

Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens

NEWSLETTER

Number 54 November 2006





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The Friends Newsletter is published three times a year. We welcome your articles for inclusion in the next issue. Material should be forwarded to the Newsletter Committee no later than the first week of June for the July issue; September for the October issue; and February for the March issue.

Post material to the Newsletter Committee at the above address or, place in the Friends letterbox, located inside the Gardens' Visitor Centre between 9.00am and 4.30pm, Monday to Sunday. Editorial messages: telephone (02) 6250 9548.

Design and typesetting: Anne Rawson
 Printing: Instant Colour Press Canberra
 ISSN 1036 9163

Cover: The beautiful flowers of Christmas Bells (*Blandfordia nobilis*) appear in summer. In the Gardens they can be seen near the Friends semi-circular seating in the Sydney Region Flora Section. Photo by Denise Greig.

IN THIS ISSUE

Our Friend Bernard—a Thoroughly Decent Docent	3
Studying Snakes in the Gardens	4
The Alice Springs Desert Park.....	5
Blooming Threads	6
Original Wildflowers.....	7
The Varied Sitella	8
From the Bookshop	9
News from the Acting Director	10
Celebrating the New 'Friends Cascades'	11
Friends Briefs	12

Vale, Bernard



Photo by Murray Fagg

Membership Information

Membership of the Friends is for 12 months from 1 November. New memberships after 1 August are valid until November the following year.

Membership fees (from 1 August) are:

Pensioner / student	\$30
Individual	\$35
Corporate/Household	\$50

Cheques or Money Orders should be made payable to:

Friends of the ANBG

If paying by Bankcard/Mastercard/Visa please include card numbers, expiry date, name on card and signature.

Applications should be sent to:

The Membership Secretary
 Friends of the ANBG
 GPO Box 1777
 Canberra ACT 2601

Our Friend Bernard—a Thoroughly Decent Docent

Bernard Vincent Fennessy 16 November 1923 – 6 August 2006

Jim Croft, Deputy Director, Science and Information, ANBG

Docent is not a word you commonly hear in Australian botanic gardens and natural history institutions. It comes from the Latin *docere*, to teach, and is widely used in North America for the legions of volunteer guides who underpin, maintain and communicate the best of society's values through cultural and natural institutions. Bernard Fennessy was one of the finest, a teacher *par excellence*, and was the very embodiment of the ancient Greek aphorism: 'a society grows great when old men plant trees under whose shade they will never sit'.

As a volunteer guide Bernard, and his distinctive hat of rabbit felt, has been the public face of the Australian National Botanic Gardens; for countless thousands of visitors, Bernard Fennessy *was* the Botanic Gardens experience.

On guard all day everyday, putting in more hours than many of the full-time Gardens' staff, Bernard was a fixture of the Gardens for as long as I and most ANBG staff can remember, a watchful eye on everything, keeping us all honest and on our toes. He was ubiquitous, keeping up-to-date with the location, state and condition of every plant, and who was, or wasn't, looking after it.

The thing I admired most about Bernard was his love and respect for knowledge and his passion in sharing this with others. To Bernard it was totally unacceptable for a visitor to come to the Gardens for lunch or a cup of coffee. Totally! Anyone who entered the site had to leave the place as a better person, inspired and better informed and appreciative of Australian plants and the environment. I often thought of Bernard as an avuncular angler-fish, a patriarchal predator, lurking around the bus shelter, outside the Visitor Centre, or his favourite habitat, the congestion point where all visitors must converge on the bridge across the rainforest gully. An alternative image of a bear fishing salmon out of a stream often came to mind. Bernard would entice his prey with a friendly nod and a gesture of assistance and... snap! 'Have you seen the...?' 'Did you know...?' 'Let me show you...'. Hardly any could escape. Hardly any wanted to.

Bernard was everywhere. You could walk deep into the Gardens to get away from it all (your job, your boss, your staff, the usual things) to collect thoughts, and there would be Bernard—a jovial pied piper instructing, informing, lecturing and regaling an enthralled bunch of hijacked visitors. Or sometimes by himself, checking out some hidden nook that he would later show to someone

else. When his legs got weak, he would pursue visitors on an electric wheelchair commandeered from the Visitor Centre. Yes—it was unacceptable for anyone to leave the Gardens without having been inspired by the place and without learning something.

