

GardensUpdate

Fellows & Supporter newsletter **Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation**

SYDNEY

Conserving the world's plants for a sustainable future

Message from the Foundation Director



*Pauline Markwell
Foundation Director*

Dear Foundation Fellows and Supporters,

We are delighted to publish our second Gardens Update to keep you informed on how your contributions are directly assisting our Foundation to support the Botanic Gardens Trust.

The Jungle acquisition has been a highlight in the past few months. The property adjacent to Mount Tomah Botanic Garden has been acquired by the Trust, thanks to the most generous support of John B Fairfax and his family, in memory of John's mother Lady Fairfax.

This property has an important rainforest known as The Jungle which was recognised for its conservation values in the early 1920s by a group of Sydney business men, including Sir James Fairfax K.B.E. Conserving and interpreting The Jungle will provide a genuine experience of pristine NSW rainforest for our future generations.

Children's Sculpture Gardens: One of the Bicentenary projects at Mount Tomah Botanic Garden is under way, thanks to the generosity of the Breen family.

Four small gardens each with its own sculptural element and integrated landscape will be constructed over the next few years. Each sculpture will be designed by an artist selected from a national design competition launched by our Minister, Carmel Tebbutt on 13 November. The closing date of the first competition is 31 January 2009.

The theme of this garden is Exploring — getting close to nature — to nurture a love of nature in children and adults. The installation will feature a maze and is expected to be completed by June 2010.

2009 will be a full and exciting year including our wish to involve additional Councillors to help us expand our activities and reach out to new benefactors.

I would like to thank all our benefactors and supporters whose passion for the Botanic Gardens helps us achieve new landscapes, science and education opportunities to benefit the whole community.

I wish you a very happy Festive Season and prosperous New Year.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Pauline A. Markwell". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light-colored background.

Pauline A Markwell, Foundation Director

Youth Community Greening

Youth Community Greening is a program designed to promote social cohesion, improved personal health and life-long learning about our natural environment for youth in need. Kathy Pflieger was appointed Youth Community Greening Education Officer in May. With years of teaching youth in disadvantaged high schools in USA, she has brought in-depth experience, empathy, humour and creativity to this new program. Trained to teach agriculture, horticulture and flower arranging, Kathy has found her way to the outer regions of Sydney to over 1600 students at various schools, community gardens and other youth facilities.

She is now joined by Elizabeth Docking and Julie Medana at our

regional gardens to extend the reach of this program.

At our recent Halloween event it was heart warming to bring together two programs funded by the Foundation.

On Friday 31st October, we celebrated the recent conservation of the Robbie Burns statue with a Halloween themed event. A little known fact is that the Scots celebrated Halloween – long before the Americans!

With children from local Plunkett Street Primary School (who are involved in Youth Community Greening), and members of the Sydney Scottish community, the celebration opened with bagpipes and Robert Goldie read two Burns' poems — 'To a Mouse' and another about Halloween.



Youth Community Greening participants

Bronze Statuary Conservation



We are delighted to share the news that James O Fairfax AO, well known patron of the arts, has most kindly supported

conservation work on five major bronze statues in the Domain and the Royal Botanic Gardens. This work has been done over the last four months. Regular conservation work ensures the longevity of these heritage statues.

We invite you to visit these wonderful sculptures on your next visit.

- Robbie Burns statue, 1904, near Domain Lodge, Art Gallery Road

- Levi Fountain, 1889, near Woolloomooloo Gate
- Governor Phillip Fountain and Statue, 1897, Palace Garden
- Huntsman and Dogs statue, c1879, near Palace Rose Garden
- Mare and Foal, 1959, Lower Garden, Band Lawn

Thanks to a number of people responding to our Heritage Statuary Restoration Appeal, we raised \$30,000 for La Ballerina —

the first of the marble statues to be repaired. At this point, research has been done on the original statue and two blocks of marble have been sourced from Italy. When it arrives we will be inviting our benefactors in to talk with the sculptor and conservators so they will see La Ballerina 'before' and 'after'. La Ballerina was imported from Italy (probably Carrara) in 1883.



Top left: Mare and Foal; above: La Ballerina, Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney

Rainforest Seed Conservation Research

Dr Kim Hamilton commenced in May 2008 to lead this research program for the next 3 years. Kim's doctoral research was in rainforest seeds from which she has many contacts at the Millennium Seed Bank at Kew Gardens, along with relevant experience and enormous enthusiasm. Based at the Seedbank at Mount Annan Botanic Garden, she has already established new networks in NSW north coast rainforest areas and attended international and local conferences. We had the pleasure of hearing about Kim's research at our annual general meeting.

Again we would like to thank Allianz Australia and Tony Maxwell and Robyn Godlee for their support for this important



Dr Kim Hamilton Project Coordinator of the Rainforest Seed Project

program, aiming to save these plants vital to biodiversity.



Photo of Cliffina (Babs) and Jack Rathborne taken in the 1930s.

Babs Rathborne's generous bequest to the Gardens in 1998 enabled the refurbishment and reconstruction of Rathborne Lodge.

Recent bequests

Thank you to the 12 Fellows who participated in the Queensland University of Technology Bequest survey. The report collated from these surveys is providing us with excellent information to commence our bequest program.

If you are considering leaving a bequest to the Royal Botanic Gardens Foundation and would like to discuss this further, please contact Pauline Markwell on (02) 9231 8308.

Visiting Retford Park

A group from the Foundation had the wonderful Spring pleasure of visiting Retford



Park, the beautiful estate of James Fairfax in the Southern Highlands. With head gardener James Orman as escort, the group enjoyed his knowledge and insights, the grand trees and shrubs, the history and design of the garden as well as the variety of birds in residence, including the emus. Seeing the cockatoo damage to the trees, all were reminded that each garden, no matter how wonderful, has its own challenges.

Foundation group with Retford Park head gardener, James Orman (third from the right)

Looking ahead

Autumn Soiree

10 March 2009

Benefactors Lunch

June 2009

Relocation of Flying Foxes

As we know you are all interested in the status of our trees in the Palm Grove, we can inform you that applications have been submitted to the Federal and State governments for the relocation of the Flying-fox camp at the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. If approved, the relocation program will commence in May 2009.