

Native Orchid Society
of
South Australia Inc.

Journal



NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

P.O Box 565,
UNLEY S.A 5061

The Native Orchid Society of South Australia promotes the conservation of native orchids through cultivation of native orchids, through preservation of naturally-occurring orchid plants and natural habitat.

Except with the documented official representation from the Management Committee of the native orchid society of South Australia, no person is authorised to represent the society on any matter.

All native orchids are protected plants in the wild. Their collection without written Government permit is illegal.

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NATIVE ORCHID SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC

FEBRUARY 1996 Vol. 20. No. 1 JOURNAL

MARCH MEETING

Tuesday, 22nd February 8.00 pm: at St Matthews Hall, Bridge Street, Kensington. Birgitte Sorensen, Scientist, Black Hill Flora Centre, will speak on *Pterostylis arenicola* - endangered, vulnerable or rare? Doors to the hall will be open at 7.15 pm for those wishing to borrow books from the library or take in items for the trading table.

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DIARY DATES

Feb 22 First meeting 1996.

Mar 5 Open Day, George Nieuwenhoven's

Mar 26 1996 AGM. All positions will be declared open.

May Annual Dinner at the Walkers Arms Hotel.

COMMITTEE MEETING

To be held at 7.30 pm Friday February

COMING FIELD TRIPS

Sunday February 25th Mount Lofty Botanic Garden Due to the cancellation of the January "*Dipodium* special" this trip has been re-scheduled. Meet at the top car park at 10am. Besides looking at *Dipodium* we will take a stroll through the woodland and fern gardens. If the forecast maximum is less than 30°C bring morning tea to share by the lake.

March There is no field trip for March and we are looking for people to organise field trips for the rest of 1996 as Gary Guide is no longer available.

NEW MEMBERS:

NOSSA welcomes - Kenneth Grinter of American River
David & Kaye Cammack of Wooderoft
Ian & Karen Charlesworth of Salisbury Park
Mrs Dianna Bartlett of Paradise
Ms H. Ennor of Toowoomba
Ms JK Niejalke of Northfield
D. Pettifer of Rosedale

Wanted: Convenors for the Trading Table at monthly meetings. Come and join the action. Its fun to be involved and learn. Our present convenors are unable to continue the job. See President Bill Dear if you can help!

We also need people to nominate for committee positions.

Wanted: Plants for the Society for Growing Australian Plants (SGAP) autumn display. See Bill Dear or Les Nesbitt at the next meeting.

Annual Subscriptions: The subscription for 1996 will be \$12 (single or family).

Have you seen the new Australian genus of orchids the *Pyrochis*

IRA BUTLER TROPHY COMMITTEE AWARDS

The winner of the GOLD IRA BUTLER TROPHY for the best native hybrid in 1995 is *Sarcochilus* Judith 'Snowy' grown by Bill Kennewell.

There were four racemes with a total of nearly 60 flowers on a single growth 160mm high. *S. Judith* is a hybrid of *S. Melba* x *S. Fitzhart*. This plant was champion native at Macarthur and Sydney Sarcanthinae Shows.

The winner of the BILL MURDOCH TROPHY for the best Native Orchid species in 1995 was *Dendrobium linguiforme* 'Jean' grown by M. & J. Fruend.

This magnificent specimen plant was not only floriferous but the flowers were of very good quality. It was the Grand Champion of the Wangaratta and District Orchid Society's spring Show held last September. The plant had 117 'spikes' and 2106 flowers.

THIRD AUSTRALASIAN NATIVE ORCHID CONFERENCE SPEAKERS UPDATE

Have you been wondering who will be speaking at the Conference? Well here are a few names to wet your appetite.

Lorraine Fagg

Subject: Line breeding *Sarcochilus fitzgeraldii*

Lorraine first became interested in *Sarcochilus fitzgeraldii* about 31 years ago when she accompanied her father and a friend for a walk in the Bellingen-Forrigo area. Lorraine says, "after walking for about 1 1/2 hours with ticks, leeches, etc I saw my first *Sarcochilus fitzgeraldii*. I knew this was what I wanted to grow, this was for me." Lorraine has been hybridising for about ten years attempting to gain additional size and colour. Some of the species she has given cultivar names to include- *S. fitzgeraldii* 'Red Eye', 'Cara' and 'The Clown'.