And it wasn't just visitors. Bernard was always extolling the virtue of knowledge and cajoling his fellow Guides to learn more, know more, teach more. And when he ran out of visitors and Guides he would make sure the staff was fully aware of what they were responsible for and that he was fully aware of what they had to show and talk about.

No-one was spared the burden of botanic knowledge, which to Bernard was not a burden at all. As well as lurking strategically in the Gardens, Bernard positioned himself in the ANBG library and encouraged everyone who passed through to know everything about our plants and environment that could be found on the library shelves. He would lie in wait for the Deputy Director Science and Information and pounce on him to make sure he was across all the science and had all the up-to-date information and that he was going to give directions armed with this knowledge. Learning, knowing and making sure others learnt and knew was his passion.

People like Bernard, and what they stand for, is one of the reasons I come to work each day. He was truly a decent docent and a friend to us all.

The Bernard Fennessy 'What's in a Name?' Award is to be established by the Friends of the Gardens to commemorate the valuable contribution Bernard made to the Gardens as an educator and mentor. Full details will appear in the March 2007 newsletter.



Bernard Fennessy wearing his distinctive hat of rabbit felt. Photo by Murray Fagg.

Studying Snakes in the Gardens

Donna Douglass, ANBG Ranger



Many staff, visitors and volunteers have seen brown snakes in the Gardens, some at closer range than they would like!

Have you ever wondered how many brown snakes live in the Gardens? Or where you are most likely to see one? And how a brown snake will behave if you do encounter one? From October 2006 to March 2007 a research project will attempt to answer these questions. Titled 'Human Interactions with Free-ranging Brown Snakes (*Pseudonaja textilis*) at the Australian National Botanic Gardens', the project is being conducted as part of a Masters of Applied Science (Environmental Conservation) through Charles Sturt University. The Friends of the Gardens have generously supported the project with a \$3000 grant. Staff, management and volunteers are also assisting.

The sight of a brown snake elicits many varied responses from staff, visitors and volunteers alike. Whilst some believe that the 'only good snake is a dead snake', others are fascinated by these enigmatic and much-maligned animals.

The Eastern Brown Snake is a highly venomous, extremely active snake that will aggressively defend itself if threatened. Although brown snakes are usually shy animals they are often encountered in early spring when they are so preoccupied foraging for food and searching for mates that they often fail to notice the approach of people. The remarkable accompanying photograph is an excellent example. It was taken in October 2004 when Ranger Greg Sattler accidentally noticed the snake devouring a water dragon in a garden bed beside the Tasmanian Gardens. Last summer there were over 80 recorded sightings of brown snakes in the Gardens.

The project has three main parts. The first is a mark recapture study of the Gardens' snake population. Snakes will be captured and painted with a distinguishing mark,

but because the mark will be lost when the snake sheds its skin, it will also be microchipped. This is a permanent tagging procedure and enables researchers to identify an individual snake, using a scanner, without the need for recapture. Snakes will also be sexed, weighed and measured to determine the minimum number of snakes on the Gardens' site and the characteristics of this snake population.

The second part is a snake reporting process, which will record all human interactions with snakes at the Gardens. Anyone who observes a snake is asked to report it to either a Ranger or the Visitor Centre and to complete a 'snake encounter form'. These reports and forms will inform researchers of the snake sighting and about the snake's behaviour during the encounter. If you see a snake in the Gardens please report it to the Visitor Centre staff and complete a form. This will enable a 'snake hotspot' map to be developed and will assist in developing management procedures for handling potentially dangerous encounters.

The final component is a survey of people's attitudes towards snakes at the Gardens. The survey forms will be available at the Visitor Centre and from the Ranger on duty. Please complete a form and have your say on how the brown snake population at the ANBG should be managed.

If you do see a brown snake in the Gardens please do not approach it. Inform a Ranger or staff member as soon as possible so the snake can be identified. For further information about the study, please contact Donna Douglass on 6250 9542.

The Alice Springs Desert Park

Maggie Nightingale



Desert Ghost Gums with Heavitree Range (Mt Gillen) in the background

In July 2003 I moved from Canberra to join my husband John, who in April had been appointed as Botany Curator at the Alice Springs Desert Park (ASDP). John had worked at the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) for about 13 years, and had been the staff representative on the ANBG Friends' Council in recent years, and I had worked at the Australian National Herbarium (ANH) or ANBG for 10 years. (In fact we met at ANBG in 1994.) This brief account describes the Desert Park environment. A longer piece based on my talk to the Friends in May 2006, may be found on the ANBG Friends' website: www.anbg.gov.au/friends.

