish, squirrels and many birds make it an attractive place to be. Volunteers assist the paid staff in ways similar to our Friends’ group.

This reserve is located quite near Kranji War Cemetery and adjacent to the famous World War II battle site. Entry is free during the week and $1 per adult at weekends. There is good free carparking and good public transport is less than 20 minutes’ walk away. For further information, see: www.sbwr.org.sg.

* ‘ceriseum’ or collection of cherries from the French ‘cerisier’.
Parrotia persica
PERSIAN IRONWOOD

BY LINDA MULDOON

Persian ironwoods can be found in Forest 14 which occupies a prominent site at the Arboretum. The forest straddles both sides of the turn-off to the Himalayan cedars and extends to the Central Valley side of Forest Drive, where there are very recent plantings. The rest of the forest was planted in September 2008.

Parrotia gets its name from Freidrch W Parrot (1792–1841), a German naturalist who collected specimens of the tree on Mt Ararat, while searching for Noah’s Ark; persica is from Latin, meaning of, or from, Persia. This species is part of the Hamamelidaceae family, and although not regarded as a threatened species, it is possibly one of only two widely-separated species in the genus Parrotia.

It is native to northern Iran (formerly Persia) where it grows mostly in moist deciduous forests on low-lying plains and mountain foothills up to 900 m elevation, sometimes on alkaline soils.

Persian ironwood is a small to medium-sized deciduous tree that can reach 15 m in height with a spread of 10 m.

A large Persian ironwood tree growing in Belgium. This tree had a height of 14 m in 1999.
Photo: Jean-Pol Grandmont in 2007
with a single trunk or multiple trunks. With age, trunks and larger branches shed large flake leaves, leaving a beautiful patchy pinkish-grey bark. This adds to the tree’s attraction in winter and becomes more pronounced as the tree ages.

The smooth, deep-green, elliptical leaves are 6–15 cm long and 4–10 cm wide with wavy margins. The surface of the leaves is corrugated when they first emerge and some new leaves are flushed with purple. In early May, the leaves turn a magnificent autumn blend of pinks, purples, reds, and golds. (The very hot days of early 2013 had a detrimental impact on the leaves, so we didn’t see the typical autumn colouring this year.)

The flowers are produced in July when the branches are bare. Clusters of deep-red stamens, about 4 mm wide, appear from woolly bracts. There are no petals. As spring approaches, the stamens grow longer and their colour fades to deep-pink.

The fruit is a two-part capsule, with each part containing one shiny brown seed.

In its natural habitat, Persian ironwood is an important species in protecting slopes in very steep locations that are subject to landslides. The name ‘ironwood’ comes from the very dense and almost indestructible nature of the timber. Herbalists have used this species to treat various fevers and respiratory infections. It is also used in food colouring and flavouring.

This forest is planted in long, equally spaced rows following the curve of Forest Drive. Trees of this species can live for 80 years or more.

Azerbaijan postage stamp featuring Persian ironwood

NOTE
Photos with credits are sourced from Wikimedia Commons. The balance are by the author.
Welcome Leigh, farewell Grant

CHANGES FOR THE BONSAI COLLECTION
BY LEIGH TAAFE AND JOCELYN PLOVITS

The National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia (NBPCA) is one of the most popular attractions at the Arboretum. Since moving from its temporary home in Commonwealth Park, visitation to the Collection has increased 15 to 20-fold, and feedback from the public is very positive.

In order to accommodate the increase in traffic, along with longer opening hours (an extra two hours per day), we have created an extra shift to be filled by our bonsai volunteers. This increases our weekly volunteer hours from 45 hours to 84 hours.

The display area is much larger than the one we had in Commonwealth Park, allowing us to display more bonsai (up to 85, instead of 30). The extra room has also helped in accommodating the number of visitors.

After six years as Interim Curator of the NBPCA, Grant Bowie has decided to step back from the demands of the role. Grant has done an outstanding job to bring the Collection to where it is today. He has helped the Australian bonsai community to work with the ACT Government, creating a wonderful bonsai display for the public to enjoy. At his farewell, people celebrated Grant’s wonderful skills and contribution, particularly his talent for graciously sharing his knowledge with everyone. Grant was presented with four fabulous bonsai pots, so that he can remember his time with the Collection, even when working on his own collection.

The newly-appointed Curator, Leigh Taafe, assumes the role with significant experience, having been Assistant Curator of the NBPCA for the past three years. Leigh brings over 26 years of experience with bonsai, including 14 years operating in a commercial capacity. His local knowledge of climate and conditions is a great strength. Also, the relationships he has developed with donors and lenders of bonsai, and with our wonderful volunteers, should make his transition into this role an easy one.

Leigh’s enthusiasm for the success of the NBPCA and the Arboretum is boundless, and his desire to learn and share his skills is a valuable asset for the NBPCA and the bonsai community as a whole.