Ted Gregory

Operates Merrellen Nursery in the beautiful Mount Tambourine (Qld) area. He has a wide knowledge of NSW and Qld *Dendrobiums*. He is a very entertaining speaker. Ted calls me 'lassie' which is a nice change.

Walter Upton

Came to Australia from England in 1950. He is a well known hybridiser of Australian native *Dendrobiums*. He is a judge for a number of societies and regularly gives talks. With his wife Jill he owns Double U Orchids. Wally is the author of *Dendrobium Orchids of Australia* and *Dendrobium kingianum*.

If you'd like more details Gerry Carne, Reg Shooter or Charlie Edwards would be happy to answer your questions.

IT'S REPOTTING TIME

by LES NESBITT

With the 96 conference rushing up at a furious rate (its only 7 months away), the summer months are the time to repot all of your colony type terrestrials. *Diuris*, *Corybas*, *Chiloglottis*, *Acianthus*, *Lyperanthus*, *Microtis*, *Pterostylis*, *Cyrtostylis*, and *Thelymitra* all grow better if repotted every year. I always start with the terrestrials which have large tubers (such as *Diuris*

and *Thelymitra*) because I know from experience that they and the hairy tuber types are the most susceptible to rotting if we get a thunderstorm followed by very hot humid weather.

Select the largest tubers for specimen pots for the conference. Pot up the small tubers in separate pots to grow on for another year. Pot sizes can vary but I think that for my conditions and soil mix the optimum sizes are 125mm (5"), 150mm (6") and 180mm (7"). Smaller pots dry out too fast, larger pots can stay too wet in winter and need a more open mix.

I like to reuse a proportion (25%) of old soil in the new, provided there has been no diseases in the previous growing season. Add some blood and bone to the mix. I use a handful per tub of soil which is enough for about 15 x 5" pots, a small amount really. To get your flowers out for the conference you may have to hold them back or hurry them along. More on that later.

TUBER TROUBLES

by LES NESBITT

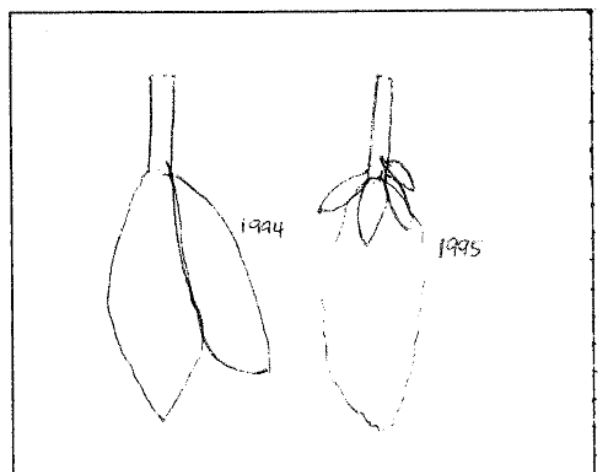
Each growing season brings some new experience to terrestrial growers. Mother nature ensures that we never know it all and stay humble however long we have been repotting tubers. This summer I have discovered that almost all of my *Thelymitra nuda* plants have produced, instead of the usual pigeon's egg size tuber, a cluster of small dirty looking tubers. Why is this so? I now have 3 - 4 times as many tubers but very few large enough to flower for the Conference in September. Other *Thelymitra* species have made normal tubers.

Usually *Thelymitra nuda* tubers increase in size without multiplying until they reach flowering size. Flowering plants do not set seed unaided and if no pods form then a cluster of clean small tubers is produced. These have to be grown on for at least one season to build up to flowering size tubers again. What happened in growing season 1995? The leaves were green and healthy and showed no sign of any problems throughout the April - November growing period I have ruled out any fungal or bacterial disease because other species were not affected. Another year will throw more light on this assumption.

I think that the roots on *T. nuda* got water logged and died during the six weeks of continual rain in July and early August. Tubers of *Pterostylis* which form early in the season in heavy soil mixes get a condition I call "woody tuber". The tubers have a hard dark surface, often with splits and veining evident. Tubers which form in Spring on the same plants are smooth, clean and glisten like pearls. Woody tubers produce normal plants the following year. If this is what happened to *T. nuda* it explains the dark appearance of the tubers. If the roots had died the leaf would be supported by the old tuber but there would not be the energy in the plants to build new large tubers. The energy from the old tuber would be transferred to the new tubers with some loss so the total volume of the new tubers would be smaller than the original tuber. This is the result I have observed .