The ASDP is run by the Northern Territory government and was opened in 1997. It is an integrated and well-interpreted botanic gardens and zoo for central Australian native plants and animals. It lies 6 km west of Alice Springs, and consists of a developed area of about 30 ha (the 'core precinct'), with a 2.5 m electrified fence to exclude feral animals, and 1300 ha of natural and semi-natural vegetation around it, extending over the quartzite-topped Heavitree Range to the south.

The Desert Park area was previously the town common, so is a bit degraded except in the restored core precinct, but still has enough native vegetation, birds and reptiles in the outer part of the Park to make life interesting. We were lucky enough to live in one of only three houses there. The Northern Territory herbarium, with its 30,000 dried plant specimens, was just across the road, providing friendly contacts and useful resources.

Three desert habitats have been created in the core precinct of the Park:

- the woodland habitat, which is an enrichment of the natural ecosystem at the base of the ranges

- the sand dune habitat, which was created by bringing in thousands of tonnes of red sand
- the desert rivers habitat, where many river red gums were planted and irrigated for a few years until they were established—they are *Eucalyptus camadulensis* var. *obtusata*, with unbeaked caps on the buds and more colourful bark than var. *camaldulensis* which occurs across southern Australia.

The ASDP core precinct has a wide range of plants from across central Australia, plus eight or nine beautiful aviaries, many excellent live animal exhibits in its nocturnal house, and an open-air theatre where a show using trained raptors is staged twice daily.

In the outer park area around the houses, several species of *Acacia* are common, including Mulga (*A. aneura*) and the beautiful weeping Ironwood (*A. estrophiolata*). Tree species of *Hakea* and *Grevillea* have interesting gnarled forms, and the more graceful Desert Ghost Gum (*Corymbia aparrerinja*) is seen near drainage lines and on rocky hills. Mistletoes and native birds, especially honeyeaters, are diverse and surprisingly abundant, and depend upon each other. The understorey is mostly the introduced Buffel Grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*), except in the 'core precinct' where its costly removal has made way for the delicate native grasses, most notably the silvery-glumed Nine-awn Grasses (*Enneapogon* spp.). Good rains in early winter 2004 caused a spectacular display of desert ephemerals growing in the gaps between the Buffel.

We must have been too many years residing in Canberra's cool climate, for we lasted less than two years in the heat of the Centre, where only mid April to August was really pleasant for outdoor day-time activity. We returned to Canberra in February 2005.

Blooming Threads

Arminel Ryan
Friend of the ANBG



Eucalyptus sideroxydon

Impossible! There we were at Hudsons in the Gardens on Easter Tuesday 2006. There on the table lay the flowers of *Eucalyptus phoenicea*, from the Northern Territory, and *Acacia victoriae*, also from the North—but they flower in September! The beholders were understandably amazed at this unlikely display, and fascinated to discover more about its creator, Lynne Stone, and her techniques.

When she sold her computer business in her home-town, Melbourne, twelve years ago, Lynne Stone decided to study for a Certificate of Art and Design for Embroidery. For two years she attended classes at Box Hill TAFE. The daughter of a ladies' tailor, Lynne was already an accomplished seamstress, having made her own clothes since the age of eight. The Box Hill course inspired her to direct her creativity in a new and original direction—three-dimensional botanical embroidery. So this intrepid needle-woman sold her house and set off in her studio-cum-van to travel the highways and byways of Australia. Loving

the bush and our emblematic 'powder-puff' flowers, she has devoted the past ten years to devising ways of making them artificially—with the emphasis on *art!*

Lynne uses wire and thread to fashion those most ephemeral and dainty of Australian wildflowers, *Acacia* and *Eucalyptus* blossoms. Her sprays of flowers and leaves are uncannily realistic. Even lerps and chewed leaves are faithfully reproduced. Callistemons and hakeas, which were particularly difficult in a technical sense, are her current projects.