A large part of the role of Curator includes management of people and processes, budgets and reporting to the ACT Government. Knowledge that Leigh gained by working within the Arboretum team from its inception, has provided him with a good understanding of the NBPCA’s relationship with the Arboretum as a business at large. After graduating from Curtin University with a business degree, majoring in Information Technology and Economics, Leigh’s background placed him very well in tough competition for the job.

BOOK REVIEW BY MAX BOURKE

SCIENCE AND HOPE—A Forest History
BY JOHN DARGAavel & ELISABETH JOHANN

“We tell our story of the hopeful science and trusting art of forestry. Ours is not a tale of triumph; the outlook for the world’s forests is too bleak for that. . . . Ours is another, longer story; one of inquiry, of science and persistent endeavour to find a better future for forests. . . . Ours too is a partial story; science is not enough, but it is necessary.”

So begins this elegantly written, wonderful look at 300 years of professional engagement of people who became ‘scientific’ foresters in the 19th century.

The lead author is Dr John Dargavel, a Canberra forester who has worked in industry and academia, as well as championing the causes of forest training and forest history for many decades.

Presumably all of us who are members of the Friends have an interest in trees. This book is for those who want to understand something about the science of tree management, its politics, and indirectly, where arboreta might fit into that. It is a true pleasure to read, with little jargon, yet full of interesting background information regarding 300 years of local and global tree management. Chapter 14 ‘WARMING’ is the best simple summary I have read on the political issues of, the science of, and the management of climate change.

But the story begins on a precise date: Tuesday, 16 February 1664, when John Evelyn, a true polymath and an active early member of the Royal Society, published his famous treatise, Silva or a discourse on forest trees and the propagation of timber. This book was the first truly comprehensive look at tree cultivation and forest management. A developing sense of the need for scientific study and management of trees followed, becoming a story of global importance, and one that continues today.

Arboreta, both for amenity/pleasure and scientific forestry, get good coverage, as well as their place in the story of appreciating trees.

I believe members of the Friends who read this book will see the connectedness of the enterprise of the National Arboretum Canberra, with the long story of tree care. While the book ends on a sad note, it should leave us feeling inspired by the work and function of the National Arboretum Canberra:

“What we can be sure of is that the hope to understand the complexity of the forests will continue. It will not be enough, but it is not inconsiderable.”

Published in 2013 by The White Horse Press.
FOREST TALK

RELOCATING THE JAPANESE BLACK PINES

When the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia moved from Commonwealth Park in January, two trees were left behind. They were Japanese black pines that had been donated by Dorothy Koreshoff, the matriarch of Australian bonsai, in 2008. They had originally been growing in the ground at Dorothy’s bonsai nursery in Castle Hill, Sydney, and were replanted in Commonwealth Park, next to the Caretaker’s Cottage. But on 15–16 August, they were moved to the National Arboretum Canberra, and replanted near the front entrance of the bonsai pavilion.

Dorothy imported the seeds for these pines (*Pinus thunbergii*) in 1950, and they are said to have been forgotten about, staying in an envelope on top of a Customs Office filing cabinet, until the following year.

These are styled garden trees, as commonly seen in Japanese parks and gardens, and in Japan they are referred to as niwaki. They require the same pruning techniques as bonsai, just on a larger scale.

STUNNING FRUITS ON THE SOUTHERN MAGNOLIAS

We had seen seed heads form on the magnolias in previous years, but 2013 was the first year they went on to produce mature fruits (in early June). These sturdy young trees are growing apiece in Forest 7 (next to the Himalayan cedars). Remember to check out the beautiful flowers in December/January.

WANTED: GOOD CLEAR PHOTOS FOR NEW ARBORETUM BOOK

The friends have begun work on a new book about all the Arboretum tree species. The tree descriptions will be broader than those already prepared by Mark Richardson. However, the hardest part is finding good photos of mature trees, particularly of our rarer species. If you have any good photos of any Arboretum species (other than cork oaks and Himalayan cedars), please tell us about them, or send them (in small format initially) to: lindaon@grapevine.com.au.

The format of the book will be 29 cm x 24 cm wide (larger than the previous book). Where we can find very good photos, we will include them at full page size. Otherwise each species will occupy one page. We are also trying to show flowers, leaves, fruit, and bark, so if you have suitable photos, please let us know.

FRIENDS’ FIRST FUNCTION AT THE MARGARET WHITLAM PAVILION

The Friends, or at least 120 of them, celebrated the completion of the Margaret Whitlam Pavilion with drinks and nibbles on Friday, 23 May. This was also the occasion for drawing the raffle, which was quite a lengthy process, as there were 34 major prize winners and many others besides. The raffle earned the Friends over $4000 profit, so thanks to all who participated.

TREE MEASURING TO A 21-GUN SALUTE!

On Tuesday, 9 July, a peaceful morning’s tree measuring was interrupted by a 21-gun salute. This was a first, but we have learned to expect the unexpected and it does underscore the fact that the Arboretum has an amazing grandstand view over Canberra. The occasion was a State Lunch at Government House for the President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, and his wife.
FRIENDS' SPECIAL WALK: 'OUT OF SIGHT'

Max Bourke will lead a special walk on Sunday, 15 September 2013. 'Out of Sight' is a 2.8 km walk, looking at a range of forests in the Arboretum's 'Back Country' that most visitors do not see.