What can I do to prevent this happening again? Some options are:

1. Do nothing - it may not happen again.
2. Grow plants under a solid roof and control watering.
3. Use a sandy soil mix.
4. Open up the drainage holes in the pots.
5. Increase air movement over the pots.



I have chosen a mixture of choices 1. and 3. If the soil mix for terrestrials is too sandy the plants do not grow as well and make small tubers although they are nice and clean. Next year I, should know a bit more about dealing with this problem as long as mother nature is kind.

Due no doubt to a mistake with the date given in the Journal only a handful of people attended, this excursion.

This mistake was followed by another problem. Telephone Road had been closed off for the summer so we could not drive along it but had to walk from the eastern end. A NOSSA excursion to this area 15 years ago revealed several thousand *Orthoceras* of many colours. Today we had to search hard to find any. *Orthoceras* is not listed as a threatened species in South Australia but since this population which was the largest in South Australia has been all but destroyed perhaps it needs to be rated. The destruction seemed due to several factors:

1. Grazing by sheep (parts were eaten out to bare soil in the week before our visit).
2. Aerial dropping of superphosphate which changes the soil microflora,
3. Increased salination following removal of vegetation.
4. Weed invasion.

Instead of *Orthoceras* we found hundreds of *Monadenia*. *Monadenia* the African 'weed' orchid is not a cause of the *Orthoceras* disappearing rather it is a symptom of the destruction of our native bush. *Monadenia* favours degraded habitats!

According to Jones & Clements (1992) there are actually two species of *Orthoceras* namely *O. strictum* from Australia with its pointed labellum and *O. novae-zelandiae* from New Zealand with its rounded labellum. Recently rounded labellum plants have been found in several places in Australia (mostly in swamps)! I believe that plants which grew in the Mount Compass Swamps until about 1980 had these rounded labellum tips. However here at Telephone Rd. (Mt Crawford) all plants have pointed labella. The colour variation of flowers ranged from deep purple-black to wholly green with all combinations in between.

To top off the sheep damage about 50% of plants were being chewed by native grasshoppers (there wasn't much else for them to chew).

Other than the *Orthoceras* other orchids were all in seed. The seed pods of *Prasophyllum odoratum* elicited some interested discussion. The capsules had opened in two eye-like holes on the very top of each capsule. We decided this was so that seeds would only be released on windy days. When the capsules were shaken the seed came out these small holes. On calm days no seed would come out. This was a good method to ensure wide dispersal of the species (indeed *Prasophyllum odoratum* is one of the most widespread orchids in Australia and in different forms even extends to New Zealand).

A walk through the area revealed the tallest grass trees in South Australia. Some were in flower and the tops of the shapes were estimated to be 10 metres above the ground. They were in fact taller than the *Eucalyptus baxteri* growing amongst them! They truly were 'grass' trees!

To finish the excursion we drove around to Centennial Drive to look at an undescribed *Microtis* species. It was drier here than we had ever seen it but we did find the *Microtis* in flower, some plants were 80cm tall amid the reeds by the bone dry creek.

Orchids seen:

In Flower: *Orthoceras strictum*, *Microtis* sp.

In Seed: *Prasophyllum odoratum*, *Microtis. frutetorum*, *Monadenia*, *Thelymitra* spp.

In Bud: *Dipodium roseum*.

A SUMMER VISIT TO THE OTWAYS

by SANDY & MARK PHILIPS

The closest true rainforest to Adelaide is the cool temperate rain forest of Victoria's Otways. We visited the area in early January this year, driving along the Great Ocean Road from Mt Gambier through Victoria's oldest town, Portland, through Port Fairy and the fabulous coastal scenery of the Port Campbell area.

We stayed at Lavers Hill on the summit of the mountainous ridge which uplifts wind off the sea and causes the almost daily rainfall which makes this area so wet.

There are very few orchids in cool temperate rainforest but plenty in woodland and heath adjacent so we spent about half the time walking through rainforest in such places as the boardwalk at Malts Rest with its enormous tree ferns and giant myrtle beech, festooned with epiphytic ferns and mosses.

There is one epiphytic orchid in the Otways and that is *Sarcochilus australis* which has its closest occurrence to South Australia at Melba Gully National Park. We were fascinated by the delicate filmy ferns of which there are five or six species in the Otway forest. Our favourite walks were to the water-falls: Beauchamp, Hopetown and Triplet Falls all within half an hour of Lavers Hill (driving time).