Photographs or line drawings are art forms with which we Friends of the Gardens are all quite familiar. They have an established place in botanical studies. Lynne's innovation allows us to handle botanical 'specimens' in three dimensions, rather than admiring them in two. We hold in our hands the stunning blooms of tropical trees that we southerners are unlikely ever to see in flower.

Working in white thread, which she painstakingly hand-tints to the shades of the example she is working on, Lynne meticulously measures and records the details of each specimen. Apart from sewing machine, camera and computer, her tools of trade include surgeons' forceps, flyfishers' gadgets, a soldering iron and a kettle, not to mention her special 'solar steamer' for setting dyes.

Each of Lynne's creations is accompanied by a photograph, description, and care notes. Lynne also makes beautiful cards using these same photographs.

Territory Craft in Alice Springs acquired one of her pieces, '*Acacia podalyriifolia* Queensland Silver Wattle', in 2003. The ABC interviewed her in 2004 and this feature, showing examples of her creations, appears on-line at: <http://www.abc.net.au>. Lynne was Artist-in-Residence at Ayers Rock Resort in 2004 and also exhibited in Darwin that year. In 2005 she exhibited at the textile specialist Lumina Gallery in Melbourne.

From 6 March to 27 May 2007, the gallery at the Visitor Centre in the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra will exhibit Lynne Stone's work. The Friends' program will include talks by Lynne on her techniques and travels.



The artist and her 'studio', taken at Mary River, NT.

Gardens Receives Original Wildflower Works

Paul Ziesing
ANBG Communications and Media
Coordinator



Botanical artist Elizabeth McDonald recently donated a large collection of her original works to the Australian National Botanic Gardens. The works are contained in 17 sketchbooks that will be incorporated into the Gardens' library collection of original works.

Elizabeth McDonald (nee Mackay) was born in Scotland in 1910 and moved to Australia with her family two years later. She attended classes at Julian Ashton's Art School in Sydney during the 1920s and 1930s. In 1938 she married Ronald McDonald and they had five children.

The family lived in Young, New South Wales, from 1949 until 1958 and during this time she founded the Young Art Group. In 1959 they moved to Bumbaldry, between Cowra and Grenfell, then the following year she lost almost all of her early art work in a fire that destroyed the family home. The house was rebuilt and they lived at Bumbaldry until 1973. During this time she also founded the Cowra Art Group.

In 1973 her husband retired and they moved to Maleny, Queensland, where she founded the Maleny Art Group. She travelled extensively with her husband throughout Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia during the next few years.

In 1980 she published her first book, *Wildflowers of the Wallum*. This was followed by *Wildflowers of the Pilbara*, published in 1988.

Elizabeth's husband died in 1991, and in 1999 she moved to Canberra. She has participated in numerous local exhibitions in recent years and is a member of the Wildlife and Botanical Artists group.

The Gardens' library collection contains a copy of *Wildflowers of the Pilbara*, which features paintings of 40 species found in that region. The foreword concludes with Elizabeth's words:

This is a land unique in the world, let us preserve it while we may.

I have chosen a few of the many flowering plants of the Pilbara to show what beauty may be found among the rocks and hills of even the most barren-seeming landscape.



Catherine Jordan, ANBG librarian, with Elizabeth McDonald



The Varied Sittella

*Tom Green
Friend of the ANBG*

There is often something to gain from taking a different point of view. The Sittella stands out from the throng of little brown birds by literally standing on its head.

Sittellas feed in the forest canopy and upper branches on small insects and spiders. They live in small family flocks which move quickly through the trees, landing high on the branches and then spiralling inward and down as they probe into cracks and under loose bark for prey. It's this downward feeding movement that instantly distinguishes them from the rest of the forest flock. Presumably by feeding upside down they see into places that are less accessible to treecreepers and the other birds which look from below.

When seen more closely Sittellas are a small, dumpy, black-streaked and white bird. Local birds have a large orange wing-bar which is very noticeable as they fly between trees. Sittellas have very short tails which stick up while the bird crouches with its head close to the branch. In contrast, treecreepers stand off from the branch and use their strong tails as an additional support while feeding.

Another feature of the Sittella is its strangely upturned bill seemingly stuck on at the wrong angle. This, together with the bird's large yellow eye-ring and jerky movements, give the Sittella a rather comical appearance. However, if you must eat while standing on your head, an upturned bill is just right for sliding under loose bark in search of a reclusive spider or juicy grub.