Cost $10.00 per person (as a contribution to the Friends), includes morning tea.

Meet at the bus set down spot, near the visitor centre at 9:00 am. Book with Max on max@mebourke.com.

RED STRINGYBARK BUDS

Next time you’re near the Southern Tablelands Ecosystems Park (STEP) site, look for these beautiful buds on the trees next to the water tank. Nearby, some other trees of the same species also have buds, but are not showing the red colour.

Work continues on the STEP site (Forest 20) every Thursday morning at 8:30 am, with morning tea at 10:00 am. New volunteers welcome! Despite the winter cold, the garden is really progressing, with flowers emerging in the Grevilleas and Hardenbergias.

WORKING BEE ON 8 JUNE

Many hands make light work, and in a couple of hours, this group of volunteers cleared the weeds from a huge area around the dam, and created several mega-piles of weeds to prove it. Thanks to all working bee participants. Don’t our Friends’ flouro vests look good?

FRIENDS' PROGRAM OF EVENTS

- 10 September Council Meeting
- 15 September Max’s special walk
- 8 October Council Meeting
- 12 October Working Bee
- 12 November General Meeting
- 23 November Voices in the Forest concert
- 30 November Friends’ End of Year Picnic
- 10 December Council Meeting

FACTT WALKS IN WESTBOURNE WOODS

8 September Food and fodder from trees led by Paul Dann
10 October History of Australian arboreta led by Max Bourke
11 November Conifers for production led by Richard Hart
10 December Features that help identify trees led by Kim Wells

Free guided walks through the grounds of the Royal Canberra Golf Club.

Meet at 9:30 am at the gate, off Bentham Street, Yarralumla.

No dogs allowed. For more information contact the Friends of ACT Arboretum 6251 4463.

FRIENDS HELP OUT AT RETIREMENT EXPO

The ACT Government participated in the Retirement and Lifestyle Expo, held at Exhibition Park, Canberra in May 2013, and Friends’ volunteers were asked to man a Friends’ display there. Here Sanya is photographed with Shane Rattenbury MLA, Minister for TAMS.

Photo: Lindsay Burse

FIRST FLOWERING FOR WESTERN QUEENSLAND WHITE GUMS

These are very tiny, insignificant flowers, but now we know what they look like. This species, in Forest 19, grows to around 35 m tall, with a single whitish trunk which is very conspicuous as the trees loose their lower branches.
Membership application form

Please complete the form below OR go to www.arboretumcanberra.org.au where you can join online and make a secure payment.

Yes, I/we wish to join the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc.

1. Title .................. First name ..................................................................................................
   Last name ..................................................................................................

2. Title .................. First name ..................................................................................................
   Last name ..................................................................................................

Address ....................................................................................................................................
......................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................... Postcode ..........................................

Telephone (h) ..................................................(w)....................................................................

Email address ...........................................................................................................................

Do you agree to receiving notices of meetings via email?

YES/NO ................................ Date of application .................................................................

Please tick your relevant membership category:

☐ Single ($25.00)  ☐ Association or club ($50.00)
☐ Concession ($10.00)  ☐ Corporate Friend ($2000.00)
☐ Household ($30.00)

Memberships are due for renewal in December each year

Please tick your method of payment

☐ Cash  ☐ Direct deposit

☐ Cheque (cheques must be made payable to the
Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc.)

Details for direct deposit are:
WESTPAC, Petrie Plaza, Canberra, ACT
Account—Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc.
BSB No. 032719  Account No. 375379

If making a direct deposit, please make sure that you record your name so that your membership can be verified.

Send applications to: The Secretary
Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc.
PO Box 48
Campbell ACT 2612

Please remember to notify us about changes to your contact details

Contact
You can contact the Friends at friends@arboretumcanberra.org.au or via our website on www.arboretumcanberra.org.au or by phone on 0406 376 711 during business hours

Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc.

OFFICE BEARERS
Jocelyn Plovits, Chair
Trish Keller OAM, Deputy Chair
Colette Mackay, Secretary
Richard Bear, Treasurer
Spero Cassidy, Web Manager

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Linda Muldoon, Publications Editor
Tony Lawson, STEP Representative
Caitrin Dunn

The Council (all of the above) meet on the second Tuesday of each month. We invite any member interested in joining the Council to contact us.

LIFE MEMBERS
Sherry McArdle-English
Roger Hnatiuk

HONORARY MEMBER
Jon Stanhope

Newsletter
The newsletter is published quarterly. Please contact Linda Muldoon on lindaon@grapevine.com.au if you would like to contribute an article.

The Friends thank the ACT Government, ActewAGL, Supabarn and Yarralumla Nursery for their support.

Information prepared by the Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra Inc. August 2013