The other half of the time we spent looking for orchids. An interesting pattern emerged as we kept finding two species of each genus!

One of the commonest orchids was *Gastrodia sesamoides* which we found in rainforest, in pine plantations and in woodland. On the drive to Cape Otway lighthouse they grew on the roadside in heavy forest. Nearer the sea in stringy bark woodland in light sandy soil we found a second *Gastrodia*, *G. procera*. This species had many more flowers, in a straight not curved spike, the flowers were more orange, warty and lacked the perfume of *G. sesamoides*.

The second pair of species we found together on the Lavers Hill - Carlisle River road, *Prasophyllum australe* grew in heathy swamps and reached 80cm high. Like the first *Gastrodia* they were beautifully perfumed. Only 100 metres further on in loamy woodland grew the smaller *P. brevibre* with similar white crispy labellum but few non-perfumed flowers. Both these grew only on roadsides because disturbance facilitates flowering (We found no burnt areas otherwise we would have found more orchids I'm sure). In damp mossy spots on the edge of rainforest near our motel were two *Chiloglottis* growing together, both were past their best and already their pedicels were elongating. The *Chiloglottis cornuta* grew in the damper spots the *C. valida* in more open drier sites.

Other pairs of orchid species seen included *Thelymitra pauciflora* and *T. circumsepta*, *Microtis unifolia* and *M. parviflora* and *Genoplesium archeri* and *G.* species unknown to us. These last two grew only in mowed swamp heath near Merango. All of these species were found only in disturbed areas!

There were two *Pterostylis* growing on logs in the rainforest but both had finished, we presumed them to be *P. nutans* and *P. longifolia* complex. Similarly the two bearded orchids *Calochilus herbaceus* and *C. paludosus* were found together near Carlisle River in heath. We did not see any *Diuris* or *Caladenia* or *Dipodium* though we were assured they occur in the Otways.

On the way back to S.A. we did find two *Dipodium* species to continue our pattern! ie *D. roseum* and *D. campanulatum* at Caroline Forest.

The one species which did not have a partner was *Arthrochilus huntianus* which grew under tea tree where cattle were grazing in the Carlisle Forest. Of course as far as we know there is only one *Arthrochilus* in Victoria.

I know there are many other species of orchids in the Otways so perhaps we'll go back some day!

DIPODIUM SPECIAL 14TH JANUARY 1996

Although officially cancelled due to:

- A. the temperature forecast to reach 41°C
- B. the garden closed anyway.
- C. the majority of *Dipodium* still in bud:

a small group went instead to the Aldgate cemetery, not to die in the heat but to photograph the unusual colour forms of *Dipodium* growing in the area. We found the usual green stemmed forms with pale flowers, dark stemmed plants with pale flowers, green stemmed plants with dark flowers and dark stemmed plants with dark flowers. Part of the cemetery area is regularly watered and the *Microtis parviflora* here were still flowering. The only other recognisable orchids were seed pods of *Thelymitra pauciflora* and *T. grandiflora*.

RETIREMENT

J.Z. Weber botanist in charge of the Orchidaceae at the State Herbarium in Adelaide retired in late 1995. We wish him a happy, relaxed and prosperous retirement in Queensland. Joe also recently completed his revision of *Thelymitra* but it should be a while yet before this is published. Those hoping that the *Thelymitra nuda-pauciflora-longifolia* complex would be sorted out will find that Joe has barely touched on the problem so there will be plenty of research left for later workers in this area.

MONADENIA ON THE MOVE

An unfortunate extension of distribution for *Monadenia*! January 1996 and *M. bracteata* was found - seed released in the Penola Forest east of Nangwarry in our South East. The author remembers this species in an orchid enthusiast's shadehouse at Nangwarry about 20 years ago, Almost certainly the Penola Forest plants have originated from there and not from the Adelaide Hills. The size of the South East infestation is not known but the fact that it is adjacent to the Victorian border would suggest *Monadenia* may already be in that state!

CYRTOSTYLIS OF ACIANTHUS

A recent 1995 article on *Acianthus* by Paul Kores looks in detail at the morphology of the genus. Paul's conclusion that *Cyrtostylis* and *Acianthus* are one single genus is unlikely to change the belief in Australia and New Zealand that they are two, especially since he reaches the conclusion that *Cyrtostylis robusta* and *C. reniformis* are just one species! Any NOSSA member who has studied these two in the field will know this is not so! It is just another case of lumpers versus splitters or of herbarium botanists versus field botanists. I'm afraid that I'm on the side of the field botanist!