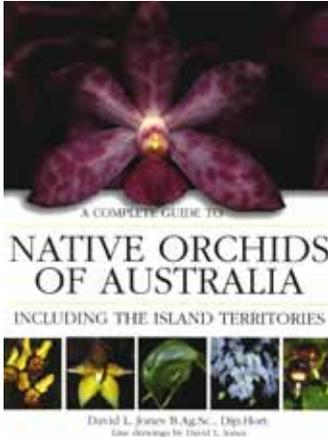
Sittellas are similar in appearance to the northern hemisphere Nuthatches (family Sittidae) hence our Sittella's common name. Recent DNA analysis shows that there is no relationship and so the similarities must be due to convergent evolution, where appearances are

similar only because of their adaptation to similar roles in the forest.

Sittellas occur throughout Australia wherever there are trees but they prefer sites with rough-barked Eucalypts. As a result of this wide distribution they have evolved into a number of varied races with differing amounts of black and white. Western birds have a white rather than orange wing-bar. Another race in northeast New South Wales and much of Queensland has a pale head. It is curious that this race overlaps the distribution of the Pale-headed Rosella, a white-headed version of the Crimson Rosella so common in our area.

Sittellas build a most attractive conical nest in a narrow upright fork between branches. The nest material blends perfectly with the adjacent branches and it is bound together with ample spider-web. The nest is often lined with soft spider egg sacs and sometimes small pieces of lichen. In another twist to that old argument, the nest lining is said to match the colour of the yet-to-be-laid eggs. All the family members help with nest construction and help tend the young birds. This cooperative breeding is common among Australian birds. Young birds remain in their parents' territory, helping raise the next generation in exchange for the protection afforded by a familiar environment.

From the Bookshop



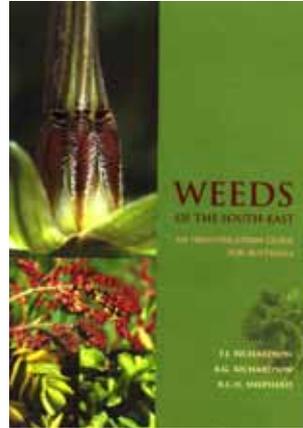
A Complete Guide to Native Orchids of Australia
by David Jones
Sydney, Reed New Holland, 2006, 496pp.
hardcover, colour photographs
ISBN: 1 877069 12 4
RRP \$75.00.

People are generally familiar with orchids through the numerous colourful and showy exotic species grown in backyards around Australia. But less familiar is the huge variety of Australian native orchids, ranging from those as large and showy as the exotics, to the much more subtle and easy-to-miss spider orchids, duck orchids, leek orchids and greenhoods.

In this spectacular and comprehensive book, orchid expert David Jones describes more than 1300 species and subspecies of Australian native orchids. His line drawings accompanying each genus will help you to easily determine the genus of each orchid you discover. The genus descriptions outline the features of the genus as a whole and also include details about pollination and cultivation.

Almost every species is illustrated with a beautiful colour photograph, and the detailed species descriptions include information about every part of the plant, as well as its distribution, habitat, how to distinguish it from other similar species and its conservation status.

Related or similar genera are grouped alphabetically in separate chapters, and species with a similar appearance are presented together to help you to distinguish them from each other. The introductory part of the book describes the general characteristics of orchids and explains how to grow them. Botanical terms are kept to a minimum and are explained in the glossary. A detailed index helps keep track of old and new names.



Weeds of the South-East: an identification guide for Australia
by F.J. Richardson, R.G. Richardson & R.C.H. Shepherd
paperback, colour illustrations, 436pp
ISBN: 0 9587439 3 2
RRP \$69.95

Written in easy-to-understand language and beautifully illustrated, this is a field guide for anyone interested in the identification of pest plants and the preservation of our native flora. An essential tool for community and government organisations, park rangers, weed officers and advisers, agronomists, landholders, horticulturalists, landscapers, amateur naturalists and gardeners. It features:

- over 2000 plant species, subspecies, varieties and hybrids, including weeds of agriculture, bushland, waterways, gardens, roadsides, wasteland and amenity areas, and many new and emerging problem species
- over 1600 photographs, including spectacular close-up shots of many features
- key features of plants described with relevant measurements for easier identification
- comparisons between similar species and easily confused natives
- likely locations of species
- occurrence by state using herbaria records.

