

Timed Summary

Interview with Anna Stirling Cox

OH 870/10

Interviewer: Meg Butler

Date: 28th January 2009

Note: Key words shown in bold.

START TIME	SUMMARY
Disc 1	
0.00	Introduction
0.27	Anna gives an outline of her family background. She was born in 1941 in Adelaide and her parents were Anna Dorothea Morrison and Robert Hay Morrison . Her mother was a physiotherapist and her father was a journalist with the ABC. She grew up in Glenunga and that is where she nurtured her love of gardens. Her brother is Rob Morrison, a science communicator.
3.13	Anna explains that the Friends of the Botanic Gardens began when the Adelaide Botanic Gardens were very different because there were many more outdoor horticultural staff and there was a greater diversity of planting. Noel Lothian was the Director. There was a large compost heap that would steam in winter and they also used to get zoo sweepings. People in Adelaide had an emotional attachment to the gardens.
7.12	She was at the first meeting of the Friends and was asked to join the steering committee because of a letter she had written to the Gardens objecting to some of the developments. The idea to set up the Friends came from Collin Robjohns . Five members were on the original committee and Collin was the President. Brian Morley was Assistant Director.
10.29	All volunteers had to be Friends. Collin later set up the guides and began The Gazette which promoted attendance at the meetings. The Gazette came out six times a year.
14.05	Anna describes Collin's influence on the development of the Friends. He started the Shop in the Museum of Economic Botany and did all the buying. The best part of being a Friend was the stimulation and the enormous amount of learning gained working with the staff. Collin set up the Guides and she became the first Guide Leader . He organised staff to give a series of lectures from the staff. Brian Morley refused to throw out anyone who was not a good guide. Ed McAlister was the next Director.
21.41	She explains that she became a Guide Leader because she liked the idea of passing on what she had learnt to other people, and it was also a chance to learn more about the Gardens. There were 20 Guides in the first group who had replied to an article in the Gazette. The training was a lecture a week for eight weeks. They had to find their own way around the gardens and they had to put out their own promotional material. Her first tour group was a terrifying experience as it was at the Australian Garden History Society Conference . She held the position of Guide Leader for three years and then she handed over to Audrey Abbie . She was concerned about the standards and got each Guide to undertake a detailed study of a tree.

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30.25	Anna was on the committee for 20 years. She was Secretary for a while and the Gazette Representative for 10 years with Eric Sims who had a good eye for Botany. She went on expeditions with Professor Cleland and she reported on these activities in <i>The Gazette</i> .
33.30	She had a good working relationship with Eric. She enjoyed writing for <i>The Gazette</i> .
37.53	Anna outlines the development of the Friends into the Growing Group and the Botanical Art Group which were important achievements. The loss of Yarrabee for exhibitions was devastating for the Friends. It was lost as part of the Wine Debate and the staff in the Herbarium had to move out of their purpose-built building. The Friends were very vocal about the loss of Yarrabee. Apart from exhibitions it had been used as the venue for a craft group of which she had been a member.
42.38	Anna became a member of the Board about 20 years ago and participated on it for 16 years. She was on it in her own right, not as a Friend. There were only eight members. Brian Morley was Director while she was on the Board.
45.56	There was great emphasis on getting wild-collected seed for everything grown in the Botanic Gardens and this was maintained under Brian Morely. Noel Lothian was more of a horticulturist.
47.13	Anna explains that she had a long working relationship with Collin Robjohns. He started many new things, was a great photographer and a very interesting man. He wrote his autobiography " My Several Lives ". She went on a Friends guided trip to China with her husband, and Collin was the leader and it was a fantastic experience.
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