A LETTER FROM IAN ST GEORGE.

Doctor St George, editor of the New Zealand Native Orchid Society journal wrote to your editors and enclosed photos of *Microtis arenaria* from the Auckland area of New Zealand thereby confirming that our common South Australian *Microtis* does extend to that country! It has not previously been listed as far as I know from New Zealand.

Third
Australasian
Native
Orchid
Conference



96

To be held at
The Flinders University
Adelaide, South Australia
26 - 30 September, 1996

Address correspondence to:
Hon. Secretary, NOSSA, P.O. Box 565
Unley SA 5061

THIRD AUSTRALASIAN NATIVE ORCHID CONFERENCE AND SHOW

IT WILL BE SPECTACULAR!!

It is now only SEVEN MONTHS!! until the Third Australasian Native Orchid Conference and Show will be held in Adelaide at the Flinders University. Much has been accomplished over the past year, but there is still much to do.

The Native Orchid Society of South Australia (NOSSA), host of the third Conference, has been working hard towards ensuring that the Third Australasian Native Orchid Conference and Show, will be long remembered as one of the most impressive and most significant Orchid Meetings ever staged in Australia. The twenty-five Australian and New Zealand groups that comprise the Australasian Native Orchid Society will together bring to Adelaide what is expected to be the largest and the most innovative and spectacular display of Australasian native epiphyte and terrestrial orchids and their hybrids ever assembled, with all areas of the Australasian region represented. Field trips will allow Conference delegates to see a large variety of South Australia's terrestrial orchids in their natural settings. Speakers of the highest calibre will deliver up-to-date papers on an exciting range of topics, over a full two day period. The Australasian Native Orchid Conference and Show is offered only every third year and should not be missed! NOSSA looks forward to providing a warm and genuine South Australian welcome to delegates from around the world and hopes to see an excellent representation of N.O.S.S.A. Members.

Speakers from Australia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand have been selected on the basis of specific expertise and public speaking ability. Speakers will include David Banks, Tad Bartareau, Andrew Brown, Malcolm Campbell, Lorraine Fagg, Ted Gregory, Wayne Harris, Neville Howcroft, Bruce Mules, Les Nesbitt, Helen Richards, Daryl Smedley, Phil Spence, Geoff Stocker, Wal Upton, Ron Heberle and John Woolf. Not all speakers have finalised their subject topics, but topics nominated at this time include: The Hot Cold Mix of Australian Dendrobiums, Conservation of Orchids on a Bush Block, Growing Natives in Arid Areas, You Can have a Darn Good Collection of Species Terrestrials, Australasian Species - Hybridising with New Guinea Dendrobiums from the Latouria group, Hybridising with the genus *Dendrobium* in Australia, Miniature Orchids of Australia, Specificity and Mutual Dependency in Pollination of Australian Epiphytic Orchids by Native Bees, The Evolution and Distribution of the Australasian Orchid, *Sarcochilus* Species in the Wild and the latest Hybridisation, Aspects of Biology and Ecology of Western Australia's Native Orchids, Hybridising Between Australian and New Zealand Orchid Genera and Selected Orchids of Papua New Guinea - notes on Habitat and Cultivation.

September is the best month to see native orchids in the bush near Adelaide. Some 100 species of terrestrial orchids occur in the Adelaide Hills area, making it one of the richest orchid areas in Australia.

Sponsored by: The Council of the Australasian Native Orchid Society Inc.

Hosted by: The Native Orchid Society of South Australia Incorporated.

Local experts on South Australia's native orchids have offered their services as field excursion guides. Two formal excursions are being organised and many very exciting terrestrial orchid species will be seen. Additional informal outings, both before and after the Conference, are also being arranged and N.O.S.S.A. will be looking for people who are willing to show interstate and international visitors orchid locations that are not covered by the more formal tours being offered. The Who's Who of Australasian Native Orchid Experts and Enthusiasts will all be attending the Conference.

A Photographic Competition is being held in conjunction with the Conference and Show. All entries will be displayed at the Conference in a room specifically designed for such displays. Wouldn't it be great to have every Australasian orchid species represented in one form or another at the Conference! Paintings, ceramics, woodcarvings and other crafts depicting native orchids will be placed on display alongside the photographic entries. NOSSA is finalising other displays and events that will add considerably to the enjoyment of the Conference. We would love to hear from you if you are able to contribute in any way or if you have any ideas that may lead to an improvement the Conference.