This book was published by the authors, R.G. and F.J. Richardson and information about it is on their website at: www.weedinfo.com.au.

News from the Acting Director

Jim Croft, Acting Director, ANBG

Welcome, all members of the Friends.

On 25 August 2006, Robin Nielsen finished his time as Director of the Australian National Botanic Gardens, to take up a new position in the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forests. We wish Robin all the best in his new career. The appointment of the new Director, Anne Duncan, has recently been announced.

The Gardens is currently poised to embrace new directions, with increased national focus in our activities, with a new thematic emphasis on climate change adaptation in our horticulture, research and public interpretation. We are relying on our Friends to help us achieve these bold new goals.

Your Friends Council recently held a very stimulating planning day and several Gardens staff were fortunate to attend. I am very confident that the ideas and renewed focus and enthusiasm arising from this workshop will help put the Friends' activities into a strong and exciting position for the future.

The Gardens is ready for another very busy summer period, and as in previous years one of our biggest activities will be the Summer Concert series. This extremely successful series is the highlight of the Canberra summer calendar, and the major annual fundraising activity for the Friends. The series commences on Saturday 6 January 2007 on the Eucalypt Lawn, and concludes on Sunday 4 February on the Café Lawn.



Congratulations to the Gardens' photograph curator and staff representative on the Friends Council, Laura Vallee, who has been appointed an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development, as part of AusAID. For the next 12 months, Laura will be Conservation Manager for World-

wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in the Solomon Islands. This will be great training and personal development for Laura.

We have recently established a working group from all areas to look at our thematic plantings. We will be considering existing themes and proposals for new ones and how these might be implemented, managed and interpreted for the public. This will be of particular interest to our Volunteer Guides.

The Gardens is currently paying particular attention to marketing and public presentation of our botanical, environmental and social messages. Consultants have prepared a draft *ANBG Marketing Plan*. The summary is available for comment. The Friends and Volunteer Guides will be a key element of marketing the Gardens. Another group of consultants are working on draft *ANBG Style Guide* that will cover the look and feel of all Gardens' presentational materials; this will shortly be available for comment.

Gardens' staff have been working with consultants to update and refocus the *ANBG Development Planning Guide* for the next decade, 2006–2016. This document will guide major infrastructural works on the site in the future, and is one of our most important planning documents. The draft version is available in the Friends lounge and the Gardens library and I encourage all Friends to have a look and let us know what you think of the direction in which we are heading.

Sound planning is vital for the success of our Gardens, and we are approaching the time where we have to start considering the next iteration of our foundation document, the *ANBG Plan of Management* for 2001–2007. All of the previous activities will contribute to this process and we look forward to working with the Friends as we plan our future.

Once again I would like to thank all members of the Friends for your enthusiastic support for the Gardens. Without you, the Gardens could not be what it is.

Celebrating the New ‘Friends Cascades’

Barbara Podger, Friend of the ANBG

On a lovely sunny afternoon, Sunday 27 August, the Friends hosted a function for Friends and staff to celebrate the results of their cooperative efforts—the new ‘Friends Cascades’.

Dr Robert Boden, a former Director of the Gardens, kindly agreed to address the guests and to formally launch the Cascades. He also announced that the new water feature would be known as the ‘Friends Cascades’, in recognition of the donation of \$20,000 by the Friends for the construction of the project.

ACT Government MLAs, Deb Foskey, Karin McDonald, Richard Mulcahy and Brendan Smyth, were among the group of Friends and ANBG staff who attended the opening. In addition to Dr Boden, ANBG Acting Director, Jim Croft, and President of the Friends, Andrew Walker, also spoke to guests.

Kaiya Chatto, one of the Gardens’ staff who originally suggested the idea of installing flowforms to form a cascade, spoke about the way that flowforms work to oxygenate and revitalise the water, and about other ways in which they are used, including in agriculture and in food processing.

The Friends Cascades replace a creek bed which used to flow into the pond below the Visitor Centre. This recirculating system had to be turned off in 2003 due to a water leak in the creek bed. It was important to replace the creek, in order to oxygenate the water and provide a healthier ecological functioning of the pond.

A series of flowforms were installed to simulate the swirls and movement of water in a natural stream, and to oxygenate and revitalise the water in the pond. The vessels are at varying angles to provide different effects, and a combination of strong and gentle movements. The area has been replanted with a range of rare and endangered plant species

In Australia, the world’s driest continent, we need to use our precious water sensibly, and water recycling and improvement using flowforms is a logical environmentally friendly way of helping to achieve this.

Funding for the Cascades project was requested from the Friends by the Gardens, as part of submissions invited from Garden’s staff for project funding in 2005. The funds come from fundraising efforts by the Friends, including membership fees, proceeds from the Summer Concert Series, and other events and activities during the year.



Photo by Anne Rawson

Some projects funded by the Friends in the last five years :

- Semi-circular seats for Sydney Region Flora Section
- Design for development of the Rock Garden Lawn
- ANBG Web-site development: a Fungal Information Service; and a Bryophytes Website
- Purchase of palms and tree ferns for Rainforest Gully
- A prototype for a children’s self-guided walk
- Photographic portraits of Australian native plants
- Renovation of a section of the Gardens to showcase native plants available in local nurseries for the home garden
- Purchase of classroom microscopes for the schools education program
- Contribution towards a fogging system for the Main Bridge over the Rainforest Gully
- Purchase of Electric Scooters for use by visitors
- Purchase of Macrozamia for display along Banks Walk
- Purchase of Bottle Tree and other plants for front entrance

Friends Briefs

Summer Concerts

These ever-popular concerts will be held in January 2007. A feature of the Canberra calendar, they present a great venue for locals and visitors to Canberra to share in the happy family atmosphere the music creates. This is also an opportunity to raise money for the Friends of the Gardens, and we usually have a 'bucket brigade' to collect donations. We are always looking for more helpers for the concerts, so if you are in Canberra and would like to help and be part of the activity at these concerts in January, please call 6250 9548 and leave your details so we can get back to you.

The Social Committee of the Friends of the Gardens co-ordinates events in the Gardens all through the year, and we very much appreciate the help that is given by Friends. Many of these events would not be held without this assistance. However, more help is always needed. If you would like to assist, please call 6250 9548 and leave your details, and we will get back to you with more information.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on Tuesday 13 February at 5.30pm. Nibbles and drinks will be served beforehand from 5pm. There will be a report on the previous year's activities and then election of office bearers. After the business part of the AGM, the new Director of the Gardens, Anne Duncan, will talk about her vision for the future of the Gardens.

Tasmanian Tour



Autumn in Tasmania 6–13 March 2007 will be a joint excursion by the Friends of ANBG in conjunction with the Railway Historical Society. There will be eight glorious days travelling through the scenic and historic 'Apple Isle', visiting many towns, including Launceston, Hobart, Strahan, Devonport and Queenstown.

The tour includes return airfare, twin-share accommodation with ensuite, breakfast and dinner each day and all tours/attractions. All inclusive price (based on twin share): \$2250.00 per person; single supplement \$2715.00 per person. Further information is available from Warwick Wright at 6281 3088.

Sydney Friends Tours



The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, is offering special interest tours in 2007 for garden enthusiasts and nature lovers. These include short breaks and extended tours, within Australia and overseas:

- 18–24 February – Walking Tasmania
- 3–10 March – Lord Howe Island
- 1–20 May – Treasures of Andalusia—a tour to southern Spain
- 1–18 September Kenya and Tanzania

- October – Galapagos Islands and Ecuador
- 23–28 November – Orange and Bathurst, Gardens and Gastronomy

If you would like more details about any of these tours, please contact Warwick Wright on 6281 3088. The Friends of the ANBG will receive a small percentage of participating ANBG Friends' payments for these tours.

Tour Tibetan Yunnan



Ben and Xiaomei Wallace will take a group to northwestern Yunnan, China, for twenty days from late May into the first half of June 2007.

The vast gorges of the Yangtze and Mekong rivers, the towering snowy mountains and their grinding glaciers are truly awesome. The bizarre and beautiful plants and wildlife will fascinate you endlessly. Mingle with the local people in their colourful traditional dress, see their unique architecture and way of life, and sample the delicious cuisine. Go to Dali and Lijiang, the ancient walled Silk Road cities once visited by Kublai Khan and Marco Polo, and meet the matrilineal Mosuo people at the hauntingly beautiful alpine Lake Lugu.

For further details phone or fax on 02 6238 0935, or email at benwallace@bigpond.com.