The Conservation of our native orchids will be a much promoted theme of the 1996 Conference. It is hoped that Conservation Officers from all ANOS associated/affiliated Societies will meet in Adelaide to maintain a conservation purpose and solidarity at national and international levels. A conservation forum is planned for the Saturday morning of the Conference and a board-room has been booked in which Conservation issues may be discussed throughout the Conference period. Industry and government participation, sponsorship and support are being sought.

The great news is that Ms Barbara Hardy has agreed to open the Conference for us. This is indeed a great honour for both N.O.S.S.A. and for A.N.O.S; I'm ecstatic about this! No one has a busier schedule than Ms Hardy and she has had to cancel another very important engagement to be with us.

There are other good things happening as well:

- The Adelaide Botanical Gardens/State Herbarium will assist us in putting together a special display of the more historical aspects of native orchids in South Australia,
- John Riley will have up to three displays (*Chiloglottis*, the *Caladenia dilatata* complex and *Pterostylis longifolia*), each comprising about 20 of his outstanding botanical drawings, showing the variances that occur in certain orchid species/complexes in different localities around Australia,
- Ron Tunstall, considered Australia's foremost photographer of native orchids and an excellent speaker, will give registrants an intriguing look at *Diuris*, using 35 mm slides,
- Ron Heberle, a man with an outstanding knowledge and understanding of Western Australia's native orchids, will have a very large and very impressive photographic display of Western Australia's orchids,
- We are working on putting together special exhibits showing native orchids from both Papua New Guinea and from New Zealand. These will be combination live plant/photograph/35mm slide displays,
- There will be continuous showings of 35 mm slides (we hope to have several projectors set up) and videos of Australasian native orchids,

- NOSSA Life Member Don Wells has crafted, from large cuts of redgum, a spectacular Conference Totem that will be garnished with orchids and ferns and will act as the perfect entrance to the Native Orchid Show,
- There will be a large trading table area, with many interstate nurseries represented,
- A display showing some of the modern laboratory techniques, such as flasking, that are being used in the culture of native orchids,
- We are hoping to have 'Meet the Author' and 'Meet the Artist' sessions in order that registrants may meet and talk to the 'celebrities' themselves,
- A display of *Rhizanthella gardneri* with actual preserved plant,
- A Conference Icebreaker Evening, a Conference Presentations Dinner, a Conference Badge, other Conference momentos,
- and there will be more and more and more!! - we will keep you posted.

N.O.S.S.A. encourages ALL OF ITS MEMBERS to promote the Conference, to assist in preparations, and of course to attend the Conference and Show, to be held at the Flinders University in Adelaide, South Australia, from 26 to 30 September 1996. It is an event that no orchid enthusiast will want to miss. Registration cost has been kept to a minimum to ensure everyone can afford to attend. PLEASE NOTE that early registration fees apply only until 31 March. Registration Forms will be available from Gerry Carne at all future meetings prior to the Conference.

If you are handy with a hammer, have some expertise in making signs, are willing to billet and/or transport Conference Delegates, are willing to set up or take down the orchid display, or are willing to help in any other way, please contact Gerry Carne (332 7730) or another Committee Member.

Your Conference Committee comprises Neil Christoph (Catering and Hospitality), Bill Dear (Show Marshall), Helen and Charlie Edwards (Speakers), Pauline and Geoff Edwards, Roy Hargreaves (Public Relations and Advisor), Julie Harrington (Exhibitions/Conservation), Les Nesbitt (Registrar of Judges), Thelma O'Neill, Sylvie Creed, Karen Possingham (Conservation), Ron Robjohns (Treasurer), Jill Shooter (Registration), Reg Shooter (Proceedings Volume), Jill Taylor (Catering and Hospitality), and I'm certain to have forgotten someone. It's a terrific Committee and I'm honoured to be a part of it. There are others contributing too, but who are not on the Committee per se. Of very special note is Don Wells who has hand crafted beautiful redwood gum chalices which will be presented to invited speakers at the Conference. Many thanks also to Bub for her very considerable support.

Several other members have approached me with respect to assuming Committee positions or assisting in other ways. I will be catching up with these people in the New Year. The Conference Committee is looking forward to their participation and to the important contributions that they will be making.

Have a happy, healthy and stimulating 1996. G. E. Carne 3 January 1996